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THE POLITICS OF RESISTANCE IN ASSIA DJEBAR'S
THE CHILDREN OF THE NEW WORLD AND GILBERTO
PONTECORVO'S *THE BATTLE OF ALGIERS*

**Dissertation Submitted to the Department of English in Partial Fulfilment of the
Requirements for the Master's Degree**

Candidates:

Ms. Angham ARIOUA

Ms. Ms. Ouarda SAOUDI

Supervisor:

Dr. Bachir SAHED

2023

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Dedication

I dedicate my dissertation work to my beloved parents whose encouragement and prayers make me able to get this success.

To my family, my dearest sisters, brothers, nieces and nephews " Hadjer, Sara, Nor, Abd Eldjalil, Abd Essalam, Salma, Chaima, Douaa, Iman, Ines, Abd Erazak, Othman, Safa."

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To my ideal partner Angham you were my hand.

To my lovely friend Rofaida thanks for being my greatest motivation.

OUARDA

List of Abbreviations

- CNW:** *The Children of the New World*
- BOA:** *The Battle of Algiers*
- WOE:** *The Wretched of the Earth*
- FLN :** *National Liberation Front (Front de libération nationale, jabhat al-tahrir al-watani)*
- ALN :** *National Liberation Army (Armée de libération nationale, jaysh al-tahrir al-watani)*
- UN:** *United states*
- OS :** *Organisation Spéciale- Special Organization*
- MTLD :** *Mouvement pour le Triomphe des Libertés Démocratiques*
- CRUA :** *Comité Révolutionnaire pour l'Unité et l'Action- Revolutionary Committee for Unity and Action*

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Abstract

The present study examines the depiction of Algerian women in literature and cinema. It addresses the plight of women in Assia Djebar's *The Children of the New World* and Gilberto Pontecorvo's *The Battle of Algiers*. It aims to highlight the different forms of resistance demonstrated in these two works, as well as the effects of colonialism and patriarchal ideas that prompt women to resist. In order to achieve this objective, the research seeks to examine the two works through the framework of the postcolonial feminist theory using Spivak's theory of subalternity. The first chapter addresses the socio-historical context along with the theoretical framework. The second chapter investigates how colonial politics and patriarchy marginalize Algerian women and gives insight on the portrayal of the subaltern voice as well as the various strategies of female resistance. Therefore, the findings show Djebar's and Pontecorvo's attitudes toward patriarchy and colonialism, including the restriction of women's rights and identities.

Keywords: Resistance; women; colonialism; patriarchy; subalternity

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الملخص

تباينت تجارب النساء الجزائريات خلال فترة الاستعمار بشكل كبير بين الاستعمار والنظام الأبوي، الشيء الذي أدى إلى تقويض قيمتهن. حاول العديد من الأكاديميين والباحثين في قضايا المرأة الجزائرية إلى تحديد ودراسة التصورات النمطية لهؤلاء النساء من خلال الأعمال الأدبية. إلا أن الدراسة الحالية تهدف إلى التمييز بمنظور جديد ومختلف عن الأبحاث السابقة، من خلال النظر في تصوير المرأة الجزائرية في كل من الأدب والسينما. حيث تتناول معاناة النساء في كل من رواية الكاتبة الجزائرية آسيا جبار "أطفال العالم الجديد"، وفيلم "معركة الجزائر" للمخرج الإيطالي جيلبرتو بونتيكورفو. الهدف الجوهرى لهذا البحث يكمن في تسليط الضوء على الأشكال المتنوعة المتنبئة للمقاومة والموضحة في هذين العملين، بالإضافة إلى آثار الاستعمار والمثل الأبوية التي دفعت النساء إلى المقاومة. من أجل تحقيق هذا المطلب، يسعى البحث إلى دراسة العملين من خلال إطار النظرية النسوية ما بعد الكولونيالية باستخدام نظرية سبيفاك حول التبعية. يتناول الفصل الأول تحليلاً للسياق الاجتماعي التاريخي إلى جانب الإطار النظري، أما الفصل الثاني فيبحث في كيفية تهميش السياسة الاستعمارية والنظام الأبوي للمرأة الجزائرية، حيث يوجه التركيز على تصوير صوت التابع بالإضافة إلى الاستراتيجيات المتباينة التي استعملتها النساء للمقاومة. لذلك يشير تحليل العملين إلى موقف كل من جبار وبونتيكورفو تجاه النظام الأبوي والاستعمار، بما في ذلك مسألة تقييد حقوق المرأة وهويتها.

