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## **Plotting Eastern Women's Multiple Colonization:**

**A Comparative Study between Khaled Hossieni's *A  
Thousand Splendid Suns* and Assia Djébar's  
*Fantasia, an Algerian Cavalcade***

**Dissertation Submitted to the Department of English in Partial  
Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Master's Degree in  
Literature and Civilization**

*Supervisor:*

**Dr. Mohammed GOUFFI**

*Candidate:*

**Mr. Mohamed Elamine RABIA**

**2020/2021**

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**2020/2021**

# Dedication

In loving memory of my parents,

To my beloved brother and sister

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*"I can no other answer make but Thanks. And thanks, and ever thanks."*

*Shakespeare*

## **Abstract**

This dissertation addresses the relationship between literature and women multiple colonization in Djébar's *Fantasia* and Hosseini's *A Thousand Splendid Suns*. The two novels give a truthful portrayal of how women were, and still are, treated in Algeria and Afghanistan during colonization and post-colonization. The selected novels are thus studied from different locations. That is to say, the research uses a Fanonian perspective as a tool that provides an insightful cultural understanding to the psychology of the colonized female. Postcolonial feminist approach, on the other hand, presents a good framework to study the multiple colonization in the countries in question. This study is hence significant as it juxtaposes two works written in different languages, but importantly both speak one language of women oppression. Moreover, it brings together something about the subjection of women in Algeria and Afghanistan. By the end, the research has come to one conclusion—for however much the conditions of third world women may differ, they are always subjected to a kind of radical patriarchy.

**Keywords:** Fanonian perspective, postcolonial feminist approach, patriarchy

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## **General Introduction**

Literature is a window onto the world, and, as the French philosopher Louise Gabriel Ambroise commented, “[it] is an expression of society just like the word is the expression of a human being”. Literature, therefore, is a product that reflects in most of the time the real social lifestyle; i.e., an art that is replete with hi(stories). If history were the body that states facts, literary works would be the soul that animates them and the vehicle which permits the readers to dive into the archive of history and construct a full picture about nations and societies. For that reason, literature became a fertile land for the implementation of many theories; be them in sociology, gender, or psychology; and led to the appearance of many literary devices and theories to study it, such as post colonialism and feminism.

Since antiquity, the pendulum of power swings from one extreme to another, from a colonizer who wants to extend his territory and fill his pockets, to a colonized who is either submissive or rebellious against the invaders. Colonialism is an ancient phenomenon by which powerful nations seek domination over the weak ones by force and persecution in order to gain new lands and spread their culture. Spreading religion, civilization, and equality in the primitive patriarchal societies are among the overtly declared causes of many colonizer, while the most covertly one is to create a mess in order to facilitate the stealing process with the help of the divide and rule policy.

Historically speaking, Algeria and Afghanistan were both under colonialism, where the first got its independence in 1962 from the French colonizer after a furious war. Afghanistan, on the other hand, has a complicated history since it was dominated by two empires: a British colonizer where it was under the umbrella of what was known as ‘the empire where the sun never sets’ then got its independence in 1919, and a Soviet colonization under which it was a pawn in the chessboard of the cold war—the Communist rule ended in 1988 after the dissolve of the Soviet union. The Afghan nightmare did not end with the Soviet collapse, since soon after, the Taliban started spreading fear again and opened the state's gate to a new American invader in 2001.

From another dimension, patriarchy is a system that essences from the idea of male dominance over women and sometimes even over young men. This word, according to the Oxford Learner's Dictionary, is derived from Greek word *patriarkhēs* which means the ruling father. In this regard, Lerner attempts to define it as “the manifestation and institutionalization of male dominance over women and children in the family and the extension of male dominance over women in society in general.” (Lerner 239). Patriarchy is then an intersectionality between social ideologies and power relations. Despite the cultural differences, all patriarchal communities share what “Caldwell...has called ‘the patriarchal belt,’ [which] is an extreme case of what Kandiyoti... terms ‘classic patriarchy.’ ” (qtd in Moghadam 20) Hereof, the dominant male is the one who holds the reins and controls everything.

Under these colonial and patriarchal conditions, women have always been the weak knot and a crucial subject in a large power play. In other words, women have been living between the hammer of colonization and the anvil of patriarchal societies, as though they were the oppressed of the oppressed. In this regard, Algeria and Afghanistan are no exceptions.

Since literature is a window onto society, many writers have been using their pens to depict the social instability brought by the clouds of colonization; for example, the Algerian Francophone writer Assia Djebar and the Anglophone Afghan writer Khaled Hosseini. Djebar, on the one hand, was born Fatima-Zohra Imalayen and used Assia Djebar as a pen name since the publication of her first novel *La Soif*. Her novel *Fantasia: An Algerian Cavalcade* received more critical attention than her other works due to its embodiment of not only to her own life story, but also to the story of her country. In this novel, the author tries to bring those Algerian women of the past to tell us about their life and position within society. Moreover, the writer sees this work as a “quest of identity [...] not only of women but of an entire nation”(Mortimer 201). Hosseini, on the other hand, has written many novels which describe the life of Afghan women under colonization and patriarchy, such as *A Thousand Splendid Suns*, which was selected as the bestselling novel in 2007 and bought him great. Throughout this novel, Hosseini tries to shine the light on the life of two female characters, Merriam and Laila; in an attempt “[to give] people a window into Afghanistan, especially into the difficult existence of Afghan women over the last 30 years” (Mudge “*Khaled Hosseini Behind the Veil*”). For that reason, making a comparison between *Fantasia: an*

*Algerian Cavalcade* [henceforth *Fantasia*] and *A Thousand Splendid Suns* [henceforth *ATSS*] will offer a broader understanding of the position of women in these societies and how the two authors have tackled their multiple- colonization.

Significant researches have tackled the issue of post-colonialism in the two novels. Critics have praised Djebbar and Hosseini's profound treatment of the issues of female bodily exile, gender stereotyping, and patriarchy in their novels. In a research published on 2019, the Algerian researchers Belkhiri and Azzi have come to a result that Hosseini's attempt behind *ATSS* is to "re-draw the human face of third world women" (77). Another researcher who has shown interest in this topic is Bindu Ann Philip in her research entitled *Endurance and Resilience: A study of the subaltern voice in A Thousand Splendid Suns* (2016). In this study, Philip maintains that Mariam and Laila represent the hope and the future of Afghanistan through their courage and resistance of all kinds of discrimination and abuse cast upon them in the novel. From another sphere, Shabanirad and Seifi point out in a research published on Autumn 2014 in the *International Journal of Women's Research* entitled *Postcolonial feminist reading of Khaled Hosseini's A Thousand Splendid Suns* that Afghan woman has suffered a double oppression due to the patriarchal rule and the military invasions that caused an instability inside the Afghan society. *Fantasia*, on the other hand, has got a shortage of critical English materials that tackled it from a post-colonial feminism lens in comparison to *ATSS*. In their thesis *Images of Women in Assia Djebbar's Fantasia an Algerian Cavalcade* (2018), the Algerian researchers Bougoufa and Abbad discuss Djebbar's representation of the Algerian women in her novel *Fantasia* and draw the conclusion that "the Algerian women were frightened to enjoy love, Djebbar's female characters reveal the daily oppression, all Algerian women suffer, under the patriarchal thumb or colonial hegemony" (58). In a similar vein, El Khairat succeeded in showing in his article *Narrating the Empire: Nationalism, Memory and Gender in Arab Postcolonial Novel* (2008) how writers such as Djebbar were able to play the role of an archaeologist in order to revise and reconstruct the history's fragments of the voiceless Algerian women. That is, Djebbar uses her pen and novel *Fantasia* to portray the life of women within both colonization and a patriarchal society in an attempt to give voice to the voiceless.

This finds all what have been mentioned before. Nevertheless, this dissertation takes a different perspective of the two novels. That is to say, all the aforesaid researches have tackled the image of women in the two novels separately; however, this one is meant to conduct a comparative study between the two novels which have never been done before.

The study, thus, will highlight the impact of culture and colonization on women's position in society. Moreover, it seeks to juxtapose the views of two authors from different societies who use different languages for a similar purpose— bringing together something about the oppression of women in Algeria and Afghanistan. Furthermore, it aims to discover the way a literary text can be the mouthpiece of the female in societies that work relentlessly upon silencing them. Lastly, it aims to figure out to what extent third world women have a similar portrayal of in third world fiction.

Postcolonial feminism is a sub-field in the field of postcolonialism. It focuses on the literary productions of the third world writers and seeks to study the intersectionality of the factors that lead to women dehumanization, such as gender, race, religion, and colonization. The selected novels therefore will be studied from different locations: firstly, from a Fanonian perspective which will offer an insightful understanding of the psychology of the oppressed; secondly, from a postcolonial feminist perspective—Spivakian—that will provide a good tool to discuss the representation of the subaltern women characters in the two novels.

Under the light of a suggested similarity between the two novels, the study is meant for achieving a set of objectives. First of all, it is aimed to make a comparative study from a postcolonial feminism insight in order to discover how the two writers portray women in their fictions. Secondly, it aims at shining the light on the experience of women under multiple-colonization. Therefore, in order to fulfill the aforementioned objective, the study attempts at pondering the following questions: in what way do Hosseini and Djébar speak to the sort of women with multiple-oppression and in what way are women presented in their novels?

The work, ergo, will be divided into two main chapters. The first one will discuss the history of Algeria and Afghanistan, the theoretical framework, and the writers' philosophies. In other words, the first chapter is meant to show a broad socio-historical vision by merging the novels with their contexts and writers. Meanwhile, it will provide a theoretical background by discussing the theories needed to achieve the aim of this research. The second

chapter, on the other hand, will be divided into three sections as well. The first section works as a fundamental platform; i.e., in this section the research will deal with patriarchy in the two novels. The second section will displays a comparative analysis to the image of women in the two novels. Lastly, the third section is devoted to analyze and compare the two novels from a postcolonial feminism view by implementing Spivak's theory of subalternity.

## **CHAPTER ONE: Socio-Historical Context and Theoretical Framework**

*It takes a great deal of history to produce a little literature.*

*Henry James*

### **Introduction**

It is a truth universally acknowledged that literary works cannot be fully tasted, savored, and understood when detached from their contexts. Given the fact that literature is no more than a reflection of its environment, the first section of this chapter is devoted to a socio-historical framework that embeds the two novels in their context. Here, Algeria and Afghanistan are put under the lens of history and sociology, i.e. it discusses patriarchy in the two societies. Secondly, the next section will deal with a theoretical framework. That is to say, it will provide an elaboration about comparative literature and some of postcolonial theories that serve the aim of study; more precisely, the ones of Frantz Fanon and Gayatri Spivak. Lastly, the third section will deal with the authors' biographies and philosophies.

### **1. Historical Background**

#### **1.1. The Colonial History of Algeria and Afghanistan**

Algeria and Afghanistan are two different countries from two different continents which seem to share a kind of similar oppressive history—both of them were subjected to colonization for more than a century. Algeria, on the one hand, had been a French colony for nearly one hundred and thirty years, under which, it faced different kinds of barbaric oppression. Afghanistan, on the other hand, has a more complicated history since it has received many invaders: the British Empire, the Soviet, Taliban, and the United States. However, its most difficult years are the last four decades.

### **1.2.1. Algeria under the French Colonization**

The history of the Algerian colonization can be traced back to the 1800, when France started to go down the ranking of the European colonial power because of the loss of a proportion of its North American colonies. In addition to the decrease of its influence in Egypt, France found itself in a bad position and pressured to restore its dominating colonial power (Brown 12). Therefore, the French unloved Bourbon monarchy needed a last resort to regain the love of the people and to avoid a revolution, and what is better than winning a glorious battle abroad for the sake of the nation (Vendervort 1).

The Fan Affair incident was the last straw that enflamed the conflict between France and Algiers. It happened when the French general counsel was hit by Dey Hussein. The accident was represented in a number of paintings and engravings. It was considered as an insult to the French Empire (Pilbeam 131). Later on, this incident was a fertile soil and an opportunity to display the power of France. It was used as an excuse to justify the invasion of Algeria in 1830 and to hide the real motives which were purely economic (Brown 12).

