

The Sense of National Belonging and Identity in Selected Works of Nikos Kazantzakis, Kamala Markandya, and Ahlam Mosteghanemi

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The feeling that a new start ought to be made in politics, society, or literature, is always associated with worldwide wars, national catastrophes, or any other mishaps which were haunted by deep-rooted memories of fear, anger, or sickening. The results or consequences could begin to transform their experience into social, political, and literary aspects of everyday life interactions. What of great concern in the present study lies in tracing the line of development of the national sense of belonging in the works of three conspicuous writers: Kazantzakis, Markandya, and Mosteghanemi. Chronologically, their works extended over a long period of time that starts from 1920s up to the present time. Each writer was driven by a different motive or point of view to visualize her/his national sense of belonging.

The main goal of this study is to discuss how literature represents the relationship of national identity first within the context; at the same time, literature also played an important role in constructing national identity.

Nikos Kazantzakis, the child of a military father and an intellectual mother, tried hard to identify with the concept of "being colonised, of existing in exile, of living in diaspora."¹ Kazantzakis succeeded in popularizing Greek culture in North America and in Europe with his acclaimed novel, *Zorba the Greek*.² Kazantzakis functioned as a representative of modernist literature. He was an exponent of modernism in Greece.³

Kamala Markandya is a pioneer member of the Indian diaspora, whose strength as a novelist comes from her sensitive creation of individual characters and situations, which are simultaneously representative of a larger collective. Cross-cultural and inter-racial conflicts are the recurring themes in her writing. She dealt with different predicaments of identity. The identity crisis arose out of political background, as struggle for independence in India entered a violent phase.⁴

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In fact, Markandaya's sense of national belonging and identity can be shown clearly by the following quotation: "She has visited India frequently ... she claims that her long residence in England and self-chosen role as an outsider give her more objectivity and allow her to examine without prejudice the society, customs, and character of her native land." ⁵ India's life is in her villages; they are her calmness and *Nectar in a Sieve* is written from that heart.⁶

In the post- independence period, an important change occurred as Algerian literature focused on representing the reality of the nation. In this way, struggle bloodshed dominated narratives, dating from the early 1990s. Algerian literature became known nationally and more importantly, internationally recognized, or literally put on the map for not shying away from describing the moments in recent Algerian history, in addition to discussing controversial aspects of its political system and society.⁷ To express sense of national belonging, Mosteghanemi uses in *Memory in the Flesh*, "women as metaphors for the nation and women's bodies as sites of national struggle."⁸

Kazantzakis wrote many works, as an original writer. He became famous by his novels, fruit of his mature creation, but he also wrote many other genres. His own life was a novel, an endless philosophical search, a travel in existence.⁹

Although Kazantzakis left Crete as a young man, he returned to his homeland constantly in his writings. Several of his novels deal with the history and culture of his own country, and the mystical relationship between man and God. In 1957, he lost the Nobel Prize by a single vote to the French writer Albert Camus.¹⁰

Kazantzakis wrote passionately about ethnic strife in his homeland and worked to create a rebirth of democracy in Crete, all the while crafting several novels including *Zorba the Greek*. Once a college student in search of himself, Kazantzakis became one of the leading authors and activists of the twentieth century, he not just discovered a career, he discovered a large role in the world.¹¹

Kazantzakis is perhaps best known for his widely translated novels. They include *Zorba the Greek*, 1946, a portrayal of a passionate lover of life and poor-man's philosophy, *The Greek Passion* in an English translation, 1954, or *Christ Recrucified*. Motion pictures based on his works include *He Who Must Die*, 1958, from *The Greek Passion*, *Zorba the Greek* 1964, and *The Last Temptation of the Christ* 1988.¹²

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Kazantzakis died on Oct, 26, 1957. He was buried in the town of his birth. A plain wooden cross marks his grave with the epitaph he had requested: " I hope for nothing...I fear nothing ...I am free."¹³

Kamala Markandaya (1924- May 16, 2004) was a pseudonym used by Kamala Purnaiya Taylor, an Indian novelist and journalist. After India declared its independence, Markandaya moved to Britain, though she labeled herself an Indian expatriate long afterwards.¹⁴

