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William Faulkner's The Sound and The Fury and Kateb Yacine's Nedjma: A Comparative Study of Style and Structure as Related to Time

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WILLIAM FAULKNER’S THE SOUND AND THE FURY AND

KATEB YACINE’S NEDJMA:

A Comparative Study of Style and Structure as Related to Time

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In memory of Dr. Richard E. Cauger

without whose enthusiasm and
calm encouragement this work would
never have been accomplished.
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To my husband, Zac, a very special thanks for his patience and confidence.
We never confine ourselves to the present time. We anticipate the future as too slow in coming, as it were, to hasten its course; or we recall the past, in order to stop it as too ready to go: so imprudent that we wander into times that are not ours, and do not think on that alone which belongs to us; and so vain that we meditate upon those periods that have vanished, and allow the sole moment that subsists to escape without reflecting upon it. It is only the present time that ordinarily wounds us. We conceal it from our views, because it afflicts us; and if it is agreeable to us, we regret to see it escape. We strive to prolong it by the future, and think to dispose of things that are not in our power, for a time at which we have no assurance of arriving. Let each one examine his own thoughts; he will find them always occupied with the past and the future. We scarcely think of the present; and if we do think of it, it is only to take its light in order to dispose of the future. The present is never our end; the past and the present are our means; the future alone is our end. Thus we never live, but we hope to live; and always disposing ourselves to be happy, it is inevitable that we never become so.

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PREFACE

The most striking technical device in *The Sound and the Fury*¹ is the use of four different points of view.² Faulkner is neither the first nor the last to use this device; a similar method has been used by Lawrence G. Durrell in *Justine, Baltazar, Clea, and Mountolive*, by Balzac in *La Grande Bretèche*, and by Kurosawa in his film *Rashomon*.³ The use of four different points of view determines the structure of Faulkner's novel; each point of view forms one section of the book.

While reading *Nedjma*, a novel by an Algerian writer, Kateb Yacine,⁴ we were particularly impressed by the similarity between the latter and Faulkner. Kateb also employs "multiple narrators."⁵ The story in *Nedjma* is likewise told by four characters; the same events are repeated, each time from a different point of view. Structurally more confusing than Faulkner's four-part narrative, the changes in point of view in *Nedjma* are sudden and often abrupt. The first person narrative may refer to different characters within the same chapter with little or no indication to the reader. Before going any further, it would perhaps be of interest to present a brief synopsis of the novel and a biographical sketch of its author.

*Nedjma* depicts French colonial Algeria around the year 1945. Four young men who have a common tribal background, Rachid, Lakhdar, Mourad, and Mustapha, live in Bône, a harbor in Eastern Algeria. They are all in love with Nedjma, a mysterious young woman, who is already married to Kamel. The relationships between the four protagonists and *Nedjma* are initially blurred. Her origin is a mystery whose unfolding is the central
thread of the novel. She is the daughter of a native father and a Frenchwoman. Abandoned by her mother as a young child, she was adopted by Lella Fatma, the aunt of Mourad and Lakhdar who are, in fact, brothers. Nedjma's mother had had four lovers who included Rachid's father and an elderly tribal figure, Si Mokhtar. The night Nedjma was conceived, these two men had taken the Frenchwoman off to a cave. The following day, Rachid's father was found dead inside the cave. In order to learn the truth about Nedjma, Rachid becomes the ever-present companion of Si Mokhtar, his father's would-be murderer. Rachid accompanies Si Mokhtar on a pilgrimage to Mecca during which the old man relates the entire story of Nedjma to him. Si Mokhtar reveals himself to be Nedjma's father and, most probably, Kamel's father as well. As a result, the two men decide to kidnap Nedjma from her incestuous partner and take her to the Nadhor, the ancestral homeland. Before reaching the native land, however, Si Mokhtar is killed; Rachid is forced to abandon Nedjma to tribal guardsmen who then escort her to the homeland.

Rachid then rejoins the other three young men and they are hired as construction workers on the same site. The first day on the job, Lakhdar is provoked into striking his foreman, Mr. Ernest, a French settler. He is arrested but soon escapes. Shortly thereafter, Mourad kills Mr. Ricard, a wealthy, French contractor, who has just married Mr. Ernest's daughter, Suzy. Motivated by his attraction to Suzy and the fact that the wedding is a mere business arrangement between Ricard and Ernest, Mourad is predisposed to violence. During the wedding celebration, Ricard beats an Algerian woman servant. Mourad comes to her defense by killing Ricard. Mourad is then arrested. In the end, Mourad languishes in jail, Rachid and Lakhdar return to their native towns, and Mustapha simply says he will
take another road. As they separate, their shadows disappear into the night.

*Nedjma* was published in 1956. The date is significant in that it appeared during the Algerian war for independence which began in 1954 and ended in 1962. As already mentioned, the novel deals with an earlier period, the years leading to the war. The year 1945 is an important date for Algeria historically as well as for Kateb personally.

Born in 1929 in Constantine (eastern Algeria), Kateb is the son of a lawyer (*oukil*) who was versed in both French literature and Coranic law. His mother was also literate in Arabic. Appropriately enough his surname means writer in Arabic. As a young boy he was sent to the Coranic school (*medersa*) but was later enrolled in the French school which he refers to as "la gueule du loup." This was a major turning point in his life in that it alienated him somewhat from his mother who spoke only Arabic and it opened a whole new world to him, socially as well as culturally. He was a student at the *lycée* in Sétif when the events of May 8, 1945 erupted. He, along with many other students, participated in that manifestation. The events of this historic day can be traced to many sources, two of which are among the most important: 1) the reforms of 1947 which promised the Algerian population equality with its French colonists in the form of the "collège unique" were not enforced; and 2) the returning World War II Algerian heroes were discriminated against in their own homeland. The manifestation which began on May 8 in Sétif spread to Guelma and before the end of the month 45,000 people were dead. Kateb was not quite sixteen years old at the time of his arrest. He spent three months in prison and was expelled from school as an undesirable element. Thus, this event marked the end of his formal education. It was also a great awakening in his life:
C'est alors... qu'on assume la plénitude tragique de ce qu'on est et qu'on découvre les êtres. C'est à ce moment-là aussi que j'ai accumulé ma première réserve poétique... Rétrospectivement, ce sont les plus beaux moments de ma vie. J'ai découvert alors les deux choses qui me sont les plus chères: la poésie et la révolution.

Elsewhere, he has said:

Je crois que je serais resté un poète obscur, s'il n'y avait pas eu la manifestation du 8 mai 1945.... C'est en prison que j'ai découvert le peuple qui était là devant moi, mais que je n'avais pas vu jusqu'ici.... J'ai découvert là mes personnages.

The event has, in fact, become "a haunting refrain in his literary work."

Within a year, his first work was published, a book of poems entitled Soliloques. It is important to note that Kateb's disappearance in 1945 contributed greatly to his mother's loss of reason and eventual confinement in the psychiatric hospital in Blida.

Kateb soon became a militant nationalist. He gave a lecture in 1947 in Paris which was later published in pamphlet form, Abdelkader et l'Indépendance Algérienne. In 1948 he worked as a journalist for Alger Républicain, the same newspaper for which Camus wrote.

In 1950 his father's death left him family burdens. Unable to find employment as a dock worker, he was obliged to emigrate to France. He became a jack-of-all-trades: agricultural worker, electrician, mason, and construction worker. While in France, thanks to the help of a few close friends, he was able to begin writing Nedjma. Excerpts appeared in Esprit in 1955. Toward the end of 1954, Kateb was forced to leave France for what proved to be many years of exile. He traveled widely during this period: Italy, Germany, Belgium, U.S.S.R., and Tunisia.

Aside from Nedjma, by far his best known work, Kateb has written numerous plays: Le Cadavre encerclé, Les Ancêtres redoublent de férocité,
La Poudre d'intelligence, La Femme sauvage, L'Homme aux sandales de caoutchouc, Mohamed prends ta valise, and La Guerre de 2000 ans. The life he came to know as a migrant North-African worker in France, he has described in a second and last novel to date, Le Polygone étoilé.

On June 23, 1963, Kateb was awarded the Jean Amrouche prize by the Congrès Méditerranéen de la Culture in Florence.\(^{17}\)

Kateb is renown for his revolutionary approach to literature. He is the first Algerian writer to reject "colonial domination and its accepted literary tradition."\(^{18}\) As Jean Sénac has pointed out, "Loin de se laisser coloniser par cette langue [French], il lui a arraché, dans une pathétique étreinte, un sens insolite et nouveau."\(^{19}\) Albert Memmi, the Tunisian writer, has said of Kateb:

C'est quelqu'un qui ne prétend pas faire de son verbe quelque chose qui domestique les hommes et qui leur apprend à vivre, mais au contraire quelqu'un qui leur apporte une liberté, une liberté souvent gênante d'ailleurs...le vrai message du poète c'est ça...C'est justement de briser tous les cadres qui ont été tracés autour d'eux [les lecteurs] pour qu'ils puissent rebondir.\(^{20}\)

Kateb is presently active in theater groups in Algiers as well as in Paris. He spends most of his time writing and directing plays. Two of his plays, Mohamed prends ta valise and La Guerre de 2000 ans were recently playing in Paris.\(^{21}\)

The parallels between Faulkner and Kateb have been pointed out by many critics prior to this study. With the publication of *Nedjma*, Kateb was hailed as the Algerian Faulkner. Driss Chraïbi, the Moroccan writer, has said of Kateb: "Sa poésie transcende même l'action, lui confère un caractère intemporel. On dirait du Faulkner reconverti et servi à la sauce arabe."\(^{22}\) Jean Sénac has described Kateb's method as "parfois à la manière de Faulkner."\(^{23}\)
Georges Joyaux has mentioned the similarity between the two writers only to attribute it mistakenly in our opinion to his Arab origins. This point of view is also maintained by the anonymous author of the introduction to *Nedjma*. The latter does not totally ignore the possibility of Faulkner's influence, but rather attributes Kateb's method to a purely Arabic conception of time. Kateb himself, however, has asserted the importance of Faulkner in modern literature. In a lecture he gave in April, 1967, at the University of Algiers, Kateb stated:

Dans le roman, cette littérature moderne, je crois que ça n'est plus en France que vous pouvez trouver ses meilleures réussites, mais par exemple chez Faulkner. Il faudra que vous lisiez Faulkner parce que c'est très important pour comprendre la signification de la littérature moderne.

Kateb has, in fact, acknowledged Faulkner's influence on his own art. In a recent interview, Kateb made this very clear: "Il [Faulkner] ne pouvait pas ne pas m'influencer surtout que l'Algérie était une sorte d'Amérique du Sud, un Sud d'Etats-Unis, au moment où j'écrivais..."

Although the resemblance between the two writers is undeniable, this is far from saying that their use of technique is identical. Nor is it a value judgment as to whom is the better writer. Nor is it a question of determining whether Kateb is a blind disciple of Faulkner. The purpose of this study is simply to point out parallels where they can be demonstrated. We shall limit our comparison to a study of style and structure with relation to time.

Although apparently chaotic, both novels are precisely structured. As Conrad Aiken has indicated, "with its massive four-part symphonic structure, is perhaps the most beautifully wrought [of Faulkner's novels]...and an indubitable masterpiece...The joinery is flawless in its intricacy."
Similarly, *Nedjma* is elaborately structured. It is divided into six parts which contain nine episodes which are developed in twelve short chapters each. Chapters eleven and twelve of the final section (Book VI) repeat almost word for word the first chapter and the end of the ninth chapter of the first section (Book I). Generally speaking, the structure of both novels is circular. Pattern replaces plot. Chronology becomes irrelevant or rather, secondary to memory.

As Cleanth Brooks has pointed out, the progression in *SF* is derived "from the fact that we are traversing the same territory in circling movements, and [from] the cumulative effect of names and characterizations." As we will attempt to demonstrate, this also applies to *Nedjma*.

In his use of multiple narrators, Kateb presents alternatively and sometimes simultaneously the viewpoint of the four narrators. What Aiken has said about the Faulkner reader certainly holds true for the Kateb reader as well: "The reader must simply make up his mind to go to work, and in a sense to cooperate; his reward being that there is a situation to be given shape, a meaning to be extracted."
The Sound and the Fury will hereafter be referred to as SF.


Kateb Yacine has chosen to inverse his name; Kateb is, in fact, his surname.

Frederick J. Hoffman, Introduction to Three Decades, p. 12.

Jean Déjeux, "La Littérature maghrébine d'expression française," Vol. II (Alger, Centre Culturel Français, 1970), p. 177. The official entry for Kateb's birth is August 26, 1929 in Condé Smendou. Déjeux, however, claims he was born on August 6, 1929 in Constantine. According to the novelist himself, he was born in either July or August in Constantine.

Ibid. This expression literally translated means the wolf's mouth.

This date marks the first major revolt by Algerian autochthons to gain independence. This manifestation began in Sétif (eastern Algeria) and resulted in much bloodshed.

For a further discussion, see Yves Courrière, La Guerre d'Algérie, Tome I, Les Fils de la Toussaint, (Paris, Fayard, 1968).

This figure is much disputed. The figure cited is a compromise between two extremes. See Historia Magazine N° 196 (Octobre 6 1971), 82-86.

Déjeux, p. 178. This French quotation, as well as subsequent lengthy ones, is translated in the appendix.


Soliloques (1946) has since been lost.

Déjeux, p. 177.