The City, not so much 'captured' as declared an 'Open City'. The Capital is sold: the price - its legendary treasure. The gold of Algiers, shipped by the crateful to France, where a new king inaugurates his reign by accepting the Republican flag and acquiring the Barbary ingots. . . An Open City, its ramparts destroyed, its battlements and earthworks demolished; its ignominy casts a shadow over the immediate future. (Djebar 39)

5<sup>th</sup> July, 1830 was the beginning of the French occupation of Algeria after the surrender of the Dey Hussein. After that day, the French colonizer started announcing new rules with vague terms meant to protect properties and to spread the cultural respect. But later on, it would be clear that those rules are only applicable to the settlers while indigenous population of Algeria suffered unjust rules that destroyed their traditions and seized their lands (Halaçoğlu 9).

As expected, France started occupying the rest of Algeria after conquering the capital Algiers in 1830. Just like they did with the Caribbean colonies they believed that Algeria

would be a great source of wealth and trade, and it would also be suitable as a French settlement that could provide a lot of opportunities to the jobless French citizens (Brown 13). Because of that, they faced fearless resistance from the indigenous population.

The word which could have united these scattered forces is not heard. This word will be spoken two hundred years later, more to the West, above the Plains of Eghris, by a young man of twenty-five, with green eyes and a mystic's brow: his name, Abd al-Qadir. (Djebar 31)

One of the strongest resistances of that time was the resistance of the Algerian western tribes, which was led by the elected leader Emir Abd al-Qadir ibn Muḥyī al-Dīn in 1832. Abd al-Qadir presided over the Algerian resistance movement as a *marabout* [spiritual leader] rather than a political or military chief (Vendervort 1). Moreover, he believed that facing the brutal force of France without any prior planning would be madness. That is why he started building a modern army equipped with the modern weapons. With the help of some mercenaries and prisoners of war, he created an army of 10,000 regular warriors. He also believed that it is a must to create an arm industry to repair guns and produce gunpowder (Vendervort 1). This *amir* [prince] had come up with the guerilla warfare strategy that stopped the French forces and sent them back to coastal cities for about five years.

Putting the powerful and fearsome French army, which trampled most of Europe recently to the ground, was seen as a great achievement by both people in Algeria and around the world. Specially that it has been done by a small number of heroic and motivated warriors of the dessert led by the fearless leader Amir Abd al-Qadir (Brower 175). But all of that changed with the coming of the French general Thomas Robert Bugeaud who was experienced in the guerilla warfare strategies used by Abd al-Qadir. After many battles with Bugeaud, Abd al-Qadir decided that any additional resistance would be hopeless. In 1847, he surrendered and was exiled to Damascus (Vandervort 2). That was only a break in what would be a national liberation war.

Abd al-Qadir had definitely been routed. But several Abd al-Qadirs are springing up. From every region they appear, a second one, a third, each one more. (Djebar 70)

After a hundred years from Abd al-Qadir's surrender and precisely in 8 May 1945, a display of Algerian nationalist flags in Sétif led French authorities to open fire on protesters. According to French reports, some 8,000 Muslims died that day. However, the Algerian reports state that there were more than 45,000 martyrdoms. The massacres, on the other hand, had far-reaching consequences that went beyond the deaths of innocent people. In other words, they laid the groundwork for Algeria's fight for independence which started nearly a decade later, for these protests were the Algerians' last hope of a peaceful solution.

The events of 8 May 1945 massacres radicalized the nationalist parties because they realized that the independence was not going to be achieved by the peaceful means but only with the military force. In 1954 the Revolutionary Committee of Unity and Action was formed by a group of previous members of OS (Special Organization) who split from the MTLD (Movement for the Triumph of Democratic Liberties). This organization would be later known as the FLN (National Liberation Front), an organization that was ready for military actions (Brown et al "Britannica").

In October 1954, the newly formed FLN stated that its aim was to restore the former glory of Algeria and to grant equal rights for all the Algerians and non-Algerians who supported the Algerian cause. It also stated that the war would not rely only on the military conflict. In that case it was the guerrilla warfare, but also on the diplomatic pressure. The war lasted for about eight years with incredible number of losses on both sides, and it was only in July 1962 when a referendum was held in Algeria, where Algerians were given the choice to decide their own destiny. Only 16,000 voted against the independence compared to the even greater 6,000,000 votes in favor of the independence (Brown et al "Britannica"). After that, Algerians savored the taste freedom for the first time after 132 year of atrocious colonization.

### **1.1.2. Afghanistan under Multiple Invasions**

The "graveyard of empires" (Maley 5) or Afghanistan had been always considered as a pawn in the world geopolitical chessboard due to its strategic position. Afghanistan for years have been conquered and ruled by two big empires: the British and the Soviet ones. Then, the Taliban seized power from the Soviet, which did not last for a long time since the United States would invade Afghanistan and took its sovereignty after the 9/11 attacks.

The first Afghan's nightmare started in the nineteenth century with the British invasion that sought to conquer Afghanistan in order to defend its Indian empire from Russian expansion. The British Empire, however, faced a furious resistance from the Afghan that resulted in succession of liberating wars (Desk "A Historical Timeline of Afghanistan") and ended up with the formation of Republic of Afghanistan in 1921.

For nearly half a century after getting its independence, Afghanistan had been one of the most peaceful countries in Asia. However, the decade did not get off to the best of starts. After the end of the World War II and the beginning of the Cold War era, Afghanistan, as many third world countries, was a part within that power play.

In December 1979 and amid the zenith of the Cold War, the Soviet Union occupied Afghanistan and used its invading army to depose an obstreperous ally and establish a puppet government in a dazzling display of military power. Moreover, it had shifted the country's stance toward a more radical and overtly expansionist direction (Heller 36). Nevertheless, and as its precursor, the Soviet faced strong public opposition and a furious military resistance as well.

In May 1988 and after nearly a decade from the Soviet invasion, General Aleksei Lizichev, the chief of the Soviet armed forces, declared the missing of 311 Soviet troops in Afghanistan, which gave the Afghan resistance some influence as they were the only ones who could fulfill the need for information within Soviet families. A series of meetings between Soviet authorities and resistance delegates happened as a result that led the General Secretary Gorbachev to declare the withdrawal of the Soviet forces from Afghanistan by 15 May 1988 (Maley 151).

After the Soviets resignation from Afghanistan, a shaky Afghan government took control, which was ultimately overthrown by the Taliban in a coup d'état. Kabul residents awakened to a gruesome scene on the morning of September 27, 1996. In a downtown intersection, two bodies were suspended from a traffic cop's pylon (Maley218). Photographs of the incident were reported widely around the world. Although the identification of the killers was never verified, it was widely viewed as a manifestation of the Taliban type.

According to Maley, the word Taliban comes from the plural of the Arabic word talib that means "student," who were well-known on the Northwest Frontier and in Afghanistan. However, the Taliban who captured Kabul were more than just a bunch of students: they were militarized army united under the name of the "Islamic Movement of Taliban" (Sirrs 44).

Mullah Omar, who was previously affiliated with the Hezb-e Islami of Younos Khalis in Afghanistan, was able to quickly assemble enough forces to take control of the county. Their initiative began with a successful radio propaganda campaign aimed at radicalizing urban communities. Subsequently, Omar started conscripting fighters in small towns (Renfro 3) and took a "bottom up" strategy by focusing on small towns (Jones 59).

The Taliban rule did not last for long. After the 9/11 attacks, President Bush authorized indirect assistance to anti-Taliban groups at the end of September. On September 26, 2001, the US launched a campaign into Afghanistan with tripartite goals. The first was the elimination of Al Qaeda, the second was the destruction of the Taliban, and the third was establishment of a representative government. US troops entered the country in traditionally American style and created an overwhelming intelligence presence (Renfro 4).

From what have been already stated, one can understand that although the Algerian's and Afghan's colonization were disguised and justified by the intention of "*la mission civilisatrice*" [civilizing mission], in fact they were colonized for merely economic and political reasons. The colonial histories of these countries show how these two countries have witnessed bloody years that stopped the weal of development for many decades. Moreover, this unstable situation has worsened women's position in these societies where they become doubly marginalized, for it has created a kind of a third world patriarchy. In order to make my point clear, the next title will deal with patriarchy in Algeria and Afghanistan.

## 1.2. Women's Position in Islam: Patriarchy in Algeria and Afghanistan

The Algerian patriarchy is considered to be a classical one. In other words, the senior man spreads his authority over all the members of his family; be them, man, women, or children. Where, in some places, women are treated according to the norms instead of *Shariaa Laws* [Islamic doctrine] in matters, such as marriage, inheritance, and education, i.e., they are deprived from the right of choosing their own husbands, the right of taking their part of inheritance, and the right of learning. In this behalf, Effendi sees in his book *Enable Workers: An introduction to the improvement and continuous development* that generally “Arab cultures are patriarchal and place women in a passive role at work and in the family” (qtd in Littrell & Bertsch 94) [Emphasizes added].

Nevertheless, patriarchy in Algeria during colonization was not a way of dominance as much as a way of resistance. According to Fanon, the French colonizer considered the Algerian culture as backward and underdeveloped, especially in regards to the treatment of women. For the French, the Algerian women were oppressed, and it is their duty to save them from those “medieval and barbaric” men (Fanon “*A Daying Colonialism*” 58). However, the covert intention from saving those oppressed women was to destroy one of the strong pillars that the Algerian society was standing on: women. That is to say, through colonizing and westernizing their minds by unveiling them(37). When the Algerian men realize that their women were under attack and their conservatism was the key point that the French colonizer was seeking to destroy at any cost, they hide their women and kept them behind the veil as a way of “defending civilization as well as they were able” (8).

Much the same as the Arabian culture, patriarchy in contemporary Afghanistan is classic too. Under this rule, women were, and still are, segregated from man, silenced, and obliged to behave according to restrict family codes (Moghadam 90). Moreover, women are regarded to be inferior to men under which they are classified according to their age, ethnicity, and family status.

Nowadays, as a result of war and instability, many women are facing daily domestic abuse and killing for honor by their husbands or relatives. In an article entitled *Domestic Abuse: 'Women in Herat may Survive Coronavirus but not Lockdown'* published on Apr 21, 2020 by The Guardian, Kumar reported that, as estimated by the United Nations, half of

Afghan women are subjected to domestic abuse committed by their husbands. While Bohn entitles his article “We’re All Handcuffed in This Country. ‘ Why Afghanistan is still the worst place in the world to be a woman with a headline that summarizes with a few words the daily suffering of some of Afghan women in such a patriarchal society. In this article, Bohn tells us the story of Khadija that attempted to commit a suicide by burning herself in order to escape from the domestic abuse of her husband.

Religiously speaking, Algeria and Afghanistan are both Muslim countries. The rise of Islam in the 7th century caused a radical change, such as changing the position of women inside society from being marginalized to being honored; be she, a mother, a daughter, a wife, or a sister starting by turning her from a curse in the pre-Arabian society to a blessing in the Islamic word. In this regard, the Prophet (peace be upon him ) says, "who is involved (in the responsibility) of (bringing up) daughters, and he is benevolent towards them, they would become protection for him against Hell-fire"(*Riyad as-Salihin* 268). Hence, the misbehaviors of men towards women in the Arabic and Islamic world have either to do with the social norms, or a misunderstanding of the Islamic teachings that may be interpreted in a way that supports men’s unfair treatment of women. In his book *Enable workers: An introduction to the improvement and continuous*, Effendi shares this opinion by stating that “it is not Islam that places women in these roles [a passive role], but rather the way that patriarchal societies interpret Islam to support their positions regarding what is and is not acceptable behavior for women” (qtd in Littrell and Bertsch 94).

Moroccan Islamic Feminist, Fatima Mernissi, gave many researches that share Effendi’s opinion. This last attempted to explain the cause behind the unfair treatment of women in her books. In her book *Veil and the Male Elite\_ A Feminist Interpretation of Women's Rights in Islam*, Mernissi explains how the prophet Mohammed (peace be upon him) was fair, flexible, and kind when dealing with his wives, and how “during the whole period of his prophetic mission, whether in Mecca (AD 610 to 622) or in Medina (AD 622 to 632), [he] had a major place to women in his public life (102). According to Mernissi, he was “an extremely polite and reserved man” (86). Furthermore, when the wife of the Prophet (peace be upon him) Aicha was asked what does the Prophet do inside his home, she answered that he was human like all humans; he was serving himself and milking his goat (Al-Adab Al-Mufrad 538). Furthermore, In a chapter entitled, *The Prophet and Space*, Mernissi tells the story of the beginning of the prophetic mission when the Prophet

Mahammed (peace be upon him) received his first revelation. The prophet went directly from the Cave of Hira where he was praying and meeting Gabriel to “ the arms of his first wife Khadija [where] he sought comfort and support (102).

