PEOPLE'S DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF ALGERIA
MINISTRY OF HIGHER EDUCATION AND SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH
UNIVERSITY OF MOHAMED BOUDIAF - M'SILA

FACULTY OF LETTERS AND LANGUAGES
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH
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DOMAIN: FOREIGN LANGUAGES
STREAM: ENGLISH LANGUAGE
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IMAGES OF WOMEN IN ASSIA DJEBAR'S *FANTASIA: AN ALGERIAN CAVALCADE*

Dissertation Submitted to the Department of English in Partial fulfilment of the Requirements for the Master's Degree in Literature and Civilisation

Candidates:

Miss. Sarra BOUGOUFA

Miss. Nadjet ABBAD

Supervisor:

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2017 /2018

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2017 /2018

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We would like to thank our supervisor **Mr. Bachir SAHED** for his continuous assistance, guidance, and his precious time and tremendous efforts. Without his documents, this research could have never seen light.

Special thanks to the members of the board of examiners for their kind acceptance to read and evaluate the work.

Our further thanks also go to all our teachers at the department of English, University of M'sila. Their insightful guidance and constant support will always be remembered and acknowledged.

Last but not least, we are so thankful to our families and friends for their unfailing support and encouragement. We would like to thank our parents, brothers and sisters whom we owe their devotion and commitment to offer us an education.

DEDICATION

To the souls of my grandfather, my grandmother…

Sarra

DEDICATION

To my family and friends…

Nadjet

ABBREVIATIONS

F: *Fantasia: An Algerian Cavalcade*

ABSTRACT

Assia Djebar's *Fantasia: An Algerian Cavalcade* is an important work in the Francophone literature; it brings the Algerian woman into the Algerian history to erase the stereotypes formulated by both the colonial and the patriarchal structures. Therefore, the aim of this research is to study images of women in *Fantasia: An Algerian Cavalcade*. According to a Feminist Postcolonial approach the novel examines Djebar's attempt to praise the maternal culture as a necessary step in changing the image of Arab women as "powerless victims" in a patriarchal Algerian-Islamic context. Hence, the first chapter introduces the historical events of Algeria during the colonial period. It sheds light on the confined status of women in both colonial and patriarchal society. The second chapter involves the multiple images of Algerian women that inspire oppression and resistance. The third chapter employs Feminist Postcolonial theory to approach the novel. Thus, Djebar portrays the Algerian women in different heroic images: as a colonized Algerian female, as a beloved, as a bride, as mother or widow freedom fighter to immortalize their contribution in the Algerian history.

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INTRODUCTION

Algerian literature does not chart only the buried light of colonial oppression by France; but also the struggle for the ideological independence of the now unformulated and unregulated spaces left behind; therefore, Assia Djebar's works are perfect presentation of the Algerian attempt to liberate the minds from the socially constructed ideas that confined women for centuries.

Fantasia: An Algerian Cavalcade (1985) received more critical attention than Djebar's many other works, the novel interweaves the narrator personal history with the history of her homeland, she continues to bring life not only for her story but that of her country. Djebar published her first novel *La Soif* (1957), several works followed, *les impatients* (1958), *les Enfants du Nouveau Monde* (1962), *les Alouettes Naives* (1967), *La Nouba des Femmes du mont Chenoua* (1977), and *Femmes d'Alger dans leur Appartement* (1980). However, at the end of the 1960s, she came to her decision to give up writing, for not having access to her female compatriots, from a sociological point of view, she was right. In Algeria, an Islamic country, women are less literate than men; and, in a colonial or postcolonial country, they are less likely to have obtained access to the colonizer's language.[1] Thus Djebar's work did not reach her target audience (the confined Algerian women). During this "silent decade", in which Djebar did not write, she collected oral testimonies of Algerian women while travelling through the country. These testimonies would become materials for producing her most complicated work *Fantasia*.

This novel was studied in various ways to throw light on Djebar's talent in locating Algerian women in history. Her historical training was noticeable in the work, whereby,

[1] Clarisse Zimra, "In Her Own Write: The Circular Structures of Linguistic Alienation in Assia Djebar's Early Novels," Research in African Literatures, Vol. 11, No. 2, (Summer, 1980), pp.206-223; p. 208.

she documented the oral stories through using passages from the French archives as evidence on women's struggle to make their voices heard in a male colonized country. Djabar's texts are seen as an attempt to address the exclusion of women from Algerian history, she lends her pen to their memories to establish a female counter-memory to the liberated, illiterate Algerian women.[2] Furthermore; *Fantasia* seeks for the recognition of women's agency in national and historical discourse, shedding light on Djebar challenge of providing silenced women with voice after a violent war.[3]

Fantasia represents an investigation of the modern Algerian women's struggle to create a space for themselves, in which they sought to define themselves without being bound to men, also it reflects a quest of understanding women's roles within the Algerian history, Djebar criticizes women's silence ,and tries to give it a voice through her writings. [4] Her novel depicts Algerian women some like herself, who have moved into the modern world, and others who are isolated physically and psychologically. Her writing is so much cantered on specific incidents in the lives of extraordinary women, who lived in the early Islamic period. However, in her evocation of the Algerian War of Independence in *Fantasia*, she privileges the histories of ordinary women of that era to focus on their experiences.[5] In her novel Djebar evaluates Algerian women's oppression from the space of intersection between French colonization and Algerian nationalism, Djebar especially hopes to show how the founding images of both discourses violently brand women's bodies with inflexible truth that limits their possibilities for identification and political mobilization.[6]

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[2] Mary Stevens, "The Light in The Heart: Cultural capital versus cultural memory in Assia Djebar's epigraphs," *Francophone post-colonial studies*, Vol. 3, No. 2, (autumn/Winter, 2005), pp.1-10; p.10.
[3] Hannah Kershaw**,** "Can I Claim to Revive These Stifled Voices: Writing, Researching and Performing Postcolonial Womanhood in Assia Djebar's Fantasia: An Algerian Cavalcade and So Vast the Prison," university of York, pp. 50-72; p.50.
[4] Jane Hiddelston, *Assia Djebar Out of Algeria* (Liverpool: Liverpool university press, 2006, p. 7.
[5] Ringrose Priscilla, *Assia Djebar in Dialogue with Feminisms* (Amsterdam: New York, NY 2006), p. 15.
[6] Nawar Al Hassan Gulley, *Arab Women's Lives Retold; Exploring Identity through Writing* (New York: Syracuse University Press), p.21.

Fantasia deals with a female colonized group that faced multiple forms of oppression. Hence, the methodology that is followed in this work is Postcolonial Feminist approach that contradicts the universality of women's forms of oppression of western feminism.

This research intends to unveil the female images that are spread along *Fantasia*, in an attempt to analyse their focal role during the revolutionary war of independence, as well as elucidating the postcolonial Feminist features in the work.

This thesis attempts to answer the following main question: how does Djabar portray images of women in her novel *Fantasia*?

Under this question there are sub-questions: To what extent does society and colonialism shape woman's role through history? How does Djebar try to spot light on the images of various resistance fighters? What makes *Fantasia* a Postcolonial Feminist work?

The Work is divided into three chapters, chapter one is entitled Algerian History under Feminist Eyes, that extends over three sections: Algeria: the Unveiled Bride, that was stripped of her honour and pride at the hands of the colonizer, the next section Patriarchy: the Root of All Evil explains the social and religious obstacles that faced the Algerian women in their way to liberation, the final section entitled Expressing the Self through the Body. Thus this chapter endeavours to show the devastating effects of colonialism on the Algerians in general, particularly on women, who experienced earlier social and political marginalization in the name of religion and tradition. This oppression was released through using the body as a sort of self-identification.

The second chapter examines two sections, the first one is Images of Women's Oppression and Resistance, it extends over two sub-sections, Women under French eyes in which they were portrayed as unwomanly women to inspire their savage and

barbarous resistance, while the next sub-section contradicts the former, Djebar's Representation of Women mirrors women as courageous lionesses who are impossible to tame. The second section Women's Resistance in the Face of the Colonizer deals with the unregistered role and sacrifices of women in the national liberation, this section explains The Concept of Rape for The Oppressed and Silence as a Colonial Heritage or a nightmare that scratched the female honour, starting from rape to silence, this latter is a long extended result to the former.

The final chapter is devoted to Postcolonial Feminist Reading of *Fantasia*, it is divided into two sections, the first one is Theoretical Background of Postcolonial Feminism, it contains two sub-sections: The Rise of Postcolonial Feminism, in which the background of the theory is elucidated, it is rooted in the Postcolonial discourse. Furthermore, the second sub-section Postcolonial Feminism as a Reaction to Western Feminism illustrates the differences between the two forms of Feminism, as it harshly resists western feminists' tendency to universalize the forms of oppression women face in their own lives, a tendency which ignores the crucial differences in the way women from various national, ethnic and religious backgrounds experience gender. Consequently, the concept of sisterhood proved to be wrong. The second section is entitled *Fantasia* as a Postcolonial Feminist Work, it focuses on the Postcolonial Feminist nature of *Fantasia*, in which the author both backs the postcolonial feminist's premises and contradicts the belief of the impossibility of the subaltern subjects to speak.

Fantasia is preoccupied with giving women a voice and a place in history, that had been socially and legally denied, whether under colonization, or in the newly independent Algeria. The author scrutinizes the oral testimonies of Algerian women to draw and sculpture different images that inspire heroism, oppression, and resistance.

Despite playing a major role in the revolutionary war as fighters, nurses, wives or victims; their contribution was ignored to return to their traditional role as marginalized and silenced even after independence.

CHAPTER I. ALGERIAN HISTORY UNDER FEMINIST EYES

The Algerian history is carefully crafted under Assia Djebar's feminist eyes, in which she depicts Algeria as the unveiled bride, who was stripped of her pride and history by the rapist colonizer, this Algerian woman is also subjugated under the patriarchal rule, that deprived her from enjoying her natural rights using religion and tradition as legitimate pretexts, the body was the only possible way to release this pressure and a sort of self-expression.

1. Algeria: the Unveiled Bride

> History is used in this novel as a quest of identity, identity not only of women but of an entire nation.[7] Assia Djebar

In addition to the depiction of women's plight and contribution to the Algerian history, Assia Djebar charts a historical account of the French conquest of Algeria. She re-narrates history from the first day of the conquest on June 14th, 1830 when more than 600 French ships landed 37,000 men on the shores of Sidi Ferredj near the town of Algiers. This scene is compared by Djebar to an unveiled bride in her wedding day.

Acting as a historian, Djebar discovers in the French archives thirty two accounts of military documents from official reports and letters that soldiers sent home to their families. Those French witness stories were used by Djebar to reimagine and recreate the history of Algeria.

Algiers is described by Djebar as the "open city", when the Dey was forced to surrender, signing a treaty to guaranty the respect of property and religion for the Algerians. This treaty, however, was nothing but ink on paper. The "open city" was

[7] Mildred Mortimer, "Entretien avec Assia Djebar, Ecrivain Algerien," *Research in African Literatures*, Vol.19, No.2, (1988), pp.197-205; p.201.

settled by more than four thousand French civilians by February 1831.Those eager civilians were full of desire to torture the captured city, *"The capital is sold: the price its legendary treasure, the gold of Algiers shipped by a crateful to France […] Algiers, stripped of its past and its pride."*[8]

Under the title *"Women, Children, Oxen Dying in Caves,"*[9] Djebar narrates a traumatic event that took place in the Nineteenth century is. She depicts the heroism of the Berber tribes in trying to get their independence. She also denounces the cruelty of the French army inflicted on Ouled Riah tribesmen, who refuse to surrender and withdraw in caves. After a failed negotiation to subjugate the high-spirited Algerians, the French army set the caves on fire to smoke out men, women and children.[10] Djebar expresses her appreciation of Plissier for being honest, and reporting how he smokes out Ouled Raih men, women and children from their hideout in caves. Plissier wrote a very realistic report that falls in the hands of Assia Djebar and enables her to *"weave a pattern of French words."* (*F* 78) Lieutenant colonel Canrobert writes,

> Plissier made only one mistake: As he had a talent for writing, and was aware of this, he gave in his report an eloquent and realistic, much too realistic, description of the Arabs' suffering. (*F* 75)

For Canrobert, Plissier was mistaken for not hiding the ugly face of colonialism behind a sophisticated and poetic language as he was supposed to do.[11]

The scenes that describe the Algerian suffering during the French occupation are endless, but Djebar focuses on the Algerian women, who are depicted as brave lionesses. She gives the example of the woman who ripped out a soldier's heart, or the

[8] Fantasia: An Algerian Cavalcade, Translated by Dorothy S. Blair. Heinermann, 1993, p. 39.
[9] Ibid., p.64.
[10] Sanne Boersma, *The Powerful Writing Strategies of Assia Djebar and Toni Morrison Differentiation of The Depiction of Otherness through Literature* (Utrecht: Utrecht University, 2010), p.12.
[11] Hannah Kershaw, "Can I Claim to Revive these Stifled Voices", p.60.

one who chooses to sacrifice her child rather than surrender the infant alive.[12]Those noble and tragic figures could have their sacrifices recorded only through Djabar's pen.