الكلمات المفتاحية: المقاومة، النساء، الاستعمار، النظام الأبوي، التبعية

INTRODUCTION

Literature and cinema constitute extraordinary works of art and expression that are regarded as an essential instrument for representing human culture and history. Literature as well as cinema both reflect society and depict its historical background. Several authors and directors attempted to portray the Algerian Revolution, one of the finest examples of revolutions in history, in which Algeria was regarded a part of France rather than a colony. After decades of humiliation, marginalization, and torture, "the Algerian National Liberation Front" organized and coordinated the Algerian decolonization revolution, which began in 1954 and lasted until 1962, to overthrow French control. Resistance policy spreads in this works as a reaction to colonizer activities and as an indication of national consciousness.

In the discipline of literature, Assia Djébar, also known as Fatma Zohra Lmalhayene, was born in Ouled Hamou (1936-2015) and is one of Algeria's most renowned authors, whose works include several books and stories as well as directing several films. She was the first North African novelist to be elected to the French Academy in 2005. It is regarded a postcolonial fiction work in her famous novel, *Children of the New World*, which was published after the independence in France 1962, written in French and titled *Les Enfants du Nouveau Monde*. Djébar narrates the story of Algerians during the colonial era, emphasizing the women who were drawn into the politics of resistance.

In each chapter, the novel tells a different Algerian woman's story and experience with regard to their struggle against the colonizer and society's oppression, starting with the main character, "Cherifa" who breaks the traditional rules of marriage, and walks outside the house in order to help her husband, who was a member of the underground militia. The author captures the effects of war and violence on female characters specifically and how this condition pushes them towards radical and instrumental

decisions. She succeeded powerfully in depicting the circumstances that drive those women to resist and act for their rights and independence, while at the same time revealing the tragic cost of war.

This great work is indirectly related to the cinematic work *The Battle of Algiers* by the director Gilberto Pontecorvo (1919–2006), an Italian film maker associated with the political cinema who won the golden lion at the 21st Venice film festival and the Oscar nomination for best director and best original screenplay after his masterpiece *The Battle of Algiers* (1965). This iconic film is based on the memoir of Algerian revolutionary leader Saadi Yacef. One of the leaders of the FLN (Front de Libération National) and a member of Algeria's resistance fighters, who played a significant role in the creation of the film.

The Battle of Algiers portrays the Algerian struggle for independence taking place in the Casbah. The director focuses on the revolutionary fighter Ali La Pointe and the three women associated with the FLN guerrillas (Halima, Hassiba, and Djamila) who carry out the bombing attacks. Many socialist ideals that inspired the film link it to what is known as "the third cinema" or the third world cinema. Theoretically speaking, the third cinema movement first appeared during the 1960s and 1970s and called for politicized filmmaking activity in Africa, Asia, and Latin America, including issues of race, class, war, religion, and national integrity.

Interest in these major works has been growing; recent studies have focused on the effects of the colonial period on the people of the Third World from different perspectives, using the Algerian experience that is recited in literary works. A lot of these researches and studies analyse Djebbar's *Children of the New World* from diverse perspectives, including the anticolonial perspective, in order to show the effects of war on the Algerians and their experiences with violence within this typical period of history. Other studies focus more on female issues related to stereotypes and gender

disparities in the colonized Algerian society, in addition to other concepts such as religion and marriage.