When it comes to marriage and education, the Prophet Mohammed (peace be upon him) prohibited obliging women to marry against their will, and when a maiden complained that her father obliged her to marry, the prophet( peace be upon him) give her the right to choose whether to stay with her new husband or to leave. Education, on the other hand, in Islam is a duty not just a choice. For that reason, the Quran asks Muslims to pray for Allah to increase their knowledge “O! Allah, increase my knowledge” (The Qur'an,20 : 114). On this subject, in her collected works *One Woman's Jihad* by Beverly Mack and Jean Boyd Nigerian Muslim feminist, Nana Asma'u affirmed the indispensability of becoming an educated woman. Asma'u goes further and asserts that depriving women from their right of education is against the teachings of Islam. “Any society that impedes equitable access to salvation by controlling or limiting who can get an education eschews the tenets of Islam” (Mack, Beverly B. and Jean Boyd 76).

## 2. THEORITICAL FRAMEWORK

### 1.2. Comparative Literature: Different Schools different Thoughts

Comparative literature is the art of juxtaposing two literary works; for example, poems, books, or essays, etc; and merging the colors of their literariness through crossing the borders of their homelands and discovering to what extent they mirror each other. However, Hutchinson sees that comparative literature as an art that exceeds the simplicity of crossing borders since it leads its practitioner to distancing himself from his own native culture “to forgo his ‘home’ literatures in favor of a willed homelessness” (Hutchinson 12).

Throughout this field of study, its practitioner uses comparison as an instrument in an attempt to study literature without borders and boundaries across other disciplines; such as, art and humanities. In this regard, Zhang succeeded in giving a broader definition to comparative literature, which is, according to him, “a special discipline refers to the comparative study of literatures of different countries and languages” (qtd in Jiewen 30).

Historically speaking, comparative literature has witnessed the appearance of many schools of thought, such as the Russian, German, Chinese, French, and American. However, the most influential and notable ones in the field are French and American schools.

French school, on the one hand, sees that comparative literature studies the relationship between two authors or works from different countries and languages with a stress on the historical context. Moreover, it attempts to deal with the influence of one author on another and to discover that relation. That is to say, it sees comparative literature as a “positivist discipline concerned with the study of the influence or reception to an author or authors abroad” (Mangattu 2). Plus, it focuses on the differences and similarities between the two works, i.e., it sees that two works must be from different languages and cultures.. In this regard, Paul Van Tieghem, one of the leading figures among the French school views comparative Literature as a detective tool “to gather different *facts* from as many sources as possible, so as to fully explain each *fact*, know more about the *facts*, and finally find reasons for each research”( qtd in Jiewen 31).

The American school, in contrast, follows the old saying ‘all roads lead to Rome’. For it, all the ways in literature lead only to beauty and art. This school sees comparative literature as an artistic domain that helps critics to mirror literary works. According to Remak, one of the pioneers of this school, “it is the study of relations among the literatures and *other scientific areas of knowledge and belief*” (qtd in Salahuddin & b. Abd Rahman). To rephrase it, the American school seeks comparison through going hand in hand with other scientific domains, such as sociology and psychology. This definition shows clearly the heart of contradiction between the French and the American schools whereas the first envision comparison as a mere indication of the similarities and dissimilarities between the two works with more focus on history, the latter views it as a broader art that study parallels in literature and that does not support any restriction. That is, the American school “de-emphasizes the detective work and detailed historical research that the French school had demanded” (Mangattu 2).

Nevertheless, for however much the two schools differ in thoughts, there is no denying that both of them seek to wave beautiful quilts from different colorful ropes through the art of comparison.

## **2.2. Views of Postcolonialism**

Postcolonialism, as a field of research, has appeared in the seventies with the publication of Edward Said’s seminal work *Orientalism*. According to Ashcroft et al., “[the] team has been used by literary critics —such as Spivak’s *In Other Worlds* (1987), Bhabha’s *Nation and Narration* (1990), and Said’s *Culture and Imperialism* (1993) — to discuss the various cultural effects of colonization.”(168) The word post-colonialism with a hyphen refers to the era of independence; i.e., after the end of colonialism; while unhyphenated it refers to the body of ideas, theories, and philosophies that weaves this field of research.

Postcolonial theories, therefore, are the ones that concentrate basically on studying socially, culturally, and economically the implications of colonialism on colonies. The term postcolonialism does not mean only the post-independence literature, but also literary texts during colonialism. Namely, it deals with colonialism from the first encounter between the colonized and the colonizer until the post-independence. Postcolonialism, thus, “deals with the effects of colonization on culture and societies”(Ashcroft, Griffiths & Tiffin, 168).

Among the pioneers of this field of study there are: Frantz Fanon, Edward Said, Homi Bhabha, and Gayatri Spivak.

Despite the undeniable contribution of critics such as Edward Said and Homi Bhabha into this field of Postcolonialism, this part will shed light only on two— Frantz Fanon and Gayatri Spivak due to their importance in serving the aim of this study.

### **2. 2. 1. Fanonian Legacy: a Critical Insight**

Frantz Fanon is one of the writers whose name walks side to side with postcolonial studies. “To read Fanon” according to Bhabha, “is to experience a sense of division that prefigures – and fissures – the emergence of truly radical thoughts that never dawn without casting an uncertain shadow” (Bhabha 57). For however shadow Fanon’s writings may cast, there is no objection for his contribution into the field of post-colonial literature through his analysis of the clash between the colonized and the colonizer in his books.

In *The Wretched of the Earth*, Fanon analyzes the nature of colonialism —the clash between a colonizer who steals the fortunes of his colonies and a colonized who is wretched in his own land. This latter will lead eventually to revolution which, according to Fanon, is conducted by “the peasants alone/ for they have nothing to lose and everything to gain.” (Fanon “*The Wretched of the Earth*” 61) In order to elaborate his idea that what is taken by force can only be recovered by force, Fanon uses *The Tragedy of Julius Caesar* to emphasize that violence is the only available tool for the oppressed in order to get back their land (86).

*Black Skin White Mask* was, too, a key text for understanding the psychology of the oppressed. In this book, Fanon uses a psychoanalytical theory in order to understand the psychology of the oppressed and the dilemma of racism since, for him, everything irrational needs psychology to understand it. In order to do so, Fanon analyses the psychology of the Negro from Martinique, and exhibits how can racism lead a Negro or the oppressed into searching for ways to experience the desire to be white, such as in language. For that reason, Fanon chooses to start his book not with the problem of race per se but with the problem of language in order to show to what extent can language affect culture; that is, “to speak a language is to take a world, a culture” (Fanon “*Black Skin White Masks*” 25).

Fanon delves into analyzing the psychology of the oppressed through applying Hegel's duality – the master and the slave– into colonialism. As a result, Fanon finds that within colonialism the oppressor wants the fulfillment of his material needs from an oppressed who, under these circumstances, develops two desires: to be master, or to be equal to the masters. This latter conflict, according to Fanon, will create an internal alienation and, undoubtedly, a complex of inferiority. In this vein, Fanon recalls a debate between the poet Aimé Césaire and the French philosopher Octave Mannoni, where the first sees that European civilization is responsible of the racism, while the second sees the reverse- the Europeans are innocent from that claim. Amid such a debate, Fanon stands besides Césaire's opinion that all Europe is built upon a racist base. In other words, Fanon means what has become known in the field of post-colonial studies as Orientalism.

Lastly, in *A Dying Colonialism*, Fanon discusses the changes that happened inside the Algerian family during revolution, and how the oppressed or the 'primitive' as named by the colonizer fought the colonizer overtly— with guns— and covertly; through clinging on their traditions and cultural rules, and using them as a way of resistance. Fanon uses the fifth year of the Algerian Revolution as a starting point to understand the cunning and lucid ways used by the colonizer on the oppressor in order to destroy their fort by culturally colonizing their women and making Algeria unveiled.

It is noteworthy that Fanon's works had a profound impact on libertarian movements and helped usher in the area of postcolonial studies. i.e., they served as the first spark that led to the rise of many theories in the field of postcolonial studies, such as Spivak's theory of subalternity.

### **2.2.2. Spivakian Feminism and Subalternity**

Apart from Fanon, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak is an Indian Scholar, theorist, and literary critic who attempted through her research to make a comparison between women in the western society and third world subaltern women and defending oppressed women. Spivak is a well-known feminist within the field of Postcolonialism. Under the umbrella of this discipline, she has published many insightful researches, such as *The Post-Colonial Critic* and *Can the Subaltern Speak?*

### 2.2.2.1 Spivak as a Postcolonial Feminist Figure

Postcolonial feminism is a fruit of marriage between two fields of study: post colonialism and feminism. This link has produced a tool for studying the state of silence, oppression, and marginalization of women across cultures. “It has the potential to function as a critical discourse of female reconstruction which leads to plural, rather than double forms of decolonization” (Hamam 10). To put it simply, it is “ a hopeful discourse that seeks peaceful solutions for all the world marginalized women” (Mishra 129). This discipline has been always working under the umbrella of postcolonialism. It surpassed the western feminism that has neglected other oppressive conditions that surrounded third world women and attempted to voice their concerns and make their voices rehearable.

“Third world feminism” is a second concept which is used to refer to postcolonial feminism in order to distinguish it from Western feminism or the white feminists’ discourse that failed to take into consideration other factors of women’s oppression; for example, colonization. In this view, Spivak sees that

Between *patriarchy* and *imperialism*, subject-constitution and object-formation, the figure of the woman disappears, not into a pristine nothingness, but a violent shuttling which is the displaced figuration of *the “third-world woman” caught between tradition and modernization.* (Spivak 306)

Throughout this field of study, Spivak has attempted to frame the forms of double oppression imposed on third world women and write about the difficulties faced by those women who live in patriarchal societies and bear an additional hyphen in their identities, such as colonized-illiterate-peasant-women. Controversially, she sought to empower them by making them the owners of their own experiences (Gandhi, 88). For her, Spivak believes that third world women are drowned in subalternity and must have the opportunity to make their voices hearable again. Hence, Gandhi holds that in doing so, Spivak maintains that “the prescription of non-Western alterity as a tonic for the ill health of western culture heralds the perpetration of a new Orientalism” (84).

### 2.2.2.2 Gayatri Spivak and the Nation of Subalternity

Historically speaking, the term ‘subaltern’ has been introduced at the beginning by the Italian philosopher Gramsci in his book *Prision Notevooks*. In this book, Gramsci used the term in its literal meaning to discuss the issue of ‘military structure’ related to noncommissioned troops who are under the authority of military officers. Gramsci attempted to answer the ability of a private to become a noncommissioned officer. Gramsci results that, in fact, the function of those troops will remain confined to “executive- bureaucratic” duties. Gramsci used this term metaphorically in his article entitled *Some aspects of the Southern Question* which was published in 1926 to define the subaltern peasant in southern Italy as a “perpetual ferment, but as a mass they are incapable of giving a centralized expression to their aspirations and needs.” (qtd in Ajarour 1)

As a field of research, Subaltern Studies attempts to extend the usage of Gramsci’s term to identify other categories, such as gender. It is, according to Chakrabarty, a project that has emerged “in conversation with postcolonial studies” (Chakrabarty 18). Under this endeavor, the India scholar Gayatri Spivak has produced her seminal work “Can the Subaltern Speak?” Where she raised a rhetorical question on whether or not the subaltern are able to make their voices hearable.

In her seminal essay “*Can the Subaltern Speak*”, Spivak has rhetorically problematized the term subaltern in an attempt to ask whether or not the subalterns, women in particular, are able to make their voices hearable under the weight of power and hegemony. Moreover, Spivak investigates whether or not it is possible for the subaltern to speak for themselves and talks about a type of subalternity where Bangal women were living in. According to Spivak, in the Hindu tradition, there is a ritual known as *Sati*, where the Hindu widow “ascends the pyre of the dead husband and immortal herself upon it”. That is, in that patriarchal society, women’s body was considered as men’s property, where they had to follow blindly the Indian tradition without any control to their bodies, desires, or consciousness. Hence, in the Sati practice, women were presented as an unconscious subaltern who has no right to question or oppose but to show their ultimate loyalty and sincerity to their dead husbands through burning themselves alive. By raising this question, Spivak does not attempt to say, giving the Sati practice as an example, that the subalteran subjects are not able to speak, but rather the issue essences in their inability to make their

voices hearable; since, in such societies, psychological aphonia is practiced through male dominance and religious manuscripts.

