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The Postcolonial Unconscious in North African Migrant Fiction

Imad Oilad Ali
Ph.D. Candidate, Faculty of Letters, Languages, and Arts, University Ibn Tofaïl, Kenitra, Morocco
imad.oiladali@uit.ac.ma & oiladaliimad@gmail.com

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Abstract
The impact of the postcolonial unconscious on North African migrant fiction has been extensively explored and revealed through both theoretical frameworks and literary practices throughout the postcolonial era. Scholars and writers alike have delved into how the psychological remnants of colonialism continue to influence the narratives, themes, and character development in this body of work. This ongoing examination highlights the deep-seated cultural and psychological legacies that shape the identities and experiences of both individuals and communities within North African migrant literature. As a reflection of the long-lasting consequences of colonial history on people and society, North African migrant writers, like other postcolonial writers worldwide, tackle themes of identity, displacement, and post-colonialism. Theorists like Sigmund Freud, Jacques Lacan, Frantz Fanon, and Jacques Derrida have theorized that the unconscious influences language and subject creation, which in turn shapes their narratives. This analysis uses Fanon's concept of the postcolonial unconscious, which explores the psychological effects of colonialism, such as internalized trauma and cultural hybridity, as a major framework. This study examines how postcolonial unconscious and related themes appear in the writing of North African writers who have immigrated to Europe and the USA, emphasizing the psychological and cultural effects of colonization on both individuals and groups. In addition to offering in-depth examinations of some texts, the paper presents a comprehensive view of the importance of postcolonial literary criticism in comprehending the complexities of postcolonial societies.

1. Introduction

North African migrant fiction is heavily shaped by the postcolonial unconscious. Like almost all postcolonial writers, in different regions of the world, and by the same token, North African migrant writers weave their narratives about postcolonialism, identity, displacement, and the different repercussions of colonial history on individuals and societies. The unconscious as theorized by many theorists/philosophers such as Sigmund Freud, Jacques Lacan, Frantz Fanon, Jacques Derrida, etc., is deeply related to subject formation and language. Freud, for instance, would argue that the "'unconscious is structured like a language', [yet, a] 'language which escapes the subject in its operation and effects'. [Hence], the similarity to the structure of language was crucial to Lacan because the subject itself is produced through language in the same way that language produces meaning" (Ashcroft et al., 2013, pp. 249-50).

The postcolonial unconscious, as is introduced by Fanon in his seminal works, *Black Skin, White Masks* (1968), and *The Wretched of the Earth* (1963), refers to the profound and enduring psychological ramifications of colonialism on both the colonized and the colonizers. This concept delves into the internalization of colonial experiences, wherein the trauma, power dynamics, and cultural impositions of the colonial era become ingrained in the collective and individual psyches. The postcolonial unconscious encompasses a spectrum of psychological phenomena, including the internalization of racial hierarchies, the alienation and identity crises faced by colonized individuals, and the negotiation of cultural hybridity amid conflicting influences. Fanon's exploration of this concept emphasizes the enduring impact of colonization on mentalities, perceptions, and behaviours. The postcolonial unconscious, therefore, becomes a crucial viewpoint through which to understand the complexities of postcolonial societies, revealing the deeply rooted legacies that persist even after the formal end of colonial rule.

By focusing specifically on how authors who have migrated from North Africa to Europe and the USA engage with postcolonial themes, this paper seeks to grapple with the psychological and cultural impacts of colonization on both the individual and the community. Through the course of this research, this paper seeks to provide examples from Laila Lalami's novels so as to contextualize the debate about the subject, deepen the discussion, and also to provide a broader introduction to potential insights into a postcolonial approach to literary criticism.

2. Historical Context and the Rise of Colonial Ideologies

(The) early modern history has witnessed the European Renaissance. The Renaissance was known as the transitory period in European history from the Middle Ages to the modern period. After Muslims lost power in Spain in 1492, and their expulsion that followed from 1609 to 1614 (Miguel Ángel de Bunes Ibarra, 2014, p. 37), the European states, mainly Spain, Portugal and France, started solidifying their economic, military, political, and cultural presence both within the European continent and beyond. The Spanish kingdom –of King Ferdinand II of Aragon and Queen Isabella I of Castile– set among their goals the discovery of the New World, or what they thought was the Indies. This period of world history was a real and appropriate moment to inaugurate what is called the Age of Discovery, as darkness and ignorance had prevailed for a long time in Europe.

The Age of Discovery, as it turned out to be, was not a simple idea of exploring new places, peoples, cultures, and horizons, but it was a strong desire to exploit new lands and

peoples that were different from Europe, especially the ones that are thought of as abundant with limitless treasures and possibilities. Another idea that tickled the statesmen and traders' feet was to find new routes of trade to the end of the world, where natural resources and mythic treasures were inexhaustible. After countless European journeys to Africa and Asia, Christopher Columbus set his journey Westward, upon which he discovered the New World. European expeditions started as a triumph over the age of decadence or what is called the Middle Ages when Europe was living in very bad conditions on both scientific and economic levels. The shift from the Middle Ages to the modern age was of crucial importance on different scales: the economic, the cultural, and the scientific. However, the most important one was the cultural because it exerted radical change in the European societies, mainly the French. There were "three momentous cultural shifts around the year 1500 – the discovery of the 'New World', the Renaissance and the Reformation – [that] had, by the eighteenth century, come to constitute 'the epochal threshold between modern times and the middle ages'" (Habermas, 1981, p. 5 quoted in Ashcroft et al., 2013, 160).

Another crucial point was that modernity – that started after the Middle Ages, with the Renaissance, the Age of Reason (17th C.), and the Enlightenment (18th C.), till the Second World War – has brought with it a strong fervour and a sense of grandiose supremacy for everything that is European. No one can deny the fact that "the emergence of modernity is coterminous with the emergence of Eurocentrism and the European dominance of the world effected through imperial expansion" (Ashcroft et al., 2013, p. 161). This, in fact, raised high the self-estimation of the European cultures, science, and power and triggered nationalist tendencies for the colonized and the colonizer, alike. As a result, the European nations built up their credibility and self-confidence in leading what they had called 'civilizing missions' in different colonies all over the globe.