Known for writing about culture clash between Indian urban and rural societies, Markandaya's first published novel, *Nectar in a Sieve*, was a best seller and cited as an American Library Association Notable Book in 1955.¹⁵

Kamala Markandaya belonged to that pioneering group of Indian women writers who made their mark not just through their subject matter, but also through their fluid, polished literary style.¹⁶ *Nectar in a Sieve* depiction of rural India and the suffering of farmers made it popular in the west. This was followed by other fiction that dramatized the Quit India movement in 1942, the clash between east and west and the tragedy that resulted from it, or the problems facing ordinary middle-class Indians making a living, finding inner peace, coping with modern technology and its effects on the poor.¹⁷ She was a pioneer member of the Indian diaspora, who occupied an outstanding place among the Indian women novelists writing in English. In a wider context, she comes under the umbrella of post-colonial writers.¹⁸ Her strength as a novelist comes from her sensitive creation of individual characters and situations. She deals with different predicaments of identity.¹⁹

Many Indian novelists in English knew personally the exclusiveness of identity, for, having chosen to write in a second language, they became very sensitive to the precariousness of bi-cultural identities. Kamala Markandaya was respected by many for her outspoken voice among the Indian people and had often been credited by many for bringing recognition to Indian literature.²⁰ Charles Larson of American University in Washington wrote: "Most Americans' perception of India came through Kamala Markandaya; she helped forge the image of India for American readers in schools and book clubs."²¹ After Markandaya's husband died in 1986, she made frequent trips to India, where she continued to write. On May 16, 2004, Kamala Markandaya died in London at the age of 79, due to kidney failure. Although she is no longer alive, her voice will always be heard through her novels. Through her novels, Markandaya brings to light

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the complication of post-colonial and traditional Indian social hierarchy as well as the implications prevalent within both systems.²²

Ahlam Mosteghanemi's life and work are shaped in relation to her father, Mohammed Sherif, who was born a revolutionary leader in Algeria's overthrow of French colonial power and a noted writer. By the time she was born in 1953, her father had already been imprisoned after the 1945 riots. When the Algerian war broke out in 1954, her family home in Tunisia became a central meeting point for resistance fighters allied to the Algerian People's Party FLN, including her father and cousins. After independence, in 1962, the family returned to Algeria, where Ahlam was sent to the country's first Arabic language school.²³

In the late 1960s and early 1970s, she became one of the first Algerian Arabic writers, broadcasting her poetry on national radio to support her family due to her father's ill-health. She earned a B.A from the university of Algiers in 1973, and also published her first poetry collection, *Ala Marfa' Al-ayyam*. She married a Lebanese journalist and moved to Beirut. Mosteghanemi's writings evoke nostalgia for a nation "that live in us but that we don't live in."²⁴ Now a resident of Beirut, her works express passion for an Algeria that the author missed, and disappointment in a generation that could not build a strong nation after 130 years of colonialism. Her novels reach beyond the borders of their setting to tell a story of unrealized dreams and tragic becoming, making her tales significant to readers across the Arab world.²⁵

Ahlam Mosteghanemi was an exception, she was exceptional in everything. Modest, with a spontaneity for shyness, she talked about her souvenirs in Tunisia, about her love for the country; she praised Tunisia saying "how the world beauty will be in lack, if there was no Tunisia."²⁶

Zorba the Greek, written in 1946, is a rich and powerful novel following the adventures of the Boss and his acquaintance, Alexis Zorba, during the 1920s on the small island of Crete. Through the interactive oral presentations, cultural and contextual understandings of Greek culture are greatly improved, specifically on subjects such as passion for food, strong Greek patriotism and gender inequality in Greece during the 1920s.²⁷

Crete, is a Greek island with a violent history; Zorba has fought for Crete in several of its wars, and has learned better than to trust in patriotism. He remembers the liberation of the island and counts it as one of his happiest moments. The Greek Orthodox Church is a strong influence on Cretan culture, and foreigners are regarded with suspicion, particularly if they belong to the Roman Catholic branch of Madame Hortense, a

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French woman, a relic of the wars, left behind after having great affairs with the world powers.²⁸

Kazantzakis was a seeker, thirsty for the oases of truth in the human desert, even to the point of obsession. He was concerned with the interaction between the material and the spiritual, or the sensual and the intellectual. His fictional hero, Zorba, resolves this battle by proclaiming the victory of the flesh.²⁹One reads:

You need a touch of folly to do that;
folly, d'you see? You have to risk everything!
But you've got such a strong head, it'll always
get the better of you. A man's head is like a
grocer; it keeps accounts: I've paid so much
and earned so much and that means a profit
of this much or a loss of that much! The head's
a careful little shopkeeper; it never risks all it
has, always keeps something in reserve. It
never breaks the string. Ah no! It hangs on
tight to it, the bastard! If the string slips out of
its grasp, the head, poor devil, is lost, finished!
But if a man doesn't break the string, tell me,
what flavor is left in life? The flavor of
chamomile, weak chamomile tea! Nothing like
rum—that makes you see life inside out!"(ZG,
304)

The passage comes from a dialogue between Zorba and the narrator, the intellectual, who, in many ways, resembles Kazantzakis himself. It presents Zorba's argument against the sole reliance on the mind in one's daily affairs, which is, to be sure, a typical affliction of bookish intellectuals, including the book's narrator. The mind is so bound by the logic of self-preservation. Zorba compares the mind to a stingy shopkeeper who constantly gets bogged down in petty and trivial calculations of advantages and disadvantages, while he misses to establish a connection with meaningful, exciting things. The mind is too cheap to pay for rum; it contents itself with tasteless chamomile tea. Communication among people has come to be dominated by the sole reliance on discourse. Words are used to convey ideas, feelings, and wants; other modes of communicating, such as dance, or playing an instrument have been either forgotten or undergone such severe distortion that all that is left does not even represent the promise of any meaningful difference. In Zorba's words: "People have

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let their bodies become mute and they speak only with their mouths" (ZG, 770). The problem here is that the discursive element cannot avoid being captured by the particular language; it therefore fails to rise to the level of universality, the level beyond the particular that connects all humanity into one.³⁰

The popularity of the novel *Zorba the Greek* is attributed to the fact that it urged American and European intellectuals discover what they were not, what their represented self was; in other words, it offered westerners a prototype of liberation. The Mediterranean eyes of Kazantzakis's work were an attraction for the western society, which, tired by logic and abundance, admired Zorba, a daring, spontaneous hero, who refuses conventions and admits his emotional passions³¹

In 1964, the film "Zorba the Greek" was released and became popular. The final image by which the audience left the cinema was that of Zorba's dance, a scene which became the symbol of Greece and of the Greek spirit represented by Zorba in particular.³²

Peter Bien says that Zorba is the superhuman³³ who knows that there is not a true, reasonable, permanent, ordered, or good world for living. The boss can function as a tragic artist, fuse his western mentality with Zorbatic barbarism, transform within his womb the barbarian seed, and bear an artistic son: the tragic myth called Zorba the Greek.³⁴

Kazantzakis wanted his eternal Greek to be nothing different than the Greek race itself, a marvelous synthesis of both east and west. Moreover, through Zorba, Kazantzakis embraced both the western as well as the eastern. The protagonist wants to get rich, but, at the same time, acts very irresponsibly. He abandons rationality to live in madness. In Bien's view, he rejects the mind in favor of the heart, whereas everyone is overwhelmed by an inexorable, tragic, destructive fate.³⁵

Kazantzakis's vision, besides being Greek, was definitely Cretan too. Crete, for Kazantzakis, was his homeland, an island of the southernmost part of Greece, a crossroads of many cultures and civilizations, a synthesis that he always pursued. He breathed another air, a composition of all these forces and its components that empowered and made him proud and brave. The syncretic glance that dares to look at life and death nakedly, Kazantzakis named Cretan.³⁶

In *Christ Recrucified*, the whole story of mankind and the Son of God is foregrounded against a Greek village ruled by the Turks. Thomas Mann praised it as a work of high artistic order formed by a tender and firm hand and built up with strong dynamic power.³⁷