The lecture was given on May 24, 1947 and was published by El Wahda (Algiers) that same year.
18 Mortimer, p. 120.
23 Sénac, p. 62.
26 Menasserri, pp. 59-60.
29 Mortimer, p. 121.
30 Brooks, p. 326.
32 Aiken, p. 138.
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

If the title of Faulkner's *SF* is indicative of the meaning of the novel as a whole, that is, that life is simply a tale told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, signifying nothing,\(^1\) then this novel is simply a document of the meaninglessness of life. Yet it is difficult to embrace this interpretation completely because of Dilsey's presence in the novel. She is portrayed as a courageous, compassionate, and noble figure. Her simple Christian faith enables her to endure. Where the disintegration of the house of Compson is revealed gradually throughout the novel, she survives: indeed, she dominates the last section of the novel. And although her view is not the last one we see, its peacefulness and stability mark a profound contrast to the final pathetic scene between Jason and Benjy. As the Compson line draws to an end, Dilsey, although somewhat weary, endures. She, in fact, prevails. Faulkner, in his Stockholm address, stated that man would not only endure, but would prevail. Through his capacity for such feelings as courage, love, honor, hope, pride, compassion, pity and sacrifice, man reaches beyond his physical limitations in time.

Faulkner's narrative approach in *SF* is subjective. Each of the four sections of the novel reveals a separate reality from which emerges a separate concept of time.

The first three sections are interior monologues with varying degrees of introspection and depth. Jason's section (III) has been referred to as "surface soliloquy" for it does not reach far beneath the surface of his thoughts.\(^2\) Perhaps Faulkner implies by this that there is not much depth to Jason. Benjy's and Quentin's sections, on the other hand, are in the
stream-of-consciousness technique.

"Stream-of-consciousness" is a term introduced by William James in his Principles of Psychology. He characterized thought, in part, as changing and continuous. Thoughtsflow as a river or stream does. Thus the term, stream-of-consciousness. James went on to say that "all consciousness is in the form of time." We normally think of time as divided into past, present and future. But, as James points out, "there is no present; it is composed of past and future divided by an indivisible point or instant." This brings us to the idea of the "specious present." The present, in this sense, is simply a point of reference from which we look either backward or forward in time. If the present is a mere instant which dissolves with every passing second, then one must either recapture the past or look to the future. Faulkner has chosen to look towards the past. All motivation and raison d'etre are found in the past. This idea underlies the novel's structure. The first section, Benjy's, begins on April 7, 1928, the day Miss Quentin runs away. The second section, Quentin's, supplies the necessary background for the novel as a whole. It dates back to June 2, 1910. The third section, Jason's, is dated April 6, 1928. This section provides the motives for Miss Quentin's flight. And the concluding section, dated April 8, 1928, draws the loose strings together and brings the tale to an orderly end. There is a chronologically false yet psychologically valid regression.

Each of the first three sections is expressed, at least in part, by the stream-of-consciousness technique. The variety of its use reveals the particular character of each brother. As was mentioned earlier, Jason's monologue is not particularly deep. It expresses his main concerns: the quest for money and his hatred of Caddy and his niece, Quentin. Benjy's
monologue, on the other hand, is quite difficult to follow because no logical continuum in time is established. All events flow together in an everlasting present. Events, sounds, smells are joined together by an indiscriminate and.

It is first with Quentin's monologue that the reader becomes aware of a logic in time, even though thoughts about the past are constantly interrupted by present events. His mind is sharp but it is an obsessed mind. His obsession is centered on Caddy's loss of honor. His despair at her dishonor is something he wishes to preserve. Quentin wants desperately to stop time, for he knows that with its passage, the despair will diminish. As Brooks has stated, Quentin is in love neither with Caddy nor with death, but with his own despair.7

Not unlike Faulkner, Kateb looks to the past for insight into the future. Historically oriented, Kateb is aware that history repeats itself. Acutely aware of his own country's history, he sees Algeria as a testament to the repetition of history. Invasion upon invasion, one leading to the other, tends to render the past all-important. In the past lies the future. One feels an undercurrent of possible future joy despite the despairing present of the novel. There is within the hearts of all the characters the conviction, however vague, that a millennium is soon to come. When that will be, no one ventures to say. It is simply a belief, a kind of faith, that it will someday materialize. Like Faulkner, Kateb also manipulates time. Strict chronology is violated to reach a deeper truth. Kateb yearns for a reality within a historical framework. He sees time as cyclic, a continuum in the form of a spiral. All the characters are caught in this never-ending spiral, the yoke of which can be broken only by an extraordinary event which will bring about a golden age. Great joy will abound, freedom and equality will prevail. Rachid, the most hopeless of the four protagonists, within his
despair paradoxically keeps alive vestiges of this vague hope. He looks to the past, ancient Numidia, for a reawakening, a new thrust for freedom. He maintains that if the spirit and glory of the ancient cities of Cirta and Hippone could be recaptured, then a new dawn would appear. In the end, he cannot consciously believe that they can be recaptured. Only if and when this could be realized would there come about a true reign of joy. It is this ever-present underlying feeling of future happiness which sustains the protagonists from one construction site to another, from one prison to another.

Both Kateb and Faulkner grapple with this mystery of time. Each tries to come to terms with it somehow. Both see time as an isolating force which reduces man's existence to absurdity. But within that context, each comes up with a creative construct that makes it possible to cope with tyrannous time. Generally, Kateb seems to be saying that man's existence, when placed within a historical framework, gains meaning. The fact that other men have experienced the same problem should console him. This collectivity lessens the burden of time on any single man. Faulkner's subjective view of time is very much tied to the past and its traditions, whereas, for Kateb reality is made by the future; time forever unfolding, gives the individual a reality. The potential for future glory, however, always lies in the traditions and seeds of the past. For the Algerian mind, there is always a future and thus a potential faith for national fulfillment. A nation and, as a consequence, the individual nationalist has a significant reality only to the extent that he has a belief in the future.
1. Macbeth, Act V, Scene V.


5. Ibid.

6. Ibid., p. 398. According to James, the term was first used by E.R. Clay. It is taken from Clay's work, The Alternative.

CHAPTER TWO: TIME

In *Nedjma* we find two conflicting concepts of time. The first suggests that time is meaningless. As Mildred Mortimer points out, past, present and future are mere repetitions of the same. They form an endless spiral which Kateb paradoxically describes as French colonial Algeria around 1945. The realization that there is no progression except on a circular basis leads Rachid to the depths of despair. This is easily seen through the frequent use of such words as *gouffre* and *abîme* throughout his long monologues. He lives in the glory of the past, rejects the present, and has little hope in the future. The feeling of futility which results from this view of time is expressed by Lakhdar near the end of the novel: "Tous les villages sont les mêmes, si on a de quoi vivre..." (249). The frustration and consequent despair of this concept is due to a short-sighted view of time. Rachid's defeat is a result of his loss of hope. His subsequent resignation is described as a kind of living death:

Rachid n'en parlait plus, ne voulait plus en parler; à mesure qu'il s'habitue au fondouk, son langage se raréfiait, de même que s'embuait et se creusait son regard sombre, et les côtes se dessinaient sous la vieille chemise de soldat, comme si son corps de plus en plus sec devait mettre en relief le squelette, uniquement le squelette de l'homme puissant qu'il eût été en d'autres circonstances...(170).

Mustapha also expresses his frustration and especially his anger in a class theme for which he is expelled from school for one week. He realizes the hopelessness of the colonial situation when he says:

*Allons nous servir de larbins, ou nous contenter de "professions liberales" pour devenir à notre tour des privilégiés? Pouvons-nous avoir une autre ambition?*
On sait bien qu'un Musulman incorporé dans l'aviation balaie les mégots des pilotes, et s'il est officier, même sorti de Polytechnique, il n'atteint au grade de colonel que pour ficher ses compatriotes au bureau de recrutement...(222).

This would lead us to believe that the future is hopeless. The name chosen for the café where the young men often meet corroborates this view: Café de l'Avenir. The initial description of the café is appropriate for it is dismal, dark, and narrow. The implication is that the future is as bleak.

The second view of time, however, reveals a belief in the future. Within this framework of infinity, the dream of an independent Algeria, which is at the heart of the novel, becomes possible. An Algeria free of colonial racism is Mourad's dream. There will come a time, he thinks to himself, when Algeria will be part of the world where men, regardless of their origin, can speak to one another on equal terms. These thoughts occur to him when he meets Suzy, the foreman's daughter. Despite their mutual attraction, she refuses to consider him as a young man, but treats him merely as one of her father's laborers. She automatically uses the familiar form tu when she addresses him despite his use of the formal form vous. His frustration leads him to make the following statement:

...il y a un monde, ni le sien, ni le mien, ni même le nôtre, mais simplement le monde qui n'en est pas à sa première femme, à son premier homme, et qui ne garde pas longtemps nos faibles traces, nos pâles souvenirs, un point c'est tout (20).

Lakhdar also expresses a long-sighted view of time, a belief in the future. Describing his actions during the manifestation of May 8, 1945, he exteriorizes his hope:

Je suis parti avec les tracts.
Je les ai enterrés dans la rivière.
J'ai tracé sur le sable un plan...
Un plan de manifestation future.
Qu'on me donne cette rivière, et je me battrai.
Je me battrai avec du sable et de l'eau.
De l'eau fraîche, du sable chaud. Je me battrai.

Mustapha in his journal verbalizes his hope in the future in the most overt way:

... ce sera enfin l'arbre de la nation s'enracinant dans la sépulture tribale, sous le nuage enfin crevé d'un sang trop de fois écume... (187).

He believes his dream will materialize but not in his time. He is resigned to the fact that he, as well as his friends, belong to a sacrificed generation. He willingly accepts it because of his firm hope in the future.

For Rachid, the key to the future lies in the past:

... il suffit de remettre en avant les Ancêtres pour découvrir la phase triomphale, la clé de la victoire refusée à Jugurtha,² le germe indestructible de la nation écartelée entre deux continents... (175).

Both concepts of time, that of hopelessness and hopefulness, are fused in Nedjma, a symbol of this ambiguity. She is at once the uncatchable and the irresistible. She, like Caddy in SF, is the catalyst behind the action.

In SF there are similarly two conflicting views of time. As we mentioned earlier, each of the four sections in the novel reveals a different concept of time. But they can be grouped into two opposing views. Quentin and Jason have reduced time to utter meaninglessness. The former sees the futility of time as symbolized by the inaccuracy of mechanical time. The latter, in his fury to catch up with time, is confined by it. Whereas Quentin cannot conceive of a future time, Jason lives only in terms of it. Benjy is neither a captive of immediate time nor can he conceive of time at all. Dilsey, on the other hand, understands time to be a continuum. She has a firm belief in eternity. While she is aware of mechanical time, her view of time is the least limited of all the characters. She is the embod-
iment of a sane view of time. While maintaining an idealistic view of time as eternal, she manages to run a rather hectic household, prepare meals on time, and even get to church on time.

Being outside of time is an ideal Faulkner cherishes. Although she is within time, Dilsey aspires for eternity. Hers is a positive force brought about by an awareness of time as a continuum. Although Benjy achieves a kind of timelessness, his is a "specious eternity." It is a negative force for it does not contain either past or future. Near the end of _SF_, at the climax of Reverend Shegog's sermon, his speech is described as "of no moment" (310); its greatness has reached a peak. Its timelessness becomes a point of reference for greatness. Faulkner elevates Reverend Shegog's sermon to the level of universality. Time, at least as Dilsey lives it, is an ideal. In this context, it is equated with "immolation" and "abnegation." "Two tears slid down her [Dilsey's] fallen cheeks, in and out of the myriad coruscations of immolation and abnegation and time" (311). Sacrifice being one of the "old verities" Faulkner claims in his Nobel Prize address, the ability to live at one with time is, in this sense, a virtue.

Whereas in _SF_ the emphasis is on psychological time, in _Nedjma_, it is difficult to dissociate psychological time from historical time. The main characters have such a strong sense of history as to render their own individual sense of time inseparable from historical time. The past becomes haunting in _Nedjma_ because it is ever-present. There is a myriad of references to Abdelkader, the now national hero who unsuccessfully attempted to fight the French invaders, to the French invasion itself, and to ancient Numidia. It is the conviction that the present cannot escape the past and that the key to the future lies in the past that forces Rachid compulsively
to bring the past to the foreground. He holds desperately onto the past
because he knows that if he should lose his grasp of it, only chaos would
result. The sins of his forefathers taught him this lesson. His fathers,
as well as those of the other protagonists, lost their sense of past. They
sold their land, their only claim to dignity. They subsequently squandered
their money on women and wine, leaving little, if anything, to their sons.

There are numerous references to the selling of land in *Nedjma*. The
following passage is such an example:

...les terres, par exemple, ont été perdues dans la
lutte contre les Français: l'arrière-grand-père de
Mourad avait combattu sous la bannière d'Abdelkader,
s'exposant aux représailles de Bugeaud, qui fit dis-
tribuer les plus beaux domaines aux colons accourus
d'Europe; par contre, l'argent liquide a été dissipé
par Sidi Ahmed, qui pratiquait le charleston et la
polygamie... (77).

Later in the novel, Rachid says of himself and of his friends, "nous étions
de ceux dont les pères avaient vendu leurs part de terre et contribué à la
ruine de l'oeuvre ancestrale" (146). In French colonial Algeria, this was
historically true. Between 1871 and 1900, 687,000 hectares of land were
distributed gratuitously to encourage the colonization of Algeria by French
peasants. Under various pretexts, the land was appropriated freely:

Ces terres, l'Etat se les procurait par la main-mise
sur les biens religieux, les habous publics, les con-
fiscations sur les tribus, la revendication des terres
dites forestières ou déclarées inultes ou sans maître.

In *Nedjma*, the present gains significance with reference to the past.
An example of this is Mustapha's class theme. In it he compares the French
colonization of Algeria to Agricola's conquest of the British. Mustapha
refers to Agricola's translation of Tacitus. He concludes by saying:

"Voilà comment nous, descendants des Numides, subissons à présent la
colonisation des Gaulois!" (222).

