

I. Critiquing French's Intention in *Days of Glory*

This research work unveils how Rachid Bouchereb's movie *Days of Glory* echoes the racial oppression and its resistance by the articulation of rebellious consciousness of the African people. By highlighting the role played by the North African colonial groups in the liberation of France during World War II, the movie helps to influence major public debates in France about the nation's colonial past and contemporary post-colonial immigrant minorities. Regardless of the obvious colonial and dominating overtones of *Days of Glory*, a critical lens of the "African Power" places the spotlight on the important ways in which North African soldiers who fight for France against the Nazis are acknowledged. In doing so, categorization of these soldiers as less valuable but taken as the best soldiers at the last part of the movie.

The director of the movie is Rachid Bouchereb who is from the Paris and his parents immigrated from Algeria. In the movie he has got a new level of success and renown. The story of a group of Algerian men who volunteer to fight in France during World War II, It is a gripping war film and a powerful tale of misplaced illusions and miscommunication. The film makes a huge impact in France. He directed the movie because he has always been caught up in the history of immigration. It is his family passed one of his uncle fought and lived through the Algerian war and his grandfather who fought in World War I. Because of the insertion of the Colonization, decolonization, immigration and all the men who made French history. So, he directs the World War II film, which focuses on North African who fought for France and was routinely given short shift. Not much time is spend tracing the back ground of the characters or even more importantly why they volunteer to serve the country ruling their own as colonizer. *Days of Glory* a gritty war film that reveals that even courageous military service can not erased the sharp edges of racism.

This is a film genre that shows World War II through the perspective of soldiers who have been historically sidelined in our eyes, with indigenous soldiers from Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia fighting alongside the French army but being made to suffer many forms of discrimination on a daily basis. The movie is about the North African soldiers and their involvement and contribution to the war effort. It begins with a tribal chieftain in the Atlas mountain of Algeria calling the man of his village to come to the aid of France. Four young men are among the volunteers who remain the stars through out the movie. The four get trained and face the battle. The characters have different motivations, one a young fellow wants to prove himself. Another is patriotically pro-French, but falls in love with a white French girl. A third one is interested in loot. The last one is an idealist, demanding equal promotion, food and the respect from a white French military. Three of them die in the battle for the sake of France and the fourth one who survives the battle demands the equality. *Days of Glory* depicts the discrimination within the Free French Forces against colonial North African soldiers, who are treated as second class citizens despite fighting for the liberation of France. Focusing on the exploits of a group of Berber soldiers from Africa, the film offers a disturbing portrayal of the injustices forced upon these men, including one shocking episode in which, in the midst of a battle, it becomes clear that North African soldiers are being used as cannon fodder by their commanding officers. Bouchareb's poignant depiction of the suffering of these soldiers and the deeply discriminatory military establishment offers a prism through which to examine the modern day discrimination of immigrants in France. His film has a profound impact on public discourse in France, and helps to bring about a change in the way North African veterans were viewed. The Africans are sent north, and things go wrong again. Their white comrades get promotion, while they do not

they are not allowed to visit their families; their love letters to Frenchwomen are censored; and, to top it all off, they're made to watch a ballet. ("What's this shit?" asks one.) Most of this is accurate enough, though the historian has been unable to confirm the bit about the ballet. Meanwhile, the Nazis drop leaflets in Arabic, telling them they will be treated well if they surrender. In real life, that is not guaranteed. Though there was no formal order to do so, German troops – who usually stuck with the Geneva Convention when they captured British or French soldiers – occasionally massacred African prisoners of war. By 2006, this meant Africans are getting less than one-tenth of what the Frenchmen who had fought alongside them were paid. After the screening of *Days of Glory*, Jacques Chirac, the then president of France, was apparently moved to even up the pensions of African veterans.

A film about North Africans fighting the Nazis in the Second World War has reopened old wounds about France's attitude to its former colony, Algeria. This passage came to mind as watching the opening scene of *Days of Glory*, a new film tracing the drama of four North African men who fight to free France from German occupation during the Second World War. A tribal chieftain walks through his village, rousing young men from their homes and urging them to take up arms for France. It is 1943, and De Gaulle's Free French are attempting to raise an army of young men from its colonial subjects to fight for a "homeland" few have ever seen. The recruiter shouts that his villagers must help throw the Nazis out of France: "We must wash the French flag in our blood. (Said)

Rachid Bouchareb's movie 2006 portraits of the forgotten heroes of the Free French army are not just accurate, it's important. After serving as a cannon fodder during the Italian campaign, the surviving troops sail for Provence. In the ship's mess, there's a nice-looking box of tomatoes. The pale-skinned North Africans help

themselves but, when a darker West African picks one, the cook growls: "No tomatoes for you". The Africans are sent north and things go wrong again. Their white comrades get allowed, while they don not, their love letters to French women are censored. The pensions of African veterans were frozen in the late 1950s, when their colonies independent, while those of French nationals continued to rise with inflation. This meant Africans were getting less then one-tenth of what the French men who had fought alongside them were paid.

This research not only exposes how the White French activity constructs the intended hierarchy where the North African soldiers are seen as more objects but it also presumes that these African soldiers, at that time were taken as inferior in the colonial discourse. In this connection, this thesis argues that the glory and bravery of the North African soldiers, shown now in the movie, tend to threaten the white man's masculine cultural legacy. To save their honor they bring the discourse of colonialism to justify their superiority while radicalizing the Africans. The primary objective of the study is to pit the postcolonial discourse of resistance against the hegemonic representation of Africans in a Colonial narrative in *Days of Glory* in context of real post-colonial and self ruled Africa now. Through a critical analysis it tries to establish that the Africans were very brave and risked their lives to save France from Nazism. But they are not treated as equals because of the color of their skin. Thus, this study aims at deconstructing the binaries centrally located in the then white men's psychology in recently made (2006) Bouchereb's movie. By doing so the study also aims at acknowledging the importance of the Africans in the mission to liberate France from Nazism. Although this study makes significant use of concepts developed in post-colonial theory and racism, it does not offer a comprehensive analysis of North Africans as the primary troops to make the victory. Given the nature

of the research, available time and resources, this study does not offer an analysis of Bouchereb's own relationship with the state and the soldiers, even though such an analysis would definitely contribute towards the complex relationship between the White and the North African soldiers.

