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**The French Cultural Colonization of the Algerian Mind: Writing
"The Self" in Mouloud Feraoun's *Le Fils du pauvre* (1954), and Assia
Djebar's *L'Amour, la fantasia* (1985)**

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I declare that this thesis has not been previously submitted for the award of a degree to any other university or institution.

Ahlem Harrat

Date: 2025

Dedications

To my mother, for her unwavering support

To the woman without sepulcher, Lalla Zoulikha Oudai

To the women who inhabit Fantasia, to the mothers of the Revolution

*To the scorched-caves victims, whose silent testimony compelled the resurgence of
collective memory*

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Abstract

The present study examines the ways in which the French colonial school served both as a site of cultural indoctrination and as a vehicle of resistance in colonial Algeria. The French colonial educational apparatus that was implemented in Algeria is fraught with fragmentations and inconsistencies that engendered long lasting effects on the nation's cultural identity. This dissertation outlines the decisive shift in the history of education in colonial Algeria: the exportation of the Jules Ferry laws – that were devised under the French Third Republic (1870-1914) – to the colony resulted in the dislocation of traditional forms of schooling, and the consolidation of the “instruct to conquer” ideology within diverse colonial institutions. It examines the policies, the pedagogical practices, and the school curriculums that aimed at eroding the Arabo-Berber cultural heritage. The comparative study of Mouloud Feraoun's *Le Fils du pauvre* (1950), and Assia Djebar's *L'Amour, la fantasia* (1985) aims at foregrounding the ways in which the authors subversively represent their experience within the French colonial educational system. Both authors were among the minority of Algerian children to receive a French colonial education, and to be admitted to a teacher's training college. Their autobiographical narratives offer crucial testimony to the inner-workings of colonial schooling structures. This research investigates the strategies of indoctrination that propounded the creation of a class of intermediaries that would ensure colonial dominion. It explores the historical circumstances in which the authors were educated. It also endeavors to examine the perplexing correlation between women's education, emancipation, and alienation. It argues that both novelists reappropriate the tools of their indoctrination to forge creative subversive writing strategies in order to reclaim their identity, territory, and history.

Keywords: French Education, Colonial School, Cultural Indoctrination, The Self, Ambivalence, Resistance

List of Acronyms

AR: Algerian Revolution

CEPE : Certificat d'Études Primaires Élémentaire

EN: École Normale (Normal School)

EPS: École Primaire Supérieure (Superior Normal School)

FAC: Fantasia, an Algerian Cavalcade

FLN: Front de Libération Nationale (National Liberation Front)

FP : Le Fils du Pauvre

FWIS : A Frenchwoman's Imperial Story

LAC: La Littérature Algérienne Contemporaine

LAF : L'Amour, la Fantasia

SNP : Sans Nom Patronymique

OAS : Organisation Armée Secrète (Secret Army Organisation)

PMS: The Poor Man's Son

PT: Personal Translation

TFAN: Themes in the Francophone Algerian Novel

TMR: Teaching Morality and Religion

WW: World War

List of Tables

Table 1.1. Public “Indigenous” Instruction in Algeria (1856-1857).....	41
Table 1.2. The Number of Muslim Students Enrolled in French Public Primary Schools (1881-1882/1890-1891).....	42

List of Figures

Fig. 1.1 An Excerpt from a Colonial History Textbook: “Le bon roi saint Louis” (1947).....	39
Fig. 1.2 An Excerpt from a Colonial History Textbook: “Jules Ferry” (1947).....	40
Fig. 1.3 An Excerpt from a Colonial History Textbook: “La revolution de 1830” (1947).....	41
Fig. 1.4 An Excerpt from a Colonial History Textbook: “Sidi-Brahim (23-26 septembre 1845)” (1947).....	42
Fig. 3.1 Types of Relations towards the School and the Dominant Culture” (1997).....	96
Fig. 3.2 The First Class of the Normal School, Mr Verdy amongst his Students (1936).....	101
Fig. 3.3 The School of Moorish Girls Directed by Madame Luce, Photographed by Félix Jacque Antoine Moulin (1857).....	122
Fig. 3.4 The School of Moorish Boys Supervised by Auguste Depeille (1857).....	124
Fig. 3.5 Djebar’s First Classroom Picture in her Father’s Only Boys School (1992).....	129

Notes on Translations, Transliterations, and Citations

All through this research project, I quote texts in the source language (French), then I provide a translated version in the target language (English). If a published translation is available and accessible, I use and reference it. Or else I provide a personal translation of the text. I did not rely on standard transliterations of names and words from Arabic and French, I have, for the most part, maintained the versions found in the two novels and other primary source materials. With regards to the passages quoted from both novels for analytical purposes, all translations are drawn from: *The Poor Man's Son: Menrad, Kabyle Schoolteacher*, Translated by Lucy R. McNair, (2005), and *Fantasia: an Algerian cavalcade*, Translated by Dorothy S. Blair, (1993). This thesis follows the MLA 8th edition guidelines, and incorporates updates from the 9th edition as regards to the citation of digital sources.

Table of Contents

Declaration of Originality.....	I
Dedications	II
Acknowledgments.....	III
Abstract.....	IV
List of Acronyms.....	V
List of Tables.....	VI
List of Figures.....	VII
Notes on Translations, Transliterations, and Citations.....	VIII
Table of Contents.....	IX
Introduction.....	1

1. Chapter One: Schools of the Third French Republic and the Invention of

“L’Algérie Française”.....	9
1.1. Introduction.....	10
1.2. The Invention of a French Algeria.....	10
1.2.1. French Algeria, a Colony Imagined.....	11
1.2.2. The French Invasion of Algeria.....	14
1.2.3. France’s Cultural Conquest: the ‘Instruct to Conquer’ Ideology.....	18
1.2.4. Education in Algeria on the Eve of Conquest	20
1.2.5. Language Rivalry in Colonial Algeria	24
1.3. Educational Reform and French Language Instruction under the French Third Republic in the <i>Métropole</i> and the Algerian Colony.....	26
1.3.1. The Jules Ferry Laws and the Creation of a Franco-conform Nation.....	27
1.3.2. Education in Colonial Algeria and the Aftermath of the Ferryian Project.....	34
1.4. Conclusion.....	47

2. Chapter Two: Algerian Literature of French Expression: Orientalism,

Algerianism, and the Literature of Resistance	48
2.1. Introduction.....	49
2.2. Algerian Literature of French Expression, an Overview	49
2.2.1. The Search for a New Orient: the Exotic Movement.....	51
2.2.2. The Colonial Novel: Algerianism.....	60
2.2.3. <i>L’École d’Alger</i> and the Mediterranean Literary Discourse.....	66
2.2.4. The Rise of the Algerian Novel of French Expression.....	73
2.2.4.1. The Early Literary Voices: Performance, and Mimicry.....	74

2.2.4.2. The Emergence of the New Algerian Novel: Ambivalence, Awakening, and Resistance.....	77
2.3. Conclusion.....	82

3. Chapter Three: Colonial Education in Mouloud Feraoun’s *Le Fils du pauvre* and Assia Djébar’s *L’Amour, la Fantasia*.....83

3.1. Introduction.....	84
3.2. <i>L’École Française</i> in Mouloud Feraoun’s <i>Le Fils du pauvre</i>	85
3.2.1. Fouroulou’s Educational Path: <i>L’École Normale de Bouzaréa</i> , and Religious Proselytism.....	87
3.2.2. Educating the Son: the Politics of Gender in Rural Kabylia.....	103
3.2.3. Becoming a Schoolteacher: Fouroulou and the “Rite of Institution”.....	110
3.3. Colonial Education, Empowerment, and the War of Languages in Assia Djébar’s <i>L’Amour, la fantasia</i>	116
3.3.1. Women’s Education in Colonial Algeria.....	118
3.3.2. The Little Arab Girl’s Journey to the French School: Between Tradition and Transgression.....	130
3.3.3. Emancipation, Bodily Integrity, and the Mobility of Voice.....	134
3.3.4. Coersion, Alienation, and <i>l’entre-des-langues</i>	137
3.4. The Legacy of Colonial Education: Acculturation, Ambivalence, and Resistance.....	142
3. 5. Conclusion.....	148

4. Chapter Four: The Poetics of Resistance in Mouloud Feraoun’s and Assia Djébar’s Autobiographical Narratives.....149

4.1. Introduction.....	150
4.2. Feraoun’s Autobiographical Narrative and Strategies of Subversion.....	150
4.2.1. Between Autobiography and Ethnography: The Rhetoric of Writing the Self	151
4.2.2. Belonging and Becoming in Mouloud Feraoun’s <i>Le Fils du pauvre</i>	164
4.3. The Post/colonial Palimpsest: Writing/Rewriting History and The Aesthetics of Resistance.....	171
4.3.1. Revisiting the Archives: Colonial History and the Dialectics of Dissent.....	172

4.3.2. Women’s Testimonial Narratives and the Reconstruction of a Collective Cultural Memory.....	188
4.3.3. Selfhood, Remembrance, and Women’s Autobiography.....	198
4.3.4. Orality and the Dialectization of Colonial Language.....	205
4.4. Conclusion.....	213
Conclusion.....	215
Works Cited List.....	219
Appendices.....	233
Appendix I.....	233
Appendix II.....	234
Glossary.....	235

Introduction

The causatum of France's violent centenary presence in Algeria is embodied in the country's intricate linguistic profile. Crucial to the success of the moral conquest of the colonized was the domination of his language. In an attempt to suppress Algerian national identity and to refashion the society along French lines, the colonial government adopted a policy of cultural colonialism that entailed the propagation of the French language and the dislocation of the Arabic and the Berber languages. Nativism mutilated the Algerian linguistic body and authored an identity plight. Today, sixty-three years after gaining independence, Algeria struggles still to mend its wounds, to annihilate the inherency of linguistic loss, and to salvage its education system.

A revision of France's colonial history manifests the empire's keen use of language as a tool of ideological domination. The French language is the trinket that ornamentizes France's *mission civilisatrice*, the imperial doctrine that entails that Metropole nations have a duty to enlighten "primitive" societies. The notion of a divine mission to civilize served as the ideological framework that justifies the French republican imperialism, positing the imposition of the French language, values, and culture through conquest as a noble obligation. Though embedded in Enlightenment ideals and the The Revolutionary principles, this doctrine reached its zenith under the French Third Republic. The civilizing mission found its embodiment in the colonial policy of assimilation, which sought to integrate the "other" through Frenchcentric education by imposing the colonizer's language and his cultural believes and values on the colonized subject. The intention of this study is to investigate the "instruct to conquer" ideology and the trauma it bestowed on Arabo-Berber¹ writers

¹ The terms "Arabo-Berber," and "Algerian" are used interchangeably, all throughout the dissertation, in reference to the natives to the land, the Algerian people. In the context of the history of French

representatives of the Algerian society. Prior to the French colonization, Algeria was a multilingual and a multicultural society, various languages co-existed in harmony until the enforcement of the colonial policy that aimed at producing another France, a linguistically and culturally homogeneous but above all subjugated Algeria.

The history of the implementation of a French educational system in colonial Algeria is full of contradiction. There is a great discrepancy between what has been said and what has been done. There is a confounding diversity between policies, institutional practices, and pedagogical curriculums within and across the different regions of the country. The colonial regime forged educational policies that were characterized by skepticism and inconsistency. In his *Bouzaréa Histoire Illustrée des Écoles Normales d'instituteurs d'Alger-Bouzaréa*, Aimé Dupuy (1936) argued that education in colonial Algeria has been subjected to the will of the colonial administration. The fluctuation in the making of pedagogical policies has been governed more or less by the *colons'* opposition and/or sympathy towards the education of the masses (43).

Therefore, the formulation of a comprehensive survey on the French colonial educational system proved to be an enigmatic task. That is what prompted our decision to investigate the educational system of France at the time of the conquest. Limited academic attention has been attributed to this area of research, Linda Lehmil (2006) argues, in her "L'Édification d'un enseignement pour les indigènes: Madagascar et l'Algérie dans l'Empire français," that historians often neglect to draw a comparative study between education in different African colonies or/and between education in the colony and the metropolis (92). The rise of the Third French

colonialism, the term 'Algerian' may be misleading since it's often used by French historians and critics to refer either to European settler or to the French who were born and raised in colonial Algeria, while Algerians are called 'Arabs,' 'Muslims,' 'indigenous,' 'Moorish'. For the purpose of this study, the term *indigenous* is some times used (in italics) to consider the underpinning of imperial ideology.

Republic (1870-1940) engendered a pedagogical system that would profoundly change the structure of education in Republican France and colonial Algeria alike. The implementation of the Jules Ferry laws (1881-1886) in the metropolis and their exportation to the Algerian colony established a centralized educational strategy that broke ties with the educational regime adopted under the Second French Empire (1852-1870).

After France's defeat in the Franco-Prussian War (1870-1871), Republican educational experts sought to use the French language in order to unite a linguistically and culturally fragmented nation. The comparative study of the educational policies implemented in France and in the colony would demonstrate that the reforms of the Third French Republic were designed to bridge divisions, to strengthen national bonds, and to promote solidarity within the French empire. While their enforcement in Algeria aimed at debasing Algerian languages, and cultural practices in order to erase any sense of a national identity. The implementation of the Ferryian educational project in Algeria marks a critical shift in the history of the education of the country, since the introduction of laic education engendered the eradication of traditional form of education.

Being linguistically dispossessed, fosters a feeling of being physically out of place giving rise to a complex interplay between, self, language, and identity. Migrating through different language worlds, and by necessity, roaming between cultural and mental spaces, issues a questioning of cultural belonging. The present research focuses on two writers who were amongst the minority of Algerians to receive an education beyond primary school instruction. Their autobiographical narratives testify to the challenges colonial education posits, to the strains inflicted by cultural conversion, and to the tensions between their traditional environment and the

educational milieu. The Algerian identity crisis is quite often vociferated in the language of the colonizer. In their quest for a sense of selfhood, Algerian writers produced literary texts burdened by a violent colonial legacy.

In an attempt to shed light on questions of language, self, and identity, we shall foreground the ideological foundations of the French cultural and linguistic colonialism and investigate its strategies of control and domination. A study of the French colonial educational system and the means deployed in the subjugation of the Arabic and Berber languages under the French Third Republic is vital to the analysis of the cultural challenges faced by postcolonial Algeria. The comparative study of Mouloud Feraoun's *Le Fils du pauvre* (1954), and Assia Djebar's *L'Amour, la fantasia* (1985) will allow the exploration of the following questions:

- What are the policies, methods of instruction, and pedagogical practices that were devised under the French Third Republic to destabilize Algeria's traditional schooling system in order to achieve cultural dominion over the colony?
- How did the French colonization of Algeria shape the emergence of an Algerian literature of French expression?
- In what ways did Feraoun and Djaber subversely represent their French education in their autobiographical narratives?
- What are the writing strategies of resistance that were formulated by the authors in their attempt to reappropriate their cultural heritage?

The study of the French educational colonial system and the analysis of the language policies designed in order to dislocate local languages and to subjugate the Algerian population would illuminate the effects of the French colonial rule on the country's past and present. The evaluation of the contradictory correlation between the French

metropolitan educational system and the colonial educational project implemented under the Third French Republic would contribute in illuminating the ambiguity surrounding the history of French education in Algeria. Furthermore, the comparative study of the creative strategies the authors revert to in their attempt to write “The Self” encompasses an offering to researchers concerned with the psychological and social consequences of being linguistically exiled.

Extensive work has been produced discussing the complex politics and history of the French colonization of Algeria, however, the area of colonial education remains not sufficiently explored. The defected nature of the schooling apparatus, its embedded contradictions, and the inaccessibility to archival materials and to colonial legislative records pose a challenge to researchers in the field. While both Mouloud Feraoun’s *Le Fils du pauvre*, and Assia Djébar’s *L’Amour, la fantasia* have received a wide range of critical attention, not many researchers have conducted a comparative examination of the two novels.

Namely, Debra Kelly’s *Autobiography and Independence: Selfhood and Creativity in North African Postcolonial writing in French* (2003), examines the works of Feraoun and Djébar along with other Maghrebian writers. The study provides an insightful examination of the autobiographical narratives; however, it does not bring the two novels into direct contrast. The schooling experiences of the authors and their responses to French acculturation are studied in isolation. Nichola Harrison’s *Our Civilizing Mission: the Lessons of Colonial Education* (2019), examines the mechanisms of colonial education in Algeria centering on the schooling experiences of Feraoun, Djébar, amongst others. The book reflects on the broader framework of colonial educational practices. This dissertation contributes to the existing literature by assessing in detail the processes of acculturation both authors

were subjected to. It explores the diverse ways in which they represent and respond to their colonial education.

The study innovates by reading Feraoun's work in its entirety, for his truest voice was suppressed when the French *Édition du Seuil*, sanctioned the parts of *Le fils du pauvre* (1950) which delineate the author's experience as a student and as a teacher of the French colonial school system. The French house of publication has also carved out the entire second chapter of the book in order to obliterate the author's criticism of and frustration with the colonial regime (James D. Le Sueur , *The Poor Man's Son* x). The English translation of the original manuscript of the novel was published by the University of Virginia Press in 2005 under the title that was initially attributed to it by Feraoun: "The Poor Man's Son Menrad, Kabyle Schoolteacher".

This study is mainly informed by the postcolonial approach whose main agenda addresses literary representations of racism, oppression, and colonial violence. By virtue of their interdisciplinary nature, the comparative examination of the two narratives entails the adoption of the interdisciplinary method to account for the intricate interplay between history, politics, sociology, philosophy, and literature. In order to explore the complex implications of colonial education as depicted in both narratives, the close reading approach coupled with methods of contextual analysis are employed. The schooling experiences depicted by the two authors are not studied in isolation, connections are drawn between literary representations, specific policies, institutional practices, and school curriculums, and therefore, the analysis is grounded in the socio-political and historical structures that frame the experiences represented in the literary texts.

The dissertation is divided into four chapters, the first one: “Schools of the Third French Republic and the Invention of ‘L’Algérie Française,’” provides a historical overview of the French conquest of Algeria, and outlines the traditional systems of education that were present prior to the French colonization of the country. It examines the Jules Ferry laws that were implemented - under the French Third Republic - in metropolitan France to achieve Franco-conformity and were exported to the Algerian colony to fulfill the project of cultural assimilation. The Ferryan policies of the metropolis and the colony are juxtaposed to foreground France’s ideological strategies of manipulation in order to achieve a domestic and a colonial civilizing mission. The second chapter entitled: “Algerian Literature of French Expression: Orientalism, Algerianism, and the Literature of Resistance” traces the emergence and the evolution of the Francophone Algerian novel, it examines the nuanced themes and the diverse writing strategies present in the texts of the first writers, and the revolutionary ones. The chapter also offers a brief account of the intellectual conflicts that rose amongst Algerian writers in the period of decolonization.

The Third chapter: “Colonial Education in Mouloud Feraoun’s *Le Fils du pauvre* and Assia Djébar’s *L’Amour, la Fantasia*” offers a comparative analysis of the experiences of Mouloud Feraoun and Assia Djébar within the French colonial educational system drawing on the authors’ accounts of their journeys through the French school. It studies the ways in which each author represents his/her institutionalization, and how do they respond to it. The study foregrounds the inherent inconsistencies of the colonial educational apparatus, and the sense of ambivalence it engenders. Pedagogical strategies of acculturation were designed to produce subjects who were loyal to the very institutions that oppressed them. The final chapter: “The Poetics of Resistance in Mouloud Feraoun’s and Assia Djébar’s Autobiographical

Narratives,” explores the ways in which the authors’ resist pedagogical conditioning by asserting selfhood. It examines the subversive writing strategies the authors developed that entailed the reshaping of canonized literary and anthropological frameworks to articulate an Arabo-Berber perspective. The chapter analyzes Feraoun’s methods of forging a humanist ethnography that decenters colonial modes of representation. It also examines Djébar’s strategies of historical deconstruction, and linguistic relexification that aim at decolonizing the history of Algeria.

Chapter One:
Schools of the Third French Republic
and the Invention of *L'Algérie Française*

1.1. Introduction

After the conquest of Algeria in 1830, the French empire implemented an educational system embedded in a colonial ideological framework that positioned the French language as a tool of conquest. Colonial pedagogues designed a schooling system that aimed at simultaneously alienating and assimilating the Algerian people. France's pedagogical venture was shaped by a pattern of cursory experimentations that gave rise to irreconcilable contradictions within the system. An examination of the history of the policies and practices of the imperial educational apparatus demonstrates that the introduction of the Jules Ferry laws marks a critical shift in Algeria's history of education. The pedagogical policies enforced in Algeria were closely related to the educational reforms employed in the metropolis under the French Third Republic.

French pedagogues designed a metropolitan schooling system that aimed at uniting a linguistically and culturally divided nation, whereas; the educational reforms that were introduced in the Algerian colony aimed to suppress national languages. This chapter offers a brief overview of the educational policies executed in metropolitan France during the Third Republic, and examines the effects of the exportation of those policies to the Algerian colony. It interrogates the ways colonial schools operate as sites of cultural conversion. It also posits that the teaching of the French language at the primary level of schooling constitutes the vital instrument of France's universal and domestic *mission civilisatrice*.

1.2 The Invention of French Algeria

The French conquest of the Ottoman Regency of Algiers in 1830 was a venture staged by an unpopular monarch who sought to divert attention away from France's domestic problems by attempting to restore some of the empire's lost glory.

Weeks after the invasion, House Bourbon was overthrown. In the name of national prestige, King Charles X' successor - Louis-Philippe (1830-1848)- pursued the conquest of the country (Session 1). The invasion of Algeria enrooted into a 132 years of French colonization. At the centre of France's colonial policy was the notion of a divine mission to civilise the Arabo-Berber population. In her monograph, *By Sword and Plow: France and the Conquest of Algeria* (2011), Jennifer Sessions maintains that the expression "mission civilisatrice" [civilizing mission] was introduced to the French lexicon in the 1840's in order to depict the politics of the colonial enterprise in Algeria (6).

French policy makers believed that the empire's duty to bestow enlightenment on its colonial subjects could be fulfilled by means of instruction. The displacement of Arabic and Berber along with the enforcement of the French language deemed vital to the survival of French colonial rule in Algeria. Hence, the school ousted the sword, and the French colonial empire embarked on a pedagogic conquest of minds. The following section deals with the military and moral conquest of Algeria. It offers a brief overview of the French conquest of the nation, and elucidates the emergence of a French educational colonial project that is embedded in the colonial ideology "Instruct to conquer".

1.2.1 French Algeria, a Colony Imagined

"L'Algérie est Française" [Algeria is French], was the motto of French politicians, thinkers, and policy makers. The expression embodies the metaphorical fusion between the settler-colony and the metropolis, Algeria became an integral part of France as the military and moral conquest of the territory conceived a mirror of France on the African continent. French works of art, school-books, and official reports of the early decades of the twentieth century depict the nuanced meanings of

the expression *l'Algérie Française*, for the most part, the claim they advanced is that the colony has witnessed – through a process of assimilation - an administrative, social, political, and cultural metamorphosis, Algeria became a re-invented nation (Gosnell 14).

Advocators of the imperialist enterprise claim that the colony has been molded into a replica of France, and that Algeria did not exist until France granted it a name and a frame, René Maunier maintained that “... the very name of Algeria is the work of the French: the French named and created Algeria just a few months after the surrender of Algiers” (qtd. in Gosnell 15). The French empire credits itself for naming and outlining the borders of the Algerian regency whereas, French historian Charles-Robert Ageron, attributes - in his *Histoire de l'Algérie contemporaine (1830-1969)*(2016) - the delineation of the Algerian borders to the Ottoman colonial period (7).

To legitimize the French conquest of the country, the notion of an *Algerian nation* was dismantled through colonial propaganda. Algerian statehood was perceived by the citizens of the metropolis and the French settlers of Algeria as a fictional construct. In his case against the Algerian Revolution, Albert Camus argues in *Chroniques Algériennes* (2016), that:

...l'indépendance nationale est une formule purement passionnelle. Il n'y a jamais eu encore de nation algérienne. Les Juifs, les Turcs, les Grecs, les Italiens, les Berbères, auraient autant de droit à réclamer la direction de cette nation virtuelle... L'importance et l'ancienneté du peuplement français, en particulier, suffisent à créer un problème qui ne peut se comparer à rien dans l'histoire. Les Français d'Algérie sont, eux aussi, et au sens fort du terme, des indigènes (179).

[...national independence is a purely emotional notion. There has never been an Algerian nation. The Jews, the Turcs, the Greeks, and the Berbers would have just as much right to claim leadership over this virtual nation... the significance and the long-lasting French settlement, in particular, suffice to create a problem without parallel in history. The French of Algeria are also, in the truest sense of the term, natives] (PT).

Camus describes the Algerian people's claim to independence as a mere sentimental reaction disregarding the oppressive socio-economical conditions he has thoroughly outlined in previous works². His statement echoes the imperial rethoric of the empty, unclaimed land often used by colonialists in order to justify imperial expansion. The novelist argues that the longevity of French occupation lands support to the French regime's claim to the land. In an attempt to erode the historical and cultural identity of the nation, Camus goes as far as to describe the country as a fictional entity. He also lists the different communities and the various foreign regimes the land has known in order to undermine the nationalist Algerian cause.

In his *L'Algérie des origines: de la préhistoire à l'avènement de l'islam*, Gilbert Meynier (2007), maintains that in Antiquity there was no Algerian nation because the concept of nationhood and statehood is a modern construct. He asserts that the reasons that led to the presentation of certain events as foundational phases in the development of the nation of Algeria are not grounded in history. These events have been arbitrarily selected to meet the power demands that are embedded in the ideology of a presumed singular point of origin (9). Paul Leroy-Beaulieu maintains

² See Albert Camus, "*Misère de la Kabylie*" [The Misery of Kabylia] (1939), *Chroniques algériennes* (2016), in which he provides a critical examination of the socio-economical realities of life in the Kabyle region.

that, in 1830, the French empire claimed a land that had been occupied, cultivated, and settled -throughout the centuries- by a large population that inherited a rich civilization, a nation of warriors who possessed a strong sense of national identity and refused any form of assimilation with another race (Ferhat 59).

In his *Colonial Night* (2005), Ferhat Abbas asserts that the brutal and violent means deployed by the French empire in the military conquest of the country testify that Algeria prior to colonization was a sovereign state. He maintains that this state, like many others, conducted national and international affairs evident by the treaties it maintained with many European nations: France, the United Kingdom, the United States, and Holland. The nation had a strong military and naval presence (55). The official language of the nation is Arabic. Education was imparted in Quranic schools or *Zouïas*. The pedagogical materials taught in these schools was no different from those dispensed in other parts of the Arab world. General Valaze declares that: “Presque tous les Arabes savent lire et écrire. Dans chaque village il y a deux écoles” (qtd in. Ferhat 56). [Nearly every Arab knew how to read and write. In every village we can locate two schools] (PT). Prior to colonization, there existed in the Algerian nation approximately two thousand schools, and numerous universities in the city of Algiers, Constantine, Mazouna, Tlemcen, and Oran (Ferhat 56).

1.2.2 The French Invasion of Algeria

French Algeria was contrived by a brutal military conquest; the French armada looted, massacred, and ravaged many villages, violated properties, dishonored mosques and wrecked cemeteries. Saint-Arnaud confesses: “We lay waste, we burn, we plunder, we destroy” (qtd. in Césaire 40). Following the “flywhisk incident³” in

³ The flywhisk incident was used by the French empire as a pretext for the invasion of Algeria, France owed a substantial debt to the regency of Algiers since 1789. The Dey Hussein demanded repayment, however, the French monarchy ignored his plea to settle the debts.

1827, Algiers endured a naval blockade for three years. After failing to provide a proper response regarding the repayment of accrued debts, the dey of Algiers reportedly struck a French consul with a flywhisk (Sessions 25). The incident, deemed damaging to the French empire's national prestige, offered the anticipated excuse for staging a military invasion. Charles X, the Bourbon King, believed that the "conquest" of Algeria would alert nationalist sentiments, and create the perfect distraction from domestic troubles (Sessions 10).

Prior to the "flywhisk episode," Franco-Algerian relations were amicable since the Algerian nation was sympathetic to the revolutionary cause. Benjamin Stora maintains that during the French revolution, *Le Moniteur* (June, 1793) issued: "Tandis que l'Europe se coalise contre la France libre, une puissance africaine (Alger), plus loyale et fidèle, reconnaît la République et lui jure amitié" (*Histoire de l'Algérie Coloniale (1830-1954)* 12) [While Europe coalesced against a free France, an African power (Algeria), more loyal and faithful, recognized the Republic and offered it its friendship] (PT). In the aftermath of the French Revolution, France suffered from shortage of food supplies. The newly-formed republic urged the dey of Ottoman Algiers for a loan, the latter responded in kindness and provided the nation in need with large quantities of wheat. The First French Republic had no intention of honoring the debt (Stora 12). As a matter of a fact, this very loan that the French empire failed to refund would provide grounds that would justify the conquest of the Algerian nation.

Algeria, prior to the French invasion, was under the indirect rule of the Ottoman Empire. The country's economic development was quite humble. Most of the nomadic population depended on cattle-breeding and only a few villagers lived on land cultivation. Essentially, the Algerian native population is composed of Arabs and

Berbers organized according to a dynamic tribal system (Ferhat 58). For the most part, lands were commonly owned, and harvests were mutually collected and consumed. The French “civilizing” mission resulted in the deterioration of the country’s economic, religious, social, and educational institutions. Famine and poverty prevailed as lands were looted and burned. Though Algeria was perceived an integral part of France, Algerians were denied the benefits of French citizenship unless they renounce their culture and religion (Ferhat 58).

Notably, the military strategies that were used in the invasion of Algeria were orchestrated prior to the flywhisk theatrical. Napoleon I (1804-1814) aspired to seize the Regency of Algiers as it was regarded a vital foreign market for the expansion of France’s industrial enterprise. In order to forge a plan, Napoleon I sent a military expert, Major Buten, to Algeria and Tunisia in 1808. The Emperor’s plan served the French military well whilst preparing for the conquest of Algeria. On June 14, 1830, General Louis de Bourmont (June 1830- July 1830) led an army of 37.000 soldiers to Sidi Fredj, his success signaled the beginning of the French conquest of Algeria. The latter, defeated the strong resistance put up by the Dey in the battle of Staoueli.

On July the 5th ,1830, the French took possession of the country. The Dey agreed to surrender in return for his freedom and the preservation of his personal wealth. Nonetheless, the defeat did not grant France total control of the country. For the Ottoman Empire’s rule was restricted, it only exercised direct control in Algiers and its surrounding territories. In 1834, France seized only coastal areas: Oran, Mostaganem, Arzeu, Bougie, Metija. Markedly, the French sword had not been unchallenged by the Arabo-Berber populations for decades to come (Lustsky 3-6).

When the news of the collapse of Algiers spread throughout the nation, various tribes rallied behind El Amir Abd-el-Kader (1808-1883) - son of Muhyi-ad-Din - a prominent leader of a religious community known as, the *Kaderia*, and a fervent resistance fighter against foreign invaders. In 1832, Abd-el-Kader was elected Amir al-Muminin, commander of the faithful. The leader of the war of resistance against the French aggressor challenged tribal dissension in defense of his nation's freedom. As soon as El Amir assumed leadership, he inflicted ruthless casualty upon the enemy. Albeit, the commander of the faithful avowed his troops' weaknesses, so he conceded battle and chose diplomacy. The Desmichel Treaty is the fruition of El Amir's negotiations with The French Commander Louis-Alexis Desmichels. Signed on February 26, 1834, the treaty recognized most of Western Algeria as the new independent Arab state under the commandment of Amir al-Muminin Abd-el-Kader. The pact also recognized El Amir's right to appoint representatives in towns under dispute (Lutsky 6-7).

In his essay, *The Swinging Pendulum: Linguistic Controversy in Post-Colonial Algeria*, Fitroozeh Kashani-Sabet (1996), asserted that: "As early as 1834, language became a vehicle of manipulation and a point of contention between the Algerians and the French" (265). By virtue of the duplicity of the French colonial enterprise, El Amir Abd-el-Kader signed a bilingual treaty delineating peace terms, the points of divergence between the Arabic version and the French version initiated a state of chaos decimating the non-aggression pact. Since the Arabic text acknowledged Abd-el-Kader's right to delegate consuls in disputed territories whereas the French text deemed the territories French forsaking el Amir's in-submission. The first of many incidents, The Desmichel Treaty encapsulates France's keen use of the French language as an instrument of manipulation (Kashani-Sabet 266).

1.2.3 France's Cultural Conquest: The 'Instruct to Conquer' Ideology

Resistance against the French perdured for four decades, in 1870 the French military ceded authority to civilian command initiating the era of the colonial ideology of 'assimilation'. The latter entailed a comprehensive gallicization of the Algerian society by processes of acculturation. French education enabled the colonizer to pursue an acrid policy of deracination and deculturation for the purpose of quenching vestiges of resistance, Dumal maintained that: "the opening of a school in the midst of the indigenous is far more effective in the calming of the country than a whole military battalion" (qtd, in Bensaid and Ladjal 5). At the center of the 'instruct to conquer' policy was the propagation of *Molière's* language, the gem that accessorizes France's *mission civilisatrice*.

Hence, the colonial empire waged a linguistic war on native tongues. The Duke of Rovigo, leader of the military campaign, asserted in a letter dedicated to the French Minister of Defense that: "Truly Algeria will not become French unless the French language becomes the dominant language. The ultimate goal of all efforts of the [French] administration in education is to replace the Arabic language with the colonial language..." (qtd, in Bensaid and Ladjal 7). French policy makers set out a policy of cultural colonization that entailed the exaltation of the French language at the expense of the Arabic and Berber languages. In his *The Politics of Frenchness in Colonial Algeria (1930-1954)*, Gosnell (2002), states that: "French schools performed an internal colonization of sorts by introducing peasant children to the French language and combating their local tongues" (51). Colonial schools served as instruments not of enlightenment, rather of indoctrination.

In her essay "What Education for the Algerians in Colonial Algeria?" (2016), Faïza Senouci-Meberbeche maintains that: "The French language was imposed as a

powerful force for cultural ‘re-engineering’ of the Algerians to the determinant of more national and local languages” (16). Notably, the Decree of 8 March 1938, referred to as the *Décret Chautemps*, proclaimed Arabic a foreign language and outlawed its teaching within the colonial institutions of education (Benrabah 395). The marginalization of the Arabic language and the imposition of the French language as the language of instruction aimed at inculcating French values, culture, and systems of beliefs testify to the brutality of the means deployed in the French cultural colonization of the Algerian mind. In his, *Algérie: Formation d’une Nation*, Benjamin Stora (1998), contends that: “French was both the carrier of modern universal values (French Revolution and Declaration of Human Rights) and the instrument of brutal colonialism that had to be condemned (qtd. in Benrabah 398).

The French language deemed the language of the arts, of civilization, of modernity, and of sophistication would domesticate France’s subjects, as the Governor General of French West Africa claims “the native’s mind [can] become disciplined by the mastering of spoken French... ” (qtd, in White 14), denoting that the acquisition of the colonizer’s language enriches the mind of the colonial subject. Within the same token, Léon Dufourmantelle –the general secretary of l’Alliance Française- declares that since the French language is “sweet to speak, clear to understand, [and] through which many masterpieces have been written,” it imparts in the native the ability to think and act nobly (Brooks 75).

The teaching of the Romance language constituted the main instrument of the French colonial enterprise. The assimilation project entailed a rapprochement between the two ‘races.’ Schooling the Arabo-Berber population would bring them closer to the attainment of a French identity so they would evolve into loyal obedient servants.

Georges Hardy, Inspector General of Education of West Africa, indicates that *l'écopier indigène*:

[He] could not possibly forget the good ideas that were introduced to him via this language: ...these are our ideas, which constitute our moral, social and economic superiority, and little by little they will transform the barbarians of yesterday into disciples and assistants (qtd. in White 14).

Thus, colonial schools constituted emblems of an imperial institution galvanized by a mission to civilize. Educational policies in colonial Algeria were for the most part presented through the framework of the doctrine of assimilation, in his *A Savage War of Peace*, Alistair Horne maintains the aim of the legislative practices of colonial education is that: “Muslim students, while remaining Muslim should become so French in their education, that no Frenchman, however deeply racist and religiously prejudiced he might be... will any longer dare to deny them French fraternity” (qtd in Lyons 578). However, the assimilationist project proved to be fraught with irreconcilable inconsistencies. Deeply embedded in racist ideology, these educational policies proclaimed assimilation while they served to relegate the Algerian people at an inferior status.

1.2.4 Education in Algeria on the Eve of Conquest

In Algeria, just like in the Arab and European world, religion played an important role in the field of education. Until 1830, education in Algeria remained free; it was organized by charitable structures known as the *Zaouïas*, the *Habous*, or *Waqf*. The *Zaouïas* were directed by a *shiekh* who had spiritual knowledge. The *zaouïas* held religious ceremonies known as “cercles d’invocations,” *Halakt Dikr* for adults. It also had educational structures for children, for adolescents, and for young

people to teach the Quran, the Islamic Law, the prophetic tradition, and the Islamic theology (Becherirat 162). The *Zaouïas* were founded in the 5th century after the death of the Prophet Mohamed (peace be upon him). Their existence is not issued in the prophetic tradition, but it isn't prohibited. These institutions gained influence after the foundation of the famous *zaouïa* known as El-Qadria in Baghdad. In the beginning of the 11th century, the *zaouïas* spread all over the Muslim world (Becherirat 162). The other structures known as the *Habous* or the *Waqf* are mainly small private schools that were administrated by a private association. These schools were widespread in Algeria prior to the French colonization. Their role in education was vital for they were responsible for the construction of classes, the maintenance of schools, and the payment of teachers' salaries. Education in *Habous* was balanced between Quranic or religious studies and the teaching of general knowledge for Islam values all the scientific disciplines useful to humanity (Becherirat 163).

Islam prohibits all forms of coercion in religious matters, it respects cultural diversity, and it incites people to make good deeds for the benefit of humanity. Science occupies an important position in Islamic societies, the Quran invites Muslims to learn and the Prophet (peace be upon him) honored scholars (Becherirat 161). In his *L'état intellectuel et moral de l'Algérie en 1830*, Marcel Emerit (1954), maintains that education in Algeria on the eve of conquest was not regulated by the Turkish military, it was organized by religious institutions. He states that:

Les fidèles savaient que le prophète avait honoré les savants, que le Coran invitait les musulmans à étudier, afin de propager la connaissance de la Vérité. Apprendre à lire, c'est devenir apte à déchiffrer le Livre sacré. Apprendre à écrire, c'est se mettre en mesure d'en retracer les préceptes (qtd. in Becherirat 161).

Muslims knew that the prophet had honored scholars, and that the Quran invited them to learn, so as to spread the knowledge of the Truth. Learning to read is being able to decipher the sacred Book. Learning to write is being able to retrace its precepts (PT).

The rhetoric of the “savage,” “uneducated” Arab that was consistently conveyed in different modes of colonial representation in order to justify the conquest of the country was not historically accurate. Education in Algeria, at the time of conquest, differed from European modes of instruction, that difference should not be regarded as an indicator of backwardness.

In his “Les Séparations scolaires dans l’Algérie coloniale,” Kamel Kateb (2004), notes that the archives of the *zaouïas*, notably of the Constantine region and the southern territories, remain unexploited. The available accounts on the system of education in Algeria prior to the French conquest are, for the most part, derived from the governmental reports of the French military (2). In *La France et les œuvres indigènes en Algérie*, J. Mirante (1930), states that the number of Quranic schools in the Regency of Algiers was estimated at around 2000 schools, in 1830 (Kateb 3). While this figure might seem humble in comparison to the number of primary schools of metropolitan France, it is quite substantial given that the population of the Regency was estimated at approximately 3 million inhabitants at the time of the conquest (Maison 1079).

The presence of 2000 schools shows that educational institutions were widespread, and education was accessible to a large number of people. According to Daumas, 2000 to 3000 pupils per province received a secondary education at a

méderasa (Kateb 5). The French conquest of Algeria proved to be detrimental to these institutions, Alexis de Tocqueville writes in his “Rapport sur L’Algérie” (1847):

La société musulmane, en Afrique, n’était pas incivilisée, elle avait seulement une civilisation arriérée et imparfaite. Il existait dans son sein un grand nombre de fondations pieuses, ayant pour objet de pourvoir aux besoins de la charité ou de l’instruction publique. Partout nous avons mis la main sur ces revenus... nous avons réduit les établissements charitables, laisser tomber les écoles... Autour de nous les lumières se sont éteintes... nous avons rendu la société musulmane beaucoup plus misérable, plus désordonnée, plus ignorante et plus barbare qu’elle n’était avant de nous connaître (87).

The Muslim society, in Africa, was not uncivilized; it only had a less advanced and a flawed civilization. There existed within it a large number of religious foundations, whose object was to meet the needs of charity and to finance public instruction. Everywhere, we seized these revenues... we restricted charitable institutions, forsook schools... Around us the lights have dimmed... we have made the Muslim society much more miserable, more disorganized, more ignorant and more barbaric than it was before it came into contact with us (PT).

The confiscation of the funds of religious institutions that provided financial support to charitable structures, and that sustained educational institutions formed a part of France’s broader strategies of cultural conquest. Charles-Robert Ageron states that the French invasion of Algeria brought about the destruction of numerous religious structures. There were 13 big mosques and 109 smaller ones in Algiers at the time of

conquest, 32 religious sites, and 12 *zâouïas*. By the year 1862, only 9 big mosques, 19 small ones, 15 mausoleums, and 5 *zâouïas* survived France's aggressive strategy of confiscation, namely, 48 religious structures out of 176 (Becherirat 173). Ageron stresses that not all of the surviving institutions were destined to be used by Algerians, only 4 big mosques, 8 of modest size, and 9 sacred sites (Becherirat 173).

1.2.5 Language Rivalry in Colonial Algeria

The process of assimilation via the imposition of the French language fostered a mutation of the Algerian linguistic body. Colonial educators sought to decenter the mother tongues in order to instill in the colonized subjects the idea that their language is of no value since they have no history and no civilization. Onésime Reclus (1837-1916) - the French geographer who coined the word "Francophonie" [Francophonia] in 1880 - depicts Arabic and Berber as vernaculars that accord "a passion for terrible guttural sounds which resemble vomiting" (qtd. in Benrabah, *Competition between Four 'World' Languages* 44).

The displacement of Arabic and Berber encompassed a process of stigmatization. In order to render the mother tongues inferior, they were deprived legitimacy. Colonial educators often labeled Arabic and Berber as 'dialect,' and 'patois' (Benrabah, *Competition between Four 'World' Languages* 44). In his essay, *The Politics of Language in Former Colonial Lands: A Comparative look at North Africa and Central Asia* (1999), Edward H. Thomas argues that French linguists considered Arabic a dead language unworthy of being taught in schools, proper to the spoken realm only (4). The moral conquest of Algeria via the imposition the French language on the Arabo-Berber population entailed a hostile linguistic confrontation.

In 1930, the Centennial of French presence in Algeria was lavishly celebrated. While the military conquest was praised, manifestations of *frenchness* in the North African colony were glorified. Festivities ennobled the debasement of the Arabo-Berber culture and offered an opportunity to further debase *ce qui n'était pas Français*, [what was not French] (Gosnell 19). William Marçais, a renowned orientalist and dialectologist, asserted that Literary Arabic, dialectal Arabic, and Berber, are bound to die. He attributed the downfall of Berber to the absence of an adequate writing system, and the decay of dialectal Arabic to its tendency to borrow from the language of *Delacroix*. Marçais marginalized Literary Arabic on account of its “incurable diglossia.” The lingua franca of the Arab world was described as anti-modernist, and backward (qtd, in Benrabah, *Competition between Four ‘World’ Languages* 44). The study that planned the death of native languages demonstrates cultural violence at its most aggressive forms.

In his *De la décolonisation à la révolution culturelle (1962-1972)* published in (1976), Ahmed Taleb Ibrahim (1932-2025), son of Shaykh Bashir Ibrahim, contends that French schools served as instruments of manipulation. Prior to the French colonization the Algerian people celebrated a national cultural identity, the French colonial administration debased Algerian cultural heritage by forging a rift between the colonized and his values, his traditions, his past, and most importantly his language (qtd, in Kashani-Sabet 270). The process of deracination proved virulent to the Berber language, in 1830, the Berber inhabited various territories in Algeria and the different tribes retained linguistic affinities. The policy of land exportation ousted Berber-speaking communities from regions that were resettled later on by Arabophones (Benrabah, *The Language Planning Situation* 397).