In 1829, the British authority abolished this practice where the overly declared intention, as stated by Spivak, was understood as a “white men saving brown women from brown men” (93), the covertly intention that lies behind this decision is to practice and legitimize a cultural and imperial hegemony under the claim of liberating and giving third world woman the right to live, while in fact, they kept her presented as an unconscious oppressed. Therefore, between the social conventions and the colonial hegemony, the third world subalterns’ voices, became nothing but doubly muted; i.e., in both cases they cannot express their culture or identity in the way that they wished without an external interference.

Spivak maintains that it is the role of the intellectuals to voice the subaltern and speak for them giving the fact that “there is no un-representable subaltern subject that can know and speak itself; the intellectual’s solution is not to abstain from representation” (80). Nevertheless, it is fair to argue that any attempt to voice the subaltern is considered as nothing save making him more dependent and subaltern because he cannot speak in the own and need always someone to speak for him, on that account, Spivak results that, under the patriarchal ideology that supports the male dominance, and in a context of colonization, “*the subaltern cannot speak,*” and “as a female is even more deeply in shadow” (84).

It is very interesting to discuss what Spivak calls a “white men saving brown women from brown men” (93) Algerian and Afghanistan. In his novel *ATSS*, Hosseini tells us through the tongue of his character Hakim that Afghan “regions where men who lived by ancient tribal laws had rebelled against *the communists and their decrees to liberate women...* [and] saw it as an insult to their centuries-old tradition” (Hosseini 143). On the other hand, according to Fanon, the French colonizer had “denounced and described [the Algerian man] as medieval and barbaric” (“*A Daying Colonialism*” 58) and it is a burden above their white shoulders to liberate the Algerian women and symbolically to un-veil. Therefore, in the context of colonialism, Afghan and Algerian women had also practiced the covertly intentions of a colonizer who attempted to liberate them.

### 3. DJEBAR AND HOSSEINI'S BIOGRAPHIES AND PHILOSOPHIES

In their book *Theory of Literature*, Warren and Wellek hold that while analyzing a work, we should never ignore the biographical elements. For when they are merged and integrated in a work, they lose all their personal touch and become “simply concrete human material, integral elements of a work” (qtd in Bennai 45). For that reason, analyzing Hosseini’s and Djebbar’s biographies and philosophies will certainly help in fulfilling the research aims.

#### 3.1. Biographical Similarities between Djebbar and Hosseini

Before diving into their lives and while reading their works, Hosseini and Djebbar seem to confirm the saying “all great authors are at war with themselves, and that great literature is born out of internal conflict” (Martin 207). In other words, *ATSS* and *Fantasia* are products of pain sensation and beautiful translations of a realistic environment and personas that faced colonization and patriarchy.

Among the common features between Hosseini and Djebbar, besides their use of a second language as a tool of writing, are their similar social status — both are from educated families— and their similar talk about pain. Being born in an intellectual environment in unstable milieu the two writers could not help to prevent being subjective in their works which is undeniably apparent in their depiction to their homelands— Algeria and Afghanistan.

The Afghan doctor-turn-novelist, on the one hand, Khaled Hosseini was born in 1965 in Kabul, Afghanistan to a secondary school teacher mother and a diplomat father. At the age of eleven, Hosseini went with his parents to live in Paris after his father was appointed as a diplomat at the embassy of Afghanistan. The Soviet invasion to Afghanistan in 1979 prevented the Hosseini from returning home and obliged them to seek refuge in the United States. In the U.S., Hosseini obtained his degree in Biology from Santa Clara University in 1989, then attained the medical school at the University of California, San Diego where he got his medical degree too in 1996 (Luebering & Pallardy “Britannica”).

Hosseini has published his first book *Kite Runner* in 2003, preceded by his second splendid book *A Thousand Splendid Suns* in 2007. In an interview that followed the publication of his first book, Hosseini says that as he enjoyed practicing medicine, writing for him had always been a passion. And as a doctor he was woke very early in order to write his first novel before going to work since writing for him is his livelihood. Now Hosseini is managing the *Khaled Hosseini Foundation* that provides humanitarian help for people in Afghanistan.

The winds of art take us further into the west to meet another splendid sun in the field of literature— the Algerian francophone writer Fatima-Zohra Imalayen who chose Assia Djebar as a pen name. Djebar was born in 1935, Cherchell, Algeria. Djebar was educated in Algeria during colonization then in France and got her PhD in 1999 from Paul Valéry University of Montpellier III. Among her notable works *La Soif (The Mischief)*, *L'Amour, la fantasia [Fantasia: An Algerian Cavalcade]*, *Ombre sultane [A Sister to Scheherazade]*, and *Vaste est la prison [So Vast the Prison]*.

In addition of being a novelist, Djebar was too a filmmaker. During her carrier, Djebar has produced two movies in the period between 1978 and 1980. Her first movie, *Nouba des femmes du mont Chenoua*, is about an Algerian women who return back to her homeland after a long time in exile, whereas the second one *Femmes d'Alger dans leur appartement [Women of Algiers in Their Apartment]* talks about patriarchy in post-colonial Algeria.

Academically speaking, Djebar had been teaching as a professor of history at the University of Algiers for four years, where she was appointed as department head of the French Section at the university. Later in 1996, Djebar won Neustadt International Prize for Literature then the Peace Prize of the German Book Trade in 2000 (Britanica).

### **3.2. Assia Djebar and Khaled Hosseini Philosophies**

As though Hosseini and Djebar share Khatib Yacine's philosophy that he writes in "French to tell the French that [he is] not French"( Hannoum 232), the two authors, however, have chosen to tell the world through their writings and usage of foreign languages about their real identity and belongings. For Hosseini, English is the language of his second home,

of a place that opened its gates when the doors of his homeland were closed; whereas Djébar sees French as a war trophy, as a war loud, and as a language of a former enemy. For her, the usage of such a language is like starting a fire that may consume her “for attempting an autobiography in the former enemy's language” (Djébar 215).

The Afghan writer, Hosseini, on the one hand, puts upon his shoulders the duty of telling the world about Afghanistan; more precisely, the stories of Afghan women who have been double marginalized for over thirty years by war and patriarchy. Hosseini professes that his book, *ATSS*, is a reflection of the Afghan society, and that he wrote it after his visit to Kabul in spring 2003. Moreover, he states that, while he was there, he had spoken to many women in order to know about their life during the Taliban era; hence, according to him, his two main characters are reflection of the “collected spirits” of all those women he met there.

I am from Afghanistan. And although it's not my intention to educate people about Afghanistan, I do hope that in some ways this novel [*ATSS*] gives people a window into Afghanistan, especially into the difficult existence of Afghan women over the last 30 years. (Mudge)

According to Soraya, Hosseini's original roots and memories have worked hand in hand with the instability witnessed in Afghanistan for over thirty years like a background for *ATSS*. (Soraya 82)

Pain for Hosseini, is a language, a universal one that everyone knows the feeling of its rhyme on our hearts. It is the center of human experience, and it is one of the causes behind reading books; since when doing so, we feel others pains and know that we are not the only people suffering in the world. For that reason, Hosseini sees his works nothing but a vivid depiction of real stories that happened in Afghanistan.

I read stories about families in Afghanistan who living in villages who were selling the children ...to be adopted and ...to be enlisting in some house Labor's but these families were. They were selling their children in order to support the rest of their kids. (Al Jazeera English)<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> This source has been taken from an interview conducted with Hosseini by Al Jazeera English. One can find the following quotation literary from the minute 21:03 to 21. 23.

When it comes to writing from women's voice, Hosseini admits that it is a very difficult task since he had to be in women's position and think as they do, but also he "had to think about what it would be like to be a different woman" (Mudge "Khaled Hosseini Behind the Veil"). During the writing process, Hosseini knew that his duty is to "became a mouthpiece for them" (Mudge).

At the end of this interview, Hosseini confesses the major philosophy that lies behind his writings, which is what all writers want: that people feel the sorrow and happiness of his characters, "and to be transported by them" (Mudge).

Similarly to Hosseini, Djebbar views writing as silent voice "l'écrivain idéal serait un muet qui écrit" [the ideal writer would be a mute who writes] (Adler)<sup>2</sup>. It is about recalling the noises and poetry of voices of your memories and translating them into works of art. Writing for Djebbar is a task made by the mind's ear through which a writer writes with the feather of past and the ink of memories. Through writing, Djebbar was seeking liberty in environment where there was a little freedom.<sup>3</sup> Moreover, Djebbar admits that her aim from writing is to give those Algerian women what they have lost in exile. In this regard, she states that,

Donc je pense que c'est au fond de ça, ma solidarité sera plein littéraire. C'est ramener les femmes du passé les ramener dans leur vie, dans leur opposition, et dans leur vie en faisant exister des femmes entière pas des femmes entravée... j'essaye de me mettre dans le regard des femmes traditionnelles de multiples femmes de médina qui vont et viennent, qui doivent travailler, qui finalement assument à la fois le rôle de l'homme ... et en même temps acceptent l'autorité de.<sup>4</sup> (Sadki)

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<sup>2</sup> This source has been taken from an interview conducted with Djebbar by Laure Adler. One can find the following quotation literary from the minute 00:02:00 to 00:02:07.

<sup>3</sup> The same source from the minute 00:03:00 to 00:05:00

<sup>4</sup> This source has been taken from an interview with Djebbar which is uploaded on You Tube by Sadki on 6 Mar, 2015. One can find the following quotation literary from the minute 01:30 to 02:06. "I think that at the heart of this my solidarity with women will be literal. It is about bringing those women of the past to their life and position within society—through creating full women not hampered ones ... I try to see from the eyes of the traditional women and of those of the madina who come and go, who need to work, who finally have played the role of man in order to support their families financially, and at the same time accept the men's authority." [My own translation]

From another dimension, Djébar uncovers that there are two major figures who shaped her way of thinking and influenced her philosophy of writing: Frantz Fanon and Albert Camus. Djébar recalls how, after marrying her first fiancée and immigrated to live in Tunisia during the Algerian war of independence; she met Frantz Fanon who encouraged her with his revolutionary ideas to write and said that “dans cette époque trouble, c'est très important que vous écrivais des romans”<sup>5</sup> [in this troubled time, it is very important that you write novels] (Sadki). As though, Fanon was encouraging her to write the Algerian history with more emphasis on women. According to de Medeiros, there is no wonder that much of Djébar’s ideas overlap with Fanon’s. Throughout her fiction, Djébar is interested in rewriting the history of Algeria under colonization from a colonized stand (de Medeiros 5). de Medeiros furthermore claims that it is clear and obvious how Djébar adopts Fanon’s analysis in her fiction, but in different way. Whereas Fanon shines the light of his analysis from sociological and political lenses, “Djébar uses a blend of history, narrative and commentary to express her response to French hegemony” (5). Camus, on the other hand, is the other for Djébar; i.e., he is considered as a stranger as he does with the Arabs<sup>6</sup> “[he was] from my country, but from the other side ... his novels has permitted me to understand the world of pied-noir<sup>7</sup>,” and how they see the Algerians (Adler)<sup>8</sup>.

Despite her use of French language, Djébar sees this language as nothing but a tool to convey the stories of Algerian women. Reality for Djébar does no longer appear through the eyes of the French language, but through the voice-eyes of Algerian women.

When it comes to women, Djébar echoes Fanon’s statement that “in the fight for liberation...[women] literally forged a new place for herself by her sheer strength,” and fight side to side with men. Djébar sees that because of them; especially those heroes, the republic of Algeria was built and maintained (Adler)<sup>9</sup>.

From another dimension, *Fantasia* is a bridge by which she attempted to bring those women who were marginalized and place at the edge of history into the center; it is a discourse by which Djébar has shed the light on Algerian women achievements and

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5 The same source from the minute 1:02:00 to 1:03:00

6 In his novel *L'étranger* [The Stranger], Camus has never mentioned the Arabs by their names. For him, They are always considered as the other.