Racism can be defined as a way of thinking that tries to link a group's unchangeable physical characteristics to its mental and moral characteristics. On the basis of the physical features, it distinguishes between 'superior' and 'inferior' racial groups. Racism is a way of thinking and discrimination and its practice. Racism is generally known as the predication of decisions and policies on consideration of race for the purpose of subordinating a racial group and maintaining control over that group. "Race has been a cause of more misunderstanding and human suffering than anything else that can be associated with a single word in language"(Brace 116). It is in fact a prejudice conditioned by perceptions. In America it has been the practice toward the black man. The practice as such is seen in two levels- individual and community. In individual level, individual whites act against individual blacks and in community level the total community acts against the black community. The first is related to death, injury or the violent destruction of property whereas the latter is less destructive of human life and originates in the operation of established and respected forces in the society, and this receives far less public condemnation than the first type.

Race, may have political implication as well, particularly pertinent to rise of colonialism, because the division of human society in this way is inextricable from the need of colonialist power to establish dominance over subject people and hence justify the imperial enterprise. Race thinking and colonialism are imbued with the same impetus to draw a binary distinction between civilized and primitive and the same necessity for the hierarchization of human type. It is a project which dramatizes

the logic of discriminatory treatment of colonial Africans hidden, under the glory of French nationalism, by the white French as shown in the movie. French racist attitude towards North African in the military branches and the concept of other has been presented in the movie. Though the North African soldiers have been dominated before the war they were taken as the best soldiers at the time of battle, but again were humiliated after the war. Said an impoverished goat herder joins the seventh Algerian Tirailleurs Regiment, with him are several other barber men, including Yassir, who is seeking booty, so that he can return home and his brother can marry; Messaoud who wants marry and settle in France and Corporal who is fighting for the equality and rights of colonized Algerians.

The concept of racial improvement along with the development of the theory of Social Darwinism with the civilizing mission of imperial ideology which encourages colonial powers to take up the "white-man's burden and rise of the condition of the inferior races" (Key Concept of Post-Colonial Study, 201), who were idealized as childlike and malleable. As stated above in the movie, four young soldiers who belong to North African at first taken as the inferior and weren't given any equal right and promotions but at last, these soldiers were idealized and taken as the unsung heroes of the battle. As the term racism defines as a way of thinking that considers groups unchangeable physical characteristics to be linked in a direct, causal way to psychological or intellectual characteristics and which on the basis distinguishes between superiors and inferiors, we can see the discriminatory treatment of Colonial Africans by the White French in the movie *Days of Glory*.

In his preface to *The Damned of the Earth*, Frantz Fanon analyses the psychopathology of colonial rule, Jean-Paul Sartre wrote of how Europeans made their subjects complicit in their imperial projects. "The European elite undertook to

create elite of natives; they selected adolescents, branded their foreheads with the principles of western culture, as with a red hot iron, and filled their mouths with big pasty words that stuck to their teeth." 'Race' is word, first used in the English language in 1508 in a poem by William Dunbar, and through the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries it remained essentially a literary word denoting a class of persons or things. It was only in the late eighteenth century that the term came to mean a distinct category of human beings with physical characteristics transmitted by descent. Humans had been categorized by Europeans on physical grounds from the late 1600s, when François Bernier postulated a number of distinctive categories, based largely on facial character and skin color. Soon a hierarchy of groups (not yet termed races) came to be accepted, with white Europeans at the top. The Negro or black African category was usually relegated to the bottom, in part because of black Africans' colour and allegedly 'primitive' culture, but primarily because they were best known to Europeans as slaves.

The struggle of African- Americans for their human and social rights became one of the most important themes in the twentieth century American history. Though Abraham Lincoln abolished slavery system of blacks, their position in American society remained very bad. African-Americans achieved the literary development in the forms of protest literature, autobiography, sermons, songs and poetry. Booker T. Washington, educator and prominent black leader of his day grew up as a slave. He became popular for his relentless efforts to better the lives of African-Americans. His autobiography, "Up from Slavery" recounts his experience as slave. W.E.B. Bois in his essay "Of Mr. Booker T. Washington and Others" praised African-Americans culture and tradition. Of mixed white and black ancestry, James Weldon Johnson examines the complex issue of race in his fictional "Autobiography of an Ex-colored

Man”. The 1911 Universal Race Congress Organized in London demonstrated liberal thought and focused on ‘monogenism’ the idea that there is only one species of man living on earth today.

As this study dramatizes the logic of the discriminatory treatment of the Colonial Africans by the White French as shown in *Days of Glory*. French racist attitude towards North African in the military branch and the concept of other has been presented in the movie. Though the North African military force has been dominated before the war but they were taken as the best soldiers at the time of battle. By exposing the discrimination and narrating the past history more sympathetically towards the Africans, the movie exposes the evils of the racist attitude of French rulers towards the North Africans in official history that only glorifies French’s war.

The first chapter of the thesis is introductory chapter which includes the white French’s sketch in the movie *Days of Glory*. It is an articulation of the rebellious consciousness of the Africans. Racism is used while analyzing the movie. the term ‘race’ primarily deals with the concept of black and white, superior and inferior The simple fact of “whiteness” means the overall life, fortune, and destiny of white people. White people enjoyed wide latitude of opportunities, personal freedom and democratic rights protected by state. Even though poor American-born and immigrant whites were viciously exploited by rich white people, they were not on the bottom. The bottom was reserved for Indians, black, and other people of colour. It exposes how the white French activity constructs the intended hierarchy and the Africans are made objects. Anti-colonial resistance has been presented in the movie by highlighting the role played by the North African in the movie. The second chapter includes the whole textual analysis of the movie where the discrimination and the subversion in the movie with textual evidence has been presented and proved with some theoretical ideas. The whole evidences have been brought in the second chapter with relevant ideas. The third or conclusion chapter argues that the glory and bravery of the North African soldiers tend to threaten the white men’s cultural legacy to justify their superiority.

II. French's Sketch in *Days of Glory*

The present research attempts to analyze how the movie *Days of Glory* can be used to rewrite the oppressive history of the Europeans Whites, and to reconstruct the history of racially oppressed and misrepresented colonial blacks. The post colonial discourse of subversion and resistance against the hegemonic representation of Africans in a colonial period has been dramatized in the narrative of the movie. So the research attempts to find out how the cultural texts like movies can be used to rewrite the oppressive history of the European Whites and reconstruct the history of racially oppressed and misrepresented colonial blacks.