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Kazantzakis introduces a common experience of his childhood in Crete as the foreground for the identification of Manolios and his friends with Jesus and His disciples. A group of Greek Christian refugees, who have been persecuted by the Turks, come to seek asylum in Lycovrissi under the leadership of their priest Pope Fotis. Their procession is described thus:

at its head, a thin pope with sun-tanned face and flaring black eyes under bushy eyebrows, and with a sparse, pointed beard, quite grey. He clasped in his arms a great Gospel with a heavy binding in chased silver. He wore his stole. At his right hand, a giant with black, drooping moustaches bore the old church banner on which was embroidered a tall Saint George in gold. Behind them, five or six gaunt old men carried huge icons, holding them dead straight. Then followed the flock of women and men accompanied by children crying and weeping. The men were laden with bundles and tools: shovels, spades, picks, scythes; the women with cradles, stools and tubs. (CR, 36)

Kazantzakis believed that his Jesus would have acquired a different face if there had been no struggle between Crete and Turkey. This struggle created in him the yearning for freedom. To gain freedom first of all from the Turk and after that to gain freedom from the inner Turk- from ignorance, malice and envy, from fear and laziness, from dazzling false ideas, and finally from idols, all of them, even the most revered and beloved.³⁸

Kazantzakis as a young boy visualized the hero as a great military leader, like his paternal grandfather or a vehement knight on horseback, the crusader, or a great explorer like Columbus. He has nothing but courage, trust, and fruitful action. To the children of Crete in those era words such as freedom, Christ, and revolution were words upon which all people were crucified.³⁹

In *Christ Recrucified*, Manolios becomes a cry to the world requesting not to crucify the prophets and Christ who preach the kingdom of love and protection to the weak and the meek. He longed to transmute the word directly into flesh that flesh might in time be transubstantiated into something more refined than either words or flesh.⁴⁰ According to him,

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true heroism and the highest human achievement was obtained when one can fight without the hope for even heavenly reward. Manolios leads the struggling people of Sarakina to rise against the social authority of Lycovrissi. He leaves the earth considering it an insignificant place. He meets his God on his way to the mountain after his rejection by the archon, his master. Manolios resembles the Gospel Jesus in that he becomes a model for man to imitate and follow in the same manner as Jesus was placed in the Gospels as a model for the fallen humanity to follow. Jesus Christ restored to humanity their human image that is identical to God's own image which they lost after Adam's fall. Manolios becomes a redemptive figure among the selfish Greeks by helping the refugees who waved away empty handed by the Lycovrissiots. The novel provides an overall impression that each human being can become Christ by taking his everyday cross and following Jesus through suffering and self- sacrifice. Each Christian is called to reincarnate Christ in the space and time where he is placed. Thus, Kazantzakis succeeds in reconstructing the Jesus figure who is apt for the modern world.⁴¹

Kazantzakis's view included personal, political, and metaphysical levels, but it also emphasized freedom from enslavement to ideology left or right, eastern or western. It also meant freedom from fear and hope, yet the human being cannot support absolute freedom. Lea says: "The circle is closed, and man goes beyond freedom to come back to the struggle for freedom. Thus, limitation of absolute freedom leads to an unending quest for affirmation in the face of negativity. This gives purpose and therefore a measure of harmony and satisfaction to our lives."⁴²Lea believes that Kazantzakis saw a link between hope and politics.⁴³

Kamala Markandaya's novels always rely upon confrontation between opposing viewpoints to set the stage for action and thereby convey her ideological concerns.Indeed, the east-west encounter as a recurrent theme in her novels is directly related to her experience as an expatriate who inherited Indian values by birth and acquired western values by choosing to live in England. Like her, most of her characters find themselves in situations where they must confront values rooted in opposing cultural milieus, historical processes, economic systems, political ideologies, and philosophical traditions. Not all of them are able to resolve the tensions and inequities that threaten to disintegrate their own psyche and spirit, but even their defeat is redeemed by their heroic endeavour to overcome their innate weaknesses or the inexorable forces around them.⁴⁴

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Markandaya wrote on the sensibility of Indian women. Though she lived abroad, she was able to portray the strength and weakness of Indian women characters and most of her women are protagonists in her novels.⁴⁵