To a lesser extent in SF, the past influences the present. The story in SF is presented as a chronicle of the Compson downfall. The appendix which Faulkner wrote for Malcolm Cowley's Portable Faulkner traces the history of the Compsons before and after the period of SF. It is entitled "Compson, 1699-1945." Further evidence that we are to view the Compsons historically comes from Quentin's watch. It is significant that his watch has been passed on to him by his grandfather. As Perrin Lowrey points out, it is thus enriched as a symbol not only marking mechanical time, but also containing history itself.11

The importance of time in Faulkner's novels has been discussed at length by many critics.12 As Lowrey mentions, "Throughout The Sound and the Fury clocks and watches and references to time provide a ticking refrain to the central action."13 Time as symbolized by clocks is closely linked to the meaning of the novel: "The clock tick-tocked, solemn and profound. It might have been the dry pulse of the decaying house itself..." (301).

If indeed time is a major consideration in SF, it is no less important in Kateb's Nedjma. This has been suggested by various critics. Maurice Nadeau points to "une confusion complète du passé, du présent et de l'avenir."14 Mildred Mortimer states that Kateb, "following in the tradition of Faulkner, experiments with time-space relationships."15 André Rousseaux describes "des décalages et des renversements temporels."16 Claude Meade speaks of "perpétuels retours au passé."17 The editors of Nedjma emphasize that an understanding of time is crucial to an understanding of the novel:
Le rythme et la construction du récit...résultent surtout d'une attitude purement arabe de l'homme face au temps. La pensée européenne se met dans une durée linéaire; la pensée arabe évolue dans une durée circulaire où chaque détour est un retour, confondant l'avenir et le passé dans l'éternité de l'instant.  

Time has concerned many great twentieth century writers. As Jean-Paul Sartre indicates, Proust, Joyce, Dos Passos, Gide, Virginia Woolf, and Faulkner have attempted, each in his own way, to mutilate time.  

Some have deprived it of past and future and reduced it to the pure intuition of the moment; others, like Dos Passos, make it a limited and mechanical memory. Proust and Faulkner, have simply decapitated it; they have taken away its future—that is to say, the dimension of free choice and act.  

The very structure of each novel is based on a manipulation of time. The resulting distortion of chronological order is due to the fact that "the order of the past is the order of the heart." Kateb has phrased it in the following way: "la mémoire n'a pas de succession chronologique." Hence, chronological time is violated and made subordinate to psychological time. From each of the four sections in SF there surfaces a different concept of time. Each of the Compson brothers, according to Lowrey, has a distorted view of time: "none of them understands the relation between past and present and future, each has a flawed vision of reality." Likewise in Nedjma, each of the protagonists is a captive of his concept of time. Lakhdar and Mustapha, for example, are marked by the events of May 8, 1945. As a result of their participation in those events, they were expelled from school. Rachid is a captive of a more distant past, his tribal ancestor, the Keblout. "As Rachid focuses upon the semi-mythic past, his thoughts spiral inward, and he is caught in a labyrinth between light and darkness."
The past takes on overwhelming proportions when the present is empty and the future uncertain. Rachid cannot cope with the present because he concentrates on the past. The past overtakes the present to the exclusion of any future. Rachid's dreams literally blow up into a cloud of smoke: "il mourrait probablement au balcon, dans un nuage d'herbe interdite" (169). A prisoner of the past, Rachid seeks refuge in oblivion: "À présent, il se savait capturé, comme le rossignol et les canaris qu'on entendait dès le seuil du fondouk, et il ne lui venait plus à l'idée d'en sortir" (169). To Mourad, who is serving a twenty year sentence for the killing of Mr. Ricard, time has little meaning: "le soleil ne luit pour nous qu'à la visière des gardes, sur les canons de leurs fusils, jusqu'à la fin des vingt ans de peine..." (41-42).

He too is a prisoner of the past as the description of his prison in historical terms implies. It renders his confinement a result not only of his act, but also a consequence of a collective history of oppression:

Me voilà dans les murs de Lambèse, mais les Romains sont remplacés par les Corses; tous Corses, tous gardiens de prison, et nous prenons la succession des esclaves, dans le même bagnes, près de la fosse aux lions, et les fils des Romains patrouillent l'arme à la bretelle (41).

Similarly, "Faulkner starts off from a present...so choked by a stagnant past that there is no place in it for the future." Sartre has characterized Faulkner's "concept of the present" as "a kind of arrested motion in time." This is in keeping with what Faulkner himself has said about the artist's purpose:

The aim of every artist is to arrest motion, which is life, by artificial means and hold it fixed so that a hundred years later, when a stranger looks at it, it moves again since it is life.
According to Rodrigues, in *SF* "there is only time past which erupts violently into time present—and there is no time future." This is obviously true for Quentin whose sole purpose is to stop time. As Brooks indicates, his obsession with the past and his inability to cope with the present are tantamount to a denial of any future. To a lesser degree, Jason is also obsessed with time. His concern with time on a minute-to-minute basis prevents him from ever accomplishing anything. "Jason, too, is harried by time, but in a very different way: far from wishing to obliterate it, he would like to catch up with it." Through Benjy's section, on the other hand, we are able to get a timeless view of the Compsons, what they were and have become—from the pasture to the golf course, as it were. In this larger sense, there is no future. The Compsons as described in *SF* are on the brink of disintegration. This is symbolized by their outdated carriage to which Dilsey refers: "This thing going to fall to pieces under you all some day" (29). At the end of the novel, Quentin is dead, Caddy has long since disappeared; only Benjy and Jason remain: one, a castrated idiot, and the other, a childless bachelor. With them ends the Compson line. The Compson chronicle, marked by "disorder, disintegration, and the absence of perspective," is brought to a pitiful end.

"I seed de beginnin en now I sees de endin," says Dilsey (313). "Through her eyes the reader sees the Compson family in the proper historical perspective." She has witnessed the rise and the fall of the Compsons. She has endured their complete disintegration and has managed to impose order on an otherwise chaotic scene. While Jason is out chasing his niece, Quentin, and the "man with the red tie," Dilsey quietly prepares the meal for Benjy
and Luster, patiently tends to the ever-complaining, self-indulgent Mrs. Compson, and compassionately offers comfort to the bellowing Benjy. "But he bellowed slowly, abjectively, without tears; the grave hopeless sound of all voiceless misery under the sun" (332). As Luster hands him Caddy's now-yellowed satin slipper, Benjy calms down. "Dilsoy rocked back and forth stroking Ben's head. 'Dis long time, O Jesus,' she said, 'dis long time'" (332).

A similarly "strong sense of historical time," as Lowrey refers to it in SF, is present in *Nedjma*. A sense of history or a consciousness of the past is central to the comprehension of the novel. This is expressed mainly through the character of Rachid, Quentin's counterpart. It is Rachid who often refers to ancient Numidia:

> Constantine et Bône, les deux cités qui dominaient l'ancienne Numidie aujourd'hui réduite en département français... Deux âmes en lutte pour la puissance abdiquée des Numides. Constantine luttant pour Cirta et Bône pour Hippone comme si l'enjeu du passé, figé dans une partie apparemment perdue, constituait l'unique épreuve pour les champions à venir... (175).

According to Mortimer, "These two cities, as they appear in 1945, mirror Algeria's defeat." The once glorious capitals of ancient Numidia, Cirta and Hippone, are now reduced to mere French départements.

Rachid's desire to know the history of *Nedjma*--to possess the secret of her origin from Si Mokhtar--is a manifestation of his sense of past. To him, the past is all-important, for the present is in the hands of "les colonisateurs, les prétendants sans titre et sans amour..." (175). As Mortimer indicates, "In colonial Algeria, past, present and future form a closed circuit; the present and the future are mere repetitions of the past with its indelible mark of the conquest." Rachid makes this point very
clear: "...depuis l'entrée de Lamoricière, ce quartier n'avait guère changé son train de vie: négoce, bureaucratie, mendicité" (155). It is through Rachid's ramblings to an unknown journalist in the fondouk overlooking the Rhummel River that much is revealed about Nedjma. Her mother, according to Rachid, is responsible for the destruction of the tribe: "...c'était la mère de Nedjma, la Française, c'était elle qui avait fait exploser la tribu" (178). She disrupted what Si Mokhtar refers to as "la chronologie du sang" (98). As Rachid retraces the history of Nedjma, the past eventually engulfs him. He reaches a point in his talk to the journalist where he can no longer continue; the weight of the past becomes unbearable: "C'est assez pour ce soir, dit Rachid en se levant. Tout cela est une pure malédiction de Dieu ou du vieux brigand... Je ne puis remonter aux causes. Car je suis mêlé à trop de morts, trop de morts" (184). Haunted by the tribal past, he cannot escape the "galop souterrain des ancêtres" (97). Algeria's past in Rachid's mind is very much linked to Nedjma, "the fugitive heroine of the novel":

Pursued by four potential captors, just as the nation has been prey to four potential conquerors—Turk, Roman, Arab, and French, she embodies...the elusiveness of the captive.

While referring to Numidia, Rachid restates this point: "Car les cités qui ont connu trop de sièges n'ont plus le goûût du sommeil, s'attendent toujours à la défaite, ne sauraient être surprises ni vaincues..." (174).

Common to both novels is a continuous shift in time from past to present and from present to past. What Rodrigues has stated about Faulkner holds true for Kateb as well: "the present is being continually invaded and irrupted [sic] by the past." In Nedjma, for instance, Lakhdar's arrest for striking his foreman recalls his first arrest, a year earlier, for his participation in the May 8 manifestation:
Lakhdar se voit dans la prison, avant même d'y arriver, il est en cellule, avec une impression de déjà vécu; le dernier faisceau de lumière, disparu au soleil couchant, fait sentir son absence sur la route devenue grise, étroite; Lakhdar y retrouve l'atmosphère, perdue dans sa mémoire, de la première arrrestation (52).

Another example of this occurs when Rachid returns to his native Constantine after leaving the construction site. There he finds his abandoned home in the midst of a stream of garbage and mud. The ruins of a nearby building bring to mind the initial French invasion. Rachid speaks of Damrémont, one of the French generals who headed the African army in the 1830's: "les décombres d'un quatrième immeuble rasé par l'artillerie de Damrémont, au cours du second assaut qui se termina par les quatre jours de bombardement ... ce fut alors la conquête, maison par maison" (154). Glancing at his watch, Rachid again recalls the past: "'pas loin de sept heures,' pensait Rachid.... L'heure à laquelle se montra le chef des Français, dans les décombres qu'un siècle n'a suffi à déblayer" (155). A few lines further, his thoughts pass to yet another general, in a more recent past: "Quelques immeubles gigantesques, quelques usines anarchiques, et le chômage persistant dans le plus riche des trois départements, dans la ville même 'où de Gaulle vint m'accorder la citoyenneté" (155).

As Mortimer points out, Rachid is reminiscent of a Faulkner character "for he identifies with a world that does not exist, is haunted by a woman he cannot possess, and a murder he will never avenge." In this respect, Rachid and Quentin are closely linked. Like Quentin, Rachid is consumed by time: "Rachid sevré de sa passion, parlant à l'écrivain, n'a plus la moindre consistance, et ses propos s'effritent bien loin des pensées premières dont il n'est plus que le réceptacle éboulé, le coeur et le visage en cendres,
dévorés par une trop vive flambée de temps" (181). Unlike Rachid, however, who finds refuge in the fonduk smoking hashish, Quentin can only escape time through death. Quentin's obsession with the passage of time is more acute. He is conscious of every passing second: "You can be oblivious to the sound for a while, then in a second of ticking it can create in the mind unbroken the long diminishing parade of time you didn't hear" (95).

To Quentin, time is endowed "with ugly and chaotic significance." It is the "reducto absurdum of all human experience" (95). His references to clocks and watches are filled with disdain: "the watch telling its furious lie" (192); "the round stupid assertion of the clock" (143). Quentin recalls his father's words with the fervor of his own assertion: "Because Father said clocks slay time. He said time is dead as long as it is being clicked off by little wheels; only when the clock stops does time come to life" (104). A little later he recalls, "Father said a man is the sum of his misfortunes. One day you'd think misfortune would get tired, but then time is your misfortune Father said" (123).

The sounds of watches, clocks, and chimes are heard throughout Quentin's section. Upon entering the jeweller's shop he can only hear the clocks: "The place was full of ticking, like crickets in September grass, and I could hear a big clock on the wall above his head" (102). Throughout his section Quentin's efforts are devoted to stopping time as symbolized by the breaking of his watch. He breaks the crystal and removes the hands and yet the clock keeps on ticking: "The watch ticked on. I turned the face up, the blank dial with little wheels clicking and clicking behind it, not knowing any better" (99). In his obsession to stop time, Quentin is fascinated with
clocks. As he passes the jeweller's window he tries to avoid looking at the clocks, but the attraction is overwhelming:

...I thought about how, when you don't want to do a thing, your body will try to trick you into doing it, sort of unawares. I could feel the muscles in the back of my neck, and then I could hear my watch ticking away in my pocket and after a while I had all the other sounds shut away, leaving only the watch in my pocket. I turned back up the street, to the window (102).

His greatest concern with the jeweller's watches is to know if any of them is correct. When the jeweller attempts to tell him the time, Quentin says "Don't tell me...please sir. Just tell me if any of them are right" (103).

The jeweller's negative reply is to Quentin a confirmation of his belief that clocks lie, that mechanical time is not true time: "...a dozen different hours and each with the same assertive and contradictory assurance that mine had, without any hands at all" (104).