More complex than it seems, the process was not as simple as sending a huge number of expeditions to 'civilize' the world by the white man, but these expeditions were underpinned by scientists, anthropologists, sociologists, travellers, and missionaries to justify their invasions and to prove the racial supremacy of the white man over the other races as was done by Arthur de Gobineau and many others. Gobineau was a "French diplomat, writer, ethnologist, and social thinker whose theory of racial determinism [as he explained in his "Essay on the Inequality of Human Races"] had an enormous influence upon the subsequent development

of racist theories and practices in western Europe."[1] In addition to that, Teun Van Dijk (1993) explains, "Philosophers of the eighteenth century, historians of the nineteenth century, and anthropologists, biologists, psychologists, and other social scientists of our century all contributed to the fabrication of a web of facts, myths, and half-truths whose ideological impact is felt even today" (p. 159).

All the above-mentioned circumstances and the well-studied strategies helped Europe lay the ground for the forthcoming waves of colonialism that had to rule over all the non-European nations. To put it differently, colonialism was never a straightforward plan—or whatever you want to call it—to conquer, dominate, and subjugate the less powerful nations; instead, it was a process that was far too complex and a well-researched strategy that was used to generate various methods of controlling the societies that had been colonized in the most effective manner possible. Hence, the initial phase and the most crucial one was orientalism, which encompasses a wide range of academic fields, political ideologies, and power structures. Said (1979) would define the concept as follows,

> The most readily accepted designation for Orientalism is an academic one, and indeed the label still serves in a number of academic institutions. Anyone who teaches, writes about, or researches the Orient-and this applies whether the person is an anthropologist, sociologist, historian, or philologist--either in its specific or its general aspects, is an Orientalist, and what he or she does is Orientalism. (p. 2)

As a political philosophy, centred—either implicitly or explicitly—on power relations, orientalism does, of course, embrace a wide range of themes, as this definition plainly demonstrates. It is through Orientalism, as a strategy, process, and ideology that the West was able to diversify its ideological weapons such as studying the Orient, controlling it, and then manipulating and rendering it as submissive and malleable as possible. The Orient had to be manoeuvred in all proficiency and dexterity. This was true not just during the colonial era but also throughout the postcolonial era of decolonization since Western nations were present and ready to establish and maintain control over all the disciplines in the best way possible to serve their interests.

The colonialist reason had also been strengthened by theories such as Darwinism. Social Darwinism, for instance, communicated and enacted the ideological mantra of "the survival of the fittest", an idea that was introduced by Herbert Spencer in *Principles of Biology* (1864, p.

[1] - https://www.britannica.com/biography/Arthur-de-Gobineau

444). Its ideological roots formulate a biased awareness that receives its strength and credibility from the European 'power' and 'knowledge.' Social Darwinism, thus, operates through a set of premises and assumptions that were ideologically woven to serve colonialist and imperialist concerns.

> On the one hand, the debasement of the primitive peoples could find in Social Darwinism a justification for the domination and at times extinction of inferior races as not only an inevitable but also a desirable unfolding of natural law. On the other hand, the concept of racial improvement concurred with the 'civilizing mission' of imperial ideology, which encouraged colonial powers to take up the 'white man's burden' and raise up the condition of the inferior races who were idealized as child-like and malleable. The assumption of superiority thus supported by scientific racial theory could pursue its project of world domination with impunity. (Ashcroft et al., 2013, p. 221)

Ashcroft et al. focus on the core constituents of colonial/imperial ideology and its cornerstone concepts of how to justify, dominate, manipulate and then pursue the imperial project of world domination. Colonialist and imperialist powers exploited their economic and military progress to disseminate their ideological strategies such as the 'civilizing missions' and the 'white man's burden' to conquer and dominate nations, regions, and continents. The survival of the fittest, as Spencer explains, is equated with what Darwin called natural selection, or "the preservation of favoured races in the struggle for life" (Howerth, 1917, pp. 253-257). Such social, scientific and pseudo-scientific theories helped a lot in solidifying European colonialism. European powers exploited the cultural means that could help them in their missions to settle and then to expand their colonies. Culture and civilization in general, and literature in particular, were very efficient tools in the processes of colonialism and imperialism. European writings about the Orient, for example, constituted the core of what Edward Said referred to as *Orientalism*.

Colonialism has left a lasting legacy of power relations and cultural hierarchies, as is understood and manifested by the return of colonial ideals in modern discourse. These beliefs persist in many ways even after colonial power has officially ended, such as racial discrimination, cultural imperialism, and neo-colonial economic activities. In fact, the rise of these ideologies challenges the advancements gained in postcolonial cultures and signals a worrying return to discriminatory and repressive mindsets. It also emphasizes how critical analysis and direct confrontation with these persistent legacies are crucial in advancing a just and equitable world order. Therefore, dismantling the systems that uphold inequality and

promoting a better knowledge of the historical and cultural contexts and locations that have produced modern global interactions are two steps in the collaborative effort needed to combat the growth of colonial ideology.

3. Orientalism and the Construction of the Colonial Subject

Edward Said's theory of Orientalism, as mentioned before, is heavily based on the Western tendency to portray the East—in particular, the Middle East, North Africa, and Asia—as foreign, archaic, and fundamentally distinct from the West. In addition to justifying colonial dominance, this manufactured dichotomy was crucial to the creation of the colonial subject. Colonial peoples were frequently represented by Orientalist rhetoric as inferior, illogical, and in need of Western rule and enlightenment (Said, 1979, p. 40). These representations of the colonized as "others" who were subjected to physical and psychological subjugation served to uphold colonial ideals. In addition to dehumanizing and objectifying the colonized, this creation of the colonial subject served to justify imperial power and control, solidifying the unequal power structures that supported colonial rule.

In the process of constructing the colonial subject, Said has always critically examined the complex and often problematic relationship between the East and the West, focusing on how the West constructed knowledge about the Orient. He draws attention to two major factors that have influenced Western conceptions of the East since the eighteenth century: the development of methodical knowledge about the Orient and the underlying power relations that gave Europe the upper hand over the East. These components supported the colonial goals of dominance and exploitation of the East as well as the West's perception of it. In this regard, Said (1979) writes,

> […] since the middle of the eighteenth century there had been two principal elements in the relation between East and West. One was a growing systematic knowledge in Europe about the Orient, knowledge reinforced by the colonial encounter as well as by the widespread interest in the alien and unusual, exploited by the developing sciences of ethnology, comparative anatomy, philology, and history; furthermore, to this systematic knowledge was added a sizable body of literature produced by novelists, poets, translators, and gifted travelers. The other feature of Oriental-European relations was that Europe was always in a position of strength, not to say domination. (pp. 39-40)

Hence, Europe's systematic gathering and accumulation of knowledge about the Orient was deeply connected to the colonial power structures rather than being a neutral or objective collection of facts. With the East seen as fundamentally different, exotic, and in need of Western intervention, the knowledge created was frequently utilized to justify and uphold Western domination. Western supremacy was reinforced by the widespread perception of the Orient created by this manufactured knowledge, which was further spread through literature, science, and the arts. Thus, rather than an interaction based on reciprocal exchange on equal footing, the relationship between the East and the West was one of dominance and power, with Europe setting the parameters for communication and understanding with the Orient and preserving a history of exploitation and inequality.