French officials and policy makers concocted the Berber/Kabyle myth for the purpose of dividing the Arabo-Berber population. The latter entailed that the Berber were descendants of Europeans, hence, they were superior to the Arabs and prone to gallicization (Benrabah, *The Language Planning Situation* 395). French colonial discourse set the Arab population against the Berber population, the rhetoric of that time painted the native inhabitants of the Algerian nation as two different races. Linguistic diversity in Algeria formed the object of a policy of segregation. French officials using the concept of language as a “determinant of racial origin” devised the “divide to conquer” policy. They argued that the Berbers spoke an Indo-European language and were the descendants of Aryans while the Arabs of Algeria spoke a Semitic Afro-Asiatic language (Brooks 80).

Accordingly, French educational experts targeted Berber tongues, Colonna maintained that “89% of rural-teacher trainees were of Kabyle origin” (qtd, in Benrabah, *The Language Planning Situation* 396). The belief that the Kabyle population was prone to assimilation led educational experts to encourage and fund French schools in the region. Jules Ferry, Minister of Public Primary Education, argued for the implementation of the Jules Ferry reforms in Kabylia. The following section examines the before mentioned reforms and their enactment in the metropolis and the Algerian colony.

1.3. Educational Reform and French Language Instruction in the *Métropole* and the Algerian Colony

In the wake of France’s defeat in the Franco- Prussian war (1870-1871), republicans of the early Third Republic sought to devise an educational system that would forge national unity, and produce a politically conscious citizenry. The defeat, deemed a national disaster, entailed the reconstruction of the educational system as

politicians considered French schools and the French military equally responsible for the republic's vanquishment (Gosnell 43). To conceive a strong sense of loyalty and gratitude vis-à-vis *la patrie*, the field of education witnessed the implementation of various series of legislation, the most prominent ones are the Ferry Laws.

In 1881, Jules François Camille Ferry (1832-1893), Minister of Public Instruction, declared education in primary public schools free. In 1882, schools were pronounced laic and attendance was rendered compulsory for children between the ages six and thirteen. The third Ferry law entailed the construction of public primary schools in villages populated by more than twenty children of school age. The state set out to standardize school curricula and to establish teacher training colleges (*des écoles normales*). In 1886, lay instructors displaced Catholic teachers in primary schools. The act also introduced a common educational program and designed a tenacious plan of inspection (Brooks 21-22, Brickman 4). The following section offers a comparative study between the implementation of the Ferry laws in the metropolis and their exportation to the Algerian colony.

1.3.1 The Jules Ferry Laws and the Creation of a Franco-conform Nation

Republicans strived to orchestrate an educational system that would ensure the survival of the republic and sustain the French Revolution's primary legacy embodied in the "emancipation of the people through education" (Brooks 23). The educational reforms that fostered the rise of a free, mandatory, secular scholarly system were ingenerated in ideologies that promoted modernity, nationalism, and Western cultural superiority. Jules Ferry revolutionized the field of education in France by introducing reforms imbued with notions of Enlightenment that ennobled rationality over religious teaching (Keaton 100). To build the nation he envisioned, Ferry proclaimed the necessity of establishing a national laic schooling system free of the constraints of the

church that, according to the French minister of education, acted as: “mental incubators designed to breed anti-republican and anti-modernist ideas” (qtd. in Keaton 100). The Church obstructed the efforts of the republican school; hence, the laicization of the French educational system constituted a keystone in the Ferryian project.

In 1883, schoolteachers throughout France received the Minister of Public Instruction’s *Lettre aux instituteurs*, in which the latter delineates the significance of a liberal, moral, and civic national education decreed by the act of 28 March 1882, the letter reads:

La loi du 28 mars se caractérise par deux dispositions qui se complètent sans se contredire; d'une part, elle met en dehors du programme obligatoire l'enseignement de tout dogme particulier; d'autre part, elle y place au premier rang l'enseignement moral et civique... elle affirme la volonté de fonder chez nous une éducation nationale, et de la fonder sur des notions du devoir et du droit... (Ferry, *LT* 1)

[The law of March 28 is characterized by two tendencies that complement without contradicting each other; on the one hand, it rejects the teaching of any particular dogma from the required curriculum; on the other hand, it places moral and civic education at the forefront ... it affirms the desire to found a national education, based on notions of duty and law...] (PT)

The break with religious teaching and the promotion of a moral and civic education ushered a new era in which schools influenced the political discourse in the *métropole* and its colonies.

Under the Third French Republic, education played a vital role in forging a Franco-conform nation. It also rendered colonial policies of expansion - of which

Jules Ferry was a staunch proponent - legitimate. The notion of 'race' reared the mindset of decision makers of that period, the idea that their society was superior led them to believe that they were destined to enlighten the inferior race (Keaton 101). The Ferryian project was designed to accomplish a moral conquest on foreign soils, and to contrive national unity at home. Schools emerged as vital galvanizers of French patriotism, they served as a means to teach frenchness to the metropolis' future citizens, and to the colony's settlers and subjects.

The role of educational institutions was rewritten; they served a national policy of assimilation and a colonial policy of deculturation. In an 1855 Assembly session, Ferry argued that educational establishments constitute the instruments needed to mold a generation of republicans bound to their nation:

If the school is education, if it is an important national institution that proposes not to watch over a child in order to teach him to sign his name, but to shape his soul and his mind for the patriotic and national cause, can it remain narrowly restricted in a way that, until this moment, you have considered adequate? (qtd. in Keaton. 102).

Ferry believed that education should act in order to sculpt the mind and soul of France's future generations making it fundamental in the process of *unification*. Schoolteachers had a pedagogical mission that entailed turning "peasants into Frenchmen" (Weber. qtd in. Brooks 32). The linguistic displacement of Algerian colonized subjects was at the center of the colonial project since the beginning of the conquest; the exportation of the Jules Ferry laws to the Algerian colony gave linguistic conversion more prominence. The educational project of the Third French Republic - that was simultaneously implemented in France and in Algeria -

championed a secular education that promotes the use of the French language as a tool of assimilation to serve different political agendas.

In France, French language teaching was central to suppress linguistic differences in order to achieve the mission to assimilate the “*non-français-français*” to French culture (Keaton 103). Leaders of the newly-formed Third Republic argued that the ratified reforms were insufficient and that education necessitated a unifying instrument of instruction, a national language that would forge unity amongst a linguistically diverse community. Historian Gilbert Meynier contends that in 1789 almost half of the French populace did not speak or comprehend French: the Alsatians, the Flemings, the Bretons, the Occitans, and the Catalans (Brooks 23). Conforming to a national survey ordained by the Ministry of Education in 1863, historian Eugen Weber estimates that half of France’s population spoke a language other than French (Brooks 25). Strikingly, the French language served as a tool of conquest at a time when it was not the standard language of the French nation.

In the 1880’s, the republican school emerged to inhibit linguistic varieties and to promote a common “national language.” In the aftermath of the French Revolution, the French language arose as a symbol of a liberal nation that advocated egalitarianism (Brooks 41). The Ferryian pedagogic policies that were set to accomplish the metropolitan civilizing mission equated the language with patriotism making the reforms an essential component in the creation of the nation-state:

The [Jules] Ferry Laws (article 13 and 14) of the early 1880s instituted free, compulsory and secular education—the *école laïque*. French therefore became synonymous not only with education, freedom, and equality but also and especially with patriotism. Speaking French became a tangible measure of adherence and commitment to the nation. The French language was the

monument of the Revolution, the language of the Law and State, and a new equation— “One Nation= One Language”— was put forth” (Djité. qtd in Keaton. 108).

The pedagogical mission orchestrated by the Third Republic aimed at assimilating the *other* France into: “la vraie France, la France du Nord” (Michelet, qtd in. Meynier 23), [The real France is northern France] (PT). The work of French lexicographers and linguists of the nineteenth century shaped the emergence of a standardized French language that served as a unifying method of instruction. In his *l'école et la nation en France*, Buisson depicted the process of teaching the French language as “a labor of patriotic character” (qtd. in Brooks. 42). The instructor had a mission that consisted of promoting the values of the republic in order to abolish regional loyalties.

Republican officials and educational experts believed that to remedy the damage bestowed on the nation’s pride and to raise a politically active citizenry, history and geography lessons had to be taught to make known France’s glorious past and to redeem its prestige. George Duruy, a history and literature professor, maintained that in order to regain France’s lost status primary school children needed to be exposed to their nation’s “war stories” since history lessons exhibited a vessel that would facilitate ingraining the image of a grandiose France in the minds of its future citizens (Brooks 42).

These future citizens had a mission that entailed preserving republicanism and asserting their nation’s superior status. To meet that end, the history curriculum – according to Alain Choppin - was designed in order to “transmit a system of values, an ideology, and a culture... the traditions, the innovations, indeed the pedagogic utopias of an era” (Keaton 112). History textbooks formed the political tool that was

vital to mold a generation of young republicans that adhered to a “common culture,” and was devoted to the glory of the nation.

G. Bruno’s (1904), *Le Tour de la France par deux enfants: devoir et patrie* (1877) embodies the rhetoric of the politics of the French Third Republic. The history and geography reader narrates the journey of Julien and André of Lorraine as they explore their country. The breviary recounts in an informative fashion the protagonists’ expedition throughout France and its colonies namely Algeria. Gosnell (2002) maintains that educational experts considered the teaching of the geography of the nations colonized by France was necessary to the process of engendering a better understanding of the Greater France (45). Through each experience, each adventure Julien and André offer a moral lesson. The central idea that has been conveyed recurrently throughout the book is that historical knowledge further bonds *les écoliers* to their country as the author maintained, to know one’s country is to love one’s country.

The school textbook portrays the colonies as vital sources of resurgence to an exhausted yet grand nation imparting generations of young scholars with the belief that colonization is a legitimate necessity. The author restlessly evokes the idea of patriotism to cultivate a sense of pride in the *patrie*: “France aimée, nous sommes tes enfants, et nous voulons devenir dignes de toi! » (Bruno 308) [Beloved France, we are your children, and we want to become worthy of you!] (PT). The protagonists of the textbook demonstrate to *écoliers* of the Third Republic how to cultivate devotion to their nation, and how to become exemplary citizens entrusted with the future of France.

Julien and André’s story revolves around their forced departure from their hometown Lorraine. From beginning to end, they face the consequences of the defeat

in the Franco-Prussian War (1871), and the loss of the provinces of Alsace-Lorraine. As the children witness ruination and destruction, they learn that their duty lies in preventing the reoccurrence of the defeat. Prior to their parting, Julien and André assure their dying father that they will remain devoted Frenchmen:

Un mot plus léger qu'un souffle arriva à l'oreille d'André :

- France ! - Oh ! s'écria le fils aîné avec élan, soyez tranquille, cher père, je vous promets que nous demeurerons les enfants de la France; nous quitterons Phalsbourg pour aller là-bas; nous resterons Français, quelque peine qu'il faille souffrir pour cela (Bruno 10).

[A word more delicate than a breath came to André's ear:

- France! - Oh! exclaimed the eldest son, rest assured, dear father, I promise you that we will remain the children of France; we will leave Phalsbourg to go there; we will remain French, no matter the price we shall pay] (PT).

Gosnell (2002) maintains that the portrayal of France's defeat in the Franco-Prussian War appears to reflect the belief that textbooks had to be crafted in order to foster a strong sense of national awareness (45). Although Bruno's *Le Tour de la France par deux enfants: devoir et patrie* (1877) was published prior to the implementation of the Jules Ferry Laws, the reader is emblematic of the Ferryian project.

Leaders of the Third Republic orchestrated series of educational reforms that rendered the French language the focal point of a free, laic, and a compulsory educational system for the purpose of shaping a citizenry imbued with a strong sense of morality and patriotism to ensure the endurance of a republican France. Metropolitan policy makers staunchly advocated for the exportation of the reformed educational system and most importantly the exportation of the French language to the Algerian colony. French pedagogues strived to implement the *métropole's* schooling

system in French Algeria in order to propagate and to maintain influence by means of a conquest of languages.

1.3.2. Education in Colonial Algeria and the Aftermath of the Ferryian Project:

Primary schools in French Algeria offered the potential of “teaching Frenchness” to the colony’s settlers and subjects: Europeans, Jews, and Muslims (Gosnell 42). The colonial educational system acted to transcribe the metropolitan assimilationist project. Policy makers sought to integrate the settler population and subdue the Arabo-Berber population by ingraining French culture and values in the minds of its *écoliers*. The French language deemed the bearer of civilization and enlightenment, emerged as a tool of pedagogical conquest to achieve France’s domestic and universal civilizing mission. Ahmed Lanasri (1986), maintains, in his *Conditions socio-historiques et émergence de la littérature algérienne*, that from 1881 onward, the scholastic colonial policy – to which the name Jules Ferry continues to be linked – would become : “le cheval de bataille dans le processus colonialiste,” [the spearhead of the colonial project] (qtd. in Bendjelid 48).

The processes by which the Jules Ferry laws were introduced in the Algerian colony were extremely different from the strategies of their implementation in France; this discrepancy reflects the oppressive nature of the French colonial schooling system. The Ferryian educational project promoted a free, compulsory, and secular primary school system for the children of the French Third Republic. Colonial schools in French Algeria specifically the departments of Algiers, Oran, and Constantine adhered to the Jules Ferry reforms since the three districts were governed as metropolitan French municipalities. Therefore, the colonial administration had to dispense French instruction to both the European settler and Arabo-Berber populations (Gosnell 46).

The implementation of the Ferry Laws in the colony had detrimental effects on the nation's traditional modes of teaching. Ferry strongly believed in the precept the colonial school fosters: "épousez le pays," [Espouse the country] (Maamri 78). While debating the policy of assimilation by means of colonial education, Ferry argues in a Parliamentary session, which was held on March 1885, that the policy under scrutiny embodies France's mission to civilize the so-called "inferior races". He states:

Il y a un second point... que je dois aborder... croyez-le, c'est le côté humanitaire et civilisateur de la question... Il faut dire ouvertement qu'en effet les races supérieures ont un droit vis-à-vis des races inférieures... parce qu'il y a un devoir pour elles. Elles ont le devoir de civiliser les races inférieures... Est-ce que quelqu'un peut nier qu'il y'a plus de justice, plus d'ordre matériel et moral, plus d'équité, plus de vertus sociales dans l'Afrique du Nord depuis que la France a fait sa conquête ? (Discours au sujet de colonisation, 1885).

[There is a second point... I wish to refer to... believe it, it is the humanitarian and civilizing aspect to this undertaking [...] it must be stated openly that the superior races have a right in relation to the inferior races. They have a right because they have a duty. They have the duty to civilize the inferior races... Can anyone deny that the French conquest of North Africa has brought more justice, more material and moral order, more equity, and more social virtues?]
(PT).

The founder of the French liberal school was an ardent partisan of the colonial enterprise. In his speech, he evokes the entrenched belief in the superiority of the European race and declares that it was their divine duty to enlighten the colonized population. This belief has led to the development of a colonial policy that promotes

the use of colonial schools as weapons of the moral conquest of Algeria. The rhetoric of the superiority of the European race resulted in the creation of irreconcilable contradictions within the educational system: a system that on the one hand proclaimed equality and assimilationism; systemized on the other, exploitation, segregation, and cultural violence.

In 1883, the Minister of Public Instruction enacted a decree regulating education in the Algerian colony. The decree extends the legislative measures implemented in the metropolis - since the introduction of the 1879-1882 reforms - to the Algerian colony. The law states that instruction within a public primary colonial school has to offer: a moral and civic education, reading and writing lessons, the teaching of the history and the geography of the French nation and of the colony, and most importantly the teaching of the French language (Le Décret du 13 février 1883, 113). In the same way that the use of vernaculars in metropolitan schools was severely restricted, communication in the Arabic or the Berber languages had long been outlawed in Algerian colonial schools (Gosnell 51).

Ferry's administration instituted incentive measures to further promote the teaching of the French language amongst the Arabo-Berber population. Article 30 of the decree offers financial compensation to students who learn how to communicate in French: "Il est établi pour les indigènes une prime pour la connaissance de la langue française. Cette prime sera de 300 francs. La dépense sera imputée sur le budget de l'Instruction publique" (Le Décret du 13 février 1883, 113) [Natives shall be rewarded for learning the French language. The reward will comprise of 300 francs. The expenditure will be charged to the public instruction budget] (PT). French policy makers marginalized Arabic and Berber languages and enforced French as the only medium of instruction.

Pedagogues of the Third French Republic centralized the teaching of the French language and also the teaching of French history in European and Arab-french schools in colonial Algeria. Some educational reformers believed that the teaching of the history of France to the Arabo-Berber is of equal importance to French language instruction. They argued that historical context would bridge the distance between the metropole and the Algerian colony, that it would instill a sense of cultural belonging within the estranged *écoliers*, and encourage them to adopt the values of the Third Republic (Gosnell 55). In one of his seminal speeches, Ferry debated that to rule by consent, colonial schools have to dispense French language, French history and geography instruction:

Transformer les jeunes indigènes en sujets fidèles et obéissants de la France, en leur faisant connaître notre langue et en leur inculquant des notions d'histoire et de géographie destinées à leur donner l'idée de la grandeur de la civilisation de leur nouvelle patrie (qtd in Maamri, 79).

[Transform the young indigenous into faithful and obedient subjects by teaching them our language, history and geography to give an idea of the extent of the civilization of our country] (PT).

Pertaining to the teaching of French history in colonial primary schools, Gosnell (2002), states that the discipline was at once analogous to and different from the teaching of history in France. For the most part, Algerian educators used the same textbooks that were used in metropolitan schools (55). French history textbooks produced under the Third French Republic emphasized the pre-revolutionary era of the history of France. They entailed broad overviews that outline France's historical development beginning from the Gauls, to the July Monarchy, foregrounding the contributions of prominent figures including Charlemagne, Saint Louis, Jean d'Arc...

etc. History textbooks refrained from discussing periods of unrest; they portrayed an idealized France and focused on the depiction of the emblems of the nation's grandeur: the florescence of palaces, monuments, cathedrals, and the rise of great cities (Gosnell 55).

Along with the metropolitan history textbooks that were employed in the teaching of French history in Algerian colonial schools, a body of specialized manuals was formatted to integrate the study of the history of Imperial France in the colony; not solely the history of The Hexagone (Gosnell 55). However, colonial curriculum designers argued for the need to produce history books specific to the Franco-Algerian framework, they advocated for the use of a dual approach to the teaching of history. Reformed primary school history textbooks presented accounts of both the history of France and of Algeria (Gosnell 56).

Yet, the parallel history approach failed to offer Arabo-Berber students equitable representation of both histories. Chaulanges' *Images et Récits d'histoire de France: Cours Élémentaires classes de 10^e et 9^e* is a history textbook that was used in French primary schools of the east of Algeria. While the book was published in 1947 and does not qualify as a textbook of the Third French Republic, it carries the pedagogical philosophy of the Ferryian school. The book offers a survey of the most significant episodes of the history of France starting from an overview of *Les Gaulois* to the events of the Second World War. It chronicles the achievements of prominent historical figures such as King Louis (see fig.1. 1), and the Minister of Public Instruction under the Third French Republic Jules Ferry (see fig.1. 2).

Fig.1. 1 An Excerpt from a Colonial History Textbook: “Le bon roi saint Louis”

(1947)

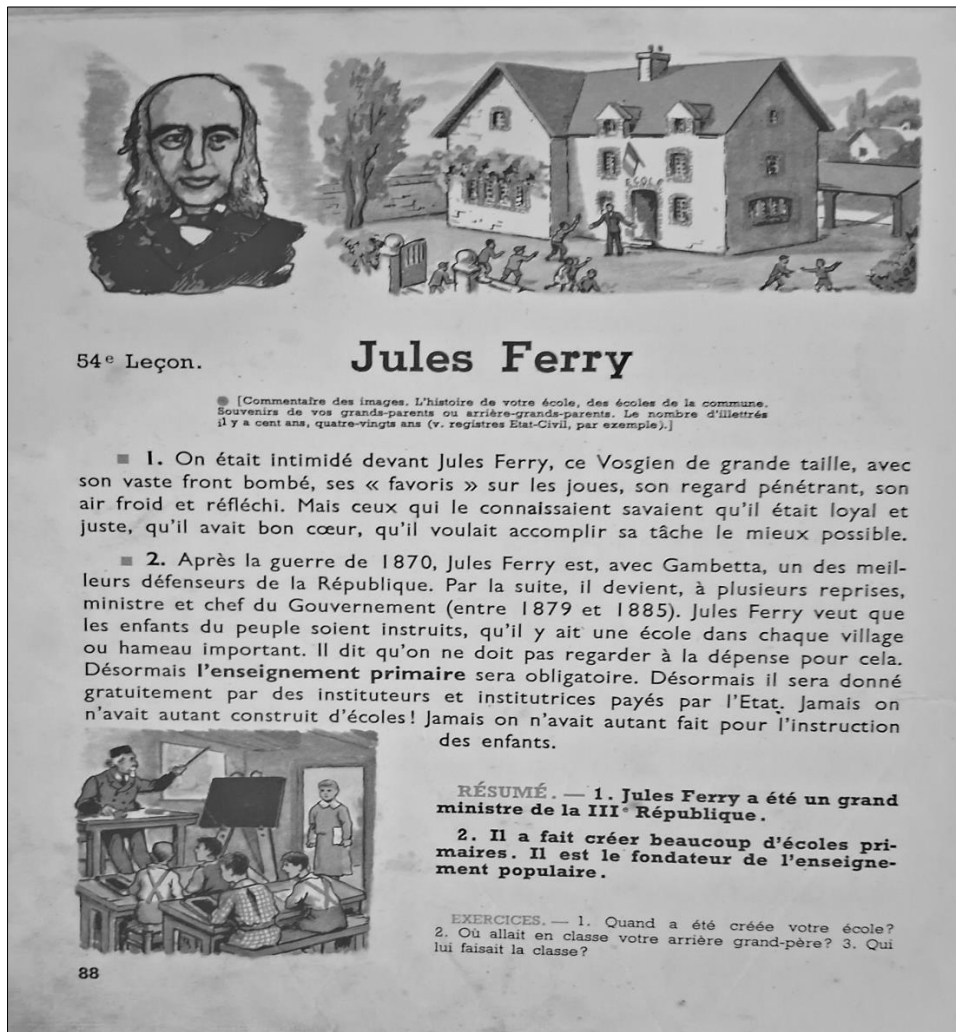


Source: Chaulanges, M. and S. Chaulanges. Images et récit d'histoire de France.

Delagrave, 1947, p. 22.

Fig. 1. 2. An Excerpt from a Colonial History Textbook: “Jules Ferry”

(1947)



Source: Chaulanges, M. and S. Chaulanges. Images et récit d'histoire de France.

Delagrave, 1947, p. 88.

Lesson 50 of the history textbook presents an overview of the French Revolution of 1830, also known as the July Revolution, the upheaval gave rise to a new political regime in France (see fig 1.3). Lesson 51 then provides an account of the Battle of Sidi Brahim (1845) in which El Amir Abd el Kader fought and defeated French troops under the leadership of Lieutenant-Colonel Montagnac. The account is the only instance in which the history of Algeria is mentioned, the textbook's

narrative seamlessly introduces the battle presenting it as a mundane event (see fig.1 4).

Fig. 1. 3. An Excerpt from a Colonial History Textbook: “La révolution de 1830”

(1947)



Source: Chaulanges, M. and S. Chaulanges. Images et récit d'histoire de France.

Delagrave, 1947, p. 80.

The text opens with the following statement: “Il y a de cela un peu plus de cent ans, les Français se battaient alors contre les Arabes d’Algérie” (Chaulanges 82) [Over one hundred years ago, the French were then fighting against the Arabs of Algeria] (PT).

The passage does not make any reference to the French conquest and/or colonization of Algeria, to national resistance, and to French colonial violence normalizing colonial expansion. It treats the battle as a tragic event in the history of France, and a testament to French bravery and valour. It distorts historical facts by shadowing the circumstances of El Amir's surrender, and by describing him as: "un fidèle ami de la France" (Chaulanges 83) [a loyal friend of France]⁴.

Fig. 1. 4. An Excerpt from a Colonial History Textbook: "Sidi-Brahim (23-26 septembre 1845)" (1947).



⁴ The authors of the history textbook incorporated biographical notes of El Amir Abd el Kader; the page is heavily damaged preventing its interpretation.

Source: Chaulanges, M. and S. Chaulanges. Images et récit d'histoire de France.

Delagrave, 1947, p. 82.

Despite the fact that policy makers staunchly advocated for a pedagogical conquest of the Algerian colony; only a minority of Algerian children were granted access to French colonial schools. This is what constitutes the paradox of the French educational system in Algeria, while the colonial project is centered on the ideology “instruct to conquer;” the percentage of Arabo-Berber children of school age who received a French education is very low, yet the effects of the proclamation of French as the official language of instruction were pernicious to the Algerian linguistic and cultural frameworks. Table 1 indicates the number of enrolled children in the primary and secondary levels in colonial schools of the departments of Algiers, Oran, and Constantine (1856-1857).

Table 1. Public “Indigenous” Instruction in Algeria (1856-1857)

Subdivision	Nombre d'écoles 1856		Nombre d'élèves 1856		Nombre d'écoles 1857		Nombre d'élèves	
	1 ^{er} degré	2 ^e degré	1 ^{er} degré	2 ^e degré	1 ^{er} degré	2 ^e degré	1 ^{er} degré	2 ^e degré
Algier	530	77	9 485	1 777	510	80	9 853	1 630
Oran	1 379	813	24850	6 643	1 072	569	9 852	4 410
Constantine	489	154	5 889	2 061	460	161	5 710	2 256
Total	2 398	1 044	40324	10481	2 041	810	25415	8 296

Source: cited in Kateb p. 12

Attempts at schooling Muslim children, under the Second French Empire (1852-1870), were challenged by the settler community. The colonial administration in Algeria was hostile to the metropole's attempts at educating the Arabo-Berber population. The Arab-French primary schools gradually ceased to function: out of the 40 schools that were operational in 1870, only 13 survived in 1882, in 1883 the Arab-French schools disappeared completely (Desvages 55). In the year 1880, Ferry ordered an inspection of the schooling situation in Kabylia. He contrived to create, in the region, a network of 15 ministerial schools financed by metropolitan France (Desvages 56). Ferry's colonial pedagogical project was galvanized by a conviction in the Kabyle myth that entailed the depiction of the Kabyle population as prone to assimilation since they were the descendants of the Gauls, the Romans, the Christian Berbers, and the Vandals (Ageron 93).

La scolarisation des musulmans en Algérie (1882-1962) dans l'enseignement primaire public français, a statistical study conducted in 1972 demonstrates that whilst the implementation of the Jules Ferry Laws in the metropolis (1881-1882), school attendance in the Algerian colony was relatively low: around 3 000 Muslim boys and girls were schooled. The percentage of school attendance amongst the Arabo-Berber population, according to Table 2, gradually increased (Desvages 55).

Table 2: The Number of Muslim Students Enrolled in French Public Primary Schools
(1881-1882/1890-1891)

<u>Année scolaire</u>	<u>Nombre de scolarisés</u>	<u>Sources</u>
1881-82	3 172	E.S.G. 1906
1882-83	4 095	-
1883-84	4 821	-
1884-85	5 695	-
1885-86	7 341	-
1886-87	9 064	-
1887-88	10 638	-
1888-89	10 631	-
1889-90	11 206	-
1890-91	11 347	-

Source: cited in Desvages p. 72

Ferry's legislative plan was opposed by officials in Paris who refused to finance Ferry's colonial educational project arguing that: "si l'instruction se généralisait, le cri unanime des indigènes serait: l'Algérie aux Arabes!" (Ferry, qtd in Ageron. 78) [If instruction became accessible to all, the unanimous cry of the natives would be: Algeria for the Arabs!] (PT). The Reforms of the Third French Republic were met with resistance since the education of the Arabo-Berber population was perceived a threat to the colonial enterprise. The efforts to educate Muslim children were also contested by the settler and Arabo-Berber populations alike (Desvages 56). After the establishment of French primary public schools in the Kabyle region, parents refused to enlist their children. Subsequently, the French administration rendered school attendance compulsory. If children of school age did not attend, their parents became the subject of penalties enforced by *le code d'indigénat* (Brooks 81).

The newly appointed rector in 1884, Jeanmaire, strongly advocated for the exportation of the Jules Ferry reforms to the Algerian colony. He elaborated a plan

that entailed the establishment of 60 to 80 schools, every year, to host the children of the Arabo-Berber population. The rector's efforts were directed towards the cities and the Kabyle region. The rector estimated the numbers of would-be Muslim attendees to: 12 000 *écoliers* in the 20 largest cities, 27 000 *écoliers* in Kabylia, 23 000 *écoliers* in Constantine, a total of 62 000 Muslim children that would, potentially, contribute in the building of the colony's economy. The plan required the creation of 620 schools (Desvages 56). The efforts of the colonial administration resulted, by 1890, in the creation of 122 schools and the enrollment of 11 206 Arabo-Berber children (Brooks 82).

An investigative study of education in colonial Algeria conducted by a senatorial delegation in 1892 proffered that the moral conquest of Algeria would only be fulfilled through the dissemination of the French language (Brooks 82). The officials charged with the investigation perceived that *la langue de Molière*, is "the principal instrument of the rapprochement of minds and as a natural process toward the eventual harmony of hearts," colonial school teachers were portrayed as "agents of propaganda" (qtd, in Brooks. 82). Under the aegis of patriotism, the propagation of the French language, in the metropolis and the Algerian colony, was considered a divine mission. Primary school instruction, under the Third French Republic, acted as a means to assimilate a linguistically diverse nation and to subdue a colonized nation.

Malika R. Maamri (2009) contends that the Ferryian project irreversibly damaged the Algerian scholastic enterprise since Algerians learned how to read and write the Arabic language in the Quranic school. The separation between the school and the mosque that was proclaimed by the Ferry laws decimated Algerian forms of education (79). Kateb (2004) maintains that: "l'avènement de la III^e République fut fatal à cet enseignement" (17) [the rise of the III Republic was fatal to this teaching]

(PT). In the name of laicization and the colonial policy of assimilation, policy makers did not tolerate the teaching offered in Quranic schools. Consequently, the number of Quranic schools was strictly limited, the *zâouïas* were monitored, persecuted, or shut down (Ageron 92).

The colonial administration took coercive measures that entailed the seizure of the *habus* land that used to finance the schooling of Algerian children. Additionally, colonial policy makers refused to fund Quranic schools and mosques and attributed large sums of money to the education of the settler population (Maamri 79). These constraints resulted in the decline of the number of *ulémas* and *mouderrésins* (Doctors of law, and Quranic school teachers). Subsequently, the use of literary Arabic, barely taught, irreparably deteriorated (Ageron 92).

1.4 Conclusion

So far this chapter has examined the Jules Ferry educational project that was implemented, under the Third French Republic, in the metropolis and enforced on the Algerian colony. Schools served as instruments in the Republic's domestic mission to civilize that aimed to forge unity and Franco conformity while French education in colonial Algeria served as a tool of conquest. In order to annihilate any form of cultural resistance, and to fulfill the notion of a 'fusion of the races'; the French colonial government adopted a pedagogical project that entailed the coercive promotion of the French language, and the dislocation of the Arabic and the Berber languages. Algerian authors, graduates of the French colonial school, produced literary works that provide crucial insight on the inneworkings of the colonial educational system. The following chapter will provide an overview of the emergence of an Algerian literature of French expression. It will also ponder on Algerian writers' language conundrum.

Chapter Two:
Algerian Literature of French Expression: Orientalism,
Algerianism, and the Literature of Resistance

2.1 Introduction:

Rooted in a complex historical context, Algerian literature of French expression is shaped by the history of the colonization of the nation, the struggle for liberation, and the quest of decolonization. The present chapter provides an overview of the different literary currents that sprung in the Algerian colony, the historical phases that elicited their emergence, and the major literary themes that inform them. It argues that Algerian writers of Arabo-Berber descent, graduates of the French colonial school, challenged the means of their institutionalization, and forged a discourse of resistance assertive of the self. Mouloud Feraoun's *Le Fils du pauvre* is widely considered as the first authentic form of literary expression that portrays the experiences of the Algerian people in the French language, while, Assia Djébar's *L'Amour la fantasia* is a grounding subversive work that distorts Euro-centric modes of historical representation. Both autobiographical narratives, along with the works of some of the key figures of the tradition, depict the experiences of Algerian youth within the French colonial educational system and their attempt to resist the forms of acculturation they were subjected to. This chapter aims to delineate the ways these authors create spaces to negotiate a treaty between the tensions of languages, belonging, and resistance.

2.2 Algerian Literature of French Expression, an Overview

Born from violent colonial encounters, Algerian literature of French expression is the complex body of work produced by Algerian authors in the language of their colonial education. The emergence of this literary tradition is fraught with tension; the following section attempts to explore the complex and contested formation of the Algerian novel of French expression. In his "Francophone Literature in the Maghreb: the Problem and the Possibility", Jean Déjeux (1992), opens his

paper with the following statement: “Francophone ‘Maghrebean’ literature is neither indigenous nor national” (7). Déjeux’ erroneous assertion is dismissive of the complex history of the emergence of Maghrebean literature in North African colonies. A literature that is certainly not exclusively North African, or colonialist, or nationalist, or settlerist⁵; rather, a confluence of all the above mentioned. It could be asserted that there is an urgency to retrace the archeology of Francophone literatures of the Great Maghreb. From the 50’s onward, many terms have been formulated to describe the body of North African literary texts written in French, the most widely used are: “littérature d’expression française” [literature of French expression], and “littérature de langue française” [literature of French language] (*FLM* 7).

Even though these designations have been a matter of contention amongst critics, no better alternative has been proposed. Kacem Basfao (1988), has suggested; “littérature marocaine de langue véhiculaire française,” [Marrocan literature vehiculed by the French language], Ahmed Lanasri has framed it as: “littérature algérienne d’expression arabe mais de langue française,” [Algerian literature of Arabic expression but of French language] (7). Additionally, Debra Kelly (2005), – in her *Autobiography and Independence* - has chosen the label: “North African Postcolonial Writing in French” (III). For the purposes of this chapter, the umbrella term “Maghrebean literature of French expression” - which reduces the Algerian literary tradition to a byproduct of French colonialism, diminishing the innovative contributions Algerian writers have made to world literature - proves to be inadequate. Instead the label “Algerian literature of French expression,” is used in

⁵ The term settlerist is used in reference to the body of literary texts produced by European settlers to support their colonial agenda in occupied territories, while the term colonialist literature is often used to refer to literature written by metropolitan and/or settler authors, in the context of Algeria there’s a clear distinction between the literary texts produced by colonialists and French settlers that calls for the introduction of separate label.

order to trace the development of the literature produced within Algeria from the colonial period, to the revolutionary war, till the current postcolonial era.

It is important to note that while it's imperative to maintain a critical distance from Déjeux' contentious claims; his work is engaged with all throughout this chapter in an effort to provide a critically informed overview of Algerian literature of French expression. Déjeux' scholarship forms a foundational reference in the field of the anthologization of Francophone North African literature that is widely cited by scholars within the discipline. Granted that, the following section is concerned with the emergence, evolution, and reception of the Francophone Algerian novel. The literary works discussed demonstrate that the themes portrayed in the Algerian novel of French expression reflect the country's colonial heritage and complex political landscape. In their attempt to depict their experiences in colonial Algeria and to assert a cultural identity, writers of the French colonial schools contributed in forging creative literary styles. Novelists experimented with literary genres and modes of artistic expression deflating the claim that reduces Algerian literature of French expression written by Arabo-Berber novelists to ethnographic texts.

2.2.1 The Search for a New Orient: the Exotic Movement

The literature of conquest forms the first type of writing produced about Algeria, it comprises official military reports, diaries, and correspondences written of the conquest of the Algerian nation. Military officers who took part in the French invasion chronicled the events in official documents and governmental reports, and personal letters they have exchanged with family members. These texts narrate the events of the expedition of the country, the stories of the victorious battles, of the glory of the French empire, and of the strength of the French army facing the Moorish population of the Turkish regency of Algiers (Bendjelid 23). Their writings also offer

description of the newly annexed territories, with particular emphasis on things they perceive as exotic (Salhi 22). It is important to note that the conquest of Algeria coincided with the emergence of the Romantic Movement⁶ in France. The 1850's witnessed an influx of French artists who sought to seek new sources of inspiration. They were fascinated with the different, the unknown, and the unfathomable which they perceived as 'exotic'. Jean Déjeux maintains in his *La littérature Algérienne contemporaine* (1975), that:

La conquête de l'Algérie coïncide avec l'expansion du mouvement romantique en France. Le débarquement de 1830 et les campagnes à l'intérieur du pays nous apportent donc d'abord des récits militaires, des journaux de route marqués par les images romantiques, les poncifs de l'époque, les réminiscences de l'ambiance des campagnes de Bonaparte en Egypte. Correspondances, Mémoires des officiers résonnent d'épopées et de faits d'armes toujours à la gloire de celui qui les raconte (14).

[The conquest of Algeria coincides with the rise of romanticism in France. The disembarkation of the troops in 1830 and the military campaigns in the interior of the country bring us first military accounts, travel journals marked by romantic images, the stereotypes of the time, the reminiscences of the ambiance of the military campaigns of Bonaparte in Egypt. Correspondences, Memoirs of officers filled with epics and feats of arms always glorifying the one who narrates them] (PT).

⁶ Romanticism is an artistic movement that emerged in France in the late 18th century in reaction to the rigidity of Neoclassicism, the movement is characterized by an emphasis on the sublime, the expression of emotions, and a fascination by nature.

The literature of conquest takes on different forms and modes of writing: military, personal, political, and philosophical. Alexis de Tocqueville -a French journalist, philosopher, historian, and essayist - was deployed by the French government to study the Algerian society in order to assist in the formulation of a strategy of colonization (Tocqueville, *Seconde Lettre sur l'Algérie* 8). Tocqueville travelled to Algeria, for the first time, in 1841, and again in 1846, he drafted many reports, letters, and essays in which he provides his analytical observations on the conditions of the country and puts forward tactics of domination (SLA 107).

Tocqueville's letters on Algeria testify to the contradictions inherent in Western liberal thought, the philosopher on the one hand claims to be a staunch advocate of the freedom and rights of men; on the other he defends the French Empire's violent methods of the conquest of Algeria. In 1835, Tocqueville published *Democracy in America* in which he criticized American methods of expansion, and pleaded for the dignified treatment of the Native and African Americans; while he justified the most brutal war crimes that were committed by the French army in Algeria (Harrat-Barkaoui 23). The French liberalist was devoted to the study of the newly conquered country; he emphasized in his governmental letters the necessity of gathering the necessary knowledge that would guarantee full dominion over the country (Tocqueville, *SLA* 8).

Therefore, in his examination of Algerian social structures, De Tocqueville explored the colony's history, geography, religion, and language. He also detailed the people's cultural practices, and traditional values. All the more, he studied the Quran with diligence and came to the conclusion that Islam is the cause of the Arab society's backwardness (Olivier Le Cour GrandMaison 87). The philosopher provided in his writings the rationale behind Algeria's colonization by diagnosing the obstacles the

colonial regime might encounter in subduing the Arabo-Berber population and outlined the solutions. He has theorized the “divide to conquer” policy by charting the differences between Kabyle and Arab, formulating the notorious “Kabyle Myth” (Tocqueville, *SLA* 33). Additionally, he posited the colonial regime’s policy of assimilation:

On doit viser avant tout à ce que ces Arabes indépendants s’habituent à nous voir nous mêler de leurs affaires intérieures et se familiarisent avec nous. Car il faut bien s’imaginer qu’un peuple puissant et civilisé comme le nôtre exerce par le seul fait de la supériorité de ses lumières une influence presque invincible sur de petites peuplades à peu près barbares ; et que, pour forcer celles-ci à s’incorporer à lui, il lui suffit de pouvoir établir des rapports durables avec elles (*SLA* 38).

[We must above all aim at getting these independent Arabs used to having us interfere in their internal affairs and getting familiar with us. For it is vital to imagine that a powerful and civilized people like ours, by the mere fact of its superiority, exerts an almost invincible influence on small tribes which are just about barbarian; and that, in order to force them to integrate into our nation, It is sufficient to be able to establish lasting ties with them] (PT).

Tocqueville’s governmental reports outlined the foundations of the colonial policy of assimilation. In her *Le Roman algérien de langue française (2012)*, Faouzia Bendjelid stresses the role the military texts played in documenting the events of the invasion, of the colonization, and of the crimes of war. The author evokes Djébar’s re-reading of the historical archives in *L’Amour, la fantasia (1985)*, a novel that blurs the lines between autobiography, fiction, and history. In her attempt to rewrite the history of

her nation, Djébar studies eye-witness accounts written by military officers, artists, and voyagers of the period that relate the fall of the city of Algiers in 1830, the seizure of the city of Oran in 1840, and the resistance of the Arabo-Berber population.

The following excerpt accounts for the capture of Oran and the surrounding regions: “Two men will chronicle this expedition: Captain Bosquet... and Captain Montagnac... The two officers unbeknown to each other, correspond with their respective families, and thereby allow us to accompany them as eyewitnesses and actors of this operation” (*Fantasia, an Algerian Cavalcade* 51). Djébar maintains that the epistles that the military officers exchanged with their family members serve as eyewitness testimonies that chronicle the conquest of the Algerian nation. However, the author does not opt for a mere reproduction of the French historical documents in her fiction; she questions their reliability and attempts to decolonize the archives by rewriting history from an Algerian perspective (a detailed analysis of Djébar’s strategies of rewriting history will be presented in chapter four).

The literature of conquest was succeeded by travel literature; the rise of the Romantic Movement in France prompted the visit of prestigious writers and painters who sought novel artistic avenues in the newly-acquired colony. Artists traveled to coastal cities, the *sahara*, and cities of the interior to portray their impressions on the ‘exotic’ land (Bendjelid 25). The traveler art was fraught with stereotypical conceptions of the Orient, artists sought to feed the audience’s appetite for the alluring far off lands. The voyagers that embarked in Algeria carried with them a pre-existing impression of the country, which the previous visitors had described in detail. Déjeux states that prior to the French conquest of Algeria European travelers came to inspect the country and they produced texts that chronicle their trips; however, these writings do not qualify as travel literature since they do not exhibit the characteristics of the

genre. Written by captifs such as : Cerventès or by the Fathers of Merci and of the Order of the Trinity who came to rebuy prisoners, these texts offer a plethora of notes and observations evoking the racial European ideology of 'Barbarian Africa' (*LAC* 9-10).

The literary works produced at that time were informed by the exotic tradition. The travel journals of the period tend to portray the Arabo-Berber population as 'barbaric', 'uncivilized'. Women were over-sexualized. Pierre Martino (1931), reports: "chaque voyageur emporta de France avec lui son Algérie toute faite..." (qtd. in Salhi *Themes in the Francophone Algerian Novel* 22) [Each traveler carried off from France a ready-made Algeria] (PT). He also notes that many clichés were created and used at will, such as: military Algeria, Algeria of chivalric customs, Algeria of the great hunts, gallant Algeria, Algeria of the One Thousand and One Night (Salhi, *TFAN* 22). Metropolitan artists who sought to explore the 'peculiar' traveled to the French colonies carrying with them preconceived notions that would influence the artistic production of the time.

Déjeux cites the example of some voyagers who each depicted an Algeria of their own in their art. He maintains that Gautier's Algeria was a superb country where the French presence was the only flaw (*LAC* 14). That of Fromentin offered new possibilities, the painter was struck by the aesthetic of things, of men and of places, that is why he felt the urge to describe and to paint and not to narrate (14). Fromentin sought distraction from the tensions of metropolitan life. Likewise, the Goncourts were taken by the liveliness of the country by: "the lust of being," thinking of Algeria only, life became a poetic celebration (Déjeux, *LAC* 15). Taken by the beauty of the unknown, artists tended to mystify all that was Algerian.

French Romanticists ostracized the Arabo-Berber population from their works of art; however, women were depicted as ornaments, as a part of the exotic scenery. Hopwood (1999), comments on the first French expedition to North Africa: “they went with a rather naïve, if not fatuous, assumption that women would be easily available in harems and elsewhere, ideas which must have been picked up from popular mythology of France” (qtd. in Salhi, *Colonial Visual Representations* 80). Painted after Eugène Delacroix’s voyage to the ‘exotic’ North African land, *Femmes d’Alger dans leur appartement* (1834) embodies the image attributed to the enigmatic female ‘other’ by an orientalist French artist.