For Quentin, the past constantly erupts into the present. His entire section is a free association of past and present. An example of this is the incident with the little Italian girl. Quentin calls her "sister" and the entire passage is interwoven with bits of the past. The "little dirty child with eyes like a toy bear's and two patent-leather pig-tails" (144) reminds him of Caddy:

Do you live down this way? She said nothing, she walked beside me, under my elbow sort of, eating. We went on. It was quiet, hardly anyone about getting the odour of honeysuckle all mixed She would have told me not to let me sit there on the steps hearing her door twilight slamming hearing Benjy still crying Supper she would have to come down then getting honeysuckle all mixed up in it We reached the corner (148).

The "she" in the first part of the above passage refers to the little Italian girl; the "she" in the italicized portion refers to Caddy. A little further
in the same section, Quentin says of the little girl: "'You're just a girl. Poor kid... Nothing but a girl. Poor sister'" (157). This is immediately followed by "'We lay in the wet grass panting the rain like cold shot on my back. Do you care now do you do you" (158).

This blending of past and present is even more pronounced in Benjy's section where events are presented with no reference to time. No attempt to relate events is made. Since the events are seen through an idiot's mind, we are outside of time. As Lovrey points out, Benjy has no concept of time. All events occur in an everlasting present. The events of 1898, 1910, and 1928 are all merged into one meaningless time for Benjy. A curiously appropriate description of Benjy's age is symbolically representative of his place outside of time: "he been three years old thirty years" (36). In the present, Luster and Benjy are walking along the fence which surrounds the golf course. As they crawl through a broken place in the fence, Benjy's clothes snag on a nail: "Can't you never crawl through here without snagging on that nail. Caddy uncaught me and we crawled through. Uncle Maury said to not let anybody see us, so we better stoop over, Caddy said. Stoop over, Benjy. Like this, see" (24). The snag on the nail in the present recalls an earlier time when he crawled through the fence with Caddy. "The reader moves from one event to another, sometimes, without warning, across a gap of years, since for Benjy events are related only through some casual and accidental association." Unlike Quentin, who is trapped by the past, Benjy "is locked almost completely into a timeless present." Another example of this blending of past and present is the incident of the swing where Caddy and her daughter, Quentin, become confused in Benjy's mind.
The present is indicated by italics.

Luster came back. Wait, he said. Here.
Don't go over there. Miss Quentin and
her beau in the swing yonder. You come
on this way. Come back here, Benjy.
It was dark under the trees. Dan
wouldn't come. He stayed in the moon-
light. Then I could see the swing and
I began to cry.
Come away from there, Benjy, Luster
said. You know Miss Quentin going to
get mad.
It was two now, and then one in the
swing. Caddy came fast, white in the
darkness (65).

We mentioned earlier that in both novels there is apparently no sense
of future. We must, however, qualify this statement. Whereas Faulkner
describes the end of an era as symbolized by the decline of the Compsons,
Kateb depicts a nation not yet come into being. Therein lies the essential
difference between the two writers. Although both novels portray hopeless
situations, in *Nedjma* there is an undercurrent of future hope throughout.
In *SF*, on the other hand, no such hope exists. The novel ends on a note
of emptiness. Dilsey's presence in the novel, however, would tend to dis-
credit this view. She is, in fact, the only character in *SF* who has an
undistorted view of time.48 But her view of time is based on a simple,
Christian faith: "neither the past nor the future nor the present is
oppressive, because to her they are all aspects of eternity, and her ulti-
mate commitment is to eternity."49 The Compsons, however, have long since
lost their faith.

2. Jugurtha was king of Numidia (160 A.D.-104 B.C.). He fought against the Romans and was defeated by Marius. He perished in prison.


5. Abdelkader (1808-1883) fought the struggle against the French between the years 1832 and 1847. He surrendered to Lamoricière in 1847.

6. Sidi Ahmed is Mourad's father. Thomas Bugeaud organized the conquest of Algeria and vanquished the Moroccan allies at Isly in 1844. This defeat greatly contributed to the fall of Abdelkader.


8. Ibid.

9. Agricola was a Roman general who conquered Great Britain. He was Tacitus's father-in-law and wrote his biography.

10. Tacitus (55-120) was a Latin historian whose style was marked by extreme conciseness.


15Mortimer, p. 152.


18Nedjma, p. 6.


20Sartre, p. 228.


22Lowrey, p. 65.

23Mortimer, p. 141.

24A third class hotel in a ghetto area.


26Sartre, p. 226.

27Sartre, p. 227.


30Brooks, p. 329.

31Brooks, p. 328.

32Lowrey, p. 69.

Lowrey, p. 81.

Lowrey, p. 64.

Lowrey, p. 64.

Mortimer, p. 140.

Mortimer, p. 146.

Louis Juchault de Lamoricière (1806-1865) was a greatly decorated French colonial general in Algeria.

Si Mokhtar.


Mortimer, p. 145.

Rodrigues, p. 65.

Mortimer, p. 136.


Lowrey, p. 69.

Brooks, p. 328.

Brooks, p. 329.

Lowrey, p. 79.

CHAPTER THREE: STRUCTURE

If structure refers to the basic organization of a work of art, the structure of a novel refers to the way it is pieced together, how the various sections are constructed, how it is divided into its diverse parts, and how they contribute to the whole. An investigation into the structure of a work thus becomes a study of its parts and how they are connected.

In *SF* Faulkner chose to divide the novel into four sections, each told from a different point of view. Each section corresponds to a different narrator. Each narrator attempts to tell the story of the Compsons in his own way. In the end, we have four different stories, all related to a common center, Caddy. As Faulkner himself points out, each section was an attempt to retell the same story. Not satisfied with the first four attempts, he added the Appendix in a final effort to explain the Compsons.

In *Nedjma* Kateb has divided his novel into six parts. The same story is retold by four protagonists, Mustapha, Mourad, Rachid, and Lakh达尔. As in *SF*, each of the stories centers on a single character. Each of the six sections is further subdivided into sets of twelve chapters. Each set of twelve chapters reveals a major thrust of the novel. Book I introduces us to the major characters in their present situation, makeshift construction workers. Book II is mainly Lakh达尔's section. We are taken into the past, to the events of May 8, 1945 and Lakh达尔's participation in that manifestation. We are also introduced to Nedjma. Book III contains two sets of twelve chapters. The first set deals with Mourad and the second with Rachid. In the latter section we are introduced to Si Mokhtar, Rachid's elderly companion.
Book IV is also comprised of two sets of twelve chapters. Both sets are dominated by Rachid. Book V begins with Lakhdar's early history and ends with Mustapha's schoolboy experience. Book VI, the final section, is also divided into two sets of twelve chapters. The first set again deals with Mustapha and Lakhdar. It includes extensive excerpts from Mustapha's journal. The last set concludes the novel. We return to the present and to the beginning of the novel.

Both structures, although presented differently, reveal a similar narrative approach. The narrators construct the novel, as it were. What Faulkner has done in four sections, Kateb has done in six. Although four points of view dominate each novel, in *Nedjma*, the same narrator tells his story more than once. Rachid, for example, tells his story once to Mourad and again to a public writer in the *fondouk*. Likewise, Lakhdar tells his story in Book II and again in Books V and VI.

Structure is perhaps the most striking element in both *SF* and *Nedjma*. Both authors describe a number of events through the eyes of four characters. In *SF* the Compson story is retold successively by Benjy, Quentin, Jason, and Dilsy. As Lawrence Thompson suggests, "each of the four parts provides a different aspect, a different view, a different angle of vision, a different reflection of some parts of the story."¹ Similarly in *Nedjma*, Kateb describes a series of events through the eyes of four characters whose attention is generally centered on Nedjma. She is at the very heart of the novel. Yet she "appears only indirectly, seen through the eyes of the men who love her and worship her."² Each of the four characters wishes to possess her. She represents for each some kind of hope. But she eludes them all. To Rachid and Mustapha she signifies salvation.³ She is the unattainable star:
"étoile de sang jaillie du meurtre...qu'aucun époux ne pouvait apprivoiser..." (179). An aura of mystery surrounds her: she is described variously as 
"l'ogresse au sang obscur," (179) "fleur irrespirable," (179) and "la goutte d'eau trouble" (180). To Lakhdar, she is "une femme perpétuellement en fuite...la forme, sensible, l'épine, la chair, le noyau, mais non pas l'âme, non pas l'unité vivante où je pourrais me confondre sans crainte de dissolution..." (247). To Rachid, she is "la gazelle fourvoyée qui pouvait seule m'arracher à l'ombre des cèdres" (182). Conscious of her elusiveness, Rachid would like to transform Nedjma, "stérile et fatale," into Nedjma the mother: "...je préférerais de beaucoup te rejoindre dans une chambre noire, et n'en sortir qu'avec assez d'enfants pour être sûr de te retrouver" (140). To Mustapha, "Nedjma n'est que le pépin du verger, l'avant-goût du déboire, un parfum de citron..." (84). To Rachid, she signifies "un vain espoir d'évasion" (177) and "la Salammbô qui allait donner un sens au supplice" (176). But above all, Nedjma is uncapturable: "Je ne connais personne qui l'ait approchée sans la perdre, et c'est ainsi que se multiplièrent les rivaux..." (177). Elusive yet ever-present, she is "distante, mais sans disparaître, à la façon d'un astre impossible à piller dans sa fulgurante lumière" (138).

Nedjma, "star" in Arabic, is the center of a stellar universe. She is the sun around which the other characters rotate. Maurice Nadeau has extended Kateb's initial metaphor:

Il [Kateb] a construit un univers stellaire. En son centre, il a disposé un soleil: Nedjma, autour duquel gravitent un certain nombre d'étoiles grandes et petites, pourvues elles-mêmes de satellites. Si le soleil est fixe et brille à peu près toujours avec la même intensité,
nous ne la connaissons que par ses reflets sur les astres qui l'entourent et dont le mouvement régulier les approche ou les éloigne périodiquement de sa lumière. Il en va de même, par rapport à eux, de leurs satellites. Et comme ces astres sont prisonniers du même mouvement qui, à l'intervalles fixes, les rend également présents, il s'ensuit dans une espèce de "retour éternel," une confusion complète du passé, du présent et de l'avenir.4

There are many references in the novel to Nedjma as a star or sun: "ma mauvaise étoile," (176) "le crépuscule d'un astre," (177) "étoile de sang jaillie du meurtre," (179) "le rayon dont elle m'avait ébloui," (176) "la mauvaise étoile de notre clan" (188). Each of the four protagonists is captive of the same orbit: "tous projetés comme les étincelles d'un seul et même brasier" (181). Prisoners of the same movement, they are captive of the one they wish to capture: "Puisqu'ils m'aident, je les garde dans ma prison..." (67).

Similarly, Caddy in SE appears only as seen through the eyes of one of the other characters. To Benjy, Caddy is a source of warmth, comfort and love. Since he can only perceive things as sensations, he expresses his joy in terms of smells with which he is familiar: "Caddy smelled like leaves," (26) "Caddy smelled like trees in the rain" (38). To Quentin, Caddy represents the Compson honor. His section is especially concerned with her role in the Compson downfall. As Robert Humphrey points out, "Quentin...even more than Benjy is obsessed; and like Benjy, his sister Candace is the object of his obsession."5 To Jason, she is a source of resentment. He blames her for his failures and justifies the theft of the money intended for his niece Quentin as vengeance for his lost job. "Once a bitch always a bitch," (198) such is Jason's view.

Not only do the two novels have similar centers of attraction, char-
acters who serve as primary focus, but also the structure in both cases can be characterized as circular. This is easily seen in *Nedjma* where the ending repeats almost word for word the beginning. The novel begins and ends with Lakhdar's escape from his prison cell. In their pursuit of *Nedjma*, the four protagonists become locked into a circle of violence from which they cannot escape: "Sur les quatre jeunes héros se referme un cercle de violence que ne permet pas de briser l'oppression coloniale: au sortir du collège, la prison, le chantier, la prison." As Mortimer points out, Lakhdar "escapes from his cell, but not from his prison; the escape is temporary and incomplete. Prison, Kateb tells us time and again, in a myriad of words and symbols, is colonial Algeria." The importance of the circle in Kateb's work has been noted, among others, by Jean Déjeux: "L'image fondamentale chez Kateb est le cercle, au mieux la spirale." *Nedjma*, in fact, progresses by means of spirals. Each set of twelve chapters forms a spiral. Nine spirals form the whole. As Meade points out, the final spiral is a repetition of the initial one:

Voici que les chapitres onze et douze de l'ultime spirale reprennent, presque mot à mot, le début du premier chapitre et la fin du neuvième de la spirale initiale.

Each spiral converges on *Nedjma* "comme les rayons d'une roue vers son essieu." Rachid's memories are described in terms of a circle: "...comme s'il avait conscience de décrire un cercle, sans quitter le point de départ de sorte que le cercle n'était qu'une promenade à contre-coeur qui avait failli le perdre..." (167). As is indicated by Mortimer, "The novel spirals inward reaching a certain climax: *Nedjma*'s return to the Nadhor (the ancestral homeland) and the death of Si Mokhtar."
Whereas the structure of Nedjma is suggestive of a spiral, the structure of SF is more reminiscent of a circle. While the spiral is an ever-changing, open-ended configuration, the circle is a constant, closed figure. In SF, "the wheel [of the action] comes full circle. We began with Ben, in the first section knowing nothing about the Compsons, and we end with Ben, knowing all about the Compsons." The SF develops in terms of enlarging concentric circles: each section moves forward and backward in time "constantly adding meanings." As Brooks points out, "The reader's movement through the book is a progression from murkiness to increasing enlightenment." Each section builds on the preceding one. "Part of the sense of enlightenment comes simply from the fact that we are traversing the same territory in circling movements..." The changing of Benjy's name, for example, is presented twice in the novel. First in Benjy's section:

His name's Benjy now, Caddy said. How come it is, Dilsey said. He aint wore out the name he was born with yet, is he. Benjamin came out of the bible, Caddy said. It's a better name for him than Maury was. How come it is, Dilsey said. Mother says it is, Caddy said. Huh, Dilsey said. Name aint going to help him. Hurt him, neither. Folks dont have no luck, changing names (77).