Furthermore, the French authorities used more than violence to control the Algerians; they used various strategies like destroying the local culture and replacing it by a French one. Since a nation without a culture is a dead one, encouraging women to pull out the veil, as well as building French schools and forbidding the use of Arabic in administration were serious attempts to attack the mother culture. The FLN, National Liberation Front, responding to those tactics, organized teaching programs among combatants and farmers to strengthen the Islamic ethics.[13] This Algerian nationalist movement encouraged women to preserve their cultures and traditions and to reject French "Modernization" that was an effort to westernize Algerian society through unveiling Algerian women. Therefore, women were in a dilemma regarding the political meaning of veiling: whether the veil is a symbol of patriarchal oppression in the French colonialists' eyes, or an important component of Algerian culture and identity. Many women used the veil as a symbol of defiance and resistance. They wore the veil to express their Muslim faith and cultural beliefs, and also to hide messages, guns, and bombs during wartime.[14]

Many feminists of various cultural backgrounds have justified the need to "restore" or "re-inscribe" women into history. In her essay "Placing Women's History in History" Elizabeth Fox-Genovese argues that what is needed is not just "adding" women to history. Instead of a process of "substitution", feminist historians should seek to restore

[12] Mildred Mortimer, "Language and Space In The Fiction of Assia Djebar And Leila Sebbar," *Research in African literature*, Vol.19, No.3, (autumn, 1988) ,pp.301-311;p.303.
[13] Alaarbi Alzoubiri, *Modern Algerian History (1962-1954)*, in Itihad alkotab Alarab, 1999, p.11. Translation mine
[14] Karina Elleraas, *Between Image and Identity Transnational Fantasy, Symbolic Violence and Feminist Misrecognition* (Plymouth: Lexington Books, 2007), pp.8-10.

conflict, ambiguity, and tragedy to the centre of the historical process.[15]From this feminist point of view, Djebar's fiction cannot be seen as merely an exploration of the nature of the French conquest to Algiers, but it is also a negation of and a protest against the condition of subalternity imposed on the Algerians in general and on women in particular.[16]

Djebar's historical training enables her to treat the historical facts with a feminine touch , shedding light on the sufferance of Algerians , particularly women, who were denied the right to be mentioned in history as a fighters , and focal participants in the liberation of the nation .

2. Patriarchy: the Root of All Evil

Samuel Teets views patriarchy as *"the primarily governmental and religious de-privileging of women and women's experience in Algerian society."*[17]Women were seen as the guardians of tradition and the basic component of the Algerian society. They represented men's honour and responsibility in a male dominated society as Multi Doglass expresses in *Woman's Body, Woman's Word* "woman's body is a commodity object, whose value is linked to its honour."[18]

The images of women's oppression vary but the cause is one, patriarchy. As such, men tend to control women, and mute them in a concealed corner in society. They would be killed by their fathers or brothers on the basis of a rumour or ill-hidden love letter. Women would be always veiled, if they were taken by a desire to circulate in the

[15] Patricia Geesey, "Collective Autobiography: Algerian Women and History in Assia Djebar's *L'amour, la Fantasia*," *Dalhousie French Studies*, Vol. 35, (Summer, 1996), pp.153-167; p. 160.
[16] Salma Khatoun, "The Subaltern Voices in Fantasia," *Journal of Research*, (Humanities), pp.31-39; p.37.
[17] Samuel Teets, *The Work of Assia Djebar: (Re)Imagining Algerian Women's Embodied Experiences* (Colorado: University of Colorado Boulder, 2014), p.08.
[18] Fedwa Malti-Douglas, *Woman's Body, Woman's Word: Crender and Discourse in Arabo-Islamic Writing* (Princeton. N.J: Princeton University Press), p.143.

city,[19]or they would be publically punished for *"harem conversation"*. (*F* 36) If a husband sent his wife a postcard in French writing her first name, family and friends understand this direct correspondence between men and women, as a significant subversion of Islamic tradition, giving no importance to their married status. Traditionally, letters should travel through male lines, as a son, to protect woman's name from the masculine eye.[20]

Women were denied even the right to choose their own husbands. This stimulates the three cloistered sisters to write letters to strangers, hoping to break the old socially-constructed rule of that imposed traditional marriage. This behaviour could be seen as a rebellious act in the Algerian conservative society, as the middle sister expresses:

> I'll never let them marry me off to a stranger who, in one night will have the right to touch me, that's why I write all those letters, one day, someone will come to this dead-and- alive hole to take me away: my father and brother won't know him, but he won't be a stranger to me. (*F* 13)

Islamic tradition also controls the way women refer to themselves in speech. Women are only allowed to speak in whispers, only the elderly have the right to speak at all, and young women may only listen. Moreover, when a woman speaks, she may only refer to herself anonymously, it is a crime for a woman to use the first personal pronoun "I".[21]Since the singularity represented by the "I" transgressed the traditional anonymity surrounding society. Transgression of this taboo has far-reaching symbolic consequences particularly for women, since revealing intimate details about oneself

[19] David Waterman, "Body/Text/History: Violation of Borders in Assia Djebar's *Fantasia*," *Studies in 20th Century Literature*, Vol. 22, No.2, (1998), pp.320-333; p.330.
[20] Hannah Kershaw, "Can I Claim to Revive these Stifled Voices, p.57.
[21] Victoria Best, "Between the Harem and the Battlefield: Domestic Space in the Work of Assia Djebar," *Signs*, Vol .27, No.3, (Spring, 2002), pp.873-879; p.878.

with the first-person pronoun "I" without adopting traditional circumlocutions is akin to unveiling oneself.[22]

This inferior status that women had in society is mainly the result of a misinterpretation of religious texts whether of Quran or Sharia. Patriarchs exploit Quran like the verse 228, Surah 2 that states that *"men have a degree over women in responsibility and authority."* (Surat al Baqarah), emphasizing the agency of men over women to devalue women and the experience of womanhood.[23]

Leila Ahmed in her study of *Women and Gender in Islam* explains that Islam is highly egalitarian, stressing the spiritual equality between men and women. This Islamic protection of women is intended to regulate and control practices, such as polygamy, but this special care for women's position in society led to difficulties of interpretation and stereotypes regarding their position within Islamic abound. Islam seems to be divided between these spiritual equality and perpetuation of a set of social structures that seem entrenched and backward, since the ethical voice of Islam seems increasingly not to be heard in Algeria.[24] People misinterpret Islamic instruction and reform it to make women more cloistered and bound them with spiritual tools which are Quran and Sharia.

Fatima Mernissi argues in *The Veil and The Male Elite* that neither the prophet nor God as the source of the holly law desired anything other than equality between the sexes, and not an equality enforced by separation. But Phyllis Mongo added that it is not

[22] Katherine Gracki, "Writing Violence and the Violence of Writing in Assia Djebar's *Algerian Quartet*," *World Literature Today*, Vol. 70, No. 4, (Autumn, 1996), pp.835-845; p.835.
[23] Samuel Teets, *The Work of Assia Djebar*, p.10.
[24] Leila Ahmed, *Women and Gender in Islam: Historical Roots of the Modern Debate* (London and New Heaven, CT: Yale University Press, 1992), p.276.

Quran but Sharia that dictates women's subordinate nature to the extent that they were more severely punished than men for transgressing Sharia norms.[25]

This structure was strengthened by law. After the Islamic revival of 1970s that spread all over the Muslim world, simple adjustment started to occur like the adaptation of veiling, in the form of hijab or burka, then it turned to be laws like "the Algerian Family Code" of 1984 that states that women are to be minor under the law, and label them into three categories: daughters, mothers or wives, which means that they were defined on the basis of their relationship to men, denying them the full citizenship in the newly elected Algerian government.[26]

Algeria gained its independence in 1962, but women became legal minors, who needed their husband's permission to work or travel, and had no equal rights to proclaim divorce.at the time of independence, women received full civil rights like the voting right, but their personal rights remained a dark area, since they were pushed backward into the home, to return to their traditional role as silenced, cloistered and veiled.[27]

The Algerian women fell brutally back into the reality of post-independence Algeria.[28] This fact disappointed many older women who participated in the revolution, because the boundary between war and peace becomes distorted, in which there is no difference between the abnormal reality of wartime, and the reasonable one of peace time, in a period that is supposed to be the golden age of Arab feminism.[29]

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[25] Fatima Mernissi, *The Veil and the Male Elite: A Feminist Interpretation of Women's Rights in Islam* (London: Addison-Wesley, 1991), p.77.
[26] Samuel Teets, *The Work of Assia Djebar*, p.08.
[27] Hannah Kershaw, "Can I Claim to Revive these Stifled Voices, p.52.
[28] Benjamin Stora & R. H. Mitsch, "Women's Writing between Two Algerian Wars," *Research in African Literatures*, Vol. 30, No. 3, (Autumn, 1999), pp.78-94; p.84.
[29] David Waterman, "Body/Text/History," p.330.

Djebar evaluates Algerian women's oppression from the space of intersection between French colonization and Algerian nationalism. She especially hopes to show how the founding images of both discourses, violently limit women's bodies and their possibilities for identification and political mobilization.[30]

The twin powers of religion and traditional culture melted together to imprison women. The Algerian society saw in cloistering women both a way of fighting westernization, and of avoiding the image of the European woman, who is equal to man. By keeping women hidden, they thought they were protecting their identity from the western ideals of equality brought by the colonizer, that would spoil their social structure.

3. Expressing the Self through the Body

Djabar's first ambition in *Fantasia* was rewriting the history of Algeria as well as of Algerian women. She tries to awaken those silenced voices of women, and telling their stories during the war of independence. Djabar states,

> writing has brought me to the cries of the women silently rebelling in my youth, to my own true origins. Writing does not silence the voice but awakens it above all to resurrect so many vanished sisters. (*F* 204)

A woman without a voice is someone who does not own her body, the silencing of the voice means the silencing of the body. Women in the revolution have no right to express or to defend their rights. Thus, this heavy silence restricts their movements, denies them actions and let them fell down in the prison of oblivion.[31]

[30] Nawar Al Hassan Gulley, *Arab Women's Lives Retold; Exploring Identity through Writing* (New York: Syracuse University Press), p.21.
[31] Najla Achik, *Re-Righting Her/Story: Renegotiating Gender and Identity in Maghrebian Women Writing* (Tunisia: University of Manouba, 2017), p.10.

Djebar draws a connection between the female body and female writing. This means that the idea of the restricted female body and female guilt, caused by writing, are tightly linked. For the Algerian women, the act of self-expression through writing causes feelings of shame as the exposure of one's body. So, Djabar's challenge was to provide the long muted women with voice after suffering sexual violence and patriarchal oppression.[32]

The feminist Héléne Cixous asserts that *"woman must write herself; must write about women and bring women to writing, from which they have been driven away as violently as from their bodies."*[33] Djebar follows the steps of Cixous in trying to legitimize a female counter memory. She supports the idea that the act of writing belongs to women despite the fact that it has been always a male domain. Historically speaking, the written form of Berber belongs to women, proved by an inscription found in the tomb of the 4th century B.C. Tuareg princess Tin Hinan. By adhering to this idea, Djabar does not merely lend her writing to women who are voiceless, but she restores to them the act of writing itself.[34]

The human body is the most powerful medium of expression. Movement and gesture are the oldest languages known to man. They are still the most revealing. It is quite possible to hide behind words, or to mask facial expression. It is conceivable that one can dissimulate and deceive with paints, clay, stone, print, sounds, but the body reveals.[35]

[32] Hannah Kershaw, "Can I Claim to Revive these Stifled Voices, p.53.
[33] Héléne Cixous, "The Laugh of the Medusa," *Signs*, Vol. 1, No. 4, (1976), pp.860-882; p. 875.
[34] Marry Stevens, "The Light in The Heart: Cultural Capital versus Cultural Memory in Assia Djebar's *Epigraphs*," *Francophone Postcolonial Studies*, Vol. 3, No.2, (Autumn, 2005), pp.1-11; pp.10-11.
[35] Samuel Teets, *The Work of Assia Djebar*, p.03.

In *Fantasia*, the body expresses itself in different ways. Writing was Djebar's *"way of saying I exist."*[36] She links her body to the act of writing in her early life, when she discovers her awakening sexuality in the form of a love letter written to her by a boy. It is at this stage that the girl must be locked away, because for her father love letters are tantamount to setting the stage for rape, the only logical solution in the patriarchal minds is to wrap the nubile girl in veils, make her invisible, and destroy in her every memory.[37]

Djebar emphasizes in *Fantasia* on the power of the woman's body as the fourth language of all the Algerian women, she states:

> While the man still has the right to four legitimate wives, we girls, big and little, have at our command four languages: French for secret missives; Arabic for our stifled aspirations […] Lybico-Berber which takes us back to the pagan idols-mother-gods of pre-Islamic Mecca. The fourth language, for all females, young or old, cloistered or half-emancipated, remains that of the body: the body which male neighbours' and cousins' eyes require to be deaf and blind," (*F* 180)

For Djabar, the female body possess a unique language which may express the ideas and emotion without pronouncing a letter. This idea is explained in detail in the part entitled the "Second Movement The Trance", in which she describes the dance of her grandmother, who was silenced during the whole novel but expressed everything in one dance, just as the grandmother breaks her silence with her body through dancing, so does the narrator receives the grandmother ideas with a different sense of her own body.[38] In another words, through her body, the grandmother escapes the patriarchal

[36] Najla Achik, *Re-/Righting Her/Story: Renegotiating Gender and Identity in Maghrebian Women Writing* (Tunisia: University of Manouba, 2017), p.12.
[37] David Waterman, "Body/Text/History," p.320.
[38] Samuel Teets, *The Work of Assia Djebar*, p.30.

limitations on her and becomes queen of the city through the affirmation of her own body in dance.