The spread of these studies included the film *The Battle of Algiers* as well as a main concern. These studies outline reviews of the Algerian rebellion against French control and its importance. The work inspired some excellent scholarship, reveals a real image of the oppressed and their multitude, and also promotes moral equivalency. Nevertheless, such studies are unsatisfactory because they take on board some influenced topics that confirm the Algerian women's weakness by ignoring their important and strategic role in the revolution, which gives the present research the capacity to deal with such a significant problem as this.

Furthermore, resistance is a basic concept in postcolonial theory. postcolonial approach focuses on the human experience of marginalized groups and how their national origin and race define their place and value in the eyes of dominant groups, in addition to the plight of the oppressed and their resistance to representation. Along with the postcolonial feminism approach, which emerged as a critique of western feminism because of its limited scope that focuses only on the experience of western women, postcolonial feminism influences the act of resistance as a decolonization from the western feminism ideas, as well as being linked to postcolonial theory concerning the issues of oppression that can co-exist, and at the same time raises a critique of postcolonial theory regarding its failure to examine the issues of gender and other related aspects of feminism.

Therefore, the postcolonial feminist theorist Gayatri Spivak, in her 1988 essay "Can the Subaltern Speak?" examines the issues of the voiceless subaltern, focusing on the representation of women and the narration of oriental women in the Third World without being considered an archetype. The essay sheds light on the importance of the

heterogeneity of women's history and discourse that must be acknowledged by feminist rhetoric. Besides, the case of resistance in its principles shapes an essential tool within this theory, and conversely, it is linked to the characters and events of the novel and the film. Therefore, for a better understanding of the women's situation in this case, the dissertation examines the issue of the politics of resistance in Assia Djébar's *Children of the New World* and Gilberto Pontecorvo's film *The Battle of Algiers*.

Resistance is an important concept in postcolonial works and literary criticism. As a movement, resistance takes different forms and is also regarded as a reaction to colonial structure and tyranny. However, the Algerian women's resistance came as a result of the double oppression they faced within the colonial era, the first one from the colonial power and the other from the patriarchy.

Postcolonial narratives depict important issues related to the Algerian revolution and the Algerian women dreams of independence. More specifically, Djébar's *Children of the New World* and Gillo Pontecorvo's *The Battle of Algiers* draws different images about women that inspire resistance to both colonialism and patriarchy. It contributes to how the world views the revolution and the participation of women within these circumstances, and also how their input was disregarded, and they were cast back into their traditional rule of marginalization and silence after the independence. What motivates this research is the need to highlight one of the most important themes linked specifically to female resistance.

Hence, this dissertation aims to examine the politics of resistance from the post-colonial feminism perspective using Assia Djébar's *Children of the New World* and Pontecorvo's film *The Battle of Algiers*. The research focuses on Algerian women's participation in resistance to the gender oppression that was imposed on them during the fight for independence, as well as their community's goals and standards. The novel

and the film are selected for the discussion of this problem as they show the conflicts experienced by Algerian females in regards to their positions and roles in their community within the period of war and their quest to find a unique identification as an individual. The postcolonial feminist theory will be applied in order to underscore the impact of double colonialism on Algerian women in their search for "voice" and "independence".

This dissertation attempts to answer the following primary question: How do Djébar and Pontecorvo seek to promote and address Algerian women's resistance? This question will be answered by introducing sub-questions: in what way *Children of The New World* novel and *The Battle of Algiers* film present the effects of colonialism and patriarchy in colonized Algeria? How do Djébar and Pontecorvo reflect the feminine situation in a context of double oppression?

Many research studies have focused on the topic in general and included Assia Djébar's novel, *Children of the New World*, and Gilberto Pontecorvo's film *The Battle of Algiers* in their studies. In the case of Djébar's novel, Evelyne Accad's study, "Assia Djébar's Contribution to Arab Women's Literature: Rebellion, Maturity, Vision" (1996) take in board an analysis of the novel *Children of the New World* from a historical context and focuses on the role played by women within the war, specifically the main female characters and their struggle with the social circumstances and traditions in the same way as their struggle with the war, such as Cherifa and Lila. Additionally, it considers this work the first North African novel in which a woman writer focuses on the inner conflicts of male characters, and raises people's awareness about women in general. These women joined men in creating a new society where women work alongside men but within their own roles (806-807).