Related to what have been mentioned in the first section, the ideological edge of Social Darwinism, for instance, goes even far beyond Eurocentric bias, as it functions as a mantle for subject formation. Spivak, for example, maintains that "the idea of human rights […] may carry within itself the agenda of a kind of social Darwinism—the fittest must shoulder the burden of righting the wrongs of the unfit—and the possibility of an alibi" (Spivak, 2004, p. 524). This does not mean that the idea of human rights is all about the stigmatized concept of social Darwinism, but it is a kind of oppression as is the case for the 'white man's burden'; needless to mention that it is just a pretext for economic, military, and political interventions or for the sake of exposing the Eurocentrism of human rights. The exploitation of human rights as an excuse for various types of interventions is more of a problem for Spivak. She is mainly concerned with the elaboration of how colonialism's commitment to the education of a particular class is the root of the issue. Accordingly, some of the best products of high colonialism—the offspring of the colonial middle class—become human rights activists in the southern nations (Spivak, 2004, p. 524). In fact, social Darwinism, or Orientalism in general, cannot be reduced to a certain narrow field of inquiry, but it should be understood as a set of relationships and interconnections. For Said (1979), Orientalism means "several things, all of them, in [his] opinion, [are] interdependent" (p. 2).

In the same vein, in *Desiring Arabs*, Joseph A. Massad elaborates more on the kind of relationship between the Arab and European cultures and civilizations. He brilliantly exposes the fact that "orientalist writing was racist and dehumanizing".[2] It is through Orientalism that Europe was able to manipulate and discipline the rest of the world, mainly the Muslim Middle

[2] - *Financial Times'* synopsis, at https://www.amazon.ca/Desiring-Arabs-Joseph-Massad/dp/0226509583

East, along with the Asian, African, and Latin American peoples. For him, "as Orientalism assumed a central place in the colonial campaign, its pretensions encompassed defining who the subject people to be colonized were, what their past was, the content of their culture, and how they measured up to the civilizational, cultural, and racial hierarchies that colonial thought had disseminated" (Massad, 2007, pp. 1-2). When invading Egypt in 1798, Napoleon, ironically, fretted that the land had been plunged into savagery and decay by the Turks and that it was the responsibility of France to liberate its populace in order to justify his invasion. However, Egyptians did not concur with his pretext (Niqula al-Turk, 1990, pp. 30-31 quoted in Massad, 2007, pp- 3-4). Abd al-Rahman al-Jabarti (1754-1826), the Egyptian chronicler of the Napoleonic invasion described the French mores in these terms,

> Their women do not cover themselves and have no modesty; they do not care whether they uncover their private parts. Whenever a Frenchman has to perform an act of nature he does so wherever he happens to be, even in full view of people, and he goes away as he is, without washing his private parts after defecation. If he is a man of taste and refinement he wipes himself with whatever he finds, even with a paper with writing on it, otherwise, he remains as he is. They have intercourse with any woman who pleases them and vice versa. Sometimes one of their women goes into a barber's shop and invites him to shave her pubic hair. If he wishes he can take his fee in kind. (Al-Jabarti quoted in Massad, 2007, p. 4)

What helped most the Orientalist thought as an efficient tool to disseminate its ideology is the evolution of the modern notions of culture and civilization that evolved from a simple definition to a more complex epistemological tradition, laws, and canons. British literary scholar, Raymond Williams, excavated the modern English term "culture" as having emerged in the eighteenth century and certainly by the early nineteenth as different from its earlier meaning of plant cultivation and its more recent meaning of the upbringing of children to something that defined class, education, and specific forms of knowledge (Williams quoted in Massad, 2007, p. 2).

The Arab intellectuals were made to accept the Orientalist and colonialist pedagogy through "epistemological affinity" that was ideologically constructed to inform all their archaeological efforts. Massad would explain that the most effective pedagogy that Orientalism and the encounter with colonialism would pass on to these Arab intellectuals was not, despite the fact that this was a component of it, the creation of a nationalist historiographical response, but rather an epistemological affinity that would guide all of their archaeological endeavours. These Arab writers would approach the subject by adopting and not challenging these recently created European notions of "civilization" and "culture" and their corresponding insertion in a

social Darwinist idiom of "evolution," "progress," "advancement," "development," "degeneration," and most importantly, "decadence" and "renaissance" (Massad, 2007, p. 5).

Another key strategy that helped in controlling the Arab intelligentsia and limiting their influence on the Arab readers was the invention of the printing presses in 1821. Before this period, all the scholarly materials were hand-copied manuscripts. Schulze contends that the introduction of printing presses and the book form in 1821—which occurred not only in Cairo but also in Aleppo, Beirut, and Jerusalem—was a deliberate act of colonialism to destroy the existing Arab intelligentsia and its primary scholarly output, namely, hand-copied manuscripts. A new intellectual reading audience would be created by books, one that would view the preceding generation as being stalled in its reliance on medieval manuscripts and would view the book form as the barometer of civilized modernity. The local market would soon be impacted by the consumption of books, including new 'classics' of Arab and Islamic history, which at first was almost exclusively restricted to Orientalists and European universities, who bought the majority of the copies printed in Egypt (the al-Azhar University would also become an important buyer). A new book-reading audience would soon emerge as a result of the new educational scholarships that sent young Arabs to Europe and the advent of European educational systems of instruction in Arab countries. As a result, anything created before 1821, which might be considered a 'break' in Egyptian cultural history, was no longer as valuable as the culture produced after that year. The eighteenth century had to be viewed as a decrepit era as part of universal Islamic deterioration because pre-1821 civilization could not be 'measured' by the norms of European culture (Schulze quoted in Massad, 2007, pp. 5-6).