By choosing English as her medium, Markandaya was essentially precluding the true depiction of the Indian experience. Her characters walk down Indian streets in Indian villages; they sing in Hindi; they curse their neighbour in dialect. Every aspect of their lives, in fact, seems more conducive to description in the native tongue. For Markandaya, the challenge was to use English without making a stranger, an 'other', of India and things Indian. This, in fact, was one of the assumed ideals of any literature: to remove the 'otherness' from its subject, to let one into its home, to let one become intimate with it. Markandaya seemed to treat the language as if she were borrowing it- she made good, sensible use of it while she held it, but returned it unmarred, intact. She left it unchanged. In the balancing act between ensuring belonging and ensuring self-identity, she erred toward the former.⁴⁶

The centripetal force in Markandaya's novels is India, racked by confusion, violence, economic disparity, and convulsive social and political changes. She presents east and west in her works, but she seems to have undertaken the task of interpreting the east to the west. Social concern is in her blood. Her talent is best expressed in her capacity to explore the vital, formative areas of individual consciousness that project the image of cultural change and in her uncanny gift of inhabiting the shifting landscapes of an outer reality with human beings whose sensibility becomes a sensitive measure of the inner reality as it responds to the stimulus of change.⁴⁷

Nectar in a Sieve unfolds the story of Rukmani's life. She is a widow. In the novel, she looks at her own life in a flash-back. She narrates various and varied experiences and records her observations about life. Her life story gives us a firsthand information about the hardships faced by the Indian rural people.

Rukmani is true to her tradition and culture. She represents a woman's struggle to find happiness in a changing India. Rukmani is not a woman who allows adversity to destroy her. She has enough in her life that fulfils her, children she loves, friends and a happy marriage, to fit the will to continue seeking improvement. At the end, she is at peace with herself and her life. She is hopeful and cherishes her memories, because she clings to the happiness in her past rather than to the heart ache of the present.⁴⁸

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Rukmani's struggle epitomizes woman's undefeatable spirit. She brings out the message that while a woman may grow old fighting against all odds, and be wholly down on her luck, she can still dare to persist and thus win a victory by the very manner of her losing. Her victory is a moral victory of having lasted without permanent impairment of her belief in the worth of what she has been doing. She is the triumphant woman who is capable of snatching spiritual victory from circumstances of disaster and material defeat. Rukmani thus scales great moral and spiritual heights. The writer and especially her central character is part of the Indian social and national heritage being dedicated to freedom in family life, in society, and in social life.⁴⁹

The figure of the Indian woman represented by Rukmani, with her inner strength and integrity, paving her own resolute way through an exploitative, discriminatory world serves as an inspiring light of hope and endeavour. Markandaya has a message for the new generation. Woman is not an island, she is the main land, the heart land of the human race.⁵⁰

Markandaya creates her own reality in *Nectar in a Sieve* as a result of her diasporic dis/location, class, colonial influence, cultural dis/placement, which impacts the understanding of national identity and nationalism in the diasporic context. The text's contradictions and multiplicities, visible in the ways it uses, deals with, avoids, resists, and reinscribes the nation and national agendas reflect Markandaya's multiply formed cultural identity, making the text a site for conflicting metaphors and competing discourses.⁵¹

Markandaya's experience as an expatriate is evident in her depiction of racial interaction in *The Nowhere Man*, a penetrating study of the predicament of a man who becomes alienated from both the culture he has inherited by birth and the culture he has adopted. The protagonist, Srinivas, migrates to Britain as a young man and he eventually makes it his home. His two sons fight for the Union Jack in World War II, where the younger one is killed in action. Nearly, a half century later, Srinivas finds that he is not accepted as British, as he has always thought himself to be. Racial prejudice and intolerance, caused by socioeconomic pressures, have made him a nowhere man in a white society, because his skin is not white. In this story, punctured by occasional melodramatic undertones, the toughest element is the cultural disparity between the eastern/Indian and the western/British ways that often leads to misunderstanding and tragedy.⁵²Srinivas is bewildered as to where he belongs; he has lived in Britain for thirty years and yet he becomes a rootless, restless individual

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disposed of by India and disowned by Britain. He represents millions of men who, for some reason or other, leave their own roots and fail to strike roots in alien soil and die as rootless, restless individuals.⁵³

Markandaya feels that one should not lose sight of the fact that all are basically human beings and belong to the whole world and not as part of the earth separated by man-made territorial boundaries for administrative purposes. Her views are reflected in the feelings of Srinivas:

He was a human being and as such felt he belong to a wider citizenship. (NM, 43)

The Nowhere Man undoubtedly proves to be a testimony of the novelist's widening of contemporary developments in race relations at the international level.