Then in Quentin's section:

Can he smell that new name they give him? Can he smell bad luck? What he want to worry about luck for? Luck cant do him no hurt. What they change his name for then if aint trying to help his luck? (103).

Another example of this is Miss Quentin's affair with "the man with the red tie." First in Benjy's section:

I kept a telling you to stay away from
there, Luster said. They sat up in the swing, quick. Quentin had her hands on her hair. He had a red tie (67).

Next in Jason's section:

She [Quentin] had dodged out of sight somewhere. Saw me coming and dodged into another alley, running up and down the alleys with a damn show man in a red tie that everybody would look at and think what kind of a damn man would wear a red tie (251).

Finally in Dilsey's section:

He [Jason] believed that both of them would know him on sight, while he'd have to trust to seeing her first, unless the man still wore the red tie. And the fact that he must depend on that red tie seemed to be the sum of the impending disaster...(323).

There are other illustrations of Faulkner's technique of dealing twice or more with the same fact or event. In Benjy's section, for example, we witness a quarrel between Jason and his niece Quentin:

Hush your mouth, Jason, Dilsey said.
She went and put her arm around Quentin.
Sit down, honey, Dilsey said. He ought to be ashamed of hisself, throwing what aint your fault up to you.
"She sulling again, is she." Roskus said.
"Hush your mouth." Dilsey said.
Quentin pushed Dilsey away. She looked at Jason. Her mouth was red. She picked up her glass of water and swung her arm back, looking at Jason. Dilsey caught her arm. They fought. The glass broke on the table, and the water ran into the table. Quentin was running (90).

As reported by Benjy, the incident is confusing. His view is limited to what he saw and heard. In Jason's section, we encounter an extended version of the same quarrel:

I grabbed her by the arm. She dropped
the cup. It broke on the floor and she jerked back, looking at me, but I held her arm. Dilsey got up from her chair.
"You, Jason," she says.
"You turn me loose," Quentin says, "I'll slap you."
"You will, will you?" I says, "You will will you?"
She slapped at me. I caught that hand too and held her like a wildcat.

"Now," I says, "I want to know what you mean, playing out of school and telling your grandmother lies and forging her name on your report and worrying her sick. What do you mean by it?"

"None of your damn business," she says. "You turn me loose." Dilsey came in the door. "You, Jason," she says. "You get out of here, like I told you," I says, not even looking back. "I want to know where you go when you play out of school," I says. "You keep off the streets, or I'd see you. Who do you play out with? Are you hiding out in the woods with one of those damn slick-headed jellybeans? Is that where you go?" "You--you old goddamn!" she says. She fought, but I held her. "You damn old goddamn!" she says. "$I'll show you," I says. "You may can scare an old woman off, but I'll show you who's got hold of you now."
I held her with one hand, then she quit fighting and watched me, her eyes getting wide and black.
"What are you going to do?" she says.
"You wait until I get this belt out and I'll show you," I says, pulling my belt out. Then Dilsey grabbed my arm.
"Jason," she says, "You, Jason! Aint you shamed of yourself" (201-203).

In *Nedjma*, Kateb employs a similar technique. In Book I, for instance, we are told that Lakhdar quarreled with his foreman, Mr. Ernest, and injured him: "Voilà notre ami Lakhdar, qui a réglé son compte à M. Ernest... Pas la première fois qu'un chef d'équipe se fait rosser par un manœuvre..." (12).

Little is revealed about the incident itself. In the beginning of Book II, we find a detailed description of the same quarrel:

-Mais pourquoi vous taisez-vous quand j'arrive?
Alors je suis un imbécile?
-Loin de là, susurre Lakhdar.
M. Ernest frappe Lakhdar à la tête, avec le mètre qu'il a en main.
Le sang.

Les lèvres tachées par la sauce des choux-fleurs, M. Ernest marche vers Lakhdar; cette fois, l'interpellation de sa fille l'ayant élevé aux sommets de l'héroïsme, il jette le mètre dans la tranchée; Lakhdar fait un tour sur lui-même, prend le contremaitre à la gorge, et, d'un coup de tête, lui ouvre l'arcade sourcilière; match nul! disent les sourires involontaires des témoins (49-50).

Another example of what Mortimer refers to as "the double vision of each experience" is the manifestation of May 8, 1945. When Lakhdar is arrested for striking Mr. Ernest, he recalls his earlier arrest following his participation in the May 8 demonstration:

Fallait pas partir. Si j'étais resté au collège, ils ne m'auraient pas arrêté. Je serais encore étudiant, pas manoeuvre, et je ne serais pas enfermé une seconde fois, pour un coup de tête.
Fallait rester au collège, comme disait le chef du district (53).

This event is repeated in Book VI. Here it is placed within a larger historical context:

L'Allemagne a capitulé.
Couples. Brasseries bondées.
Les cloches.
Cérémonie officielle; monument aux morts.
La police se tient à distance.
Contre-manifestation populaire.
Assez de promesses. 1870. 1918. 1945.
Aujourd'hui, 8 mai, est-ce vraiment la victoire?
Les scouts défilent à l'avant, puis les étudiants.
Lakhdar et Mustapha marchent côte à côte.
La foule grossit.
Quatre par quatre.
Aucun passant ne résiste aux banderoles.
Les Cadres sont bousculés.
The hymne commence sur des lèvres d'enfants:
De nos montagnes s'élève
La voix des hommes libres (227).
Thus, both Faulkner and Kateb make similar use of repetition. An event is at first presented briefly and at times obscurely to be expanded and clarified at a later point in the story. As the novel proceeds, the meaning of events becomes clearer. The reader's efforts are rewarded as he reaches the end of the novel.

The reader, in both cases, experiences the same feeling of fragmentation. Referring to _SF_, Lowrey has stated: "The reader receives only bits and pieces of the action as he reads from page to page... He is forced to put the action together again as he goes along by a process which can best be likened to the process which the reader of a detective story must perform."17 Referring to _Nedjma_, Rachid Benouameur has noted: "C'est un roman difficile et déconcertant, voire inextricable, qu'il faut savoir reconstituer soi-même comme les fragments épars d'un miroir brisé."18

It is perhaps relevant at this time to cite what the authors themselves have said about the writing of their respective novels. In an interview with Jean Stein, Faulkner made the following statement about the _SF_: 

I had already begun to tell the story through the eyes of the idiot child, since I felt that it would be more effective as told by someone capable only of knowing what happened, but not why. I saw that I had not told the story that time. I tried to tell it again, the same story through the eyes of another brother. That was still not it. I tried to gather the pieces together and fill in the gaps by making myself the spokesman.19

In a lecture given in Algiers in April, 1967, Kateb described his method in _Nedjma_ in the following manner:

... j'ai commencé tout à fait dans les ténèbres, instinctivement, sans avoir vraiment un plan,
je m'en suis rendu compte plus tard d'ailleurs, j'ai commencé à me rendre compte que mon œuvre décrivait des courbes. Alors, je me suis dit, bien c'est idiot pourquoi alors faut-il qu'il y ait un commencement pour que j'aboutisse à une fin; puisque je m'aperçois que ma pensée tourne sur elle-même, laissons-la tourner.20

Although Robert Penn Warren did not have *Nadjma* in mind when he described the spiral method, it is quite applicable: "...the spiral method...takes the reader over and over the same event from a different altitude, as it were, and a different angle."21

Yet, beyond this similarity of general approach, each novelist develops his own structure as he fits the different pieces of the novel together. In *SF*, Faulkner has devoted one section to each character. Each of the first three sections is presented from a single point of view, that of its narrator. In one section, the story is told as if from an "objective" point of view—what some critics have called an "omniscient" point of view. Of course, there is no such authorial device as "omniscience."22 Still we must grant that the story is the same experience that is told more impersonally. Faulkner is there because, as he said, he tried to tell the story four (even five) different ways. In that sense we can say that Section Four is his most even-handed, dispassionate treatment of the fall of the house of Compson. Although the four sections are distinct, their final meaning stems from their interdependence. *Nadjma*, on the other hand, "is structured upon its leitmotif, the six pointed star."23 As pointed out earlier, the novel is divided into six sections, each of which is further subdivided into chapters. Books I, II, and V contain twelve chapters each, while Books III, IV, and VI contain two sets of twelve chapters each:

"De petits chapitres se dévident, par suites de douze, comme les grains..."
The structure of *Nedjma* seems more complex and intricate than that of *SF*. Within each section, the same events are reviewed successively from several points of view: "Au cours de la narration, Kateb Yacine expose alternativement—et quelquefois simultanément—le point de vue de quatre narrateurs-amis... dont aucun ne saurait être appelé secondaire." Book III, for instance, opens with Mourad's reflections on the rather curious relationship between Rachid and a man at least twice his age, Si Mokhtar. Then Rachid is shown in a room with Mourad to whom he reveals the history of their common ancestry. Finally, Si Mokhtar himself appears during the course of a pseudo-pilgrimage he made with Rachid to Mecca and tells the story of their tribal origins.

The use of multiple narrators is an attempt on the part of Kateb as well as Faulkner to reveal different aspects of the same event. Caddy's wedding, for example, is alluded to three times. In Benjy's section it is described as follows:

I saw them. Then I saw Caddy, with flowers in her hair, and a long veil like shining wind. Caddy Caddy (58).

The same event repeated in Quentin's section becomes:

She ran right out of the mirror, out of the banked scent. Roses. Roses. Mr. and Mrs. Jason Richmond Compson announce the marriage of (96).

A little further in Quentin's section, the event is repeated and expanded:

Only she was running already when I heard it. In the mirror she was running before I knew what it was. That quick, her train caught up over her arm she ran out of the mirror like a cloud, her veil swirling in long glints her heels brittle and fast clutching her dress
onto her shoulder with the other hand, running out of the mirror the smells roses roses the voice that breathed o' er Eden... She ran out of her dress, clutching her bridal, running into the bellowing... (100-101).

Another example of this is Damuddy's funeral. In Benjy's section the first mention of it is made by Frony:

"Is they started the funeral yet."
"What's a funeral." Jason said.
"Didn't mammy tell you not to tell them." Versh said.
"Where they moans." Frony said.
"They moaned two days on Sis Beulah Clay." They moaned at Dilsey's house. Dilsey was moaning. When Dilsey moaned Luster said, Hush, and we hushed, and then I began to cry and Blue howled under the kitchen steps. Then Dilsey stopped and we stopped (52).

A little later in the same section, Caddy climbs up the pear tree to see what is happening in Damuddy's room: "'They're not doing anything in there,' Caddy said. 'Just sitting in chairs and looking!'" (65). In Quentin's section, the event is mentioned only briefly: "Benjy knew it when Damuddy died. He cried. He smell hit. He smell hit" (109). Referring to the same event, Roskus makes the following remark to Dilsey: "They been two, now... Going to be one more. I seen the sign, and you is too" (48).

Still another example of one incident reported from several points of view is Miss Quentin's nightly escapades. In Benjy's section, the description of Quentin climbing out her bedroom window is reported as mere fact:

Here she come, he [Luster] said. Be quiet, now. We went to the window and looked out. It came out of Quentin's window and climbed across into the tree. We watched the tree shaking. The shaking went down the tree, then it came out and we watched it go away across the grass. Then we couldn't see it (92-93).

Earlier, Luster makes a reference to Quentin's promiscuity: "They comes every night she can climb down that tree. I dont keep no track of them" (69).
In Dilsey's section the same event is reported but now in the light of Jason's lost fortune:

"Me and Benjy seed her clamb out de window last night. Didn't us, Benjy?"
"You did?" Dilsey said, looking at him.
"We sees her doin hit ev'y night," Luster said, "Clamb right down dat pear tree" (302).

Likewise in *Nedjma*, Kateb uses shifts in point of view for a similar purpose. At the beginning of the novel, for example, Nedjma goes to the market and Mustapha, who is a porter, carries her basket full of fruits and vegetables. We are given two versions of this event, first through Nedjma's eyes:

Remonter à la terrasse? Trop de curieux...
Trop de connaissances dans les tramways...
Quel maladroit! Les fruits ont failli tomber... Il avait les mains blanches, les ongles sales... Agréable, sans cette taille de chimpanzé... Pas d'ici, évidemment. Chassé par sa famille? Cette façon d'économiser sa barbe... Si Kamel savait que j'ai donné cent francs à un commissaire!... Pourquoi l'ai-je fait au juste? Pour l'éloigner... (67).