7 People with European origin who were born in Algeria during the French colonization

8 One can find the following quotation literary from the minute 1:08:50 to 1:10:00

9 One can find the following quotation literary from the minute 1:53:00, 1:54:00

contributions in the war of independence; it is an endeavor to give voice to the voiceless. In this regard, Jenny Murray sees that the philosophy that lies behind Djébar's *Fantasia* is to shine the light on "these women and moves them from the margins of the Frenchmen's account to the center of her revised history" (Djébar 75).

All in all, the historical parallel found in the life of Djébar and Hosseini has certainly makes it clear that there are no differences between them—the two authors share a kind of similar philosophy that springs from similar experiences towards writings. Writing for them is a tool to voice those voiceless women. In other words, the two authors seem to be brothers in literature from colonized different motherlands.

## **Conclusion**

The present chapter has dealt with the historical, theoretical, and philosophical side of the research. The first section of this chapter has provided a socio-historical overview of the two novels, wherein it deals with the colonial history and visions of patriarchy in Algerian and Afghanistan. The second section, on the other hand, deals with the theories that serve the aim of the research. That is to say, it provides an explanation to comparative literature and post-colonial theories. Lastly, the third section illustrates Djébar's and Hosseini's philosophies and how they have affected their writings. In the light of this section, the next section will discuss the practical side of this research.

## **CHAPTER TWO: The Subaltern Predicament: the Female between Hammer Colonization and Anvil of Patriarchy**

*“For most of history Anonymous was a woman”*

*Virginia Woolf*

### **Introduction**

In *Fantasia* and *ATSS*, Hossein and Djebbar invite their readers to delve into the life of their protagonists. Throughout their works, the two authors seek to give voice to the voiceless and show to extent women have endured under the weight of patriarchy and the curse of wars. Whereas the former chooses fictional characters, the latter prefers to dig into the archive of history to dust off some stories of real life personalities. Hence, this chapter will illustrate, compare, and elaborate the aforementioned situation from three sides: firstly, the vision of eastern men toward the concept of patriarchy; secondly, the representation of eastern women in *ATSS, an Algerian Cavalcade* under multiple Colonization, i.e., a comparative analysis to the image of woman in the two novels; lastly, a postcolonial feminist reading to *ATSS* and *Fantasia*.

### **1. Eastern Men and Different Visions of Patriarchy**

#### **1.1 A Tale of the Two Countries: Images of Patriarchy in *A Thousand Splendid Suns* and *Fantasia***

The idea of classic patriarchy in Algeria and Afghanistan that we have dealt with in the previous chapter is presented realistically in *Fantasia* and *ATSS*. In these books, Hosseini and Djebbar portray this social phenomenon by picturing how men are behaving in these societies and how women are treated as well. According to Saigol, patriarchy has effected across time periods and cultures women’s position in many societies. It has reduced women’s position “to lesser status as citizens... and [devaluated] all that is considered feminine” (Saigol 7). This situation has created a kind of people who use women and subordinate them

into their male authority “in both the public and private spheres” (7). Moreover, they oblige them to be silent and submissive.

Hosseini, on the one hand, reflects this idea in *ATSS* through embodying the spirit of Afghan patriarchy in the character of Racheed. Racheed, who believes in the Afghan proverb that “a woman is best *at home or in the grave*” (7), is abusing his wives and tries to show his male supremacy over them whenever he gets the occasion. According to Rahimi, to this day, many women are enslaved in Afghanistan— it is up to the starting of the twentieth century women “were the slaves of their *father, husband, father-in-law, and elder brother,*” where all she has to do is to be silent and obedient (Rahimi 6). This kind of enslavement is shown in *ASTT* through Racheed’s usage of violence against his wives for the slightest mistake. For instance, when Mariam loses her front teeth after being knocked out by him, for “she'd accidentally dropped Zalmai” (Hosseini 287).

It is fair to argue that Hosseini’s intention behind *ATSS* might be to criticize patriarchy in his homeland. To argue my point, Hosseini tells us about an anti-feminist husband who desire to inject his son, Zalmai, with the belief of male supremacy. This husband who desires to get a new born boy is blinded by his misogyny to the extent of avoiding calling his daughter Aziza by her name and wanting to “put that thing [Aziza] in a box and let her float down Kabul River. Like baby Moses” (Hos

seini 228). Moreover, Aziza is felt despised, hated, and treated very harshly by her father who behaves differently when dealing with his son Zalmai. Furthermore, inside this small kingdom, Zalmai is enjoying his lordly position where he receives gifts that should never be touched by his sister, whereas Aziza tastes daily the bitterness of Racheed’s marginalization. This different treatments and male supremacy teachings leads Zalmai to behave differently in the presence of his father, and do things “*which he never did when Rasheed was away*” (280). For Racheed, it is the rightful way to treat women since from where he comes “one wrong look, one improper word, and blood is spilled. Where [he] comes from, a woman's face is her husband's business only” (77).

On the other hand, patriarchy in Djebbar’s *Fantasia* takes in most time the form of silence, obedience, and colonial resistance. In this novel, Djebbar indicates clearly how women are kept out of sight, and how in their *Hareem* conversations murmurs and whispers are the

language used for discussion. In this respect, Mortimer maintains that there exist two spaces in the Algerian society: the house for women and work places for men (qtd in Beckmann 10). In other words, the home works as a second veil to preserve their culture and protect them from colonization which confirms Fanon's claim that "Algerians kept their women behind veils" (Fanon "A Daying Colonialism" 8) as a way of protection. Throughout the father of the *Three Cloistered Girls*, Djébar echoes this idea and shows how patriarchy in Algeria was a form of resistance and preserving their culture. In this section, the Sheikh, their father, does not allow them to go outside "except when [he] drove them *himself* in the barouche to the smartest Turkish bath" (Djébar 12). Their father's behavior is, undoubtedly, springs from his intention to protect them from the colonial eyes "as if the invaders were coming as lovers!" (8) Their brother, in contrast, is occupying the outer space and worked "as an interpreter in the Sahara" (11).

There is no denying that the two sexes are in need of each other. However, according to De Beauvoir, this necessity in most times does not support equality (545) especially when it has to do with subjects as forced marriage. Interestingly, despite the fact that patriarchy in Afghanistan is different from the Algerian one at many levels, the two authors share a similar depiction to the aforesaid matter. In doing so, Djébar and Hosseini go hand in hand with the Islamic feminist Fatima Mernissi in an endeavor to criticize some social issues that contradict with the Islamic Sharia law, such as inequality and forced marriage. According to Mernissi, Islamic religion came to put women in an equally position as man and to refute the myth of her inherited inferiority (10). That is to say, the Islamic doctrine does not allow forced marriages, and seeks always to put woman in an equal position as man by giving her the right to accept or refuse her suitors. However, some Islamic societies ignore these Islamic teachings and oblige women to get married against their wills, for example, the stories of Badra in *Fantasia* and Mariam in *ATSS*.

Comparing the marriage of Badra to Mariam, the two stories give us an insightful look on the similarities between the two novels. Caid of Mazuna, Barda's father, and Jalil share an analogous point of view towards the subject of marriage. To start with, Badra, Mohamed ben Khadruma's daughter is extremely beautiful with a 'green eyes' and face that reflects the meaning of her name: 'a full moon'. In this story, Djébar tells us on Badra's desire to marry Sharif Bou Mazza. For her, if he comes, she "would reply that [she] is ready to marry him on the spot!" (Djébar 86) However, the winds of destiny blow counter to what

the ship of her desires since her father “has [already] given his consent” (87) for the marriage between Badra and the Aga of Ouarsenis’ eldest son without even asking for his daughter’s opinion. Badra’s stepmothers inform her about the news. Although the beautiful princess “was stunned”(87), she has to accept against her will “a marriage that comes in term of treaty which will end the war” (214). The story of Mariam, on the other hand, is akin to her precedent. After the death of her mother, Jalil decides to give this illegitimate daughter to Racheed, who lives in Kabul “six hundred and fifty kilometers to the east of Hirat” (Hosseini, 214), in order to efface his adultery for good. As though the scene of Badra’s repeats itself, Mariam is informed by her stepmothers that her father has already given Rasheed his answer and that the marriage will be the next morning, “then there is a bus leaving for Kabul at noon" (49).

In the two novels, the authors direct similarly the scene of marriage; i.e., the father decides to give his daughter, the stepmothers inform and convince these future brides to embrace their destinies, the girls accept against their wills, and the marriage is a few days later. In her book *Dislocating Cultures: Identities, Traditions, and Third World Feminism*, the Indian feminist Uma Narayan discusses how girls such as Badra and Mariem are influenced by their mothers to accept the patriarchal conditions. According to Narayan, since matters such as the arranged marriage are traditionally sacred, any kind of resistance by these girls is translated as a failure in raising them “with respect to [their] tradition” (9). In other words, any rejection to arranged or forced marriages will be considered as a betrayal, disrespect, and a ‘westernize’ rejection to their culture and tradition. For that reason, Mariam and Badra cannot raise their voices against these unfair arranged marriages. Both of them have received the news of their marriage from their stepmothers, and both of them have to betray their wishes instead of the cultural ones.

At the end of these two stories, Hosseini and Djebbar display how the Caid of Mazuna and Jalil regretted their selfishness and attempt to correct their deeds. Mohamed ben Khadruma, on the one hand, “decided to undertake the pilgrimage to Mecca, accompanied with his daughter”(Djebbar 100), while Jalil sought to gain an unobtainable forgiveness from a daughter who will never forgive him. In this regard, in her book *The Second Sex*, De Beauvoir states that patriarchal societies that neglected the right of women with time will develop a sense of anguish for both sexes (De Beauvoir 640).

Contradictory to Caid of Mazuna, Racheed, and Jalil; Hakim in *ATSS* and Taher in *Fantasia* share a different vision to the idea of patriarchy—both of them bear an ideology of modern man.

## **1.2 Taher, Hakim, and the Concept of Modern Men**

In the other side of the coin, Djebbar and Hosseini seem to provide their readers with an ideal picture of patriarchy; i.e., how men ought to behave in these patriarchal societies. Both of Taher in *Fantasia* and Hakim in *ATSS* share a similar view to the concept of patriarchy which contradicts with the one of their community. In the two novels, Hosseini and Djebbar show how these two teachers decide to break the rules of their societies by rejecting forced marriage, liberating their wives, and encouraging their daughters to conduct their studies. That is, by forming modern-couples.

Hosseini starts the story of Laila when she is nine years old. At that day, Laila raises from her bed to accompany her father, Babi, to school as usual. Since she was a little child, Hakim has made his point clear to her that her education is the most important thing “in his life after her safety” (Hosseini, 120). For him, after the end of war, their country will need educated women as Laila “as much as its men, maybe even more” (120). For that reason, Hakim prefers to see his daughter learning in the colonizer’s school rather than remaining illiterate.

Correspondingly, Djebbar opens her work with her story, a story of a “little Arab girl” who agrees with her father for her “first day at school” (Djebbar 03). In this section, Djebbar tells us that teaching a girl how to write was considered as a dangerous think in the Algerian society since “any girl who has had some schooling ... will without doubt write that fatal latter” (3) — love letter. Nevertheless, Taher, Djebbar’s father, decides to take that risk and educated his daughter the colonizer’s language in the colonizer’s schools.

From another dimension, Hakim and Tahar share a similar vision toward the topic of marriage that contradicts with the one of their societies. According to Fanon, in the life of the Algerian girl during colonization, there are only two stages: “*childhood-puberty, and*

*marriage.*” In other words, in “*the Douar*”[small village], sixteen is the age of that shift, and any girl at that ages must get married (Fanoon “*A Dying Colonialism*” 107). Alike Algerian girls, Afghan ones live this two stages too. To argue my point, Nana’s, Mariam’s, and Hassina’s marriages supports this claim. Firstly, Nana has told Mariam that she was about to get married when she was at the age of fifteen before being processed by a *Jin* who ruined that marriage; Mariam, too, find herself to get married against her will at the age of fifteen. When it comes to Hassina, Laila’s friend, she gets married to her cousin at the age of fifteen. The destiny of Hasina is expected by Laila three years earlier before her marriage for Laila, her father, the “ill-tempered taxi driver, would almost certainly give her away” (Hosseini 120) in two or three years.