The movie is based on the IIInd world war, when the France is under the colony of German. German Nazis occupy the nation France and French are hegemonized by the Germans. To liberate the France from German occupation, France needs very brave soldiers. So, they bring the soldiers from North Africa. Through the analysis, the Africans are very honor and devotee to save France from Nazism, but they are not treated as equals because of the colour of their skin. In the movie, White French activity constructs the intended hierarchy where the North African soldiers are seen as mere objects. With a tortured mentality, they fight with France against German with lots of energy and devotion. At last, they free t France from the German colonization. Without the help of African soldiers, it is not possible to liberate France and get victory over Nazism. Africans do not get equal pensions as the French. Their pensions are frozen. But later the French government provides the pensions for the Africans after realizing their contribution. After the II World War, the history is written from the perspective of the white French but no credit is given to the African. In the history it is written that the white French make the France free but the Africans are forgotten. So, to subvert the history, the movie *Days of Glory* comes

to the market at 2006. The movie gives justice to the African soldiers who fought bravely in the battle to liberate France. After the movie, the people know that the glory and bravery of the African soldiers are forgotten. To give the justice to the African, people start to rewrite the history from the perspective of Africans.

So, the director of the movie Rachid Bouchereb tries to do justice to the Africans by bringing the movie in the market. So, this thesis attempts to subvert the history of the French and reconstruct the history of blacks who are suppressed and misrepresented in the colonial narrative in the movie.

While analyzing the movie from the first part, Said is an important character in the movie that shows the great devotion to liberate the France from German Nazism in the II world war. The movie begins with a tribal chieftain in the Atlas mountain of Algeria calling the man of his village to come to the aid of France. Four young men are among the volunteers and they remain the stars through out the movie. Three of them die in the battle for the sake of France and the fourth one survives alone. Days of Glory depicts the discrimination with in the free French forces against colonial North African soldiers, who are treated as second class citizens despite fighting for the liberation of France. Focusing on the exploitation of a group of Berber soldiers from Algeria and Tunisia, this film offers a disturbing portrayal of the injustices forced upon these men. In the midst of the battle, it becomes clear that North African soldiers are being used as cannon fodder by their commanding officers. Bouchereb's poignant depiction of the suffering of these soldiers and the deep discrimination of the immigrants in France touches the heart of people. The discrimination starts from the first part of the movie. Though the Africans have the deep courage and devotion to save the France, they are treated as inferior. The great contribution of African can be seen from the under mentioned paragraph.

The conversation between mother and son (Said) shows latter's courage and devotion towards France. Said is planning to go to the war and save France from German Nazism for money. With the innocent face, mother convinces her son not to go to the war but the son is convincing his mother. Here the picture shows the great love and affection of mother towards the son.



Fig.1 Mother- Son Affection

In the above mentioned picture mother and son showing their affection to each other. Mother convinces her son not to go to the battle but the son ignores her words. She says that she prefers the worse poverty rather than going to the battle, which shows the affection and love to each other.

This picture came to mind as watching the opening scene of *Days of Glory*, a new film tracing the drama of four North African men who fight to free France from German occupation during the Second World War. A tribal chieftain walks through his village, rousting young men from their homes and urging them to take up arms for France.

Said: We must rid France from German occupation.

Come along! Come along with me!

We must wash the French flag with our blood!

Come wit me!

Let's have the men out!

We must liberate France!

Liberate her!

We must save France from this situation.

Come on!

Mother: Said, come back

Be reasonable.

Come back inside.

Your grandfather never comes back. From the first half. (02:38-03:37)

He has great eagerness to fight with France against the Nazism. While requesting her son not to go to the battle, she says that she prefers the worst poverty rather than her son going to the war, which indicates great love and affection towards the son. By rejecting all words of his mother, Said insists to go to the war. We do learn that Said comes from a poor family and breaks his mother's heart by putting his life on the line. We can only surmise that others volunteered for service for the pay or the adventure

Said: Don't worry about me mother. I want to help France. I can manage.

Mother: They will kill you. I prefer the worst poverty to losing you.

Said: You put up with too much. Please let me go. I will be all right mother.

Pray for me. From the first half (03:39-04:05)

Rather than accepting the mother's proposal, Said denies staying at home and prefers to go to the war to liberate France from German occupation. His words like "we must rid France of the German occupation, we must wash the French flag with our blood" show his courage and devotion towards the France but they were taken as inferiors.

The discrimination against them in training and other opportunities offered by white French, the North Africans are forced to live under the depressed status. After

the discrimination in training all Africans united together and sing a song. The unification of the African soldiers and their commitment can be seen through their song. The below mentioned song shows their togetherness and the love towards France. Colonizers had injected such a psychology even in the Africans that to fight for French nationalism is their duty. They injected such a psychology that Africans are made to serve the country France and the people of France.

“We are the men of Africa. We come here from afar.

We have come from the colonies, to save the fatherland.

We have left behind, our families and homes.

And our hearts are full of invincible favor

For we wish to bear high and proud.

The cherished flag of sweet France.

Should someone try to part us.

We are here to die at her feet.

Drums roll to make our love.

For our country and land.

We have come from afar to die,

We are the men of Africa. From the first half (06:51-07:26)

In the above sung song, the Africans are praising their unity and their nation. This shows the togetherness among the Africans. By putting their love for their parents and children, they come to save their fatherland. By the discrimination upon the African soldiers, the white French want to use them as an object and divide them into the different groups. White French take them as civilized and the Africans as primitive. So, the under mentioned theory proves the discrimination upon the blacks.

The North African soldiers come under the command of Sergeant Martinez, who speaks well of his men to his superiors but rarely mentions anything positive to them on a day-to-day basis. When his aide-de-camp is killed in the first serious military campaign in Italy, he chooses Said for the job, which is nothing more than being his servant. The two men from different worlds try to relate to each other, but when Said sees a picture of Martinez's mother and suggests that she could be the sister of his mother, his boss's racism flares up in ugly fashion.