> Finally my grandmother made her dramatic entrance, as always the consummate actress. Upright, clad only in a tight-fitting tunic, her head turbaned in multi-coloured scarves, she began a slow dance. All of us onlookers could sense that, in spite of appearances, this was not the beginning of a festivity […] Finally came the crisis: my grandmother, oblivious to everything, jerked spasmodically to and fro till she went into a trance. (*F* 144)

The cries joined with the text narrating voice links women's bodies, women's presence to the act of writing. These cries forge the links in a narrative chain between Algerian women from the nineteenth century to the women of today. Djebar provides two dictionary entries that highlight the double meaning of women's cries: The cries signify joy and triumph (or even sorrow on certain occasions), and Djebar states that she wishes to transcribe them in her autobiographical text because they represent a form of women's language. The tzarl-rit (Cries) may be interpreted as women's communication, one of pure emotion, or a language that facilitates an exchange between women of the past and women of the present, women whose echoing cries Djebar seeks to resurrect in her collective autobiography.[39]

According to the Algerians, woman's body cannot be exposed, but *"must be muffled up, tightly swathed, swaddled like infants or shrouded like corpses."* (*F* 180) It is a dangerous situation if a woman's body, like writing, should fall into the wrong hands.[40] So, women should be veiled or silenced, between their silences or abundance

[39] Patricia Geesey, "Collective Autobiography: Algerian Women and History in Assia Djebar's *L'amour, la Fantasia*," *Dalhousie French Studies*, Vol. 35, (Summer, 1996), pp.153-167; p.161.
[40] David Waterman, "Body/Text/History," p.321.

of words, the writer/historian scratches the surface in an attempt to decipher and bring to light the traces of the presence of her people in history.[41]

Therefore, *Fantasia* represents the rewriting of Algerian history from a feminine stance, so that these screams will be heard. Women's bodies were used as monuments and privileged sites in the re-inscription of their oral history into the fabric of Algeria's past. These bodies testify to, and can be read as, the story of women's active presence in history to contest the representation of women as passive odalisques.[42]

Both the colonial and the patriarchal discourses conspired together to imprison women under the gloomy shadows of colonialism and local culture, in this process, their precious efforts to the national liberation were underestimated and omitted from the Algerian history; while their presence was merely a decor in the French accounts , this state of emptiness found no way out but through the body , the only available tool for all women to prove their existence in colonial and postcolonial Algeria, which were quite similar.

[41] Anne Donnady, "Rekindling the Vividness of the Past: Assia Djebar's *Films and Fiction*," *World Literature Today*, Vol.70, No.4, (Autumn, 1996), pp.85-92; p.886.
[42] Katherine Gracki, "Writing Violence and the Violence of Writing in Assia Djebar's *Algerian Quartet*," *World Literature Today*, Vol.70, No.4, (Autumn, 1996), pp.835-845; p.836.

CHAPTER II. IMAGES OF WOMEN'S OPPRESSION AND RESISTANCE

> To write the voice of others, the orphaned mother who clamors infinite mourning, the beggar woman who goes humming through the ruins, the infant who barely laughs, a single sob, then nothing, the empty house to write all voices. To dry them, smooth them out, smother them, but not prolong them, illusion, nor perpetuate them, all your voices on paper become a unique and shapeless jumble, become mud, alas, a female mud.[43]

Fantasia: An Algerian Cavalcade is an excellently worked-out novel that functions on two levels, reflecting two journeys: one into the author's inner self, the other historical, tracing the history of Algeria from conquest in 1830 to liberation in 1962. These two themes, the autobiographical elements mixed with history, are crafted beautifully within the narrative.[44] *Fantasia* gives expression to self and history, but never written through retelling the oral testimonies of the Algerian women to memorialize their presence and contribution to the nation's history, their oppression and resistance are Djebar's raw materials to produce *Fantasia.*

2.1. Images of Women in *Fantasia*

Fantasia highlights the images of women that have been marginalized and muted throughout history;[45] it portrays female characters in many guises.[46] From the Djebarian perspective Women inspire heroism and courage through being warriors, nurses, Combatants, mothers and widows, who never lose their dignity, while they were nothing but beasts and slaves for the racist colonizer.

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[43] Assia Djebar & Marjolijn de Jager, "Raïs, Bentalha... Un an après / Raïs Bentalha... A Year Later," *Research in African Literatures*, Vol. 30, No.3, (Autumn, 1999), pp.7-14; p.11.

[44] Evelyne Accad, "Assia Djebar's Contribution to Arab Women's Literature: Rebellion, Maturity, Vision" *World Literature Today*, Vol. 70, No. 4, (Autumn, 1996), pp.801-812; p.809.

[45] Nawar Al Hassan Gulley, *Arab Women's Lives Retold; Exploring Identity through Writing* (New York: Syracuse University Press), p.17.

[46] Salma Khatoun, "The Subaltern Voices in Fantasia," *Journal of Research* (Humanities), pp.31-39; p.32.

2.1.1. Women under Western Eyes

When speaking of Djebar's first autobiographical novel, *Fantasia*, she reconstructs the nineteenth-century French conquest, by making use of her historical training to analyse a series of documents: memoirs, letters, and newspaper articles that offer eye witness accounts of French invasion, documents that are, with one exception, written by European men.[47]

Djebar does not shy away from creeping into the minds of those European writers and artists, who commit atrocities, conveying their supposed arguments, rationales, and justifications, and showing the chain of violent acts which bind the combatants to each other.[48] This violence was a French natural response towards any Algerian sign of resistance.

Algerians are invisible, both in the French reports, and in the battlefield due to their guerrilla war strategies, which render them invisible to the French army. With the absence of truly Algerian records, Algerians are erased from a history written from the enemy's perspective. Particularly women, who were kept in their homes,[49] muffled with their veils; this status strengthened their invisibility in the French diaries.

According to Barchou, Algerians are almost indistinguishable from brutal animals. Arabs are not just strangers to the occupying troops; they are almost another species. The sound of their movements is beastlike. Barchou does not criticize their language; rather, he views them as beings, who are not advanced enough to have language, but

[47] Sarah E Mosher, *Shooting the Canon: Feminine Autobiographical Voices of the French-Speaking World* (Arizona: The University of Arizona, 2008), p.124.
[48] Barbara Frischmuth & William Riggan, "A Letter to Assia Djebar," *World Literature Today*, Vol. 70, No. 4, (Autumn, 1996), pp.778-780; p.780.
[49] Anne Donadey, "Rekindling the Vividness of the Past: Assia Djebar's Films and Fiction," *World Literature Today*, Vol. 70, No. 4, (Autumn, 1996), pp.885-892; p. 887.

merely animal cries.[50] French documents do not represent Algerian women as human subjects who struggled to save their deprived lives, but they described them as corpses that symbolize spoils of war.[51]

Affected by his French imperial ideology, Barchou brings to light the involvement of women in colonial resistance, with a predisposed prejudice towards Algerian women. This is noticeable in his description through emphasizing the violent and unnatural actions of women in their efforts to escape French ascendancy.[52]

For Barchou, these women's bodies and their deaths merely exemplify their support to combatants through accompanying them into war. Under his pen, the women's bodies are mere objects within the framework of the French patriarchal discourse. They are not only details within his discourse; they are objects without any agency.[53]

Another example of how French historiography renders the atmosphere of colonial Algeria exists in the story of Pauline Rolland. Pauline was a French prisoner who was jailed in a Parisian prison for her participation in the French Revolution. Pauline kept a journal in which she documented her experiences in Algeria and the representations of the women she encountered. More than a hundred years later, Pauline wrote that the women in Algeria represent various symbols of their lived realities. When Pauline retells what she sees, she says:

> I have seen women treated as beasts of burden and others *odalisqucs* in a rich man's harem. I have slept at the side

[50] Jennifer Bt Steadman, "A Global Feminist Travels: Assia Djebar and *Fantasia*," *Meridians*, Vol. 4, No. 1, (2003), pp.173-199;p. 178 .

[51] Sandra Salaman, *Giving Silence a Voice Feminism And Postcolonialism in Novels by Assia Djebar* (Utrecht: Utrecht University Press, 2009). p.18.

[52] Erin Peters, "Assia Djebar and Algerian Cultural Memory: Reimagining**,** Repositioning and Rewritingin Fantasia An Algerian Cavalcade" *Bristol Journal of English Studies*, Issue 1, (Summer 2012), pp.1-16; p.8.

[53] Samuel Teets, *The Work of Assia Djebar*, p.63.

> of the former on the bare ground, and beside the latter amid gold and silk. (*F* 223)

This is an example of how Algerian women representations within French history are prone to different depictions either as animalistic "beasts of burden" who support a colonial and patriarchal society, or as an "odalisque": the bejewelled North African woman, who kept sacred within the harem, preserving the image of her master's honour.[54] Djebar comes to see that Pauline's experience of sharing the Algerian women their condition of imprisonment, homeless wandering, and menial labour, enables her to be the true ancestor of the women of Algeria whose stories, she has herself, been telling.[55]

At the end of *Fantasia*, Djebar cites Eugène Fromentin description in his journey in Algeria, after a conflict between the French and the guerrilla fighters, Fromentin *"picks up out of the dust the severed hand of an anonymous Algerian woman. He throws it down again in his path."* (226) As a result of being a French painter and writer, he acts as an Orientalist who seeks to control the Algerian people through his patriarchal representations of them. When he takes up this severed hand *"the hand of an unknown woman he was never able to draw"* (226); *"he throws it down again in his path,"* signifying his rejection and dismissal of women's bodies.[56]

Fromentin and Barchou's accounts are contradictory, in which the Algerian voices are clearly indistinguishable from animal howls in Fromentin's account. In contrast to Barchou, these cries establish Algerian humanity and resistance in challenging colonial rule; they are capable of all-too-human responses to injustice. Fromentin sympathizes

[54] Sandra Salaman, *Giving Silence a Voice Feminism and Postcolonialism in Novels by Assia Djebar* (Utrecht: Utrecht University Press, 2009), pp.17-19.
[55] Mary Jean Green, "Dismantling the Colonizing Text: Anne Hébert's Kamouraska and Assia Djebar's *L'Amour, la fantasia*," *The French Review*, Vol. 66, No. 6, (May, 1993), pp.959-966; p.965.
[56] Samuel Teets, *The Work of Assia Djebar*, p.65.

with them, stressing on the active ways in which Algerian men and women fought back against the French colonialism. Unlike the controllable beasts of Barchou's travel narrative.[57]

The image of the Algerian women appears not only objectified but mutilated and fragmented in a quiet literal way, whether by being chopped to pieces by French bayonets or stripped of their jewellery. Women's existence is symbolized by a severed foot or the hand that is found along roadway by the artist Eugene Fromentin.[58]

Through presenting these travel accounts, Djebar seeks to reveal their inadequacy. Fromentin's efforts to show the humanity of the Algerians are insufficient as Barchou's racist stereotypes.[59] By showing them as merely human beings, Fromentin neglects their heroic deeds and hides the complexity of Algeria and Algerians, men and women.

In a recent study of *Fantasia*, John Erickson argues that Assia Djebar's retelling of the French colonial conquest of Algeria parodies and subverts the colonial posture as site of knowledge and authorial voice. Through using technique of citation of French historiography and presenting new perspectives, Erickson writes: *"Djebar's goal in looking at these male-authored histories is to first uncover women's obscured presence and then highlight their voices in the construction of early Islamic historiography."*[60]

Indeed, new historiography accounts like Djebar's, can be read as a way of dismantling the Western historiography, especially through the ones that narrate tales of women, Berber tribesmen and other previously under-examined stories.

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[57] Jennifer Bt Steadman, "A Global Feminist Travels: Assia Djebar and *Fantasia*," *Meridians*, Vol. 4, No. 1, (2003), pp.173-199; p.178.
[58] Mary Jean Green, "Dismantling the Colonizing Text: Anne Hébert's Kamouraska and Assia Djebar's *L'Amour, la fantasia*, "The French Review, Vol. 66, No. 6, (May, 1993), pp. 959-966; p. 962.
[59] Jennifer Bt Steadman, "A Global Feminist Travels," p. 180.
[60] Andrea Flores, Assia Djebar "Ruin and Affect in Assia Djebar's *Vaste est la prison*," *Alif: Journal of Comparative Poetics*, No. 20, (2000), pp. 234-256; p.235.

Jenny Murray comments on Djebar's goal in *Fantasia:* "*the narrator seizes on the image of these women and moves them from the margins of the Frenchman's account to the centre of her revised history.*"[61]These women are brought from the margins of colonial discourse to a more central place in the history of resistance. The author studied the archives and looked for women's achievements and participation in political and historical events to demonstrate that women were active participants in the resistance. These women's conditions are intensively presented and continued in the line of her preceding works, with more strength and determination to give them a greater voice and visibility.[62]

2.1.2. Djebar's Representation of Women

Djebar recognizes that in order to facilitate her act of life-writing, she must renew her ties to the female collective and situate her discourse within the circle of Algerian women. The author's quest for an individual and collective sense of self begins with an investigation of Algerian women's history and the vital role they have played in the historical development of their nation.[63]Djebar reveals the ways in which all texts that recount past events are constructed from one or another perspective; it means that history was shaped by the colonizer's hands to distort the colonized image, particularly Algerian women, who were presented as the conquered nation.