Contradictory to their societies, Hakim and Taher have broken the law of ‘ancient tribes’ who support forced Marriage. For Hakim, “marriage can wait, education cannot”. Comparably to him, Taher refused to give his daughter in the traditional way. According the Djebbar, at that time, “marriage [in the Algerian society was] only perpetuates a latent, lasting rivalry between the two lines of descent” (Djebbar 196). That is to say, the arranged or forced marriage between families was something traditional. Yet, Taher preferred to refuse the offers of marriage for his daughter, as the father of the three cloistered girls would do, in order to give her the opportunity to finish her studies. In this regard, Djebbar says,

My father's preference will decide for me: *light rather than darkness*. I do not realize that an irrevocable choice is being made: the outdoors and the risk, instead of the *prison of my peers* (184). [emphasis added]

In this passage, Djebbar is undoubtedly referring to marriage vs. education, where, at the end, her father’s choice had swung to the palm of education.

The similarity between Hakim and Tahar extends to their treatment of their wives. Racheed, who represents the traditional Afghan community, thinks that Hakim has “lost control of his wife,” for that she can go outside without any restrictions. In Racheed’s respect, Hakim is nothing but a “mouse”(Hosseini 86) who fancies himself some kind of educated intellectual, which “embarrasses [him], frankly, to see a man [like Hakim]”; a man who “lost control of his wife” (78) and behaves shamefully against the Afghan tradition. In this respect, Monicka & Yazhini believe that Hakim “represents the softer side of the

society.” And for that reason, people as Racheed despise him and term him as “a typical woman” (Monicka & Yazhini 184). Alike Hakim, Djébar devotes a full section entitled *My Father Writes to my Mother* to talk about how her father, Tahar, broke the Algerian social norm and “dared to write” his wife by mentioning her name in a letter where everyone can see. At that time, “no local man, poor or rich, ever referred to his wife... than by the vague periphrasis: 'the household' ” (Djébar 37) because writing someone’s wife’s name in a letter was considered as taboo and “shame.” However, Taher broke this golden rule and wrote his wife’s name on a letter where even “the postman must have read it” (37). According to Guendouzi, in the light of the descriptions provided by Djébar about her father, “Taher seems to be a loving and caring father” at the domestic level (Guendouzi 214). However, alike Hakim, he is also considered by his community as a person with a shameful behaviors.

Despite the fact that Taher and Hakim have broken the norms of their society, the two men intention from their modernity might be an attempt to hold the stick from the middle, where they neither give up their traditions nor exaggerate in forming modern couples. According to Guendouzi, despite the fact that Taher is forming a modern couple, “he remains an authoritative and piggish person with heavy decisions” (214). For example, he refuses seeing his daughter with a short in the gymnasium. In other words, Taher is, as Djébar describes him, “a tall erect figure in a *fez* and a *European suit*” (Djébar 3). Similarly to Taher, Hakim stands for a revolutionary father for Laila, who aims to guide, protect, and educate his daughter “in a society where women are uneducated” (Monicka & Yazhini 184).

All in All, throughout the character of Taher and Hakim, Djébar and Hosseini aim to provide us with a second form of patriarchy that contradicts with the first one mentioned under the previous title. Taher and Hakim; unlike Racheed, Jalil, and Caid of Mazuna; represent a kind of caring and soft patriarchy. In this respect, Minhha maintains that, the act of veiling has, too, a liberating potential as does the act of unveiling. In other words, “it depends on how and where women see *dominance*” ( qtd in Azzi & Belkhir 38).

## **2. The Representation of Eastern Women in *ATSS* and *Fantasia* under Multiple Colonization**

The main concerns of Djébar and Hosseini in their works are to invite their readers to reflect on the multiple forms of oppression imposed on Algerian and Afghan women, who were treated as a colonized and gendered subjects. Their writing is shined by the portrayal of female subjugation to patriarchy during the Algerian and the Afghan colonization, and how some of them had struggled to liberate themselves from the oppressive colonizer, traditional family regulations, and social norms.

### **2.1. Women and Policy of Double Standard**

In *ATSS*, Hosseini presents the idea of double standards through his characters Jalil, Racheed, and a police officer. Although their claim of being religiously good, all of them behave exactly the opposite— Racheed beat his wives, Jalil differentiate between his children, and the police officer maintains order only “when it benefits the man” (Hosseini 256).

Hosseini’s novel opens with Mariam, who “heard the word *Harami* ” (01) when she was five years old. Yet, at that age, Mariam does not know that this word will affect her life dramatically and works like a rope of identity that drags her towards misery. With time, Mariam learned that word *Harami* is used to describe illegitimate persons “who would never have legitimate claim to the things other people had, things such as love, family, home, and acceptance”(02).

When it comes to Mariam’s mother, Hosseini never reveals her real name. In this story, Mariam calls her by the name “Nana” which accepts the hypotheses that it is just one of Mariam’s inventions when she was a little child. In other words, most babies use an easy utterance such as the repetition of the sound “na” when addressing someone; as though the author wants to say that Nana’s real name and identity is erased definitely from her society the day she committed her adultery with Jalil.

It is very tempting to highlight that in many eastern cultures women are punished much more than men for the same mistake. Hossieni's metaphor of the "no name mother" can be interestingly found in Maxine Hong Kingston's *Woman Warrior*. In her memoir, Kingston devotes a full section to talk about her "No Name Chinese Aunt" who gives birth to an illegitimate girl alone in a pigsty, as Nana did alone with Mariam in the Kulba. By the end, the No Name Aunt commits a suicide by drowning herself and her child in the family's well after being attacked by the villagers and banished from her family. After that incident, her family effaced her name and existence from the records of their memories, while Kingston learned that she had an aunt from her mother but in secrecy " 'You must not tell anyone,' my mother said, 'what I am about to tell you' " (Kingston 03).

Mariam lives with her mother in a *kolba* that her father, Jalil, builds with his two sons outside the city of Hirat. For Nana, this was nothing but "his idea of peanance" (Hosseini 08) since she lives in a society where women always bear alone the weight of wrong deeds. A society which works "like a compass needle [pointed to the north], a man's accusing finger always finds a woman"(05). Despite the fact that both Civil and Sharia laws denounce violence against women, customary laws have a strong presence within the community. According to the Afghan norms, Nana has to be punished either by killing for honor, or by leaving in exile. For that reason, Nana wishes that her father had to kill her by sharpening "one of his knives and do the honorable thing,' but since he was "a coward who didn't have the *dil*, the heart, for it"(08). Nana has received the second fate where she has to live in exile with her daughter outside the city of Hirat, whereas Jalil lives his life normally with his three wives and nine children for the same mistake. In this regard, Philip maintains that "*women in Afghanistan have been going through gender equality issues in its severe form for ages*" (791).

After the death of her mother, Mariam finds herself inheriting her parent's mistake. In an attempt to bury his shameful deed, Jalil sacrifices with Mariam's happiness and send her, against her will, into Kabul with her new husband Racheed. In Racheed's house, and after years of abuse, Mariam meets Laila, Racheed's second wife, who starts to share with her different kinds of oppression.

A litter further, after two years to be exact; Racheed's two wives decide to take the risk of escaping from this misery. Nevertheless, their plan is aborted when an Afghani man informs a policeman at the bus station about their real identity. In the police station, Leila tries to convince the police officer to let them go; otherwise, they will be brutally punished when returning home. However, the officer ignores her begging, and informs her that they did a huge mistake to travel without their *mahram* [a close relative in Arabic like a father, brother, husband, son, or uncle] and that "what a man does in his home is his business." (Hosseini 261) For Leila, this is nothing but a double standard since the law is used only to protect the man's benefits. According to Kartrak, patriarchy in Afghanistan "claims that women are the 'guardians of tradition.'" And for that reason, religion prejudice and double-standards are used to control and imprison them, where "*freedom of movement are enforced very differently on males versus females*" (159).

Just as Hossieni in *ATSS* portrays the double standards treatment to women and men in Afghan society, Djebbar takes this issue in *Fantasia* as well through the subject of education and the character of the brother of the Three Cloistered Girls. Since, as stated by Multi Doglass, the body of woman was seen as something "*whose value is linked to its honor*" (Doglass 143); teaching a girl how to read and write was considered as a dangerous thing in the Algerian society because she would easily start a love affair throughout writing. In other words, the Algerian father realizes that it was impossible to control a girl who possesses the ability to write. Hence, many fathers avoid this shameful fate by preventing their girl from attending schools, for honor was linked with the body of women but not men. Boys, on the other hand, did not face that problem despite the fact that they would exchange love letters with girls too.

And what if the maiden does write? ... The jailer must keep watch day and night. The written word will take flight from the patio...The precautions have all been in vain." (Djebbar 03)

In this regard, de Medeiros maintains that the Algerian men concern are not in how to educate and provide their wives, daughters, or sisters with the tools that allow them to be thinking subjects, but rather they think on how "*impossible it is to guard and control girls who can write*" (de Medeiros 12).

In the *Three Cloistered Girls*, Djébar talks about three girls who are lucky enough to be “the only Muslim girls in their little village to have attended primary school” (Djébar 11). The girls, as it was expected, were exchanging love letters with men from “Iraq, Syria, Lebanon, Lybia, Tunisia, from Arab students in Paris or London” (11). However, they are afraid of the danger of being uncovered by their brother and facing a catastrophic fate.

Digging in their brother’s bookcase which “had always been kept locked”(11), the girls accidentally discovers, in addition to many novels, an “album of *erotic photographs* and an envelope containing picture postcards of bare-breasted Ouled-Na'il girls, loaded with jewel” (11). In other words, the jailer, who claims to be “extremely strict”(9) and try to deprive his sisters from the right of education, is in fact behaving in the exact opposite, which is nothing but double standards.

## **2.2. Oppression and Aphasia**

Written in a colonial setting and framed by female characters, Hossieni and Djébar’s works give a truthful description on women multiple-oppression. In their texts, Afghanistan and Algeria are presented as communities of subaltern, where women live between the hammer of colonization and the anvil of patriarchal societies. In this regard, Spivak maintains that, “in the context of colonial production and male dominance, the subaltern has no history and cannot speak, the subaltern as female is even more deeply in shadows” (Spivak 287). These oppressions are presented in subjects, such as inside and outside abuse.

In Hossieni’s *ATSS*, Meriam and Leila live with a husband who always holds “a belt in his hand” (Hosseini 231). For Racheed, a “wrong look [or] one improper word, and blood is spilled.” (77). During their marital life, the two wives experienced different kinds of abuse that make them think of running away from both their person and jailor. After collecting enough money, Laila and Mariam decide to exhibit the road of liberty and run away, yet their mission is aborted after being caught by the police who oblige them to return to their jailor again. Returning back to their home, “Laila [does not] see the punch [of Racheed] coming. One moment she [is] talking and the next she [is] on all fours” (257). After finishing with her, the turn of Mariam begins.

To Laila, the sounds she heard were those of a methodical, familiar proceeding. Systematic business of beating and being beaten, the thump, thump of something solid repeatedly striking flesh, something, someone, hitting a wall with a thud, cloth ripping. Now and then, Laila heard running footsteps, a wordless chase, furniture turning over, glass shattering, then the thumping once more. (257)

In her book *the Second Sex*, De Beauvoir argues that “woman has always been, if not man’s slave, at least his vassal” (De Beauvoire 34). In other words, the woman subordination to man has created a kind of oppression where her body becomes an arena to show his male authority. This condition creates, according to De Beauvoir, two binaries: the self and the other (Banerji & Irshad 7).

After that incident, and as a result of hunger, Racheed obliges Leila to put her daughter Aziza in an orphanage. At first, Racheed agrees to accompany Leila to see her daughter there. However, he refuses to do so after many visits and let Leila face the abuse of Taliban. Taliban, who are ruling Kabul, do not allow any women to walk alone without a *mahram*, and beat anyone who dares to do so. Under that law, and during one of her usual trip to see her daughter, a

Talib beat Laila with a radio antenna. When he was done, he gave a final whack to the back of her neck and said, "I see you again, I'll beat you until your mother's milk leaks out of your bones. (Hosseini 307)

From another dimension, when the wind of war blows, the law of the jungle rains, and rape and killing becomes usual daily news in Afghanistan — there were stories about women “who were killing themselves out of fear of being raped”(243). Men, controversially, would kill their wives or daughters “if they'd been raped by the militia...in the name of honor” (243). In this respect, Healicon states that under the oppressive condition, women face an additional range of repressive actions such as, “forced marriage, sexual harassment ...[and] crimes of honour” (Healicon 4).