So, Race is particularly pertinent to the rise of colonialism, because the division of human society in this way is inextricable from the need of colonialist power to establish dominance over subject peoples and hence justify the imperial enterprise. Race thinking and colonialism are imbued with the same impetus to draw a binary distinction between 'civilized' and 'primitive' and the same necessity for the hierarchization of human type. (Key Concept of Post-colonial studies 198)

White French believed that many Africans are poor, uneducated and deficient in health, moral, and manners and thus disagree as social companions. It is also pointed out that blacks are different in physical. Beside their beliefs regarding on Negro inferiority, these are a great number of other popular thoughts that black like to be separate that they are happy in their humble status and wouldn't like to be treated as equals. Another idea with the same function is that the separation is necessary in order to prevent friction between the two groups. But these beliefs are being questioned by the Africans in the movie *Days of Glory* appearance even if they have the same basic mental capacity and moral propensities. by showing glory and bravery in the war to make the others (White's) country free from the German Nazism. As mentioned above the discrimination and suffering can be seen in distribution the food.



Fig.2 Tomato Injustice

After serving as cannon fodder during the Italian campaign, the surviving troops sail for Provence. In the ship's mess, there's a nice-looking box of tomatoes. The pale-skinned North Africans help themselves but, when a darker West African picks one, the cook growls: "No tomatoes for you." Outraged, our hero – an Algerian – stomps the tomatoes into mush. Martinez explains to the captain: "They're ready to die for us, sir, but any injustice will cause mutiny." Or the lesser offence of tomato destruction. "You know the natives," sighs the captain. Martinez: "Avoid that term, sir." Captain: "The Muslims." Martinez: "That's as bad." Captain: "So what do I call them?" Martinez: "The men, sir. The men." Touché! Race-blind tomato distribution is accordingly brought to the Free French army. Corporal Abdelkader distinguishes himself as a natural born leader but his ability to fire up his men over injustices against them makes it impossible for the French to promote him. In one incident, the North Africans are told they cannot have tomatoes for dinner whereas the French soldiers can, and they rebel. The commander listens to the Corporal's explanation of the upset and says everyone can

French: No tomatoes for u.

Soldier: Why?

French: They are not for u, move!

Soldier: (with angry manner) what do you mean?

Corporal: Why aren't the tomatoes for everyone?

Soldier: We want tomatoes too, corporal is right.

Surgeon to soldier: Shut up your mouth.

Surgeon to corporal: You aren't happy?? From the first half (27:21-28:12)

Corporal takes a bucket of tomatoes and throws in the floor to revolt against the discriminatory treatment to the North African soldiers, who are fighting as the same manner as the French soldiers do; but they are not given equal food and deny serving the tomatoes too. So, the under mentioned theory wants to prove that the notion of Negro race is really inferior.

The notion of Negro race is inferior race which lacks social organization and social action, social fellow feeling, originality of thought and artistic qualities and shows no tendency toward higher development; the Negro race is powerful in physique, strong and normal in intellect and has not achieved a higher social and intellectual civilization, reflect the racist attitude. The principle of Race orthodoxy like "the white race must dominate; the negro is inferior and will remain so, this is a white man's country; no social equality; no political equality; let there be such industrial education of the negro as will best fit to serve the white man; let the lowest white man count for more than the highest negro" (Racism 16) are the essentials of racial creed and action, says Prof. Thomas Pearce Bailey. Regarding this Stonley Carmichael and Charles V. Hamilton say, "Racist assumptions of

white superiority have been so deeply engrained into the fiber of the society that they infuse the entire functioning of the national subconscious....”(Black Power 31).

In the above mentioned theory it is said that blacks are really inferior to that of white. Though they are powerful, they do not achieve any intellectuality and civilization. Whites’ think that they should dominate Blacks and their culture. Rather than giving motivation to the black soldiers, the French make discrimination while serving the food and giving promotions to the North African soldiers. Regardless of the obvious colonial and dominating overtones of *Days of Glory*, a critical lens of the African power places the spotlight on the very important ways in which African soldiers who fought for France against the Nazis are Yassir, Larbi, Messauod, and Said. Bouchereb’s categorization of these soldiers as less valuable and set their anti-colonial resistance in opposition to the colonial ideology.

The discovery of New World i.e. America by Christopher Columbus brought lots of changes in the perception of the people in the new land; “This accident of the history of the perception of the human differences produced the race concepts as it is now generally held” (Brace 116). During the Elizabethan period, Negro was defined as “black, ugly, cruel, sexual, rampant, and barely human” (Salgado xiii). It is certainly from the eighteenth century that we can trace the following in a number of European societies of writings about race, and the emergence of what we call racism. During the eighteenth and nineteenth century lots of social, economic, intellectual, and political change took place in the global scenario. The growth of invasions, conquests, and migrations gave birth to a heterogeneous world population. The term ‘race’ became much more poignant during the colonial period when the people of different places came into contact with each other. The division of human society in

the name of race is inextricable from the need of colonialist power to establish dominance over subject people, and hence justify the imperial enterprise. It provides impetus to draw a binary between ‘civilized’ and ‘primitive’ and the same necessity for the hierarchization of human types. It quickly became one of imperialism’s most supportive ideas to fulfill their imperial mission: dominance and enlightenment. Thus, the study of racial doctrines and ideologies took new mode during post-enlightenment period and reached its high point during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and it was defined according to the idea that “races embodied a package of fixed physical and mental traits”(Bulmer and Solomos 8) .

The twentieth century has brought a significant change in the theoretical attitude to race. The 1911 Universal Races of Congress organized in London demonstrated liberal thought and focused on ‘monogenism’ the idea that there is only one species of man living on earth today. Modern scientists, according to Kyame Anthony Appiah, “believe that such classification as Negro, Caucasian, and Mongoloid are of no importance for biological purposes” (277). Modern science doesn’t believe in racial difference. The 1951 UNESCO statement of the Race and Racial Differences pointed out that:

Race, even from the strict biological standpoint, could at most refer to a group with certain distinctive gene concentrations. The statement asserts that mental characteristics should never be included in such classifications and that environment is far more important than inherited genetic factors in shaping behavior

However, in the 1960s, there was a sudden rise in biological thinking about human behavior. The writers such as Lorenz, Morris, and Andry asserted that personal

behavior was chiefly controlled by ancient instincts that could be modified by culture. This gave the way for a sudden increase in race thinking in popular science in the 1970s.