On a different note, Alphonse Daudet ridiculed Romantic artists’ obsession with the exotic, in his *Tartarin de Tarason* (1872), he aimed to derogate the idea of a seductive distant untainted land, he believed that every notion of the colony was mystified, including the French military, and that he himself contributed in the exoticization of the country (Déjeux, *LAC* 15). Guy de Maupassant stated in his novel *Au Soleil* (1884), that he traveled to Algeria so he can escape conventional ideas, dreary places, and recurrent movements. His enthusiasm alluded to the misconception that Algeria was a deserted land: “...moi je me sentais attiré vers l’Afrique par un impérieux besoin, par la nostalgie du désert ignoré, comme par le pressentiment d’une passion qui va naître” (qtd. in Salhi, *TFAN* 22) [...as for me, I felt drawn to Africa by a compelling urge, by a longing for the forgotten desert, as if by premonition of a passion yet to be born] (PT).

The Algerian *sahara* offered a safe haven from the challenges metropolitan life fostered. Maupassant became quite eager to meet the ‘Arab,’ and to attempt to understand his soul. The author investigated the Revolt of the Sheikh Bouamama and testified to the brutality of the colonizer (Déjeux, *LAC* 15). André Gide’s Algeria is no

different from the exotic land portrayed in the works of art of French Romanticists, the ‘vacant’ land was perceived as a sanctuary that offered the Puritan novelist a chance to redeem himself, he contends that the atmosphere in Algeria enabled him to liberate himself (Déjeux, *LAC* 17). These artists authored texts that proved to be influential ideological allies that propelled the colonial discussion on Algeria in metropolitan France, a discourse laced with deep equivocalness and ignorance about Algeria and Algerians (Bendjelid 29).

Notably, these texts tend to exhibit an autobiographical character fused with Exoticism. These Orientalist autobiographies mark a break with the metropolitan metaphorical spacial representations, for they portray a strange alluring territory untainted by corruption, and machinery. In his *Les Contre-littératures*, Mouralis Bernard (1975) declares that the exotic land offers to the voyageur an abundance of wealth, a clean atmosphere, a space unpolluted by the constraints of work, and the vices of mankind (Bendjelid 29). The land of the *Arab* was in the eyes of the invader an empty land, a pure territory unsullied by modern civilization, by greed and ambition. In their backwardness, its inhabitants are free from the burden of work, wealth, and materialism. Exoticists entertained the idea that the newly acquired colony offered a chance for redemption, since it harbored the possibility of a return to nature, a kind of rebirth.

Benjelid (2012) maintains that the Exotic novel echoes J. J. Rousseau’s “Le mythe du bon sauvage” [The myth of the noble savage], which entails that men’s innate goodness is corrupted by civilization. French exoticists perpetuated that the Arab and Berber leads a ‘natural’ life, his existence is undefiled by Western socialization, urban development, industrialization, and scientific and technological advancement (30). The formulation of the theory of savage nobility reinforced the

analogy between the Orient and the Occident, attributing a primitive status to the Arab and to the Berber whose barbarism gave them the privilege to ascend to a state of savage purity. Mouralis Bernard maintains that:

les faits paraissent montrer avec suffisamment d'éclat la chance qu'a eue le sauvage de pouvoir rester en dehors de l'histoire et de la « civilisation » à l'abri du mal, voire de la maladie, du luxe inutile mais aussi du besoin, de la science, de la richesse, ignorant la propriété, les tabous sexuels et les passions funestes... sa vie s'écoule dans une « médiocrité » faite de vertu et de bonheur, que les Européens recherchent en vain chez eux... (qtd, in Bendjelid 31).

[the facts seem to reveal with enough clarity the chance that the savage had: being able to remain outside of history and «civilization» untainted by evil, even disease, unnecessary luxury but also of need, of science, of wealth, unaware of property, sexual taboos and fatal passions... his life is spent in a «mediocrity» coated in virtue and happiness, which Europeans seek in vain in their own homes...] (PT)

Thus, in the land of reverie, the primitive 'native', excluded from history and from civilization, is compelled to lead a sinless existence. He is the subject of the Romanticist's envy, for he retains a virtuous yet savage state uncorrupted by the advantages of modernism. In his writings, Eugène Fromentin praises the beauty of the colony, and the authentic character of the *Arab* who was able to preserve his moral dignity, he states that one can observe the most commendable traits in the Arab people, that these ignorant savages possess: "...la dignité naturelle du corps, le sérieux du langage, la solennité du salut, le courage absolu dans sa devotion..." (qtd,

in Bendjelid 31) [...a naturally dignified demeanor, the solemnity of language and salute, absolute courage in devotion...] (PT). The theory of the vacant land and the myth of the good savage forged a discourse that legitimized the colonization of the country. In time the Exotic movement was replaced by a literature that emerged from within the colony which would represent the settler population, the French of Algeria.

2.2.2. The Colonial Novel: Algerianism

At the outset of the twentieth century, a new literary movement known as Algerianism sprung as a reaction to the Orientalist tradition. It originated from the French colony, and it was celebrated, by the colonists, as a new artistic avenue free from the influence of the metropolis. The movement represents a break from Exoticism, Algerianists sought autonomy, they wanted to create a distinct metaphorical discourse and a separate intellectual space that would authentically represent the Europeans of French Algeria (Bendjelid 33). Déjeux maintains that by the end of the 19th century, artists traveled from France to the Algerian colony: “...non plus pour y recueillir de simple sensations et des impressions exotiques, mais pour s’y enraciner. En outre, des romanciers et poètes vont commencer à se révéler, issus de la société française qui a fait souche dans le pays” (*LAC* 17) [...not only to collect simple sensations and exotic impressions, rather to plant seeds there. In addition, novelists and poets will emerge, ushered by the French society that has infiltrated the country] (PT).

The pioneers of the Algerianist movement were: Louis Bertrand, Jean Pomier, Robert Randau, and Louis Lecoq. The Algerianists published a decree in 1920 proclaiming their artistic autonomy: “nous voulons dégager notre autonomie esthétique ... Nous voulons une littérature Nord-africaine originale” (qtd in Salhi, *TFAN* 25) [we want to conceive our aesthetic autonomy... we want to create an

original North African literature] (PT). This literary movement marks the birth of the colonial novel, it represents a discourse conceived by and for colonists who aspired to anchor their presence in the Algerian colony. It differs from metropolitan literature in style and content.

Indeed, Algerianism emerged to render the settlement of the North African colony legitimate, and to address the needs and challenges the settler population has encountered. It aimed to conceive a colonial discourse that would defend the French colonial project and the *Pieds-noirs*' right to gain political autonomy from metropolitan France. In his *Littératures de combat, Essais d'introduction: étude et préfaces* (1991), Lachref Mustapha states that this literary institution was devised to entrench the notion of a French Algeria and to claim the right of self-determination:

...en vue de s'approprier un espace conquis et légitimer son présent et son avenir, contre, tout à la fois, les nationaux spoliés de leur identité et de leur pays, et partie première du colonialisme à laquelle on continue d'appartenir par ses origines et son contrat de mandataire jaloux de sa prépondérance sur le terrain [...] qui donnerait à ce mandataire abusif tous les droits à l'autonomie du savoir colonial par rapport à sa métropole (qtd. in Bendjelid 34-35).

[...in order to truly possess a conquered space and to legitimize its present and its future, against, at the same time, the people who were robbed of their identity and country, and the first form of colonialism to which we continue to belong through origins and its contract of a jealous mandate-holder of his preponderance on the territory [...] that would give this abusive mandate-

holder all rights to the autonomy of colonial knowledge in relation to its metropolis]

Algerianism claimed itself as a nonconformist movement that rejected the discourse perpetuated by Exotic artists that tends to romanticize and mystify the colony they considered home. Algerianists celebrated the theory of Occidental Algeria by claiming that the Roman roots of the North African colony justify its annexation to France (Bendjelid 35).

They insisted on gaining autonomy and sought nothing from the metropolis apart from the use of the French language. Louis Bertrand, one of the movement's most influential pionner, contends that Algerianists are French-born Maghrebeans writers who rose in opposition to Orientalism wanting to sever all ties with metropolitan France and retain only the French language as a medium of expression (Bendjelid 35). The pioneer of the colonial French novel celebrated the idea of a contemporary Latin Africa (Déjeux, *LAC* 19). Bertrand glorified the Roman past of Algeria, he writes: "...l'Afrique française d'aujourd'hui c'est l'Afrique romaine qui continue à vivre, qui n'a jamais cessé de vivre" (qtd. in Déjeux 20) [...today's French Africa is the Roman Africa which continues to live, which has never ceased to live]. He believed that the "civilized" European settler is the legitimate heir to Africa's Roman heritage (Déjeux, *LAC* 21).

In her *A l'envers du tapis* (1935), Rose Celli states that the previous generation of European settlers (the generation of her father) that were born in the Algerian colony broke all ties with metropolitan France, as a consequence a sort of latin patriotism emerged within the colony, so strong that it was able to erase centuries of Arab and Turkish presence in the territory, she declares that "[...] L'Algérie, à leurs

yeux, était moins une conquête qu'un héritage" (qtd. in Déjeux, *LAC* 21) [Algeria, for them, was less of a conquest than an inheritance]. While Algeria was to Exoticists a mysterious new land; it was perceived by Algerianists as a recovered territory. Bertrand argued that by annexing the North African colony: "...nous n'avons que récupérer une province perdue de la Latinité" (qtd. in Déjeux, *LAC* 20) [...we have only restored a province lost to Latinity] (PT). He portrayed the French colonial occupation of Algeria as the restoration of an ancestral lost land legitimizing the French colonization of Algeria, he writes: "...nous représentons la plus haute et la plus ancienne Afrique. Le monument symbolique du pays, ce n'est pas la mosquée, c'est l'arc de triomphe" (qtd. in Bendjelid 37) [...we represent the highest and most ancient Africa. The symbolic monument of the country is not the mosque, it is the Arch of Triumph] (PT). The idea of a Latin Algeria is glorified in order to forge an illegitimate cultural lineage.

The advocate of the 'Latin myth', celebrated in his writings the ancient Roman presence in Algeria while marginalizing the Arabo-Berber culture and heritage from his literary writings. He declares: "j'ai écarté le décor islamique et pseudo-arabe qui fascinait les regards superficiels" (qtd. in Déjeux, *LAC* 19) [I have disregarded the Islamic and pseud-Arabic decor that fascinates the superficial gaze] (PT). As a matter of fact, Bertrand perceives the Arabs as the invaders of what rightfully belongs to the Latin realm, he contends that the Arab conquest didn't enrich the Roman heritage in any way. He portrays the Arabs as backward savages, unworthy of the Roman legacy which they were responsible for its destruction (Bendjelid 36). This discourse served to legitimize the notion of a French Algeria, the colony was depicted as a lost province that has been rightfully recovered. The Latin myth was evoked and perpetuated in order to disown the Arabo-Berber population from its land. In an

attempt to strengthen the Algerianists' claim to Latinity, Jacqueline Randau (1926), sought to devise links between Latin literature and Algerianism by highlighting similarities between novelists of this colonial movement and Numidian-Latin authors (Salhi, *TFAN* 25). Randau claims, in *Les Colons, roman de la patrie algérienne* (1926), that Algerianists share with the likes of St Augustine, Apuleius, and Tertullian strong ties: "entre ces écrivains et nous, il y a le même goût de la richesse verbale porté jusqu'à l'outrance" (qtd. in Salhi, *TFAN* 25) [between these writers and us, there is the same taste for stylistic richness, taken to extreme lengths] (PT).

In his novels, Louis Bertrand celebrates the 'settler' identity or what he considers the new race. He praises the French of Algeria whom he called Algerians, heirs to the Roman heritage, for their bravery, and valor in seeking to build a future for themselves in Latin Africa (Salhi, *TFAN* 23). D.M Gallup maintains that: "by proclaiming Algeria as the exclusive embodiment and resurrection of the Latin spirit, Bertrand expresses the settlers' feelings of a distinct, different identity, even a superiority over metropolitan France" (qtd. in Salhi, *TFAN* 23). So not only were the *colons* superior to Algerians but also to the French of the metropolis.

Bendjelid (2012), notes that in his *Roman colonial*, Louis Bertrand glorifies the strength of the settlers for they formed the nation-builders compared to the passive Arabs who did not build a "nation". He evokes the creation of a new race of powerful, sane, and flawless men, a *métissage* of a population of the different regions of France and the different nations of Europe (Bendjelid 38). They form a powerful union, a new blessed blood to build a glorious nation on the land of their ancestors. In the following passage of *Le Sang des races* (1899), Bertrand discusses the creation of the highly praised 'new pure race':

Il y avait là des hommes de toutes les nations [...], des terrassiers piémontais, les plus bruyants de tous, avec leur face rose de Gaulois [...], à côté des charpentiers marseillais [...], des petits charretiers de la Camargue et de la vallée du Rhône [...] tous le patois sonores de la Provence et du Piémont depuis Turin jusqu'à Matrigues [...], plus pacifiques les hommes du Nord, des Alsaciens immigrants, de Badois de la Forêt Noire quelques anciens Zouaves ou chasseurs d'Afrique [...], des maçons auvergnats se mêlaient à eux (qtd. in Bendjelid 39).

[There were men from all nations [...], Piedmontese laborers, the loudest of them all, with their pink faces of Gauls [...], next to the Marseillais carpenters [...], small carters from the Camargue and the Rhone valley [...] all the sonorous patois of Provence and Piedmont from Turin to Matrigues [...], more peaceful men from the North, immigrants from Alsace, Badois from the Black Forest Some former Zouaves or hunters from Africa [...], Auvergne construction workers in the mix with them] (PT).

Louis Bertrand's racial ideology shaped the relationship between the settler community and the Arabo-Berber population by framing how the 'native Algerian' should be perceived and treated (Salhi, *TFAN* 23). The stereotypical images that were attributed to the Arab and to the Berber contributed in maintaining an oppressive settlement regime that deprived the 'native' from the rights he was entitled to. The Algerianists' perception of the Arab and their glorification of the Latin past of Africa were condemned by the first generation of European writers born in French Algeria.

Bendjelid contends that the reading of the Algerianist movement should not be limited to the negative aspects only for we owe Algerianist artists the introduction of

new forms of art, namely the novel and the theater, to Algeria and to the Maghreb. She also credits the movement for the emergence of an African literary tradition of French expression (41). Khatibi Abedelkébir, in his *Le Roman maghrébin (1968)*, states that: “le mérite revient à Robert Randau et à son école d’avoir affirmé la spécificité d’une littérature romanesque nord-africaine d’expression française” (qtd. in Bendjelid 41) [The merit is attributed to Robert Randau and his school for asserting the singularity of a North-African romance novel of French expression] (PT). In due course, the Algerianist tradition started to decline and a new literary movement emerged in the Algerian colony that reflected a new altruistic vision.

2.2.3 *L’École d’Alger* and the Mediterranean Literary Discourse

In the 1930’s, the Algerianist literary tradition started to lose its popularity, a different literary movement, known as *L’Ecole d’Alger*, started to gain prominence. A new generation of writers sought to represent a realistic view of the political atmosphere in the colony. These writers negated the racist theory perpetuated by Algerianism that depicted Algeria as a reclaimed territory and denied the ‘natives’ the right of belonging to the land (Salhi, *TFAN* 28). Bendjelid (2012), maintains that *L’Ecole d’Alger* is described as an ‘indigénophile’ [indigenophile] (being pro-indigenous) literary movement, that grants authors the freedom to express themselves freely to contest the discriminatory Algerianist agenda by creating an inclusive discourse of the indigenous element (42). The emergence of *L’Ecole d’Alger* is associated with the rise and development of humanist ideas in France. While the xenophobic and extremist nationalist movement of the Maurice Barrés camp started to gain ground; a movement that promotes universal human values evolved. It was led by Romain Rolland a proponent of tolerance between nations and advocate of peace and non-violence (42).

A number of factors induced the emergence of a humanist Algerian intelligentsia: the rise of liberal and humanist thought, the development of national feeling, and more importantly the increased awareness of the injustices of the occupation and the transgressions of the colonial regime (Bendjelid 42). Belamri Rabah states in his *Louis Bertrand miroir de l'idéologie colonialiste (1980)*:

De discours de négation, le discours littéraire s'est peu à peu transformé en discours humaniste, en discours de dialogue et même parfois contestataire à l'encontre du discours colonial [...] Cette évolution est indissociable du développement de la prise de conscience politique internationale, de l'essor des forces progressistes en France et de l'affirmation de la pensée nationaliste en Algérie (qtd. in Bendjelid 42-43).

[From a discourse of denial, the literary discourse has gradually metamorphosed into a humanistic discourse, into a discourse open to dialogue and even sometimes in opposition to the colonial discourse [...] This evolution cannot be separated from the development of international political awareness, the rise of progressive forces in France and the assertion of nationalist thought in Algeria] (PT).

Algerian-born intellectuals of European descent were invested in the depiction of the social issues, and political challenges that dominated colonial Algeria. *L'Ecole d'Alger* writers dismissed Bertrand's 'Latin myth,' they sought to recast a new vision on their African lineage. Writers of this school of thought argued that it is no longer a question of restoring the Algerian colony to its past Latinity, rather of imposing a Mediterranean discourse common to all Mediterranean peoples. A discourse that would wheedle or prevail over the ideological and political conflicts that mounted in

the colony (Bendjelid 43). Belamri Rabah notes that the new generation of European authors born in North Africa didn't prioritize socio-political issues of the colony, they were more inclined to express a novel typology of Mediterranean passions (Bendjelid 43).

L'Ecole d'Alger defines itself as a literary tradition whose sole concern is to orchestrate new modes of expression that exalt the colony's Mediterranean affiliation. It aims at distancing itself from the difficult and complex political and ideological conflicts that divide the metropolitan and the colonial society at a time when the rivalry between European countries escalated to a Second World War. These left-wing artists began to write in an attempt to devote themselves entirely to the aesthetic and passionate celebration of Mediterranean life (Bendjelid 43). Jean Déjeux describes the writers of the movement as a group of left-wing intellectuals who resonate with the French Popular Front, and distance themselves from the conflict (35). *Méditerranée* (1925-1935) was the title of the journal in which these writers published their works. The year 1935, marked the precise date of the emergence of a literary movement created by Algerian-born writers (35).

The *œuvres* of the writers of *L'Ecole d'Alger* celebrate the Mediterranean Sea and sun. In his *Jeunesse de la Méditerranée* (1935), Gabriel Audisio provides a counter-myth to Algerianism, he portrays a colonized Algeria not a conquered one. Mediterranean sensibility is what binds him to the land: "La mer est 'Notre Mère', 'ma patrie' " (qtd. in Déjeux, *LAC* 36) [the sea is 'Our Mother', 'Our homeland'] (PT). In his novels, Audisio advocates the idea of co-existence between the different 'races' that originate from the borders of the Mediterranean and inhabit the colony, he considers Algeria "un mélange en train de se fixer, qui sera sous peu 'l'Algérien', une synthèse de races bordières cimentées par la culture française. Je l'appelle 'La

Provence de Méditerranée' ” (qtd. in Déjeux, *LAC* 36) [a mixture is in the process of gaining prominence, it will soon form “The Algerian,” a métissage of the bordering races solidified by the French culture. I call it “The Province of the Mediterranean”] (PT).

Bendjedil (2012) maintains that *L'École d'Alger* dismantled the Latin theory that was championed by Algerianists by depicting a new vision of Algeria. The movement promoted a dialogue of tolerance between the different races of French Algeria, a dialogue that does not reproduce Orientalist stereotypes previously used in describing the Arabo-Berber population (44). Bonn Charles, in his *Littérature francophone* (1997), reflects on the movement: *L'École d'Alger...* can be defined as a group of writers including Albert Camus, Emmanuel Roblès and Jean Pélégri, and whose primary editor was Charlot. The school rose to counter the Mediterranean myth developed by Louis Bertrand and later on the Algerianists they would paint: “une Méditerranée plus complexe et ambiguë du métissage: celle d'Ulysse pour Audisio, celle plus inquiétante déjà de Jugurtha de Jean Amrouche” (qtd. in Bendjelid 44) [a more complex and ambiguous Mediterranean of métissage: that of Ulysses for Audisio, and the more troubling one of Jugurtha for Jean Amrouche] (PT).

Since the literary movement developed its own means of publication and distribution, it offered the colonized population the opportunity to edit and publish their literary works. *L'École d'Alger* is credited for granting the Arabo-Berber writers the chance to voice their concerns and acquire recognition (Bendjelid 45). Bonn Charles declares that: “L'essentiel est ici de souligner que ce qu'on a appelé ‘l'École d'Alger’ a fourni aux premiers romanciers algériens arabo-musulmans ou kabyles des lieux de publication et une première reconnaissance littéraire” (qtd. in Bendjelid 45) [It's important to note that what we call ‘l'École d'Alger’ offered the first generation

of Algerian Arabo-muslim or Kabyles a space for publication and initial recognition in the literary scene] (PT). Therefore, the literary movement is often attributed the label ‘indigénophile’ [pro-native] (Bendjelid 45).

In time, Gabriel Audisio dismissed the use of the expression *École d’Alger* to describe this generation of writers; however, Albert Camus relabelled it under the title *École nord-africaine des Lettres* to celebrate une “esthétique du soleil,” [aesthetics of the sun], et une “littérature du soleil” [literature of the sun] for Maghrebean-born writers (Déjeux, *LAC* 38). The year 1937 marked the publication of an anthology entitled *Méditerranée nouvelle* by Camille Bégué, it included writers from Algeria, Tunisia, and Morocco. The writers of the anthology put to the forth a culture specific to their region in their Mediterranean narratives (Déjeux, *LAC* 38). In February 8th, 1937, Camus proclaimed in the inaugural conference of *la Maison de Culture d’Alger*: “la culture indigène, la nouvelle culture méditerranéenne” [the indigenous culture, the new culture of the Mediterranean], he argued that to serve the cause of a Mediterranean regionalism is by no way a promotion of authoritarianism. He maintained that “la patrie c’est un goût de la vie” [the homeland is a taste for life]. It’s the Mediterranean : “nous la sentons avec notre peau” [we feel it in our skin] (PT) (qtd. in Déjeux, *LAC* 38).

Albert Camus published his main Algerian *Œuvres* with the beginning of the Second World War (1939-1945), *Noces* was published in (1938), *L’Etranger* in (1942), *Le Minotaure* or *la Halte d’Oran* found in *L’Été* appeared in (1954), *The Plague* in (1957). In *Noces*, the author celebrates nature, sun, and sea, he re-endorses “l’hymne aux biens naturels” (qtd. in Déjeux, *LAC* 39) [Ode to nature’s gifts] (PT). While Camus’ *Œuvre* proclaims a Mediterranean culture shared by the different peoples of Algeria, it tends to convey a sense of alienation, of being affiliated to two

nations without belonging to either. Albert Memmi contends in his *Anthologie des écrivains maghrébins d'expression française (1964)* : “ils sont d’ici, mais surtout d’ailleurs, ils tiennent fermement à l’Afrique du nord mais comme à une seconde patrie” (qtd. Salhi *TFAN* 29) [they are from here, but above all from elsewhere, they hold on firmly to North Africa just like a second country] (PT). Exile happens to be a recurrent theme in Camus’ literary production: “l’Étranger, n’est pas seulement un récit métaphysique, la relation d’une angoisse existentielle, c’est aussi Camus-Étranger dans son pays nata”l (Memmi, qtd. in Salhi *TFAN* 29) [The Stranger, is not solely a metaphysical narrative, the account of an existential crisis, it is also Camus - the stranger in his birthland] (PT).

Though *l’Ecole d’Alger* writers contested the Algerianists’ exclusion of the Arabo-Berber population and sought to depict the realities of life in the Algerian colony, they failed to represent the colonized people. In his letter aux Roblès (1951), Mouloud Feraoun expressed his frustration towards the absence of an indigenous reality in Camus’ *La Peste*: “Il [Camus] a été content de ma lettre où j’ai eu le culot de lui reprocher de n’avoir pas parlé des Arabes d’Oran dans *la Peste*” (*Lettres à ses amis* 60) [he was pleased with my letter where I had the nerve to hold him accountable for marginalizing the Arabs of Oran in *La Peste*] (PT). In the letter he sent to Camus, Feraoun criticized the exclusion of the Arabs from the novel but he also acknowledged what he gained from the movement’s literary production, he stated that he learned how to portray Algerians from the way the French writers express themselves in their fiction:

Si je parvenais un jour à m’exprimer sereinement, je le devrais à votre livre- à vos livres qui m’ont appris à me connaître puis à découvrir les autres et à constater qu’ils me ressemblent. Ne puis-je donc me payer ce ridicule: tenter à

mon tour d'expliquer les Kabyles et montrer qu'ils ressemblent à tout le monde ? A tous les Algériens, par exemple ? Ce fossé qui s'élargit, ne faudrait-il pas essayer de combler ? (qtd. in *Autobiography and Independence* 64).

[If I were ever able to express myself with serenity, I would owe it to your book- to your books that taught me to reflect on who I am and then to discover others only to find out that they are like me. Can I not afford this absurdity: to try to explain in turn the Kabyles and to demonstrate that they are like everyone else? To all Algerians, for instance? Should we not try to narrow this widening gap?] (PT).

After the Exotic novel, and the literature of the settlers, a new movement imposed itself in the literary arena, that of the colonized. This event destabilized ideological tendencies and disrupted the currents of thought in the colony and metropolitan France alike. The French Intelligentsia challenged the writings of the colonized since the latter threatened the balance of relations between the colonizer and the colonized (Bendjelid 46). The conqueror is now confronted with the word of the Other, that of the Arabs and Berbers, trained at the French school, they subvert the language of their colonial education to voice the stance of the Algerian dispossessed peoples in difficult conditions of production and diffusion because these native authors were subjected to censorship and persecutions of the colonial regime. The Algerian literature of French expression emerged in the 1930's. Mohamed Ould Cheikh published his first novel *Myriem dans les palmes* (1936), when he was still an *écolier*. The movement encompasses various writing projects that reinscribe an Algerian identity into the pages of history (Bendjelid 46).

2.2.4 The Rise of the Algerian Novel of French Expression

Algerian Literature of French expression is above all linked to the implementation of the French language in the Algerian colony. As has been discussed in the first chapter, French language instruction was enforced in order to secure dominion over the colony. The destruction of Quranic schools undermined traditional modes of learning, leaving as an only option the colonial school. The imposition of French language instruction was followed by the generalization of the use of the French language in different sectors, be it administration, or public service institutions. The introduction of these laws resulted in the decline of the usage of the Arabic and Berber languages in public spheres (Bendjelid 48). The use of the French language has always been the subject of a heated debate, those who adapt it argue that the language is one of the gains of the war; those who write in Arabic argue that it's a form of betrayal to the nation. Christiane Achour maintains, in *Anthologie de la littérature algérienne*, that writing in the French language is not a concession to the colonizer; rather, it's a means to initiate a dialogue with the colonial power (Thénault, *Mouloud Feraoun, un écrivain dans la guerre d'Algérie* 68).

In 1833, Hamdan Khodja authored –in Arabic- *Le miroir* in which he denounces the misconduct of the French military during the war of conquest, pleading the cause of the Algerian people to the metropolitan government. The author then sought to translate his text to the French language so his concerns may be heard. Writing in the French language, in this context, was necessary to engage with the French public opinion (Thénault, *Mouloud Feraoun, un écrivain dans la guerre d'Algérie* 68). Though, the use of the French language was considered essential by many writers, it proved to be problematic, most novelists find the language alienating.

When Djébar endeavored to rewrite the colonial archives, she struggled with the colonizer's language; writing in French felt to her like a betrayal of her ancestors.

Algerian writers, graduates of the French colonial school appropriated the language of the colonizer to represent their concerns, to express their socio-economic realities, and to resist against oppression, giving birth to the Algerian novel of French expression, which continues to coexist today with Algerian literature in Arabic. This diversity is what enriches the Algerian literary scene, Déjeux contends that: "Si les langues sont variées l'expression est Algérienne" (*LAC* 56) [Even if the languages vary the expression remains Algerian] (PT). The richness of this literature stems also from the fact that it was shaped within a nuanced ideological and symbolic stream, one that's influenced by diverse literary movements that emerged from the French of metropolitan France, or the French settlers of Algeria (Bendjelid 49). Algerian writers of the French colonial schools, subvert the language of their instruction in order to reclaim their national and cultural identity. The following section traces the beginnings of the emergence of the Algerian novel of French expression.

2.2.4.1 The Early Literary Voices: Performance, and Mimicry

The Early literary texts that signal the emergence of an Algerian literature of French expression were produced by a class of *elites*, graduates of the French school in the 1930's, the date that marks the centenary of the French colonization of Algeria. However, Algerian writers were only able to occupy a space in the literary scene in the inter-war period. The early writers faced difficulties in getting published; they often sought the guardianship of colonial writers. They had to work under the patronage of the Algerianist writers; they also adapted their techniques, and imitated their aesthetic style (Bendjelid 52). Déjeux describes this period as, "[la période] d'acculturation et du mimétisme" (*LAC* 58) [a period of acculturation and mimicry]

(PT). Writers of this period authored essays and pamphlets discussing their status as Algerian and French at the same time. Déjeux cites some of the most notable texts of this era: “Chérif Benhabylès (*L’Algérie française vue par un indigène*, 1914), Emir Khaled (*La Situation des musulmans en Algérie*, 1924), Ferhat Abbas (*Le Jeune Algérien*, 1931), Saïd Faci (*L’Algérie sous l’égide de la France*, 1936), Mohammed Kessous (*La vérité sur le malaise algérien*, 1935), Rachid Zenati (*Le Problème algérien vu par un indigène*, 1938)” (*LAC* 59).

The main aim of the early literary writings produced by Algerian intellectuals writing in the French language was to initiate a discussion concerning the politics of assimilation. These writers also bring into light the issue of otherness by foregrounding issues related to the articulation of native identity. Concerning aesthetics, these texts are characterized by linearity and by simplicity which are key features of the realistic movement. A school text-book like type of writing, since, the authors were influenced by the literature they were exposed to in French schools (Bendjelid 53). Bonn Charles states that:

Un petit noyau d’écrivains algériens qui arrive sur la scène littéraire se constituent en une sorte de sous-ensemble à l’intérieur du genre dominant de la littérature colonial. En effet comme le roman colonial de l’époque, le roman algérien s’inscrit aux conventions réalistes et les exploite pour exposer, de façon didactique, une thèse à caractère social. D’où les traits formels tels que la linéarité de l’intrigue, la typologie des personnages exemplaires et symboliques ... (qtd in Bendjelid 53).

[A small unit of Algerian writers who enter the literary scene form a type of a subgroup amongst the dominant genre of colonial literature. As a matter of a

fact, similar to the colonial novel of that time, the Algerian novel adapts realistic traits and exploits them to expose, in a didactic manner, a statement with a social character. Accordingly, these texts are marked by formal traits such as the linearity of the plot, the categorization of characters as exemplary or symbolic figures ...] (PT).

The precursor of the Algerian novel of French expression was preoccupied with the necessity of establishing a dialogue with the colonizer, his primary concern was to relate the socio-political conditions of the colony to the citizens of the metropolis who were not informed about the realities of life in the colony. Therefore, he made use of basic narratological devices for their practicality (Bendjelid 53).

Déjeux offers a more critical view of the movement; he describes the novels of the early period as “médiocres” and “décevant.” He explains that in terms of structure the authors sought to demonstrate that they are perfectly capable of writing in French correctly without making any syntactical errors, in an academic style, using a refined vocabulary (*LAC* 59). The critic maintains that the early writers tend to depict their society from the outside, in an abstract way, and using the colonial framework of the “other”. They wanted to preserve the image of the Algerian as portrayed in the colonialist novel so their work would gain readership. They would praise the glorious “motherland,” they would criticize alcoholism and certain disadvantages of colonialism. They would provide moral lessons, some folkloric notions, however, their accounts remained distant, superficial, they would evade any discussions of the self. The most prominent literary figures of the period, as cited by Déjeux, are: “Caïd Ben Chérif, Ahmed Ben Mostapha (goumier), Hadj Hamou (*Zohra la femme du mineur* 1925), Chukri Khodja, Saïd Guenoun, Mohamed Ould Cheikh, Ali Belhadj, Aïssa Zehar, les frères Zenati, Djemila Debèche (*Leila, jeune fille d’Algérie* 1947)”

(LAC 59). These literary voices, whose work is often reduced to a literature of imitation, paved the way for the rise of the new Algerian novel.

2.2.4.2 The Emergence of the New Algerian Novel: Ambivalence, Awakening, and Resistance

This period in one of political turmoil, the Second World War, the Massacres of May 8th, 1945⁷, the rise of nationalist movements in other parts of the world, poverty, misery. These events led intellectuals and thinkers to raise the question of independence (Déjeux, LAC 61). Bendjelid (2012) contends that Algerian literature of French expression is an institution of dis-alienation that rose from a space of alienation. A creative discourse that emerged from the counter-discourse (the dominant discourse) in order to re-appropriate or claim history, collective memory, national identity and cultures, languages, all that has been robbed from the Algerian people (18).

According to Fanon's classification, the 1950's is characterized by the emergence of two categories of literature, the literature of "pré-combat" [pre-resistance] and that of "combat" [resistance] (Bendjelid 57). Déjeux considers this period the real date of birth of Algerian literature of French expression, marked by the publication of Mouloud Feraoun's *Le Fils du pauvre* in 1950, at the author's own expense. The authors of this period started their publication journey first at cultural and literary journals that were held by the French, then they slowly separated from these institutions while keeping strong ties with French authors: "La littérature algérienne va conquérir un public européen mais en faisant entendre un langage nouveau, donnant une image différente de celle qui avait été peinte des Algériens par

⁷ The massacres of Sétif and Guelma that took place on May 8th, 1945 are one of the bloodiest crimes committed against Algerian civilians. In order to repress a peaceful protest, the French army indiscriminately executed men, women, and children. The death toll is estimated at 45000 thousand martyrs.

les romanciers de l'époque coloniale et de *l'École d'Alger*" (68) [Algerian literature will conquer a European audience however by voicing a new language, offering a different image of the Algerians that had been portrayed by the novelists of the colonialist movement and *l'École d'Alger*] (PT).

Nationalist leaders published brochures and manifestos discussing the colony's political status. In 1954, Malek Bennabi published *Vocation et l'Islam* which was a different mode of writing than that of the early writers. The war of liberation was declared on the 1st of November 1954, and it was no longer the time to promote reformist literature, it was time to combat the colonial regime. In the same year, Nadir Bouzar published a confrontational palimpsest entitled "J'ai cru en la France" [I believed in France] (Déjeux, *LAC* 62). The 1950's mark the emergence, all throughout the Great Maghreb, of the novels of Mouloud Feraoun (*Le Fils du pauvre* 1950, *La Terre et le sang* 1953, *Les Chemins qui montent* 1957), Mohammed Dib (*La Grande Maison* 1952, *L'Incendie* 1954), Mouloud Mammeri (*La Colline oubliée* 1952, *Le Sommeil du juste* 1955), Albert Memmi (*La Statue de sel* 1953, *The Colonizer and the colonized* 1957), Driss Chraïbi (*The Simple past* 1954), and Ahmed Sefrioui (*La Boite à merveilles* 1954), to name a few, in reaction to the colonizer's modes of representation. The authors express their ambivalence towards the linguistic and cultural frames imposed on them; they also denounce old customs, the gap between generations, and internal conflicts. These novels are for the most part autobiographical in nature; they offer reflection on the self, on families, on societies. They raise the pertinent question: why do we live under colonial dominion? (62).

Pertaining to the literary scene, for some the novels were about demonstrating that the colonized can write well and express a sense of selfhood. These novels fall within the realm of populism and realism, in certain cases the texts adhere to the

characteristics of documentary, and or ethnographic writing (Déjeux, *LAC* 62). Authors of “pre-resistance” texts, according to A. Khatibi, were concerned with “the representation of everyday life” or of “commitment and a return to the origins” (qtd in Bendjelid 57). These texts serve as testimonies of life within marginalized communities that aim to dismantle dehumanizing colonial stereotypes that depict the Arabo-Berber population as “barbaric, or savage” (Bendjelid 58).

A. Khatibi (1968) contends that these types of texts are an extension of the colonial novel produced by orientalist writers, he writes: “le roman ethnographique et folklorique au Maghreb n’est pas un fait isolé, il est la continuation d’une tradition française en Afrique et qui a fourni une littérature fort nombreuse” (qtd in Bendjelid 58) [the ethnographic and folkloric novel of the Maghreb didn’t emerge from a vacuum, it’s the continuation of the French tradition in Africa that produced many literary works] (PT). However, to declare the novels of the 50’s as a continuation of the French tradition is a precipitous act; Algerian authors borrowed and reshaped western literary frameworks to articulate a sense of self and to assert their cultural belonging.

The literature of the resistance, on the other hand, offers a scathing critique of colonialism, it denounces methods of French military suppression, and advocates for the independence of the Algerian colony. It continued to gain prominence after the independence of the country in 1962. Algerian writers subvert the French language; they bend literary forms to articulate an Arabo-Berber perspective. Déjeux states:

Usant la langue française, certains la cassent pour dire l’irruption. On écrit parfois ‘mal’ exprès, mal selon les règles classiques, mais en fait plus vrai par rapport à l’événement. Kréa tente d’utiliser une langue hybride... ‘nous sommes en fusion. En plein dérèglement des sens,’ disait Kréa... (*LAC* 72).

Using the French language, some authors break it to speak of the invasion. Sometimes it is written 'wrong' intentionally, but in fact more accurately vis a vis the event. Kréa, for instance, tries to use a hybrid language... 'we are in fusion. In the midst of the disorder of the senses,' said Kréa... (PT).

In 1956, Kateb yacine published *Nedjma* a symbolic retelling of the different invasions Algeria endured, throughout the centuries. This novel is the first to make use of a new literary technique in comparison with other Algerian novels of the time. The novelist disrupts chronological order, he reverts to the technique of flashbacks juxtaposing past memories with present events. A writing strategy often used to convey "la reaffirmation d'un inconscient mutilé" (Jacques Berque qtd in Déjeux, LAC 73) [the reassertion of a mutilated unconscious] (PT).

Malek Haddad published four novels during the war of liberation (1958-1961): *La Dernière Impression*, *Je t'offrirai une gazelle*, *L'Élève et la leçon*, *Le Quai aux fleurs ne répond plus*. This poetic *œuvres* explores themes of nationalism, exile, resistance in its different forms. At the centre of Haddad's work lies the paradox of language, the novelist in the words of Déjeux is haunted by the use of the French language. He debated Algerian novelists' use of the French language in his essay *Les Zéros tournent en rond* (1961), then condemned himself to a literary silence and never produced any piece of writing again (Déjeux, LAC 74).

In 1961, Henri Kréa published *Djamal*, written in a hybrid language, a mixture of Spanish words, Berber, Arabic, and Italian terms. His work deals with themes of alienation, heroism, and identity (Déjeux, LAC 76). Réda Falaki, penname of Hadj Hamou (son of Abdelkader Hadj Hamou), has authored only one novel *Le Milieu et la Marge* (1964). Unique in its nature, the book makes use of satire to explore themes of political disillusionment (Déjeux, LAC 76).

Mohammed Dib pursued his literary resistance, in 1962 he published *Qui se souvient de la mer*, he depicts the war of liberation in an apocalyptic tone using the style of science fiction books. He evokes the metaphor of the labyrinth in order to address political oppression, and colonial violence (Déjeux, *LAC* 76). In 1952, Mouloud Memmeri published his first novel *La Colline oubliée*, in which he reflects on his youthful experiences. He states: “Je me disais alors que mes expériences et celles de mes proches camarades Kabyles valait la peine d’être mises noir sur blanc” (qtd in Salhi, *TFAN* 116) [I felt that my experiences and those of my close Kabyle comrades were worth being inscribed in black and white] (PT). Both Feraoun and Memmeri were harshly criticized by nationalists who accused them of regionalism and compliance with the colonizer at a time of war (Salhi, *TFAN* 128). In 1965, Memmeri published *L’Opium et le bâton*, set in the kabyle village Thala, it depicts its’ inhabitants war experiences. The novel positioned the author amongst the revolutionaries.

In 1957, Assia Djebar published her debut novel *La Soif*. The novel did not raise any nationalist concern, for which it was heavily criticized. In her “Themes in the Francophone Algerian Novel” (1991), Zahia Smaïl-Salhi maintains that Djebar was accused of aligning her work with the colonial agenda. Her novel was considered a literal imitation of *Bonjour tristesse* by Françoise Sagan whose plot revolves around the issues of French youth (217). *Les Impatients* appeared in (1958), it raises the concerns of Algerian women; however, the characters of her third novel *Les Enfants du nouveau monde* (1962) join the revolutionary war. *Les Alouettes naïves* (1967) is also set during the war of liberation; it depicts the people’s encounters with colonial violence. It was the last novel she produced before she descended in a decade of literary silence (218).

Djebar would turn to cinematography, yielding the word and the image in her battle against colonialism and patriarchy. The novelist ended up producing revolutionary literary works that reshaped history, rehabilitated linguistic and literary frameworks, and reinvented Algeria's national identity. *L'Amour, la fantasia* (1985) is the novel that signals Djebar's return to the literary scene. It carries within it the traces of the literature of the French military; Djebar subverts those texts and weaves them into the texture of her novel creating a counter-historical record that amplifies the voices of the long silenced women of Algeria.

2.3 Conclusion

This chapter attempted to outline the history of the emergence of an Algerian literature of French expression. It traces its development from a literature of conquest, to a settlerist literature, to a discourse of resistance and decolonization. It examines the debates between Algerian intellectuals that revolve around the use of the colonizer's language. Algerian writers, in an attempt to reclaim the history of their nation, to assert their cultural identity, and to reconstruct a collective memory, produced creative texts characterized by fragmentation and experimentation. To challenge the colonial assimilationist system of education, Algerian writers, graduates of the French school yielded the subversive literary potential autobiographical narratives bore. The next chapter proposes a comparative study between Mouloud Feraoun's *Le Fils du pauvre* and Assia Djebar's *L'Amour, la fantasia* in order to foreground the educational experience of these writers.

Chapter Three:
**Colonial Education in Mouloud Feraoun's *Le Fils du pauvre* and
Assia Djebar's *L'Amour, la Fantasia***

3. 1 Introduction

In their autobiographical narratives, Mouloud Feraoun and Assia Djébar depict their journeys through the French colonial schooling system. The testimonies of the authors reveal that the colonial school functioned at once as a site of assimilation and alienation. The present chapter explores how the colonial educational policies, content, and practices sought to impose French culture and values in order to subdue the Algerian people. A reflection upon Feraoun's pedagogical training reveals the inherent tensions within France's colonial educational system: a system that intended to equally assimilate and to other. His educational path is peculiar; he underwent religious proselytism by the Rolland Protestant mission, and was subjected to indoctrination in *L'École Normale de Bouzaréah*. The following study delineates the ways in which Feraoun was institutionalized to become an intermediary between colonizer and colonized, it aims to refute the theory that reduces Feraoun's work to an assimilationist *œuvre*.

Assia Djébar belongs to the small number of women who were admitted to the French colonial school. In the novel that broke her literary exile, Djébar created a collective autobiography in which she depicts her formative years within the colonial school, her linguistic displacement, and the war stories of Algeria's unsung war heroines. In Djébar's case, the colonial school represents a site of emancipation and estrangement. This chapter examines the complex relationship between women's education, bodily liberation, and alienation. Education, for Djébar, served as a tool of resistance against patriarchy and colonial violence. Her struggle to denounce or condemn the vehicle of her empowerment reflects the state of ambivalence faced by the colonized intellectuals.

3.2 *L'école Française* in Mouloud Feraoun's *Le Fils du pauvre*

Mouloud Feraoun was born on March 8th, 1913 in Tizi-Hibel, *Grande Kabylie* [Upper Kabylia], to a family of modest peasants. Since there were no schools in his village, young Feraoun was admitted, at the age of seven, to the Taourirt-Moussa school. He walked for two kilometers bare foot on his first day of school (Guerrouf 11). Once he obtained his *Certificat d'études primaires élémentaires (CEPE)* [Certificate of Primary Elementary Studies], he benefited from a scholarship to study at the superior primary school in Tizi-Ouzou. He then was admitted to *l'École Normale*⁸ de Bouzaréa. Feraoun became a teacher at the age of 22, in 1935; he held the position of *instituteur*⁹ at his native village, then in 1946 at Taourirt-Moussa. In 1952, he was appointed supervisor of the complementary course in a school in Fort-National, and in 1957 he was named headmaster of the *Clos Salembier* School. In 1960, the Normal school graduate was elected inspector of the Centres sociaux¹⁰. In March 15th, 1962, Feraoun was assassinated at El Biar, Algiers, along with five other colleagues, by an officer of the OAS (Organisation de l'armée secrète) (*Le Fils du pauvre*, bookcover).