Whereas, Yassir Mohammed Nasr Ali and Fares Mohammed Hussein Rashed Al-shuaibi devoted their research, entitled “Nationalism and Feminism Assia Djébar's *Children of The New World* A Novel of The Algerian War” (2019), which has shown that *Children of the New World* is a novel that uses historical fiction to legitimize nationalist speech and behaviour. It uses a variety of discursive techniques to support the nation's rhetoric of societal cohesion and common identity, emphasizing male customs in Algerian society and connecting them to the colonial era. The novel's portrayals of female victimization act as a counterpoint to the individualization of women that was exemplified by their involvement in the Algerian revolution. Furthermore, it illustrates the conundrum of the prevalent nationalist ideologies in the postcolonial setting of the Arab world, which heavily depend on the politically driven and epistemologically decided structures of Eurocentrism (95-96).

Alternatively, research by Gordon Bigelow “Revolution and Modernity: Assia Djébar's *Les enfants du nouveau monde*” (2003) linked the novel to Fanon's "L'an V de la révolution" by the "modernist" view of the anticolonial struggle. In this volume's essay "Algeria Unveiled", Fanon quotes a scene from Djébar in which Cherifa leaves the home by herself for the first time to tell her spouse that the authorities are looking for him when Cherifa eventually locates Youssef at his store in the city, her veil unintentionally slides off, revealing her troubled visage. Gordon illustrates that Djébar demonstrates powerfully that economic and political modernization is not the same as rationalization on the level of subjectivity, despite the fact that she sometimes seems to portray Algerian modernity as the rise of an independent rational subject. Tradition can still be found in this revolutionary story in commodified or conventionalized forms. The nation's "new world" is otherwise divorced from colonial or precolonial societal systems, but the traditional gender system still exists (20-23).

Furthermore, other studies have examined the cinematic work "*The Battle of Algiers*", including an article by Adrienne Rooney, "The Battle of Algiers and Colonial Analogy in the Panther 21"(2019). *The Battle of Algiers* (1966) was used as proof in a 1969–1971 New York Supreme Court case involving more than a dozen Black Panther Party members. The prosecution argued that the Battle of Algiers showed the defendants planning to kill police and civilians in order to achieve their "radical" cause, but the film acted counterproductively and supported the defence counsel's argument that the legal establishment conspired to persecute the Panthers (457).

Besides, Alan O'Leary devoted his work, *The Battle of Algiers* (2019), in which he gave a general analysis of the film from different perspectives, because it is an important example that reveals the power of cinema beyond individual films. Alan describes "the Casbah" as a strategic place of resistance, and the dichotomy between this place and the European cities in order to depict the relation between the colonized and the colonizer (23-24). In addition to that, the author linked some of the shots in the movie with Delacroix's paintings, such as 'Women of Algiers in Their Apartment' (1834). The film depicts the women as "active revolutionary fighters," which is a fantasy scenario from the years after the initial French conquest of Algeria. Delacroix's depiction of the women gives the impression of submissive femininity.

Although their de-individualization into allegory may be implied in the same process, the women assailants' evocation of and difference from an Orientalist paradigm indicates their meaning (59-61). Moreover, Alan tackles the theme of temporalities, and the film uses an intentional and rhetorical deployment of temporality to demonstrate the Algerians themselves pressing on their contemporaneity, the Battle and the conclusion in particular, in terms of recreation. Re-enactment has become a buzzword in discussions of historical films, just as it has in discussions of both

scholarly and popular history. Understanding the character of film as both a historical and a political picture is dependent on the issue of temporality (84).