Djebar continues to dismantle colonial representations of exotic female sexuality, through challenging the representation of Algerian women and Algeria as female bodies

[61] Jenny Murray, *Remembering the (Post) Colonial Self-Memory and Identity in the Novels of Assia Djebar* (Bern: Peter Lang International Academic Publishers, 2008), p.75.
[62] Evelyne Accad, "Assia Djebar's Contribution to Arab Women's Literature: Rebellion, Maturity, Vision," *World Literature Today*, Vol. 70, No. 4, (Autumn, 1996), pp.801-812; p. 809.
[63] Patricia Geesey, "Collective Autobiography: Algerian Women and History in Assia Djebar's *L'amour, la Fantasia*," *Dalhousie French Studies*, Vol. 35, (Summer, 1996), pp.153-167; p.153.

available for use by occupying armies.[64] Thus, the 'unseen' experiences of Algerian women must be approached by working through the images and representations of women who were seen as the "other".[65]

Female characters are carefully situated in relation to history, mapping the position of particular extraordinary women, with regard to the political upheavals of the nineteenth century and the war of independence.[66] Cherifa, Zohra, and the bride of Mazuna in the novel are Djebar's varied models of female struggle who, in all their diversity and multiplicity, speak a powerful language of resistance.[67]

The thirteen-year old Cherifa observes her brother Ahmed, a *mudjahid*, fighting death in front of her. She spends two nights hiding herself from the French in a tree, climbing down only to retrieve the body, in order to perform the purification ritual.[68]Her fierce resistance is a perfect example of heroism. She resists arrest, imprisonment, and torture to support her brothers the *Maquisards* in their noble goal.

Here we see the subaltern Cherifa speaking for herself as a woman who stood against oppression:

> "Why were you fighting?"
> "For what I believe in, for my ideas!"
> "And now, seeing you are a prisoner?"
> "I'm a prisoner, so what!"
> "What have you gained?"
> "I've gained the respect of my compatriots and my own self-respect! Did you arrest me for stealing or for murder? I never stole!" (*F* 140).

[64] Michael F. O'Riley, "Cultural Memory and the Legacy of World War II in Assia Djebar, Leïla Sebbar, and Tahar Ben Jelloun," *Dalhousie French Studies*, Vol. 63, (Summer, 2003), pp.147-161; p.159.
[65] Emily Tomlinson, "Speaking to the Living Dead," *Paragraph*, Vol. 26, No. 3, (November, 2003), pp. 35-45; p.41.
[66] Jane Hiddelston, *Assia Djebar Out of Algeria* (Liverpool: Liverpool university press, 2006), p.72.
[67] Salma Khatoun, "The Subaltern Voices in Fantasia," *Journal of Research* (Humanities), pp.31-39; p.37.
[68] Anne Donadey, "Rekindling the Vividness of the Past: Assia Djebar's Films and Fiction," *World Literature Today*, Vol. 70, No. 4, (Autumn, 1996), pp.885-892; p.889.

In the late 1970[s], Cherifa meets the narrator and tells the legacy of her experiences as a resistance fighter and prisoner of the French military, when Cherifa recounts her story twenty years later her voice does not only recount the past days but it also sounds of fear, defiance, and the intoxication that characterizes the entire history of colonization.[69]

Another image of women that attracts readers of *Fantasia* is the bride of Mazuna, during the French conquest of Algeria, Cherif Bou Maza kidnaps Badra, the Caid of Mazouna's daughter, the night before her wedding, this act intended to provoke and insult her father, attacking him in his honour.

Badra spends her wedding night in his tent, but the next morning when the captors force the women to pull out their jewels as spoils, Badra stripped off her heavy gold anklets and bracelet crying, *"she wrapped her arms around the frail adolescent, clothed only in her emerald gown, her hair streaming in the wind, her face raised to the sky, and repeating softly, 'I am naked! Praise be to God, I am naked! Praise…'"* (*F* 99)

Her dignified gesture of stripping herself naked empowered the female bride; this act results in a powerful protest, both heard and read as it evokes varied responses. The bride does not need words to register her protest for her striptease has evoked an active response from the people.[70] Her defiance here clearly breaks the society's conventions. The other female captive's disapproving reaction was a sufficient proof for that social transgression.[71]

[69] Salma Khatoun, "The Subaltern Voices in Fantasia", *Journal of Research* (Humanities), pp. 31-39; p. 36.
[70] Ibid., p.33.
[71] Marta Lee-Perrlard, *Border Subjects: A Textual Dialogue between Assia Djebar and Helene Cixous*. (Oxford University: Balliol College, 2002), p.147.

Badra's refusal to subdue to the desire and will of the male Other signifies the negation of the ambiguous ground which defines her as a thing to be possessed, or portion of war's booty. By legislating the terms of her resistance to the paternal norms of the conqueror, Badra abolishes her status as female object.[72] This act has been witnessed and registered as an attempt to adjust the postcolonial feminine resistance.

Another female figure is Zohra. She is a farmer, who feeds the *mudjahidin*, and is punished by the French through burning her farm. This cruel act makes her spend the night outside with her daughter, not daring to disturb any of her neighbours.[73] Due to her struggles during the Algerian War of Liberation, Lla Zohra deserved the title of *"Mother of the Mudjahidin, or Holy Warriors"* (F181)

Fatima and Meriam's story exemplifies another face for the Algerian woman, who is killed by their lovers or colonizers after enjoying a night of love. The story was transmitted from a French army lieutenant to Fromentin, then to Djebar, to be finally insured by Lla Zohra, who knows the story of their death earlier.

The story of the two prostitutes is related to Khadidja, a former prostitute, who turns to be a freedom fighter. She suffers French torture with Lla Zohra. Khadidja has hoped to live to make the pilgrimage to Mecca, repent, and give her wealth to the Algerian resistance. As well as the young Fatima and Meriam, who might become another version of Khadija, if they lived for a long time.[74]

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[72] H. Adlai Murdoch, "Rewriting Writing: Identity, Exile and Renewal in Assia Djebar's *L'Amour, la fantasia*," *Yale French Studies*, Vol. 2, No. 83, (1993), pp.71-92; p.85.

[73] Anne Donadey, "Rekindling the Vividness of the Past: Assia Djebar's Films and Fiction," *World Literature Today*, Vol. 70, No. 4, (Autumn, 1996), pp.885-892; p.889.

[74] Shaden M. Tageldin, "Which Qalam for Algeria? Colonialism, Liberation, and Language in Djebar's *L'Amour, la Fantasia* and Mustaghanimi's *Dhakirat Al-Jasad*," *Comparative Literature Studies*, Vol. 46, No. 3, (2009), pp.467-497; p. 476.

The landscape inspires another image of women; Algeria herself is a woman, who was invaded by the rapist colonizer. In *Fantasia*, the description of the invasion of Algiers is full of metaphors, which describe the oppression of women, and the scene sets out to retell this moment in a feminine language, or in other words, to recover the lost suffering of a nation of women subjugated at once by colonialism and patriarchy.[75] In the French written pieces, Algeria is described as a wounded female body, raped and left bleeding in the dust by the conqueror.

The first step to possess Algeria is to possess or conquer Algerian woman, since Algeria was imagined as a woman to be possessed. Fanon's title, "Algeria Unveiled" indicates this link between land and woman is especially veiled women. Algeria is depicted as a veiled woman, threatened with unveiling, which is equivalent to rape. According to Fanon, this leads to Algerian male dishonour due to colonial domination either of the land or of the nation.[76]

Katherine Gracki comments on Djebar's choice of attributing Algeria a female feature, *"Far from collaborating with their (French) discourse of exoticism when recuperating the image of Algeria as a woman, Djebar subverts this discourse by ripping the veil which masks the overt violence of colonial invasion."*[77]

The author provides another vision of Algerian women as "trespassers, agitators, and cultural mediators."[78]Among the autobiographical episodes, Djebar depicts her rebellious cousins, though cloistered, they defy their father and challenge convention by

[75] Jane Hiddelston, *Assia Djebar Out of Algeria* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2006), p.72.
[76] Rita A. Faulkner, "Assia Djebar, Frantz Fanon, Women, Veils, and Land," *World Literature Today*, Vol. 70, No. 4, (Autumn, 1996), pp. 847-855; p.847.
[77] Gracki Katherine, "Writing Violence and the Violence of Writing in Assia Djebar's Algerian Quartet," *World Literature Today*, Vol. 70, No. 4, (Autumn, 1996), pp.835-845; p.836.
[78] NawarAl Hassan Gulley, *Arab Women's Lives Retold; Exploring Identity through Writing* (New York: Syracuse University Press), p.24.

secretly corresponding with male pen pals in distant lands, as a step to overcome the closed doors and blackened windows of the harem to the outside world.

Their secret love letters are an explicit attempt to challenge the native costume of arranged marriage in favour of romance, and love. The cloistered girls commit their first offence or act of aggression within Algerian society, their love letters might be read as texts of resistance.[79]

A more tragic story that is related to the work's title *Fantasia*, it is centred on Haoua, a young woman, who has come to watch the cavalcade of the Hajouts. She turns to be the victim of her rejected lover, who was one of the riders. In the middle of the festivity, Haoua's killer wheels on his horse and bears down on her until his charger kicks her in the face.[80] Women were severely oppressed to the extent that a rejected love may cost them their lives. Haoua's frightening story whispers a dark reality of internal division provoking one Algerian against another, namely a man against a woman.

This story of death in the novel of the quartet makes Djebar predict and warn against the flow of blood in the future. She expects more violence and death to come for her Algerian sisters. Haoua's story represents the destiny of any Algerian woman who stands freely against her society.[81]

The final image that occupies half of the navel is that of Djebar herself, since it is a semi-autobiographical work, in which the private life of the author is mingled with the historical images of the Algerian women. Djebar wants to reflect her internal struggle

[79] Nawar Al Hassan Gulley, *Arab Women's Lives Retold; Exploring Identity through Writing* (New York: Syracuse University Press), p.24.
[80] Gracki Katherine, "Writing Violence and the Violence of Writing in Assia Djebar's Algerian Quartet," *World Literature Today*, Vol. 70, No. 4, (Autumn, 1996), pp.835-845; p.837.
[81] Ibidem.

that divides her between her paternal and maternal words. In fact, this conflict traces its roots in her early childhood.

The opening in Djebar's fifth novel begins and ends with the scene of a little Arab girl being walked to school for the first time hand in hand with her father. The young girl is so proud to walk freely. As soon as she realizes that she walks, always, with her father. And though her father seems to hold her hand in tenderness, in love, his hand-hold is also an assertion of control, he pulls her by the hand towards a French school.[82]

Djebar's French education enables her to escape the fate of her Algerian sisters, that of cloistering; and it provides her with the means of stepping out into the public, into the male and the colonizers' sphere, by enabling her to write, to write in French.[83]Her father sets her on a bilingual, bicultural, and ambiguous journey that freed her and exiled her away from the majority of her sisters.[84]

In a 1996 interview Djebar said that her choice to begin the story of *Fantasia* is because of her father,

> As I began to write, I gradually discovered that if, at age eleven, I was not veiled like my cousins it was thanks to the language, thanks to my father. I arrive to the conclusion that this language that I do not use in desire and love, this language has given me, above all, space.[85]

[82] Shaden M Tageldin , "Which Qalam for Algeria? Colonialism, Liberation, and Language in Djebar's *L'Amour, la fantaisie* & Mustaghanimi's *Dhakirat Al-Jasad*." *Comparative Literature Studies*, Vol. 46, No. 3, (2009), pp.467-497; p.475.

[83] Soheila Ghaussy, "A Stepmother Tongue: "Feminine Writing" in Assia Djebar's *Fantasia: An Algerian Cavalcade*," *World Literature Today*, Vol. 68, No. 3, (Summer, 1994), pp.457-462; p.458.

[84] Mildred Mortimer, "Language And Space in The Fiction of Assia Djebar And Leila Sebbar," *Research in African Literature*, Vol.19, No.3, (Autumn ,1988), pp.301-311; p.302.

[85] Assia Djebar, "Territoires des langues: entretien" [Territories of languages: an interview], interview by Lise Gauvin, Literature, Vol. 101, (1996), pp.76-82; p.81.

This language of love is a poisoned gift that forbids her to enjoy love in her adolescence. Her father will deny her the right to use French as a language of love through tearing up her first love letter she receives from a young man.

This complexity follows her to spoil her happiness in her wedding night. When she sends a telegram to her absent father reassuring him of her love, she reveals that the wedding night outside of tradition disturbs her. Her ambivalence underlines the complexity of transgressing societal expectations, and moreover, how complete severance from traditions or history is impossible. Indeed, the bride finds herself, surprisingly, longing for even the most antiquated traditions, such as the father wrapping her in his *burnous* and guiding her over the threshold as a sign of protection.[86]

2. Women's Resistance in the Face of Colonialism

The first Algerian war was man's world, where gunpowder is in the air, and where the combatant's weakness and heroism are revealed. Numerous men's voices speak of the tragedy and the cruelty of the first Algerian war, officers, and soldiers filled the field of print with a barrage of autobiographies, diaries, and pamphlets of the battlefield. However, women were condemned to be nothing more than widows mourning a husband or a dead brother for the rest of their lives.[87] Despite the fact that women were active participants in the resistance alongside with men, they were marginalized, objectified and excluded from history.