Feraoun began writing *Le Fils du pauvre* in 1939, four years after his graduation from *l'École Normale* de Bouzaréa. Upon its completion in 1944, the manuscript was first presented to Aimé Dupuy - Feraoun's former schoolmaster at the EN - who persuaded his student to pursue a writing career (Kelly 54; McNair 49). The manuscript was first submitted to the *Charlot maison d'édition*, it was met with

⁸ The Normal School or the Teachers college is an institution for the training of teachers.

⁹ A primary school teacher.

¹⁰ *Les centres-sociaux* were created in 1955 by Germaine Tillion, they promoted an inclusive education policy that aimed to provide an education to the children that were excluded from France's schooling system. For further detail see Kelle, "La création des Centres sociaux par Germaine Tillion (1955-1962)", pp. 101-115.

rejection. *Le Fils du pauvre* was then submitted to the *Éditions latines*, a publishing house accustomed to working with Arabo-Berber writers. In his letter to the *Nouvelle*¹¹, Feraoun wrote: “...je demandais aux Nouvelles Éditions latines... de soumettre mon travail à leur comité de lecture. J’ai su que cette maison a édité une collection de machin d’autochtones. Ils m’ont répondu et ont accepté d’examiner la chose ‘sans engagement;’ de leur part” (*Lettres à ses amis* 26) [...I asked the *Nouvelles Éditions latines*... to submit my work to their reading committee. I learned that this house has published a collection of native stuff. They responded and agreed to review the thing with “no commitment;” on their part] (PT). The editor of the *Éditions latines* accepted to publish the manuscript but imposed inadmissible conditions on the author (*Lettres à ses amis* 35). Feraoun’s account of his experience with the publishing houses testifies to the challenges that the publishing industry posed to Arabo-Berber writers of colonial Algeria.

Le Fils du pauvre was published for the first time in 1950, by *Les Cahiers du Nouvel Humanisme* at the author’s own expense (*Lettres à ses amis* 43). The thousand copies of the first edition of the novel were sold out in a short period of time. In 1951, the novel was granted the *Grand Prix littéraire of the City of Algiers*, the reward accorded the author literary recognition. Mouloud Feraoun was the first Algerian Berber writer to win the prize (Kelly 55, Harrison 91). Feraoun’s autobiographical novel was favorably received by French critics of the period, Fanny Colonna maintains that “la société colonial y voyait un exemple à la fois rassurant et édifiant à imiter” [colonial society viewed it as a reassuring and edifying example to imitate] (qtd in Guétarni 133). *Le Fils du pauvre* was perceived as a promising literary model

¹¹ Feraoun maintained an epistolary relationship with his classmates, fellow teachers and writers. The letters were compiled and published posthumously in a letter book: “*Lettres à ses amis*” (1949-1962). According to a note attached by Emmanuel Roblès, René Nouvelle was a teacher in Paris and a member of the (S.C.I) (*Lettres à ses amis* 7).

that provides a positive portrait of life in colonial Algeria since Fouroulou,¹² the son of an illiterate Kabyle *fellah* [farmer], succeeded within the French colonial education system and was granted a teaching degree from the prestigious *École Normale Supérieure d'Alger de Bouzaréa*.

The success of the novel led to its republication in 1954 by the *Éditions du Seuil*, an acclaimed metropolitan house of publication. The original manuscript of Feraoun's *Le fils du pauvre* was expurgated, it was subjected to major cuts and meticulous revisions, supervised by Emmanuel Roblès and Paul Flamand, by which an entire chapter of the book was omitted and about fifty pages were edited (Le Sueur, James D. *The Poor Man's Son* Introduction, ix). The second edition of the novel was purged from the sections deemed controversial, specifically the parts that narrate Fouroulou's experience as a student at *l'École primaire supérieur* [The superior primary school], his time as a *normalien* at *l'École des instituteurs de Bouzaréa* [The teacher training college of Bouzaréa], and the effects of WWII on Kabyle society. Some paragraphs were rewritten, rendering the narrative textually corrupt. The first edition of the novel, published by *Les Cahiers du Nouvel Humanisme*, was translated by Lucy R. McNair in 2005. *The Poor Man's Son Menrad, Kabyle Schoolteacher* reconstructs Feraoun's *Le Fils du Pauvre* and restores it to its original form. We chose to work on McNair's translation of the autobiography in order to provide a viable interpretation of Feraoun's experiences within the French colonial school system, and to offer a revised understanding of his political stance.

3.2.1 Fouroulou's Educational Path: *L'École Normale de Bouzaréa*, and Religious Proselytism

¹² Fouroulou Menrad is the central protagonist of *Le fils du pauvre*, the name of the character is an anagram of the novelist's name.

Mouloud Feraoun belongs to a group of Algerian francophone intellectuals referred to as *les évolués*¹³, Arabo-Berber graduates of the *École Normale de Bouzaréa* formed in order to serve as cultural intermediaries. In his “Native Schoolteachers as a Mediating Elite in Colonial Algeria,” E. P. Fitzgerald (1977), maintains that: “their task was to bring the rudiments of French education to the Muslim masses and thereby train future generations of loyal native subjects in the language and ways of their masters” (156). The EN aimed to forge a generation of Gaullitized agents that would disseminate the French culture and language amongst the Algerian population. The following section explores the type of training the pedagogical colonial institution endorsed in the process of constructing a core of Franco-Arab *instituteurs du bled* [rural primary schoolteachers].

Of all the Algerian pedagogues and authors of his generation, Mouloud Feraoun had a distinct educational path: he was subjected to religious proselytism by the Protestant Lember mission and to ideological manipulation by *l’Ecole Normale de Bouzaréa*. In his autobiographical novel, Feraoun transcribes his experiences at the colonial French school. In a letter to Mme Landi-Benos, written in 1955, Feraoun notes: “vous savez bien que Fouroulou c’était à peu près moi. Un moi enfant tel que je le voyais il y a dix ans” (*Lettres à ses amis* 121). [You know perfectly well that Fouroulou was me. A child me as I saw him ten years ago] (PT). At the village’s primary school, young Fouroulou was instructed in French, lessons in the Arabic language were excluded from the curriculum. By the time he reached schooling age Quranic schools were for the most part decimated by the French Third Republic, by and large decentering the traditional educational institutions of the country. Feraoun’s

¹³ The evolved. For further information on the history of the emergence of the term and its connotation, see: Dunwoodie, Peter. “Assimilation, Cultural Identity, and Permissible Deviance in Francophone Algerian Writing of the Interwar Years”. In E., Lorcin Patricia M. *Algeria & France, 1800-2000: Identity, Memory, Nostalgia*. Syracuse University Press, 2006.

The Poor Man's Son, opens with a detailed description of the Kabyle village: its architecture, its landscapes, and its inhabitants. The narrator's portrait of his native village did not include a Quranic school, he stated that mosques were deserted and that: "the old who pray there seem to come from another century" (*The Poor Man's Son* 6).

After the completion of his schooling at the village's primary French school, Fouroulou was awarded a scholarship to attend *l'École Primaire Supérieure* [The Superior Primary School] at Tizi-Ouzou. Fouroulou, the studious student, was thrilled to hear the news. Attending the *E.P.S* meant he could enter *l'École Normale* and fulfill his dream of becoming: "a teacher! The best of all careers, the highest paid, the least harsh, the noblest" (*The Poor Man's Son* 100). He would be given a sum of 180 francs per month, such an opportunity could not be rejected. He felt especially proud as his sisters gazed at him with respect (*PMS* 100). However, he encountered some financial troubles as his father commented: "we are poor - education is rich" (*PMS* 99). Fouroulou could not afford to rent a room, the inability to secure rent-money threatened the dream he longed for. A solution to Fouroulou's predicament was found; he joined the Lembert Missionary Mission once he started attending the *E.P.S*.

The Rolland mission that is depicted as the Lembert mission in *The Poor Man's Son*, was founded by Father Emile Rolland, the latter offered lodgings to young Kabyle students who could not afford rent, in return they would attend, on a daily basis, religious ceremonies (Benachour 192). The Jules Ferry Laws declared education both in the Algerian colony and the metropolis laic, official reports state that the colonial government recognized the dangers that the proselytization of the Arabo-Berber population entailed and prohibited the practice. Rebecca Rogers maintains in her *Teaching Morality and Religion in Nineteenth-Century Colonial*

Algeria and the Civilizing Mission (2011), that the “French Arabists, in particular, penned reports highlighting the centrality of religious faith within Arab society and the need to respect that faith in the effort to establish an elusory ‘assimilation’ of the races” (741). At the beginning of the conquest, the French government sought to abide by the Act of Capitulation signed between General *De Bourmont* and the *Dey* of Algiers upon his surrender. The Act proclaimed the need to respect the religious beliefs and practices of the Arabo-Berber population (Becherirat 118).

To apprise some historical context to Fouroulou’s story, Emile Roland, a common laborer at the Peugeot factory in *Montbéliard*, was invited, in 1896, to join the North Africa Mission, a British organization. The Anglican missions took the initiative in evangelism over French religious organizations. Nonetheless, after the Franco-Prussian war the settlement of citizens from the East of France, of Calvinist or Lutheran confession, in the Algerian colony, contributed in the spread of French missions and the establishment of Protestant churches all over the territory (Lamarque). In her *Mouloud Fearoun La voix et le silence (1982)*, Marie-Hélène Chéze states that the Rolland Protestant mission was founded in 1908 (Benachour 192). Alfred Rolland, the priest’s nephew and son-in-law, wrote in a letter in 1977:

C’est pour aider les jeunes Kabyles originaires de la montagne que nous avons bâti et mis gratuitement à leur disposition, une dizaine de chambres rustiques mais suffisantes... on enseignait l’Evangile aux jeunes pensionnaires et on les initiait au scoutisme mais sans excès de prosélytisme (as cited in Benachour 192).

[It is to help the young Kabyles from the mountains that we have built and put at their disposal free of charge, a dozen rustic but sufficient rooms... The

young boarders were taught the Gospel and introduced to Scouting, but without excessive proselytism] (PT).

The young students were exposed to evangelism, but at a slow rate. The missionaries focused their efforts mainly in the Kabyle region, which invokes “The Kabyle Myth”. Emile Rolland learned Kabyle¹⁴, got acquainted with the customs and traditions of the region. He didn’t only provide a shelter to students, but also to orphans, and runaway girls (Lamarque).

The rise of secularism in the metropolis and the Algerian colony destabilized the framework within which French missionaries operate. In 1871, the colony witnessed a surge of *laïcité*. The year marked the beginning of the civilian rule in colonial Algeria, it gave rise to political tension amongst pro-secular parties and clericals (Rogers, *The Teaching of Morality and Religion* 755). The actions of Archbishop Monsignor Lavigerie contributed in fueling tension in Algeria. The latter envisaged to convert the Arabo-Berber population through the use of schools and hospitals:

In 1866 and 1867 a terrible drought brought famine, typhus, and cholera that claimed 100.000 victims. Lavigerie organized his network in France to provide money for the succor of 1.800 orphans of both sexes. The survivors (378 boys and 342 girls in 1871) formed two Arab Christian villages: Sainte Monique and Saint-Cyprien-des Attafs established in 1872 some 180 kilometers west of Algiers (Rogers, *TMR* 755).

The archbishop took advantage of the crisis, chose as preys orphans left without shelter and without protection. Debates rose as the anticlerical deputies questioned the

¹⁴ Kabyle, *takbaylit*, is a Berber language spoken by the inhabitants of the Kabyle region.

practices of the Archbishop, they protested the conversion of young orphans and the establishment of the Arab Christian villages. Eventually, Monsignor Lavigerie¹⁵ (1825-1892) diverted his efforts towards the region of Kabylia, he believed “the Berbers in Kabylia to be more receptive than Arabs to the French civilizing mission,” since, “[they] had ancient Christian roots rendering them far readier for conversion to Christianity than the more fanatical Arabs,” Lavigerie consigned, “the missionary order he founded - Notre Dame d’Afrique, known as the White Fathers and Sisters - to set up schools there” (Rogers TMR, 756). Historian Karima Direche-Slimani (2004), contends that missionary schools had a powerful impact on the Kabyle region; she argues that these institutions shaped a minority susceptible to religious proselytism since the latter provided a way out of poverty and degradation (Rogers, TMR 756).

In *The Poor Man’s Son*, Fouroulou was the target of these strategies of conversion. He was approached by Azir, a fellow grant holder, who persuaded him to accept the accommodations offered by the Lembert Protestant mission:

I’m a day student too... and a scholarship kid like you. We come from the same area... If you want, we can live together and be friends... there’s a Protestant missionary at Tizi-Ouzou who lodges the day students from the mountain country... We’ll have a room, electricity, a table, chairs, two beds. We’ll get coffee and bread each morning. And all of that for free... (*PMS102*).

Ergo, Fouroulou was provided with the opportunity to challenge poverty and to work in an effort to achieve his dream career, he could not refuse the tempting offer. He cared little for what the mission entailed, he commented: “It was truly incredible. Azir

¹⁵ Charles Lavigerie was a French missionary, in 1867 he was appointed as Archbishop of Algiers. In 1868, he established the Society of Missionaries of Africa known as the White Fathers. The Archbishop founded several orphanages to host Arabo-Beber children.

explained that a missionary is a good man, naturally inclined to help the poor...” (PMS 102). When his father heard the news, he thought that: “it was a miracle,” and that, “The Good Lord had come to their rescue” (PMS 102). He agreed without hesitation, and his son joined the E.P.S.

Fouroulou recounts the time he spent as a guest of the mission, Mr Lembert: “in return to his services to the poor mountain boys, each evening, he gathers them in a big hall to speak to them about religion, to advise them, and to educate them... It was admirable” (PMS 102). Young Menrad perceived evangelization as a form of education which he revered. He didn’t recognize that he was the subject of a violent attempt of religious conversion, he valued not only the help he was offered but any form of education or advice he received.

Fouroulou and his companion abided by Lembert’s rules, they invested all of their energy in their studies. Fouroulou was amazed by his new school, he tried to imitate his classmates but could not help but feel like an outsider: “he doesn’t recognize himself anymore... He cannot do anything by himself; he imitates every move... He is suffocating; he tells himself he does not belong there. Come on you ex-shepherd! ...he feels like an intruder in this milieu” (PMS 103). The young student questioned iteratively where he belongs, he spent four years in the missionary’s house; however, the reader is left with the impression that Fouroulou was not persuaded by his preaching, and that Protestantism left little traces in the narrator’s mind. He wrote:

They would go regularly, read a verse from the Bible like everyone else, diligently sing the hymns, respectfully listen to the chief’s commentary... They were never known to ask for clarification about some verse, not to go to

the lounge to have this or that religious subtlety explained or to ask the chief to pray for them... Yet, he [the missionary] keenly felt that these two boys had escaped him (*PMS 107*).

Despite the fact that Fouroulou shared a solid bond with the missionary and that he held Protestantism at high esteem; he didn't heed to his preaching. The roommates studied The Bible and The New Testament, they prayed, they sung the chants with their classmates or privately, nonetheless: "...they considered all that irrelevant to their studies" (*PMS 107*). The Lemberstists could not afford to fail; they had to please their host at any cost so they worked tirelessly to succeed. Fouroulou and Azir prioritized their school assignments over anything else and worked hard to realize their dreams.

The sections that described the time Feraoun spent in the missionary's house were excluded from the Second edition of *Le Fils du pauvre*. The Lemberst mission was strategically located near the E.P.S and a big worship hall, so students were easily targeted (*PMS 106*). Fouroulou lived in thrift, he only spent 80 francs from the sum he monthly received and sent the rest to his father. When he returned home during summer vacations, he could no longer eat like a shepherd; he had to have coffee, meat, semolina, luxurious items the Menrads could not afford. His father's debts grew, as young Fouroulou prepared to take his Brevet exam. Ramadan saved no costs for the future held rewards, his son would become a teacher and unburden him (*PMS 108*). The young Kabyle student passed the entrance exam; he was admitted to the Teachers' Training College of Bouzaréa, a turning point in his life. Upon hearing the news Fouroulou was in disbelief: "had he really passed, was his cherished dream becoming real; was he entering earthly paradise? ...So he would be a teacher, he would get to know this *École Normale*, which from his most tender age had

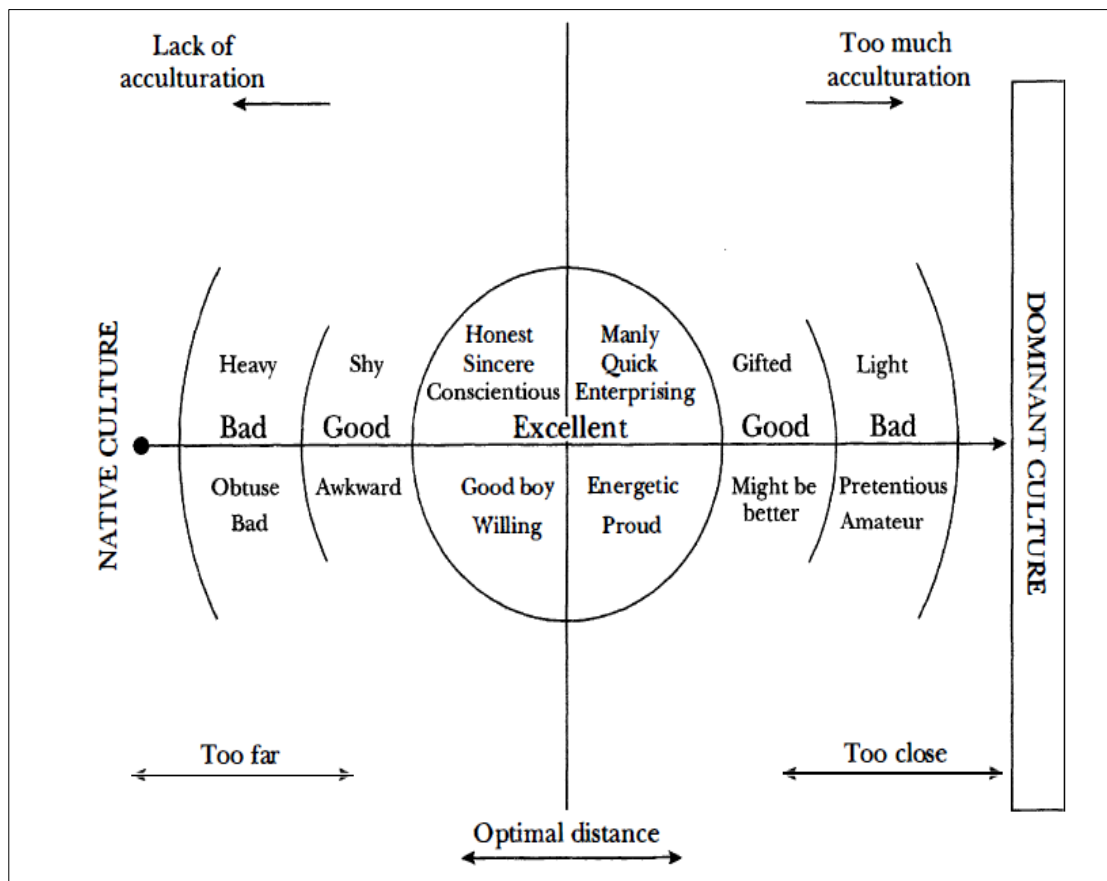
represented a kind of inaccessible ideal?” (PMS 112). At the time, it was extremely rare for underprivileged children in colonial Algeria who came from an impoverished background to follow young Fouroulou’s academic career.

L’École Normale d’instituteurs d’Alger, Bouzaréa was created by an imperial decree on March 4th, 1865 in order to solve the problem of teachers’ recruitment to French colonial schools (Dupuy 12). The school founders aimed to train teachers equipped with the necessary tools that education in the Algerian colony required: “[...] L’imperfection des méthodes d’enseignement et surtout la difficulté de recruter des maîtres capables sont un obstacle au progrès de notre influence sur la jeune génération. Ces maîtres une École Normale Primaire peut seule les donner...” (P. Horluc, qtd in Dupuy 11). [(...) The imperfection of the teaching methods and especially the difficulty of recruiting qualified teachers pose an obstacle to the progress of our influence on the younger generation. These teachers only a Normal Primary School can provide them...] (PT). French educationalists recognized that the colony was an eccentric pedagogical milieu, and that the education of the settler community, and that of the Arabo-Berber population presented a challenge to metropolitan expatriate teachers.

Primarily, it was necessary to form a body of native teachers that would act as cultural agents between the Arabo-Berber population and the French colonial power in order to achieve Franco-conformity. In his *L’Algérie sous l’égide de la France* (1936), Saïd Faci –a naturalized teacher trained at l’École Normale de Bouzaréa– stated that: “The native intellectuals are the best intermediaries between France and the Moslem masses; their knowledge of the various milieus, their culture, their respectability, their independence, their impartiality, their attachment to France, are so many guarantees for the public powers” (qtd in Colonna, *Educating Conformity in*

French Colonial Algeria 365). The school aimed to train a class of native elites that would establish the grounds for a rapprochement of the different races that forge French Algeria. Colonna maintains that the system of selection for entrance to the E.N. discloses that educationalists didn't assign much importance to the pedagogical skills and to the academic achievements of the candidates rather, they focused on morality, intercultural competence, and the ability to internalize French Republican values and ideas (354).

Fig 3. 1. Types of Relations Towards the School and the Dominant Culture



Source Fanny Colonna's, "Educating Conformity in French Colonial Algeria"

(363)¹⁶.

¹⁶ Colonna, Fanny. "Educating Conformity in French Colonial Algeria." *Tensions of Empire: Colonial Cultures in a Bourgeois World*, edited by Cooper, Frederick, and Ann Laura Stoler, University of California Press, 1997, pp. 346-370.

Access to the *École Normale* was highly restrictive. Fig 3.1: “Types of relations toward the school and the dominant culture” represents the scale of characteristics used in the process of selection of Normal School candidates. It demonstrates that the criteria of excellence are dictated by the candidate’s distance from his Arabo-Berber culture to the French dominant culture. A candidate that would successfully serve as an intermediary between the settler community and the Algerian population would cross to the center where the two cultures intersect forming a perfect balance on account of the degree of acculturation. If the student comes too close to the dominant culture, he is classified as a bad student. Equally, if the student does not move too far from his culture of origin, he fails. The conceptual framework that informs the standards of selection has set, in a binary opposition, two types of “Good” candidates, and two types of “Bad” candidates. A heavy bearing student and a light bearing student become both “Bad”.

Notably, the circle of excellence encompasses a set of personality traits that exclude intellectual capacities, as shown in fig 3.1 the adjective “Gifted” is placed outside the ring and is classified as “Good”, while the adjective “Light” is criticized as “Bad”. A report on students’ progress at the Normal School reads as follows: “Very intelligent but fanatic” (1887, student from Médéa), “Barely educated, hardly intelligent, good Frenchman-will make a good teacher” (1887, student from Biskra)” (Colonna 360). Docility and obedience dispose of intelligence, crucial to the success of the candidate is the ability to properly ingest the notion of frenchness.

Similar teacher training institutions were established throughout the colony, in Miliana (1874), in Constantine (1878), and in Oran (1883). In the period from 1883 and 1945, 993 native teachers graduated from the colony’s Normal Schools (Kadri, A., and Ghouati, A., 126-127). Dupuy (1936) states that according to the ministerial

decree of August 3rd, 1865, the Arabo-Berber students enrolled in the Normal School of Bouzaréa had to meet the equation of a Muslim pupil opposite two European pupils, so out of 30 *normaliens*, 10 had to belong to the native population (Dupuy 13). In 1932, the year Feraoun entered the teachers' training college of Bouzaréa, 318 Arabo-Berber candidates competed for 20 positions in the Indigenous Section, while 64 candidates competed for 54 positions in the European Section (Harrison 68).

The educational program of the Normal school encompassed, in 1866, the teaching of morality and religion, pedagogy, reading and writing in French, history and geography, along with some notions of Algebra and geometry (Dupuy 16). Dupuy observes that for a long period of time, only the schools in the Kabyle region provided the Normal School of Algiers with its native candidates (17). Fouroulou's primary school teachers were both Kabyles, native of the region, products of the French school: "We had two professors, both of them Kabyles... They both wore French suits under fine, sparkling white burnoses. This attire struck me for a long time as having attained the epitome of good taste..." (*The Poor Man's Son* 42). The colonial educational system invested its efforts in the Kabyle region under the pretext that its inhabitants were prone to assimilation.

Namely, the curriculum of the EN of Bouzaréa was an exact replica of the syllabus of the Normal Schools of the metropolis of the year 1865. The teaching of the Arabic language was not included; however, Dupuy (1936) claims it was later introduced to the curriculum (16). The Arabo-Berber *écoliers* were subjected to religious indoctrination in classrooms, and had to take part in prayers regularly. While describing a day in the life of a student-teacher, Dupuy maintained that they woke up really early in winter and summer alike. Under the supervision of monitors they

would wash, make their beds, and go to class around 5:30 am in “order and silence,” and in each class the Christians and Muslims would recite prayers (17).

When describing the years he spent at the Normal school, Feraoun romanticizes his experience, and portrays his teachers as idols. He bears a lot of gratitude towards the institution that trained him to become a teacher: “He attributes such importance to these three years, which account for so much in his life, that it seems a sacrilege to try to speak of them, especially when one lacks the talent to make them come alive on the page exactly as he had lived them or as he likes to relieve them in memory” (*PMS* 113). In any case, young Fouroulou was programmed to foster only indebtedness and appreciativeness to his school and to his teachers. He pays no heed to the structured discriminatory politics of *L'École Normale*.

Fouroulou contends that his inferiority complex vis a vis the Europeans of Algeria disappeared since his teachers at the Normal school worked to instill in their students the notion of the rapprochement of the races. The following passage exemplifies the institution's mechanism of ideological manipulation:

The first and glorious gift his mentors at the *École Normale* gave him was the return of his dignity... There, the barriers gone, he found neither French nor natives but simply student teachers and the master teachers who watched over their training with jealous concern... The professors' first task, led by the director, was to erase from the minds of their native students all trace of distrust, fear or inferiority... (*PMS* 114).

Then, Fouroulou writes that the teachers of the Normal School would persuade their native students of the absence of boundaries between them and the French students, and in return they would gain their respect and most importantly their trust (*PMS*

114). In this new school Fouroulou needed not mimic his classmates, he could act on his own in this safe space. He cherished that period since "...it was the only time he lived among the French" (*PMS* 118). He never interacted with them before his entrance to the *École Normale* and once graduated, he returned to his home town to teach at the local school where he only perceived the French from a distance (*PMS* 118). In 1936, Feraoun was one of the 20 Arabo-Berber graduates of the Teachers' Training College of Bouzaréa (McNair, *An Algerian Primer: Mouloud Feraoun's Le Fils du pauvre, Translation Commentary* 42).

Significantly, the literature on the students' teacher training college of Bouzaréa indicates that there were patterns of discrimination in the treatment and the training of the Arabo-Berber candidates. The boundaries between the Algerian and the European students were very much present, and the differences between the two groups could not only be confined to classroom and residential segregation. Le commandant Rinn, member of the school's administrative council, writes: "... on [Le personnel scolaire] ne les nourrit pas comme les autres, on les habille pas comme les autres, on ne les loge pas comme les autres" (qtd. in Dupuy 35). [... we [the school staff] don't feed them like the others, we don't dress them like the others, we don't house them like the others] (PT). Furthermore, the use of the Arabic and Berber languages within the school and between classmates was forbidden (Harrison70).

While the motto of the school was assimilation of the different races of the Algerian colony, the Arabo-Berber students did not have the same uniform as their French counterparts. They wore: "*des vestes abricot*" [apricot vests] with la "*Chéchia*"¹⁷ (Dupus 36). Paradoxically, the school principal had to, "habiller en indigène un élève qui arrive avec un costume européen" (Dupuy 36) [Dress as native

¹⁷ A Chéchia is a headscarf traditionally worn by men in Algeria.

a student who came in a European costume] (PT). The picture of the first class of Arabo-Berber students (fig 3.2) portrays the students in their traditional attire: a *burnous*¹⁸, and a *chéchia* standing with two teachers and a European student dressed in a suit.

Fig. 3. 2. The First Class of the Normal School, Mr. Verdy amongst his Students



Source Dupuy, Aimé. *Bouzaréa, Histoire Illustrée des Écoles Normales d'instituteurs d'Alger Bouzaréa* (21)

Benachour (2009) maintains that the form of education the Normal School dispensed was adequate with the ideology that the French colonial pedagogical system in Algeria was founded upon. The Arabo-Berber students studied in a special section, they were assigned a separate course called “*le Cours Normal Indigène*,” [the Indigenous Normal Course]. This form of academic segregation highly contradicts the

¹⁸ A *burnous* is a traditional Algerian cloak.

principle the institution represents, which is the annihilation of the boundaries between native to the land and colonists (*Parcours Scolaires et écriture: Mouloud Feraoun et l'École Normale de Bouzaréa* 195). The teachers' training college had one aim that of reshaping the native mind so it would grow accustomed to French habits, ideas, and way of life. *L'École Normale* offered Feraoun the prospect of a career, at the price of being subjected to ideological manipulation (Benachour 194).

L'École Normale recruited its candidates from different cultural and ethnic backgrounds into various economic areas: the students/teachers belonged to poor or rich families, they came from rural or urban areas, and they were Arabo-Berber or European (Benachour 195). This strategic policy of recruitment was implemented in order to promote the idea of a Franco-conform community where social, economic, and cultural differences did not exist between Algerians and the French of Algeria (Benachour 195). Dupuy declares that *L'École Normale* de Bouzaréa was founded so that:

...Indigènes, Français d'Algérie, Français de France s'y coudoient, et y vivent, matériellement tout au moins, en camarades, en attendant que de cette réunion naisse l'union, c'est-à-dire l'amitié intellectuelle, l'intimité, la fraternité tant désirée par tous les hommes de cœur, d'une jeunesse éprise du même idéal, formée par les mêmes méthodes, promise à la même tâche éducatrice et civilisatrice (Dupuy 44).

[...The Natives, the French of Algeria, the French of France, live there, as comrades, in the hopes that out of this cohabitation comes the union, that is, the intellectual friendship, the intimacy, the fraternity so desired by all men of

heart, of a youth fond of the same ideal, trained by the same methods, destined to fulfil the same educative and civilizing task] (PT).

Under the banner of French Republican values, of liberty, of equality, and of fraternity, the Normal School would forge a generation of loyal teachers who would work to accomplish the notion of a rapprochement of races, neglecting the socio-political realities of the Algerian colony. Feraoun believed in the idea of unity and peaceful coexistence, he writes: “La communauté franco-arabe, nous l’avons formée, il y a un quart de siècle, nous autres, à Bouzaréa!” (qtd, in Harrison 68). [The Franco-Arab community, we’ve created it, a quarter of a century ago, us others, at Bouzaréa!] (PT). Evidently, this pedagogical mission that entailed the blurring of the lines between colonizer and colonized aimed at suppressing any form of national or cultural resistance. For these students remained French subjects, not citizens, they were governed by a different judicial system - a separate one -, they were subjected to the laws of *Le Code d’Indigénat*¹⁹.

3.2.2 Educating the Son: The Politics of Gender in Rural Kabylia

Le Fils du pauvre (1950) offers an intricate insight into the gender politics of rural Kabylia, Feraoun’s portrayal of the women of his region resonates with Bourdieu’s theory of gender differences and gendered habitus. In his study of the Kabyle house [*Akham*], French philosopher, Pierre Bourdieu, draws an analogy between domestic spatial dimensions and gender relations in rural Kabylia. The rectangular-shaped house is divided into two sections emblematic of the binary opposition between the exterior, male territory, and the interior, female domain, represented by the metaphor of the beam [*asalas alemmas*], the master of the house,

¹⁹ For further information on the regime de L’Indigénat, see: Le Cour Grandmaison, Olivier. *De L’Indigénat, Anatomie d’un “monstre” juridique, Le droit colonial en Algérie et dans l’Empire français*. Saihi Éditions, 2011.

and that of the pillar [*thigedjith*], the housewife, of the dwelling (*Algeria 1960*, 139). According to Bourdieu, the Kabyle woman: "...through whom fertility comes to the house, makes her own contribution to the fertility of the fields: consigned to the world of the inside, she also acts on the outside by ensuring plentitude for the inside..." (*Algeria 1960*, 148).

Kabyle women were not confined to the *harem* - the home sphere - they were part of the workforce, nonetheless, their influence was restricted by non-Islamic laws of inheritance that advocated the denial of a woman's right to inherit land or any other form of property. Though Feraoun's female characters, in *Le Fils du pauvre*, were not assigned solely the role of breeders, since they contributed to the household income by taking part in agricultural work, and also by producing carpets and pottery; they were dispossessed of the right of education, and of the right of inheritance. The exclusion of women from what is considered a public masculine territory fostered the loss of social agency.

The social customs of the period prevented women from the right of ownership and inheritance. Upon the death of his grandfather, Fouroulou's mother and aunts were deprived of their father's inheritance. The old man was hesitant about passing on a part of his property to his daughters; he feared that his wealth would be ill-managed: "...he did not dare give them his properties before his death... He feared for his possessions, easy preys in the hands of women" (*PMS 13*). Prior to his passing, Fouroulou's grandfather chose to grant his daughters a small house and a field, however, the sheikh who read the will after his death misinterpreted it: "...the sheikh who translated it explained to the heirs that they had only the right of usufruct" (*PMS 13*). Though the three daughters had the text that proved that they had the right to inherit the house and the field, they chose not to antagonize their brothers and cousins,

the male heirs that would unjustly deprive them from their birthright: “he left behind a *qadi*’s document. This paper still exists, a bit discolored but still intact... this was a “binding and definitive” legacy... Obviously the *qadi* had misunderstood the wishes of the dying man. He had written those of the brothers” (*PMS* 13).

Hence, the right of ownership was relegated by the right of usufruct, the male heirs who inherited the old man’s properties, would eventually take over the small house and the field that was bequeathed to the women. The customs of the time dictated that those who inherit would care for the orphans, the male heirs felt the burden of supervising the women: ““Try to get along honorably,’ they said to Fouroulou’s aunts, “The slightest lapse in your behavior could sully our name. You’ll be promptly and severely punished. You are under our wing. Walk a straight path. Whatever else you do doesn’t concern us” (*PMS* 14). *Khalti* [*my aunt*] and *Nana* had to abide by the rules, any misconduct would result in their disavowal from the family, and the aunts “...prefer this to the indifference and abandonment that always accompanies scorn” (*PMS* 14). The women renounced their claim to their inheritance for contesting the customary laws would result in their expulsion from the family and the society as a whole. Disinheritance, still a common practice in today’s Kabylia, led to the aunts’ demise.

The system of inheritance, in the Kabyle region, was embedded in a patrilineal tradition. In his, “Thala in the Kabyle Village: Feminine Drudgery or Social Link” (2011), Belmessoud maintains that the Kabyles encouraged cousin marriage through male lineage so: “...all the inheritance in goods, moral values and honor is ensured to remain within the patriarchal family without risk” (515). On that account, marriage in the region was governed by the fear of the fragmentation of land and of wealth. The Kabyles share strong spiritual ties with the lands of their forefathers; the selling of a

piece of land was regarded as a dishonorable act. Women could not inherit so the land does not fall into the hands of the family-in-law, “thus, the custom envisaged two solutions to the problem of their subsistence: right of protection of maintenance on the incomes of the succession and the assignment of one part of the succession buildings by the attribution of usufruct” (517). Hereinafter, to preserve communally held and cultivated lands the practice of usufruct was dictated by the customary code of the region.

The transfer of assets, wealth and power in Kabylia was regulated by the *djemaâ*, a tribal council that implements laws based on the traditional customs of the region. The assembly oversees the collective affairs of the tribe, in addition to inheritance and domestic matters (Charrad 46). The *djemaâ* comprises all the male villagers, teens and adults, and excludes women in general. It sanctions the customary codes made by the elderly, revokes the ineffective laws, and implements new ones. Belmessaoud (2011) argues that: “It is the patriarchal organization in all its simplicity; neither *caïd*, nor *sheikh* but simply *Thajmaât* or *djemma...*” (516). According to Feraoun the rich maintained high positions in the *djemmaâ*, they had influence over the decisions of the tribal council: “so a big Kabyle landowner owns about six hectares. He can speak loudly at the *djemaâ* and is an absolute master at home...” (PMS 8).

In his “Mouloud Feraoun, Masculinist Systems and Feminine Thanatos” (2017), Edward Still argues that Feraoun engaged in what he labels a “discrete militancy” against the discriminatory gender politics of his region (2). He maintains that *The Poor Man’s Son* female characters display protestatory tendencies against the traditional social order. He cites as an example Fouroulou’s aunts’ small pottery and weaving enterprise that was established in reaction to their disinheritance after their

father's death. However, women in Kabylia have formed an integral part of the workforce, they have always contributed in providing for their families. A Kabyle woman, according to Belmessaoud, takes part in the harvesting of the olives, "...gives birth to children and educates them, executes the domestic duties, brings back water from the fountain or the source, takes part in the agricultural work compatible with her physical force, weaves the carpets, produces pottery etc..." (516). Nonetheless, being part of the labor force didn't necessarily empower women; their influence was restricted since they were subjected to harmful inheritance practices.

In his essay, Still evokes Slavoj Žižek's reading of the Laccanian *thanatos* or the "death drive," he argues that the demise of Feraoun's aunts epitomizes the revolutionary potential of *thanatos*, which he associates with the notion of *nushuz*, "the Islamic concept of women's rebellion" (Still 4). We would argue that while Feraoun sympathetically depicted the suffering Nana and Khalti endured on account of the discriminatory inheritance laws that are practiced in the region, he failed to express his opposition to these customary laws. The two characters did not protest the will, they also did not demonstrate any form of resistance against the masculinity structures that governed their lives; their death was but a tragic end to a story.

As has been noted, Kabyle women did not have access to education, Fouroulou Menrad's recollection of his first day at school demonstrates that Kabyle families prioritized, at all costs, the education of the son. One day, upon his return from the *djemaâ*, Ramdan, Fouroulou's father, announced the news to his mother with much excitement. He asked her to ready their son so he would go to school, and warned her from lateness on the first day of school: "people say the *Roumis* are strict, and he's the only son we have. He shouldn't be banned because of us..." (PMS 42). The education of his sisters or female cousins was not discussed or considered. A

recurrent theme throughout the novel is poverty and the lack of means, the only son had the privilege of having a royal breakfast the first day of school:

For the sake of clarity, I should add that only in exceptional circumstances was I granted such a breakfast. Several conditions had to come together for this to happen... waiting especially for my little sisters to be away... all the conditions were met and I sat alone like a prince before that casserole, my eyes still thick with sleep but my stomach wide awake (*PMS* 41).

After he left in quite a hurry, his sister Titi ate his breakfast, he stated that she learned “that some reap their happiness from the misfortune of... but we should not speak too badly of school” (*PMS* 42). The gratitude that Fouroulou bears towards the school prevented him from finishing the saying.

This mindset did not change much in the upcoming years, Feraoun, the father and the teacher approached his daughter’s education with hesitation: “Je crois que je présenterai Djidji aux bourses 1^{ère}, mais je ne suis pas encore décidé à en faire une lycéenne. C’est une question très embarrassante pour moi. Je ne sais pas exactement où se trouve mon devoir vis-à-vis la petite” (*Lettres à ses amis* 33). [I think I’ll introduce Djiji to the 1st scholarship, but I have not decided yet to make her a high school student. It’s a very embarrassing question for me. I’m not exactly sure where my duty lies] (PT). The novelist questioned whether he should prioritize his duty towards his daughter or comply with society, he feared the risks of destabilizing social norms and chose to yield to the politics of gender of that time: “...non, je reste Kabyle et ici. Tant pis pour les filles ! Les gosses iront à l’école. S’ils ne réussissent pas comme leur père, ils deviendront *fellahs* comme leur grand père ou leurs cousins” (*Lettres à ces amis* 34). [No, I remain Kabyle and I’m staying here. Too bad for the

girls. The boys will go to school. If they don't succeed like their father, they'll become *fellahs* like their grandfather or their cousins] (PT). Feraoun would follow his father's footsteps, and only educate his sons, if they fail in school they would become shepherds and if they succeed they would secure the family's future.

Male children occupied a central and privileged position within society, Fouroulou –the only son who later became the elder son, lived a happy childhood amongst his sisters and female cousins. The dynamics of the relationship he entertained with his sisters divulge the unfair treatment the women of his region faced, at the house: "...I immediately became a tyrant to the youngest of my sisters... she was constantly inculcated with the belief that her docility was a duty and my attitude a right," whenever his sister tried to denounce his behavior to their parents, "...she received an invariable reply: 'isn't he your brother? How lucky you are to have a brother!'" (PMS 18).

Sons held potential, they could secure a poverty free future for the family while girls were a burden, mouths you had to feed until they marry. In the household, men enjoyed a status of privilege, women were in charge of cooking and men were in charge of distributing the meat portions: "...that was man's work. Since we only bought it for holidays..." (PMS14). In many cultures the consumption of meat is perceived to be masculine, an act that asserts male dominance. When someone falls ill in Fouroulou's village, the jinn was always assumed to be the cause. To defeat the illness men had to eat plenty of meat, their jinn required it, "as for the sisters, their jinn only dared ask for eggs" (PMS 49). The gendered meat consumption within the Kabyle household is representative of the inferior status attributed to women.

3.2.3 Becoming a Schoolteacher: Fouroulou and the “Rite of Institution”

The young Fouroulou Menrad was fated to become, like his father and his uncle, a humble peasant. His success within the French colonial educational system, and his ascension to the status of *un maître indigène* [indigenous teacher] enabled him to evade a life of poverty and insecurity. While education empowered Djébar and offered her the means to attain bodily movement, for Feraoun and Djébar’s Father, a fellow *instituteur* and a Normal School classmate, education provided the means to escape poverty. In addition to a career as a schoolteacher, Fouroulou endeavored in writing his life-story in 1939, the manuscript that Fouroulou kept in the drawer of his classroom desk amongst his students’ notebooks became *Le Fils du pauvre: Menrad, instituteur kabyle*. The acquisition of the French language allowed him to pursue his ambition for “...he wanted to write. He believed he could write. Ah! Neither poetry nor a psychological study, nor even an adventure novel, since he has no imagination,” he believes he can be an author since, “...he has read Montaigne and Rousseau, he has read Daudet and Dickens (in translation). He quite simply wanted, like those great men, to tell his story” (*PMS* 3).

Colonial education enabled Feraoun to provide for his extended family, and to pursue a career he greatly admired. The author was grateful to the institution that saved him from poverty, he highly believed in the notion of the fusion of the races that was instilled in him by his Normal School teachers. Hence, he was hesitant in taking a stance against colonial France:

La chose, pour moi, est d’une exceptionnelle gravité. Je me suis mêlé à vouloir peindre mon pays et mes compatriotes... Aux yeux de mes compatriotes, aux yeux de ceux qui souffrent et qui luttent. J’apparais comme quelqu’un de tiède qui a peur... Aux yeux des agitateurs politiques, je ne suis qu’un vulgaire

vendu. Pour moi, je suis tout simplement un ambitieux qui a surestimé ses forces... Ni les Français ni les Musulmans ne trouveraient leur compte dans cet ouvrage (*Lettres à ses amis* 130-131).

[The thing, for me, is of exceptional gravity. I aspired to paint my country and my compatriots... In the eyes of my compatriots, in the eyes of those who are suffering and struggling. I appear as a fearful lukewarm... In the eyes of political agitators, I am a vulgar traitor. To me, I am simply an ambitious man who overestimated his strength... Neither the French nor the Muslims would find their cause in this work] (PT).

The autobiographical narrative was written during an era of political turmoil, but it was only meant to account for the journey of young Fouroulou within the French educational system and to portray his people, and their way of life. Writing, at that time, to promote kabyle culture and to construe the misery of the Algerian people under colonial rule is in itself a subversive act.