Silence, on the other hand, is one of the duties in Racheed's house. Racheed always obliges Mariam to keep silent and avoid answering her questions when he is listening to the radio. One day he decides to open her mouth, "dropped a handful of pebbles into it, (105) and obliges her to chew till she heard something cracks in her mouth. For Istikomah, Racheed's deed is a reflection on the reality of patriarchal societies, where men use verbal and physical violence in order to dominate and control women (qtd in Azzi & Belkhiri 58).

Similarly, in *Fantasia*, Djébar reflects the double oppression and the social aphasia imposed on Algerian women through knitting her work diachronically and synchronically. Throughout *Fantasia*, Djébar echoes Fanon's description of patriarchy in the Algerian family that girls are always "one notch behind the boy" ("A dying colonialism" 106) who sits on the throne of the family and enjoys his kingly position. According to Djébar, she lived at a time when "the vilest of men from the dominant society had imagined himself a *master* over us [women]" (128) [emphasis added].

In Djébar's *Fantasia*, the problem is "neither Islam nor patriarchy itself" (qtd in Beckmann 12); it lies rather in the abuse committed by "those occupying roles synonymous with it" (12), such as fathers, brothers, and husbands; since patriarchy in Algeria, as stated by Fanon, was a tool of colonial resistance. In "the *harem* conversations", Djébar recounts how women talk about their 'own experiences'. And how, sometimes, a daughter adds a 'vivid detail' to her mother's story of domestic abuse and "caustic moments, such as when some husband come "home drunk and striking her" (Djébar 128). For Djébar, "it was rare for a woman to be lucky enough to have a 'true Muslim', a hard-working, docile man for a husband" (203).

Aphasia is presented in Djébar's work not as an organic disease—"a loss of the faculty of speech, as a result of cerebral affection" (Djébar 125)—but rather as one of patriarchal symptoms. Djébar talks about how the voice of women should never be heard and how, in the 'harem conversations', there are only two things: either 'loud exclamations', or 'rapid whispers' where the 'I' of the first person is never used. In this regard, Kirshaw states that in the Algerian society it is a Taboo for a woman to use the first pronoun 'I', since in doing so she will provide more intimate details about herself. (qtd in Bougoufa&Abbab 10). Moreover, Djébar tells us how, in the Algerian society, "everybody... especially girls and women" (Djébar 154).adopt with the rule that old people should "never be referred to by their

name,” and husbands are only mentioned “by the omnipresent ‘he’ ” (154). In other words, in these meetings, silence and murmurs are always the masters that everyone should respect.

Girls; on the other hand, and “after the age of ten or eleven;” are prevented from attaining the Quranic schools (183) and obliged soon after to get marry through an arranged marriage. Since honor, as mentioned before, is linked to women’s body, there were many cases of domestic violence committed against a daughter or a sister “for a letter slipped surreptitiously into a hand, for a word whispered behind shuttered windows, for some slanderous accusation” (12). According to Teets, “*patriarchy is the primarily governmental and religious deprivileging of women and women’s experience in the Algerian society*” ( qtd in Bougoufa & Abbab 9).

The colonial abuse is a second burden upon the shoulders of women. “*To the French, Algerian women were seen as the ‘oppressed of the oppressed.’* ” (Leonhardt 44-45). Sahraoui, one of the *mujahedat* [a freedom fighter in Arabic] who faced the colonized by knitting uniforms for the brothers [the mujahedeen or the freedom fighter in Arabic], recounts through the pen of Djébar how the French colonizer burned her house; and, in addition to this, shows different kinds on insults and humiliations during that day to the extent of taking her clothes and leaving her naked as the day she was born.

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 soldiers  
laughed at me, saying 'Arc you keeping that one fo r the fellaheen?'  
...They took our clothes, and left us like that, naked as the day we were  
born! (Djébar 159)

Moreover, during those usual attacks, Captains Bosquet and the French Barchou recite how Algerian women were facing the colonizers. Bosquet, on the one hand, tells us that the Algerian women were covering their faces with mud and use it as a veil in order to block the French army’s gazes and protect themselves from being raped. “Algerian women smear their faces with mud and excrement when they are paraded in front of the conqueror”(108). On the other hand, Barchou relates the story of how an Algerian woman had killed her child in order to save him from the colonizer.

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. (Djebar 18)

It is very interesting to compare that woman's deed with the story of Sethe in Toni Morrison's *Beloved*. In this novel, Sethe who is enslaved by the whites decides to escape, besides many other slaves, from this misery. In this journey, the protagonist gives birth to a girl whom she names Beloved. Nevertheless, her freedom does not last for long when her master finally finds her hiding place few days later. While the school teacher, Sethe's master, is about to taking her back, Sethe slaughters her daughter. For her, she "didn't have time to explain before because it had to be done [the slaughter] quick quike. She [Beloved] had to be safe" (Morrison 237). As though Morrison's protagonist, as for the Algerian woman, believe that the safest place for her child under slavery and colonization is in grave.

By telling us the story of this Algerian woman, Djebar has worked like an archaeologist who revives the massacres and oppression done by the colonizer. In this regard, Donadey states that under the testimonies of the French soldiers, "Djebar exhumes ... 'details' that the Frenchmen had unconsciously let slip through and that bear witness to the violence used against the Algerians, especially against women" (887).

Throughout *Fantasia* and *ATSS*, Djebar and Hosseini share a similar depiction to women oppressions under the weight of multiple-colonization. However, this suppression and marginalization are neither related only to Algeria and Afghanistan nor is a modern-day issue—women oppression by patriarchy and colonization can be traced back into ancient Greece and, more precisely, the Greek mythology.

In his poem *Metamorphosis*, Ovid, the Roman poet, writes about the story of rape and oppression to Princess Philomela. In this poem, Philomela is an Athenian princess whose sister Procne is married to Tereus, a Thracian king. In Thrace, Procne longs for her sister Philomela and begs her husband to bring her to their kingdom. Tereus agrees and travels to Athena to bring his sister in law. On their way back to Thrace, Tereus desires Philomela and raps her in the woods. When Philomela threatens him that she will tell her sister, the king

decides to cut her tongue, rapes her again, and leaves her chained in the woods. Considering that Philomela is unable to speak, the princess decides to wave a tapestry recounting within its threads the story of the crime committed by Tereus. Back to the palace, Procne decides to avenge her sister by killing Tereus', Itys, son and serving him to the king at dinner. After finishing his meal, the king asks about his son, and the queen tells him that he is in his stomach, when Philomela enters the room to serve the king his son's head. After that incident, Philomela and her sister transform to a nightingale and fly together, while the unragged king is transformed to a hoopoe (Britannica "Tereus").

It is said that the Greek mythology was invented in order to give answers to life mysteries. Therefore, the aim of implying Philomela's story in this research is to figure out whether or not subaltern women in the two works succeed, as Philomela does, in finding another way to speak and make their voice hearable. Hence, in order to answer this question, the next section will apply Spivak's subaltern theory on Hosseini's *ATSS* and Djébar's *Fantasia, an Algerian Cavalcade*.

### 3. From Silence to Song: a Subaltern Reading to *ATSS* and *Fantasia*

In their novels, Hossieni and Djébar appear to challenge Spivak's notions that the subaltern cannot speak by themselves without the help of external forces. Throughout their works, the authors talk about characters with an insurgent consciousness against both patriarchal and colonial condition.

Before diving into the life of the characters that resist the subaltern situation and sought to make their voices hearable, I have to talk first about those who have accepted to be muted, and have lived "doubly in shadow" (Spivak 84)—Nana, Mariem's mother, in *ATSS suns*, and the "Harem" in *Fantasia*.

In *ATSS*, Hosseini presented Nana as a muted subaltern who accepts to bear the weight of a sin that she did not commit and to live in the exile. In one of Nana's conversations, she tells her daughter that she wishes that her father had killed her by sharpening "one of his knives and do the honorable thing" (Hosseini 08). In so doing, Nana does not only accept to bear the mistake, but also wishes to pay for it. Nana's powerlessness comes from being a uneducated female from a low class in a third world county. Moreover, when Mariam wants to have an equal opportunity with her half-sisters "Saideh and Naheed" and go to "a real school...like [her] father's other kids" (15), Nana opposes definitely the idea which is according to her senseless and without no meaning "what's the sense of schooling to a girl like you" (17). For Nana, there is only one skill for women like them to learn in life, which is to "endure, it's all we have" (17).

Similarly to Mariam, Djébar's mother finds herself indirectly judged and opposed by the court of "harem". In *My Father Writes to my Mother*, Djébar tells us, as mentioned before, that in the Algerian society a "husband ... must never be referred to by a name" (Djébar 35). However, Djébar's mother decides to break this subaltern rule and resists patriarchy when calling her husband by his name in the of "harem conversation". In doing so, "a suspicion of a smile flickered across the other women's faces [who] looked half ill at ease [or] half indulgent" (36). For these harem, Djébar's mother did a shameful behavior.

The comparison between Mariam's story to Djébar's mother confirms Spivak's assertion that "For the "figure" of woman, the relationship between: woman and silence can be plotted *by women themselves*" (Spivak 287) [Emphasis added]. In other words, the first obstacle that stands before a woman who attempt to resist the subaltern situation are the ones who accept the patriarchal situation and refuse any kind of change. Nevertheless, while some subaltern groups are silenced in *ATSS* and *Fantasia*, others decide to reject the subaltern situation and make their voices hearable.

In *ATSS*, Mariam and Laila represent two characters who attempt to resist the subaltern conditions. Mariam, on the one hand, is always silent and submissive. However, she attempts to break her subalternity when Racheed shows his desire to marry Laila. Despite showing her refusal to Racheed's intention, Mariam's fear from her husband obliges her to remain silent and return to her subaltern cave again. Being with educated background, Laila, on the other hand, resists the present condition and protects herself in a cunning way. In order to marry Laila, Racheed brings one of his friends to inform her that Tariq, her beloved, is dead. In doing so, Racheed puts Laila in an either-or situation—either marrying him, or leaving his house and be homeless. After hearing the news, Laila accepts his offer, whereas Racheed thinks that he has successfully used her. However, in fact, Laila is using Racheed to legitimize the birth of her and Tariq's child. During her first night with Racheed, Laila cuts her finger and puts a fake blood on their bed to convince him about his paternity of her future pregnancy. Nonetheless, according to Soraya, Laila has not become a subaltern yet since she is "still ruled over Racheed and his male lust" (86).

At first, the relationship between Mariam and Laila is highly charged, where Mariam shows her hatred and disapproval to the current situation since for her Laila has stolen her husband. However, after the birth of Aziza, the two wives develop a kind of sisterhood "as they are both oppressed by Racheed and equally suffered from Taliban" (Soraya 85).

Being a daughter of a teacher and with an educational background, Laila resists Racheed and behaves the exact opposite of Mariam. In one of the insides Laila keeps provoking her husband until he beats her and swears that one day she will make him kill her (296). Laila's refusal to her situation affects Mariam who decides by the end to take the risk of an escape with her new sister from Racheed's abuse. In this regard, Bell Hooks maintains

that, feminist sisterhood essences from their wrestle against injustice patriarchy. For him, it does not matter the form of injustice since their solidarity will undermine sexism (Hooks 15).

As much as the tight of multiply oppression is getting gripper, the relationship between Laila and Mariam is getting stronger too, for both of them are equally wretched. Laila's insurgency against Racheed's tyranny empowered Mariam who is playing a *Sati* role, a good wife as stated by Spivak, and encourages her to run away from her husband's prison. After being caught, Racheed becomes more violent swears that he will kill Laila if she does not stop resisting him until the day comes when he seeks fulfilling this oath. Nevertheless, this time, the two wives decide to speak through a violent voice.

At that day, Racheed "meant to suffocate her" (Hosseini 345) when he discovers that she has met Tariq, her ex-boyfriend, secretly. When Mariam sees "Laila's face [is ] turning blue... and her eyes [have] rolled back", she decides to interfere by bringing a shovel, tightening her grip, then hitting him on his head. "Mariam swung. She hit him across the temple. The blow knocked him off Laila"(345). In this respect, Soraya maintains that despite the fact that some subaltern characters cannot speak in their own voices, "there will always be forces that would make them speak loudly and firmly" (Soraya 87)—the force of sisterhood.