One reason behind the success of Orientalist and Colonialist writings is the fact that they were so much obsessed with representing other cultures as strange and exotic. Most of them were concerned with lust and eroticism that could be obtained both imaginatively (and sometimes realistically) in the represented settings. That is to say, Orientalist writings had this kind of effect on European readers, both inside Europe, and on those living in the East seeking to live an imagined life full of adventures, desires, and mythological thoughts. The cultural 'Other' and "the East [in general] is a career" for the Occident (Disraeli quoted in Said, 1979, p. xii). In *Colonial Desire: Hybridity in Theory* (1995), Robert Young comments on Hanif Kureishi and Kipling by stating that,

> The many colonial novels in English betray themselves as driven by a desire for the cultural other, for forsaking their own culture: the novels and travel writings of Burton, Haggard, Stevenson, Kipling, Allen or Buchan are all concerned with

> forms of cross-cultural contact, interaction, an active desire, frequently sexual, for the other, or with the state of being what Hanif Kureishi calls 'an inbetween', or Kipling 'the monstrous hybridism of East and West.' (p. 3)

The quote illustrates the enduring attractiveness and interest Western colonial powers felt for the cultures they aimed to subjugate. This "desire for the cultural other," which is frequently articulated in literature and travelogues, is a reflection of the complicated relationship between control, fear, and fascination that is essential to the Orientalist discourse's construction of the colonial subject. Colonial literature's sexualized and fetishized portrayals of Eastern civilizations reflect the desire to acquire and control the "other," which Young notes was a common component of the "cross-cultural contact" between East and West. This ambition, however, also reveals a profound ambivalence—a knowledge of the East's impact and a fear of being changed by it at the same time, creating an identity that is both "inbetween" and disturbs the divisions between the East and the West. Therefore, in addition to portraying the colonial subject as inferior and foreign through these literary representations, Orientalism also revealed the flaws and inconsistencies in the colonial psyche itself.

One of the main theorists, who theorized for "in-betweeness", "hybridity", or the "third space" is Homi Bhabha in his *The Location of Culture*. For him, "It is that Third Space, though unrepresentable in itself, which constitutes the discursive conditions of enunciation that ensure that the meaning and symbols of culture have no primordial unity or fixity; that even the same signs can be appropriated, translated, rehistoricized and read anew" (Bhabha, 2004, p. 55). Bhabha's quote highlights the fluidity and instability of cultural meaning in the "Third Space," a theoretical area where cultural exchanges take place. This zone allows for the ongoing reinterpretation and modification of symbols, meanings, and identities. According to Bhabha, cultural signifiers are always being reappropriated, rehistoricized, and given new meanings through the act of enunciation; none of them has a fixed, intrinsic meaning. By disrupting the strict divisions between colonizer and colonized the "Third Space" enables the emergence of hybrid identities that subvert prevailing cultural narratives. The concept of cultural purity is challenged by this hybridity, which demonstrates how culture is constantly changing due to a variety of influences and reinterpretations.

Bhabha's concept of "Third Space" is deeply related to both Benedict Anderson's idea of "Imagined Communities" and Frantz Fanon's notion of "fluctuating movement." According to Anderson, people who identify as belonging to a certain nation create their own socially constructed communities within it. Similar to Bhabha's hybridity, national identity is thus a

dynamic construct that results from ongoing negotiation and the reimagining and historicalization of symbols and meanings (Anderson, 2006, p. 6). Comparably, since colonized subjects negotiate between their forced identities and their own sense of self, Fanon's "fluctuating movement" emphasizes the unstable nature of colonial identities (Fanon, 1963, p. 227). This movement is a reflection of Bhabha's "Third Space," where hybrid identities are created when the colonized question the rigid dichotomies of colonizer and colonized. In other words, Bhabha's theory of cultural hybridity and the renegotiation of meaning in the postcolonial setting are in line with Anderson and Fanon's depictions of identities as dynamic, fluctuating movements rather than primordial or unified entities.

Undoubtedly, hybridism can be perceived, as almost in every field, both, a positive and negative trait, fascinating and unsettling at the same time. It is both an image of richness, collaboration, and harmony, and at the same time, it is something that represents the challenge, tension, and unease of two or more contrasting ideologies, traditions, or practices. Therefore, in the realm of the tension and complexity generated by these contrasting ideologies, writing about the non-European world, mainly the East and Africa, exerted a kind of cultural power by both "*energizing myths*" (Boehmer, 2005, p. 23) and realities, alike. This had helped European colonialism in drawing the multifaceted features of the world order that had to follow for centuries, until the rise of the USA as a world superpower. These publications (colonial novels) had, of course, triggered considerable anxiety in European readers, encouraging them to embark on more and more adventures and attempts to write their own accounts, as well as creating more eagerness to explore the cultural other. That is to say,

> For centuries Europe had nurtured an anxiety-ridden perception about Other People, those beyond its actual touch and reach, and about the natural world. Woven monstrous and phantasmagoric detail, based primarily on fears, fantasies and demons inhabiting the Western mind from Herodotus to Pliny, and from St Augustine to Columbus, this perception had become an integral part of Europe's self-identity. (Davies, 1993, p. 1)

The image that Europe attempted to propagate within European space throughout the colonial era yields to its imagination and ideology. The assiduity to persuade people, as well as all of the cultural, scientific, and ideological arguments used, have all contributed significantly to the formation of such consciousness in forging "Europe's self-identity."

The colonial era was fraught with unending ideologies that sought to exploit and manipulate the whole world around Europe. And, as numerous as the ideologies and the strategies there were to achieve colonialist and imperialist concerns in Asia, Africa, Australia,

and the Americas, there were postcolonial critics to disclose, expose, and unmask these ideologies, strategies, and their advocates, both inside and outside Europe. The colonial era was a phase of "Othering" *par excellence*. It was mainly based on the differentiation between what is European and what is not. In the realm of this unceasing debate and shaky relations between the West and the rest, so many related issues buoyed up to the surface mainly with the relentless waves of migration to the West.

4. The Role of Culture and Literature in Colonial and Postcolonial Discourse

The formation of colonial and postcolonial discourse is significantly influenced by culture and literature, which are instruments of both dominance and resistance. Literature of the colonial era frequently mirrored and upheld colonial ideals, depicting colonized peoples as inferior and deserving of Western rule and sustaining stereotypes of the "exotic" and "backward" native. The dissemination of these narratives and the defence of colonial rule were greatly aided by cultural production in the forms of literature, art, and education. However, in a postcolonial setting, literature emerges as a potent tool for contesting colonial legacies and reclaiming identity. Through the use of storytelling, postcolonial writers address issues of hybridity, displacement, and cultural resistance, as well as the psychological and social impacts of colonization. Adopting such a perspective, we can say that postcolonial voices can reinterpret their pasts and reshape their futures through literature's important space and tools for negotiating power, identity, and history.