In her essay “L’Ecole Française dans *Le Fils du pauvre* de Mouloud Feraoun: rite de passage ou rite d’institution?” (2013), Boualit attempts to debunk the presumption that Mouloud Feraoun was simply an assimilationist, and a fervent proponent of the French colonial project. Our reading of the Feraounian text using Bourdieu’s conception of the ‘rite of institution’ has been prompted by Boualit’s analysis of the social and political dimensions of Fouroulou’s success within the French colonial school. Fouroulou writes of his first day at the *École Primaire Supérieure*: “he recalled nevertheless his childhood friend Akli, who had stayed behind on the mountain and would inevitably remain a shepherd, while he, Menrad,

was going to live and evolve in this fantastic milieu” (*PMS* 105). Education bore the potential of escaping the horrid fate of becoming a peasant in colonial Algeria.

Admittedly, success within the French educational system carried the promise of financial stability, the passage from poverty to richness, and from illiteracy to literacy. In *The Rite of Passage* (1960), Arnold Van Gennep contends that: “the life of an individual in any society is a series of passages from one age to another and from one occupation to another” (2). The transition from a phase to a different one or from one social status to another is usually accompanied by a ceremony that marks one’s initiation to a specific occupation or position (Van Gennep 3). In Fouroulou’s case his transition from a poor man’s son to a man of letters is marked by his graduation from the French colonial school, namely *L’École Normale*.

Gennep distinguishes three types of rites of passage: “rites of separation, transition rites, and rites of incorporation”, He argues that “these three subcategories are not developed to the same extent by all people... in specific instances these three rites are not always equally important or equally elaborated” (10-11). Boualit argues that Feraoun perceives his success in school and his ascent to the position of a teacher as the self’s rite of passage (32). Fouroulou comments on the transition he underwent: “What he did at Bouzaréa can be summed up in a few words: he entered a young man, and they made of him a man and a teacher. He knows very well that he would have become a man wherever he was, even in his village. But a completely different one!” (*PMS* 113).

The Poor Man’s Son Menrad Kabyle Schoolteacher opens up with the following statement: “Menrad, a humble rural Kabyle schoolteacher, lives ‘among the blind.’ But he does not wish to be king. First, he is for Democracy; second, he is firmly convinced he is not a genius” (*PMS* 3). Fouroulou underwent a rite of passage

from illiteracy to literacy but he returned to the *bled*. After graduating from the Normal School, Fouroulou became a teacher, he secured a new position but he remained in his old world, he returned to teach in his native village among his people, hence, the rite of passage he underwent is an incomplete one, since Fouroulou could not fully ascend to the final stage, and obtain a new status (Boualit 37). Fouroulou's return to the same socio-economic milieu signifies that he did not separate from those who did not undergo the rite of institution or the rite of school, and also that he lived far away from the French of Algeria. In his *Language and Symbolic Power* (1993), Pierre Bourdieu re-reads A. Van Gennep's theory of the rites of passage and emphasizes the social function the transition from a position to another entails and the boundaries it draws between different social groups. The philosopher declares that:

The institution of an identity, which can be a title of nobility or a stigma [...] is the imposition of a name, i.e. of a social essence. To institute, to assign an essence, a competence, is to impose a right to be that is an obligation of being so (or to be so), it is to signify to someone that what he is and how he should conduct himself as a consequence... to institute, to give a social definition, an identity, is also to impose boundaries (120).

Feraoun was instituted by the EN, he was attributed a "social essence" that of an indigenous teacher. He was trained to act as an intermediary between the colonial state and the Arabo-Berber population, his role imposed on him certain boundaries. His paradoxical attitudes indicate that the author occupied a space between the margins, by refraining from supporting the *Front de Liberation Nationale*²⁰ [The National Liberation Front], he was separated from one camp, that of the revolutionaries; however, he did not join the other group. The rite of institution was

²⁰ The nationalist political party in Algeria, it was founded in 1954.

successful, since the Normal school's agenda was to train a cultural emissary, who would navigate between the two territories, that of the colonizer and the colonized, without fully belonging to either worlds.

The colonial pedagogy the EN designed for its Arabo-Berber candidates operated within an integrative framework that aimed at blurring educational inequalities in order to secure positive acculturation outcomes. By the end of the training process, the candidate would master the language, adopt the colonizer's cultural practices and system of beliefs, to serve as a mediator between the masses and the colonial/settler community. Benachour (2009) argues that:

L'idéologie véhiculée par l'École Normale qui loue la supériorité de la culture française, légalité et la fraternité universelles... et qui éloigne les esprits de toute réalité politique a, inévitablement, laissé une empreinte sur la propre formation idéologique de Feraoun (196).

[The ideology conveyed by the Normal School, which promotes the superiority of French culture, equality and universal fraternity... and which draws minds away from any political reality has, inevitably, left an imprint on Feraoun's own ideological formation] (PT).

Notably, Colonna (1975) maintains that Feraoun epitomizes the 1930's section of Arabo-Berber EN graduates described as apolitical, impartial, and detached from the reality of life in the colony, incapable of perceiving the problems of the French teachers as only limited to them since they had the same educational experiences, this generation of Algerians would be committed to the colony's socio-economic development without claiming its independence (McNair, *Translation Commentary* 43).

By integrating Arabo-Berber children in the prestigious École Normale, the teachers of Bouzaréa ingrained in Feraoun and his classmates a powerful sentiment of gratitude and indebtedness. Traces of this sentiment can be located in the literary production of many Algerian writers of French expression: Feraoun, Mohaned Cherif Salhi, Rabah and Mohamed Ould Chikh Zenati. These EN graduates began their writing journey with the production of autobiographies, annotating a great importance to education, the French school and their carriers as teachers. *Le Fils du pauvre* is part of the literary movement characterised by the theme of the romanticized *instituteur du bled* that emerged in the 1940's (Benachour 196).

Writers issued from L'École Normale expressed the immense gratitude they held to the institution that trained them, and to the colonial educational project as a whole on numerous occasions. Harrison states, in his *Our Civilizing Mission: The Lessons of Colonial Education* (2019), that "The teacher training college in Bouzaréa was perhaps the colonial educational institution that inspired most loyalty amongst its former students" (67). Feraoun dedicated the success of his first novel to the French colonial school in general and to his EN teachers in particular, in his acceptance speech of *le prix de la ville d'Alger* on April 5th, 1952, he declared:

C'est d'abord en hommage à tous ceux qui me firent la classe, depuis mon vénéré maître de L'École primaire qui fit de moi un boursier, jusqu'à mes professeurs d'École Normale qui m'apprirent beaucoup de choses... de ces Maîtres, ce que chacun de nous ne saurait perdre, c'est le souvenir de leur droiture et leur compétence. Ils surent donner à leurs élèves l'image exacte de l'éducateur, l'envie de leur ressembler et la crainte de ne pas y parvenir... Le lauréat, Messieurs, n'est pas l'instituteur du bled qui a retenu vos suffrages,

mais l'École française d'Algérie dont il est un produit authentique. Et c'est en son nom que je vous remercie (Discours de Mouloud Feraoun, Overblog).

[First of all it's in honour to all those who taught me, from my venerated primary schoolmaster who made me a scholarship recipient, to my Normal School teachers who taught me a great deal... of these Masters, what each of us cannot forget, is the memory of their righteousness and competence. They were able to give their students the image of the exemplary educator, the desire to be like them and the fear of not succeeding... The laureate, Gentlemen, is not the teacher of the bled who won your votes, but the French school of Algeria of which he is an authentic product. And it is in its name that I thank you] (PT).

Markedly, the form of religious proselytism that Feraoun underwent at the Lembert mission as a student at the E.P.S left little trace in the author's literary production. The notion of *fraternité* and the concept of *Laïcité* promoted by the Third French Republic pedagogues form the essence of the EN's graduate conceptual framework. However, Feraoun's novel reflects a case of political delusion; nowhere in *Le Fils du pauvre* does the novelist make an explicit reference to French colonialism. Ideological conversion is an insidious form of conquest, Feraoun's *Journal (1955-1962)*, provides an insight into the struggle of a being torn between allegiances, but one thing is sure Feraoun strongly desired an independent Algeria.

3.3 Colonial Education, Empowerment, and the War of Languages in Assia Djébar's *L'Amour, la fantasia*

Assia Djébar, pen name of Fatima-Zohra Imalhayène, is an Algerian novelist, historian, and filmmaker. She was born on June 30th, 1936 in the coastal town of

Cherchel. Djébar grew up amidst political tension that escalated to Algeria's war of liberation. In an attempt to preserve the family's honor from their daughter's literary transgressions, the young novelist chose her *nom de plume* on her way to a meeting with a publisher in the Spring of 1957 (Zimra, *Trespasser across Perilous Ways* 146). At age ten, Djébar's father, a French school primary teacher and Feraoun's schoolmate at of the *École Normale* of Bouzaréa, admitted his daughter to the village's school (Zimra, *TAPW* 146, Weltmon-Aron, *Algerian Imprints* 20).

She then attended a boarding school in the city of Blida. In 1954, she graduated high school and migrated to the *métropole*. In 1955, she successfully joined the prestigious *École Normale de Sèvres* to study contemporary history. Djébar was the first and only Algerian candidate to pass the admission examination; however, she was expelled from the school a year later for taking part in the Algerian students' peaceful manifestations called upon by the F.L.N. After her expulsion, the novelist ventured in her creative project, she published her first novel *La Soif*, in 1957. A fugitive, Djébar published her second novel *Les Impatients*, in 1958 (Zimra, *Afterword* 204-205, Hamdi 146).

In 1958, Djébar fled to Tunisia where she cooperated with Frantz Fanon on the FLN's newspaper *El Mujahid*, she also recorded the war stories of Algerian refugees, and obtained a degree in history under the supervision of Louis Massignon, a French scholar of Islam. Her thesis centered on the study of the life story of *Lla Aïcha el Manoubia*, an eminent figure in the history of Islam. Her research investigated the processes by which cultural norms and traditions debase religious practices (Zimra, *Afterword* 206). A year later, she moved to Morocco where she taught the History of the Maghreb at the Rabat University. In 1959, General De Gaulle readmitted Djébar

to the *École Normale de Sèvres* in view of her promising career as a novelist of French language expression (Zimra, *Afterword* 207).

In 1962, she moved back to Algeria to teach Modern Contemporary History, and French Literature and Cinema, at the University of Algiers. In the 1970's, to reach a female audience the novelist reverted to the art of film making. She produced two award-winning documentary films: *La Nouba des femmes du Mont Chenoua* (1977), and *La Zerda et les chants de l'oubli* (1982). Djebbar travelled across the country, to record the oral testimonies of Algerian women, the data she gathered would influence her literary production. Namely the Algerian quartet: *L'Amour, la fantasia* (1985), *Ombre Sultane* (1987), and *Vaste est la prison* (1995). Assia Djebbar has received the 1996 *International Literary Neustadt Prize* (The US), in 2002 she received *Le Prix de la Paix*, and in 2005 she was awarded *Le Doctorat honoris causa de l'université d'Osnabrück* (Amhis-Ouksel 10-11). In 2005, she has been appointed a member of *L'Académie française*, the second writer of African origin to be elected to the prestigious institution, the first is the Senegalese poet Léopold Sédar Senghor (Zimra, *Afterword* 225).

3.3.1 Women's Education in Colonial Algeria

Girls' education in the Algerian colony was extremely limited, Dianne Sambron states in *Les Femmes Algériennes pendant la colonisation* (2013), that up until the year 1944, French educational legislation was unsuccessful in implementing strategies that would raise enrolment rates amongst Arabo-Berber girls (189). Despite the fact that French educators pleaded for the education of women under the pretext that they would act as cultural intermediaries and secure French domination over the colony, little efforts and funds were directed towards the inclusion of girls' in

France's colonial pedagogical mission. Madame Allix Luce²¹ wrote to the Administrative council of Algiers, in 1846: "...these girls [the ones who will receive a French education] will become, in the nature of things the privileged wives of the most important men of their class; they will become our guarantees of the country's submission to our authority, as well as unimpeachable pledge of its future assimilation" (qtd in Rogers, *A Frenchwoman's Imperial Story* 65).

Colonial administrators believed that women's literacy would help in reducing the fertility rates of the Arabo-Berber population (Gosnell 36). While some representatives stated that French instruction would prevent colonized women, who were in close contact with the French army, from violating codes of morality (Rogers, *A Frenchwoman's Imperial Story* 76). The first initiatives that were carried out in order to establish schools for Muslim girls were individual, and were equally challenged by the colonial authority and the Arabo-Berber community. Between 1839 and 1847, the colonial administration focused all of its efforts on the education of Arabo-Berber boys in order to form a class of native elites. The arrival of the French missionaries of the colonial order promoted the growth of French schools in the Algerian colony. Official records note that in 1837, 1,047 students were admitted to 22 French schools, and in 1847, 7,571 students attended 108 colonial schools. The statistics continued to increase due to a rise in the levels of immigration of European settlers to the colony (Rogers, *A Frenchwoman's Imperial Story* 68-80).

Women missionaries left their homeland, driven by a strong belief in the righteousness of France's civilizing mission, and devoted themselves to the Empire's moral conquest. They established schools in the colony that were destined to provide

²¹ Eugénie Allix Luce was a French teacher and the founder of the first French school for girls in Algiers in 1845.

a moral and religious education to European girls (Rogers, *From the Salon to the Schoolroom* 230). Government surveys indicate that, in 1838, there were five primary schools that were attended by 162 schoolgirls, in Algiers (*FWIS* 68). These schools operated under the authority of French nuns. It has also been reported that three private schools were functional at that time; they received 113 students, along with the Héloïse Hartock's school, an institution reserved to the education of Jewish girls that hosted 68 students (Rogers, *FWIS* 68).

Sambron (2013) maintains that prior to the French conquest of Algeria, about 2000 schools were functional in the regency of Algiers. These institutions dispensed a traditional form of education based on the teaching of the Quran. By reason of the social role attributed to women and of the practice of the principle of female seclusion, the education of young Arabo-Berber girls was utterly marginalized (191). The concept of female confinement, often groundlessly attributed to the principles of Islam, entails an inexorable exclusion of women from the public space which subjected girls to a life of illiteracy. Saneya Saleh declares, in "Women in Islam: their Roles in Religious and Traditional Culture" (1972), that: "Islamic principles are compatible with feminine emancipation and do not exclude women from public activities as many European scholars have claimed" (194). In her study of women's status in Islam, the author associates women's oppression in Islamic regions to cultural practices which she terms "extra-Islamic traditions" (193). Rafika Merini (2001) maintains that the history of Algeria reveals that the territory has been the target of several invasions: by the Phoenicians, the Romans, the Arabs, the Ottomans, the Spanish, and the French. The practice of the seclusion of women was enforced in order to protect them from the raids carried out by invaders, so the latter is a

protective yet repressive war ritual (80-90). Essentially, *harems*²² existed in ancient civilizations and women's cloisterment was practiced in pre-Islamic societies²³.

Saleh (1972) emphasizes that Arab culture is not essentially Islamic rather it is heterogeneous. Islam grants women the right of equal treatment, it establishes a set of moral principles which serve as guidelines that regulate the relationship between men and women (193). She reminds us that the Islamic faith ordains that the two sexes have been assigned complementary roles, and that there is no difference between a man's and a woman's mental faculties, she cites the Prophet's *hadith*²⁴ (peace be upon him), that denotes that the Islamic religion supports egalitarian opportunities in education: "The acquisition of knowledge is a duty incumbent on every Moslem male and female" (Saleh 194). Significantly, the first holy command of the Quran is: *Read*, it does not exclude women or prohibits them from gaining knowledge or having access to the public sphere. Hence, women's seclusion and denial of the right to education is dictated by extra-Islamic notions that are embedded in patriarchy.

In 1845, Madame Eugénie Allix Luce established the first school for Arabo-Berber girls in Algiers. She relentlessly pleaded the colonial government to grant her funding by producing reports that reiterate the rhetoric of the civilizing mission stressing the necessity of forming a class of French educated women that would serve as intermediaries in the "fusion of the races" (Rogers, *Language Learning versus Vocational Training* 370). The institution was built in accordance with French elementary schools of the period, the girls learned French in the morning and

²² A *harem* is a women's quarter in a household, i.e., the rooms they were confined to and to which foreign males are denied access.

²³ For further detail on the practice of women's cloisterment, see: Garner, Dianne. J., and Linn Prentis. *A History of Women's Seclusion in the Middle East: The Veil in the Looking Glass*. London, Routledge, 2006.

²⁴ A *hadith* is a statement or a saying of the Prophet Muhammed peace be upon him.

practiced sewing and embroidery at the afternoon workshop (Rogers, *Language Learning versus Vocational Training* 370-371).

Over the course of five years, 245 Arabo-Berber girls had attended the school. Reports on the school demonstrate that Madame Luce relied on teaching material and school manuals used formerly in French mutual schools. Mainly, the *Peigné*²⁵ reading method propagated by *La Société pour l'Instruction Élémentaire* in France, in the 1830's (Rogers, *Language Learning versus Vocational Training* 84-94-96). Despite the fact that, by the 1850 decree, four other Arabo-Berber schools for girls and five for boys were established in parallel to the Luce-Benaben school in the three departments of the colony, the institution couldn't resist the debates surrounding the politics of education in colonial Algeria (Rogers, *A FWIS* 89).

In 1856, Félix Jacques Antoine Moulin, a French photographer, was commissioned by the Minister of War to tour the Algerian colony. The images he captured constitute the first official record of the Arab-French schools of the period. Moulin's collection was published under the title "*L'Algérie photographié*" [Algeria photographed], the Arabo-Berber population served as the main motif of his work; however, he also produced photographs of the notable colonial figures of French Algeria at the time (Rogers, *FWIS* 110). The following photograph (fig. 3.3), taken in 1857, depicts a moral lesson dispensed in both the French and Arabic language at the Luce-Benaben school for girls (Rogers 111).

Fig. 3. 3. The School of Moorish Girls Directed by Madame Luce. Photographed by Félix Jacques Antoine Moulin, (1857).

²⁵ For further information, see: *Méthode de Lecture par M. A. Peigné* (date of publication non-available).



Source Rebecca Rogers', *A Frenchwoman's Imperial Story* (111)

The image conveys that the students studied in a secluded atmosphere. Madame Luce dressed in her French gown is pointing at a map, while the student- monitor is standing by a small board teaching the girls the following inscription: “The principle of wisdom, is the fear of God” (Rogers, *FWIS* 111). We can count 18 students in the schoolroom, they are seated on stools, and only a few of them are seated on the floor. The girls are wearing traditional garments: a white blouse with bishop sleeves, an Algerian *serouel*²⁶, and a *karakou*²⁷ jacket. A few students are wearing headscarves, the rest are wearing their hair in traditional turbans called *kardoun*²⁸.

²⁶ A *serouel* is a form of Algerian trousers.

²⁷ A *karakou* is an embroidered jacket originating from the city of Algiers, it's usually worn with a *serouel*

²⁸ A *kardoun* is a hair accessory traditionally worn by Algerian women. It's a long ribbon that is rolled around the lengths of the hair to smooth and straighten it.

Fig. 3. 4: The School of Moorish Boys Supervised by Auguste Depeille (1857).



Auguste Depeille, the head of Algiers's Arab-French school for boys, is represented here teaching male students how to read French. This drawing comes from a photograph taken by Félix Jacques Antoine Moulin in 1857. From *L'illustration*, no. 1 (1858): 297.

Source: Rebecca Rogers', *A Frenchwoman's Imperial Story* (109).

Fig 4 is a portrait of one of the schools for Arabo-Berber boys established on the model of the Luce-Benaben school. August Depeille is teaching his students French, the sentence written on the board reads: "My children love France your new country" (Rogers, FWIS 109). The number of students in the class is 17. The boys, seated on the floor on a map, are dressed in traditional clothes: a *bernous* and a *chechia*. There is a striking resemblance between Depeille's classroom and Quranic schools' study rooms. The student monitor is standing by the side of the teacher, there are two older men in Arabo-Berber attire.

Notably, the educational policies that were implemented in France were slowly and partially adopted in Algeria. Women's education in the *métropole* was marginalized as well, girls at that time attended private or religious schools only. As

the system became, progressively, more inclusive, female enrollment patterns shifted (Sambron 191). In the 1860's, the Minister of Public Instruction, Victor Duruy, endorsed the principal of equal opportunities to education in the *métropole*. The 1867 act decrees that a school for girls should be established for each five hundred citizens. In the 1880's the rate of female enrollments in governmental schools witnessed a surge (Sambron 191). In the time that, women's education became generalized in France the number of private schools for girls increased in Algeria. However, the numerous attempts that aimed at providing an education to Arabo-Berber girls, prior to the 1870's, were not successful. The rate of admission to pedagogical institutions remained considerably low (Sambron 192).

To remedy the failure to promote women's education, the colonial administration adopted a different strategy that aimed at expanding female access to French schools. The decree of August 6th, 1850, created an equal number of schools for Arabo-Berber boys and girls. Still, the decree instituted a difference in pedagogy and curriculum, while boys were trained for juridical and administrative positions, girls received a vocational training, apprentices learned French and artisanal work. In the 1890's, "les écoles ouvriers" [workshops] were established in Cherchel, Bougie, Constantine, and Sétif. These schools dispensed courses in the art of the *Guergour*²⁹ carpet weaving (Sambron 192).

These institutions mark noteworthy affinities with the approach adopted by the Luce-Benaben school. In the late 19th century, the pedagogical venture that aimed at promoting a vocational education for girls was dismissed by the French

²⁹ For further detail on the history of the *Guergour* carpet, see: Pierre, Guichard, and Abdenour, Sebbah. "Les Tapis D'algerie et du Guergour dans L'histoire Objet Artisanaux ou Ouevres D'art?" مجلة البحوث التاريخية, vol.2, no.1, 2018, pp 206-245.

administration. The Recteur of the Algiers Academy, M. Cheffaut, attributed the failure of the project to cultural resistance: “Cette tentative ne fut pas couronnées de succès, les musulmans ayant manifesté une certaine répugnance pour toute activité susceptible d’écloigner les fillettes de leur famille et de leur maison” (qtd. in Sambron 193). [This experiment was not successful, since the Muslims showed some reluctance to engage in any activity that would keep the girls away from their family and home] (PT). The Arabo-Berber community approached the French educational project with scepticism, their hesitance in enlisting their daughters in these schools sprung from a fear of cultural and religious conversion.

Harrison (2019) maintains that despite the fact that the French colonial administration produced reports imbued with the rhetoric of Algerian women’s liberation, their right to have an education was never prioritized. It seems that French pedagogues were preoccupied, for the most part, by women’s unveiling (201). Fadéla M’Rabet evokes in her *Une Enfance singulière* (2003), the story of her mother’s withdrawal from school:

Yemma [ma mère] ne connut l’école française que quelques semaines - le temps d’apprendre *Gentille alouette* - parce que son institutrice lui avait demandé d’enlever son foulard. Sa mère lui dit alors “Aujourd’hui, elle te demande d’enlever ton foulard, demain elle te demandera de manger du porc. Tu restes donc à la maison”

[*Yemma*, which is what I call my mother, went to the French school for just a few weeks – just long enough to learn the song *Gentille alouette* - because her teacher asked her to take off her headscarf. My grandmother said: “Today, she

wants you to take off your headscarf, tomorrow she'll ask you to eat pork. You're staying home"] (qtd. in Harrison 201).

Ostensibly, woman's veil has been at the centre of the politics of girl's education in the Algerian colony. M'Rabet's account of her mother's schooling experience demonstrates that the Arabo-Berber population were antagonized by French school teachers, their resistance to girl's education was often times provoked.

The implementation of the Jules Ferry Laws, under the French Third Republic, revolutionized education in France. The laws championed a free, laic, and compulsory education for boys and girls. The Ferryian project expunged any form of cultural resistance towards the scolarisation of girls in the metropolis (Sambron 193). The adaptation of the law that renders primary education obligatory for Arabo-Berber children of both sexes was not properly enforced in the Algerian colony. The education of girls was marginalized still, only boys were sent to the French school. According to Cheffaut's report, very few Arabo-Berber families accepted to admit their daughters to French primary schools in view of the fact that the formative period did not trespass the age of puberty, the point at which female students would have been retrieved from schools and cloistered (Sambron 195).

In that regard, Fadhma Amrouche, a Kabyle poet and musician, noted in her autobiography, *Histoire de ma Vie* (1968), that only the attendance of Arabo-Berber boys was regarded compulsory in the colony. The fathers of deserters could be punished by imprisonment for three days; the same regulation didn't apply for girls. Amrouche writes: "Mais, pour les filles, on n'imposa rien d'analogue, hélas!" [But for girls, no such rule was imposed, alas!] (qtd. in Harrison 82).

Overall, the level of educational attainment amongst Arabo-Berber children in colonial Algeria was relatively low. In 1930, a century has elapsed since the conquest, out of 192 000 elementary school students, Algerian school children of both sexes formed 67 700 pupil, 59 300 schoolboys, and 8400 schoolgirls, this number represented 5.4% of the Arabo-Berber school-age population. In 1939, out of 258 000 registered students, 114 000 were Algerian, 92 400 boys and 21 600 girls (Sambron 199). Neil MacMaster (2009) maintains that women's illiteracy -in 1954- ranked at 98%, educated girls formed about 10.7 per cent of the female population (qtd. in Harrison 81). The low percentage of educated Arabo-Berber schoolchildren of the two sexes is attributed to the colonists' and Algerians' resistance to the French pedagogical project. The socio-economic realities of the colony also posed restrictions on the advancement of girls' schooling. Algerian families, stricken by poverty, had a tendency to prioritize the education of young boys over the education of young girls since they could not afford schooling both.

In his autobiographical novel, *The Poor Man's Son*, Mouloud Feraoun narrates his educational journey. He recollects his first day at school, while his sisters worked in their father's field, their brother was given, in secrecy, a proper wash and a lavish breakfast. Then, he was sent off to school so he would secure the future of his family. All of his needs were catered for his was a schoolboy, on the other hand, his sisters labored throughout the day their schooling was never discussed (Feraoun 41-42). Considering that, Rogers (2005) maintains that Madame Eugénie Luce was able to convince local families to allow their daughters to attend The Luce-Benaben school by offering them small sums of money: "The government's financial support allowed her to institute an unusual procedure: she paid each girl two francs per day to receive

lessons in reading and writing in both French and Arabic...” (*From the Salon to the Schoolroom* 234).

The money that was offered to the students forms the only motive that made their schooling possible. Assia Djébar was, therefore, a particular case since she was one of the few Algerian women to receive a French education and also to obtain a university degree. She states: “Up until my *bac*, and even after my *bac*... I always was the only Arab girl among the French students” (qtd in. Weltmon-Aron, *Algerian Imprints* 29). Fig. 3. 5. is an illustration of Djébar at her father’s school, the little girl used to attend her father’s class in a school for boys only. Her father gave her her first lessons in French, Djébar’s autobiographical narrative reflects on a rare female experience in colonial Algeria. It presents a nuanced understanding of the complexities of the French colonial educational system.

Fig. 3. 5 Djébar’s First Classroom Picture in her Father’s Only Boys’ School³⁰.



³⁰ The little girl is wearing white, she is sitting in the middle of 46 schoolboys. She was five years old at the time.

Source. The picture was screenshoted from the docu-film: *Assia Djébar, entre ombre et soleil* realized by Kamal Dehane (1992).

3.3.2 The Little Arab Girl's Journey to the French School: Between Tradition and Transgression

Assia Djébar's *L'Amour, la fantasia*³¹ interlaces the novelist's childhood memories with the historical accounts of the French conquest of Algeria, and the testimonies of the women of her native city about the Algerian War of Liberation. The novel opens with Djébar's recollections of the memory of her first day at the French school: "Fillette arabe allant pour la première fois à l'école, un matin d'automne, main dans la main du père... il est instituteur à l'école française. Fillette arabe dans un village du Sahel algérien" (*L'Amour, la fantasia* 11). [A little Arab girl going to school for the first time, one autumn morning, walking hand in hand with her father... He is a teacher at the French primary school. A little Arab girl in a village in the Algerian Sahel] (*Fantasia, an Algerian Cavalcade* 3). The scene marks the little girl's induction into the world of Western colonial education. The unrelenting reiteration of the expression "Arab girl" accentuates the ethnicity and gender identity of the young student indicating that the event is of a rare occurrence.

As the father escorts his daughter to the French school for the first time, rendering extra-Islamic traditions eccentric, he is subjected to the male gaze of dissent: "Dès le premier jour où une fillette "sort" pour apprendre l'alphabet, les voisins prennent le regard matois... toute vierge savante saura écrire, écrira à coup sûr 'la lettre'" (*LAF* 11). [From the very first day that a little girl leaves her home to learn the ABC, the neighbors adopt that knowing look... Any girl who has had some

³¹ *Fantasia, an Algerian Cavalcade* is the English version of the novel translated by Dorothy S. Blair in 1993.

schooling will have learned to write and will write that fatal letter] (*FAC* 3). As soon as the Arab schoolgirl steps out of the house, an act deemed transgressive, she would acquire the intellectual tools that would enable her ‘to write’, she would specially be able to pen secret love letters.

Unlike Feraoun, Djébar had the opportunity to study Arabic at the village’s Quranic school and receive an Islamic education. The novelist avows that she appertains to the last generation of Arabo-Berber children to frequent traditional, secular Quranic schools. She laments the gallicization of the popular *madaress*³² instituted by the nationalist Association of Algerian *Ulemas* (*LAF* 258). *Fantasia*’s little Arab girl attended, concurrently, the French school and the *Kuttāb* from age five to ten along with four other girls, the majority of the students were boys. Classes couldn’t be held at the mosque; the *tulab*³³ were schooled in the back room of the local grocery store used for teaching purposes. Their education was funded by the donations of forty families (*LAF* 256-257). The continuity of this form of traditional teaching, despite the restrictions imposed by the French colonial administration, represents the people’s cultural resistance against the colonizer’s strategy of assimilation.

At the Quranic school, the teaching of the Arabic language was imparted to the young learners through the oral recitation of Quranic verses. Sitting uncomfortably in her French school uniform on the straw mat the little Arab girl would write on the wooden board:

Quand la main trace l’écriture-liane, la bouche s’ouvre pour la sanction et la répétition... à l’observance des voyelles longues et brève... et l’intelligence

³² *Madaress*, the plural form of a *madrassa*: the Arabic word for school or educational institution whether secular or religious.

³³ Quranic schools students.

chemine en position d'équilibriste. Le respect de la grammaire, par la vocalise, s'inscrit dans le chant (*LAF* 260).

[As the hand traces the liana-script, the mouth opens to repeat the words... care taken to observe the tonic accents to differentiate between long and short vowels... and letting the understanding advance precariously along its tight rope. Respecting the grammar by speaking it aloud, making it part of the chant] (*FAC* 184).

Quran recitation was essential for learning the basic skills in reading and writing the Arabic language, students would learn *suras* [Quranic verses] by heart and practice writing by tracing the outlines of the words on their wooden tablets.

Reminiscent of the time she spent at the *Kuttāb*, Djébar confesses that prizes obtained at award ceremonies held at the French school strengthened her bond with her family, whereas “la planche de noyer ornée d'arabesque” [the walnut tablet decorated with arabesques] granted by the *sheikh* at the Quranic schools was a revered prize of honour (*LAF* 257-258). For Djébar's mother celebrated the occasion traditionally with *tzarl-rit*³⁴: “Ma mère et la ‘nounou’ villageoise... osaient pousser alors le ‘youyou’ presque barbare. Cri long, saccadé, par spasmes roucoulements et qui, dans cet immeuble pour familles d'enseignants, toutes européennes excepté la nôtre, devait paraître incongru, un vrai cri de sauvage ” (*LAF* 258) [My mother and our village nanny... then let out that semi-barbaric 'you-you'. That prolonged, irregular, spasmodic cooing, which in our building reserved for teachers' families - all European except for ours- must have appeared incongruous, a truly primitive cry] (*FAC* 182).

³⁴ Djébar provides the following definitions of the term *Tzarl-rit* in the fifth movement of *Fantasia*: “to utter cries of joy while smacking the lips with the hands (of women)” (Beaussier, Arabic-French Dictionary).
“to shout, vociferate (of women when some misfortune befalls them)” (Kazimirski, Arabic-French Dictionary) (221).

The *sheikh*'s gift, granted as an award for the memorization of a long sacred script, bestowed glory on the little Arab girl's family. Despite living in an alienating space, the mother bravely uttered the ancestral ululation, the only way she could properly celebrate her daughter's achievements.

Djebar's recollections of her schooling experience often highlight the correlation between women's education, movement, and cloisterment. Learning the French language has enabled the young student to trespass the boundaries between the public male space and the domestic female one: "...mon corps s'est trouvé en mouvement dès la pratique de l'écriture étrangère" (*LAF* 256) "...as soon as I learned the foreign script, my body began to move as if by instinct" (*FAC* 181). Before her transition to womanhood the little Arab schoolgirl and her female classmates were expelled from the Quranic school. Djebar was admitted into a secondary French school and became a boarding student while her friend, the Kabyle baker's daughter, was: "Voilée certainement, soustraite du jour au lendemain aux chemins de l'école: son corps la trahissait. Ses seins naissants, ses jambes qui s'affinaient, bref l'apparition de sa personnalité de femme la transforma en corps incarcéré !" (*LAF* 259) [veiled, withdrawn overnight from school: betrayed by her figure. Her swelling breasts, her slender legs, in a word, the emergence of her woman's personality transformed her into an incarcerated body!] (*FAC* 183).

Trapped by the emergence of her womanly features, the baker's daughter, like many girls of the village, is deprived from the right to pursue her studies and is subjected to cloisterment. A form of patriarchal coercion that the little Arab schoolgirl escapes by virtue of being an *écolière* at the French colonial school: "A l'âge où le corps aurait dû se voiler, grâce à l'école française, je peux davantage circuler..." (*LAF* 253) [At the age when I should be veiled already, I can still move about freely

thanks to the French school...] (*FAC* 179). Djébar's evocations of her school memories often juxtapose images of mobility and confinement to *the harem*. Her depiction of her educational experience portrays the colonial school system not only as a site of colonial oppression but also as a tool of women's emancipation.

3.3.3 Emancipation, Bodily Integrity, and the Mobility of Voice

The autobiographical sections of *Fantasia* foreground the link between women's education, their acquisition of the French language, and their empowerment. Djébar's assessment of her schooling experience theorizes the liberating potential French instruction bestows on the colonial female subject. She writes: "...comme si la langue française aveuglait les mâles voyeurs de mon clan et qu'à ce prix, je puis circuler, dégringoler toute les rues, annexer le dehors pour mes compagnes cloitrées, pour mes aïeules mortes bien avant le tombeau" (*LAF* 256). [...as if the French language blinded the peeping-toms of my clan and, at this price, I could move freely, run headlong down every street, annex the outdoors for my cloistered companions, for the matriarchs of my family who endured a living death] (*FAC* 181). The French language enabled the narrator to subvert voyeurism, to challenge the men eyeing her objecting her French education. It also granted her the right to bodily integrity³⁵, so she could conquer the public sphere and roam the city of her childhood.

Djébar also attributes the healthy dynamics of her parents' relationship to the impact of the French pedagogical project, and to the contact with the settler community. Traditionally, Arabo-Berber women would never, out of modesty, name their husbands in public. They would usually use the personal pronoun *howa* [him], exceptionally, if the husband has made the pilgrimage to *Mecca*, his wife would call

³⁵ In her *Bodily Integrity and Conceptions of Subjectivity* (2009), Mervi Patosalim maintains that according to Martha Nussbaum (2000): "...bodily integrity is understood to include, among others, freedom of movement, respect of bodily boundaries, and opportunities for sexual satisfaction and reproductive choice" (41).

him « Hadj » (*LAF* 54). The narrator of *Fantasia*, notes: “Ainsi, chacune de ses phrases, où le verbe, conjugué à la troisième personne du masculin singulier, ne comportait pas de sujet nommément désigné se rapportait-elle naturellement à l’époux” (*LAF* 54). [Thus, every time she used a verb in the third personal singular which didn’t have a noun subject, she was naturally referring to her husband] (*FAC* 35). It was a non-gendered conventional practice; partners were evoked by means of verbal evasions. After a few years of marriage, Djébar’s mother adopted the Western way and started speaking of her husband by name or using the designation “mon mari” (*LAF* 55). Though this appellation does not compare to the expressions the French policeman’s daughter uses to call her fiancé: “...tantôt ‘mon lapin,’ tantôt mon chéri” (*LAF* 41). [...sometimes ‘my pet’, sometimes ‘my darling’] (*FAC* 25). It was quite revolutionary at that time, and it had the potential to deconstruct the social status quo.

Influenced by their European entourage, the novelist’s parents - a culturally-hybrid couple - renounced, little by little, the traditional code of conduct dictated by the social customs of the period. Djébar recalls the day her father defied convention by writing and addressing a letter to her mother: “...mon père, de sa propre écriture, et sur un carte qui allait voyager de ville en ville, qui allait passer sous tant et tant de regard masculins... avait osé écrire le nom de sa femme qu’il avait désignée à la manière occidentale : ‘Madame untel...’ ” (*LAF* 57) [...my father had quite brazenly written his wife’s name, in his own handwriting, on a postcard which was going to travel from one town to another, which was going to be exposed to so many masculine eyes... what is more, he had dared to refer to her in the Western manner as ‘Madame So-and-So...’] (*FAC* 37). The narrator assigns a lot of importance first to the act of writing the letter, a common phenomenon in the Western world but an

unconventional event in the Arabo-Berber society. By abstaining from using the standard euphemism “la maison,” [the household], Djébar’s father joined his daughter in her militancy against the male gaze (*LAF* 57).

On one occasion, when an elderly woman questioned the mother on the reason why the little Arab girl doesn’t yet wear the veil, though she’s of age, the latter’s reply was: “Elle lit!” (*LAF* 254), [She reads!] (*FAC* 179). Which means that the teenager attends the French school and in that case she cannot possibly wear the veil. In the following passage, the author draws an analogy between her mother’s response and the first heavenly commandment of the Quran:

Maintenant je me dis que ce verbe ‘lire’ ne fut pas par hasard l’ordre lancé par l’archange Gabriel, dans la grotte, pour la révolution coranique... ‘Elle lit’, autant dire que l’écriture à lire, y compris celle de mécréant, est toujours source de révélation : de la mobilité du corps dans mon cas, et donc de ma future liberté (*LAF* 254).

[I think now that this command ‘to read’ was not just casually included in the Quranic revelation made by the Angel Gabriel in the cave... ‘She reads’ is tantamount to saying that writing to be read, including that of the unbelievers is always a source of revelation: in my case of the mobility of my body, and so of my future freedom] (*FAC* 180).

In her invocation of the first divine word of the Quranic revelation, Djébar asserts that to read, even in the language of the colonizer, is a key to salvation. Her possession of bodily integrity depended on her success within the French pedagogical enterprise. Schools are paradoxically represented as both symbols of freedom and as sites of colonial oppression. Throughout the text, images of cloistered young girls and women are set against descriptions of the young student’s freedom of movement.

Nonetheless, Djébar abstains from glorifying her schooling experience. Lisa Connell maintains in her, “Movement, Education, and Empowerment in Assia Djébar’s *L’Amour, la fantasia* and *Nulle part dans la maison de mon père*” (2013), that the novelist is incapable of praising or decrying, openly, her colonial instruction.

3.3.4 Coersion, Alienation, and *l’entre-deux-langues*

From the very first moment Djébar invokes the memory of her first journey to school, she presents it as a contested site where tensions rise between two different worlds. Brigitte Weltman Aron declares, in “The Pedagogy of Colonial Algeria: Djébar, Cixous, Derrida” (2008), that: “From the beginning, stepping out with the father to go to school has entailed witnessing the separation between two groups, while incarnating the dividing line between both or difference itself” (40). All through the autobiographical narrative, the author probes her schooling experience, its mechanism and its impact. Each awakened memory is a meditation on the problematic correlation between her French education, her attainment of the colonizer’s language, and her emancipation.

In a non-insulated instance, the narrator of *Fantasia* holds her father accountable for the state of displacement she constantly lives in. She condemns his choice to educate his daughter at the colonial school, stating: “Ainsi le père, instituteur, lui que l’enseignement du français a sorti de le gêne familiale, m’aurait ‘donnée’ avant l’âge nubile – certains pères n’abandonnaient-ils pas leur fille à un prétendant inconnu ou, comme dans ce cas, au camp ennemi ? ” (*LAF* 298). [Thus, my father, the schoolteacher, for whom a French education provided a means of escape from his family's poverty, had probably 'given' me before I was nubile - did not certain fathers abandon their daughters to an unknown suitor, or, as in my case, deliver them into the enemy camp?] (*FAC* 213).

Djebar's statement brings to mind Kateb Yacine's declaration in *Le Polygone Étoilé* (1966): "Mon père pris soudain la décision irrévocable de me fourrer sans plus tarder dans 'la gueule du loup', c'est-à-dire à l'école française" (181). [Suddenly, my father made the irreversible decision to shove me without further delay into 'the jaws of the wolf,' that is to say the French school] (PT). Both novelists were compelled to confront the colonizer's intellectual tactics of oppression. The verb "donnée" designates in Dialectical Arabic: given in marriage probably without consent, Djebar allegorizes her relationship with the colonial school, and by extension, with the French language to that of a forced marriage.

The author contends that colonial school textbooks had an alienating effect on learners; culturally distinct sceneries of reading comprehension texts would position Arabo-Berber school children in unfamiliar settings. Images of parents walking side by side in the streets, of mothers picking up their kids from school had the potential to isolate the colonized subject from his traditional surroundings (*LAF* 261). French educators attributed a lot of importance to the study of the geography of France, children would read texts about flora and fauna that they wouldn't be able to identify unless they visit *la patrie*. Fantasia's narrator notes : "j'apprends des noms d'oiseaux que je n'ai jamais vus, des noms d'arbres que je mettrai dix ans ou davantage à identifier ensuite, des glossaires de fleurs et de plantes que je ne humerai jamais avant de voyager au nord de la Méditerranée..." (*LAF* 261). [I learn the names of birds I've never seen, trees I shall take ten years or more to identify. Lists of flowers and plants that I shall never smell until I travel north of the Mediterranean...] (*FAC* 185).

Among a similar line, Feraoun declared, in a letter to René Nouelle, that the type of instruction his students received was completely detached from reality: "Tu t'imagines, parlés de kW et de compteur à des gens qui n'ont en fait d'ampoules

jamais vu autre chose que celles des lampes de poche !” (*Lettres à ses amis* 9). [Can you imagine, talking about kW and meter to people who have actually never seen any light bulbs except for those of flashlights] (PT). School materials were not adapted to the realities of life in the colony, the depiction of alien images nurtured a feeling of estrangement. The exclusion of the study of the geography and history of Algeria had detrimental effects on Algerian *écoliers*³⁶.

The possession of bodily integrity and the use of the French language distanced the young girl from the traditional female world of her city. As she migrates between cultures, languages, and traditions, the little Arab girl developed a sense of double exclusion: a rejection from the world of cloistered women, and a detachment from the French school environment. This feeling of estrangement becomes highly heightened during family events, the narrator states that as she studies and speaks French her body converts to that of a European woman, she can no longer sit on the floor with the women of her camp, she can no longer move her body like them and participate in the traditional dance (*LAF* 181-182). And just like a traitor’s wife, young Djébar is bereaved from the ability to vocalize the sound of her ancestral melody: “Ce cri ancestral de déchirement – que la glotte fait vibrer de spasms allègres – ne sortait du fond de ma gorge que peu harmonieusement. Au lieu de fuser hors de moi, il me déchirait” (*LAF* 182). [My throat lent itself uneasily, discordantly, to this ancestral plangent cry - which is emitted by spasmodic vibrations of the glottis. Instead of arising spontaneously, it tore me apart] (*FAC* 127).

Djébar re-evokes one more time the opening scene of the novel, her first walk towards the French school escorted by her father. The tenor of the text avers the

³⁶ For further information on the teaching of history and geography in colonial Algeria, see: Gosnell, Jonathen K., *The Politics of Frenchness in Colonial Algeria, 1930-1954*. University of Rochester Press, 2002.

narrator's sense of ambivalence: "...je marche, fillette, au-dehors, main dans la main du père. Soudain, une réticence, un scrupule me taraude : mon 'devoir' n'est-il pas de rester 'en arrière', dans le gynécée, avec mes semblables?" (*LAF* 297). [...I walk down the street, holding my father's hand. Suddenly, I begin to have qualms isn't it my 'duty' to stay behind in the gynaeceum?] (*FAC* 213). While the first scene signals the narrator's proclamation of the public space, her confrontation with the male gaze, the second one propounds the feeling of alienation sustained by her entry to the French educational system.