The Africans are sent north, and things go wrong again. Their white comrades get promoted, while they do not; they are not allowed to visit their families; their love letters to Frenchwomen are censored; and, to top it all off, they're made to watch a ballet. ("What's this shit?" asks one.) Most of this is accurate enough, though the historian has been unable to confirm the bit about the ballet. Meanwhile, the Nazis drop leaflets in Arabic, telling them they will be treated well if they surrender. In real life, that is not guaranteed. Though there was no formal order to do so, German troops – who usually stuck with the Geneva Convention when they captured British or French soldiers – occasionally massacred African prisoners of war, including up to 600 Senegalese on 9-10 June 1940 in Oise.



Fig.3 Getting to Know You

The picture shows the position held by the whites among the blacks. The white French girl is sitting on the top and the African soldier who is pleading her for love, being under her. The picture shows Said is pleading her for love and he is putting his next hand on her foot which shows a kind of domination and discrimination prevailing there. The camera is focusing the girl more than the soldier.

More seriously the North African soldiers are never allowed to visit their families or recognized for putting their lives on the line. Said's devotion to Martinez for saving his life, his broken promises made to Abdelkader from on high are the ultimate betrayal as the Algerian troops play a crucial role in the liberation of Alsace. This battle in the movie's most intense scene, made personal by the resonating words of Said spoken earlier in the film, "if I free a country, it's my country, even if, I have never seen it before, it's my country."

Irane: Messoud, you will come back?

Messoud: Yes I promise, I come back, Wait for me.

Irane: yes.

Said: I never loved a girl like this. I want to marry her, have kids and make a family

Said to Surgeon; me too missing my home. I like to go leave to see my

Mother. From the first half (42:33-43:54)

Messoud falls in love with the French girl named Irane and he promises that he will be back and remain with her forever. Said also falls in a love with a girl and wants to return back to home to meet his mother. Yassir wants to help French to revolt against that when he was a little, the French soldiers killed his whole family and with the pacification, he is serving the France. Both Messoud and Said want to marry the French girls but the society does not allow them to take the French women. As the war continues, so do other slights. Messaoud meets a French woman in Province and spends a romantic evening with her. They promise to write but the French censor the North Africans' mail and throw his letters away. While in France, the men are treated

to an entertainment which turns out to be a ballet. They are offended by seeing a woman so scantily dressed on the stage and storm out of the room. In another telling scene, the Germans drop pamphlets on a field saying that the North Africans should come over to their side and be free of oppression. So Harris and Ordone say,

The social division along the colour line crossed class, nationality, language and religious barriers. The simple fact of “whiteness” meant the overall life, fortune, and destiny of white people [...] white people were exempt from slavery, land grab, and genocide the first from of white privilege. White enjoyed wide latitude of opportunities, personal freedom, and democratic rights protected by state. Even though poor American –born and immigrant whites were viciously exploited by rich white people, they were not on the bottom. The bottom was reserved for Indians, black, and other people of colour. (27-28).

The whites establish a system of privilege in terms of oppression and exploitation. The history of whites begins with the grabbing of lands from the blacks and enforces the Afro-Americans to cultivate the land. Without giving any credit to the North African soldiers, these peasants answer the French call to liberate the fatherland from the Nazi’s occupation.



Fig.4 Continental Divide in Days of Glory

The Africans are sent north, and things go wrong again. Their white comrades get promoted, while they do not; they are not allowed to visit their families; their love letters to Frenchwomen are censored; and, to top it all off, they are made to watch a ballet. ("What's this shit?" asks one.) Most of this is accurate enough, though the historian has been unable to confirm the bit about the ballet. Meanwhile, the Nazis drop leaflets in Arabic, telling them they will be treated well if they surrender. In real life, that was not guaranteed. Though there was no formal order to do so, German troops – who usually stuck with the Geneva Convention when they captured British or French soldiers – occasionally massacred African prisoners of war, including up to 600 Senegalese on 9-10 June 1940 in Oise.

French commander: it looks ugly. It will be even worse in there; it will be tougher than Italy. But I have faith in you to liberate your homeland. The French have placed their fate in our hands and are watching us with eyes full of hopes. We have to be up there by dark. And, even dead, we shall be! Even dead!

Sergeant: The French get promotion before anyone from North Africa.

Captain: you are doing good work. I will put you up for promotion.

Sergeant: I don't want it. My men deserve it as much as me.

Corporal Abdelkadar, for instance. From the first half (55:16-55:28)

The white French convince the Africans as said that you are honor and brave and you should help the France with lots of bravery because the French people are expecting and hoping lots from you. Here, white French activity constructs the intended hierarchy that the African suffers from poverty, illiteracy, oppression, fear, and lack of identity. The proms of racial discrimination are deeply presented in the movie *Days of Glory*. So these soldiers take such protests as a means to fight against the problems of racism. Not only the racial suppression and discrimination with in the military force there is also the racial conflict. The same Africans who are from the North Africa ethnically Christians are promoted but the Muslims are not given equal rights and opportunities as well as the promotion. The intended represents all the white French who are fighting with the North Africans to show the superiority and the Africans are rebelling against their superiority. Although usage of the term 'race' to classify various types of human being have been traced somehow earlier in a number of European languages, the development of racial doctrines and ideologies begins to take shape in the late eighteenth century, and reached its high point during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. This is, of course, not to say that the category of race was not used in earlier times. It is from the turn of the nineteenth

century that race formed an important body of literary writing. Thus, genetically a race may be defined as a group with gene frequencies differing from those of the other groups in the human species. But even this heredity differences turns out to be quite minimum when it is compared to a vast number of genes common to all human beings regardless of the race to which they belong. Bill Ashcroft defines race as:

A term for the classification of human beings into physically, biologically and genetically distinct groups. The notion of race assumes, firstly, that humanity is divided into unchanging natural types, recognizable by physical features that are transmitted 'through the blood' and permit distinctions to be made between 'pure' and 'mixed' races. (198)

Actually the movie is based on the II World War that happened in the mid nineteenth century. The experience of the second world war and the knowledge of the consequence of Hitler's 'final solution' to the 'Jewish question' led to knew initiatives after 1945 to try to prevent the discourse of 'race' from being used for similar political purpose in the future. The most significant event was undertaken by UNESCO in 1950s. The fourth UNESCO statement defines racism as a falsification of the scientific knowledge about human biology: "Racism falsely claims that there is a scientific basis for arranging groups hierarchically in terms of psychological and cultural characteristics that are immutable and innate" (qtd. Miles 348). Thus, this statement on race, took the lead in arguing that biologists should abandon the race concept in dealing with human variation because the assumptions embedded in common social usage made it unsuitable for scientific discourse.