Both postcolonial literature and migrant literature are heavily based on one of the most crucial questions that was raised by Gayatri Spivak around four decades earlier: Can the subaltern speak? In fact, the concept of the 'subaltern' was first coined by the Italian Marxist Antonio Gramsci in *Prison Notebooks*. For Gramsci (1971), "The subaltern classes, by definition, are not unified and cannot unite until they are able to become a "State": their history, therefore, is intertwined with that of civil society, and thereby with the history of States and groups of States" (p. 202). The word "subaltern," which means "of inferior rank," was used to describe those social groups that are subject to the ruling classes' hegemony. Peasants, labourers, and other groups denied 'hegemonic' power are examples of subaltern classes (Ashcroft et al., 2013, p. 244).

The most crucial point here is that the concept of subalternity was associated with the powerlessness of subjects who did not have a voice or those who were denied access to sensitive fields of political decisions and who were dominated by strong political hegemonies

issued by the state, be they their own states or the colonializing ones. Therefore, the main question to raise here is: can we consider "third-world"[3] migrant writers in Europe and the West as subaltern voices? If so, to what extent? Are their voices heard? Do they exert any political and cultural influence on the host states? Are they recognized as literary voices of equal value to those written by non-migrants?

It is well-understood that the process of colonialism constructed and disciplined the colonized peoples' identities in the strictest ways possible to meet certain standards set by the colonizer. For such a purpose Ranajit Guha introduced a dynamic stratification grid describing colonial social production in India. He talked about four groups of people. The first and the second groups are of the 'elite': (1) "dominant foreign groups", and (2) "dominant indigenous groups on the all-Indian level". The third, (3) "dominant indigenous groups at the regional and local levels" is the "buffer group" or "zone" between the great macrostructural dominant groups and the people; it is described as a place of in-betweenness. The fourth, (4) is the "people" and "subaltern classes" (Guha quoted in Spivak, 1994, p. 79).

Guha's categorization is a reasonable one to which most people would agree as it demonstrates the most efficient strategy that was followed by the colonizer to conduct their imperial policies and to make it easy, both for them and for the dominant indigenous groups at the national level, to carry out their colonialist activities smoothly. In my opinion, this stratification grid is still applicable for most 'third-world' countries. Accordingly, Guha's stratification grid is of pivotal importance in this paper; it does really help in defining migrant writers' roles, and the nature and function of their literary productions. The main focus here should be on the third category (dominant indigenous groups at the regional and local levels) as it represents the buffer zone that connects the "elite" with the "people" and "subaltern classes".

[3] - According to Fredric Jameson's influential essay "Third-World Literature in the Era of Multinational Capitalism," Third-World literature is best viewed as a national allegory. According to his argument, the personal narratives and struggles portrayed in literature are closely linked to broader political and societal narratives in the setting of Third-World countries, which are either postcolonial or currently enduring the effects of neocolonial pressures. His essay sparked significant debate, especially from scholars like Aijaz Ahmed in his book *In Theory: Classes, Nations, Literatures*, in chapter 3: "Jameson's Rhetoric of Otherness and the 'National Allegory'". Jameson's homogenization of "Third-World" nations and literature is criticized by Ahmad, who contends that Jameson's paradigm reduces the great diversity of Global South literary and cultural output to a single category of "national allegory."

Similarly, as far as this study is concerned, migrant writers should basically belong to this third category. It is true that they can act globally, and many of them have contributed to political decisions internationally, especially the ones, of older generations, whose writings have been recognized as belonging to 'first-world' literature and had the "privilege"—or say had been "uprooted from their lands"[4]—to be considered as British, American, or French like the examples of V.S. Naipaul, Kazuo Ishiguro, Salman Rushdie, Milan Kundera, Samuel Beckett, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, Vladimir Nabokov, Joseph Conrad, etc. But does that apply to North African migrant writers? And, what is the difference between writers who work as native informants and those who choose to write back to the metropolis so as to resist all the forms of neocolonialism and imperialism? To clarify more, should migrant writers who act as native informants belong to the second category while those who have chosen resistance belong to the third category?

A sophisticated viewpoint held by Gramsci, Guha, and Spivak is the categorization of "dominant indigenous groups at the regional and local levels" as different from the subaltern class. It reveals their intense interest in the complex relationships between social hierarchies and power in postcolonial situations. The dominant classes' influence on the development of cultural norms and ideas is emphasized by Gramsci's concept of hegemony. The "dominant indigenous groups" according to this theory are those who, despite being descended from indigenous peoples, have attained a certain degree of authority and influence at the local and regional levels. They might have assimilated into the systems of authority or taken on the cultural practices of the aristocracy (those in power). Because of Gramsci's emphasis on cultural and ideological hegemony, these groups may reinforce existing power structures rather than subverting them.

Guha's contributions to subaltern studies broaden this viewpoint by highlighting the agency of marginalized communities in their struggle against hegemonic forces. He contends that individuals who are marginalized politically as well as socially and economically make up the subaltern class. To further set them apart from the subaltern, "dominant indigenous groups

[4] - Sten Pultz Moslund refers to Edward Said, who for instance, "sees 'a splendid cohort of writers that includes such different figures as Salman Rushdie and V. S. Naipaul' as 'chroniclers' of '[e]xiles, émigrés, refugees, and expatriates uprooted from their lands'. They '[open] further the door first tried by Conrad'" (Said, 2000, xiv). Quoted in: Sten Pultz Moslund (2010). *Migration Literature and Hybridity: The Different Speeds of Transcultural Change*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan. p.3.

at the regional and local levels" may hold positions of political authority in this situation. However, Guha's strategy also recognizes the complex relationships between various groups within the broader context of subalternity and resistance. Subaltern groups and dominant indigenous groups may form alliances or experience tension, and their stances may change over time in reaction to shifting political environments.