In *Fantasia*, Assia Djebar insists that space has been sexualized in traditional Algeria. Inner space is reserved to women; outer space is reserved to men. As a result,

[86] Marta Lee-Perrlard, *Border Subjects: A Textual Dialogue between Assia Djebar and Helene Cixous* (Oxford University, Balliol College, 2002). p. 145.
[87] Stora Benjamin & R.H Mitsch, "Women's Writing between Two Algerian Wars," *Research in African Literature*, Vol .30, No.3, (Autumn, 1999), pp.78-94; p.80.

women are absent in history or in political life.[88] Women should remain inside in order to avoid the threats to their physical and sexual integrity, which might result in dishonouring their society.[89]

The Algerian woman played different roles during the revolution by joining the maquis, spending their guerrilla years in service, cooking and washing.[90] Other women could handle more dangerous missions like transmitting weapons and bombs in the urban networks.[91]They decide to cross the boundaries of male space and pull out the dress of the passive victims of traditions and patriarchy to hold the flame of resistance and become active participants for their country's freedom. Despite the fact that they are accepted as volunteers by the national leaders to be equal to men in the struggle, but this is not enough to be mentioned in history. According to Frantz Fanon, "The woman", he wrote, *"does not merely knit for or mourn the soldier. The Algerian woman is at the heart of the combat. Arrested, tortured, raped, shot down, she testifies to the violence of the occupier and to his inhumanity."*[92]

Algeria is named many times in the novel as a women who is hard to tame, because the national resistance controls minds and hearts of all the Algerians, men and women. The officers sending home official reports or personal letters speak of Algeria as a woman whose taming is a pipe dream. It is Djebar's mission to record and assert women's resistance in the Algerian war of independence.

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[88] Mildred Mortimer, "Language and Space in the Fiction of Assia Djebar and Leila Sebbar," *Research in African literature*, Vol.19, No. 3, Special Issue on Language and Style, (autumn 1988), pp.301-311; p.309.

[89] Laurence Huughe & Jennifer Curtiss Gage, "Ecrire comme un voile": The Problematics of the Gaze in the Work of Assia Djebar," *World Literature Today*, Vol. 70, No. 4, (Autumn, 1996), pp.867-876; p. 869.

[90] Emily Tomlinson, "Speaking to the Living Dead," *Paragraph*, Vol. 26, No. 3, (November, 2003), pp. 35-45; p.37.

[91] Assia Kaced, "The Reaction to Algerian Women Freedom Fighters' Silenced Ordeals in Assia Djebar's Works," *International Journal of Education and Research*, Vol. 4 No. 7, (July, 2016), pp.391-400; p.392.

[92] Jane Hiddelston, *Assia Djebar Out of Algeria* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2006), p.37.

While the first part of the novel describes the conquest of the city as a veiled love story, the second part underlines the pride and courage of the Algerian peasant women in the face of the invaders. Those subaltern heroes' suffering and epic struggle that characterizes the second part of the novel establishes its structural superiority to the first half of the story. The ghostly arrival of the male invader in silence and under the cover of darkness is portrayed as inferior to the active struggle of the Algerian women.[93] Their experiences such as hiding in the woods, being captured, jailed, and tortured are expressed which evokes feelings of fear, pain, and triumph when they restore these memories.[94]

Fanon concludes that a woman's wearing of the veil is a symbol of her patriotism. He argues that the female fighters wear the veil as an instrument. At one point in the struggle, it is removed so that Algerian women can carry unsuspected guns and bombs in handbags and baskets. They returned to traditional dress when their military missions are performed as well as to attack the French cultural hegemony.[95] This veil, which enables women to be *"neither audience nor actors"* (*F* 56), confirms the role of the veil as an instrument of feminine expression.

Djebar sees Pelissier's account as an evidence of women's desperate resistance: *"The women, lying among the cattle in their lyrical embraces, reveal their aspirations to be the sister-spouses of their men who do not surrender*." (*F* 79) The death of an entire tribe in the mountain's caves of Nacmariais depicted in Pelissier's reports, where

[93] Salma Khatoun, "The Subaltern Voices in Fantasia," *Journal of Research* (Humanities), pp. 31-39; p.34.
[94] Mildred Mortimer, "Language and Space in the Fiction of Assia Djebar and Leila Sebbar," *Research in African Literature*, Vol.19, No.3, (Autumn, 1988), pp.301-311; p.305.
[95] Rita A. Faulkner, "Assia Djebar, Frantz Fanon, Women, Veils, and Land," *World Literature Today*, Vol. 70, No. 4, (Autumn, 1996), pp.847-855; p. 849.

they are burnt alive under his command.[96] The loyalty of Algerian women, who have not abandoned their men when the huge fires are lit, makes the tribe unconquered forever.[97] Through narrating the death of more than one thousand and a half Algerians, Pelissier exemplified the sufferance of the Algerians, and memorialized them in French colonial history.

Pelissier's shameless description of the event puts Djebar in the paradoxical position of having to be grateful towards the officers who dare to write about the violence inflicted on the Algerian people,

> I am almost tempted to thank him for having faced the corpses, for yielding to the desire to immortalize them. Pelissier, speaking on behalf of this long drawn-out death, hands me his report and I receive this palimpsest on which I now inscribe the charred passion of my ancestors. (*F* 78-79)

Without the existence of the report, without the violence that it describes, Djebar would not have been able to overwrite this massacre. Its history would have been erased from history and buried with the corpses.[98] Algerian women's courageous defence of their country against foreign invasion was also documented, through the depiction of the battle of Staouéli, in which two Algerian women challenge French power, and die a heroic death. In *Fantasia*, Djebar lends what the French Barchou records about them,

> Arab tribes are always accompanied by great numbers of women who had shown the greatest zeal in mutilating their victims. One of these women lay dead beside the corpse of a French soldier whose heart she had torn out! Another had been fleeing with a child in her arm when a shot wounded her; she seized a stone and crushed the infant's head, to prevent it falling alive into our hand; the soldiers finished her off with their bayonets. (*F* 18)

[96] Jane Hiddelston, *Assia Djebar Out of Algeria* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2006), pp. 74-75.
[97] Valérie Budig-markin, "Writing and Filming the Cries of Silence," *World Literature Today*, Vol. 70, No. 4, (Autumn, 1996), pp.893-904; p.900.
[98] Anne Donadey, "Rekindling the Vividness of the Past: Assia Djebar's Films and Fiction," *World Literature Today*, Vol. 70, No. 4, (Autumn, 1996), pp.885-892; p.887.

According to Barchou the Algerian women's action of ripping out a soldier's heart is a sign of barbarism and uncivilized people, who terrorize French troops with the threat of cold-blooded mutilation. He describes them as unwomanly women. Moreover, he justifies the violence performed with bayonets by the French soldiers on them as a punishment for their transgressions against proper femininity.[99] As a reaction, Djebar rewrites his passage emphasizing the women's humanity, courage, and strength in fighting the colonizer, she writes in praising their sacrifice:

> Thus these two Algerian women - the one in whom rigor mortis was already setting in, still holding in her bloody hands the heart of a dead Frenchman; the second, in a fit of desperate courage, splitting open the brain of her child, like a pomegranate in spring, before dying with her mind at peace - these two heroines enter into recent history. (*F* 18)

Moreover, the horror stories of the Algerian women fighters that was collected and written down in *Fantasia,* helped Djebar to colour her novel through narrating in detail the moments of their death.[100] How they were punished and tortured brutally by the colonizer. Captain Bosquet's letters from the expedition of 1840 describe the deaths of seven women who were killed by French soldiers because they have verbally insulted them. Another letter focuses on the description of a woman whose ankle was cut in order to regain a gold bracelet,[101] *"a woman's foot that had been hacked off to appropriate the anklet of gold or silver."* (*F* 55) Those French remnants under French words are the traces of the repressed, and the proof that conveys witness to the violence used against the Algerians, especially against women.

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[99] Jennifer. Steadman, "A Global Feminist Travels: Assia Djebar and Fantasia," Meridians, Vol. 4, No. 1, (2003), pp.173-199; p.185.
[100] Jane Hiddelston, *Assia Djebar Out of Algeria* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2006), p. 134.
[101] Sarah E. Mosher, *Shooting the Canon: Feminine Autobiographical Voices of the French-Speaking World* (Arizona: The University of Arizona, 2008), p.146.

The character of Sahraoui in the novel is a sample of women resistance. She makes uniforms for the brothers and loses her sons in the war. She also tells how she is abused by the French who destroy her house completely by burning it. The French army insults and humiliates her when she tries to save a mattress from the fire to sleep on.[102] Moreover, her older sister dies in front of her eyes; she could not get over the shock.

Such stories demonstrate the hard conditions that enclose Algerian women in the struggle. In fact, they are not only supporters but actual fighters. Sahraoui asserts,

> The second time the soldiers burnt my house down, the fire spread and the roof collapsed […] I went back into the fire, thinking, 'Even if I only save one mattress, I'll have that to sleep on!' So I got one mattress out; the fire caught one corner. I plunged it into the wadi and put the fire out. The soldiers laughed at me, saying "Are you keeping that one for the *fellaheen*? They came back and set fire to the place again. They even took the clothes off our backs … They took our clothes and left us like that, naked as the day we were born! (*F* 159)

Many women were stripped naked and then beaten, such verbal or sexual assaults could be seen as a direct offense against the victim's family honour, since all these forms of violence on women are considered as transgressions of the social code of honour.[103] Those young warriors who have been strangled, stabbed, or shot to death would be forgotten forever.[104] Their experiences would not be recorded in such details; rather they would only be heard through oral tales passed down through generations.

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[102] Ferma Lekesizalin, *Defiant History and Agency in Assia Djebar's Fantasia: An Algerian Cavalcade* (Istanbul: Istanbul Aydin University, 2017), p.211.

[103] Assia Kaced, "The Reaction to Algerian Women Freedom Fighters' Silenced Ordeals in Assia Djebar's Works," *International Journal of Education and Research*, Vol. 4, No. 7, (July, 2016), pp. 391-400; p.397.

[104] Barbara Frischmuth & William Riggan, "A Letter to Assia Djebar," *World Literature Today*, Vol. 70, No. 4, (Autumn, 1996), pp.778-780; p.780.

2.1. The Oppressed and the Concept of Rape

The concept of rape in Algeria is multiple not only men against women but Muslims against infidels which is more dishonourable. The Algerian women prefer to die rather than being dishonoured by the infidels. They beg to be killed by their husbands or sons before they leave them to the battlefield, in case the French win, women are the first to be captured as the spoils of victory.[105]

Under the leadership of Captains Bosquet and Montagnac, the French army arrives and massacres those who insult them and takes as prisoners those who wait passively and silently. Their faces are covered with mud to block out the Christian gaze. Their eyes unwilling to recognize the invader and their lips refuse to pronounce his name. [106] This need to hide oneself is derived from the desire to avoid appearing "naked" exposed before the gaze of the Christian, who do not only represent to the conqueror, but also the alien and the taboo. Here resistance takes the form of a strategy of not looking which denies the French victory itself.[107]

> Algerian women smear their faces with mud and excrement when they are paraded in front of the conqueror. The elegant chronicler is not mistaken: this is not merely to protect themselves from the enemy, but also from the Christian, who is not just the conqueror, but also alien and taboo! They use the only mask at their disposal; they would use their own blood if the need arose.[108]

Djebar notes that the Algerian woman covered their faces with mud in order to protect their honour, and to block out the Christian gaze. For them, the Frenchman represents *"the doubly opposite sex"* (*F* 127), not only in being the second sex (male) or

[105] Waterman David, "Body/Text/History," p.326.
[106] Valérie Budig-markin, "Writing and Filming the Cries of Silence," *World Literature Today*, Vol. 70, No. 4, (Autumn, 1996), pp.893-904; p. 900.
[107] Laurence Huughe & Jennifer Curtiss Gage, "Ecrire comme un voile": The Problematics of the Gaze in the Work of Assia Djebar," *World Literature Today*, Vol. 70, No. 4, (Autumn, 1996), pp.867-876; p. 874.
[108] *Fantasia: An Algerian Cavalcade*. Translated by Dorothy S. Blair. Heinermann, 1993, p.56.

the colonizer, but also in his Christian European colonial power.[109] *"Even when the native seems submissive, he is not vanquished. Does not raise his eyes to gaze on his vanquisher. Does not 'recognize' him. Does not name him. What is a victory if it is not named?*" (*F* 56)

Rape is tightly linked to the colonizer and the colonized relationship, according to Frantz Fanon: *"every veil that fell, every Body that became liberated from the traditional embrace of the haïk […] was a negative expression of the fact that Algeria was beginning to deny herself and was accepting the rape of the colonizer."*[110]

Above all, torture and rape took place even in jail. The French army intended such practices to humiliate the victims in society, to destroy the community's cohesion, as well as to spread fear among the Algerian combatants. As a result, most of them are ashamed to speak about their incidents of rape and torture. Because such experiences of violence with the colonizer distorted their social honour, they would prefer to keep silent forever.