On the other hand, Lindsey Moore, in an article entitled (The Veil of Nationalism: Frantz Fanon's 'Algeria Unveiled' and Gillo Pontecorvo's *The Battle of Algiers*), stated that anticolonial nationalism has a problematic history with women because nationalist groups frequently tactically use feminism and women's discourses. However, studies carried out by feminist scholars with first-hand experience of the region show that there has been significant conflict in North Africa and the Middle East between nationalisms and feminisms. In her opinion, "Algeria Unveiled" transcends "discursive constellations" and fights against "ritualized silences" that characterize women's representation in the Algerian historical archive in general and in Pontecorvo's film in particular. Fanon's writings can be seen as part of a continuity with more recent research on women's involvement in early Islamic and anti-colonial movements by feminist thinkers from North Africa (57).

In addition to a comparative study by Vikash Kumar entitled *Revolutionary Roads: Violence versus Non-violence A comparative study of The Battle of Algiers (1966) and Gandhi (1982)*, this study provides a semiotic analysis of The Algerian versus Indian nationalism images from both of the films (260), focusing on the use of violent and nonviolent activism which are significant characteristics in our dissertation. Also, the paper provides a thorough comprehension of the concept of resistance, as well as the revolts in Algeria and India by explaining the colonial gaze and its significance on the protagonists of the films (264).

This review made it obvious that these studies and researches contain a limited indication of the resistance topic in general and the female resistance specifically in their approaches to Assia Djebar's "*Children of the New World*" and Gilberto

Pontecorvo's "*The Battle of Algiers*". Consequentially, this dissertation will focus on the forms and politics of resistance linked to postcolonial feminism theory and the representation of the subaltern linked to the works of Gayatri Spivak.

This study negotiates the theme of resistance in Assia Djébar's *Children of the New World* and Gillo Pontecorvo's *The Battle of Algiers* by investigating the role of women in the Algerian revolution. Through the postcolonial feminism approach, the research examines the female characters of the novel and the film to illustrate how colonial and patriarchal oppression leads them to rebel, fight for their independence, and defend their nation and national identity. Postcolonial feminism focuses on the third-world works and attempt to investigate the intersectionality of the variables that contribute to the dehumanization of women, such as gender, religion, and colonization. As a result, the selected works will be explored from Spivakian perspectives to debate the portrayal of subaltern female characters.

The dissertation is divided into two chapters, the first chapter addresses the theoretical framework and the socio-historical context. The first part systematically examines Algerian history and the position of women within the colonial era to demonstrate a broad socio-historical perspective by combining the two works with their contexts, and the second section is concerned with postcolonial feminist theory as well as key concepts such as female subalternity. The second chapter, on the other hand, is devoted to analyzing the work from a postcolonial feminist perspective in order to expose the depictions of colonialism and patriarchal abuse. It is divided into three parts. The first part addresses the representation of resistance in general and the effects of colonialism from different perspectives, such as political and cultural. Furthermore, the second part is devoted to addressing the female position under the situation of double oppression and the strategies for resisting these circumstances. Hence, the third part

aims to analyze the works from a postcolonial feminist viewpoint by implementing Spivak's theory of subalternity.

CHAPTER ONE: SOCIO-HISTORICAL CONTEXT AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Several narratives and cinematic works have been significantly influenced by the French colonial period in Algeria. The first section of this chapter is devoted to a sociohistorical framework that contextualizes the two works by presenting the colonial era and its origins, as well as portraying the experience of women throughout this pivotal period, in addition to the causes that prompted resistance operation. Furthermore, the next section will address a theoretical framework and provide further information and data regarding postcolonial feminist theory that serve the purpose of research, by emphasizing references to this crucial concept in a variety of postcolonial theorists and postcolonial feminist viewpoints, with a focus on subaltern studies.

1. Colonialism and the Dream of Decolonization

Starting from the age of discovery and lasting until the middle of the 20th century, colonialism spread by adopting several forms and policies. According to Horvath, colonialism is a type of domination, or the control of one person or group over another person's or group's area and/or conduct. Horvath argues that academics have not adequately defined colonization due to a lack of theoretical perspective, a lack of flexibility in colonialism definitions, an excessively ultraconservative attitude towards words, and a rigid attitude towards words. Intergroup and intragroup dominance are the two fundamental types of group behavior that are referred to as colonialism. Intergroup domination is the process of dominance in a society that is culturally diverse, while intragroup domination is the process of dominance in a society that is culturally homogeneous (45).