The interaction Spivak has with postcolonial theory adds still another level to this conversation. She emphasizes the difficulties of representing the subaltern and the dangers of doing so. Spivak's concept of "strategic essentialism"[5] acknowledges that dominant Indigenous communities may occasionally strategically assume essentialized identities in order to assert their rights and reject repressive conditions. This idea emphasizes the variety and mobility of social identities in postcolonial settings. Ashcroft et al. explain that Spivak,

> … drew attention to the dangers of assuming that it was a simple matter of allowing the subaltern (oppressed) forces to speak, without recognizing that their essential subjectivity had been and still was constrained by the discourses within which they were constructed as subaltern. Her controversial question 'Can the Subaltern Speak?' […] was frequently misinterpreted to mean that there was no way in which subaltern peoples could ever attain a voice. (Ashcroft et al., 2013, p. 97)

Spivak's essay "Can the Subaltern Speak?", poses a challenge to the oversimplified ideas about giving a voice to the oppressed and marginalized subaltern. Without acknowledging the significant limitations placed on their subjectivity by dominant discourses—those very systems of power and knowledge that initially defined them as

[5] - Spivak discusses the idea of "strategic essentialism" in *The Spivak Reader*. Her "official collaboration with the Subaltern Studies collective of historians, who are rewriting the history of colonial India from below, from the point of view of peasant insurgency" (203). She considers as "a paradoxical historical project since the documentary evidence is so one-sided that no positive, or positivist, account of subaltern insurgency is possible. There simply are no subaltern testimonials, memoirs, diaries, or official histories" (203). She criticizes the group because, as she observes, "it is only the texts of counterinsurgency or elite documentation that give us the news of the consciousness of the subaltern" (203). However, she does not totally neglect the use of essentialism, in Ashcroft et al. (2013), she "spoke of the need to embrace a strategic essentialism in an interview in which she acknowledged the usefulness of essentialist formulations in many struggles for liberation from the effects of colonial and neo-colonial oppression" (97). Thus, while acknowledging that essentialist categories (such as nation, race, or class) are not inherently set or stable, the phrase "strategic essentialism" describes the short-term, practical use of these categories for political ends.

"subaltern"—Spivak stresses the dangers of thinking that it is only a matter of allowing the subaltern to speak.

When elaborating on Guha's third category, "dominant indigenous groups at the regional and local levels". Spivak critiques colonial and postcolonial power relations, with a special focus on this group (3rd category). Because dominance within colonial frameworks was not consistent and varied widely depending on local settings, she emphasizes the fluid and uneven nature of this category. This complex knowledge casts doubt on any oversimplified or binary interpretation of indigenous power and colonization. She clarifies,

> *Taken as a whole and in the abstract* this … category … was *heterogeneous* in its composition and, thanks to the uneven character of regional economic and social developments, *differed from area to area*. The same class or element which was dominant in one area … could be among the dominant in another. [original emphasis]. (Spivak, 1993, pp. 79-80)

Thus, as Spivak notes, the social and economic status of these dominating indigenous groups varied from place to place as a result of unequal development. The complex nature of colonial social hierarchies is demonstrated by the possibility that a powerful group in one local environment would be disadvantaged in another. This viewpoint is essential to understanding how colonialism produced fragmented and dynamic power relations that allowed local elites to be both strengthened by and complicit in colonial rule while also being subject to subordination in other settings. The significance of taking these regional differences into account while researching colonial and postcolonial histories is highlighted by Spivak's approach.

5. The Postcolonial Unconscious in North African Migrant Fiction

North African migrant fiction is deeply related to the colonial and postcolonial legacies that relentlessly continue to shape the sociocultural, economic, psychological, and ideological structures, even long after the formal end of colonial rule. These fictional works generally examine the long-lasting effects of colonialism on both individual and group identities. They generally emphasize the ways in which past experiences of oppression and uprooting take shape in the lives of migrants. These authors address the psychological pain and identity difficulties experienced by people navigating a postcolonial environment, while also challenging the lingering effects of colonial power through their stories, including racial hierarchies, cultural alienation, and economic exploitation. North African migrant fiction explores these topics in order to represent the ongoing conflicts that have their roots in colonial

history and to provide a forum for the creation of new forms of resistance, hybridity, and self-determination in the postcolonial moment. Thus, these stories become a vital area for investigating how historical context shapes contemporary concerns about migration, identity, and global inequity.

Psychologically, the colonial effect is unawarely activated through a series of unconscious forms that were deeply embedded in the colonized psyche during the colonial period. These unconsciously held beliefs are the result of prolonged exposure to colonial ideology, power structures, and cultural forces, which molded both internal and exterior forms of behaviors and attitudes. In order to establish a sense of psychological inferiority that permeated the colonized people, colonial dominance entailed the systematic devaluing of their identity, culture, and language. Even after the formal end of colonial control, this internalized oppression continues to recur in postcolonial countries as identity crises, feelings of inadequacy, and a constant sense of exile.

Frantz Fanon, for instance, emphasized how colonialism psychologically fractured the colonized subject, producing a divided sense of self-caught between the imposed values of the colonizer and the suppressed heritage of their native culture. This was apparent in the colonized individual's unstable and often contradictory demeanor toward both the colonizer and fellow colonized individuals. In Fanon's words, "The black man has two dimensions. One with his fellows, the other with the white man. A Negro behaves differently with a white man and with another Negro. That this self-division is a direct result of colonialist subjugation is beyond question" (Fanon, 1968, p. 8). In fact, such unconscious effects still have an impact on modern postcolonial countries, particularly in immigrant communities where questions of cultural hybridity, alienation, and the quest for identity are frequently major concerns. For example, these psychological challenges are often depicted in North African migrant literature, which shows how colonial legacies continue to haunt people and define their circumstances. As a result, the postcolonial unconscious continues to play a role in individual and societal experiences, demonstrating the long-lasting psychological effects of colonialism. The immigrant in general—the "Negro", in Fanon's words—is "forever in combat with his own image" (Fanon, 1968, p. 150).

In the same direction, Laila Lalami's novels are celebrated for their deep approach to the postcolonial unconscious. While writing, she usually brings to life individuals whose personal stories reflect larger social, historical, and political contexts. Throughout the three novels I have chosen to work on, namely *Hope and Other Dangerous Pursuits*, *The Moor's*

Account, and *The Other Americans*, Lalami explores the complexities of identity, belonging, and other diversified sociopolitical, nationalist, and ideological issues that North African migrant fiction touches upon and tackles. Each of her characters is intricately crafted, with their narratives shedding light on the human condition, particularly in the context of migration, colonialism, and the immigrant experience that so many North African and sub-Saharan immigrants have gone through.