The perpetual binary opposition between images of colonial violence and of emancipation leaves the reader perplexed, unable to reach a verdict in regards to her relationship to her education and by extension to the French language. Until the author, at the end of the novel, conjures the story of the death of Hercules: "La langue encore coagulée des Autres m'a enveloppée, dès l'enfance, en tunique de Nessus, don d'amour de mon père qui, chaque matin, me tenait par la main sur le chemin de l'école. Fillette arabe, dans un village du Sahel algérien" (*LAF* 302). [The language of the Others, in which I was enveloped from childhood, the gift my father lovingly bestowed on me, that language has adhered to me ever since like the tunic of Nessus: that gift from my father who, every morning, took me by the hand to accompany me to school. A little Arab girl, in a village of the Algerian Sahel...] (*FAC* 217).

The novelist associates her father's token of love, her Western education which enabled her to evade a life of cloisterment, to Deianira's mortal gift to her husband. The Greek hero was endowed a tunic imbued with the virulent poison of the Lernean Hydra, the cloak burned the skin to the bone impelling the fabric and the flesh to become one. To put an end to his agony, the hero took his own life (Fry 131-

132). The metaphor of the Tunic of Nessus symbolizes the author's toxic relationship with the language of the colonizer and her inability to renounce it.

Caught between tradition and emancipation, between the languages of her upbringing, Arabic and Berber, and the language of the Other, the French of her education. Djébar struggles to navigate through the different linguistic spaces she possesses: "...la langue française, corps et voix, s'installe en moi comme un orgueilleux préside, tandis que la langue maternelle, toute en oralité, en hardes dépenaillées, résiste et attaque, entre deux essoufflements" (*LAF* 299) [...The French tongue, with its body and voice, has established a proud presidio within me, while the mother-tongue, all oral tradition, all rags and tatters, resists and attacks between two breathing spaces] (*FAC* 215). Though the author recognizes the virtues of the language of her Western instruction and cherishes the privileges it bestows on her, she relentlessly laments the loss of her mother language and yearns for a return 'home'.

She refuses to be condemned to a life of alienation, and chooses to dwell not on the corners of the two languages, not at the center, rather *entre-deux-langues*. She declares in her *Ces Voix qui m'assiègent*, [These Voices that Besiege Me] (1999):

Why not dwell *at the edge* of language [...] and why not refuse to go to its center, its hub, its fire [...] To stay at the margins of one, two or three languages [...] in what is obviously a borderland, one that is dangerous, marshy and uncertain, an ever-changing and fertile zone [...]. Between two languages, for a writer [...] means to place oneself into the nervous, unnerved, painful and mysterious area of any language (qtd. in Oțoiu 64).

To inhabit the space between two languages in conflict, is to compromise by choosing to reside in a third space where different cultures, histories, memories collide, forging the identity of the colonized schooled subject. Oțoiu maintains, in "Assia Djébar and

Identity Dilemmas: entre-des-langues” (2012), that Djébar was able to place herself in a privileged position: “we have here an apology of the margins and a rejection of the center...” (64). Indeed, in the third part of *Fantasia*, the author narrates women’s war stories, she refuses to write these testimonies in standard French, she binds the language of her instruction to the rhythms and poetics of the Berber and Arabic languages.

3.4 The Legacy of French Colonial Schools: Acculturation, Ambivalence, and Resistance

In the previous sections of this chapter, we drew on the authors’ memories of their schooling experience in colonial Algeria and attempted to provide historical context to the stories depicted in their autobiographies in order to foreground the inconsistencies and tensions at the heart of France’s colonial educational project. The texts under scrutiny account for the corroding and alienating repercussions of the colonial strategy of assimilation through the imposition of the French language discerned in the depiction of the violent encounters between the native culture and the colonial culture. The examination of the educational policies that the authors were subjected to and of the circumstances of their schooling appropiates a comparative analysis of Feraoun and Djébar’s different responses to acculturation.

Even though each writer had a unique educational path, parallels could be drawn in their accounts of their experiences within France’s colonial educational system. Both authors were of the very few Algerian children to obtain a French education, to proceed beyond primary school, and to gain access to a teachers training college. Both received a dual form of instruction, a common educational practice in the colony, Djébar concurrently attended the French school and the Quranic school, while Feraoun was admitted to the Superior Primary School and to the Rolland

mission at the same time. The two were regarded as successful products of the French schooling project in Algeria, often described by French critics of the time as ideal models of French colonial subjects who endorsed the role of cultural intermediaries. Throughout their autobiographies, the writers have depicted the alienating educational practices they were subjected to, and the impact of the coerced encounters with the colonizer's intellectual instruments and cultural traditions. They have expressed their aversion to the French nationalistic school materials catered by colonial pedagogues that aimed to suppress the Algerian cultural identity.

Even though, both writers have depicted in their autobiographies the challenges associated with their colonial schooling, they acknowledged the benefits of their French education. Assia Djébar was one of the few women to receive an education in colonial Algeria, she often evokes, in *L'Amour, la Fantasia*, the correlation between her French instruction and her emancipation. Similarly, Mouloud Feraoun was one of the minority of Kabyle children to go beyond primary education and evade a life as a poor peasant. The author often attributes his success in securing a position as a teacher to the colonial educational project. In *The Poor Man's Son*, Feraoun idealizes his Normal school teachers; he romanticizes his schooling experience and declares his unwavering gratitude to the institution while disregarding the impact of French colonialism on the Algerian population. This particular attitude signals the main difference in the authors' responses to the processes of colonial acculturation.

Markedly, Djébar relentlessly emphasizes the merits of her colonial education by juxtaposing images of her freedom of movement with portraits of silenced and cloistered women. Nevertheless, the sense of gratitude conveyed in Feraoun's portrait of his formative years is completely absent from Djébar's account of her schooling

experience. The author approaches her colonial education with ambivalence; she expresses her indebtedness to the language of her instruction in an isolated way, she recognizes that the French school is a site of colonial oppression. She conversely reveres her attainment of bodily integrity and at the same time she resents the colonial educational institutions.

Notably, Feraoun found in education a sense of community, he embraced the concept of fraternity promoted by his Third French Republic educators, and cherished his comradeship with the French of the Normal School of Bouzaréa³⁷. Meanwhile, Djébar has been condemned to a sense of cultural and linguistic alienation. She unceasingly laments the loss of the Arabic and the Berber languages, and the breach in the bond with the traditional culture of her upbringing inflicted by her entry to the colonial school. Fantasia's reader then is compelled to engage in a state of perplexity as the author acknowledges, on the one hand, the blessings her French education bestowed on her, and as she retaliates against it by exploiting the colonizer's intellectual tools in her endeavour to outline territories of dissent.

Granted that, the impact of French acculturation on the colonized intellectuals of Algeria has engendered several divergent reactions that contrive the paradox of the educated colonized. The analysis of the authors' autobiographical narratives, indicates that a single individual could develop numerous divergent responses to the colonizer's tactics of assimilation. In her Algerian Quartet³⁸, Djébar maps her commitment for feminism: to write about Algerian women, to challenge patriarchy, and to rewrite women into the pages of history. She often accredits her ability to write and the fact that she escaped a life of seclusion to her Western education, it is hard to come to a

³⁷ Mouloud Feraoun's correspondance with his former classmates like Emmanuel Roblès, René Nouvelle, Pierre Martin.... published posthumously in *Lettres à ses amis*, attest to the strong amicable ties he forged in the Normal School.

³⁸ The Algerian Quartet encompasses : *L'Amour*, *La fantasia* (1985), *Ombre sultane* (1987), and *Vaste et la prison* (1995).

conclusion in regards to her relationship to education, if she on one hand attributes to or equates the French language with the freedom to speak and the freedom to move, and on the other condemns colonization, she follows an ambiguous path of resistance. The correlation between liberation and colonial oppression, the concurrent dependence on and rejection of the colonizer's linguistic tools reinvent traditional modes of resistance.

Significantly, Feraoun led a simple life in a small kabyle village, he spoke his native language, taught at the local French school, raised cattle, and lived amongst his people. Although, the writer did not adopt the colonizer's cultural practices, and produced literary works that promote the values and traditions of the Algerian people asserting his belonging; he conveyed an "assimilated" attitude. What's more, Feraoun failed to take a stance for the independence of Algeria by choosing impartiality; still, his *Journal (1955-1962)* paints the portrait of a humanist figure severely torn between allegiances. The 1957, February 17th entry reads:

Roblès a évoqué devant moi tous ces attentats, il les trouve odieux, inadmissibles... Camus se refuse à admettre que l'Algérie soit indépendante... il croit que le FLN est fasciste... je comprends fort bien l'un et l'autre mais je voudrais qu'ils me comprennent aussi [...] Tout en me traitant en ennemi, ils voudraient que j'agisse en bon patriote français, même pas : ils voudraient que je les serve tel que je suis. Simplement par reconnaissance, vu que la France a fait de moi un instituteur, un directeur de cours complémentaire, un écrivain, vu qu'elle me verse une grosse mensualité qui me permet d'élever une famille nombreuse... Simplement on me demande de mourir en traître moyennant quoi j'aurai payé ma dette (261).

[Roblès mentioned to me all these attacks, he finds them odious, inadmissible... Camus refuses to admit that Algeria will be independent... he believes the FLN is a fascist group... I understand both very well but I would like them to understand me as well [...] While treating me as an enemy, they would like me to act as a good French patriot, not even: they would like me to serve them as I am. Simply out of gratitude, since France has made me a teacher, a director of a complementary course, a writer, since it pays me a large monthly sum that allows me to sustain a large family... Simply I am asked to die a traitor so my debt would be paid] (PT).

Despite being considered an enemy to the French colonial state on account of being Algerian, Feraoun was expected to declare his opposition to the FLN and to the AR. Since he chose to stay neutral, he was criticized for forsaking the institution that made a French teacher out of the son of a poor farmer. He refused to betray his people in gratefulness to the colonial educational enterprise.

Feraoun's journal depicts his disillusionment with the doctrine of assimilation of the Normal School of Bouzaréa. He is condemned to confront conflicting loyalties on a daily basis. Amidst the terror of the war, he remained devoted to teaching and tending to his students despite the constant threats to his life from both parties. On March 15, 1962, Feraoun and his *Centres Sociaux* co-members attended a meeting at El Biar, Algiers to discuss the future of education in an independent Algeria. The O.A.S, a group of right-wing French extremists attacked the building and executed all of them.

To classify Feraoun as an unpatriotic novelist, reducing his oeuvre to a literature of assimilation is to make a hasty judgment. The Seuil's version of *Le Fils du pauvre* (1950) that was subjected to colonial censorship, lends support to the

assimilationist claim. The omissions depleted the novel from the colony's political climate; the manuscript was molded to adhere to the canonical literary characteristics of a bildungsroman. Pertaining to the formatting of the natives' literary production, Dunwoodie remarks:

Paratextual evidence - in introductions, for instance - reveals that the emerging indigenous novelist was sponsored by metropolitan professionals and marketed by French publishers on the basis of conformity to metropolitan moral and aesthetic norms – in short, as proof of successful assimilation (66).

The text was conditioned to become the story of the coming of age of a poor man's son whose success within the French educational system renders the colonial occupation of Algeria legitimate.

The study of Feraoun's autobiography in its entirety allows the exploration of the mechanisms of the colonial education imposed on the Arabo-Berber population and the elucidation of the writer's perplexing attitudes. It provides an insight into the socio-political framework in which Algerian children were schooled, a coercive framework that exposed them to diverse forms of colonial indoctrination, and contrastingly equipped them with the intellectual tools to thrive within the colonial institution and to challenge its very foundation. In his examination of Feraoun's *Journal*, Harrison maintains that Feraoun's stance during the years of the Algerian War of Liberation evolved towards a denunciation of French colonialism, he describes the author's position as "anti-colonial", and "pro-colonial education" (162). Feraoun's chronicle of the events of the war, depict the portrait of a humanist, he remained deeply committed to his vocation as a teacher, to his students well-being. He was

horrified by the violent events that took place on both sides. He longed for peace; Feraoun is the very embodiment of the ambivalent colonial subject.

3.5 Conclusion

The examination of the authors' experiences within the French colonial school provides an understanding of the impact of the cultural colonization endured by Algerian colonized students. It shows the ways in which the authors internalized, appropriated, and in the end navigated this enforced acculturation. Feraoun's unique educational path has deeply affected his literary production and worldview, *The Poor Man's Son* portrays the ambivalence the author experiences, he is torn between honoring his cultural heritage and the debts he carries to the institution that forged Feraoun the teacher. In his autobiography, Feraoun questions his selfhood, and his belonging. He clings to the customs and traditions of his native village, and works to follow the footsteps of his teachers. '*L'homme frontière*' resides in-between cultures, unable to cross from one line to the other.

Similarly, Djébar's journey to the French school has imposed on her a state of perpetual conflict. She laments her European education for alienating her from the world of tradition, and for causing her an aphasia of love but at the same time she expresses her gratitude to the institution that prevented her confinement and equipped her with the intellectual tools necessary in the subversion of extra-Islamic traditions. The following chapter foregrounds the subversive writing strategies that both writers resort to in order to resist the pedagogical system of acculturation and forge an authentic expression of an Algerian identity.

Chapter Four:
The Poetics of Resistance in Mouloud Feraoun's
and Assia Djebar's Autobiographical Narratives

4.1 Introduction

Algerian writers educated within the French colonial school system developed an urgency to speak of the self in order to represent the whole. In their attempt to depict their experiences as pupils at the colonial schools, Feraoun and Djébar forged narratives that blur the lines between fiction, and non-fiction, between autobiographical and non-autobiographical discourse, between ethnography and postcolonial ethnography³⁹. The authors remain highly influenced by a pedagogical system that sought to alienate them from their linguistic and cultural heritage; however, they have formulated ways to navigate the imposed values of the colonial system, and were able to carve out avenues of dissent. This chapter examines the subversive writing strategies devised by the authors, who reappropriated the tools of their indoctrination in order to challenge the very institutions that trained them to become cultural mediators. Feraoun was conditioned to revere the establishment that sought to marginalize him, as a response the novelist created an autoethnography, a humanist anthropological account of the self in which he promotes his culture and asserts his belonging. Djébar, in turn, crafted a collective autobiography in which she endeavours to deconstruct the French colonial archives, and to reinscribe Algeria's unsung war heroines into the nation's historical discourse.

4.2 Feraoun's Autobiographical Narrative and Strategies of Subversion

The beginning of the decolonization movement in the central countries of the Greater Maghreb (Algeria, Morocco, and Tunisia) in the 1950's, marked a surge of interest in personal narratives. Numerous varieties of life writing rose to eminence, including personal correspondence, testimony, memoir, diary, biography, and

³⁹ The term postcolonial ethnography is often used in reference to ethnographic writing produced by the natives to the land using a decolonial approach.

autobiography (Jolly 7). Questions of selfhood and representation were raised by authors who found themselves excluded from the literary, political, and social scene. Mouloud Feraoun's *Le Fils du pauvre* (1950) is a founding novel of Algerian literature written in French. The author appertains to the first generation of *L'École Normale* graduates, and to the first group of Algerian intellectuals that could speak and write in the French language. Jean Déjeux labels these writers "The Generation of 52," they authored "so-called ethnographic or documentary literature largely autobiographical, a testimonial literature dealing with the harsh realities of the day or combat during the war of independence" (qtd. in Brozgal 25).

Indeed, Feraoun's novel stands to testify to the politics of the French colonial educational system, to the socio-economic actualities of the Algerian colony, and to the hardships the Kabyle people endured during the Second World War. *Le Fils du pauvre* transcends the boundaries of a story of the coming of age of a poor Kabyle young man whose success within the educational colonial system guaranteed a descent life in difficult times of war. The text cannot be described as an autobiography in its narrow sense. A life story with an anthropological orientation, Feraoun's narrative signals the emergence of an authentic Algerian literature. The following section foregrounds the ways Feraoun reappropriates canonicalized literary frameworks to create a counter discourse.

4.2.1 Between Autobiography and Ethnography: the Rhetoric of Writing the Self

The first section of Feraoun's *Le Fils du pauvre* begins with a detailed description of Fouroulou's village, Tizi, its houses, its landscapes, its *djemaâs*, and its mosques. The author provides an outline of the different tribes and fractions (*The Karoubas*) that inhabit the small village. He depicts their customs, their traditional practices, and their way of life. Then, Fouroulou proceeds to describe his family

members, one by one, their physical appearance, personality, attitudes, and their roles in the Menrad family. The narrator also provides, from an analytical framework, an accurate description of the Kabyle house. He depicts the shape of the house, the design of the rooms, their symbolic structures, and the placement of objects in the house:

Chacune des grandes pièces comprend une partie basse, dallée, qui sert d'étable, d'écurie, de bûcher. Elle est séparée de la partie haute par des piliers trapus supportant la soupente. La soupente renferme les *ikoufane* provisions, les jarres à huiles et les coffres de la famille. La partie haute constitue le logement... (*Le Fils du pauvre* 18).

Each of the large rooms has a lower section, which is paved in flagstones and used as a cowshed, stable, or woodshed. It is separated from the upper part by the short, sturdy beams that support the storage loft. This loft contains the *ikoufan* of provisions, the jars of oil and the family coffers. The upper half is the living quarters... (*The Poor Man's Son* 9).

One might argue that, Fouroulou's description of his childhood home, which represents a typical Kabyle household, parallels the ethnographic discourse produced by Bourdieu in his study of the Berber house⁴⁰. The narrator portrays different aspects of everyday life in a small Kabyle village in colonial Algeria. He documents the social and cultural practices of his people, the laws that govern them, the ways they resolve their conflicts, their beliefs, and their rituals. In Tizi, there are no perpetual hierarchical social categories; the rich may easily become poor and the poor rich (*FP* 20). The villager's survival depended on the success of the harvest.

⁴⁰ Bourdieu's study has been previously discussed in chapter 3.

Using the autobiographical “I”, Fouroulou narrates his life story from memory. He relates, in detail, his childhood recollections: his first day at the French school, his first fight, and the time he spent with his maternal aunts. Khalti and Nana used to narrate folkloric tales to Fouroulou and his sister Baya. Fouroulou used to rejoice to hear the stories of little *M’Quidech* and *Hechaïchi* (*Le Fils du pauvre* 53). By portraying his aunts’ weaving and pottery work, the author documented the process by which Kabyle artistry was produced (*FP* 48-52). Thomas Lyons maintains that the novel: “...details Kabyle daily life, both as background and sometimes in the form of asides of outright sociological analysis” (587). To preserve his cultural heritage, Feraoun was compelled to describe different aspects of everyday life in his home village.

In his essay “Au Maghreb, la langue Française ‘langue du je,’”⁴¹ Jean Déjeux (1996) theorized a claim that many French critics tend to make which proclaims Algerian autobiographical narratives a borrowed genre from the Western tradition. The idea is that it is unconventional for North Africans to openly speak of themselves outside the anonymity of the group, and that autobiography as a genre does not exist in the Arabic canon. Hence, the life writing that has risen to prominence in the Algerian colony in the 1950’s is labelled a literature of imitation (Kelly 12). Déjeux attributes the emergence of North African autobiography to the French school and to the process of acculturation, he writes:

Cette émergence du ‘je’ Durant les années 1945-1950 dans la littérature maghrébine (algérienne en particulier) de langue française se tient à plusieurs facteurs : changements socio-économiques dans les sociétés, mutations dans

⁴¹ The essay was posthumously published in Martine Mathieu-Job’s *Littératures autobiographiques de la francophonie*, 1996.

les mentalités, entrée à l'école française, voyages, acculturation donc... (qtd in Kelly 16).

[This emergence of 'I' in Maghrebi literature (especially Algerian literature) written in French during the years 1945-1950 is attributable to several different factors: socio-economic changes in societies, changes in mentality, entry into French schools, travel, and thus acculturation...] (PT).

While authors of Algerian descent, graduates of the French school are bound to be influenced by the literary forms that they are exposed to, and often times make reference to the European authors they read; to proclaim autobiography exclusively Western, is to reiterate a misapprehension. In *Le Fils du pauvre*, Fouroulou states that he aspires to make his life story known, just like other authors he read during his formative years: "...il a lu Montaigne et Rousseau, il a lu Daudet et Dickens (dans une traduction). Il voulait tout simplement comme ces grands hommes, raconter sa propre histoire" (FP 12) [...he has read Montaigne and Rousseau, he has read Daudet and Dickens (in translation). He quite simply wanted, like those great men, to tell his own story] (PMS 3).

Granted that, autobiography as a form of writing was revived in the North African colonies by colonial encounters. The Arabs of the pre-Islamic era used to perform a kind of oral biography known as *akhbār* based on genealogy and tribal history. A warrior would narrate the life story of an ancestor, and/or a poem would be recited along with accounts on the circumstances of its composition, and the biography of the poet (Brustad 36). The origins of autobiographical writing have been contested; some critics claim that the practice of self-examination and self-representation is rooted in Christianity, while others attest that this mode of self-

expression has been present in the oral and written traditions of many other cultures. In “The Fallacy of Western Origins,” Kristen F. Brustad states that in the beginning of the 1940’s, autobiography has been rebranded by European critics as a purely western construct alien to any other culture. George Gusdrof, a French philosopher who had a great influence on the formation of the theory of the western origin of autobiography, wrote in an essay in 1956:

It would seem that autobiography is not to be found outside our cultural area; one would say that it expresses a concern peculiar to western man, a concern that has been of good use in his systematic conquest of the universe and that he has communicated to men of other cultures; but those men will thereby have been annexed by a sort of intellectual colonizing to a mentality that was not their own... (qtd in Brustad 17).

In reality, various forms of life writing in the Arabic tradition can be traced to the beginning of the 9th century AD. In his “Die arabische Autobiographien” (1937), Franz Rosenthal cites 23 autobiographical texts. He considers the memoir of al-Muhasibi (d. 857) the first religious autobiography of the Arabic canon, and Hunayn ibn Ishaq’s life story (d. 873) the first secular personal narrative (Brustad 72). Leila Ahmed states that there are a multitude of varieties of Arabic autobiography: the life narratives of sultans, of poets, of philosophers, of scientists, and of men of religion (Kelly 18). Brustad lists the different subgenres of autobiographical discourse in the Arabic literary tradition: “*khabar*, *sīra* [exemplary life story], *tarjama* [biographical notice], *tabaqāt* (biographical notice), *barnāmaj*, *fahrasa* [a form of biographical writing that originated in Islamic Spain], and *manāqib* [biographical texts written to praise the achievements of well-known figures]” (38). The beginning of the thirteenth century, witnessed the production of a multitude of autobiographical texts by Umāra

al-Hakamī al-yamanī (1175), Usama ibn Munqidh (1188), Imād al-Din al kātib al-Isfahānī (1201), Yāqūt al-Hamawi (1229), and many others (Brustad 53-54).

In her autobiographical novel *L'Amour, la fantasia*, Assia Djébar makes references to autobiographers of North African origin. She uses as epigraphs a passage from Ibn Khaldun's *Ta'rif*, and another from Augustine of Hippo's confessions (71-159). By evoking these literary forebearers, Djébar professes that the expression of selfhood is not a foreign practice that was only introduced to the countries of North Africa by colonial encounters. Admittedly, life writing, in the colonial and postcolonial context, differs from western conceptions of the self. Autobiography is a form of expression that opens avenues of dissent; it bears the potential to raise the political and the social concerns of the dispossessed. In the hands of the postcolonial writer autobiography becomes a dimensional site of negotiation between individual consciousness and collective trauma.

In his *Succession Ouverte* (1962), Driss Chraïbi writes: "je suis plusieurs, toute une foule de colonisés et de protégés" (qtd in Kelly 24) [I am many, a whole group of colonised people and of protected subjects] (PT). Feraoun's depiction of the circumstances of his upbringing in colonial Algeria testifies to the grievances of the Algerian people as a whole. His work transcends the conceptualization of self-expressiveness as the highest forms of enlightenment; it chronicles the events of everyday life to counter the erasure of the cultural identity of a colonized people who were subjected to the Vichy Regime⁴² during the Second World War.

Although Feraoun has made many references to the autobiographical nature of his work, *Le Fils du pauvre* cannot be categorized as an autobiography in its literal

⁴² Vichy France, France under German occupation during WWII (1940-1944).

sense on account of the sociological narrative methods employed by the novelist. Michael Sheringham contends that “Far from being unequivocally triumphal, the apotheosis of the sovereign ego, autobiography is an anxious genre [it involves] a constant negotiation with different forms of otherness” (qtd in Rowley 437). In this regard, autobiography becomes fluid, elusive, untamed. The process of writing one’s life story requires a mediation between the self and the othered self, between conceptual systems and different modes of representation. The autobiographical text in the post/colonial context migrates across genres. Notably, Abdelkebir Khatibi (1968) categorizes literary works published between the end of the Second World War (1945) and the outset of the Algerian Revolution (1954) as “ethnographic novels” (Lyons 576).

Anthropological forms of writing rose to prominence in the Algerian colony in reaction to the discriminatory politics of the French administration, set against a segregated social order that excluded Algerian intellectuals from academic institutions. Khatibi (1968) states that: “...in a period of oppression and in the absence of an independent national press, [the ethnographic novel] can play the role of informant” (qtd in Lyons 576). Algerian authors’ encounters with western literary styles established what Lucas describes, in his *L’Algérie des Anthropologues* (1982), as: “...a properly Algerian school of ethnography,” these ethnographers are predominantly kabyle, “consisting of *françaisés* who had passed through the mills of the [Algerian] *École Normale Supérieure*” (qtd in Lyons 583).

Conversely, while the Normal school of Bouzaréah served the assimilationist agenda of the French colonial administration, it also had a significant influence on the development of nationalist intellectual and political movements. A great number of the students who were trained by the EN later became important literary and/or

political figures of the liberation movement. Their exposure to universal literary forms of writing and their growing awareness with colonial inequalities fuelled their discontent with the colonial political order. Mouloud Feraoun's *Le Fils du pauvre* is often considered the first authentic Algerian novel as it signals a break with the French colonial novel that largely excludes an Algerian perspective (Kelly 53). Though, Feraoun's novel is often critiqued for lacking political depth; his work is significant since it depicts the experiences of the Algerian people at a time when literary works were exclusively written by the French who either marginalized the Algerian people or portrayed them in stereotypical ways. Bourdieu (1963) writes that "In a revolution... everyone knows that to describe is to denounce" (qtd in Lyons 585).

The ethnographic novel in colonial Algeria served as a form of discourse that was similar, in certain respects, to the social and political modes of expression that were made inaccessible to Algerians (Lyons 591). Feraoun's novel explores the social fabric and cultural dynamics of the Kabyle society. The author has embraced the ethnographic approach, conscientiously describing the cultural practices, rituals, behaviors, beliefs, and the social structures of his community. In the following excerpt, Fouroulou describes the villages' *djemaâ*:

Qu'on imagine à un moment donné deux ruelles opposées qui partent du même point l'une à gauche, l'autre à droite. A cet endroit privilégié, la rue est bien large. Notre *djemaâ*, elle est unique et le quartier d'en haut l'envie au quartier en bas... Elle n'est ni carrée, ni rectangulaire: c'est un polygone quelconque. De larges dalles de schiste sur cinquante centimètres de maçonnerie indécise, contre les pignons, forment les bancs de la '*tadjemâit*' sur lesquels viennent s'asseoir les hommes et les enfants (*FP* 14).

[Imagine at a given moment two alleys opposite one another, starting from the same point, one to the left, the other to the right. At this privileged spot the road is quite wide. It's a crossroads, a square, or a *djemaâ*... It is neither square nor rectangular, but a polygon of sorts. Large shale slabs on a half meter of rough masonry, built against the walls of the houses, form the benches of the "tadjmaït" where the men and the boys come to sit] (*PMS* 6).

Fouroulou's anthropological descriptions of his home, his school, and his village are woven into the recollections of his upbringing offering a nuanced depiction of Algeria's social realities during French colonial occupation. The narrative immerses the reader in the customs, the rituals, the practices, and the daily experiences of the Kabyle people, it provides a deeper understanding of the culture being portrayed and the changes the community was subjected to under colonization.

Alongside his depiction of Kabyle communal rituals, Feraoun also describes through a lens characteristic of ethnographic inquiry: daily routines, familial relations, labour, social hierarchies, and the gender dynamics of a Kabyle household. Rooted in first-hand experience and presented for the outside reader, Feraoun's narrative deviates from the exotic representations often found in Western ethnographies. The narrator emerges as an insider ethnographer; he constructs, through memory, a narrative that blurs the boundaries between ethnographic observation and autobiographical subjectivity. The following passage exemplifies the ways in which Fouroulou writes memory into ethnography:

En effet, le travail de la laine est un travail de fourmi, mais il ne demande pas trop de place. Le métier à tisser est tendu verticalement sur deux perches, à faible distance du mur. Il peut rester là aussi longtemps que l'on veut. Mes

tantes y passent en quelque sorte leurs moments perdus. Elles s'assoient, alors, le dos appuyé au mur, introduisent les brins de la trame entre les fils de la chaîne et tassent avec un peigne de fer... Nana est très adroite. Ses fils de chaîne sont durs et aussi fins que des cheveux. Elle sait reproduire sur le tissu toutes les lignes qu'elle dessine sur les cruches. Khalti est encore plus nerveuse devant la laine que devant l'argile. J'entends encore ses coups de peigne... (*FP* 52).

Working with wool, on the other hand, is an ant's labour, but it does not require much space. The loom is stretched vertically over two poles a short distance from the wall. It can remain there for as long as necessary. My aunts spend their idle moments with it more or less. They sit with their backs to the wall, inserting the ends of the weft between the threads of the wrap and packing it down with an iron comb... Nana is very nimble. Her wrap threads are tough as fine as hair. She knows how to transfer onto cloth all the lines she traces on the pitchers. Khalti is even more nervous around wool than around clay. I still hear the thudding of her comb... (*PMS* 38).

Through memory, Feraoun constructs a literary ethnography rooted in personal experience. His position as both subject and observer enables him to record the secluded details of the daily lives of Kabyle women with sensitivity and reverence. His attentive depiction of the practice of carpet weaving reflects the observational style of ethnographic writing; however, contrary to social anthropologists; Feraoun grounds his description in remembrance and emotional resonance; his, is a narrative from within not a narrative from the periphery. Though the narrator adopts strategies of ethnographic inquiry; he does not methodize Kabyle social structures, he experiences them. His narrative foregrounds familial bonds, the weight of poverty, the

impact of French colonial education on young Kabylisians, and the resilience of his people.

In the preceding passage, the depiction of the process of carpet weaving does not simply outline a form of domestic labour. The portrait of the aunts weaving on the loom emerges as a site of memory, a conscious effort to archive a threatened cultural heritage, and an act of resistance that challenges distorted historical modes of representation. Fouroulou's attentive description of each movement his aunts' make, invites the reader to feel the demands of the labour, the amount of effort it requires, and the euphoria of the art of handcrafting. He does not merely inscribe what he has observed; he re-experiences it. In this light, affection and veneration are woven into the narrative much like the thread and wool of the carpet being interlaced.

The author's use of the oral rhythms, intonations, and idioms of the Berber language grounds his narrative in a traditional mode of storytelling that restores marginalized forms of cultural knowledge transmission. It is essential to emphasize that the emotionally-textured observational style of the insider ethnographer breaks away from the rigid, dehumanizing tone characteristic of Western ethnographic writing. Lyons (2003) maintains that the ethnographic studies that were produced by colonial ethnographers tend to commonly analogize Algerian society to Medieval Europe. In his *Coutumes, institutions, et croyances des indigenes de l'Algérie (1913)*, Desparmets states that: "[Kabylia] is a rude and primitive society, in the image perhaps of our France at the moment, in the 10th century of our era, when the obscure rudiments of the feudal system were sketched out" (qtd in Lyons 582). Feraoun's autobiographical ethnography stands in direct contrast to the anthropological discourse produced during the colonial era, which systematically frames Algerian social practices as markers of cultural otherness.

By foregrounding the human aspects of the cultural customs, rituals, traditions, and everyday practices of his community, Feraoun reclaims narrative authority and decentres the theoretical framework through which Algeria – and precisely the Kabyle region – is represented. To challenge the distortions of colonial discourse, the novelist undermines the relevance of the colonial gaze by refusing to frame his narrative through it. Lyons contends that Bourdieu's theoretical concepts regarding the Kabyle society are completely absent in Feraoun's work, the only noticeable parallel that could be drawn between the two ethnographies is the placement of the loom within the house (588-589). Feraoun's dismissal of colonial forms of representation affirms a cultural selfhood untainted by colonial influences.

Significantly, Feraoun's *Le Fils du pauvre* can be read as a narrative of the self and as a form of a collective autobiography. The author narrates his life-story while recording the history of his community. He integrates ethnographic observation into his personal memoir, interlacing the individual into the collective in a way that renders the self a medium through which the collective memory of a nation is inscribed. The novel transgresses textual boundaries; *Le Fils du pauvre* is neither an autobiography in the strictest sense of the word nor is it a standard ethnographic study. Within the Western tradition, autobiographical narratives often champion individualism, while colonial ethnographic practices construct authority through distance and objectification. Feraoun disrupts both genres. His observations are not abstract or objectifying, they are intimate, evocative, and empathetic. His ethnographic description doesn't stem from a distanced analytical framework; it's the portrait of the life of a child loved and nurtured by women whose lives were shaped by traditional customs and communal ties.

Emphatically, *Le Fils du pauvre* is not solely the story of an individual's journey through life; rather it is the collective story of a people living under colonial oppression. His portrayal of his childhood experiences in rural Kabylia reflects the lived realities of his community, rendering personal memory historical testimony. Truly, Feraoun's recollections of his educational training at the Normal school of *Bouzaréa* serve as one of the few available records that offer an authentic Algerian perspective on students' experiences under colonial occupation. Additionally, the novel documents the hardships his people endured under the Vichy Regime's administration during the Second World War.

As has already been established, Feraoun's narrative occupies a hybrid space; it resists colonial modes of categorization as the novelist writes between two genres, autobiography and ethnography. The novelist frames his narrative at the threshold of a poetics of resistance prior to the conceptualization of literary strategies of subversion. Thereby, Feraoun has crafted an autobiographical ethnography, a literary mode of writing that was acclaimed by Western theorists, only years later. In his essay "The Ethnographic Autobiography" (2004), Wolcott defines the textual genre as personal narratives that "...bear the stamp of an anthropological orientation," life stories that exhibit an "ethnographic intent" (99). This emerging genre was first identified and labelled "Ethnographic Autobiography" by anthropologist Stanley Brandes in his study "Ethnographic Autobiographies in American Anthropology" (1979), (Wolcott 100).

Brandes (1979) contends that an ethnographic autobiography is a first-person account of an informant who appertains to a non-Western society, of the kind historically examined within ethnographic tradition, recorded and transcribed by an anthropological researcher (2). Brandes anticipated that the rise of the rates of literacy

around the world would enable future anthropologists to act as guides rather than mediators, encouraging informants to inscribe their own life narratives, ushering a new tradition within the field of anthropology (8). Strikingly, Mouloud Feraoun was one of the earliest practitioners of the genre. Accordingly, *Le Fils du pauvre* cannot be attributed the diminishing label “Literature of Imitation,” a term commonly used by French critics that frames the early literary works produced by Algerian writers as derivative from the French tradition. Feraoun’s subversive writing strategies position the novel within the interval where tradition, modernity, and resistance intersect.

4.2.2 Belonging and Becoming in Mouloud Feraoun’s *Le Fils du pauvre*:

Feraoun’s portrayal of Kabyle traditions, customs and way of life in his autobiographical novel, reveals his deep attachment to his culture. Becoming a school teacher of French might have positioned Feraoun in a state of political ambivalence, but it has not erased his cultural identity. He asserts his belonging to the Kabyle Algerian community by providing a humanist ethnographic description of Kabyle cultural practices. Western education frequently emerges as a central theme in colonial⁴³ and postcolonial Algerian literature. The process by which a colonized subject educated at a colonial school develops a sense of estrangement from his native language and culture is often depicted in the work of many Algerian writers like Kateb Yacine, Mohamed Dib, Malek Haddad, and Assia Djebar.

Having spent years being trained at the colonizers’ educational establishments, the *évolué(e)s*⁴⁴ lose their sense of belonging to their mother culture, and they even

⁴³ The term colonial Algerian literature is used to refer to the body of literary texts written by Algerian writers native to the land during the colonial period, it shouldn’t be confused with the literary works produced by the colonizers or the settlers during the colonial period.

⁴⁴ The term *évolué(s)*, “evolved” in English, has been used by French colonial officials to describe the class of Algerians who received a formal French education at the colonial institutions, who adopted French language and values, and were loyal to the colonial state. The term is deeply problematic; it denotes that the educated colonized subject gains worth since he conforms to Western principles.

experience the loss of family bonds. They are forced to adapt the colonizer's language, his system of values; and are compelled to renounce their cultural heritage. Often times they find themselves torn between the values of their traditional society and the ones they are taught at the French school. Feraoun writes in the introduction of his translation of *Les Poèmes de Si Mohand*, that: "l'homme instruit qui s'est mis à l'école de l'Occident se voit forcé, aux pris de renoncement successifs, de se soumettre aux exigences d'une civilisation sûre de sa supériorité et destructrice de traditions" (qtd. in Harrison 94). [The educated man who has been through a Western school is obliged to undergo a series of renunciations, to give in to the demands of a civilization that is sure of its superiority and destructive of other traditions] (PT).

Although Feraoun went through the mills of the French colonial school, he does not report experiencing feelings of alienation or/and displacement from his surroundings and traditional life when evoking memories of his education. He remains deeply attached to his culture, at ease with it. Unlike Djébar, he is not faced with the violent clash between the culture of the colonized and the culture of the colonizer, a confrontation that issues a state of perpetual cultural dislocation, a feeling of being othered by one's own cultural hearth. In a seeming contradiction, becoming a schoolteacher of French language did not disrupt Feraoun's sense of belonging. That which makes his case even more paradoxical, albeit; Feraoun was successfully "institutionalized" by the Normal school of Bouzaréa, he was trained to reside in a zone of in-betweenness. As has been previously shown in section 1 of chapter 3, excellent students had to maintain an equal distance between the dominant culture and the native culture; they were conditioned to stay rooted in the endogeneous culture,

The term lends support to the colonialist binary opposition "civilized", "savage". It is used in this section for the purpose of maintaining contextual accuracy only.

and to adhere to the colonized culture; so they could efficiently act as cultural intermediaries and teach the masses French language and values.

Acculturation is a complex process; it was enforced in Algeria by French educational experts through different strategies and in different schooling institutions. French colonial pedagogues tended to experiment with various methods that shifted across regions and time periods. As a consequence, it has had nuanced effects on the Western educated colonized people who in turn developed different strategies to resist these forms of cultural conversion. Feraoun's educational training required him to become westernized while remaining entrenched in his native culture. His education made him French in some ways, but not in others. He spoke the language, instructed in it, abided by the laws of the colonial administration, but he led the life of a colonized kabyle subject who was denied equal rights of citizenship.

While Feraoun writes to promote and safeguard Kabyle culture, he does not make any explicit reference to French colonialism in his novel. He describes the hardships of his people, the lack of schools, hospitals, the dire economic conditions; but he does not criticize the colonial state. The reader first encounters any mention of the French when young Fouroulou is caught up in a fight at the village's *djmaâ* with a member of an enemy clan. The young boy is badly injured, other family members rush to join the fight in order to avenge Fouroulou, many are wounded and when his mother offers a clay vase full of water so they could wash the blood off, one of them says: "Pas du tout!... Il faut les laisser tels qu'ils sont et que les *roumis* les voient ainsi" (FP 38) ['Don't you dare!'... 'We should leave them as they are and let the *Roumis* see them like this] (PMS 26). *Roumis* is derived from the word 'Roman,' the first westerners to conquer Algeria, the term is often used in Algerian dialects to refer to Europeans or Christians.

Eventually, the rival clans agree to solve the issue without the interference of the French administration: “il est inutile d’aller à la justice française qui compliquerait tout” (*FP* 43) [It is useless to go to the French judiciary, which would examine us under a fine-tooth comb] (*PMS* 30). Instead, they chose to settle the matter according to the traditional system of justice. So Fouroulou’s father, *Ramdan*, upon his return from a trip to the markets of the neighbouring villages, summons the appointed delegation of officials in charge of resolving clan disputes comprised of the *amin*⁴⁵, two *marabouts*⁴⁶, and a dozen esteemed citizen (*FP* 41). The council had to be offered a lavish *kouskous* prepared with meat and vegetables, a meal the villagers had on rare occasions. Once they dined, the guests listened to the testimonies of Fouroulou’s uncle and the other Menrads who witnessed the conflict. The council proceeded to do the same at the house of the other party. Then, it was time to receive a verdict:

La parole est aux cheikhs! L’un d’eux sort un vieux livre en arabe tout noir de fumée, enveloppé dans un mouchoir. Il lit quelque chose d’incompréhensible, appelle sur nous la baraka puis, sans transition, les foudres du ciel si nous ne nous apaisons pas... Mon oncle est tenu de jurer, la main sur le vieux parchemin de ne plus chercher à ranimer la querelle. On obtiendra le même serment de l’autre côté (*FP* 43).

Now the sheikhs have the floor! One of them takes out an old book in Arabic, all black with smoke and wrapped in a handkerchief. He reads something incomprehensible, invokes a blessing upon us and lightning bolts, in the same breath, if we fail to quell our passions... My uncle is told to swear, with his hand on the old parchment, to refrain from rekindling the fight. The other side will receive the same sermon (*PMS* 30).

⁴⁵ *El amin* is the chieftain of the village, he represents judicial authority.

⁴⁶ A *marabout* is a religious leader.

The old book that young Fouroulou couldn't recognize was *The Quran*, Jules Ferry's educational policies in Algeria resulted in the deterioration of traditional forms of education caused by the destruction of mosques, Quranic schools, and *kuttabs*, especially in the Kabyle region to the point that the Quran was unrecognizable to young Fouroulou.

Nonetheless, pre-colonial judicial systems endured, and were practiced in parallel with colonial legal laws. It was the people's way of resisting French cultural colonization, Algerian historian Mohammed Harbi contends that: "the assertion and endorsement of traditional collective structures can be understood as a gesture of solidarity against the colonizer and could be perceived then as the only possibility of surviving culturally and socially" (Weltmon-Aron 39). Though it seems like Fouroulou lives in a disassociated world, in a village unmarked by colonialism, he is deeply affected by it and he, along with his community, contest any form of cultural domination. Their refusal to adhere to the laws imposed by the French colonial administration may be perceived as a form of passive resistance.

Furthermore, the name Feraoun is foreign to the region and to the community; it was attributed to the novelist's family by French officers. In 1882, the general governor of Algeria established the civil registry of the natives and decreed that all of the population would be attributed, compulsorily, patronymic names transcribed in French (Maghraoui 208). The erasure of the onomastic identity of the Algerian people is another form of cultural colonization that aimed at deconstructing the foundation of the Algerian society which is the tribal system. Feraoun makes a reference to his real family name, *Aït Chaâbane*, when he writes: "Nous sommes de la *karouba*⁴⁷ des Aït

⁴⁷ The term *karouba*, according to McNair's glossary, is probably derived from the Arabic word 'El-Karaib', which is used to refer to close and distant relatives. A *karaouba* is the smaller unit of a tribe (152).

Mezouz, de la famille des Aït Moussa, Menrad est notre surnom. Mon oncle et mon père se nomment l'un Ramdane, l'autre Lounis mais dans le quartier on a pris l'habitude de les appeler 'les fils du Chabane'" (*FP* 20). [We belong to the karouba of the Aït Mezouz, and to the family of the Aït Moussa. Our surname is Menrad. My uncle and my father are named Ramdane and Lounis, but in the neighbourhood people came to call them simply "the sons of Chabane"] (*PMS* 11).

The French colonial administration enforced on the population a foreign onomastic system that aimed to erase traces of lineage and disrupt societal ties, however, the people tried to preserve their patronyms by refraining from using the French surnames. In a letter to his friend (1949), Pierre Martin, Feraoun states: "tu imagines aussi que chez nous on m'appelle Feraoun. Erreur. C'est le nom français. On en a collé à chaque famille kabyle vers 1890 et qui ne correspond que très rarement au vrai nom" (*Lettres à ses amis* 14) [you imagine that here they call me Feraoun. You are mistaken. It is the French name. They have given one to each kabyle family in the 1890's and it rarely relates to the real name] (PT). A patronym indicates one's ties to the land. The French onomastic colonial policy coerced a shift from the use of patronymics to the use of surnames.