Racism takes new shape due to interference of different social, political, and cultural institution in course of time and instead of following a notion of singularity, it encompasses diverse scholarly ideas which has been shaped and determined by several power politics. The contemporary form of racism is defined in terms of culture and identity which is shaped by the discourse like nationalism or patriotism, xenophobia, gender differences etc. the social and political upheaval of the '60s and 70s paved way to the post modern liberal and multicultural society.

African soldiers are misbehaved by the staff sergeant when they are talking about the equality on food and everywhere. They always use the word 'wog' for the African to call them the man without having the brain. The same fighters are promoted but for the North African, there are limited quotas for promotion. Rather than giving courage and motivation to the soldiers, they are misbehaved by the whites who indicate the great injustices upon the North African soldiers.

Abdalkar: I thought the war would give us the rights of our French brothers. We all are fighting against Hitler for liberty, equality and fraternity. Things must change for us.

Surgeon: You keep stirring up all the time. The French reward themselves then you French North Africans. And the Africans are forgotten.

There are quotas.

Abdalkar: Quotas? Why didn't u tell us??

Surgeon: You can't understand, so shut up and step down.

Abdalkar: Why can't I understand? A wog has less of a brain than you?

Surgeon: Wogs aren't cut out to lead men.

Abdalkar: The day will come, sergeant. From the second half

(01:08:01-01:09:14)

African soldiers are really misbehaved by the white French. No equality on the battle and also the separation of quotas for the promotion. Who does the best in the war is not promoted because of the quota system. The white French's intention is to discriminate Africans in every event. So, they play the politics upon the African soldiers. Here they apply the concept of New racism'. New racism sees the race not as biological issue or heredity but as culture product. At the surface level, it doesn't believe in the superiority of one race of people over the others but 'only' harmfulness of abolishing frontiers. But its main ethos is to segregate the other than the people of one's own race. "The new racism is primarily concerned with mechanism of exclusion or inclusion" (Gilroy 250). It has not diminished the gap between the meanings used in the past centuries to the present century. Immanuel Kant in his *Observation on the Feeling of the Beautiful and Sublime* (1764) used the German phrase for 'races of mankind'. It was probably the first explicit use of the term for the classification of human beings into biologically or physically distinct groups. Debates about whether human variation was caused by descent or environment continued violently throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The biological science ascended in the nineteenth century. So, descent emerged as the predominant model of human distinctiveness. Despite scientific base and application, the notion 'race' has

established the simplest model of human variation-color difference. Colour becomes the means of distinguishing and identifying human being.

Likewise they also taught that the Afro-American is less human because he has “an oval skull, flat forehead, snout-like jaws, swollen lips, broad, flat nose, short crimped hair, calf less legs, highly elongated heels, and flat feet” (Ellis 13). Thus, exaggerating the deformities as set by the white standard, they try to give performance and stability to the false doctrine of natural Afro-American inferiority. They are heroes that history has forgotten. These African soldiers are sent to the snowy Alsace against a German battalion. The very danger and risked job is given to the Africans to save the people of Alsace, who are under attack and require reinforcement and ammunition. While sending them to the Alsace, French call them the brave and well experienced because that was very dangerous mission. But the Africans are very loyal to the France so they readily accept the proposal of the officer and ready to fight with their body and soul as they have already done.



Fig.5 Revelation of Days of Glory

They are heroes that history has forgotten. Actually they free France with their great devotion and make the France as the independent country and the days of glory have come. Colonel Abdelkader enlisted because he believed in French leader Charles

DeGaulle's call to create a country where liberty, equality, and fraternity reigned. But as the war escalates, it becomes increasingly difficult for him to believe in this ideal, especially when his men are denied a leave to return home after fighting so fiercely. He takes his troops on a dangerous mission in Alsace believing that it will earn him a promotion and win his men the respect they deserve.

Officer: People of Alsace are under attack and require reinforcements and ammunition. We must hold this bridgehead, until the general attack due and day. Captain Durieux needs brave men and man of experience.

It's very dangerous mission.

Abdalker: I will volunteer for it, sir.

French colonel: Corporal I give you my words of honor. The rewards for yourself and all the brave men. You will be the first to reach Alsace.

All of France will watch and remember you.

Abdalkar: I shall fight with my body and soul as I have always done.

From the second half (01:12:23-01:13:06)

So, racism is an ideology of racial domination based on beliefs that a designated racial group is either biologically or culturally inferior and the use of such beliefs to rationalize or prescribe the racial group's treatment in society, as well as to explain its social position and accomplishment. Bill Ashcroft defines it as, "a way of thinking that considers a group's unchangeable physical characteristics to be linked in a direct, casual way to psychological or intellectual characteristics, and which on this basis distinguishes between 'superior' and 'inferior' racial groups"(199). In short, it is a belief system or a set of implicit assumption about the superiority of one's own race

or ethnic group other than that of one's own. Thus ,it is a discrimination made by a group of people on the basis of race, colour, religion, or culture and the discrimination itself is the product of prejudice and stereotypical mode of thoughts or assumptions that “attempts to classify humanity according to the idea that ‘races’ embodied a package of fixed physical and mental traits”(Bulmer and Solomos 8).

On the way to Alsace, white French are guiding the battalion that shows the ignorance of Africans. Without any guider the Africans don not know the way to Alsace. On the way to Alsace the captain, Leroux, Larbi as well as other two got rest for the sake of France. Yassir had given his brother Larbi on the feet of France. Other soldiers are denying going to the Alsace because of the fear to be dead but Abdalkar wants to contribute France for the sake of name and fame (to be the first man to reach Alsace). Abdalkar is persuading the other friends from Africa to go Alsace not to be back home empty-handed. They all hope that there will be all right at the end.



Fig.6 Dying for Dreams.