In *Hope and Other Dangerous Pursuits* (2008), Lalami introduces readers to four primary characters, each with distinct backgrounds and motivations that drive their journey from Morocco to Spain. The novel opens with these characters embarking on a perilous crossing of the Mediterranean Sea, a journey that becomes a defining moment in their lives. Murad, for instance, is depicted as a highly educated yet unemployed man, disillusioned by the lack of opportunities in Morocco. His disillusionment deepens when the Guardia Civil apprehends him. Lalami writes, "But tomorrow they will send him back to Tangier. His future there stands before him, unalterable, despite his efforts, despite the risk he took and the price he paid. He will have to return to the same old apartment, to live off his mother and sister, without any prospects or opportunity" (15). Murad's contemplations represent the postcolonial unconscious by evoking a sense of helplessness, defeat, and entrapment. The statement "his future...unalterable, despite his efforts" captures the sense of hopelessness that many people in postcolonial cultures, especially in North Africa, have internalized. Even though these power structures are not readily apparent, Murad, like other characters, is profoundly impacted by the legacies of colonialism. More than merely a personal failure, his failed attempt to cross the Strait of Gibraltar to Spain symbolizes the structural and psychological constraints that colonial history has placed on his community, an ex-colony.

Another important character in *Hope and Other Dangerous Pursuits* is Faten, a young lady who belongs to the "Islamic Student Organization" in Rabat, and she is someone who is really devoted to her views. She believes that the Moroccan government's reliance on Western countries is the source of corruption, favoritism, and other types of subordination, and she is fiercely committed to fighting these issues. Because she believes that internal moral degradation and Western influence have damaged the social and political status quo, Faten's activism is a reflection of her desire to question it. When Larbi—a middle-aged Moroccan bureaucrat working at the Ministry of Education—asks Faten about his daughter Noura who is already convinced by her friend's Islamist ideological thinking, he says, "Don't you think that a degree from abroad would be better for her?" Her answer is, "No, I don't. I think it's a shame

that we always value foreign degrees over ours. We are so blinded by our love for the West that we are willing to give them our brightest instead of keeping them here where we need them" (41). Larbi and Faten's conversation reveals a prevalent disapproval of the postcolonial unconscious, especially the internalized inferiority complex that frequently follows colonial legacies. As a matter of fact, the widespread problem in postcolonial cultures is the overvaluation of Western education and credentials compared to local ones, as Faten's comment makes clear. The inclination towards international degrees is not just a pragmatic decision but also an expression of the postcolonial unconscious, wherein ideals from the colonial era persist in influencing perspectives and priorities. The phrase "we are so blinded by our love for the West" shows how firmly colonial values have become embedded in the minds of people.

Aziz, one of the main characters in *Hope and Other Dangerous Pursuits*, personifies the economic despair that pushes many people to put their lives in danger in the hopes of a better future. As a jobless young man in Casablanca, longs for a better life where he can provide for his wife more. He feels very perplexed by the emotional tension and underlying questions that surround his choice to leave Morocco in search of a better life elsewhere. In the conversation between him, his wife Zohra, and his friend Lahcen, Lalami writes,

> "And what about you?" Lahcen said, pointing at Zohra. "He's going to leave you behind?"
> "I'll be back in two or three years," Aziz said.
> "Haven't we all heard this before?" said Lahcen, his finger on his cheek in a gesture that made him look like a woman. "No one comes back."
> "I am coming back," Aziz said, his thumb on his chest.
> "He will," Zohra said. She took her handkerchief from the sleeve of her jellaba and blew her nose in it. Aziz felt his guilt at leaving her behind pick at him again, and he put his hand on her knee and squeezed it gently. (P.72)

Aziz's regret at leaving Zohra behind and his insistence on returning after two or three years illustrate the internal tension that many migrants go through between looking for chances abroad and staying devoted to their family and nation of origin. The ironic remark made by Lahcen, "No one comes back," reflects the common feeling and unease in postcolonial societies where migration often means a lifelong absence because of the limited opportunities at home brought about by the political and economic ramifications of colonialism. Aziz's guilt and Zohra's sorrowful yet supportive gesture illustrate the psychological costs of migration as a result of postcolonial conditions that force people to leave their families and communities behind. Such psychological complexity reveals the depth of the postcolonial unconscious,

where colonial legacies continue to inform individual and societal choices. In a greater historical and psychological struggle between the pain of separation and the need for self-betterment, Aziz's actions and sense of shame are part of the story.

Lalami's *The Moor's Account,* for its part, provides a multiplicity of identity representations in a colonial framework. The fact that Azemmur, the protagonist Mustafa's homeland, was under Portuguese colonial power, as well as his enslavement in Spain (Seville) and the New World (La Florida and Mexico), creates an ideal setting for writing a historical account concerning colonial times and his experience as a forcibly displaced migrant. Mustafa's journey from freedom to slavery and his subsequent struggle for agency and recognition represent the brutal realities of colonial oppression and the ways in which identity is manipulated and contested within these power structures.

Mustafa's complex identity as a Moroccan, Muslim, and slave in the hands of Christian invaders provides fertile ground for investigating the intersections of race, religion, and power. His tale, which reclaims the voice of a historically marginalized man, is a compelling counter-narrative to dominant historical accounts that frequently exclude the perspectives of the colonized. So, his role, from the beginning, is to "correct details of the history that was compiled by my companions, the three Castilian gentlemen known by the names of Andrés Dorantes de Carranza, Alonso del Castillo Maldonado, and especially Álvar Núñez Cabeza de Vaca, who delivered their testimony, what they called the Joint Report, to the Audiencia of Santo Domingo" (Lalami, 2015, prologue).

The role of Mustafa as the narrator, trying to "correct details of the history" recorded by his Spanish companions, is a critical engagement with the theme of the postcolonial unconscious, particularly in North African migrant fiction. By writing history from the perspective of a Moorish slave, he exposes the cultural and psychological marginalization of the colonized subject, which is an essential aspect of postcolonial consciousness. The official history, written by the "three Castilian gentlemen," reflected a Eurocentric narrative that distorted or misrepresented the realities of enslaved peoples. Mustafa's determination to restore his voice and correct the dominant narrative emphasizes the critical psychological requirement of addressing historical erasure and distortion, which are often internalized by the colonized.

Briefly, Mustafa's duty as a translator and intermediary between the Spaniards and Native Americans reveals the dual identity imposed on him, in which he must navigate between the oppressor's language and culture and his own. The postcolonial unconscious is visible in

his attempts to reclaim agency by providing his version of events, which subtly challenges official colonial narratives. His need to demonstrate his humanity and dignity, despite being continually reminded of his lesser status as a Moor and former slave, exemplifies the psychological conflict between submission and resistance. And, his feeling of a divided self, created by colonial processes, illustrates the long-lasting psychological wounds left by the colonial experience, a central issue of the postcolonial unconscious.