The process of renaming Algerian families was not adequately implemented; the agents that were charged with the task were incapable of professionally attributing new names to the population. Ageron contends that "ces commissions recrutées dans cette catégorie d'homme promu, tour à tour, géomètres, commissaires, enquêteurs, topographes, agents d'affaires, la plupart d'ex-sous-officiers écartés de l'armée, étaient de médiocres, bons à tous et propres à rien" (qtd in Maghraoui 208) [These commissions recruited in this category of promoted men, one after another, land surveyors, commissioner, investigators, topographers, businessmen, the majority of

them were officers dismissed from the army, they were mediocre, good at everything and at nothing] (PT). The French colonial policy of re-nomination was not a simple process of transcription of original names and sounds into the French language; it deprived the colonized from his identity by changing, his name against his will, and giving him a name that does not conform to the norms of traditional nomination (Maghraoui 210).

When the people did not cooperate by refusing to be attributed foreign and alienating names, often times they were given the label SNP, which stands for “sans nom patronymique” [without a patronymic name], or they would be attributed condescending names and offensive ones (Maghraoui 210). What made things worse is that the same name was transcribed in many different ways, by not standardizing the transcription of the new names, the Algerian patronym was destabilized. Benramdane (2005) maintains that: “Le résultat fut donc la production des noms amputés, substitués et dont l’effet général est de rendre obscure les rapports entre le nom original et ses dérivés” (qtd in Maghraoui 210) [the result is the production of amputated names, substitutes with a general effect that renders the link between the original name and its derivatives obscure] (PT). This process of defamiliarization resulted in a loss of sense and in a loss of family ties. Since the process was ill-managed the result was that siblings had completely different names, also families of Arabic descent were attributed Berber names and vice versa.

In certain regions or *douars* [rural areas], all patronyms that were imposed on the population started with a particular letter, *A* for one, *B* for the neighbouring *douar*, etc (Idir 316). In Feraoun’s case, his family were assigned the letter *F*. Roblés explains in a note attached to one of the letters Feraoun has sent to him in 1953 giving him his biographical information that: “tous ceux de la Karouba des Aït Chaâbane

furent voués à la lettre F. Mais à Tizi-Hibel le nom de Feraoun n'est employé par personne et celui d'Aït Chaâbane sert toujours à designer les membres de cette famille" (*Lettres à ses amis* 100) [all those who belong to the karouba of the Aït Chaâbane were attributed the letter F. However, at Tizi-Hibel no one uses the name Feraoun, the patronym Aït Chaâbane is still used to refer to members of the family] (PT). The traditional patronymic system endured along with the colonial one, nonetheless, in time the Algerian nomination system was lost. The colonial civil registry has profoundly distorted names and destabilized genealogical ties which created a rift in the Algeria identity.

4.3 The Post/colonial Palimpsest: Writing/Rewriting History and the Aesthetics of Resistance

To reconstruct the history of Algeria's war of colonization and war of independence, Djébar reverts to palimpsestic writing. The novelist posits the French colonial historical archives, and the oral testimonies of Algerian *mujahidat* in dialogic motion. In the first and second parts of the novel: "La Prise de la ville ou L'amour s'écrit", and "Les Cris de la Fantasia," Djébar examines the historical records of French military officers. She sheds light on the gaps, and inconsistencies of the archival documents, and offers insight on the reported events from the perspective of the colonized. The novelist reclaims the history of the nation by creating a new version of the archives. Anne Donadey has previously addressed, in several studies⁴⁸, the palimpsestic structure of Djébar's narrative formed through the rereading and the rewriting of the official historical records.

This section analyses the strategies employed by Djébar in crafting a post/colonial palimpsest, one that posits the colonial archives in direct confrontation

⁴⁸ Mainly, *Rekindling the Vividness of the Past: Assia Djébar's Films and Fiction (1996)*, and *The Multilingual Strategies of Postcolonial Literature Assia Djébar's Algerian Palimpsest (2000)*.

with Algerian women's oral history. In the Third Part of *Fantasia*, Djébar constructs a collective autobiography by weaving out her life story and the testimonial accounts of the elderly women of her tribe into her narrative. To historicize the testimonies of the women of Mount Chenoua, Djébar draws on *relexification*, a subversive writing strategy developed by novelists of African descent writing in a colonial language in order to transmit and preserve their cultural heritage. This section delineates the processes by which Djébar indigenizes the French language so it may attune the voices of the dispossessed.

4.3.1 Revisiting the Archive: Colonial History and the Dialectics of Dissent

In *L'Amour, la fantasia*, Djébar reappropriates the French colonial archives and rewrites a new version of Algeria's history, she interrelates non-French centered records of historical events with the reports and personal correspondence of French military officers. Djébar provides different perspectives on significant events in the history of the conquest of Algeria. She layers text upon text, and often intervenes, through authorial intrusion, to comment on certain aspects of the archives, to reclaim what has been neglected, and to imagine what has been lost. The weaving of the intertexts within the main narrative is made explicit: the authors of the historical narratives are quoted, and properly introduced to the readers rendering *Fantasia* a self-conscious novel.

Djébar begins the process of rewriting the history of the nation with the description of the French invasion in 1830 and the fall of the city of Algiers. Djébar selects the report of Captain Aimable Mattered⁴⁹, and recollects, in the language of the invader, the first encounter between the French Armada, and the Impregnable city of Algiers: "A mon tour, j'écris dans sa langue, mais plus de cent cinquante ans après"

⁴⁹ Aimable Thiébauld Mattered (1781-1868), was a French navy officer. He authored *Le Journal de la prise d'Alger*, 1830. Paris: 1960.

(LAF 16) [I, in my turn, write, using his language, but more than one hundred and fifty years later] (FAC 7). The novelist muses over the same thoughts as the colonial chronicler; did the dey Hussein go up his rooftop and personally observe the enemy's fleet approaching? Was he in a state of distress or indifference? Did he in truth answer the French envoy who solicited a formal apology to the king: "Le Roi de la France n'a plus qu'à me demander ma femme" (LAF 16) [The King of France may as well demand my wife] (FAC 8).

To reconstruct the events of *The Battle of Staouéli* of June 19th, 1830⁵⁰, Djebbar reinterprets the accounts of Officer Le Baron Barchou de Penhoën⁵¹, Captain Aimable Matterer, and Langlois⁵² painting of the defeated Turks (LAF 27-29). The novelist positions the archival sources in dialogue, creating a mosaic-like historiography of *La Bataille de Staouéli*. Djebbar challenges the authority of the colonial texts by inscribing her reflections on the attitudes of the military reporters, and by foregrounding occluded details from the French historical narratives. Rereading Le Baron Barchou's testimony, Djebbar fixates on a harrowing occurrence: "Du combat vécu et décrit... je ne retiens qu'une courte scène, phosphorescente... Barchou la rapporte d'un ton glacé, mais son regard, qui semble se concentrer sur la poésie terrible ainsi dévoilée, se révolte d'horreur..." (LAF 30) [I only recollect one brief electrifying episode from Baron Barchou's description of his experiences... Barchou's tone is ice-cold, but he seems to be transfixed with revulsion by the terrible poetry of the scene before his eyes] (FAC 18). A scene Djebbar posits at the centre of her historical narrative.

⁵⁰ The Battle of Staouéli, fought between the French military troops under the leadership of General de Bourmont and the Turkish-Algerian forces commanded by Ibrahim Agha, was the first military between the French and the Algerians.

⁵¹ Auguste Barchou de Penhoën (1849-1851), was a French military officer, politician, and man of letter. He took part in the French invasion of Algeria, in 1835 he published: *Mémoires d'un officier d'État-major: expedition d'Afrique*.

⁵² Jean-Charles Langlois (1789-1870), was a French military officer and a war painter.

During that time, it was customary for Algerian women to join their men in battle, the tribes resisted as a whole: men, women, children, and the old fiercely defended their land against the French invaders. Barchou reports that women in particular exhibited great vehemence in combat; they had a tendency to maim their victims (*LAF* 31). He cites in his journal two female warriors of the Zouave tribe, one laid motionless on the battlefield next to a French soldier's body holding his heart in her hand. The other one tried to escape, baby in arms, when she got shot she ended her child's life, bashed his head with a huge rock, so she would die peacefully knowing he wouldn't be in the possession of the enemy (*LAF* 31). By evoking these women warriors, the novelist reinserts them back into the pages of history. Djébar sets, at the beginning of the novel, the objective of her writing project which is to destabilize Euro-centric modes of historical representation by creating a counter-female history.

In order to demonstrate the ways in which history is manufactured, Djébar reverts to the deconstruction method that entails the dismantling of hierarchical oppositions embedded within the archives and the reconstruction of a new version of history. The novelist decenters the records she rereads by foregrounding the gaps in the discourse of the colonizer, the inherent bias, and the irreconcilable contradictions these texts hold. The novelist's conception of history falls in accordance with Foucault's views on historiography, the French philosopher argues that there is no "Official" version of history, but different renditions of the same events (Nagy-Zekmi 2). French historian, Pierre Vidal-Naquet, maintains that a true historiographer should betray the integrality and consonance of the historical source material and focus on the inconsistencies inherent within the archives (Weltman-Aron 27).

Djebar transgresses textual boundaries to demonstrate the limits of representation, the history of the conquest of Algeria has been written in French by the French invaders. It excludes an Arabo-Berber perspective of the history of the war of invasion. The novelist maintains that 37 accounts describing the fall of the city of Algiers in July 1830 were published the following years. The events of the war inflected a state of graphomania upon the superior military officers, by the year 1835 they produced 19 chronicles. Other witnesses developed a convulsion to write: a priest, three doctors, a painter, and a publicist. Of the 37 war memoirs, only three reports depict the viewpoint of the assailed: an account by the governor of Anatolia, the assistant of the Bey Ahmed, and a German captive (*LAF* 66).

Djebar's revision of French colonial history entails a study of the circumstances of the production of historical knowledge and the attitudes and practices of archivists. She undermines the authority of the hegemonic discourse by presenting different versions of history. However, it is not a matter of referencing different texts within the historical narrative, nor is it a mere comparison between different accounts of the same event. Rather, it is the study of history as an artifact, a creative piece of writing that often times deviates from reality. J. T Merle, one of the scribes that recorded the events that led to the fall of the city of Algiers, joined the French expedition as a secretary to the general in chief. The manager of the *Porte-Saint Theatre* in Paris, Merle is taken by the theatrics of the invasion (*LAF* 45).

Merle's reportage of the events was significant since he was the first newswriter to utilize a printer delivered from the metropolis, and to distribute newsletters in-between battles; though he stayed away from the battlefield, and chose to observe the events behind the curtains, and to deliver second-hand accounts: "...ce publiciste – de nos jours, on le dirait 'grand reporter' – ne s'attache qu'à décrire son

rôle dérisoire. Il est sans cesse à la traîne du combat décisif ; il n'est jamais témoins de l'évènement" (*LAF* 53). [...this publicist –nowadays he would be called 'a front-line reporter' is only interested in describing his own ridiculous role. He lags permanently behind any decisive battle; he never witnesses any actual events] (*FAC* 33). An eyewitness, Merle describes the explosion of "Bordj Hassan", named by the French "Fort Napoléon," a 16th century Turkish fortress. The country's defence was largely dependent on the fort, twenty-four hours after its fall; the French took over the city of Algiers (*LAF* 46).

Throughout the entirety of his memoir, Merle relates his emotions, his perceptions, and compassion towards the injured. He spent a lot of time at the military infirmary. He revered the way the Algerian tribes and the Turks have fought; he notes that there were few casualties amongst them compared to the French. To Merle the enemy was invisible, the tribal warriors always carried their wounded on wooden stretchers, and dragged their dead across the battlefield in order to properly bury them (*LAF* 51). For a long time, the French army could not capture any hostages, anyhow, after the Battle of Staouéli, three men were held captive: a Turk, a Kabyle, and an Arab. Merle was fascinated by them, he described their faces, their demeanour in great detail: "Il les comble d'attentions, va les voir à l'infirmerie, leur offre – comme aux animaux blessés d'un zoo – des morceaux de sucre" (*LAF* 51). [He devotes his whole attention to them, visits them in hospitals, offers them pieces of sugar - like wounded animals at the zoo] (*FAC* 32).

Djebar revisits Merle's story and disrupts his narration either by infusing comments such as: "like wounded animals at the zoo," or by inserting her personal judgement on certain events. By way of example, she retraces in thought the reported

story of the death of one of the injured captives, who lost his life since his father refused to approve the amputation of his son's leg:

Nous sommes désormais en plein théâtre, celui que Merle a l'habitude de produire à Paris : 'père et fils arabes, objet de la sollicitude française' ; 'père arabe franchement hostile à l'amputation de son fils que conseille la médecine française' ; 'fanatisme musulman entraînant la mort du fils, malgré la science française'. Ce dernier tableau conclut la fiction de Merle, ainsi échafaudée sous nos yeux (*LAF* 51).

[We are now in the midst of a real drama, like the ones that Merle is accustomed to producing on the Paris stage: 'Arab father and son, the object of French solicitude;' 'father disturbed by French humanity;' 'Arab father bitterly opposes his son's amputation which the French doctors advise;' 'Muslim fanaticism causes the son's death, despite French medical science.' This is the final tableau in the drama which Merle has thus constructed before our eyes] (*FAC* 32).

Djebar weakens the authority of Merle's account by foregrounding how close it is to fiction, the scenery, the choice of words, the general mood of the text, and the tone of the scribe render the text a theatrical play. Furthermore, the novelist contends that Merle has intentionally neglected to declare what one can derive from other source materials: that the set of Middle-eastern interpreters that assisted the French military failed to properly translate the doctors' wishes to the father in *derija* [dialectal Arabic], and instead he has attributed the death of the captive to fanaticism. The clash between languages claimed that young man's life, just like it claimed the life of the messenger who delivered de Bourmont's surrender terms to the Algerian resistance

(LAF 52). Djébar has proven that Merle's archived historical text is but a fictionalized version of events.

To resist against the colonial amnesia surrounding French genocidal practices, Djébar reviews Colonel Pélissier's report on the *razzia*⁵³ of the tribe of Ouled Riah. In the summer of 1845, a fraction of the Berber tribe of the Ouled Riah refused to surrender to the French invader. They retreated to the impregnable caves in Mount Nacmaria, known as *les grottes des El-Frachich* that served them as refuge during the Turkish occupation of Algeria (LAF 97). On June 11th, Colonel Pélissier received an order from his superior officer Bugeaud: "Si ces gredins se retirent dans leurs grottes... imitez Cavaignac aux Sbéah, enfumez-les à outrance, comme des renards!" (LAF 96). ['If the scoundrels retreat into their caves... do what Cavaignac did to the Sbeah, smoke them out mercilessly, like foxes!'] (FAC 65).

In his routinely military report, Pélissier retraces the phases that led to the execution of the order: the negotiations between the two parties, the motives, the ultimatum, the technical measures that were taken (LAF 102). The account was drafted in a formal way, it lacked any expression of reluctance, or remorse. The author of the massacre writes that he found himself in a critical position: Les Ouled Riah had provisions that could sustain them for a long period of time, while the French troops could only endure for three or four days. If the neighbouring tribes that

⁵³ Larousse dictionary lists the following definition of the word *razzia*: a noun of Arabic origin (*derija* of Algeria *hažya*, Standard Arabic *rhazwu*, plural *rhāwā*), an invasion of an enemy territory to plunder; a raid. ("razzia").

During the French conquest of Algeria the word *razzia* has been associated with a French method of extermination: *les enfumades*; that entailed the asphyxiation of entire tribes that sought refuge in caves in the mountains by blocking all exits except from the opening that would host the fire.

Olivier Le Cour Grandmaison states, in his *Coloniser, Exterminer: Sur la guerre et l'État colonial*, that the *razzias* committed by the French army differ completely from the raids that were practiced by Arab tribes. The motive of the latter is economic gain (war spoils); the French *razzias* aimed to bring about massive destruction, and to collect large numbers of victims (entire tribes, villages at once) (147).

had been already repressed, get word of Pélissier's ineptitude, they might rise again and reclaim their lands back (*LAF* 68).

Djebar reads Pélissier's report, and then she chooses to dismiss it, without disclosing her motives. She seeks evidence in other historical source materials, to determine whether or not the archived records present a version of events that is close enough to reality. To reconstitute the massacre of the tribe of Ouled Riah, the novelist relies on non-French centered accounts that document the events of that night. Mainly, the testimony of a Spanish officer, deployed by the French army, and a letter by an anonymous soldier addressed to his family. The first was published in a Spanish journal called the *Heraldo*, the second was exhibited by doctor P. Christian (*LAF* 103). Both accounts stress the atrocity of the scene, and the impossibility of describing the sixty meters long flames that were lit the night of the 20th June 1845, the anonymous soldier writes: "Quelle plume saurait rendre ce tableau?... " (*LAF* 103) [What pen could do justice to this scene?] (*FAC* 71). The unknown soldier has visited the three caves, he describes a scene he has witnessed:

J'ai vu un homme, le genou à terre, la main crispée sur la corne d'un bœuf. Devant lui était une femme tenant son enfant dans ses bras. Cet homme il était facile de le reconnaître, avait été asphyxié, ainsi que la femme, l'enfant et le bœuf, au moment où il cherchait à préserver sa famille de la rage de cet animal (*LAF* 106).

[I saw a dead man, with one knee on the ground, grasping the horn of an ox in one hand. In front of him lay a woman with her child in her arms. It was easy to see that this man had been asphyxiated, together with the woman, the child and the ox, while he was struggling to protect his family from the enraged animal] (*FAC* 73).

Djebar's disposition of Pélissier's official account, without the divulgence of the rationale behind her reliance on decentralized historical records in order to reconstruct the *razzia* of the tribe of Ouled Riah, has prompted our reading of the military report and of the testimonies of the two other witnesses: the anonymous French soldier and the Spanish soldier. While the three texts present the same layout of events: the French army's expedition to the impenetrable caves, the negotiations between the leaders of the tribe and the French envoys, the technical aspect of conducting an *enfumade*; notable inconsistencies in Pélissier's record have emerged. First of all, it is important to note that the archived texts under consideration reveal that the massacre of the Ouled Riah was a premeditated act of war that could have been averted.

At the end of the negotiations, the tribe leaders asked for *l'aman* [to surrender], they agreed to cede their arms and to pay in indemnity the sum of 75.000 Francs. They had only asked that the French troops move away from the caves so they can safely exit their refuge, however; colonel Pélissier perceived the request inadmissible and chose to set the caves of the Dahra on fire and execute all the tribe members without discrimination to death by asphyxiation (Colonel Pélissier, L'Officier Espagnol, Le sous-officier du 36e de ligne).

Notably, the historical documents expose a discrepancy between the number of victims disclosed in colonel Pélissier's military report and the statistics presented in the testimonies of the other witnesses. After the flames have died out, Pélissier ordered a few of his men to venture into the caves in order to extract and count the burned bodies of the Ouled Riah. The colonel states in his account:

Nous parvînmes de la sorte à recueillir, dans les deux journées, cent dix individus, parmi lesquels neuf ont expiré à l'ambulance. Les autres ont été renvoyés chez eux mais plus de cinq cents ont trouvé la mort dans les recoins

et les divers compartiments de la caverne, dont l'aspect est horrible (Colonel Pélissier).

In this way, we were able to extract, over the course of two days, one hundred and ten individuals, nine of whom succumbed at the ambulance. The others were sent home but more than five hundred died in the corners and various compartments of the cave, the sight is horrible (PT).

According to colonel Pélissier's report, only a small military unit was given access to the caves in an effort to withdraw the casualties. His testimony claims that the count mounted to a little over 500 bodies, which was only the result of the preliminary count. The number of victims kept on rising until it reached approximately more than 1500 men, women, and children of the tribe of Ouled Riah. A fact that was corroborated by the letter of the anonymous soldier and by the account of the Spanish officer, the latter writes:

Le nombre des cadavres s'élevait de 800 à 1000. Le colonel ne voulut pas croire à notre rapport, et il envoya d'autres soldats pour compter les morts. On en sortit de la grotte 600 environ sans compter tous ceux qui était entassés les uns sur les autres, et les enfants à la mamelle, presque tous cachés dans les vêtements de leurs mères. Le colonel témoignait toute l'horreur qu'il éprouvait d'un si horrible résultat... (L'officier Espagnol)

[The death toll has risen from 800 to 1000. The colonel wouldn't believe our report, so he sent another group of soldiers to count the dead. They retrieved from the cave about 600 without taking into account all those who were piled up on each other, breast-fed babies, almost all hidden in the clothes of their mothers. The colonel witnessed the horror of such horrid consequences...]
(PT).

Pélissier's report on the asphyxiation of the entire tribe of the Ouled Riah did not only neglect to state the official fatality rate of the *enfumade*, it also disregarded the looting of the corpses of the victims. To the contrary, it stressed the fact that the French troops were not allowed to enter the caves and that the dead were honourably treated. Markedly, the Spaniard states in his testimony that the caves were raided and the bodies ransacked, soldiers stole jewellery, earthenware vases, documents, coffers, and even a blood- stained *burnous*. He adds that colonel Pélissier gifted his troops Ottoman knives taken from the scorched bodies of *Les Ouled Riah*. He writes: "J'ai acheté un collier pris sur un des cadavres, et je le garderai, ainsi que les deux yatagans que le colonel nous a envoyés comme un souvenir de ces effroyables scènes" (L'officier Espagnol) [I purchased a necklace that was stolen from one of the corpses, and I intend on keeping it, as well as the two yatagans that the colonel sent us as a souvenir of these terrifying scenes] (PT).

As has been demonstrated, the Spanish officer's account (and that of the anonymous soldier) contradict the colonel's military report and testify to the bias embedded in French historical documents rendering the text an unreliable archived source material. In his report, Pélissier misrepresented the facts, he proclaimed that he denied anyone entry into the caves while the Spanish soldier's testimony describes the pillage of the victims and how valuable objects were ripped from the dead and sold amongst soldiers or collected as war trophies and gifted by the colonel to his regiment in order to commemorate his victory against the tribe of the Ouled Riah. Furthermore, the colonel failed to announce an accurate death toll distorting history since the majority of the sources that discuss the *razzia*, reiterate Pélissier's ingenuine version of history.

In her rewriting of the massacre, Djébar chose to relegate the military report and to rely on the non-hegemonic testimonies of other eyewitnesses without attempting to deconstruct and/or destabilize the historical text. At times, she would even revert to Pélissier's account and weave fragments of it into her narrative. In her *Historical (re)construction in L'Amour, la fantasia, Vaste est la prison and La Femme sans sépulture by Assia Djébar* (2011), Hamdi maintains that the originality of Djébar's endeavor lies in the fact that she does not attempt to sever links with the colonizer's historical records since she undertook the mission of rewriting a history of which he forms an inseparable part (152). Notably, the novelist feels compelled to thank colonel Pélissier for drafting his account, a routinely military practice that had immortalized the victims of the burned caves. The report that Pélissier issued stirred a debate in metropolitan France regarding the barbaric means that were deployed in subduing the resistance of the Algerian people (*LAF* 113). Pélissier's partial report has after all given voice to the victims of the *enfumade* of the Ouled Riah.

By the end of the section entitled: *Femmes, Enfants, Bœufs Couchés dans les Grottes*, Djébar evokes the *razzia* of the tribe of the Ouled Sbéah, conducted by the colonel Saint Arnaud two months after the *enfumade* of the Ouled Riah. The Colonel just like his predecessor, had blocked all exits but one and had lit the caves in which the tribe took refuge in on fire. Distinctly, Saint Arnaud did not let anyone into the caves, he did not visit them, he did not order a count of the victims, nor did he report it. He left no trace of the *enfumade* of the Ouled Sbéah, a confidential report was sent to Bugeaud, the report never made its way to the metropolis; it was destroyed in Algiers (*LAF* 110). In 1913, Gauthier, a French scholar, investigated the massacre and reached no conclusions. Due to the lack of evidence, he suspected that Saint Arnaud has fantasized about the *enfumade* so he wouldn't feel lesser of a commander than

Pélissier (*LAF* 110). Years after, a letter that the colonel sent to his brother describing the *razzia* was discovered. Eventually, Saint Arnaud couldn't resist the scribblemania of military officers. On August 15th, 1845, he wrote:

...je fais hermétiquement boucher toutes les issues et je fais un vaste cimetière. La terre couvrira à jamais les cadavres de ces fanatiques. Personne n'est descendu dans les cavernes ; personne que moi ne sait qu'il y a là-dessous, cinq cents brigands qui n'égorgeront plus les français (Saint Arnaud).

I had all the exits hermetically sealed and I made a vast cemetery. The earth will forever cover the corpses of these fanatics. No one went down into the caves; no one except for me knows that there are five hundred brigands who will no longer slaughter the French (PT).

Colonel Saint Arnaud abstained from documenting the massacre of the Ouled Sbéah so he wouldn't be held accountable by French philanthropic journals, and so he wouldn't face the backlash Pélissier was subjected to. By erasing evidence of the *razzia*, the colonel denied the tribe of Ouled Sbéah space in the pages of history and condemned them to historical oblivion. On account of this, Djebbar praises Pélissier's bravery: he reported the massacre, he extracted the bodies and he faced his victims: "Pélissier "le barbare", lui, le chef guerrier tant décrié ensuite, me devient premier écrivain de la première guerre d'Algérie! Car il s'approche des victimes quand elles viennent à peine de frémir non de haine mais de furia, et du désir de mourir..." (*LAF* 114) [Pélissier, the barbarian, the military leader subsequently discredited is for me the foremost chronicler of the first Algerian war! For he approaches the victims when they have barely ceased their final twitches – not of hatred – but a frenzied death-wish...] (*FAC* 78).

Throughout the historical part of the novel, Djébar manifests ambivalence towards the French colonial archives, she is thankful to have records of the war of conquest and of the war of liberation; still, she is resentful towards the colonizer's historicization practices. The novelist, at the one hand, strives to deconstruct the historical text and weaken its authority, and, on the other hand, she depends on it to reclaim the history of the nation. While she recognizes that the chronicles of the colonizer form an integral part of the history of Algeria, Djébar seeks to foreground the limits of historical representation. She accentuates the urgency to inweave the perspective of the colonized into the hegemonic historical discourse.

The novelist makes a reference to the palimpsestic character of her writing project, she writes: "Pélissier, l'intercesseur... pour mille cinq cents cadavres sous EL KANTARA, avec leurs troupeaux bêlant indéfiniment au trépas, me tend son rapport et je reçois ce palimpseste pour y inscrire à mon tour la calcinée des ancêtres" (*LAF* 115) [Pélissier, speaking... on behalf of fifteen hundred corpses buried beneath El-Kantra, with their flocks unceasingly bleating at death, hands me his report and I accept this palimpsest on which I now inscribe the charred passion of my ancestors] (*FAC* 79). Djébar does not venture to rescind the colonizer's account, but engages in a process of restoration of what has been marginalized that evolves into the creation of a counter-history. As she reads, dissects, and responds to the colonial text, she reveals that the colonial archives may serve as sites of contestation.

Djébar puts much emphasis on the details that the archival records tend to neglect. Hamdi observes that: "One of the most interesting elements in the author's account of history in *L'Amour, la fantasia* is the fact that the text sheds significant light on 'marginalized areas'" (*LAF* 147). Djébar's historical narrative foregrounds forgotten features; events that are deemed of minor importance to the colonizer are

centralized. Reading Bosquet's correspondence with his kinship that relates the incursion on the city of Oran in 1840, the novelist fixates on an image the General brushes in haste in one of his letters: the amputation of a woman's foot so her *Khalkhal* [anklet] can be easily stolen.

In her reconstruction of Bosquet's account of the attack, Djébar repositions the incident at the center of the narrative: "...il évoque se pied coupé de femme anonyme, coupé à cause du 'Khalkhal'... Soudain les mots de la lettre entière ne peuvent sécher, du fait de cette incise : indécence de ces lambeaux de chair que la description n'a pu taire" (*LAF* 83) [...he recalls the anonymous woman whose foot had been hacked off, 'cut off for the sake of the khalkhal...'] Suddenly as he inserts these words, they prevent the ink of the whole letter from drying: because of the obscenity of the tom flesh that he could not suppress in his description] (*FAC* 56). The severed foot becomes a recurrent image in *L'Amour, la fantasia*, emphasizing the atrocities Algerian women were subjected to in the early stages of the French colonization of Algeria.

Another marginalized detail that attests to the brutality of the French army is described in a desultory manner in Eugène Fromentin's⁵⁴ travel journal. In the summer of 1853, the painter visits the Algerian desert. He sojourns in the recently fallen city of L'Aghouat after a bloody siege. On his way through the city, he collects from the wreckage, the amputated hand of an anonymous Algerian woman. He later on throws it away (*LAF* 313). The severed hand of the anonymous Algerian woman that Fromentin describes in his memoir as a minor detail becomes the hand that holds the *qalam* with which the historian re-writes the history of the nation in general and the history of Algerian women in particular: "Eugène Fromentin me tend une main

⁵⁴ Eugène Fromentin (1820-1876), was an Orientalist French painter and writer. Author of *Un été dans le Sahara* (1856), and *Une année dans le Sahel* (1858).

inattendue, celle d'une inconnue qu'il n'a jamais pu dessiner... je me saisis de cette main vivante et je tente de lui faire porter le 'qalam'" (*LAF* 313) [Eugène Fromentin offers me an unexpected hand – the hand of an unknown woman he was never able to draw... I seize on this living hand, hand of mutilation and of memory, and I attempt to bring it the qalam] (*FAC* 226). Djébar evokes the metaphor of the severed hand that holds the *qalam*⁵⁵ in the concluding section of *L'Amour, la fantasia*; it symbolizes the novelist's historical palimpsest which in the words of Trudy Agar-Mendousse extracts from the French archives that have been inscribed by a French *plume* [quill] to challenge their authority by an Algerian *qalam* (Hamdi 148).

In her revision of the historical chronicles, Djébar does not subvert the language in which the colonizer records the war of conquest of Algeria; rather, she rescripts the events authentically so that the reader is made aware that the one who's described as barbaric in the military reports is the one who endures inhumane crimes. So words such as: *sauvagerie, fanatique, brutal* [savagery, fanatic, brutal] are often found when the novelist reassess the colonial archives. However, when she traces the events from the perspective of the colonized, she abstains from reverting to the biased language used in the French accounts she rereads.

In the section entitled *La Mariée Nue de Mazouna*, the author depicts the resistance of the Algerian people city by city: Algiers, Oran, Constantine, Bougie, Bône...etc. The expression "French Algeria" is rendered El-Djezair, the French colonizer is described as *l'Infidèle*, or the ennemi, and more importantly the novelist relies heavily on words and expressions in Classical Arabic, Berber, and dialectical Arabic (*LAF* 119). In the final part of the novel, Djébar develops a strategy of

⁵⁵ Qalam is the Arabic for any kind of writing instrument.

language indigenization through the transcription of the oral testimonies of the widows of the war of Mount Chenoua.

4.3.2 Women's Testimonial Narratives and the Reconstruction of a Collective Cultural Memory

The voices of the past emerge, in the third section of *L'Amour, la fantasia*, to narrate women's wartime experiences and the history of the Algerian Revolution. In the chapters entitled: "Voix", "Voix de veuve", "Corps enlacés", "Murmures", "Chuchotements", Djébar severs the link with the French colonial historical archives, she no longer inscribes the history of Algeria on the parchment of the colonizer. By way of an alternative, the novelist rewrites the modern history of the nation from the standpoint of those who have been excluded from the French colonial archives and Algeria's nationalist discourse. The oral testimonies of the women of Djébar's tribe served as a frame of reference to foreground women's contribution to the war of liberation, and to emphasize the significant role they play in the transmission and preservation of the nation's history.

Algerian women's resistance against the French colonizer was contested by their male counterparts; their contribution in the war effort was soon forgotten after independence, their stories were often shrouded by the phallogocentric dominant discourse. The few *mujahidat* that are known and celebrated are those whose stories of detention, torture, and execution were publicized by international mediatic coverage. Jane Hiddleston contends that women's active participation in the Algerian struggle for independence was perceived in conformity with Western beliefs thus it posed a threat to Islamic and traditional values (*Assia Djébar Out of Algeria* 35). Accordingly, women were compelled to return to the home sphere and to adhere to the old societal norms. Women's wartales were obliterated from the national historical

narrative. Though, many historians have set in motion the process of reconstructing the nation's collective memory by unearthing the testimonies of forgotten female combatants, many individual wartime chronicles remain sanctioned, untold, eclipsed by the monolithic national discourse (Hiddleston 35).

In her *The Participation of the Algerian Woman in the Liberation Struggle (1854-1962)*, Meberbeche-Senouci (2000) maintains that approximately 10.949 women took part in the war of liberation. They held different positions, and were assigned to both combat and non-combat roles (32). They either joined the brothers⁵⁶ in the *maquis* (the centre of revolutionary operations in the mountains), or worked from home to feed the combatants and provide them with shelter. Algerian women served the F.L.N army in active capacities as fighters, medics, undercover agents, money collectors, they were also charged with the task of placing bombs, transferring ammunition to the mountains, and sewing uniforms and flags. Of these women of the resistance only two were assigned to a political role and to an official military position (Meberbeche-Senouci 32-33). Marie-Aimée Helie Lucas, an Algerian women's rights activist, states that the roles attributed to women during the War of Independence went unchallenged for the good of the common cause:

Since there was "no humble task in the revolution" we did not dispute the roles we had. It would have been mean to question the priority of liberating the country, since independence would surely bring an end to discrimination against women. What makes me even angrier in retrospect is not women's confinement but the brainwashing that did not allow us young women even to think of questioning (qtd in Salhi, *Between the Languages of Silence and the Woman's Word* 82).

⁵⁶ The words « brother », « sister » are the appellations traditionally used amongst Algerian freedom fighters.

As a matter of a fact, women's nursing positions were met with severe opposition; male combatants did not accept the fact that women would attend to wounded soldiers and violate the segregation between the two sexes. Nonetheless, as the war progressed, the number of casualties increased, they had no choice but to integrate women into the medical army (Meberbeche-Senouci 37). Hiddleston observes that the literature produced by historians like Djébar and Amrane-Minne demonstrates that women's contribution to the war effort entailed a set of varied and multifaceted strategies that cannot be classified into a single category (36). In *Women and the War Story (1996)*, Miriam Cooke emphasizes that Algerian women's militancy did not consist of assuming men's role in battle; it marked the emergence of new, unparalleled strategies of insurrection that assigned women to central roles of resistance (Hiddleston 38). Women's testimonies in *Fantasia* show that *el mujahidat* fought on the frontline, they lived in disease-ridden garrisons, and they endured imprisonment, torture, sexual assault, and displacement; after the war these women were subjected to neglect, indifference, and occlusion.

During the decade of her literary silence, Djébar turned to film-making. In 1978, she produced her first docu-fiction, *La Noubia des femmes du Mont Chenoua*, the novelist travelled back to her native city of Cherchell, fifteen years after the war, she visited the surrounding mountains, and the fields, and interviewed the elder women of her tribe. She recorded their experiences of the war, and she later incorporated their testimonies in the third part of *L'Amour, la fantasia* (Donadey, *Rekindling the Vividness of the Past* 885). Algerian women's voices whisper to correct the lapses in the French archives with historical knowledge passed down orally from one generation to another, setting a dichotomy between the masculine written version of colonial history, and the nation's female collective memory. The

wartime chronicles foreground the nature of women's contribution in the Algerian resistance, they stand to testify to the hardships they endured.

In recording and inscribing the testimonies, Djébar aims to historicize women's experiences of the war so they would become a part of the nation's historical discourse. The novelist dedicates *La Nouba des femmes du Mont Chenoua* to Algeria's unsung war heroine Yamina Oudaï, known by her war name Zoulikha. She was married to El Hadj Oudaï, a *mujahid* who organized the clandestine resistance in the city of Cherchell, in 1954. After his execution, Zoulikha joined the *maquis* and took over her husband's operations leaving her children behind. In 1958, she was captured in an enemy raid, she was interrogated and tortured for ten days, she was then executed by a death flight, and her body was never recovered (Assia Djébar, *La Nouba des femmes du Mont Chenoua* 54:50-01:04:36).

Djébar's narrative is haunted by a multitude of voices that claim a space in the text to narrate the trauma of the war. The novelist does not provide any referential markers, and there is no separation between the autobiographical passages and the stories of the women of Mount Chenoua. The first to narrate her wartime experience is Chérifa, she was 13 years old when she joined her brothers at the *maquis*⁵⁷. After an enemy raid, she fled the scene along with her brother Ahmed. They run, under a hail of bullets, into a field, Ahmed obtained martyrdom, and the little girl was able to hide in a tree, for a whole night (*LAF* 167-171). At dawn, she jumped and looked for her brother's body, she dragged him all the way back to the *douar*, so he could get a proper burial:

⁵⁷ The word *maquis*, French for dense Mediterranean scrub, was used in reference to the French resistance movement during the Vichy occupation. It was used –in turn– to represent the headquarters of the Algerian resistance.

Je tentai de le porter; je ne pus que le traîner, ses pieds sans bottillons laissant un sillon derrière lui... Je voulais le laver, lui mouiller au moins le visage. J'ai pris de l'eau dans mes paumes : j'ai commencé à l'en asperger, comme des ablutions, sans me rendre compte qu'en même temps je pleurais, je sanglotais... (*LAF* 174)

I tried to carry him; I managed to drag him, his bare feet scraped along the ground behind me... I wanted to wash him, at least to moisten his face. I took water in the palms of my hands; I started to sprinkle it over him, as one does for one's ablutions, without realizing that I was crying, sobbing all night... (*FAC* 121).

In *La Nouba*, Chérifa is unable to face the camera and tell her own story to the audience; her mother narrates it on her behalf, sitting by her father's side on a straw mat (01:13:09). Nonetheless; her silence is loud, it mirrors the distress women face in conjuring the memory of the war. Her testimony in *L'Amour, la fantasia* unfolds unhindered; it provides great insight into the nature of women's interventions at the *maquis*, the activities they carried out, and the treatment they received. Algeria's "Antigone" whose bravery has been reproached by the men in her entourage: "elle que les cousins, les voisins, les alliés, les oncles paternels accusent de se prendre pour un quatrième mâle, en fuyant le douar et les soldats français, au lieu de se terrer comme les autres femelles !" (*LAF* 175) [the one the cousins, neighbours, relations by marriage, paternal uncles, all accuse of behaving as if she were the fourth son in the family, running away like that from the *douar* and the French soldiers, instead of staying put with the other females!] (*FAC* 122).

She served, after her brother's execution, as a nurse in an underground hospital near a combat zone. She was in charge of providing first aid to the injured,

and of washing their clothes and their bed sheets. Chérifa was often pressured by F.L.N high-ranking commanders to get married to either a Chef or any other partisan; with the support of the chief medical officer, she was able to evade the brothers' demands. Later on, Chérifa was detained by the French in an incursion. In prison, she was questioned, beaten, starved, she has also faced the threat of being raped, of being killed many a time. She remained in prison until the end of the war (*LAF* 185-200).

The second testimony opens up with the following statement: “La “révolution” a commencé chez moi, elle a fini chez moi, comme peuvent en témoigner les douars de ces montagnes!” (*LAF* 209) [The ‘revolution’ began and ended in my house as every douar in these mountains can bear witness] (*FAC* 146). Lla Zohra de Bou Semmam, Djebar’s distant relative of the Berkani tribe, was 88 years old by the time the movie was filmed, she had four sons, all of them served the F.L.N army and gained martyrdom (*La Noubra* 32-00). Lla Zohra engaged in the resistance by cultivating the land, by raising cattle in order to provide food and shelter for the *mujahideen*, and by sewing military uniforms. She served the cause by nourishing and protecting the combatants for five years.

Lla Zohra states that it was not possible to count the number of the partisans that came to her house on a daily basis, and that she was never able to speak to them as well: “Et pouvais tu parler? Tu ne pouvais pas! Seulement retrousser les manches, pétrir la pâte, préparer la marmite, contrôler la cuisson, ainsi, toute la journée ; car ils venaient, ils partaient, par petit groupes...” (*LAF* 210). [And could you ever say a word? Impossible! All you could do was roll up your sleeves, knead the dough, prepare the stew pot, see to the cooking, and so on, the whole day, there were always little groups of them coming and going...] (*FAC* 146). Lla Zohra had sustained the

revolution and she had suffered the wrath of the French army; they burned her farm, her house, and the surrounding fields several times (*LAF* 209).

To quell the people's resistance during the War of Liberation, the French army extensively relied on the scorched-earth policy. They'd burn the lands, farms, homes, and animals of those who supported the resistance. Victim of many attacks, Lla Zohra didn't surrender. When her house and farm could no longer be restored, she established a camp in the forest and continued to prepare meals for the *mujahideen* (*LAF* 212).

In one of the *enfumades*, Lla Zohra endured a severe head injury. She has also lost her elder sister who died out of heart pain since the soldiers stripped them out of the clothes they were wearing and burned them as well, for days, they were left with nothing to wear: "Ma sœur, que Dieu ait son âme, plus vieille que moi, mourut de cette peine! ils nous enlevèrent les habits et nous laissèrent tels quels, tels que notre mère nous a faits !...Quelles épreuves raconter et lesquelles laisser à l'oubli?... " (*LAF* 228) [My sister, may her soul rest in peace! She was older than me, she died, she never got over the shock! They took our clothes, and left us like that, naked as the day we were born!... What trials shall I tell you about, and which shall I leave to be forgotten...] (*FAC* 159).

Lla Zohra laments the fact that the women of the resistance could not read or write to record their stories and their trials for they were sentenced to silence, and forgetfulness (*LAF* 212). Salhi maintains that the exclusion of Algerian women's war chronicles from the official national discourse has rendered these heroines into mythical figures of a distant past, dispossessing the younger generation from brave female idols (*Between the Languages of Silence and the Woman's Word* 85).

One more freedom fighter relates in yet another section entitled “Voix” her wartime experience, she has also supported the resistance by feeding and housing the combatants, she lost five family members: her husband, her three sons, and her brother whose body she retrieved from a combat zone and buried (*LAF* 278). After independence, the narrator was destitute, she had no home, no source of income, and she had lost all of her male family members. She heard that in the city, a man called Allal was responsible of distributing vacant settler houses to the people. She visited him and demanded her right for a shelter and was met with indifference: “O Allal, où est mon droit? M’exclamai-je. Mes fils ont combattu de là jusqu’à la frontière tunisienne, pendant que toi, tu restais cachés dans les grottes et les trous !... Donne-moi mon droit !... Ils ne m’ont rien donné...” (*LAF* 279) [‘O Allal, where are my rights?’ I exclaimed. ‘My sons fought from here to the Tunisian border, while you remained hidden in caves and holes!’... Give me my rights! ‘They didn’t give me a thing...’] (*FAC* 200). By shedding light on marginalized chapters in the history of Algerian resistance, Djébar’s witnesses forge a subversive narrative that broadens the confines of historical discourse, and that sets forth adequate dynamics of interchange between the oppressed and the oppressor.

Through story-telling, women resist dispossession, and colonial acculturation. The oral transmission of cultural heritage kept the nation’s collective memory alive. Djébar emphasises the important role women play in the production, the dissemination, and the preservation of historical knowledge. The oral transmission of the chain of memories is made present in a scene in *La Noubba*, as several matriarchs murmur stories of the dead, stories of the living to young girls, in this way history reinvents itself again and again (31:29). The stories these women narrate are not confined to the history of the war of liberation, Djébar states that: “...a woman’s

memory spans centuries – just one woman. She could talk of an obscure, forgotten old woman she used to know who used to talk of the old days. This is precisely how Algerian women ‘relay’ the past...” (qtd in Salhi, *Between the Languages of Silence and the Woman’s Word* 94).

In the third part of *Fantasia*, the voices of the *raconteuses* of Mount Chenoua would emerge, through the blanks and gaps, to patch the textual fragments present in the colonial archives. In 1842, the French invaders burned, under the commandment of Saint Arnaud, the Berkani tribe (the tribe from which Djébar descends). Saint Arnaud’s *razzia* didn’t quell the resistance of the *zaouia*. The military commander chose then a different strategy of pacification, in 1843; he took members of the tribe as hostages and exiled them to France (*LAF* 249). The official record (which is a letter the General sent to his brother) states that they have deported 8 chiefs. However, Djébar’s foremothers assert that they took 48 hostages, including a pregnant woman:

“Huit des chefs des trois principales fractions,” écrit le commandant Français qui évoque les otages. “Quarante-huit prisonniers pour l’île Sainte-Marguerite: hommes, femmes, enfants, parmi eux une femme enceinte,” rectifient les chuchotements qui se tissent aujourd’hui à l’endroit où la zaouia a brûlé, au milieu des verges plus rares (*LAF* 250)

‘Eight of the chiefs of the three principal fractions,’ the French general writes, referring to the hostages. ‘Forty-eight prisoners bound for the Island of Sainte-Marguerite: men, women, and children, including one pregnant woman’: so go the whispers, setting the record straight today, on the site of the gutted *zaouia*, where the orchards are now more sparse (*FAC* 171)

Women’s tales of the history of the conquest, whispered during family gatherings at night to young girls in the circle of *diseuses*, stand to correct the French version of

events which falsifies the number of the forcibly displaced captives, and which excludes an account of what befell on them. Their stories were preserved, through time, by women's oral lore. One of the widows of the war heard the story from her grandmother, who was associated in marriage to the Berkani clan, in one of their sittings. A tale that has been transmitted from one story-teller to another, and from one generation to the other.