In 1959, a law was passed to freeze the pensions of the infantry men from former French colonies about to become independent. In 2002, after an endless hearing the French government was ordered to pay the pensions full. But the successive governments have pushed back this payment. The pensions of African veterans were frozen in the late 1950s when their colonies became independent, while

those of French nationals continued to rise with inflation. By 2006, this meant Africans were getting less than one-tenth of what the Frenchmen who had fought alongside them were paid.

Said: Our comrades are dead. Thanks to God. We are still alive.

Yassir is right, we must be back.

Abdalkar: You don't understand a thing. We are doing our duty by going to Alsace. Even if we pay 10 or 100 times more, we will pay and they will recognize us. What's wrong with you Yassir? You want go home empty-handed? We see it through the end. Larbi, rest his soul, won't have died on vain. From the second half (01:18:48-01:19:41)

Racism is a broader term which encompasses the element of history, culture and ethnicity. It involves the superiority of one group, ethnicity or its cultural practices over the other because the entitled inferior group lacks the set of criteria as prescribed by the privileged group. In course of social dealing, racism exists both in conscious and unconscious level. Forming an instant fixed idea of a group and to associate the genetic traits to social characteristics is a false notion, usually based on false or incomplete information.

Though the North African Soldiers are often relegated to the margins in the film, they are vitally important as they illustrate the contradictory representation of the Colonized subject. Darwin's *The Origin of Species* natural selection now offered a mechanism for species alternation-either the superiors races might be contaminated through contact with the inferior or deliberate human intervention might maximize the benefits of selection and advance the emergence of pure races. As said by Darwin, the

White French were taking the benefits from the so called inferior North Africans to make the France independent. The concept of racial improvement concurred with the civilizing mission of imperial ideology thus, encouraged Colonial powers to take up the “White Master Burden”. Gavin Burke highlights the contradiction in the movie. Donal Lynch says” The focus of this film is very much in the particular injustice, but watching *Days of Glory* it’s impossible to forget the bigger injustice of World War”. In the same way Ard Vijn April 30, 2007 said that, as a war movie *Days of Glory* .’Pardon’ indigenes”, is competent although not extraordinary. Film Fanatic highlights the importance of the movie by saying that it will give the person a new perspective on the war and those who fought it.

Racism as a concept is much more closely tied to race, a concept confused with ethnicity and culture. Race refers to social groups which differ in terms of physical attributes accorded social significance. Ethnicity on the other hand, is a classification which is based in terms of language, culture, place of origin, or common membership of a descent group without distinguishing physical characteristics. Whereas, culture is a broader category that extends beyond race and ethnicity to include any group of people who share common lifestyle, which are passed on to members of the particular group, e.g., socio-economic status, sexual orientation, geographic location.

Racism basically has two forms: individual racism and institutional racism. Racism and individual level include an individual’s belief that an entire racial group is inferior or superior on the basis of physical features linked with intellectual and moral characteristics. If these personal characteristics get connected with culture institutions like religion, education and military institutions in order to exclude or include not a person but also an entire group, it takes the form of institutionalized racism. Idea of

indoctrination, i.e., Afro- Americans are inferior and the discrimination or the feeling of superiority over “the other” on the basis of color and shape of skin, eye, hair, lips etc. are the dominant tendency of racism. When a Afro-American family moves into a home in the white neighborhood and is stoned, burned or routed out, they are the victims of the act of individual racism. But when hundreds of babies die each year because of lack of proper food, shelter and medical facilities and thousand more are destroyed and maimed physically, emotionally and intellectually because of poverty and discrimination in the Afro-American community, they are the victims of the act of institutional racism. Racism, after all, begins at personal level. This individual racism takes the form of institutional racism which ultimately culminates into the cultural racism. National Council of Churches work group has summarized this institutionalized racism as:

Both consciously and unconsciously, racism is enforced and maintained by the legal, culture, religious, educational, economic, Political, environment and military institutions of societies.

Racism is more than just a personal attitude. (qtd. Feagin 3).

Both consciously and unconsciously the Africans are misrepresented by white French in the movie *Days of Glory*. At first, the French government doesn't realize the contribution of the Africans. In the context of the resistance and riots of the 1960s Carmichael and Hamilton published *Black Power* (1968) which presented what became an influential political analysis and strategy. They defined racism as “the predication of decisions and policies on considerations of race for the purpose of subordinating a racial group and maintaining control over that group” (qtd. Miles 352). They distinguished between overt and individual racism on the one hand and covert and institutional racism on the other. The former was defined as explicit

actions by individuals and the latter as those actions and inactions which maintain 'black' people in a disadvantaged situation and which rely on "the active and pervasive operation of anti-black attitudes and practices" (qtd. Miles 352). Thus, the concept of racism was expanded in the meaning to include not only beliefs but, more important, all actions, individual and institutional, which had the consequence of sustaining or increasing the subordination of 'black' people.

The concept of 'Negro race' as inferior and European civilization as superior is based on the belief that 'Negroes' lack certain qualities such as lack of good social organization and social actions, lack of fellow feeling, lack of originality of thought and lack of artistic qualities especially "deficient on the side mechanical arts", and in general," showing no tendency toward higher development" (Reinch 3). Both in the past and at present, Afro-Americans are discriminated and declared as an inferior race on the basis of color. Even since the pre-Christian era to the present the very black colour is associated with ugliness, despair, evil and death, whereas, the whiteness is associated with beauty, goodness, virtue and innocence. The white racist try their best to dehumanize Afro-American by labeling them as a link between monkeys and men, i.e., white people and their approval goes something like a notion of New Testament that "we are the chosen people look at the colour of our skins. The others are black or yellow: that is because of their sins" (Fanon 30). "Racist assumptions of white superiority have been so deeply engrained into the fiber of the society that they infuse the entire functioning of the national subconscious..."(Carmichael 31). Thus, racism is ubiquitous and informs every level of discourse in our society.

In the last part of the movie *Days of Glory*, the director is focusing towards the war of Alsace where those Africans are fighting with full of energy and devotion because people of Alsace are under attack and require reinforcement and ammunition.