While Frantz Fanon points out in *The Wretched of the Earth* that colonialism is neither a mechanism capable of thought nor a being with the ability to reason, it is

violence in its truest form, and it will only relent in the face of more violence (61), which means that this process depends principally on violent actions that are practiced by the colonizer against the colonized people. Fanon also claims that colonialism is separate and regionalist by virtue of its design. Tribes are not simply recognized by colonialism; it also strengthens and divides them (94).

Hence, this policy increases its strength from the separation of the tribes and regions of the colonized state. He also adds that the colonial powers, especially the European ones, have acted like nothing more than war criminals for ages in the developing world; they have primarily used deportations, massacres, forced labor, and enslavement to build up their wealth and consolidate their control (101).

Furthermore, developments in Europe's manufacturing methods led to the start of colonialism. The previous slave-based economy gave way to a new method of manufacturing as a result of the industrial revolution, which impacts colonized states around the world economically. As it is mentioned in the essay "Impacts of Colonialism", colonialism had a significant economic impact, resulting in the 'drain of wealth,' expropriation of land, control over production and commerce, exploitation of natural resources, and development of infrastructure, which resulted in a large money loss (Ziltener et al. 299).

Besides, the cultural impacts of colonialism might be considered the most dangerous. Edward said in his book "*Culture and Imperialism*" defines colonialism and imperialism. According to him, imperialism refers to the acts, theories, and mindsets of a powerful metropolitan region governing a far-off territory. Colonialism, which is almost always a byproduct of imperialism, is the establishment of settlements in far-off lands (9). In other terms, the relation between imperialism and colonialism is the relation between a theory and its practice. Said argues that colonialism and imperialism

are not just acts of accumulation and conquest, but are underpinned by ideological structures that hold beliefs in dominion and knowledge related to domination. Direct colonialism has largely ended, but imperialism persists in political, ideological, economic, and social practices, as well as in the cultural realm (9).

On the other hand, the decolonization process has emerged as a reaction to colonialism; this movement started after World War II among the indigenous people in the colonies around the world. Von Bismarck claims that this aspect straddles two extreme viewpoints, each of which has benefits in practice but is also rife with serious defects. Decolonization, according to the traditional definition, is the process by which historically reliant regions gain their constitutional freedom and join the international scene as independent states, with nations joining the UN as equal members (1).

Whereas decolonization is the reversal of European imperial expansion with its political, economic, social, cultural, and linguistic consequences. This definition is methodologically advantageous as it allows for the analysis of territories and developments, as well as the informal parts of the British Empire. It also allows for the study of the social, cultural, and economic aspects of its end (Von Bismarck 2).

According to the historian and sinologist Prasenjit, decolonization is the process of giving indigenously based officially sovereign nation-states administrative and legal authority over colonial areas and dependencies. By pointing out that the replacement of political systems was part of a worldwide change in values, he introduces a normative dimension. This dissolution represents an effort to oppose empire in the name of political and moral unity (2).

Accordingly, Fanon notes: "Decolonization is the veritable creation of new men", He believes that this process is the coming together of two forces that are inherently antagonistic but attribute their originality to the circumstances in the colonies. Their

initial meeting is violent, and their coexistence is sustained by a vast arsenal of bayonets and guns; the settler and the native are old acquaintances (WOE 36). which means that this concept needs a practice that requires confrontation and stands on the same methods that the colonizer applies and uses; therefore, it contains violence in general.

The North African area can be defined differently depending on the source, but typically it includes Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Libya, and Egypt. This region witnessed the succession of several great civilizations and the invasion of a lot of people from different locations around the world, containing the ancient Egyptian civilization and the Roman Empire. Then, with the arrival of Islam, which reshaped this area, a lot of Islamic dynasties ruled North Africa, concluding with the Ottoman empire and beginning one of the major conflicts where the north African regions were colonized by the European colonies during the 18th and 19th centuries. This colonial invasion had different characteristics and methods, but the reasons were similar.