Then through Mustapha's eyes:

Elle était revêtue d'une ample cagoule de soie bleu pâle, comme en portent depuis peu les Marocaines émancipées; cagoules grotesques; elles escamotent la poitrine, la taille, les hanches, tombent tout d'une pièce aux chevilles; pour un peu, elles couvriraient les jambelets d'or massif (la cliente en portait un très fin et très lourd)... Elle m'a parlé en français. Désir de couper les ponts en me traitant non seulement comme un commissaire, mais comme un mécréant, à qui l'on signifie qu'on n'a rien de commun avec lui, évitant de lui parler dans la langue maternelle. Pas voulu que je l'accompagne en tramway... Le couffin n'était pas si lourd... J'aurais pu la suivre jusqu'à la villa, si elle ne m'avait vu au moment de descendre; du tramway, je l'ai vue gravir un talus, disparaître; puis mon regard s'est porté au sommet du talus (72).
In Book III, Nedjma's arrival in Constantine is an excellent illustration of Kateb's use of the shift in point of view. Her arrival is at first described from an impersonal point of view: "Elle vint à Constantine sans que Rachid sût comment. Il ne devait jamais le savoir, ni par elle, ni par Si Mokhtar" (104). Rachid describes the same event on the following page: "Elle vint à Constantine je ne sais comment, je ne devais jamais le savoir." This particular shift in point of view serves as a transition between two sets of twelve chapters. One event thus becomes subject to other interpretations. This passage exemplifies what Meade refers to as an "enroulement" or a coiling up of the action. 26 "By substituting a circular time pattern for a linear one, Kateb achieves a unique juxtaposition of past, present, and future." 27 The reader of both novels thus experiences what Lowrey refers to as "suspense in reverse"—instead of wondering what will happen in the future, the reader wonders what has happened in the past and puzzles over making the proper connections." 28 This is due to the fact that the two stories begin at a high point and work backwards. Through a series of flashbacks, the reader gains increasing insight. He is forced into a process of continual re-evaluation of events. 29

Conrad Aiken's description of Faulkner's method in Absalom, Absalom! best summarizes the structure of both SF and Nedjma:

...there is no beginning and no ending properly speaking, and therefore no logical point of entrance: we must just submit, and follow the circling of the author's interest, which turns a light inward towards the center, but every moment from a new angle, a new point of view. The story unfolds, therefore, now in one color of light, now in another, with references backward and forward. 30


10. Meade, p. 150.


17. Lowrey, p. 61.


22 Wayne C. Booth, The Rhetoric of Fiction (The University of Chicago Press, 1961), p. 161. "In short, impersonal narration is really no escape from omniscience—the true author is as 'unnaturally' all-knowing as he ever was."

23 Mortimer, p. 126.


25 Meade, p. 149.

26 Ibid.

27 Mortimer, p. 151.

28 Lowrey, p. 61.

29 Lowrey, pp. 61-62.

CHAPTER FOUR: STYLE

Although style and structure are related matters, they are not indistinguishable. It is at times, however, difficult to dissociate the two. And this is as it should be in a work whose style is organic. As shown in Chapter Three, structure refers to the organization of the novel as a whole, its various parts and their relation to each other. By style, we generally mean that characteristic manner of expression which the writer uses to tell his story. A discussion of style may include many aspects of a work: diction, sentence structure, rhetorical devices, imagery, and rhythmic patterns. For our purposes, we will limit the discussion to diction and imagery as poetic expressions and as they relate to time.

Both novelists began their literary careers as poets, Kateb with Soliloques (1946) and Faulkner with The Marble Faun (1924). Their work as a whole retains a poetic quality. Referring to Faulkner, Leaver has said, "He began as a poet; he is still a poet, a 'maker' with and of words...."¹ Brooks has described him as a "symbolist poet."² His dominant characteristic, according to Leaver, is intensity. Usually characteristic of poetry, intensity is sustained by Faulkner in the novel. Faulkner himself admits being a poet at heart:

I'm a failed poet. Maybe every novelist wants to write poetry first, finds he can't, and then tries the short story, which is the most demanding form after poetry. And failing at that, only then does he take up novel writing.⁴

Similarly Kateb remains a poet within his novel. Nedjma has been described by Georges Joyaux as "a long prose poem."⁵ Edouard Glissant has defined his art as poetic realism.⁶ Maurice Nadeau stresses that he is, above all, a poet.
So technique ne fait pas oublier qu'il est avant tout un poète. Et de la meilleure espèce: pour qui rêve et réalité, histoire et mythe, propos de tous les jours et pensées raffinées sont matériaux également nobles pour crée un langage nouveau...7

In **Nedjma** it is at times difficult to distinguish prose from poetry.

Peut-on chez Kateb, distinguer prose et poésie?
Toute son oeuvre est conçue comme un poème sur plusieurs plans, empruntant l'épaisseur de la durée au roman, la force tragique à la parole théâtrale, se cristallisant dans le poème...8

In a conference in Algiers in April, 1967, Kateb described his early interest in poetry: "À l'âge de douze ans, tout en étant ce qu'on appelle un bon élève, j'ai commencé à me passionner uniquement pour la poésie."9

As a result of his passion for poetry, we find in **Nedjma** passages of beautiful lyricism, a fine awareness of sound, and a sharp sense of imagery. The greater part of Kateb's images are based in nature. Much in the same way that Caddy is associated with the smell of trees or leaves for Benjy and the fragrance of honeysuckle for Quentin in **SF**, Nedjma is associated with the lemon tree. She is at once the sweet fragrance and the bitter fruit: "À douze ans, elle dissimule ses seins douloureux comme des clous, gonflés de l'amère précocité des citrons verts..." (73), "Nedjma n'est que le pépin du verger, l'avant-goût du déboire, un parfum de citron..." (84).

One of the last images we have of Nedjma shows her leaning against a lemon tree in her garden. This description of Nedjma reinforces the idea of the unattainable, the uncapturable. Even the entrance to her villa provides a natural barrier to all potential intruders: "...la villa Nedjma est entourée de résidences qui barrent la route du tramway, au bas d'un talus en pente douce, couvert d'orties..." (65).
The association between Nedjma and the lemon tree, however, is much less intense than that of Caddy and honeysuckle. In SF the smell of honeysuckle which permeates Quentin's section becomes by mere repetition an engulfing, inescapable odor: "...the honeysuckle it had got into my breathing it was on her face and throat like paint her blood pounded against my hand I was leaning on my other arm it began to jerk and jump and I had to pant to get any air at all out of that thick grey honeysuckle" (170). Quentin's attitude toward the fragrance of honeysuckle changes throughout the section: "damn that honeysuckle," (173) "Honeysuckle was the saddest odour of all...," (187) "Sometimes I could put myself to sleep saying that over and over until after the honeysuckle got all mixed up in it the whole thing came to symbolise night and unrest..." (188). As Leaver points out, honeysuckle is one of the four important word motifs in Quentin's section.¹⁰

One motif which is common to both novels is water. In Quentin's section alone it is mentioned forty-eight times.¹¹ In Nedjma many references are made to rivers, baths, and water. The Seybouse and Rhummel Rivers spiral through the novel. Nedjma herself is "la goutte d'eau trouble qui entraîne Rachid hors de son Rocher, l'attirant vers la mer, à Bône..." (180). Through his pursuit of Nedjma, Rachid becomes the shadow of his former self. His decline is described in terms of a drying river:

Rachid n'était plus qu'une ombre sans fusil, sans femme, ne sachant plus que tenir une pipe, pseudo-Rachid issu trop tard de la mort paternelle, comme l'Oued El Kebir ne prolongeant que l'ombre et la sécheresse du Rhummel, sans lui restituer sa violence vaincue... (180).

In Book IV, Chapter IV of Nedjma the water imagery is especially abundant. The chapter is written entirely from Rachid's point of view. He and Si
Hokhtar have removed Nedjma from her husband, Kamel, in an effort to return her to the homeland. Before arriving, they stop to rest. While Nedjma bathes, Rachid notices a Negro observing her from a nearby fig tree. Water, a natural symbol of life, is here described as a guardian of beauty beyond time:

Pourquoi ne pas être restée dans l'eau? Les corps de femmes désirées, comme les dépouilles des vipères et les parfums volatils, ne sont pas fait pour dépérir, pourrir et s'évaporer dans notre atmosphère: fidèles, bocaux et baignoires: c'est là que doivent durer les fleurs, scintiller les écailles et les femmes s'épanouir, loin de l'air et du temps... (138).

Nedjma's bath water becomes sacred. Rachid cannot bear the thought of the used water reaching the Negro who is now asleep under the fig tree:

...allais-je réveiller maintenant le nègre avant que l'eau (l'eau où avait baigne la femme fatale) descendit jusqu'à lui? Ne serais-je pas alors dans la posture d'un amant disant à un intrus: "Elle vient de se baigner, veuillez vous écarter, car cette eau la contient toute, sang et parfum, et je ne puis supporter que cette eau coule sur vous..." (141).

The sacred water becomes "l'eau interdite" (141). The Seybouse River which runs near Guelma and Bône is described during a rare storm:

...la Seybouse miraculeusement engrossée s'y délivre, en averse intempestives de fleuve à l'agonie, vomi par les rivages ingrats qu'il a nourris; extatique, d'un seul et vaste remous, la mer assemblée mord insensiblement dans le fleuve, agonisant jaloux de ses sources, liquifiée dans son lit, capable à jamais de cet ondoiement desesperoqui signifie la passion d'un pays avere d'eau, en qui la rencontre de la Seybouse et de la Méditerranée tient du mirage; l'averse surgit en trombe, dégénère, éternellement avorté; les constellations se noient d'une nuit à l'autre dans l'embrun, subtilisées ainsi que des escadrilles au camouflage vaporeux; porte-avions, tirant des flots bouleversés quelque essence de planète, en dépit des crépitements belliqueux du ressac, l'orage rassemble ses forces, avec l'imprévisible fracas d'un char tombé de gouffre en gouffre; fantôme cramoisi effilochant au vent
d'ouest son hamac, traîne un soleil grimé, calumet sans ardeur s'éteignant dans la bave d'une mer lamentablement vautrée... (66).

The Rhummel River which runs through Constantine is the site of Rachid's happy childhood memories: "Je me souvins de mon aventureuse enfance; vrai; j'étais libre, j'étais heureux dans le lit du Rhummel; une enfance de lézard au bord d'un fleuve évanoui" (138). But it is also the site of his retreat in despair. The balcony of the fondouk overlooks the Rhummel River.

...le balcon semblait un hamac surchargé de silhouettes recueillies sur le lit de mort du fleuve, dans un bouillonnement de pierres tombales désespérément repoussées sous le flot rare du Rhummel aux forces toujours en suspens, ne recevant que de brèves pluies sans promesse, comme une infusion de sang à un vieillard dont les os gisent déjà desséchés... (172).

As Rachid retells his story to the unknown journalist, he is on the balcony of the same fondouk "au-dessus de l'abîme où Constantine contemple son fleuve tari" (172). Another reference to a river is perhaps one of the most revealing:

Rien n'entame l'épaissie colère de l'opprimé; il ne compte pas les années; il ne distingue pas les hommes, ni les chemins; il n'y a qu'un chemin pour lui; c'est le chemin des Romains; celui qui mène à la rivière, au repos, à la mort (199).

Nedjma herself becomes a river: "Nedjma prends alors la forme d'un oued turbulent s'envuyant vers la mer, symbole du drame de l'Algérie en lutte."12

Kaleidoscopic is a term often used by critics of both Faulkner and Kateb. It implies a wide range of color and a richness of texture. According to Beck, Faulkner's style is "the stain of many colors, refracted and shifting in kaleidoscopic suspension."13 Mortimer has described Nedjma as "a mosaic of scenes, fragmented time sequences, flashbacks, dreams, hallucinations like the colors in a kaleidoscope...."14 The variety of lan-
guage found in each novel is chiefly the result of shifts in point of view. Language is adapted to the speaker. In *SF*, Benjy's section is an idiot's view of the Compsons. The story is related in a manner befitting an idiot. "All his mind does is reproduce what it takes in through the physical senses." Consequently, his section is a record of sensory impressions:

She smelled like trees. In the corner it was dark, but I could see the window. I squatted there, holding the slipper. I couldn't see it, but my hands saw the slipper but I couldn't see myself, but my hands could see the slipper, and I squatted there, hearing it getting dark (91).

In Benjy's section, we find frequent references to the smell of trees, Caddy, and firelight, the three things Benjamin loved. "Caddy's head was on Father's shoulder. Her hair was like fire, and little points of fire were in her eyes, and I went and Father lifted me into the chair too, and Caddy held me. She smelled like trees" (91). These symbols "come to dominate not only Benjy's consciousness, but the reader's also." Events are recalled with no attempt at cause and effect for this would be beyond Benjy's possibilities. In his section, words and events are related as he sees them with no value judgment. When Benjy is the "speaker" the sentences are generally simple and straightforward. The vocabulary is simple and very limited.

Our shadows were on the grass. They got to the trees before we did. Mine got there first. Then we got there, and then the shadows were gone. There was a flower in the bottle. I put the other flower in it (73).

In Quentin's section, on the other hand, we have an enlightened yet obsessed character. Repetition is significant and "quite natural to an obsessed mind." In addition to the word motifs already mentioned, honey-suckle and water, there are also door and sister. "Add to this the time motifs--watch, clock, and chimes--and Quentin's conflict is complete."
The difference between the first two sections in *SF* stems from "the fact that Quentin's mind is much more complex than Benjy's." Unlike Benjy, Quentin reasons, imagines, remembers and reviews events and ideas. Consequently, his style is more intricate. The sentence structure and vocabulary are in turn more complex.

I could smell the curves of the river beyond the dusk and I saw the last light supine and tranquil upon tideflats like pieces of broken mirror, then beyond them lights began in the pale clear air, trembling a little like butterflies hovering a long way off. Benjamin the child of. How he used to sit before that mirror. Refuge unfailing in which conflict tempered silenced reconciled. Benjamin the child of mine old age held hostage into Egypt. O Benjamin. Dilsey said it was because Mother was too proud for him. They come into white people's lives like that in sudden sharp black trickles that isolate white facts for an instant in unarguable truth like under a microscope... (188-189).

The first two sections of *SF* are examples of the stream-of-consciousness technique. The effect of each section, however, differs with respect to the narrator. Quentin's section contains many soliloquies. Contrary to Benjy's section, we find in Quentin's section "the tone of communication rather than the tone of self-expression."22

In Jason's section, on the other hand, the technique used is what Humphrey terms "surface soliloquy...with little attempt to present unspoken thoughts." Jason, the cold, calculating, arrogant brother expresses himself in a hurried style, sarcastic in tone, and colored with brooding resentment. To his mother who says, "You are the only one of them [children] that isn't a reproach to me," he replies, "I never had time to be. I never had time to go to Harvard like Quentin or drink myself into the ground like Father. I had to work" (199). In a conversation with his boss, Earl, Jason says, "If you want to make a slave of yourself to your business, it's all
right with me." "I reckon you'll never be a slave to any business," Earl replies. "Not unless it's Jason Compson's business," retorts Jason (228).