In her own way, Mosteghanemi articulates the drama of contemporary Algeria in the language in which Malek Haddad wanted so much to use. She settled her accounts beautifully with the white page and did justice to Haddad and all the Algerian intellectuals who were denied the use of the mother's tongue (French) in a creative way. As Ali El-Ra'i puts it: "Ahlam Mosteghanemi is a writer who has banished the linguistic exile into which French colonialism pushed Algerian intellectuals."⁵⁴ *Memory in the Flesh* embraces Algeria's past and present. It starts with the Algerian revolution in the 1940s and ends in 1988 with its eye on the future. Through her work, Mosteghanemi continues what her father started in the 1940s, namely the process of decolonization. According to Mosteghanemi, the liberation of the land was the beginning of decolonization, not the end of it; by writing in Arabic, Mosteghanemi accomplished another victory over the system of colonization; her use of Arabic language helped erase the barbarian marks of colonialism.⁵⁵

The novel starts out as a love-letter to a woman, it slowly unravels the idealization of the Arab homeland and forces the narrator to reconstruct what it means to be Arab and Algerian. As the love between Khalid and Ahlam proves treacherous, so does the Algerian city of Constantine emerge. No longer does it live in the beautiful signs, as the mother's bangle or the bridges crossing the city alone, but in corruption, poverty, and jail. As a symbol for the Arab homeland, Constantine does not allow for compromises or beautifications, but demands to be understood in its complexity. It is in this sense that it cannot be captured, whether in literature or art. In the end, it remains aloof and without compassion. This relationship to the city becomes an emblem of the characters' search for

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national identity, both at home and abroad. Judith Butler deconstructs the relation between the body and identity, saying:

What I would propose in place of these conceptions of construction is a return to the notion of matter , not as site or surface, but as a person of materialization that stabilizes over time to produce the effect of boundary, fixity, and surface we call matter.⁵⁶

Mosteghanemi employs the body in order to explore the relationship to one's country and culture in a variety of ways. She introduces the body as object of desire, as an allegory for the nation, and a symbol for the physical connections to, and responsibility for, one's country and its people. Ziad, the Palestinian poet in the novel, epitomizes the artist and revolutionary who makes the liberation of Palestine his absolute priority. Palestine's future becomes Ziad's main personal, political, and artistic goal and makes him a martyr right from the beginning:

Such men as Ziad were born in different Arab cities, belonged to different generations and different political ideologies, but all were somehow related to your father, to his steadfastness, his pride, and his Arab feeling. They all died or were to die for the Arab nation. (MF, 101)

The loss of the mother signifies not only an emotional loss, but the loss of one's origins, raising questions about one's identity and belonging as a whole; if the physical mother is dead, then a new allegiance need to be formed, an even stronger bond with the motherland, in order to matter and to mean, to belong. For Khalid, the loss of the mother results in an identification of the homeland with motherhood; the motherland becomes a substitute for the mother's love:

The revolution was entering its second year and I was in my third month as an orphan. I cannot remember now exactly when the country took over the character of motherhood and gave me an unexpected and strange affection and a compulsive sense of belonging. (MF, 14)

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His mother's death inspires him to join the revolutionary forces, which explains in part the strong emotional and almost physical bond between him and his homeland. He is willing to give his life for Algeria's independence, to distinguish himself as a son of Constantine. This is nowhere better articulated than in the loss of his arm during the war of liberation. By now Algeria has inscribed itself on his body indefinitely. The missing arm becomes his main mark of identity. He divides his life into the whole years and the broken years, and can forget about his handicap only when he is in art galleries, "where eyes focus more on my work rather than my missing arm". (MF, 43) It is in this sense, Khalid's diversion from his person is twofold. He might be ashamed of his handicap, but since he is exhibiting his art in France, his body is also abject because it is Arab. His mark is double. The second mark is clearly negative, since it ostracizes and alienates him from other French citizens, especially considering the low social standards of North Africans in Paris. Moreover, the mark of the martyr has become a site of contestation.⁵⁷