In the nineteenth century, industrialization and mass-produced commodities dominated North Africa and the whole globe, resulting in the emergence of European capitalism and politics. In his book, *North Africa, Revised Edition: A History from Antiquity to the Present*, Phillip argues that the financial institutions backed by national governments entered weak, unprotected polities, and European commodities outnumbered those produced and crafted by North African producers and artisans. At the outbreak of World War I, North Africa was under European control. France's involvement in Algeria led to the establishment of European colonies and the consolidation of oppressive colonialism. Tunisia and Morocco were turned into French protectorates; Italy seized control of Ottoman Tripolitania; and Spain renewed its invasion of North Africa. British colonization in North Africa had and continues to have many negative effects (141).

Nevertheless, the French colonialism of Algeria is remarked upon as one of the most significant paradigms within the colonial period. Phillip declares that Commander Abraham Duquesne bombarded Algiers in the late seventeenth century due to North African corsairs endangering French interests and aspirations in the Mediterranean. The immediate reason for the French attack was a debt due to Jewish trading businesses in Algeria for grain exports to France during the Directory of 1795-1799. The deys of Algiers represented their Jewish customers and pestered the French for money, but in vain (153).

Phillip also adds that Husayn Dey 1818-1830, the final monarch of the regency, was irritated by the French consul's domineering behavior in this situation. The dey used a fly whip to strike the ambassador in 1827. A French embargo on Algiers followed this political insult; at this time, France was governed by the incredibly conservative King Charles X, who had marginalized liberals (20). So, he authorized the assault on Algiers to divert the public's attention from his controversial policies.

Hence, Algeria was colonized for 132 years, beginning in 1830 and ending in 1962, and administered as an integral part of France from 1848 until independence. Vince claims that France considered Algeria a province composed of three departments in 1848 rather than a colony. This was due to the large number of settlers from Europe, some of whom arrived in search of wealth, while others created an urban working class that was poor. These settlers were from Spain, Italy, Malta, Germany, and Switzerland (4). It is obvious that Algeria was treated as a colony rather than a part of France.

France had committed a lot of discrimination, crimes, and denials of the Algerians rights. Vince argues that the majority of Algerians between 1881 and 1944 were governed by the *indigénat* (indigenous law), a set of oppressive laws that didn't apply to French residents. Meeting without permission, disrespecting a public official, and

departing the neighborhood without permission were all considered infractions and subject to fines, imprisonment, or group penalties (9).

Therefore, these discriminations and laws, in addition to several other reasons, lead to an uplift in anticolonial activism among the Algerians. Thus, it is important to shed light on the significant period from 1914 to 1954. This period includes the two major and great conflicts of nations, including France as one of the principal belligerents: the First World War 1914–18 and the Second World War 1939–45. Vince states that the First World War was crucial in the development of Algerian political independence because it created a link between Algerians incorporating into the French military and their access to political rights. This sparked debate in the 1920s about a "mutual duty" between the Algerian people and the colonial administration. (21).

The Algerians participated in both the First and Second World Wars. Indeed, in 1939 and 1940, Algerian troops were recruited and conscripted into the French army. The AML thought that protests would serve to remind the French and their allies of Algerian nationalist objectives. Protests in the Constantine area of eastern Algeria, in and around Setif and Guelma, and their ramifications would become widely recognized. There were clashes between demonstrators and police, and then the police started firing at those in attendance (Vince 47).

Significantly, it became clear that this event promoted a turning point in Algerian history, starting with the creation of the new political entities. Phillip demonstrates that with the so-called "organic statute" of 1947, which in reality included rigged elections silencing nationalist opinions, Algerian alienation increased. In 1947, a militia group known as the Organisation Spéciale (*Special Organization* [OS]), the Mouvement pour le Triomphe des Libertés Démocratiques (MTLD) organized (41). Colonialist police eventually broke up the OS and arrested its leaders in 1950, but some of its members

later became the core of the Comité Révolutionnaire pour l'Unité et l'Action (Revolutionary Committee for Unity and Action [CRUA]) in 1953 and then the Front de Libération Nationale (National Liberation Front [FLN]) the following year (187).