After killing Racheed, Mariam decides to scarify herself to Taliban in order to save Laila from being killed too. Laila goes with Tariq to live in Pakistan, while Mariem is sentenced by Taliban to death.

It is tempting to make a comparison between Mariam in *ATSS* and Husna bint Mahmoud in *Season of Migration to the North* from the keyhole of their resistance through violence. On the one hand, Husna, who is Mustapha Sa'eed's widow, is forced by her father to marry Wad Rayyes "who changed women as he changed donkeys" (Salih 96). Despite Husna's bagging to stop this marriage and threatening that if they oblige her to marry him she "will kill him and kill [herself]" (80), her father and Wad Rayyes do not change their minds. After their marriage, her husband attempts to commit a marital rape against her. However, Husna stabs him with a knife, kills him, and then kills herself. In this regard, Arjarour states that for Husna ceasing to exist becomes "the only means of constituting her agency and documenting her refusal to adhere to her patriarchal society" (10). Similarly, despite she knows that they will kill her, Mariam surrenders to Taliban as a way of showing her to adhere

to her patriarchal society as well. For her, ceasing to exist becomes “a legitimate end to a life and illegitimate beginning” (329).

Similarly to Hosseini, Djébar embodies the rebel against Spivak subalternity in the character of some of the Algerian women who were different from Bangal ones. In this regard, Salma Khartoum contends that throughout *Fantasia* Djébar appear to challenge Spivak’s problematic question of subaltern voice by creating a poly-layered voice that speaks many languages through different Algerian characters’ tongues: “as a colonized Algerian female, as a beloved, as a bride, as mother earth, and as a freedom fighter” (Khartoum 34). The stories of Badra, the bride of Mazuna, and Cherifa, the freedom fighter, show how the two persona challenged both patriarchy and colonization.

Badra, as mentioned earlier, is obliged to marry the Aga of Ouarsenis’ eldest son against her wish. However, the day of her marriage and while she is escorted by her father in law to her new home, Sharif Bou Mazza attacks the caravan, kills his enemy the Aga of Ouarsenis, and kidnaps Badra as a punishment to her father. For him, he has to “pay twice... to get [his] daughter back and gain [his] honor” for making deal with the “son of the dog and the lackey of the Christians [the French colonizer]” (Djébar 95).

In order to liberate the hostages, Sherif orders to send “the Mazunis’ wives and daughters without their jewels... [for] they are worth as much gain as all the ransom money!”(97) Nevertheless, Badra challenges the colonial and patriarchal situation by removing everything until she became naked “I am naked” (99).

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 brooches - ten at least - then ... The scribe, his eyes dazzled as much by the splendour of the precious stones as by the beauty of the bride herself, forgot to write down the inventory. (98)

Throughout her behavior, Badra is shown as a female who succeeded, unlike the Bangal woman, to make her voice hearable. “The novelist’s bride is an empowered female whose dignified gesture of stripping herself naked achieves the level of a powerful protest which is heard and read” (Khartoum 33).

Cherifa, on the other hand, is a person who has seen her brother dies in front of her eyes, and has chosen to fight against the colonial oppression by serving as nurse in rescuing the mujahedeen [freedom fighters in Arabic]. In doing so, Cherifa challenges Mortimer's description of the traditional Algeria — "inner space, the home, reserved to women; outer space, the workplace and government, reserved to men" (qtd in Beckmann 10). In other words, Cherifa has broken the barriers of the inner space in order to fight, side by side with the mujahedeen, against the French colonizer in the outer place.

After being caught by the French colonizer, Cherifa shows a great courage and heroism during investigation.

"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!* (Djebar 140)

The story of this hero is just a drop in a sea of other women who resisted patriarchy, fought against the colonizer, and gave all what they had in order to liberate their country from the French dominance. Some of those women died for that cause, whereas others were glorified with titles, such as the mother or wife of martyrdom. Without the help of those women, Algeria would never have a look at the light of freedom again.

## **Conclusion**

The present chapter has dealt with the practical side of the study. It has analyzed, compared, and implemented Spivak's theory of subalternity on *Fantasia* and *ATSS*. The analysis has shown that, despite the different visions of patriarchy in Algeria and Afghanistan, the two novels share many similarities regarding issues, such as marriage, double standards, and the imposition of silence on female characters. Moreover, the similarity between the two novels extends to the last section where some of the authors' characters seem to resist Spivak's theory of subalternity and speak in their own voices. Furthermore, this section illustrates how *Fantasia* and *ATSS* are two works written in different languages for one purpose—to make the screams of these women hearable.

## General Conclusion

The present research examines patriarchy and gender stereotyping in Djébar's *Fantasia* and Hosseini's *ATSS*. It employs Spivak's theory of subalternity in the two novels comparatively in an attempt to ponder over the factors that lead to women oppression in Algeria and Afghanistan. Moreover, it uses the Fanonian perspective as a supporting approach which helps in providing an insightful understanding of the psychology of the colonized.

The socio-historical context of the study indicates that radical patriarchy and colonization walk hand in hand in the process of women dehumanization. Furthermore, it shows that both of these aforesaid conditions provide fertile land for women's oppression.

The similar oppression imposed by colonization on Algeria and Afghanistan has brought into the scene of literature a generation of postcolonial feminist writers with a desire to portray through their fictions the influence of cultural and colonial hegemony on women. This generation thus seem to believe in the African saying that "the history of the hunt will always glorify the hunter until the lions produce their own histories"( LaGarrett 1); i.e., they seek to rewrite the history from a colonized and oppressed stands with a more focus on women, for they are in most times considered as the oppressed of the oppressed

The research has shown how the Algerian novelist Assia Djébar and Afghan author Khaled Hosseini share the above-stated desires. Djébar, on the one hand, has brought all these personal talents and philosophies together to produce a semi-biographical work par excellence. In other words, she has sewed her novel *Fantasia* with the threads of history and autobiography wherein she keeps moving to and fro in an attempt to tell us about the story of Algeria, a part of her own story, and Algerian women in a period confined between the Algerians first encounter with the French colonizer until the post-independence era diachronically and synchronically. Hosseini, on the other hand, has used *A Thousand Splendid Suns* as a window onto the Afghan society. In this novel, Hosseini talks about how the unstable atmosphere in Afghanistan has changed the nature of life in that society. That is, in his novel Hosseini recounts how do the multiple invasions conducted by the Soviet, the Taliban, and the United States for thirty years have caused instability and affected the lives of many Afghans especially women.

Within these predominantly patriarchal societies, the two authors succeeded in showing how women were dehumanized and reflecting Fanon's idea about third world women. According to Fanon, in the countries where farming is considered as the main source of living, the birth of boys is enthusiastically celebrated whereas is not in case of girls (Fanon "A Daying Colonilism" 105). This unfair treatment has undoubtedly led to a kind of marginalization, neglection, and dehumanization. Throughout the stories of Mariam, Laila, and Badra; the two works depict the plight of women's oppression in places ruled by males. The two wives, on the one hand, are beaten by Racheed like animals for the slightest mistake. Badra, on the other hand, is sold like merchandise to the enemy's camp in a form of "a marriage that comes in term of treaty which will end the war" (214). From another dimension, the two authors seek to embody the soul of Algerian and Afghan women who were, and still are, marginalized in their characters and protagonists.

The issues and themes discussed in this dissertation denote that Khaled Hosseini and Assia Djebbar have engaged in this feminist movement. In that they give voice to those voiceless women and take them out from the darkness of marginalization into the light of their fiction. The two authors have woven their writings with the stories of double-oppressed women who seem to resist Spivak's subaltern theory.

In *Fantasia*, Djebbar highlights the role of women under the plight of patriarchy and colonization. In this respect, she shows how does masculine hegemony exposed by patriarchy and colonization place women in a position of an object if control and protection; i.e., the "jailor"(Djebbar 03) tries always to keep women out of sight and deprive them of natural rights, such as education from the fear of secretly starting a love affair through writing. Moreover, Djebbar tells her readers about women who were exposed to domestic violence "for a word whispered behind shuttered windows, for some slanderous accusation" (12).

Similarly, Hosseini uses his pen to embody the soul of Afghan women in his two female protagonists. In his novel, Hosseini tells us about the chauvinistic ideology that results from the misinterpretation of religious texts and lead to the existence and an extremist group—Taliban. Moreover, in *ATSS*, Hosseini recites the effects of the multiple invasions conducted by the Soviet, the Taliban, and the United States on the Afghan, more precisely, on women. The stories of Nana, Mariam, and Laila indicate how women are subjects to different

kinds of oppression. Nana, to begin with, is punished for an adultery committed with Jalil. However, the heart of the issue does not lie in the punishment itself but in the double-standards. That is to say, Nana lives marginalized in exile, whereas Jalil lives normally with his four wives children.

When it comes to domestic abuse, Hosseini tells us about the marital life of Mariam and Laila inside their prison which mirror to some extent the treatment of women in Afghanistan. In the novels, the two wives are subjects to different kinds of domestic abuse that springs from Racheed's sense of masculinity and radical patriarchy. Inside his kingdom, "one improper word and blood is spilled"(Hosseini 79). These radical norms in addition to the misinterpretation of the religious texts cast its shadow over the hegemonic powers; namely, the Taliba. Under their rule, Laila is subject to an additional type of abuse—outside abuse. For example, she is beaten with an antenna by a Talibani soldier when she decides to see her daughter Azziza alone at the orphanage since for Taliban women should never be alone outside her home.

The last section of this research has implemented Spivak's theory of subaltern on the two works. The analysis has indicated that, on the contrary of Bangal women, Algeria and Afghan women have resisted Spivak's theory of subalternity. That is, the female characters in the two novels decide finally to speak by their own voices and resist the male hegemony. Firstly, Marriam and Laila choose to speak through a violent voice. In doing so, the two wives kill Racheed and liberate themselves from his daily oppression. Djébar's characters, on the contrary, take another way to protest against patriarchy. Whereas Barda chooses to remove her clothes and presents herself completely naked in the presence of men, Charifa decides to challenge the social norms and to fight side by side with men against the French colonizer.

All in all, the present research has illustrated the crucial similarities between the two novels, where both invite the readers to feel and compare between the sufferings of protagonists from two different societies. In these stories, it has been demonstrated how both colonial and patriarchal environment have conspired together to make women doubly shadowed in Algeria and Afghanistan. These women are marginalized, dehumanized, and treated like men's properties. However, some of these women have challenged Spivak's theory of subalternity and resisted, unlike the Bangal woman, these oppressive conditions.

The stories of Mariam, Laila, Badra, and Charifa present how *Fantasia* and *ATSS* are written from a feminist stance to make these screams hearable and to embody the souls of the ill-treated Algerian and Afghan women in their characters. Nevertheless, whatever the conditions of third world women, those are always subject to a kind of radical patriarchy. Radical patriarchy and colonization, ergo, are wounds and yet “literature is only born from wounds” (qtd in Gouffi & Berrahal 18).

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## المخلص

تتناول هذه الرسالة العلاقة بين الأدب والاضطهاد المتعدد للمرأة في كل من رواية "فانتازيا" لأسيا جبار و "ألف شمس ساطعة" لخالد حسيني. حيث تقدم كل من الروايتان وصفاً صادقاً عن كيفية معاملة النساء في الجزائر وأفغانستان أثناء الاستعمار و بعده. استعملت الدراسة المنظور الفانوني كوسيلة للتوصل الى فهم ثقافي لنفسية الانثى المستعمرة. من ناحية اخرى، استعملت الدراسة المنظور النسوي لما بعد الاستعمار لدراسة الاستعمار المزدوج للمرأة في الدول قيد الدراسة. تكمن اهمية الدراسة في كونها تقارب بين عمليين كتبا بلغات مختلفة من اجل غاية واحدة الا وهي التكلم عن مكانة المرأة في الجزائر و افغانستان. في النهاية، خلصت الدراسة الى انه مهما تعددت ظروف المرأة في العالم الثالث فأنها ستبقى دوما معرضة لنوع من الابوية المتطرفة.

الكلمات المفتاحية: المنظور الفانوني، المنظور النسوي لما بعد الاستعمار، الابوية