The Other Americans is a multidimensional novel that weaves together the lives of numerous individuals linked by the hit-and-run death of Driss Guerraoui, a Moroccan immigrant in a small California town. This story is also full of allusions to the theme of the postcolonial unconscious. It is told through multiple perspectives, including Nora, Driss's daughter, who returns home to uncover the truth about her father's death; Efraín, an undocumented witness; Maryam, Driss's grieving widow; Jeremy, Nora's former classmate and now a police officer; and Anderson, a neighbour with a complicated past. As the investigation progresses, themes of immigration, identity, familial relationships, and social conflicts emerge, showing the complex and often conflicting lives of those pursuing the American dream. Laila Lalami's novels highlight the complexities of migration, cultural conflict, and the search for identity, making her a crucial voice in North African migrant literature.

In this novel, Lalami depicts the postcolonial unconscious through the stories of immigrants and marginalized people who struggle with their identities in a racially and culturally changing American culture. Nora, the daughter of Moroccan immigrants, exemplifies the psychological dilemma of balancing her family's Moroccan history with her wish to integrate and assimilate into American life. The agony of relocation, cultural estrangement, and racial discrimination weigh heavily on her and other immigrant characters, reflecting the long-term consequences of colonial histories. The death of her father, Driss, emphasizes not just the immigrant fight for existence, but also the persistent sensation of not belonging in this society. Therefore, deeply rooted tensions between the past and the present face characters like Driss and Nora, whose identities and interactions with the outside world are still shaped by cultural domination and colonial hierarchies. Through its depiction of this unconscious colonial history which affects individual identities, goals, and interactions in a contemporary multicultural society, the novel exposes the postcolonial unconscious in their daily lives.

Lalami successfully communicates the political and racial prejudices that Muslim immigrants encounter, particularly in the wake of 9/11. Reflections Nora had throughout Baker's trial highlight the obvious disparities in the way justice is carried out, especially when Muslim immigrants are involved. Despite his history of hostility toward her father, Anderson Baker's mild $10,000 bail shows the systemic prejudice rooted in the legal system—prejudice that stems not only from personal bias but also from larger state policies and political ideologies that have always demonized Muslims[6], even before the 9/11 attacks. Nora's disappointment with the outcome of the trial illustrates the continuous fight for justice and acceptance that many Muslim immigrants experience in a culture that frequently criminalizes their identity. Thus, for example, as the judge delivered the verdict, Nora reflects,

> '"All right. Bail is set at $10,000."
> I turned to my mother in disbelief. "Mom, I think that's it. It's over."
> "What do you mean, it's over?"
> "I mean, it's done. He can post bail and be out before dinner."
> "He'll be free?"
> *Free*, yes. I buried my face in my hands. Perhaps if I had done a better job of explaining to Coleman and the D.A. the threat that Anderson Baker posed to my father, we might have seen a more serious charge. Or if Salma had come today and brought the twins with her, the outcome of the bond hearing might have been a little different. I was overwhelmed with the feeling that I had failed my father somehow. He hadn't even been mentioned in the proceedings; the focus had been on Baker's history and Baker's service and Baker's family, and so he'd received the benefit of the doubt. But if the roles had been reversed on the night of April 28, and Mohammed Driss Guerraoui had killed a man he'd been fighting with for many years, would he have been charged only with a count of hit-and-run? Would the D.A. have so readily agreed to bail? Growing up in this town, I had long ago learned that the savagery of a man named Mohammed was rarely questioned, but his humanity always had to be proven"' (pp. 164-65).

In this passage, Lalami delves deeply into the postcolonial unconscious as seen through a context of racial bias and the persistent effects of colonial ideologies. Nora's internal struggle is a reflection of the unseen but potent effects influencing her conception of justice and self in a society that still relies heavily on racial hierarchy. Racial superiority and inferiority ideologies from the colonial era are still present in contemporary legal and social systems, as confirmed by the fact that Mohammed Driss Guerraoui, Nora's father, would have probably faced harsher treatment in the same situation while Anderson Baker, a white man, is given the benefit of the doubt. In Fact, the colonial unconscious, that equates Western identities to civility and

[6] - Jack Shaheen critically analyzes how Arabs and Muslims are portrayed in Hollywood movies in his book *Reel Bad Arabs: How Hollywood Vilifies a People*. Shaheen elucidates the widespread negative stereotypes that portray Arabs as violent, uncivilized, and dangerous through an extensive analysis of more than 1,000 films. He contends that these damaging portrayals feed into prejudice and contribute to a false perception of Arab culture in Western nations.

humanity and non-Western identities—especially Muslim or Arab identities—with violence or savagery, is the source of this unfair treatment. The psychological burden that colonized people's descendants bear is brought to light by Nora's knowledge of these variables and conditions; it is an unconscious legacy of inferiority that must be continually fought against, even as it unintentionally moulds their experiences and sense of belonging. The fight to acknowledge her father's humanity is a fight against ingrained postcolonial ideas that still shape how marginalized people are viewed and treated.

Generally, Lalami's writing style encompasses so many components of the postcolonial theory in her literary works. Practically migrant fiction serves as a fertile ground for so many literary theories that go hand in hand with historical progression and ideological fluctuations. The postcolonial unconscious can widely get revealed in the capitalist and globalist framings of cultures, religions, values, and allegiances.

6. Conclusion

In conclusion, the historical rise of colonial ideologies and the strong establishment and fortification of Orientalist beliefs and ideologies have played a pivotal role in constructing the colonial subject as "the other." This process was reinforced by literature and culture, which served as effective instruments for both colonial domination and postcolonial resistance. As mentioned earlier, the framework of Orientalism not only shaped colonial discourse but also continues to inform postcolonial narratives, mainly North African migrant fiction. It is through this literary genre that we have witnessed and followed a counter-narrative in the form of "writing back" that aims at reclaiming agency, subverting dominant stereotypes, and exposing the deeply rooted, often unconscious colonial legacies that persist in the minds of both colonizers and the colonized.

Additionally, the concept of the postcolonial unconscious, particularly within the context of North African migrant fiction, illustrates a complicated interaction between memory, identity, and historical trauma. It is through our engagement with these texts, that we are able to see how literature both imagines and reflects the potential for healing and transformation as well as the psychological wounds left by migration and colonization. Lalami's *Hope and Other Dangerous Pursuits*, *The Moor's Account*, and *The Other Americans* are potent examples that highlight the challenges of marginalization and displacement as well as the lingering effects of colonial frameworks on individual and societal identities. The research presented here shows that postcolonial literature is crucial to comprehending both the ways that literary and cultural

expressions contribute to larger decolonial discourses and the long-lasting repercussions of colonialism.

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