2.2.2. Silence as a Colonial Heritage

What is worse than rape is silence. The Algerian victims cover their shame by silence. The most notable proof of that is that the thirteen year old girl, though being raped by the soldiers, she is excused of submitting to France, since the older women reject the term rape and they ask her instead if she has suffered any damage. This shepherd girl handles the shame of being seen by other women as a collaborator, because she is given no other choice between death and submission. She simply chooses

[109] Shaden M Tageldin, "Which Qalam for Algeria? Colonialism, Liberation, and Language in Djebar's *L'Amour, la fantasia* and Mustaghanimi's *Dhakirat Al-Jasad"*, *Comparative Literature Studies*, Vol. 46, No. 3, (2009), pp.467-497; p.478.
[110] Frantz Fanon, "Algeria Unveiled" *Dying Colonialism* (Grove Press, 1965), p. 42.

to live, so she will handle the consequences of that decision for the rest of her life.[111] Silence is the last resort to women victims of rape. When they narrate their stories, they generally try to ignore the part of rape. Through building a wall of silence, they express their fear of not being heard.

Again, the shame attached to rape in this patriarchal society is confused with a colonizing of the mind which cannot be separated from the body. Shame is felt because a person is a colonial subject, which pushes him to feel feminized in the face of colonial domination. Djebar's work continues Fanon's efforts to decolonize the mind.[112]

The first woman who is courageous enough to reveal her rape experience is Chérifa. Although she recounts her story twenty years after independence, Chérifa is still hesitant to speak about what happened to her. She buries her secret deep within her. However, the depth of her repression has led to problems with memory.[113]

After playing many roles as warriors, nurses, combatants, mothers and widows, they are not sung as heroines after the war. In the postcolonial period, the French are no more the enemy, and women are expected to return to silence, even Fromentin respects this Arab Islamic silence, by refusing to paint the murder of Fatma and Meriem. He chooses to write about them, instead of painting the Algerian hunting scenes of women who fell to France, after a night of love, Fromontine keeps the silence and rejects the French

[111] Waterman David, "Body/Text/History," p.327.
[112] Rita A. Faulkner, "Assia Djebar, Frantz Fanon, Women, Veils, and Land," *World Literature Today*, Vol. 70, No. 4, (Autumn, 1996), pp.847-855; p.849.
[113] Assia Kaced, "The Reaction to Algerian Women Freedom Fighters' Silenced Ordeals in Assia Djebar's Works," *International Journal of Education and Research*, Vol. 4, No. 7, (July, 2016), pp.391-400; p.398.

visual regime.[114]This attitude from Fromentin touches Djebar, since she uses his witness as a proof of the cruelty of the murder.

> Eugene Fromentin offers me an unexpected hand, the hand of unknown women he was never able to draw. […] Later I seize on this living hand, hand of mutilation and of memory, and I attempt to bring it the *qalam*. (*F* 226)

If the voices of Algerian women are finally restored to life in this novel, it is clearly because Djebar has taken by the hand the anonymous Algerian woman whom Fromentin had cast off along his way.[115] She awakens the voices of the "vanished sisters" in a language that represents the colonizer of their country.[116] Through emphasizing their images, and their mute state in history, she succeeds in making Algerian women's voices heard.[117]

In fact, Djebar does not limit herself to the depiction of women in their fighting, but goes beyond that to show how these "passive and mute" women challenge French authority and face torture and imprisonment without fear. Those fighters could prove their courage and patriotism in the war, but they find no fruits for their resistance, and their contribution to the national liberation does not afford them the rights they are expecting.

> No, I am only gripped by a paralyzing fear, the actual terror that I shall see this opening in my life permanently disappear. Suppose it were my luck suddenly to have amnesia; suppose tomorrow I were hit by a car; suppose some morning soon I were to die! Hurry! Write

[114] Shaden M. Tageldin, "Which Qalam for Algeria? Colonialism, Liberation, and Language in Djebar's *L'Amour, la fantasia* and *Mustaghanimi's Dhakirat Al-Jasad*," *Comparative Literature Studies*, Vol. 46, No. 3, (2009), pp.467-497; p. 479.

[115] Laurence Huughe & Jennifer Curtiss Gage, "Ecrire comme un voile": The Problematics of the Gaze in the Work of Assia Djebar," *World Literature Today*, Vol. 70, No. 4, (Autumn, 1996), pp.867-876; p. 875.

[116] Sandra Salaman, *Giving Silence a Voice Feminism and Postcolonialism in Novels by Assia Djebar* (Utrecht: Utrecht University press, 2009), p.32.

[117] Silvia Nagy-Zekmi, "Tradition and Transgression in the Novels of Assia Djebar and Aïcha Lemsine," *Research in African Literatures*, Vol. 33, No. 3, (Autumn, 2002), pp.1-11; p. 9.

> everything down, remember the ridiculous and the essential; write it, orderly or muddled, but leave some record of it for ten years from now […] ten years after my own forgetting. (*F* 49)

The text is created as one creates a sepulchre. It is written in fear of the disappearance of memory, in order not to forget the ones who have taken the story/history to their graves. The dead are absent but they are transformed into witnesses; they want to write through Djebar.

CHAPTER III: A POSTCOLONIAL FEMINIST READING TO *FANTASIA*

*Fantasia'*s engagement with the history of the (de)colonized Algeria, and its detailed analysis of the colonizer's ties with the colonized, situate the work within the Postcolonial field of study. The female touch, that is spread everywhere in the novel, starting from the protagonists as colonized females to the use of a feminine language, locate the narratives within the Postcolonial Feminist scope.

3.1. Theoretical Background of Postcolonial Feminism

The very simple definition of this theory hints to a unique mixture of Postcolonial premises and Feminist politics, in which the specificities of women as colonized subjects are celebrated, their social, political, and cultural positions are taken into account, and granted an equal importance to gender, which objects the western Feminist claims.

3.1.1. The Rise of Postcolonial Feminism

The starting point of postcolonial theory is hard to define. We can look at it from an empirical and a theoretical perspective. The occupation of "empty land" in the name of a colonial empire and the following "civilizing missions" created the image of a colonized world which would not exist without European colonialism. It contains, thereby, a clear distinction between the active European civilized colonizer and a passive colonized savage. Colonization is therefore claimed not to be a brutal exploitation and domination, but a chance to civilize the colonized and cultivate him.[118] in the western eyes, women are imagined in a desperate need for the civilizing forces of

[118] Stefan Wallaschek, "In Dialogue: Postcolonial Theory and Intersectionality," *Journal for Societal Progress*, Vol. 4, No. 4, (December,2015), pp.216-232; p.220.

equality, and rights, since they are unaware about the gravity of their oppression in the third world, they are severely victimized by the religious and patriarchal structures.

The term "postcolonial" does not refer to the time after colonization. The time of colonization had a lasting impact on the political, economic and cultural spheres of postcolonial states and societies. The colonial period is still part of present time and is influencing the metropolis and the former colonies. The concrete determination of the postcolonial includes both "after colonization" and "beyond colonization" and therefore both descriptions cannot be separated from each other, that is, the period in history "after" colonialism.[119] Rather, the "post" in postcolonial refers to a notion of both working against and beyond colonialism.[120]

Postcolonialism has to do with the social, cultural, political, economic, moral, religious sites, literature, and language to fight back "euro-centrism". To provide a clear account of postcolonial writing: it is not simply the writing which "came after" empire. Postcolonial literature is that which critically examines colonial relationship. It aims at one way or another to resist colonialist perspectives.[121]

A great deal of efforts have been paid to analyse the relationship of colonized peoples to their own history; but little effort has been made to include (de)colonized women in texts. Albert Memmi's and Frantz Fanon's, in their theories about the colonized intellectual and history, view the construction of a positive historical and cultural heritage as the first step in "decolonizing the mind", as a reaction to the colonizer's policy of denigrating the indigenous behaviour. In their essays, Memmi and

[119] Stefan Wallaschek, "In Dialogue: Postcolonial Theory and Intersectionality," *Journal for Societal Progress*, Vol. 4, No. 4, (December, 2015), pp.216-232; p.220.
[120] Joan M. Anderson, "Lessons from a Postcolonial-Feminist Perspective: Suffering and a Path to healing," Nursing Inquiry, Vol.11, No.4, (Jun., 2004), pp.238-246; p.240.
[121] Raj K. Mishra, "Postcolonial feminism: Looking into within-beyond-to difference," *International Journal of English and Literature*, Vol. 4, No.4, (June, 2013), pp.129-134; p.130.

Fanon do not specify the gender of the colonized intellectual subject whether a male or female.[122]

Postcolonial theory was criticized by some feminists for being a male-centered field, in which the exclusion of the female concerns was not satisfactory, but it exceeded to exploit them. Postcolonial feminist theorists have accused postcolonial theorists of both obliterating the role of women from the struggle for independence, and of misrepresenting them in the nationalist discourses.[123] However, at the time when the postcolonial leaders wrote their seminal studies on colonized psychology, the issue of postcolonial feminine subjectivity had not yet been distinguished from the overall concerns of the decolonized subject. They were satisfied with mentioning women's role in the revolutionary struggles, but they did not envision the possibility that colonized women have specific concerns in regard to their own relationship to history.[124] The women of the colonized nation are included in the nationalist cause, but within the institution of nationalism, they are not fully liberated, because the domestic patriarchy holds them as the keepers of the "true spiritual essence" and the core identity of the nation that cannot be challenged.

Feminist and postcolonial literary perspectives are occupied with similar questions of representation, voice, marginalization, and the relation between politics and literature. However, the conflict arises when feminists perceive that analyses of colonial or postcolonial texts, which fail to adequately consider gender issues, marginalizing them in favour of supposedly more significant goals such asnation building,

[122] Patricia Geesey, "Collective Autobiography: Algerian Women and History in Assia Djebar's *L'amour, la Fantasia*," *Dalhousie French Studies*, Vol. 35, (Summer, 1996), pp.135-167, p.159.

[123] Ritu Tyagi, "Understanding Postcolonial Feminism in relation with Postcolonial and Feminist Theories," *International Journal of Language and Linguistics*, Vol.1, No.2, (December, 2014), pp.45-50; p.46.

[124] Patricia Geesey, "Collective Autobiography: Algerian Women and History in Assia Djebar's *L'amour, la Fantasia*," *Dalhousie French Studies*, Vol. 35, (Summer, 1996), pp.135-167; p.159.

decolonization, or a critique of white imperialism.[125]Since the nation is too fragile, and the nationalist goals are to be taken care of first, feminist issues along with nationalist ones have often been delayed and women who wish to address them would be asked to be patient.[126]

While postcolonial theorist struggles to challenge the colonial discourse that aims at misrepresenting him as inferior, and primitive to legitimize his brutal atrocities, the task of a postcolonial feminist is far more complicated; it is primarily concerned with the representation of women in once colonized countries and in western locations.

3.1.2. Postcolonial Feminism as a Reaction to Western Feminism

The relationship between the term "Postcolonialism" and "feminism" creates another flexible concept that constructs a dynamic, contextualized discourse in order to examine pre–, neo–, and postcolonial female cultures and relations from a postcolonial feminist perspective that is deconstructive.[127]

Feminist theory has introduced gender as an important category of analysis, depending on what aspects of gender the theorist is most interested in clarifying, with sociological, cultural, political, anthropological, historical, and other implications. For some feminists, gender can be seen as a system of meanings that separates male and female sexuality. In which men and patriarchal ideologies control women's reproductive and sexual abilities.[128]Elaine Showalter reminds us that:

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[125] Depika Bahri, *Feminism and Postcolonialism in a Global and Local Frame* (Graduate Institute Publications, 2009), p.196.

[126] Lutsyshyna Oksana, *Postcolonial Herstory: The Novels of Assia Djebar (Algeria) and Oksana Zabuzhko (Ukraine): A Comparative Analysis* (South Florida: University of South Florida, 2006), p.32.

[127] Kinana Hamam, "Postcolonialism and Feminism: An Intersectional Discourse of Reconstruction," *Postcolonial Studies Association newsletter*, (Spring/Summer, 2015), pp.1-15; p.10.

[128] Nfah-Abbenyi J.M., "Gender, Feminist Theory, and Post-Colonial (Women's) Writing". In *African Gender Studies A Reader* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), p.260.

> A few years ago feminist critics thought we were on a pilgrimage to the promised land in which gender would lose its power, in which all texts would be sexless and equal, like angels. […] The land promised to us is not the serenely undifferentiated universality of texts but the tumultuous and intriguing wilderness of difference itself.[129]

It is impossible to deny that differences of class, race, nationality or sexual orientation are as important as gender. Yet the term "women's writing" can be debated; it can be considered as a form of segregation to categorize literature on the basis of gender. If there were no discrimination, we would speak of "men's writing" and "women's writing". It is fruitless to compare women's writing with men's writing, because women area heterogeneous group, and descend from complex intertwined categories such as class, race, nationality, ethnicity, sexual orientation, political stances and so on.[130]

A woman suffers from "double colonization" as she experiences the oppression of colonialism accompanied with patriarchy. She has to resist the control of colonial tyranny, not only as a colonized subject, but also as a woman.[131]Thereby, postcolonial feminism can serve as a critical discourse of female reconstruction which leads to plural, rather than double, forms of decolonization. It seeks to negate one dimensional theories which call for a homogeneous, historical construct of non-Western cultures and women, and so celebrating women's differences and specificities.[132]

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[129] Elaine Showalter, "Feminist criticism in the Wilderness," *Critical inquiry*, Vol .8, No.2, (1981), pp. 201-233; p. 205.