Khalid symbolizes Algeria and his amputated arm represents the mutilation of the country by colonialism. His ambiguous reaction to his scar—humiliation or pride—also symbolizes the psychological plight of post-colonial Algeria, liberated but in hopeless drift. Ahlam meets Khalid in Paris in his self-imposed exile from a culturally and politically corrupted Algeria. In a sense, she has been programmed by the colonial experience to accept a kind of inferiority. She, too, is in exile.⁵⁸

Mosteghanemi creates a landscape, upon which she begins a dialogue between the old Algerian generation, represented by Khalid, and a new Algerian generation represented by Ahlam. However, to Khalid, Ahlam is not only a representative of the new Algerian generation, but is Algeria itself. The dialogue allows them to discover their need for each other. "We were silently discovering that we complemented each other in an alarming way. I was the past that you did not know, and you were the present that had no memory ..." (MF, 64) According to Khalid, Ahlam is not an individual but a reflection of people he loves and a homeland he abandons. He frequently refers to her as his homeland, "Bashful and confused, homeland sat by me." (MF, 53) For Khalid, Ahlam is similar to his city, Constantine. Both of them carry two names and more than one date of birth. Constantine's other name is Cirta and Ahlam is named Hayat while she is waiting for her father to give her a name and register her. Like Constantine, which is given different birth dates every time it is liberated from foreign troops, Ahlam has two different birth dates.⁵⁹To Khalid, even

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Constantine's curves and bends look like Ahlam's body. Thus, Khalid believes that by placing Ahlam in his path, fate has given him another chance to reclaim all that he has lost. Ahlam on the other hand, sees in Khalid her father, who has been stolen from her during her first years. She is searching for a past taken from her with the death of her father. Like Khalid, she is a victim of colonialism:

Both of us were victims of the war. Destiny had placed us in its pitiless quern, and we emerged, each carrying a different wound. My wound was obvious and yours was hidden deep. They amputated my arm, and they amputated your childhood. They ripped off a limb of my body and snatched a father from your arms. We were the remnants of a war: two broken statues under elegant clothes. (MF, 64-5)

Through Ahlam's character, Mosteghanemi affirms that colonialism didn't only deform the old generations but that its fire has reached the new generation and caused a deep scar. The new Algerian generation was indirectly affected by the system of colonialism. They were orphans of the past. They were detached from their past and their roots, leading to identity confusion, westernization, and being lulled by the comforts of materialism. This is illustrated in Ahlam's name. Khalid breaks down her name into four letter acronym, A for "*alam*" or pain, H for "*hurqa*" or burning, la for "*la*" or no, and M for "*mut'a*" or pleasure. Her name exactly describes the transitions that take place in the book. It begins with the pain of colonialism, moves to the burning of the revolution, then onto the "no" of caution against westernization and finally to the pleasure of the bourgeois life.⁶⁰

Mosteghanemi's novel addresses the impact of exile on the nation. She depicts the corruption and difficulties faced by those whose goal is to invest in the people of the next generation.⁶¹ Khalid describes Algeria in the aftermath of the expulsion of the French, there "I was distressed to discover that not only were we lagging behind France and Europe, we were lagging behind where we had been half a century earlier under colonialism." (MF, 196) She uses Khalid as an example of a war hero who chooses to escape to the capital city of his former colonizer rather than face the difficulties required to build a nation. In this depiction of exile, Mosteghanemi urges those in exile to return to their land in order to nourish

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the development of the coming generations many of whom are amputated from their past. This is vividly shown by Khalid's realization at the end of the novel when he states "We take the homeland as furniture for our exile. We forget when the homeland puts us down at its door, when, unaffected by our tears, it closes its heart against us without so much as a nod at our suitcases. We forget to ask who will take our place after we go." (MF, 185)

As the novel closes, Khalid is back in Constantine for good. It is in this place that he traces and reconstructs his thoughts about Ahlam, Ziad, and Algeria. It is not enough to fantasize and idealize culture; one must actively enter its history. In a way, Khalid gives back his whole body and soul to his motherland when he returns.