Djebar, in turn, takes a place in the circle of listeners of which she was expelled at a young age on account of her French education. She then claims a space in history for her ancestress, who she calls: the first expatriate, she writes:

Je t'imagine, toi, l'inconnue, dont on parle encore de conteuse à conteuse... je te recrée toi, l'invisible, tandis que tu vas voyager avec les autres, jusqu'à l'île Sainte-Marguerite... ô aïeule d'aïeule la première expatriée... je te ressuscite, au cours de cette traversée que n'évoquera nulle lettre de guerrier français... (*LAF* 267)

I imagine you, the unknown woman, whose tale has been handed down by story-tellers... I re-create you, the invisible woman, sailing with the others to the Island of Sainte-Marguerite... O ancestress of ancestress! The first expatriate... I resurrect you during that crossing that no letter from any French soldier was to describe... (*FAC* 189)

By recreating the story of her abduction and her deportation, Djebar anchors the memory of her matriarch in the nation's collective consciousness. Not only does she uncover lost traces of past events, but she also destabilizes the authority of the French archival documents through the agency of her oral historical tradition. The novelist contrives the scene of her matriarchs' abortion on board of the French ship. By

depicting imagined scenes, she foregrounds, once again, the fictional nature of history.

It's through the chain of memories that Algerian women resist historical amnesia and colonial violence. Djébar emphasizes the importance of recording these historical materials, of creating an inclusive Algerian archive. She writes of her role as amanuensis: "Les vergers brûlés par Saint-Arnaud voient enfin leur feu s'éteindre, parce que la vieille aujourd'hui parle et que je m'appête à transcrire son récit" (*LAF* 251) [The fires in the orchards gutted by Saint Arnaud are finally extinguished, because the old lady talks today and I am preparing to transcribe her tale] (*FAC* 177). Djébar's strategies of rewriting the history of Algeria are radical in nature, the novelist's methods of deconstruction of the colonizer's historical archives prove that history is a fictional construct. By inscribing the testimonies of Algerian women and the tales of war that have been transmitted through the chain of memory and positioning them in direct confrontation with French historical documents, Djébar has developed a palimpsestic approach, that is not only reformative but also transformative.

4.3.3 Selfhood, Remembrance, and Women's Autobiography:

The autobiographical sections and women's testimonies of the Algerian Revolution interrelate in the third part of *L'Amour, la fantasia*. These sections get more and more personal than the self-writing present in the first and second parts of the novel. In the midst of the confessional narratives of the women of Mount Chenoua, Djébar is able to speak of herself more freely. Roswitha Geys asserts in her "Bilinguisme et Double Identité dans la Littérature Maghrébine de Langue Française" (2006), that in traditional Arabo-Berber societies the right to speak in public was the appanage of men (278). Women could solely speak in the presence of other women

and little kids in the home sphere. Customarily, they would gather to narrate stories of old times to fulfil their role as guardians of “the chain of memories” (Geys 278).

In fact, to speak in public was considered a transgression; to speak of oneself outside of the group anonymity was perceived a violation of moral codes. Djébar notes that in every women’s weekly, and monthly gathering the “I” of the first person has never been used (*LAF* 221). Girls were instructed at a very young age to refrain from speaking in public, and from addressing personal matters in female meetings. Djébar writes:

Comment une femme pourrait parler haut, même en langue arabe, autrement que dans l’attente du grand âge ? Comment dire « je », puisque ce serait dédaigner les formules-couvertures qui maintiennent le trajet individuel dans la résignation collective ?... Ne parler que de la conformité, pourrait me tancer ma grand-mère : le malheur intervient, inventif, avec une variabilité dangereuse (*LAF* 223)

[How could a woman speak aloud, even in Arabic, unless on the threshold of extreme age? How could she say 'I', since that would be to scorn the blanket-formulae, which ensure that each individual journeys through life in a collective resignation?... Only speak of what conforms, my grandmother would reprove me: to deviate is dangerous, inviting disaster in its multiple disguises] (*FAC* 156)

Markedly, the Algerian woman-novelist that attempts to write an autobiography commits a double transgression that of writing and that of revealing the self. Merini (2001) maintains that for women of the region, to speak of oneself is to breach an ancient edict that commands women to preserve their privacy, and to conceal their voice (98).

To contest the stigma that surrounds self-narration, Djébar's autobiographical "I" is joined by a chorus of female voices that relate the history of their resistance in the first person. Only then, was the novelist able to evoke her grandmother's death, the intimate letter she received after a lovers' quarrel, her time at the Quranic school, at the colonial school. Only then, was she able to reflect on the tumultuous relationship she leads with the French language. The novelist intended to record her personal battles along with women's war chronicles. It is an attempt to include "...a valorised, decolonised self..." into the nation's historical discourse (Kelly 261). Weaving history into fiction serves as a way to transgress patriarchy and colonial and contemporary modes of historical representation. It is due to the testimonies of the widows of the war (and to the 19th century colonial archives), that Djébar's personal history is not read in isolation. The stories of the widows of the war, of the women of the conquest, of Djébar's childhood blend together to form what Hiddleston labels: "a collective autobiography of the women of Algeria" (68).

To write an autobiography proves to be an extremely difficult task, Djébar maintains that to conjure one's childhood memories in the Other's language becomes synonymous with unveiling oneself, more precisely as indicated in *Dialectical Arabic* "to strip naked", laying bare without a shield (*LAF* 224). To unveil the self in the language of violence begets violence, the novelist states:

Tenter l'autobiographie par les seuls mots Français, c'est, sous le lent scalpel de l'autopsie à vif, montrer plus que sa peau. Sa chair se desquame, semble-t-il, en lambeaux du parler d'enfance qui ne s'écrit plus. Les blessures s'ouvrent, les veines pleurent, coule le sang de soi et des autres, qui n'a jamais séché (*LAF* 224)

[In writing of my childhood memories I am taken back to those bodies bereft of voices. To attempt an autobiography using French words alone is to lend oneself to the vivisector's scalpel, revealing what lies beneath the skin. The flesh flakes off and with it, seemingly, the last shreds of the unwritten language of my childhood. Wounds are reopened, veins weep, one's own blood flows and that of others, which has never dried] (*FAC* 156)

To survive the repercussions of inscribing one's life story in a language other than the ancestral one, the novelist anchors her writing project in her oral cultural heritage. Her recourse to tradition enabled her to voice the collective grievances of women and to reflect on her childhood and the circumstances of her upbringing in colonial Algeria, John Erickson states that Fantasia "is both a 'plural' chronicle and a 'singular' autobiography" (qtd in Kelly 262). The polyphonic nature of Djébar's narrative, a characteristic of the postmodern novel, challenges the authority of a main narrator subverting canonical literary conventions.

Notably, Djébar recognizes that the French she writes with is infested with the blood of the Algerian people: "Cette langue était autrefois sacrophage des miens; je la porte aujourd'hui comme un messenger transportait le pli fermé ordonnant sa condamnation au silence, ou au cachot" (*LAF* 300) [This language was formerly used to entomb my people; when I write it today I feel like the messenger of old, who bore a sealed missive which might sentence him to death or to the dungeon] (*FAC* 215). The paradox of writing a collective autobiography in French lies in the fact that the language of Djébar's education is the language of self-expression but also it constitutes an adverse language.

Djébar's attempt to voice the traumatic experiences of the widows of the war and to record a forgotten history of female resistance announces to be a challenging

endeavour. The women of Mount Chenoua struggle with remembering, their meditation on the memory of the war is deeply rooted in a traumatic place. Their testimony emerges in fragments, shrouded in distress. They subject their life narratives to self-censorship by proclaiming some painful experiences and evading others. Winifred Woodhull describes *L'Amour, la fantasia* as “a work of painstaking and often painful excavation” (qtd. in Gafaïti 815). Djébar often feels like an intruder, she approaches the war heroines with great caution; she monitors her gaze, her tone. She positions her body so as to tread, along with the story tellers, down the trope of broken memory.

In her *Haunting Legacies: Violent Histories and Transgenerational Trauma* (2010), Gabriel Schwab maintains that the paradox of inscribing traumatic memories lies in the fact that there are certain events that resist representation and that transcend any form of articulation, still they demand to be voiced, recounted, and witnessed (48). Schwab argues that victims of war violence tend to entomb painful experiences in “psychic crypts” that they conceal from themselves and from others, survivors create “...interior tombs haunted by the ghosts of the past... [that] come to haunt language from within, always threatening to destroy its communicative and expressive function” (49). Broken memories of close encounters with violence distort language; Djébar transcribes the testimonies of the women of Mount Chenoua in their raw linguistic form without any disregard to the silences, the pauses, the detours, and to the pain of remembering.

The widows of the war abstain from relating testimonies of sexual abuse. In the absence of the men who joined the resistance in the mountains, rape became a prominent threat. Many Algerian women were subjected to sexual violence by French soldiers; these women adhered to the law of silence. To break the silence surrounding

gender-based violence during the Algerian War of Liberation, Djébar questions the women about their experiences with wartime sexual violence: “‘Ma’ question frémit, entêtée. Il faudrait, pour l’expliciter, préparer mon corps tel qu’il se présente...Dire le mot secret et arabe de ‘dommage’, ou tout au moins de ‘blessure’ : -Ma sœur, y a-t-il eu, une fois, pour toi ‘dommage’ ? ” (*LAF* 282). [My question quivers persistently on my tongue. In order to put it into words I ought to prepare the outward appearance of my body... To say the private, Arabic word ‘damage,’ or at the most, ‘hurt’: ‘Sister, did you ever, at any time, suffer ‘damage’?] (*FAC* 202). The novelist reverts to the use of the secret expression commonly used amongst the womenfolk to allude to or to evade rape, the woman responds: “J’ai subi la France” (282), [I have endured France]⁵⁸ (PT).

Though she hid from the French soldiers for hours, she, the unnamed woman – all women-, was unable to escape them. She washed in the *wadi*, fixed her braid, tidied her scarf and went back home: “...la femme, chaque femme, revient une heure ou deux heures après, marche pour affronter le monde, pour éviter que le chancre ne s’ouvre davantage dans le cercle tribal... le viol, non-dit, ne sera pas violé, Avalé. Jusqu’à la prochaine alerte” (*LAF* 283) [...the woman, every woman, returns, one hour or two hours later, advances to face the world to prevent the chancre being opened in the tribal circle... rape will not be mentioned, will be respected. Swallowed. Until the next alarm] (*FAC* 202). Silence regarding rape during the French occupation of Algeria is embedded in cultural customs and social codes of conduct.

⁵⁸ I refrained from using Dorothy Blair’s translation of the quote, which reads “I submitted to ‘France’” (202), because I believe it’s not accurate, the use of the verb to submit in the context of rape is inappropriate. She didn’t surrender to ‘France’; she was violated by ‘France’.

To be able to speak of the unsayable, Djébar sets forth a dynamic of dialogic interchange: she narrates stories from the French historical archives to the war widows and in turn they share with her their wartime experiences. The novelist foregrounds that all historical knowledge is part of a chain of memories. She narrates the story of the death of the “nayetles” Fatma and Meriem, a tale that Eugène Fromentin had heard from a commander in the French army and inscribed in his travel journal, *Un été dans le Sahara* (LAF 235). By this way, another circle of listeners is formed: one witnesses, one hears and writes, and Djébar reports back an event that has occurred during the war of conquest to the heroines of the war of liberation. She writes: “Je traduis la relation dans la langue maternelle et je te la rapporte, moi, ta cousine. Ainsi je m’essaie, en éphémère diseuse, près de toi, petite mère assise devant ton potager” (LAF 237) [I, your cousin, translate this story into our mother tongue, and tell it now to you, sitting beside you, little mother, in front of your vegetable patch. So I try my hand as temporary story-teller] (FAC 162). On another night, the novelist narrates the events of the pillage of the village of El Aroub, in 1956. It has been reported that 45 *mujahideen* sought shelter in the *douar*, all of the villagers, without discrimination between men, women, children, and the elderly, endured the wrath of the French military forces. They were subjected to torture, to starvation, and to brutal forms of execution (LAF 291-292).

The French army reverted to the use of brutal means of torture to quench the resistance, they brutalized people collectively and/or individually. In her “L’Emergence du Militanisme Algérien contre la Répression Coloniale Française (1945-1962)” (2019), Meberbeche-Senouci maintains that forty years after the Algerian Independence, French military leaders such as: Marcel Bigeard, Jacques Massu, and Paul Aussaresses, testified to committing inhumane crimes against the

Algerian people (299). According to their testimonies, the methods of torture involved electric shocks to sensitive body parts, forced drowning, sodomy with wooden or glass objects, suspension by hanging, and cigarette burns (Meberbeche-Senouci 299).

In one of her visits to the French colonial archives of Algeria, Djébar had come across the testimony of Pierre Leulliette, the author of *Saint Michel et le Dragon* (1961), a book that delineates French methods of torture and subjugation. She declares: “Je le lis à mon tour, lectrice au hasard, comme si je me retrouvais enveloppée du voile ancestral ; seul mon œil libre allant et venant sur les pages, où ne s’inscrit pas seulement ce que le témoin voit, ni ce qu’il écoute” (*LAF* 293) [I come at length upon what he wrote, turn the pages at random, read as if I were shrouded in the ancestral veil; with my one free eye perusing the page, where is written more than the eye-witness sees, more than can be heard] (*FAC* 209). Once more, history weaves itself as fiction. In his monograph, Leulliette relates the love affair of a young Algerian woman with a French soldier, a story he had heard during his time in El Aroub village: “A nouveau, un homme parle, un autre écoute, puis écrit. Je bute, moi, contre leurs mots qui circulent ; je parle ensuite, je vous parle, à vous, les veuves...” (*LAF* 294) [Yet again, one man speaks, another listens, then writes. I stumble against their words which circulate; then I speak, I speak to you, the widows...] (*FAC* 210). By delineating the congruity between storytelling and historical knowledge, Djébar has demonstrated that the testimonies of the women of Mount Chenoua are legitimate archival sources that form an essential part of the nation’s history, and that historical truth will always remain a subject of interpretation.

4.3.4 Orality, and the Dialectization of Colonial Language

The matter of recording the testimonies of the women of Mount Chenoua is one of urgency, if not transcribed the stories of Algerian women's resistance would have been lost. In the third part of *Fantasia*, the voices of the freedom fighters narrate the history of the revolution in a French imbued with the intonations and syntax of the Berber and Arabic languages native to the land. The storytellers bespeak the trauma of the war in a mutated French, a linguistically modified register shaped to host the oral heritage of the nation. Djébar states that by rendering the French language familiar with the accents of the women of *djebel* Chenoua: “[elle] tente d’ancrer cette langue française dans l’oralité des femmes traditionnelles, [elle] l’enracine ainsi” (Mortimer 201), [[She] attempts to anchor this French language in the orality of traditional women, thereby [she] roots it] (PT). Algerian writers of French expression have developed diverse subversive writing strategies that decenter the French canonical literary tradition. By imbuing the idioms and intonations of Arabic and Berber into the French language, Algerian writers succeeded in creating innovative works of literature not since they refrained from producing novels written in standard French; but since they produced works that are deeply imbedded in their cultural tradition, and anchored in the rhythms of their mother languages (Déjeux and Mitsch 13).

To historicize the testimonies of *el mujahidat*, Djébar has reformed the language of her colonial education so that her oral heritage might survive the obfuscation of a foreign tongue. Malek Haddad states that francophone Algerian writers are compelled to: “*translate* thought that is *specifically Algerian*, thought that would have found full expression if its vehicle had been the Arabic language and Arabic writing” (qtd in Harrison 252). Attempting to inscribe their feelings, thoughts, and experiences in an alien language, (post)colonial writers of Algerian descent face

issues of “linguistic, cultural *fit*” (Harrison 256). Accordingly, traces of the mother language(s) can be perceived in Algerian novels of French expression. Arabic and Berber rhetoric inhabit the European text, leading to what Khatibi describes as “...writing that seeks its roots in another language...” (qtd in Erickson 10). The language of the freedom fighters carries the signs and structures of the dialects of Mount Chenoua, this form of linguistic *métissage* prevents the distortion of the events that the novelist aims to document.

In her study of the transcription of African oral textual features into Anglophonic literature (2007), Chantal Zabus opts for the use of the term “relexification” in reference to the proceedings West African writers revert to in order to weave aspects of their oral tradition into European texts (111). The term was coined by Loreto Todd in her: “The English Language in West Africa” (1982), the linguist maintains that to relexify one’s first language is “[to use] English vocabulary but indigenous structures and rhythms” (qtd in Zabus 112). More precisely, the process of relexification entails the reshaping of the lexis of the Western language through the infusion of the oral structures and speech patterns of the mother language. Zabus reintroduces relexification in *The African Palimpsest Indigenization of Language in: The West African Europhone Novel* as a literary technique that encompasses:

The making of a new register of communication out of an alien *lexicon*... [which] functions as an ‘interlanguage’ or as a ‘third register ... such a register results from the “minting,” ... the “recutting,” ... or the “fashioning” [out] ... of a new European-based novelistic language wrung out of the African tongue (112-113).

Writing from in-between two cultural realms, Djébar engraves the lexicon, the idioms, and the intonations of the dialects of the Dahara Mountains into French so it may host the stifled voices of the widows of the Algerian war of liberation. Molière's language undergoes a metamorphosis; the result is a relexified text that is neither Arabic nor French.

In his *Maghreb Pluriel* (1983), Khatibi examines the issue of colonial bilingualism and the language of the colonized/postcolonial writer. He conceptualizes the processes at work when a writer in possession of two languages in conflict attempts to forge a new creative space. When the first language infiltrates the language of colonial education, an inversion of signifiers occurs, and changes both ends (Erickson 11). Language interference in a hybrid text is perceptible in both linguistic systems, as one language constantly strives to shape, structure, and naturalize the other:

Each one *signals* to the other, calls on the other to maintain itself as outside. Outside against outside, that foreignness (strangeness): what a language desires ... is to be singular, irreducible, rigorously other. ...in effect, all Maghrebian literature of so-called French expression is a narrative of translation. I don't say it is only translation; I emphasize that it's a question of a narrative that speaks in tongues (qtd in Erickson 11).

The Western language of the bilingual writer bears within it the dense fabric of his first language(s). A language that dictates its own set of rules. To write between languages, the postcolonial novelist makes recourse to translation but not in the traditional sense of the word. Zabus maintains that interpretative translation shouldn't be equated with relexification. She draws a clear distinction between the two approaches: "...relexification is characterized by the absence of an original. It

therefore does not operate from the language of one text to the other but from one language to the other within the same text” (118).

Relexification manifests itself not only in the third part of *Fantasia*, inhabited by the voices of the widows of the war, but also in the autobiographical sections of the novel. In order to forge a counter-colonial discourse, and to depict without constraint her experience at the French colonial school, life in colonial Algeria, and to be able to historicize Algerian women’s stories of resistance Djébar reverts to the use of a *mélange* of transcodage, relexification, translation, and transliteration. Transcodage takes place in the passages that replicate the exact same speech of the women in *La Nouba du Mont Chenoua*, it involves a great deal of transliterations of Arabic and Berber expressions. Relexification is made present in the text when the narrators’ first languages impose their rules of syntax and grammar and compel the novelist to imbue aspects of her oral heritage in the flesh of the French language. The latter undergoes a linguistic transmutation, however; “the reshaping of the French language is carried out without distorting meaning, the language is reborn not mutilated” (Harrat, Meberbeche-Senouci 393).

Admittedly, the defamiliarization of the French language might estrange the Western readership from the text. Déjeux describes, in a way, the process of relexification often adopted by Algerian authors of French expression. He observes that they had a tendency to dissect the language, to refine it in order to instill the textual features of their first language(s): “...as if to say, ‘See here, I am not French; I am not bound to the norms of French grammar, the wicked stepmother’” (*Francophone Literature in the Maghreb* 11). In truth, writing in an Algerianized or dialectized French transcends a defiance of linguistic codes and grammatical norms. It is not purely a question of writing back in a subverted imperial language but also of

authenticity. As construed by Déjeux “...writing in French is a profound ‘wounded writing’...” (11), it would have been preposterous for Djébar to relate the war narratives of the women of Mount Chenoua in Standard French. When the colonial language attempts to depict the violence committed in its name, it becomes disoriented, muddled, and evasive. To sustain Algerian women’s history and to voice the unsayable, the language stretches; it turns into a layered language, more inclusive of the culture and history of the colonized people.

The Third part of *Fantasia*, opens with the story of Chérifa, the freedom fighter that joined her brothers in the *maquis* at a very young age. Her testimony emerges in fragments, inscribed in a relexified French Chérifa’s wartime stories reflect the pain of remembering traumatic events. Let us consider a few examples of relexification in her testimonial narrative:

1. a) “Même si la faim me tenaillait, je voulais leur montrer, montrer devant la France, que j’étais rassasiée !” (*LAF* 194) [Even though I was famished I wanted to show them, show the whole of ‘France’, that that was all I wanted!] (*FAC* 136).
- b) “La France, quand elle m’avait arrêtée dans les montagnes, était étonnée !” (*LAF* 198) [When the French arrested me in the mountains, they were astonished!] (*FAC* 139).

The synecdoche ‘France’ is often found in the testimonies of the women of Mount Chenoua instead of the expressions “French soldiers” and/or “French army.” The reference to the state of ‘France’ in their speech denotes that the people of Algeria recognize that they are under a political, economic, military and cultural form of colonisation.

2. “Ceux de la montagne me firent parvenir un message” (*LAF* 169) [The men in the mountains got a message to me] (*FAC* 118).

The expression “ceux de la montagne” is the equivalent of the appellation *ta3 djebel* in *el darija* used by the masses to refer to the freedom fighters of the maquis.

3. “J’ai assez perdu de temps! Je vais aller voir où est tombé mon frère!” (*LAF* 173). “‘I’ve wasted enough time!’ I thought ‘I’m going to see where my brother fell’” (*FAC* 121).

In an attempt to flee an enemy raid, Chérifa’s brother gained martyrdom. The verb *tomber* is used instead of *istashhad* meaning: to die honourably in the field of battle, *mourrir au champ d’honneur*.

4. “Je savais que, dans ce douar, les hommes étaient avec la France” (*LAF* 171) [I knew the men in that *douar* were in with ‘France’] (*FAC* 120).

Note the use of the preposition “avec”, commonly used in Dialectical Arabic to convey compliance with the French.

5. “Non, répondis-je. Où va mon frère, je vais !” (*LAF* 185) [‘No’ I replied. ‘I go wherever my brother goes!’] (*FAC* 130).

“Où va mon frère, je vais!” is a calque of the Arabic saying *Win yroh nroh*.

6. “Qu’elle mette une *kachabia*! Qu’elle n’aille pas ainsi, avec les soldats” (*LAF* 185) [‘She must put on a *kachabia* ! Don’t let her go among the soldiers like that!] (*FAC* 130).

The above statement is grammatically correct but it doesn’t adhere to the syntactical rules of the French language, it’s infused with the resonances of *el darija*. The equivalent of: “Qu’elle n’aille pas ainsi, avec les soldats,” in French should be, “qu’elle n’accompagne pas les soldats vêtue ainsi”.

7. “Si ma mère me voyait, comme elle serait fière ! Voilà, je suis laveuse de blessés !” (*LAF* 186) [‘If my mother could see me, how proud she’d be! Just look, I’ve learnt how to wash wounded men’] (*FAC* 131).

The phrase: “Laveuse de blessés” is relexified from the Arabic *ghassala*, the one in charge of washing the dead according to the Islamic tradition. The women that joined the *maquis* were in charge of cleaning the rooms and washing the bedding of the injured, hence, the expression *laveuse de blessés*.

8. “Dans cette histoire de mariage, ils pensaient me donner à ‘un chef’ ! Un chef de Mouzaïa” (*LAF* 187) [In this marriage business, they thought of giving me to a ‘chief’! A chief from Mouzaïa] (*FAC* 131).

The verb ‘me donner’ is relexified from the verb *ymadoni* in Dialectical Arabic which is to give my hand in marriage probably without consent. During the colonial period, women didn’t have a say in the matter of marriage.

9. “Tue-moi, lui dis-je, si tu es un homme! Mais tu n’es pas un homme, tu es un goumier ! Moi qui ne suis qu’une fille, vas-y, tue-moi ! Je ne suis pas une femme complète, mais c’est tout comme ! Tue-moi, car tu aimes tuer!” (*LAF* 190) [‘Kill me’, I said, ‘if you’re a man! But you aren’t a man, you’re a goumier! I’m not yet a grown woman, but that makes no difference! Kill me, since you love killing!'] (*FAC* 133).

The previous passage is imbued with relexified expressions, “si tu es un homme” stands for *ida kont rajel* in *darija* meaning “you’re not man enough.”

The phrase “une femme complète” is relexified from *mrâa kamla*, which designates a mature woman, a fully grown woman, or an adult woman. We say in French: “une femme mûre, où bien une femme d’âge mûr.” While the expression “c’est tout comme” is commonly used in French to convey

similarity; its placement within relexified syntactical elements denotes that it has also been dialectized from the term *kifkif*.

10. “Mettez-moi vingt ans de prison, si vous voulez, je ne suis pas perdante!”
(LAF 195) [You can keep me in prison for twenty years if you like. I’m not giving in!] (FAC 137).

Instead of the following construction: *emprisonnez-moi 20 ans*, or *condamnez-moi à 20 de prison*. The sentence is relexified from: *hottoni 20 sna fi lhabs*, or *a3toni 20 sna habss* which can be translated into “put me 20 years in jail”, or “give me 20 years of jail”.

Chérifa mediates on the War of Liberation in a language imbued with the dialects of the mountains of the Dahra. The intonations, rhythms, and lexicon of her first language lurk on the surface of the French text. The colonial language was conditioned to relay women’s repressed traumatic experiences. Djebbar reflects on the process of inscribing the oral testimony of the war heroine in the colonial language: “Chérifa! ... Ta voix s’est prise au piège; mon parler français la déguise sans l’habiller...” (LAF 203) [Chérifa... I have captured your voice; disguised it with my French without clothing it...] (FAC 142).

Djebbar’s French does not obfuscate the narrator’s expressive language, out of the linguistic *métissage* between the language of the colonizer and the language of the colonized a new register of French is formulated. The “voix” sections of the third part of *Fantasia* are often succeeded by poetic rewritings of the testimonies of the women of Mount Chenoua. The novelist conveys the life narratives of the widows of the war in a relexified French, then she resumes her own style of writing and presents lyrical reinterpretations of the women’s stories. The contrast between Djebbar’s poetic French

and the Algerianized French of the women of Mount Chenoua regulates the dialogic dynamics between the different voices of the polyphonic novel.

4.4 Conclusion

This chapter has foregrounded the ways in which the authors' have resisted the colonizer's cultural conversion. The novelists have yielded the tools of their indoctrination and crafted a counter discourse that destabilizes hegemonic modes of representation. Feraoun's self narrative has ushered the emergence of an authentic Algerian literary movement. The colonial school represented for Feraoun, not only a site of social advancement but also a site of negotiation between the coersivly instilled cultural values of the colonizer and the traditional cultural heritage he refuses to renounce. The novelist developed subtle methods of subversion that entailed the appropriation of borrowed frameworks that are remolded in order to voice an Arabo-Berber perspective.

In his autoethnography, Feraoun offers a humanist portrait of an often distorted body of traditions, all the while reflecting on questions of selfhood. Djebbar's strategy, on the other hand, emerges as a more defiant form of resistance, one that is politically structured, unapolegetically decolonial. Her narrative challenges the taxonomy of literary genres; it blurs the boundaries between autobiography, fiction, and histeriography. She rereads and rewrites the French colonial archives, weakens their authority by accentuating the contradictions embeded in the practice of recording colonial history. She also creates a mosaic of interlating testimonies of the experiences of the widows of the war of conquest and the war of liberation. The novelist constructs an Algerian female genealogy, while seeking to reconcile with her split self; she forges a collective autobiography of desolation and remembrance.

Conclusion

The primary aim of this dissertation was to examine the processes by which the colonial French regime executed its cultural conquest of the Algerian mind. The long history of the French colonization reshaped the Algerian society; the main legacy of colonialism is the presence of the French language that has been anchored into the nation's linguistic fabric. The study was mainly interested in the role of the French colonial school that operated as a tool of cultural indoctrination. The examination of the history of education in Algeria proved to be a tenacious task, the diversity of the policies that were implemented in the colony is striking, there's a huge discrepancy between the strategies that have been theorized by policy makers, the laws that have been enacted by the colonial administration, and the regulations that were imposed by colonial settlers. These divergent attitudes were not coherently implemented throughout the Algerian territory, findings demonstrate that educational policies that were effectuated in one French department were different from the legislations enacted in other parts of the colony.

In an attempt to provide a comprehensive outline of the history of education in Algeria, the present contribution examines the correlation between the educational reforms implemented in France and in Algeria under the French Third Republic. We argued that metropolitan educational experts orchestrated an educational system that aimed at uniting a linguistically divided nation, while the exportation of the reformed educational system to the Algerian colony aimed at decimating the linguistic and cultural body of the nation. We posited that French language instruction at the primary level of schooling constituted the key instrument of France's universal and domestic *mission to civilize*. The Third Republic's reformed educational system served a national policy of assimilation and a colonial policy of deculturation.

Our findings show that, the Ferryian project proved extremely pernicious to the Algerian scholastic enterprise for Algerians learned how to read and write the Arabic language in the Quranic school. The separation, proclaimed by the Ferry laws, between the school and religion decimated Algerian forms of education. The Third French Republic, in the name of laicization, did not tolerate the teaching offered in Quranic schools. Consequently, the number of traditional schools was strictly limited, the *zâouyas*, were monitored, persecuted, or closed. These constraints resulted in the decline of the number of *ulémas* and *mouderrésins*. Many Quranic schools closed in the first decades of the colonial era. As a result of the dismantling of Islamic schools, less than five percent of Muslim children attended any school, which worsened with time as one generation disabled the next. Subsequently, the use of literary Arabic, barely taught, deteriorated.

In order to retrace colonial educational policies and institutional practices and to examine their impact on individuals who received a colonial education, through the study of literary representations of pedagogical mechanisms, we conducted a comparative study between Mouloud Feraoun's *Le Fils du pauvre* and Assia Djebar's *L'Amour, la fantasia*. To offer a better understanding of the comparative analysis of the narratives, we outlined the history of the emergence of the Algerian novel of French expression. Both novels are fundamental texts in the Algerian literary tradition, Feraoun's autobiographical narrative was written in reaction to the complete exclusion of an Arabo-Berber perspective in the literary works produced by writers of *L'École d'Alger*. It's considered to be the first authentic Algerian novel, however, the circumstances of its publication obscure its potential to challenge colonial authority. The novel was subjected to editorial censorship that carved out the parts in which the author depicts his schooling experience and the effects of the Second World War on

Kabyle subjects. Djébar's *L'Amour, la fantasia* is a groundbreaking work of art, the novelist forged innovative techniques that decenter western modes of literary and historical representation.

The examination of Mouloud Feraoun's and Assia Djébar's depiction of colonial education testifies to the ideological manipulation inherent within the system of education, and to the oppressive attitudes the Algerian people were subjected to. Mouloud Feraoun's educational journey is singular; the author of *Le Fils du pauvre* has been exposed to religious proselytism at a very young age. He lived in poverty because of the colonial regime, a regime he was brainwashed to be grateful for at school. Our analysis of the politics of education of The Normal School of Bouzaréa demonstrated that Feraoun was institutionalized to occupy an in-between space, to live in a state of conflict between two cultural worlds. Unable to take a stance for the war of liberation, Feraoun questioned his belonging and his allegiances constantly. The author was committed to the transmission and to the preservation of his cultural heritage. His disenchantment with the institution that saved him from misery brought about works of literature that would set the way for the future generation of writers.

In her highly acclaimed novel *La Fantasia*, Djébar portrayed the tribulant relationship she entertained with her education. The present research foregrounded the correlation between women's schooling and emancipation. Djébar's Western education enabled her to escape confinement; however, it issued within her a war between languages, the language of her instruction and the language of her upbringing. The novelist lamented her loss of the Arabic and Berber languages, she portrayed her schooling experience at the traditional Quranic school, one of the last remaining institutions of that kind. The novelist also discussed the estranging potential of the pedagogical materials that she was taught at the French colonial

school. On numerous occasions the novelist deplored her alienation from her traditional cultural world. Djébar sought to compromise by repurposing the language of her instruction in her quest to rewrite the history of the Algerian nation.

This dissertation probed into the literary strategies of resistance that were devised by both writers, the research outcomes demonstrate that Algerian narratives written during the colonial and postcolonial era display aesthetic and structural traits of the postmodern novel. Both novels resist western norms of classification. In his attempt to assert his cultural belonging, Feraoun forged an autoethnography long before the term gained currency in the literary field. He reappropriated the tools of anthropological writing and produced a humanist ethnographic representation of the kabyle society and cultural practices. Djébar, on the other hand, designed a method of historical deconstruction that entailed the rereading and the rewriting of the French colonial archives, all the while foregrounding the fictional nature of colonial history. The novelist reinscribed Algerian women into the history of the conquest and colonization of Algeria, she encoded in her narrative the testimonies of Algeria's unsung heroines in a relexified French. In order to authentically articulate the experiences of Algerian women during the colonial period, the French language had to metamorphose into a linguistically and an aesthetically suitable medium of Algerian expression.

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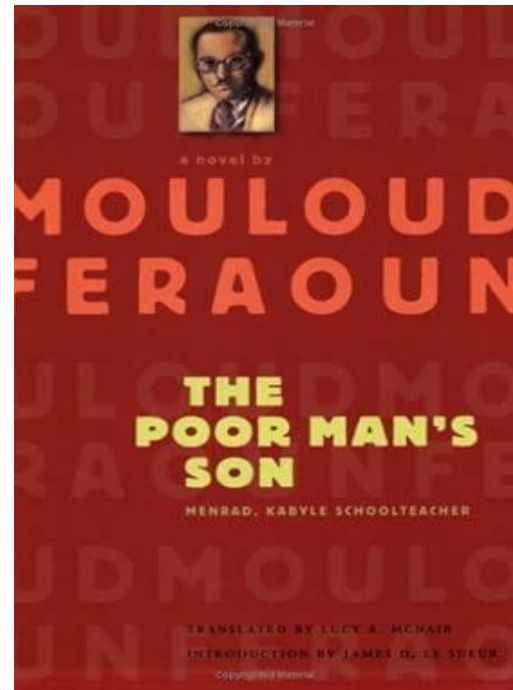
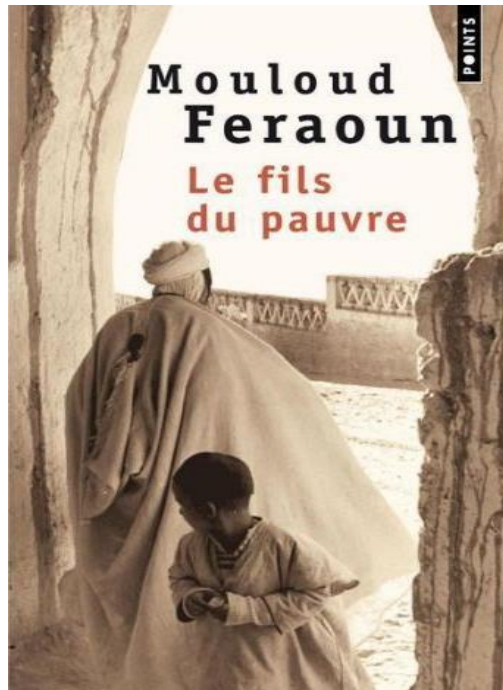
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Appendices

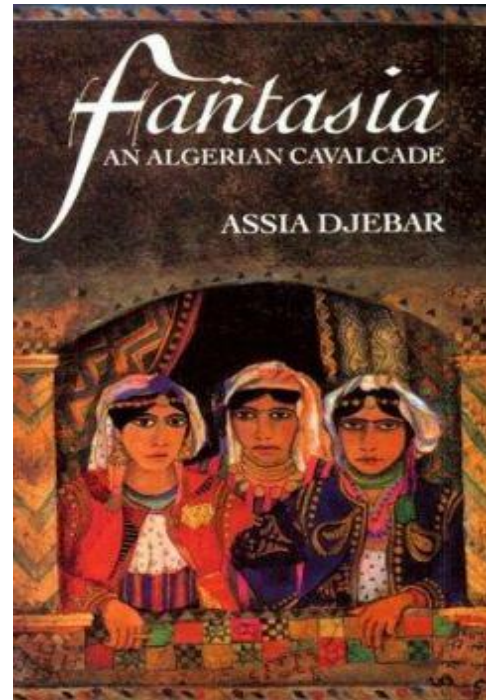
Appendix I: Summary of *Le Fils du Pauvre*



Set in the small village of Tizi-Hibel - Mouloud Feraoun's *Le Fils du pauvre* (1950) traces the upbringing of a young kabyle boy during the colonial period. The novel offers valuable insight into the difficult conditions of life in colonial Algeria. Fouroulou, the protagonist, narrates his childhood memories, he describes his village, and traces his family's genealogy. He depicts the clan feuds, the customs and the people's way of life. Fouroulou's story mainly centers on his experience at the French colonial school. He was the only member of his family to have the opportunity to be admitted at the French school. His success within the colonial educational system enabled him to access the teacher's training college and evade a life of poverty. Fouroulou's recollections elucidate the inner-workings of the colonial educational system. Despite of his institutionalization, Fouroulou remained deeply devoted to his

culture. He affectionately remembers his aunts' (Khalti and Nana) pottery work and carpet weaving, and celebrates traditional Kabyle practices.

Appendix II: Summary of *L'Amour, la Fantasia*



In the novel that challenges the taxonomy of genres, Assia Djebar weaves multiple narrative threads into a historical palimpsest. *L'Amour, la fantasia*, intertwines the recollections of a young Arab girl who was admitted into the French colonial school, with the story of the conquest of Algiers, tales of the French occupation, and the testimonies of the women who took part in the War of Liberation. Djebar's narrative is chronologically fragmented, polyphonic, and documentary. The narrator assumes the role of a historian and rereads, and dismantles French archival texts, and posits them in direct confrontation with the oral testimonies of the widows of the Algerian Revolution. Djebar braids her personal story with the tales of Algerian women creating a collective autobiography that restores lost episodes of the history of Algeria.

Glossary

- Akham: Tamazight for house.
- Akhbar: Arabic for news.
- Aman: to surrender and to request safe conduct.
- Amir-al-Muminin: Arabic for leader of the faithful
- Asalas alemmas: Tamazight for the central wooden beam of a Kabyle house.
- Bled: Arabic for homeland.
- Burnous/bernous: a traditional woolen cloak worn by men
- Caïd: Arabic for judge.
- Chéchia: a scarf traditionally worn by men.
- Derija: colloquial Arabic, Algerian Arabic dialect.
- Dey: transliteration of the Turkish word *dayi*: political and military leader.
- Douar: Arabic word for rural settlement.
- Fellah: Arabic for farmer.
- Habous: a property set for charity that is controlled by a religious institution.
- Hadith: the saying of the Prophet Mohammed (peace be upon him).
- Hadj: Arabic for an elder or the one who has fulfilled the “hajj” (the pilgrimage to Mecca, Saudi Arabia).
- Harem: the home sphere where women are confined in Turkish and Islamic societies.

- Halakt Dikr: Arabic for the circle of invocations, where the biography of the Prophet Mohammed (peace be upon him) and his companions is invoked.
- Jinn: Arabic for spirit.
- Kaderia: the religious brotherhood to which El Amir Abd el Kader belongs.
- Khalti: Arabic for maternal aunt.
- Karakou: a traditional embroidered jacket worn by Algerian women.
- Kardoun: a long hairband traditionally used for straightening hair.
- Karoubas: the different factions within the extended family.
- Méderasa: Arabic for school.
- Mouderrésins: Arabic for teachers.
- Mujahid: Arabic for militant.
- Mujahida: Arabic for female militant.
- Sérouel: Arabic for trousers.
- Shaykh/sheikh: a religious leader, or the head of the family and/or tribe.
- Taleb (plur. Tulab): a student or a learner, the one who seeks knowledge.
- Thajmaât (Tamazight), Djemma (Arabic): the main square where the men of the village gather.
- Thigedith: Tamazight for the pillar of the Kabyle house.
- Tzarl-rit: women's ululations.
- Ulémas: Muslim scholars

- Wadi: Arabic for river valley.
- Waqf: an endowment offered to religious institutions to fund education and charitable work.
- Zaouïa: a religious institution where Muslims traditionally received an education.

Abstract

This thesis examines the role of French education as a tool of cultural conquest in Algeria. The French colonial educational system is marked by hasty experiments that gave rise to some irreconcilable contradictions. Schools served, simultaneously, as sites of acculturation and alienation. This research explores the policies, the institutional practices, and the ideological values that were enforced by French policy makers. The study focuses particularly on the effects of the exportation of the Jules Ferry laws from the metropolis to the Algerian colony. The comparative study of Mouloud Feraoun's *Le Fils du pauvre*, and Assia Djébar's *L'Amour, la fantasia* aims at demonstrating the ways in which the authors subversively represent their experience within the French colonial educational system. The thesis also seeks to outline the processes by which both authors internalized, resisted, and ultimately navigated the imposed linguistic and cultural frameworks.

Key words: Education, Colonial School, Cultural Conversion, The Self, Ambivalence, Resistance

Résumé

Cette thèse examine le rôle de l'éducation française comme outil de conquête culturelle en Algérie. Le système éducatif colonial français est marqué par des expériences précipitées qui ont donné lieu à certaines contradictions irréconcilables. Les écoles ont servi, simultanément, de cadres d'acculturation et d'aliénation. Cette recherche explore les politiques scolaires, les pratiques institutionnelles et les valeurs idéologiques que les décideurs français ont imposées. Cette investigation porte particulièrement sur les effets de l'exportation des lois Jules-Ferry de la métropole vers la colonie algérienne. L'étude comparative de *Le Fils du pauvre* de Mouloud Feraoun et *L'Amour, la fantasia* d'Assia Djébar vise à démontrer comment les auteurs représentent subversivement leur expérience au sein du système éducatif colonial français. Ce travail cherche également à retracer les processus par lesquels les deux auteurs ont intériorisé, résisté et finalement négocié dans les cadres linguistiques et culturels imposés.

Mots Clés : Éducation, École Coloniale, La Conversion Culturelle, Le Soi, L'ambivalence, Résistance

الملخص

تعنى هذه الأطروحة بدور التعليم الفرنسي كأداة للغزو الثقافي في الجزائر. أسفرت تجارب النظام التعليمي الاستعماري الفرنسي المتسارعة عن تناقضات لا تجبر. وكانت المدارس بمثابة فضاءات للتثاقف والاختراب في نفس الوقت. يتناول هذا البحث السياسات والممارسات المؤسسية والقيم الأيديولوجية التي فرضها صناع القرار الفرنسيون. وتركز الدراسة بشكل خاص على آثار تصدير قوانين جول فيري من العاصمة الفرنسية إلى المستعمرة

الجزائرية. تهدف الدراسة المقارنة لكتاب "ابن الفقير" لمولود فرعون، وكتاب "الحب، الفنتازيا" لآسيا جبار، إلى إظهار الاساليب التي يقدم بها الكاتبان تمثيلاً تخريبياً لتجربتهما داخل النظام التعليمي الاستعماري الفرنسي. وتسعى الأطروحة أيضاً إلى تحديد العمليات التي تم عبرها استيعاب الكاتبين للأطر اللغوية والثقافية المفروضة، ومقاومتها لها، وأخيراً تعاملهما معها بمرونة.

الكلمات المفتاحية: التعليم، المدرسة الاستعمارية، التحول الثقافي، الذات، التناقض، المقاومة