[130] Stefania Basset, I*nterconnections and Tensions between Postcolonialism and Feminism in South Asian Women Poets: the case of Meena Alexander, Suniti Namjoshi and Imtiaz Dharker* (Venezia: University of Ca Foscari, 2014), p.12.

[131] Ritu Tyagi, "Understanding Postcolonial Feminism in relation with Postcolonial and Feminist Theories." *International Journal of Language and Linguistics* Vol. 1, No.2, (December, 2014), pp.45-50; p.45.

[132] Kinana Hamam, "Postcolonialism and Feminism: An Intersectional Discourse of Reconstruction," *Postcolonial Studies Association newsletter*, (Spring/Summer, 2015), pp.1-15; p.10.

Postcolonial feminism is sometimes also referred to as "third world feminism" born out as a response to Western feminism which is mainly a white discourse. It is practiced by Indian theorists Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, Chandra Talpade Mohanty, and Marnia Lazreg, among others, which offers a valid counterpoint to both to the masculinization of some postcolonial theory hegemonic Western feminism, that fail to take into account such elements as colonialism, heterogeneous cultural and religious factors, as well as high levels of poverty and political oppression in developing nations.

Under this light, the Third World woman is stereotypically viewed as sexually constrained, poor, uneducated, traditional, family-oriented, and victimized in many Western feminist discourses. In her essay, "Under Western Eyes: Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourses," Mohanty points out:

> The discursively consensual homogeneity of 'women' as a group is mistaken for the historically specific material reality of groups of women. This results in an assumption of women as an always-already constituted group, one which has been labelled 'powerless', 'exploited', 'sexually harassed, by feminist scientific, economic, legal and sociological discourses. (Notice that this is quite similar to sexist discourse labelling women as weak, emotional, having math anxiety, etc.)[133]

These binary categories of Western and non-Western women are not only a reductive for women, but a denial for their legitimacy as subjects, in which the third world women are not only compared to men within the dominant discourses as a result of their gender, but they are also compared as one large, homogeneous group to Western women.[134]

[133] Mohanty, Chandra Talpale, "Under Western Eyes: Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourses." *Colonial Discourse and Postcolonial theory* (New York: Columbia UP, 1994), p.66.

[134] Sarah E. Mosher, *Shooting The Canon: Feminine Autobiographical Voices of the French-Speaking World* (Arizona: University of Arizona, 2008), p.128.

According to Chandra Talpade Mohanty, western feminism often produces a singular Third World woman as a prototype for underdevelopment, oppressive traditions, high illiteracy, rural and urban poverty, religious fanaticism and over population. She argues that such negative assumptions and stereotypes about the Third World woman do not capture the complexity of their lives. A "Third World woman" is not automatically oppressed. If she is from a powerful class or family, she may have more power and agency than a working-class woman or even man in "the West".[135] Thus, Postcolonial feminism helps to identify and correct the blind spots of Western feminist theory.

Raj Kumar Mishra defines Postcolonial feminism as "*a hopeful discourse, it seeks peaceful solutions for all world marginalized women. Postcolonial feminists imagine a world in which differences are celebrated and enjoyed. Postcolonial feminists work for social, cultural, economic, and religious freedoms for women.*"[136]

Through assuming that the solutions which White Western women have advocated in combating their oppression are equally applicable to all, Western feminism neglected issues of race, which has disrupted feminists from thinking about the ways in which racism and patriarchy interact.[137]

Mohanty criticizes over-simplified Western methodological practices of trying to find "proof" of various cases of powerless women in order to support the above mentioned classical notion of Third World women as powerless victims of oppressive

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[135] Claire Chambers, "Who's Saving Whom? Postcolonialism and Feminism," *Postcolonial Studies Association newsletter*, (Spring/Summer, 2015), pp.5-8; p.5.

[136] Raj K. Mishra, "Postcolonial Feminism: Looking into within-beyond-to difference," *International Journal of English and Literature*, Vol. 4, No.4, (June, 2013), pp.129-134; p.129.

[137] Ritu Tyagi, "Understanding Postcolonial Feminism in relation with Postcolonial and Feminist Theories," *International Journal of Language and Linguistics*, Vol.1, No.2, (December,2014), pp.45-50; p.47.

men, this classical notion is taken up by the White scholars. It was proved to be definitely not adequate. She asserts:

> The effect of the representation of third-world women in western texts is a coherent one, women are variously defined as victims of male violence; victims of the colonial process; victims of the Arab familial system; victims of the economic development process. This mode of defining women primarily in terms of their object status is what characterizes this particular form of the use of 'women' as a category of analysis. In the context of western women writing about and studying women in the third world, such objectification needs to be both named and challenged.[138]

"Sisterhood" as a white feminist concept implies a false sense of common experiences and goals; as if all women are oppressed by a monolithic, conspiring sort of patriarchal dominance. According to Mohanty asserts that this idea cannot be fruitful, says as it only paralyses women. Mohanty transcends the weakness in Western feminism, and goes a step further to offer some solutions to these gaps that tattered Western feminist's representation of "Third World" women.[139]

By rejecting the claim of a "global sisterhood", she criticizes the "Western" feminists for both being the leading activists in the sisterhood and for victimizing and objectifying the "Third World Women" and portraying them as powerless homogenous group. She states, "*sisterhood cannot be assumed on the basis of gender; it must be forged in concrete historical and political praxis."*[140]

Gayatri Spivak extends double colonization through her reinterpretation of subalternity. She writes about the difficulty of non-elite people, tribal peasants women,

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[138] Mohanty, Chandra Talpale, "Under Western Eyes: Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourses." *Colonial Discourse and Postcolonial Theory* (New York : Columbia UP,1994), p.66.

[139] Ritu Tyagi, "Understanding Postcolonial Feminism in Relation with Postcolonial and Feminist Theories," *International Journal of Language and Linguistics*, Vol.1, No.2, (December,2014), pp.45-50; p. 49.

[140] "Under Western Eyes," p.67.

low castes, and the working class – having their voices heard in an undistorted way.[141] In her essay "Can the Subaltern Speak?", Spivak asserts *"The subaltern woman will be as mute as ever."*[142] To paraphrase Spivak, even within a renewed drive to tackle sexual violence and misogyny within the country, the subaltern woman continues to remain mute.[143]

Economic, religious and familial structures are judged by Western standards. Instead of looking at the way these women are constituted through these social structures. This Western feminist discourse defines Third World women as subjects "outside" social relations; the "typical" Third World woman is thus being defined as religious, family-oriented, legal minors, illiterate and domestic.[144] As a result of this description "The Third World" woman was reduced to the status of "oppressed" object, Western feminism in the past has itself been a new form of hegemonic discourse that relegates non-Western women to the role of voiceless victims of patriarchal oppression.[145] So, Postcolonial feminism comes as a reactive discipline that seeks to answer the question why women are treated as second class citizens, oppressed and enjoyed less opportunities than males. Krishnaraj comments on the issue of women representation:

> We no longer think in terms of a universal female subordination for which there is some unitary causation but realize the historical processes occurred in different places at different times and in different

[141] Claire Chambers, "Who's Saving Whom? Postcolonialism and Feminism," *Postcolonial Studies Association newsletter*, (Spring/Summer, 2015), pp.5-8; p.6.
[142] Morris, Rosalind C, and Gayatri C. Spivak . "Can the Subaltern Speak?: Reflections on The History of an Idea" (New York: Columbia University Press, 2010), p.90.
[143] Rishita Nandagiri, "Outraging Whom?," *Postcolonial Studies Association newsletter*, (Spring/ Summer, 2015), pp.9-11; p.9.
[144] Ritu Tyagi, "Understanding Postcolonial Feminism in Relation with Postcolonial and Feminist Theories," *International Journal of Language and Linguistics*, Vol.1, No.2, (December, 2014), pp.45-50; p. 49.
[145] Patricia Geesey, "Collective Autobiography: Algerian Women and History in Assia Djebar's *L'amour, la Fantasia*," *Dalhousie French Studies*, Vol. 35, (Summer, 1996), pp.153-167; p.154.

> ways; subordination was never uniform even within the same period across all groups nor even within the same group. Women enjoyed spheres of influence and power as well as been victims of subjugation.[146]

Postcolonial feminism has never functioned as a separate entity from Postcolonialism, since the latter may represent an authentic root to the former. It goes beyond white feminism that has overlooked racial, cultural, and historical specificities that mark the condition of the colonized women. Moreover, postcolonial feminism was ruled by its eagerness to voice the concern of these women, alongside with the social challenge of everyday patriarchy, such as domestic violence, sexual abuse, rape, honour, killings, dowry deaths, and child abuse.

3.2. *Fantasia* as a Postcolonial Feminist Work

Many critics who have written extensively about Maghrebian women's literature locate Assia Djebar's writing within the traditions of postcolonial autobiographical writing and *Feminine writing* among them H. Adlai Murdoch, Patricia Geesey, Jennifer Bernhardt Steadman, Soheila Ghaussy, Mildred Mortimer, Winifred Woodhull, and Anne Donadey. They are some of the leading critics who highlighted *Fantasia*'s rising to the feminist challenge opposed to the Western feminism. They share the view that Djebar's portrayal of Algerian women in *Fantasia* effectively resists the repressive Western and patriarchal discourses.[147]

Djebar is among the many women writers, who sought to counterbalance the white maleness of the literary canon by giving colonized women a voice and a history in *Fantasia.* The tradition of both literature and history has been reconstructed through

[146] Krishnaraj Maithreyi, "Permeable Boundaries". *Ideals, Images and Real Lives: Women in Literature and History* (India: Orient Longman, 2000), p. 19.
[147] Ferma Lekesizalin, *Defiant History and Agency in Assia Djebar's Fantasia: An Algerian Cavalcade* (Istanbul: Istanbul Aydin University, 2017), p .201.

granting marginal women characters with a story of their own.[148] Djebar's polyphonic[149] writing consists of many narrative strands woven together. Under this fact, her writing style goes against and dismantles the Western myths and stereotypes of the universally colonized African woman, since so many individual and diverse stories and experiences are presented.[150] Indeed, Djebar uses feminine solidarity and agency as a means of political resistance, the feminine experience is presented as both endlessly variable, and impossible to access using the French colonial language.[151]

Even in the postcolonial period, when the colonized nation has produced its own historic discourse, and claimed its unique space that differentiates it from that of the colonizers', women's history remains invisible, since Women's history of a colonized nation is doubly marginalized for being not only the history of women but also the history of the colonized. In this context, the works of women authors from postcolonial countries contain "women's" history. They reveal what was not said before, they particularly contextualize the experience of double oppression as gendered subjects and as colonized subjects.[152] Thus, she reconstructs their revolutionary history, in order to revise the colonial and patriarchal stereotypes of Algerian women as mute and passive victims.[153]

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[148] Susana B. Funck, "Of Mimicry and Woman: A Feminist Postcolonial Reading of *Wide Sargasso Sea* and *The Biggest Modern Woman of the World*," *Anglo American Studies*, No36, (2011). pp. 65-91; p. 65.

[149] *Fantasia* as Polyphonic text, that contains the autobiographical and historical events mixed with the private stories of Algerian women.

[150] Sarah E. Mosher, *Shooting the Canon: Feminine Autobiographical Voices of the French-Speaking World* (Arizona: The University of Arizona, 2008), p.127.

[151] Jane Hiddleston, "Feminism and the question of "Woman" in Assia Djebar's *Vaste est la prison*," *Research in African literatures*, Vol.35, No.4 (Winter, 2004), pp., 91-104; p.92.

[152] Lutsyshyna Oksana, *Postcolonial History: The Novels of Assia Djebar* (Algeria) and Oksana Zabuzhko (Ukraine): A Comparative Analysis (South Florida: University of South Florida, 2006), p.25.

[153] Assia Kaced, "The Reaction to Algerian Women Freedom Fighters' Silenced Ordeals in Assia Djebar's Works," *International Journal of Education and Research*, Vol. 4, No. 7 (July, 2016), pp.391-400; p.393.

Djebar takes the responsibility of an Algerian to re-examine the history of her country, and as a woman to rewrite it from a feminine point of view.[154] Algerian post-independence nationalists and feminists hoped that the newly independent Algerian state, would end once and forever all the old forms of domination and oppression that had tortured women during a long war of decolonization, in which women played a major role.[155] However, this pipe dream did not see light in the Algerian soil.