These soldiers are convinced with the words of white that when the war over, you all will be at army and rise up through the ranks to sergeant. Rather than taking the risk of their own life, Said is not interested to reach there but wanted to visit his family as soon as possible. But the words of Abdalkar force him to go to the war of Alsace to liberate the people of Alsace from German Nazism. In the battle Said, Messoud, Larbi, and Yassir all die but the one named Abdalkar remains alone in the battle. A final part, at a war cemetery sixty years later, with an only survival of the unit, may be too sentimental in the way that a similar conclusion functioned. Only survival of the unit (Abdalkar) is lamenting on the loss of his friends by sitting beside the cemetery. In 1959, a law was passed to freeze the pensions of the infantry men from former French colonies about to become independent. In 2002, after a endless hearing the French government was ordered to pay the pensions full. But the successive governments have pushed back this payment. The pensions of African veterans were frozen in the late 1950s when their colonies became independent, while those of French nationals continued to rise with inflation. By 2006, this meant Africans were getting less than one-tenth of what the Frenchmen who had fought alongside them were paid. After a screening of *Days of Glory*, Jacques Chirac, then president of France, was apparently moved to even up the pensions.

White French believed that many Negroes were poor, uneducated and deficient in health, morals, and manners and thus were not very agreeable as social companions. It was also pointed out that Negroes were different in physical appearance even if they had the same basic mental capacity and moral propensities. Besides these beliefs centering on Negro inferiority, there are great number of other popular thoughts arranged to justify social segregation; the thoughts that Negroes like to be separated that they were happy in their humble status and would not like to be

treated as equals. Another idea with the same function is that the separation was necessary in order to prevent friction between the two groups.

So, the movie *Days of Glory* attempts to pick up the postcolonial discourse of resistance against the hegemonic representation of Africans in a colonial narrative. This research assumes that White French activity constructs the intended hierarchy and the North African soldiers are more objects. But it also presumes that those African soldiers are inborn inferior and colonial representation of north African soldiers are static symbols as they threaten the carefully crafted narrative of colonial subjugation. The concept of racial improvement along with the development of the theory of Social Darwinism concurred with the civilizing mission of imperial ideology which encouraged colonial powers to take up “White man’s burden and rise up the condition of the inferior races” who were idealized as childlike and malleable. Such racial improvement ultimately institutionalized the concept of race as the marker of cultural standard. In such practice the whites are seemed superior whereas the non-whites as inferior. As the term “racism” defines as a way of thinking that considers groups unchangeable physical characteristics to be linked in a direct, casual way to psychological or intellectual characteristics and which on the basis distinguishes between superiors and inferiors, we can see the discriminatory treatment of Colonial Africans by the White French in the movie *Days of Glory*. As this study dramatizes the logic of the discriminatory treatment of the Colonial Africans by the White French as shown in *Days of Glory*. French racist attitude towards North African in the military branch and the concept of other has been presented in the movie. Though the North African military force has been dominated before the war but they were taken as the best soldiers at the time of battle. So the movie presents the racist attitude towards the North Africans. Through a critical analysis it will try to establish that the

Africans were very brave and risked their lives to save France from Nazism. But they weren't treated as equals because of the color of their skin. Thus, this study aims at deconstructing the binaries centrally located in Bouchereb's movie. By doing so the study also aims at acknowledging the importance of the Africans in the mission to liberate France from Nazism. Regardless of the obvious colonial and dominating overtones of *Days of Glory*, a critical lens of the "Africans power" places the spotlight on the important ways in which North African soldiers who fought for France against the Nazis are acknowledged. In doing so, categorization of these soldiers as less valuable will be seen as colonial attitude and thus a subject of anti-colonial critique. In this connection, this thesis argues that the glory and bravery of the North African soldiers tend to threaten the white man's masculine cultural legacy and to save their honor they bring the discourse of colonialism to justify their superiority while racializing the Africans. Although this study makes significant use of concepts developed in post-colonial theory and racism, it does not offer a comprehensive analysis of North Africans as the primary troops to make the victory. Given the nature of the research, available time and resources, this study does not offer an analysis of Bouchereb's own relationship with the state and the soldiers, even though such an analysis would definitely contribute towards the complex relationship between the White and the North African soldiers.

III. Reconstruction of suppressed Blacks' history in *Days of Glory*

The study has analyzed the postcolonial discourse of resistance against the hegemonic representation of Africans in a colonial narrative. The movie shows the domination and discrimination to the Africans who fight with France against the German Nazism. These Africans are truly the unsung heroes of the war, despite being treated as unequal. The movie begins with a tribal chieftain in the Atlas Mountains of Algeria calling the man of his village to come to the aid of France. It analyzes how the movie *Days of Glory* can be used to rewrite the oppressive history of the Europeans Whites, and to reconstruct the history of racially oppressed and misrepresented colonial blacks. The post colonial discourse of subversion and resistance against the hegemonic representation of Africans in a colonial period has been dramatized in the narrative of the movie. So, the research shows how the cultural texts like movies can be used to rewrite the oppressive history of the Europeans Whites and to reconstruct the history of racially oppressed and misrepresented colonial blacks.

The movie is based on the World War II. After the World War II the history is written from the perspective of the white French but no credit is given to the African. The misrepresentation of the colonial Africans by the white French, French racist attitude towards North Africans in the military branch and the concept of other have been presented in the movie. Though the African soldiers are often relegated to the margins in the film, they are vitally important as they illustrate the contradictory representation of the colonized subject. White French activity constructs the hierarchy that the African suffers from poverty, illiteracy, oppression, fear, and lack of identity. The proms of racial discrimination are deeply presented in the movie *Days of Glory*. So, it presents the racial misrepresentation, discrimination and domination upon the Africans who contribute a lot to save the France from German Nazism. It wants to

present the sufferings of blacks and the resistance against the domination. By exposing the discrimination and narrating the past history more sympathetically towards the Africans, the movie exposes the evils of the racist attitude of French rulers towards the North African in official history that glorifies French's war. Africans soldiers are always misbehaved by the French while they talk about the equality. White French use the word 'wog' to the Africans to call them the man without having the brain. They think that the Africans are subject to subjugation and exploitation. The characters in the movie find themselves imprisoned in the narrow cells of white law. The director has attempted to convey how bad things were for the North African. He has captured the powerful emotion, sufferings, the frustrations and yearnings of the oppressed characters. Though the North African soldiers are dominated before, they are taken as the best soldiers at the last part of the battle. So, the present research analyses how the movie *Days of Glory* can be used to rewrite the history of the Europeans Whites and to reconstruct the history of racially suppressed and misrepresented blacks.

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