Characteristically, Jason is often late. He is late for supper as well as for work. "I went back to the store. It was half past three almost. Damn little time to do anything in, but then I am used to that. I never had to go to Harvard to learn that" (252). His stock market endeavors fail because of his lateness. He learns of a drop in points too late to sell. He attempts to wire his broker only to realize it is one hour after market closing time.

The last section is the most conventional of all the sections. It is rendered by an "omniscient" narrator. The dominant figure is Dilsey. Her fortitude and endurance are contrasted with Jason's defeat. Jason is reduced to "the man sitting quietly behind the wheel of a small car, with his invisible life unravelled out about him like a wornout sock" (329). Throughout the section, Dilsey is engaged in the daily household chores. She lights the fire, prepares breakfast, heats Mrs. Compson's hot water bottle, and contends with her constant whining.

Kateb is also noted for the richness of his style. "Stylistic variations from condensed, stark prose to long interior monologues" characterize his style. Each of the main characters has his own style of expression. Dreamy and at times hallucinatory, Rachid "conjures up [ghosts] in the dark solitude of his prisoner's cell."25

Et le vieux Keblout légendaire apparut en rêve à Rachid; dans sa cellule de déserteur, Rachid songeait à autre chose qu'à son procès; le tribunal qu'il redoutait n'était ni celui de Dieu ni celui des Français; et le vieux Keblout légendaire apparut une nuit dans la cellule, avec des moustaches et des yeux de tigre, une trique à la main; la tribu se rassembla peu à peu dans la cellule; on se serra au coude à coude, mais nul n'osait s'approcher de Keblout (134).
In contrast to Rachid's "ephemeral dreams in smoke-filled rooms," Mustapha's style is at times "precise, clipped, journalistic." The scene of his arrest and subsequent torture exemplifies this particular style.

Mustapha's style, however, is more often rich in imagery. It is elaborate and involved. An example of this style is a sentence in his journal which begins on page 185 and ends on page 187. This sample will characterize the entire passage:

Les charmes de Nedjma, filtrés dans la solitude, l'avaient elle-même ligotée, réduite à la contemplation de sa beauté captive, au scepticisme et à la cruauté devant la morne adulation de ses gardiens, n'ayant que ses jeux taciturnes, son goût de l'ombre et des rêves jaloux, bactracienne pleine de cris nocturnes, disparue au premier rayon de chaleur, grenouille au bord de l'équation, principe d'électricité fait pour allumer tous les maux, après avoir brillé, crié, sauté à la face du monde... (185).

As for Lakhdar, he is often ironic. On his arrival in Bône, he is taken in by his aunt Lella Fatma, Nedjma's adoptive mother. He is given Kamel and Nedjma's room. As he lies in bed, he thinks:

Je suis fou. L'argent et la beauté. Un bijou pareil, je l'attacherais à mon lit. Il a au moins cent cravates... Qu'est-ce que j'ai, à ronronner comme un Don Juan hispano-mauresque! Rustre, timide! Le notaire achèvera de m'étouffer; je préfère vendre des haricots de mer... (239).
The "omniscient" narrator also varies his style according to the effect desired. In such transitional chapters as Book IV, Chapter I 2 and Book VI, Chapter VIII 2, the tone is objective, informative. 27 The latter is a recapitulation of Lakhdar's incident with his foreman with an emphasis on the town's view.

Lakhdar est en prison; la bagarre a scandalisé l'ensemble du corps administratif, ainsi que la population entière, sans distinction de race ni de religion; l'avis général est que les étrangers exagèrent; pareille histoire à sa première journée de travail suffit à la condamnation de Lakhdar par tous les villageois... (252).

The narrator is often descriptive, as in the following view of Constantine:

Ecrasante de près comme de loin—Constantine aux camouflage tenaces, tantôt crevasse de fleuve en pénitence, tantôt gratte-ciel solitaire au casque noir soulevé vers l'abîme; rocher surpris par l'invasion de fer, d'asphalte, de béton, de spectres aux liens tendus jusqu'aux cimes du silence, encerclé entre les quatre ponts et les deux gares, sillonné par l'énorme ascenseur entre le gouffre et la piscine, assailli à la lisière de la forêt, battu en brèche, terrassé jusqu'à l'esplanade où se détache la perspective des Hauts Plateaux... (152-153).

Time is a determinant factor in the styles of both Faulkner and Kateb. The emphasis each novelist places on the past's impact on the present is of utmost importance. As Hoffman points out, Faulkner's style is a direct result of his concern with time:

...the question of time, Faulkner's major concern to show dramatically the pressure of the past upon the present moment, also required a compressed language and an elaborate syntax; the character often thought in terms of a complex of "was" and "is," and the burden of memory not infrequently made progress in time almost impossible, with the result that the style revealed a new kind of temporal suspension. 28

This idea of suspension was first suggested by one of Faulkner's most ardent
admirers and critics, Conrad Aiken. Aiken describes Faulkner's method as deliberately withhold meaning, of progressive and partial and delayed disclosure...with one express purpose; and that is simply to keep the form—and the idea—fluid and unfinished, still in motion, as it were, and unknown, until the dropping into place of the very last syllable.29

This method explains much of the reader's difficulty with Faulkner upon first reading. More so than with most authors, an initial sentence, paragraph or even an entire section of the novel is usually incomprehensible outside its context. This is perhaps why Aiken suggests that the first fifty pages of a Faulkner novel are always the most difficult.30 Only at the end of the novel does the beginning fall into place.

The achievement of perspective in retrospect holds true for Néjma as well. The ending is meaningful only because it is a repetition of the beginning. The repetition of the scene makes it comprehensible in its deepest significance: it has happened before and will occur again. The elements which make up this circle of events are contained in the opening chapter of the novel: cellule, couteau, and chantier. The four characters wander in and out of jail and from one construction site to another. The knife is simply a symbol of their aggression. Claude Meade suggests that there are three key words in the novel: couteau, prison, and Néjma.31 They recur with such frequency as to serve as leitmotif. To the best of our knowledge, couteau is used twenty-seven times, prison and its synonyms, cellule and bagne, thirty-four times, and Néjma 154 times. The characters in Néjma strive for an ideal. "Cet idéal [Néjma] ne s'affirmera pas sans souffrance ('prison'), sans audace ('couteau')."32

The image of a construction site (chantier) is essential to an under-
standing of Medjma. In an interview Kateb once stated that like Algeria, his work is at once in a state of ruin and of construction:

Je crois bien, en effet, que je suis l'homme d'un seul livre. À l'origine, c'était un poème, qui s'est transformé en romans et en pièces de théâtre, mais c'est toujours la même œuvre que je laisserai certainement comme je l'ai commencée, c'est-à-dire à la fois à l'état de ruine et à l'état de chantier, exactement comme l'Algérie est encore à la fois une ruine et un chantier. On ne peut pas finir un livre comme on finit un objet. On sent bien au fond de soi-même que le travail n'est pas fini. L'Algérie n'a pas fini de venir au monde.\(^5\)

This idea is reinforced by references in Medjma itself. Rachid imagines Si Mokhtar speaking to him in his prison cell: "...nous ne sommes pas une nation, pas encore...nous ne sommes que des tribus décimées" (128).

Referring to Algeria later in the novel, Rachid re-echoes Kateb's phrase: "ce pays n'est pas encore venu au monde" (183). If indeed Kateb attempted "to create a total picture, a fresco of colonialism,"\(^3\) he succeeded in showing that colonial Algeria or "l'Algérie en lutte\(^5\) is in a state of suspension. It is divided and thus arrested in time and motion.

This suspension in time results in what has been termed a "suspended style."\(^3\) The term frequently encountered in Faulkner criticism denotes a "state of flux or suspension."\(^3\) Contributing to this impression is Faulkner's use of oxymorons. Combining contradictory terms of "motion and immobility,"\(^3\) we encounter in SF such phrases as "my insides would move, sitting still. Moving sitting still" (107). Similarly, motion is described "without progress."\(^3\)

Beneath the sag of the buggy the hooves neatly rapid like the motions of a lady doing embroidery, diminishing without progress like a figure on a treadmill being drawn rapidly offstage (143).
On the following page, the little Italian girl's eyes are described as "two currants floating motionless in a cup of weak coffee" (144). Likewise in *Nedjma* we encounter the use of oxymorons. The early rising laborers on their way to work on a cold and humid morning are described as "ramassées dans leurs burnous, ils font résonner leurs cannes à l'unisson, avec un art nuancé de rage et de torpeur" (24). Other examples of "motion and immobility" are "les grelots impatients [des calèches] produisent une impression de désœuvrement," (70) "nid de guêpes désertique et grouillant" (152). In the same manner, a minor character is depicted as "fraîche et fanée au sortir du bain" (113).

Both Faulkner and Kateb create a language which serves the realities they create. They create words in an effort to express an idea, a character, or a mood for which the usual language is inadequate. A characteristic common to both novels is the creation of fused or compounded words. In *SF* they are abundant: *weedchoked, cowface, sunflecks, funnypaper, hogwallow, girl-voices, tideflats, stair-railing, jaw-angle, back-looking, flac-soled, kimono-winced, sitter-a-round.* In *Nedjma* they are less frequent and less colorful: *les sans-profession, les sans-domicile, les sans-papiers, pseudo-Rachid, pseudo-pèlerinage, pseudo-Rhummel, arabo-berbère.* This is due, in part, to the nature of the French language which does not easily create new words.

"Faulkner invades the dictionary like a conqueror; and what he cannot find to suit his taste he fuses together, compounds, or creates."41 Such words as unvirgin, unimpatient, surfaceward, and adulant result. This last word is used in the following context: "The wet oars winking him along in bright winks and female palms. Adulant. Adulant if not a husband he'd ignore God" (130). It is perhaps modeled on the dictionary entry *adulatory* but used for its more pleasing sound. In *SF* we also find a profusion of
adjectives ending in less: inflectionless, motionless, hairless, lifeless, hopeless, grassless, paintless, voiceless, eyeless, tongueless, timeless, tuneless, meaningless. The effect of these negative adjectives is a simultaneous affirmation and negation. The positive and negative aspects are combined in the one word. That which is meaningless is only without meaning because it once had meaning. Therefore, the reader is given options and yet is asked not to choose. He must suspend judgment.

Although his work has demonstrated a mastery of the French language, Kateb is writing in a language which is not his own. This is a tribute to his extraordinary talent. The insufficiencies of the French language to express an Algerian situation are compensated by the use of Arabic words: fondouk, oukil, aiouah, medersa, Mouloud, muezzin, muphti, burnous, haschich, Allah, fellah, Ramadhan, Fatiha, Ulémas, hadj, smala, souks, Cadi, gnaouia, Tolbas, sambouk, rials, Aïd, oued, Cheikh, fez, Agha. While Kateb achieves a flavor of local color by the use of Arabic words, Faulkner does so by the use of such words as gabfest, bluegum, and Damuddy. Moreover, the particular Southern flavor is enhanced by the faithful rendering of Southern idiom and rhythms.

"Rev'un Shegog gwine preach today," Frony said. "Is?" Dilsey said. "Who him?"
"He fum Saint Looey," Frony said. "Dat big preacher."
"Huh," Dilsey said, "Whut dey needs is a man kin put de fear of God into dese here triflin young niggers."

Common to both novelists as well is a tendency to select words for their "tone coloring." Their concern for sound as well as meaning can
pe demonstrated by the wealth of alliteration found in both novels. In SF
we find the following phrases: "Sunlight slanted into it, sparse and eager.
Yellow butterflies flickered along the shade like flecks of sun" (141). The
consonance of the s-sounds in sunlight, slanted, and sparse contributes to
the overall picture of sunlight as an intruder. To Quentin's obsessed mind,
it is a measure of advancing time. The consonance of the fl-sounds in
butterflies, flickered, and flecks contributes sound value to an already vivid
visual image. The consonance of the r-sounds in squatting, sloughed, stinking,
surfaceward, surface, stove and of the p-sounds in pocking and pattering in
the following sentence serves a similar purpose: "and the water building
and building up the squatting back the sloughed mud stinking surfaceward
pocking the pattering surface like grease on a hot stove" (157).

In Nedjma we encounter the same awareness of and concern for the value
of sound: "C'est toujours Nedjma que je distingue, sans méconnaître la
vierge: Nedjma rieuse à la ruée de la vague, gardienne d'un verger, présent
disparu, et je m'endors évaporé..." (82). The consonance of the r-sounds in
rieuse and ruée and of the r-sounds in vierge, vague, verger, and évaporé
suggests an ear well attuned to the melody of sound. The following passage
is another example of Kateb's manipulation of sound:

Puis l'Algérie elle-même est devenue...
Devenue traîtreusement une mouche.
Mais les fourmis, les fourmis rouges.
Les fourmis rouges venaient à la rescousse (54).

The assonance of the ou-sounds in mouche, fourmis, rouges, and rescousse
is reinforced by the consonance of the r-sounds in nearly the same words,
fourmis, rouges, rescousse.
In addition to the above-mentioned passage, other segments of the novel are written as lines of poetry. An example of this is the description of the prison scene following the events of May 8, 1945. The prisoners awaiting interrogation are intimidated by the presence of already tortured, bruised, and broken bodies. Some are called but never return.

Ils étaient maintenant dix-neuf dans la salle.
Le coiffeur Si Khelifa hurlait toujours.
La lourde porte s’était ouverte quatre fois.
Tayeb n’était pas revenu. On fusillait tout près.
Tout près de la prison. Tout près de la prison.
Dans une verte prairie. Tout près de la gendarmerie.
Mustapha s’ébrouait dans une mare d’eau noire.
Un cultivateur aux yeux bleus sanglotait.
Lakhdar était monté sur le seau vide.
Lakhdar présentait sa narine aux barreaux.
Comme un veau.
Heureux de s’appuyer à des barreaux (57-58).