Throughout *Fantasia*, Djebar backs feminist and postcolonial literature through her use of a methodology that seeks to uncover women's "voices" and "experiences" in a reliable reconstructed historian's narratives. Her reinterpretations of French archives, transcription of Algerian women's personal memories, and her translation of Algerian tribal legends function to correct the sexist and colonialist versions of Algerian history.[156]

For Djebar, it is an urgent need to recover the subaltern's voice through defying silence and giving the opportunity to all the muted voices to express themselves freely. The use of the females' stories and histories supports the feminist claim of the feminine as disruptive of discourse. In *Fantasia,* Djebar is concerned with detecting the blanks, and the unmarked spaces that characterize the feminist intellectual history. This fact resulted in a partial absence of an authorised feminine theoretical genealogy, which pushed Djebar to uncover women's critical position and to problematize the power of Algerian male's discourse.[157]

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[154] Hafid Gafaiti, "The Blood of Writing: Assia Djebar's Unveiling of Women and History," *World Literature Today*, Vol. 70, No. 4, (Autumn, 1996), pp.813-822; p.813.

[155] Assia Kaced, "The Reaction to Algerian Women Freedom Fighters' Silenced Ordeals in Assia Djebar's Works," *International Journal of Education and Research*, Vol. 4, No. 7, (July, 2016), pp. 391-400; p.393.

[156] Sandra. Salaman, *Giving Silence a Voice Feminism and Postcolonialism in Novels by Assia Djebar* (Utrecht: Utrecht University, 2009), p .16.

[157] Abdelghani El Khairat**,** *Narrating the Empire: Nationalism, Memory and Gender in Arab Postcolonial Novel*, Utrecht University 2008, p.90.

The two masculine cultural systems challenged each other for conquering the Algerian woman, much like a territory to be possessed. On the one hand, the colonial powers believed that controlling and taming the Algerian women was a key step towards a successful rule, this policy mainly aimed at cultivating French cultural values and promoting their loyalty to France. On the other hand, Algerian nationalists responded to this policy by enhancing the image of women as the teachers and guardians of the nation's identity,[158] since the natural role of women in the traditional Algerian society was to raise a new generation, that would be satiated with both the Algerian culture and a fierce spirit to resist French colonialism.

Winifred Woodhull explains in her article "Unveiling Algeria", that the state's Family Code of 1984 is based on Islamic law, this document states that women,

> remain legal minors […] until they marry; women's […] decision to marry must be authorized by a guardian;[…] married women must obey their husbands and must have their husbands' permission to gain employment; […] men retain the right of polygamy and repudiation of their wives; […] one man is considered equal to two women in matters of inheritance.[159]

When Algerian feminists opposed this code, President Chadli declared that *"no place whatever exists for anarchy [that is, feminist opposition to government policy] in a society that is building itself and constructing the foundations for its future."*[160] Thus

[158] Assia Kaced, "The Reaction to Algerian Women Freedom Fighters' Silenced Ordeals in Assia Djebar's Works," *International Journal of Education and Research*, Vol. 4, No. 7,(July, 2016) ,pp.391-400;p.392.

[159] Woodhull, Winifred. *"Unveiling Algeria," Feminist Postcolonial Theory: A Reader* (New York: Routledge, 2003), p.570.

[160] Lutsyshyna Oksana, *Postcolonial History: The Novels of Assia Djebar (Algeria) and Oksana Zabuzhko (Ukraine): A Comparative Analysis* (South Florida: University of South Florida, 2006), p.33.

oppression results from this strict social segregation and from the severe limitations imposed on female activity, rather than from moral subordination.[161]

The patriarchal system spreads its wings over the legal statues and social organization to desperately entrap the Algerian women's freedom. Furthermore, it affects the daily behaviour of men with women. Thus, in the eyes of customs and tradition, domesticity and housework became a natural state for women and the purpose of their existence.

In an attempt to answer the question: who would speak for the subaltern?, Spivak claims that the subaltern cannot speak, because a subaltern collectivity would be problematic in a heterogeneous culture, and it would also lead to dependence on the western and indigenous privileged intellectuals who will speak for him. She asserted that "*the context of colonial production, the subaltern has no history and cannot speak, the subaltern as a female is even more deeply in shadow."*[162] Djebar seems to have found an answer to the problem of subaltern voice through formulating a voice that is poly-layered and speaking from different perspectives; as a colonized Algerian female, as a beloved, as a bride, as mother earth, and as a freedom fighter.[163]

Chandra Talpade Mohanty also comments on this issue by expressing the dangers of reducing Arab and Muslim cultures and countries to homogeneous groups, in which the cultural and political specificities of each region and society are of a neglected importance. Mohanty rejects what some Western feminists call "average" or "universal"

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[161] Jane Hiddleston, "Feminism and the Question of "Woman" in Assia Djebar's *Vaste et la Prison*." *Research in African literatures* Vol.35, No.4, (Winter, 2004), pp.91-104; p.93.

[162] Morris, Rosalind C, & Gayatri C. Spivak. *Can the Subaltern Speak?: Reflections on the History of an Idea* (New York: Columbia UP,2010), p.83.

[163] Salma Khatoun, "The Subaltern Voices in Fantasia," *Journal of Research* (Humanities). pp.31-39; p.34.

Third World Woman.[164] Djebar as an innovative Arab "feminist" novelist, writing in a patriarchal Algerian-Islamic context, attempts to praise the maternal culture as the necessary first step in changing the status and image of Arab women.[165]She suggests that solidarity between women may shape a strict path towards freedom.[166]

Assia Djebar rejects the colonial view of Algerian passivity through describing the French violence and Algerian resistance to it. She also criticized the notion of the Algerian woman as a "weak and passive" being, unable to act or speak without the existence of the males around her.[167]

Spivak argues, *"the subject of exploitation cannot know and speak the text of female exploitation even if the absurdity of the non-representing intellectual making space for her to speak is achieved. The women are doubly in shadow."*[168] In *Fantasia,* Djebar challenges Spivak'sidea about the impossibility of subaltern speech. She has carved a unique model of subaltern female in the "Bride of Mazuna" as an opposite reaction to Spivak's Bengali woman. Bengali woman's failed suicidal attempt goes unheard while the bride's act of stripping herself naked evokes a contrary response.[169]

> With an ample gesture, as if she were in her bridal chamber, she laid down her tiara, then her heavy earrings, then the four, five, six pearl necklaces, then the broaches- ten at least- then… 'Allah! Allah!' sighed the chaouch and asked for another casket. The scribe, his eyes dazzled as much by the splendour of the precious stones as by

[164] Sarah E. Mosher, *Shooting the Canon: Feminine Autobiographical Voices of the French-Speaking World* (Arizona: University of Arizona, 2008), p.127.
[165] Ringrose Priscilla, *Assia Djebar in Dialogue with Feminisms* (Amsterdam : New York, Rodopi, 2006), p.18.
[166] Nancy Arenberg, "Mobile Bodies and Kindred Sisters in Djebar's "Ombresultane"," *The French Review* Vol. 82, No. 2, (December, 2008), pp. 335-365; p.364.
[167] Assia Kaced, "The Reaction to Algerian Women Freedom Fighters' Silenced Ordeals in Assia Djebar's Works," *International Journal of Education and Research*, Vol. 4, No. 7, (July, 2016), pp.391-400; p.396.
[168] Morris, Rosalind C, and Gayatri C. Spivak. *Can the Subaltern Speak ?: Reflections on The History of an Idea* (New York : Columbia UP,2010), p.84.
[169] Salma Khatoun, "The Subaltern Voices in *Fantasia*," Journal of Research, (Humanities), pp.31-39; p.33.

> the beauty of the bride herself, forgot to write down the inventory. (*F* 98)

In her novels, Djebar shows the struggle of the Third World subaltern female subjects, who experience a double marginalization for their gender and for their status as colonized individuals.[170] In her fiction, by unveiling the history of colonization and resistance, the novelist reveals herself as an Algerian female and on the same time unveils the speaking voices that can no longer be "subalternized" suppressed or veiled. This female "I" is the spirit of Algeria, speaking of the absent and silent gaps and spaces erased from history.[171]

Many critics have placed *Fantasia* within the umbrella of postcolonial autobiography and feminine writing; they have usually ignored the novel's anti colonial engagement with history and its construction of female agency as an opposition between the colonizer and the colonized. The author recreates Algerian history in *Fantasia* through highlighting the problem of being a colonial subject dispossessed of land, culture, and past.[172]

Djebar's discourse on behalf of oppressed subjects and silenced groups is a way to perfectly sculpture their experiences in the historical theatre of colonial and postcolonial Algeria. The incapacity of women to speak about their stories shows how the dominant discourse or the male discourse has depicted them as inferior or Others, as well as it deprived them from the right of subjectivity. In expressing themselves, these women break the silence caused by centuries of male's alienation of the female from institutions

[170] Sarah E. Mosher, *Shooting the Canon: Feminine Autobiographical Voices of the French-Speaking World* (Arizona: The University of Arizona, 2008), p.134.
[171] Salma Khatoun, "The Subaltern Voices in *Fantasia*," *Journal of Research* (Humanities), pp.31-39; p.37.
[172] Ferma Lekesizalin, *Defiant History and Agency in Assia Djebar's Fantasia: An Algerian Cavalcade* (Istanbul: Istanbul Aydin University, 2017), p.200.

and political life. So, Djebar's narrative grants a voice to the silenced female not only in Algeria, but in the Arab society at large.

CONCLUSION

The current study seeks to examine *Fantasia*'s attempt to properly unveil Algerian women's history, through shedding light on their fierce and violent participation in the revolutionary war. However, their efforts were quickly forgotten, to return to their traditional role and muted state; they were considered as legal minors after independence, since the colonizer was no more the enemy, but patriarchy that intended to hinder any movement toward women's freedom.

Females images were purposefully distorted; they were portrayed as savages and odalisques in the French documents, whereas they were not even mentioned in the Algerian history, which linked their existence to men. Under this fact, Assia Djebar felt the need to uncover the truth about these women's experiences to move them from the periphery of the French archives to be centre in her novel, this step shifts the subalterns to brave participants, whose voices are heard and registered.

The concept of love that is present in the title "L'amour la Fantasia", was fully absent in the work. Besides, being denied civil rights, the Algerian women were frightened to enjoy love, Djebar's female characters reveal the daily oppression, all Algerian women suffer, under the patriarchal thumb or colonial hegemony. women were accused of shame if a flame of love appeared in the confined space, the cloistered girls love letters, and Djebar's adolescent love story tragically ended, her love letter was shattered under her father's hands, this social transgression was to set stage for rape in the patriarchal minds, that backward way of thinking sees in calling the husband's name a declaration of love and a "haram conversation".

As a thematic focus of this study, oppression and resistance are shown at their best, through multiple images of women, which vary from freedom fighters who sacrificed their souls and properties to oppose the colonizer, Djebar labelled many fighters under

the names of Charifa and lala Zohra as prototypes of women's courage in the face of the "Other". Of particular importance, Badra's dignified gesture could never be forgotten, for it both denied the colonial and the male control, that body could never be possessed by a man, since it was registered in history, this kidnapped bride was much like the land, Algiers or the "open city" almost lost her honour with the stealthy arrival of the invader, the colonized woman found no way out to the male space but through the fourth language, that of the body, since The human body is the most powerful medium of expression, it reveals what cannot be said.

The colonial departure left the Algerian women with painful memories of rape, that damaged their psychologies, and pushed them to hide themselves behind the walls of silence, losing any ability to say "I" in the society. This fragile postcolonial woman was to be saved by Djebar, who renews their experiences and brings them to life.

Still another covert plot which this research seeks to highlight is the theoretical scope that *Fantasia* can be situated in, the Postcolonial Feminist approach comes as a reactive discipline that seeks to answer the question why women are treated as second class citizens, oppressed and enjoyed lesser opportunities than males. It seeks to negate western feminism theories, which call for categorizing the Third World women as a homogeneous group, rather women's differences and specificities should be celebrated.

Fantasia is a negation of and a protest against the condition of subalternity imposed on the Algerians in general and on women in particular, this fact qualifies it to be a postcolonial feminist novel. Djebar seems to have found an answer to the problem of subaltern voice through formulating a voice that is poly-layered and speaking from different perspectives, to challenge the image of the third world woman as "voiceless and powerless".

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الملخص

الفانتازيا لآسيا جبار هو عمل بارز في الأدب الفرانكفوني، فهو يخلد المرأة الجزائرية في التاريخ الجزائري وذلك عبر محو المعتقدات الخاطئة التي بلورتها البنى الاستعمارية والمجتمع الذكوري. لذلك يهدف هذا البحث لدارسة صور النساء في فنتازيا بالاستناد على المنهج النسوي لما بعد الاستعماري ، فالرواية تفحص محاولة جبار مدح الثقافة الأم كخطوة ضرورية لتغيير صورة النساء العرب كضحايا مستضعفات في محيط جزائري ذكوري إسلامي ، لذلك يقدم الفصل الأول الأحداث التاريخية للجزائر في الحقبة الاستعمارية لتسليط الضوء على حالة الحصار التي عاشتها النساء في كلا المجتمعين الاستعماري أو الذكوري ، بينما يحتوي الفصل الثاني على صور متعددة للنساء الجزائريات التي توحي بالاضطهاد والمقاومة ، كما يتناول الفصل الثالث نقد الرواية لذلك عكست جبار النساء الجزائريات في مختلف الصور البطولية : كأنثى جزائرية مستعمرة ، كمعشوقة ، عروس ، كأم ، أرملة أو كمحاربة لنيل الحرية بغية تخليد مساهماتهن في التاريخ الجزائري.