The merit of the novel is its courage to turn some as yet unturned stones and evaluate the postcolonial period, within the periphery of the postmodernist discourse. Because Algeria provides one of the best examples of the success of France's mission, it is the nation best suited to measure the fate of the colonized mentality. The 130 years of colonial rule and the combined policy of assimilation and destruction of the local cultural traditions have, undoubtedly, resulted in the infiltration of the French culture into the fabric of the Algerian society.⁶²Consequently, the process of mental purification for Algerians would be unusually slow, since a painful period of search for identity would have to precede their full understanding of their condition.

Chaos of the Senses tells Hayat's story (who the reader now learns is in fact the author of *Memory in the Flesh*) against the backdrop of the assassinations of the Algerian civil war of the 1990s. Hayat, for whom writing is her escape, is trapped in a loveless marriage with a hero of the revolution and begins an affair with a stranger that she meets in a café in her home city of Constantine. The man seems to know everything about her and has an extraordinary resemblance to Khalid, the painter from the first book. He tells her his name is also Khalid.⁶³

In *Chaos of the Senses*, Mosteghanemi plays with the lexicon of revolutionary image, bending them to her own cause of love. While she is on her way to meet Khalid for the first of their secret meetings, in June of 1991, she must pass through a crowd of demonstrating Islamists to reach his apartment. To disguise and protect herself, she wears the traditional *abaya* with a shawl over her head, borrowed from her maid. Moving undetected in the garb of piety, she passes by the Milk Bar, the café that Jamila Bu Hrayd famously bombed. This incident, and others like it, is one of the most celebrated images of the war of independence :

There I was, forty years later, the legitimate heir of Jamila Bu Hrayd, passing by that same café, disguised in garments of piety. Once more, women have discovered that pious garments might conceal a passionate woman within , hiding under her abaya a body booby-trapped with desire. (CS, 100)

Mosteghanemi in *Chaos of the Senses* speaks of her great dream of building up relations that connect her, as an Arab human being, with the open world. But in front of all the thorough pressures, her dream shrinks to that of her own country, then to that of her own town, Constantine, and then comes to an end like all the dreams of any Arab person who seeks connection within himself.⁶⁴

Chaos of the Senses is a tale of a man who follows a chaotic strange philosophy who meets a woman of somehow weak character. Mosteghanemi then tries hard to uncover the great correspondance between her own novel and the reality. It represents the Algerian struggle, the Algerian woman, and the heritage of Constantine.⁶⁵

Conclusion

A sense of national belonging is the feeling of being connected and accepted within one's family and community. It is important in healthy human development and combating behaviour problems and depression. It is an important need on the hierarchy of human needs, after physiological and safety needs. A sense of belonging with one's country and community can positively influence one's sense of identity and how much they participate in society. It can alsimprove physical and mental health. A sense of belonging includes feeling secure, recognized, suitable, able to participate, like a fish in water in one's community.

The novelists under study, namely Nikos Kazantzakis and Kamala Markandaya, and Ahlam Mosteghanemi followed their lines of thought and action in searching for national sense of belonging and identity.

Nikos Kazantzakis struggled with his identity; he was of an ethnic minority in his own land. As a Cretan, he identified with the concepts of being colonised, of existing in exile, of living in constant diaspora. He struggled with multiple issues, wondering which political system deserved his allegiance, how he could reconcile the struggle for human rights with injustices perpetrated by the direction of government, and how he could explore and commit himself to one religious tradition. His two largest

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struggles were these: how to discover a passionate purpose and role in life, and how to reconcile the multiple aspects of his own identity into a harmonious whole.

Kazantzakis wrote passionately about ethnic strife in his homeland and worked to create a rebirth of democracy in Crete, all the while crafting several novels, including *Zorba the Greek* and *Christ Recrucified*.

Kamala Markandaya depicted racial conflicts, cultural differences, women hardships, temperament-al disparities, and sexual perversion. She depicted the picture of Indian society, with perfect skill.

Mosteghanemi's choice to turn away from the French audience and to direct her voice towards her own people is an important context in which to read this work. The novel's inventive form and language present a troubling and confrontational alternative to the social and political norms in the Arab world.

In *Memory in the Flesh*, the claims of the national struggle, with its rhetoric of collectivity, impel the use of a poetic language, while the individual journey in the self invites realistic analysis. In this novel the association between the land, the nation, and the beloved is stressed in the line with an Arab ideology since the 'Awakening'.

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