A poetic presence characterizes the styles of both Kateb and Faulkner. Since they both began their careers as poets, this is understandable. Their particular poetic quality emerges, however, from their unwillingness to be bound by the limits of language. They, as all writers, are limited by their instrument of expression. However, they appear to transcend such limitations. They create worlds for which they also create a new language. The realities they construct recreate their own language.


3 Leaver, p. 209.


10 Leaver, p. 207.

11 Ibid.


16 Appendix to SF, p. 19.

17 Robert Humphrey, "The Form and Function of Stream of Consciousness in

18 Ibid.

19 Leaver, p. 207.

20 Bowling, p. 553.

21 Ibid.

22 Ibid.

23 Humphrey, p. 40.

24 Mortimer, p. 142.

25 Ibid.

26 Ibid.

27 I and VIII refer to the second set of twelve chapters within each Book.

28 Frederick J. Hoffman, Introduction to Three Decades, p. 45.


30 Aiken, p. 135.

31 Meade, p. 150.

32 Meade, p. 151.


34 Mortimer, p. 122.

35 Meade, p. 150.


38 Ibid.

39 Ibid.

40 Italics mine.


42 Riedel, p. 472.

43 Riedel, p. 474.
CONCLUSION

In this study, we have attempted to draw parallels between two novels, Faulkner's _SF_ and Kateb's _Nedjma_. More specifically, we have emphasized the aspects of structure and style as they relate to time. As we have shown, time is a major consideration in both novels. Both Faulkner and Kateb have chosen to disregard chronology, not out of mere fancy, but because of their firm belief in the importance of the past's impact on the present. Thus, we encounter in both novels a continuous shift from past to present and from present to past. The resulting structure is circular rather than linear.

The use of multiple narrators contributes considerably to this effect. In both novels, one story is told by four narrators. Each narrator reviews the same set of events from his particular point of view. In addition, both novels have similar centers of attraction, characters who serve as primary focus. Both Caddy and Nedjma appear only as seen through the eyes of the other protagonists.

The kaleidoscopic variety of style characteristic of both Faulkner and Kateb is a direct consequence of the use of multiple narrators. Language is adapted to the point of view. Each narrator has a distinctive style. Moreover, there is a general effect of suspension achieved stylistically by the use of negative adjectives and oxymorons. Both novelists make use of fused or compounded words; they, in fact, create new words. They thus adapt their respective languages to their particular end. Kateb adds a touch of local color by the inclusion of occasional Arabic words, while Faulkner maintains the Southern flavor by the faithful rendering of Southern idiom and rhythms.
SELECTED LIST OF WORKS CONSULATED


Alger Républicain (17-18 Mars 1963), 2.


Djaider, M., Nekkouri K. "Kateb Yacine délie la parole," El Moudjahid Cultural (4 Avril 1975), N° 156, 8-10 (interview).


Le Figaro Littéraire (2 Février 1967), 14.


Kahn, Jean François. "Les Algériens sont à la recherche d'un théâtre à la fois national et populaire," Le Monde (20 Février 1964), 14.


La République (7 Février 1970), III.


APPENDIX

Translations of French passages cited in our text:

p.4
This is how I discovered the tragic truth about myself and others. These reflections influenced my later poetry. Retrospectively, those days were the very best of my life. I discovered the two things which are very dear to me: poetry and revolution.

p.4
I believe I would have remained an obscure poet if it had not been for the manifestation of May 8, 1945. It is in prison that I discovered the people. There, I discovered my characters.

p.5
He is someone who does not claim to use his verb to enslave men and to tell them how to live, but rather, he is someone who heralds freedom, a freedom which is, in fact, bothersome. The real message of the poet is to help the reader escape the limitations which were forced upon him.

p.6
I believe it is no longer in France that one will find the best examples of the novel, but rather in Faulkner. One must read Faulkner in order to understand the significance of modern literature.

p.15
Rachid did not want to speak of it anymore. As he grew accustomed to the fondouk, he would hardly speak to anyone; his look became misty and somber, and his ribs became apparent beneath his old soldier's shirt. Day by day he grew thinner.

p.15-16
Are we going to continue to be errand boys or be satisfied with a liberal profession in order to join the ranks of the privileged ones? Can we aspire to a better life? It is common knowledge that a Moslem who joins the air force will only be allowed to sweep cigarette butts; and if he ever becomes an officer, however brilliant, he will attain the rank of colonel only to serve as a recruiting officer for fellow Moslems.

p.16
There is a world, not hers, not mine, not even ours, but simply a world which is indifferent to our ephemeral existence.

p.16-17
I left with the pamphlets. I buried them in the river.
I drew a plan in the sand...
A plan of future manifestation.
If they gave me this river, I would fight.
I would fight with sand and water.
Fresh water and hot sand.
I would fight.
I was determined. I could see far ahead. Very far ahead.

...and it will finally be the tree of the nation taking
roots in the tribal sepulcher beneath the cloud finally
deprived of blood too often spilt.

It would suffice to remember our ancestors and recall
the glorious era; to understand the victory which eluded
Jugurtha, the indestructible seed of a nation caught
between two continents.

The land, for example, was lost in the struggle against
the French; Mourad's great grandfather fought under
Abdelkader's banner, and was thus exposed to the reprisals
of Bugeaud who distributed the most beautiful domains to
the European colonists. The cash, on the other hand, was
dissipated by Sidi Ahmed who practiced the charleston and
polygamy.

The State obtained this land by confiscating it from religious,
public, and tribal groups.

The rhythm and construction of the novel result from a purely
Arabic attitude towards time. While the European mind works
in a linear fashion, the Arab mind evolves in a rather cir-
cular manner.

Here I am a prisoner in Lambèse where the Romans have been
replaced by the Corsicans; these Corsicans are now our prison
guards while we remain the eternal slaves in the same prison,
near the ancient lion pit.

Constantine and Bône, the two cities which dominated ancient
Numidia are today reduced to mere French states...Two spirits
fighting for the abdicated power of the Numidians. Constantine
struggling for Cirta and Bône for Hippone as if the commitment
of the past, fixed in an apparently lost battle, constitutes
a unique trial for future champions...

It is enough for tonight, Rachid said, as he got up. All of
this is a malediction from God or the old bandit...I can no
longer retrace the causes for I am involved in too many deaths,
too many deaths.
Lakhdar sees himself in the prison before even getting there. He is in the cell and has the impression of having been there before; the last glimmer of light, disappearing with the setting sun, darkens the narrow road. This setting recalls his first arrest.

...the ruins of a fourth building leveled by the artillery of Damremont during the second assault which culminated in four days of bombings. Such was the conquest, house by house.

Rachid, deprived of his passion, no longer has the least substance. He is no longer coherent, his heart and face in ashes, as if devoured by the too bright blaze of time.

...a woman perpetually fleeting...the sensitive shape, the thorn, the flesh, the pit, but not the soul to which I could give myself with no fear of dissolving...

He has constructed a stellar universe. In its center, he has placed a sun: Nedjma, around which revolve a certain number of stars, large and small, which, in turn, have their own satellites. If the sun is fixed and shines nearly always with the same intensity, we know her only through her reflections on the stars which surround her and whose regular movement brings them periodically closer or farther from her light. The same is true for the stars in regards to their satellites. And since these stars are prisoners of the same movement which, at fixed intervals, renders them equally present, there follows a kind of eternal return, a complete confusion of past, present and future.

Chapters eleven and twelve of the ultimate spiral reiterate, practically word for word the beginning of the first and the end of the ninth chapter of the initial spiral.

But why do you stop talking when I arrive? So you take me for an idiot? Far from that, whispers Lakhdar. Mr. Ernest strikes Lakhdar on the head with the meter he held in his hand. Blood. His lips stained from the cauliflower casse-role, Mr. Ernest walks towards Lakhdar. This time, encouraged by his daughter's passage, Ernest throws the meter into the ditch; Lakhdar turns around, grabs the foreman by the throat, and with one swing of the head, bursts his eyebrow. Now, we are even, say the involuntary smiles of the witnesses.

Should not have left. If I had stayed in school, they would not have arrested me. I would still be a student and not a
construction worker, and I would not be locked up a second time for a loss of temper. Should have stayed in school as the superintendent said.

Germany has capitulated.
Couples. Packed pubs.
Bells.
Official ceremony; monument to the dead.
The police is off at a distance.
A popular counter-manifestation.
Today, May 8, is it really a victory?
The boy scouts march in front, followed by the students.
Lakhdar and Mustapha walk side by side.
The crowd multiplies.
Four by four.
No passerby resists the banners.
The leaders of the manifestation are pushed around.
The national anthem is sung by the children:
From our mountains arises
The voice of free men.

I started completely in the dark, instinctively, without really having a plan; in fact, I only realized this later. I came to realize that my work described curves. So I told myself, this is silly, why must there be a beginning in order to come to an end; since I see that my thought turns upon itself, let it turn.

Return to the terrace? Too many curious eyes... Too many acquaintances in the streetcars... How clumsy he was... The fruits nearly fell... His hands were white, his nails dirty... Pleasant, if it were not for his chimpanzee size... Not from here evidently. Disowned by his family? If Kamel knew I gave one hundred francs to a porter!... Why did I do it, in fact? To be rid of him...

She wore a loose-fitting robe of pale blue silk, like those worn by recently emancipated Moroccan women; grotesque robes; They conceal the bust, the waist, and the hips and hang straight to the ankles; they nearly cover the leg rings of massive gold (my client wore some which were both very thin and very heavy)...
She spoke to me in French. In order to keep her distance, she treated me not only as a porter, but also as a villain. She wanted to make it perfectly clear that there was no common ground between us and thus avoided our mother tongue. Did not want me to accompany her on the streetcar... The basket was not so heavy... I could have followed her to the villa had she not seen me when the streetcar stopped; from the streetcar, I
saw her ascend a slope and disappear; then my eyes turned to the top of the slope.

His technique does not let us forget that he is, above all, a poet. And the very best of poets: for whom dream and reality, history and myth, everyday conversations and refined thoughts are equally noble material for the creation of a new language...

Can we distinguish prose from poetry in Kateb? All his work is conceived like a poem on several levels, borrowing the length from the novel, the tragic force from the theater, and crystallizing itself in the poem...

Rachid was nothing more than a shadow without a gun, without a woman, knowing only how to hold a pipe, a pseudo-Rachid, born too late from his father's death, like the River El-Kebir prolonging only the shadow and the dryness of the Rhummel River without restoring its vanquished violence...

Why not have stayed in the water? The bodies of desirable women, like the slough of vipers and volatile perfumes, are not made to decay, rot or evaporate in the air: vials, jars and baths: it is there that flowers should endure, scales twinkle and women bloom, far from the air and time...

...was I now to awaken the Negro before the water (the water in which the femme fatale had bathed) reached him? Would I not then be in the position of a lover saying to an intruder: she just bathed, please move away, for this water contains her all, blood and perfume, and I cannot bear to see this water run over you...

The Seybouse River miraculously flows between arid and ungrateful shores. With a single and vast eddy, the darkened sea, jealous of its source, stops the agonising river...In this barren country, the meeting of the Seybouse and the Mediterranean sea is somewhat of a miracle. At times, however, rare rainstorms transform this otherwise dry river into a gushing monster whose deafening roar, reminiscent of an advancing squadron of tanks, dies suddenly into the indifferent sea.

The balcony, jammed with idle shadows, overlooks the almost waterless Rhummel River which is kept flowing only by an occasional rain.

Nothing shatters the anger of the oppressed; indifferent to time, he is incapable of distinguishing men or paths; for him, there is only one path, the path of the Romans, the one which leads to the river and to death.
And the old legendary Keblout appeared in a dream to Rachid; in his cell, Rachid was thinking of other things besides his trial; the court he feared was neither God's nor that of the French. And the old legendary Keblout appeared one night in Rachid's cell with a stick in his hand. The tribe assembled within the cell, but no one dared approach Keblout.

I am crazy. Money and beauty. I would fasten such a jewel to my bed. He must have at least one hundred ties. Why am I obliged to whisper like a Moorish Don Juan.

Lakhdar is in jail; the fight scandalized the administration as well as the entire population, regardless of race or religion. The general consensus was that these strangers exaggerate. Such an incident the first day on the job was enough to condemn Lakhdar in the eyes of all the villagers.

Constantine, built on a cliff, majestically overlooks the abyss formed by the Rhummel River. Once a savage mountain, it has now been overtaken by an invasion of steel, asphalt and concrete, encircled by four bridges and two train stations, furrowed by an enormous elevator between the abyss and the pool, subdued at the edge of the forest, defeated in its very heart...

I believe I am a man of only one book. In the beginning, it was a poem which was transformed into novels and plays, but it always remained the same work which I will leave as I began it, that is, at once in a state of ruin and in a state of construction, exactly as Algeria is at once in ruin and in construction. One cannot finish a book as one finishes an object. One feels deep down that the work is not done. Algeria has not yet come into being.

Then Algeria itself became
Became treacherously a fly
But the ants, the red ants
The red ants came to the rescue.

They were now nineteen in the room.
The Barber Si Khelifa still screamed.
The heavy door opened four times.
Tayeb did not return. People were shot close by.
Next to the prison. Next to the prison.
In a green field. Next to the barracks.
Mustapha washed himself in a puddle of black water.
A blue-eyed farmer was sobbing.
Lakhdar climbed on the empty bucket.
Lakhdar put his nostril against the window bars.
Like a calf.
Lakhdar was happy. Happy for his nostril. Happy.
Happy to lean against the window bars.