Decidedly, the FLN proclaimed the War of Independence on November 1st, 1954, which was a remarkable text that kept the FLN together and focused on the overarching goal of freedom. Despite horrific fratricides and internal conflict, the FLN was able to maintain its cohesion and urge the revival of an Algerian state and the globalization of the freedom movement. The Armée de Libération Nationale (ALN), the FLN's armed wing, managed to pose a security danger despite the French Army's counterinsurgency operations (Phillip 187).

Furthermore, the common people who had unified behind the FLN were the victors. Declaring it to be the "war of 1.5 million martyrs," the FLN formally stated that 1.5 million people were killed by the French between 1954 and 1962. Algeria had reclaimed its national sovereignty and Arabo-Islamic character through the conflict. Following independence, the conflict was assigned these exact meanings, which later served as the inspiration for the founding images of the new Algeria (Alexander et al. 3).

2. The Algerian Resistance in Literature and Cinema

Resistance is defined by the intentions of those committing acts, which are typically directed at defending pre-existing and treasured socio-political arrangements, upholding other civilizational values, or defending existing power structures. This helps to separate violent opposition from the idea of violence itself, which is used more technically or instrumentally but is still given meaning (Klaas et al. 8). This concept is seen as a morally and politically valid justification for the actions of the colonized to

benefit an emancipatory narrative of "decolonization" and national "liberation" (Domingos et al. 2).

Significantly, numerous literary and cinematic works have accommodated the Algerian Resistance war as a fundamental case, a lot of these works are considered international great works and were written and produced by Algerians and non-Algerians. On the one hand, in the literary case, the majority of the works that have tackled this topic were written in French. Four major eras can be found in French-language writing from Algeria. The first era concerns Algerian authors from affluent families who adopted French culture and stayed devoted to French ideals. The second phase focuses on the literature of resistance that supported and lauded the Algerian fight for independence, while the third phase focuses on discussing the social and political fallout of Algeria's declaration of independence. The fourth era is characterized by the need to write independently in an effort to comprehend the predicament of contemporary Algeria (Djafri et al. 193).

For instance, Kateb Yacine, one of the Algerian novelists, wrote his famous novel *Nedjma*, published in 1956. It is a contemporary book, similar to those that the New Novelists started to release in the early 1950s. At the very least, particularly in light of the way the author handles the narrative voice and the time organization, the book contains numerous passages that aim to denounce the prejudice to which the Arab population fell prey during the French occupation, to the point where they form a leitmotif that recurs throughout the lengthy text (Marco 240).

Also, Muhammad Dib was an Algerian author who wrote tumultuous literary works, including the novel *Un été Africaine* (African Summer). Dib depicts the Algerian revolution and draws a wide-ranging and detailed image of his country, with characters that reflect various societal groups and professions. He also addresses the

imperialist views of France, which are seen as a betrayal of the principles of the French Revolution. He paints a bold picture of France as being devoid of any morals and undermining all values (Geula 466).

In addition to that, Assia Djebar is considered one of the Algerian women writers and filmmakers who are associated with the representation of women and their resistance within the war. In her 1985 novel *l'Amour, la fantasia*, Assia talked about one of the Algerian women's experiences during and after the Algerian War of Independence. Mosbahi expounds that Assia Djebar's novel is about the history of the war and its biography, crossing the "I" with the "we". In the autobiographical chapters, the narrator evokes her childhood using the first-person singular "I" and replaces it with the first-person plural "we". This refers to a group of children or groups of women with whom the narrator mingles enchantment. Additionally, three historical tales are intertwined in the book: the author's intimate relationships, French testimonies of Algiers' conquest in 1830, and Algerian testimonies of their participation in the fight back against the French invaders (13).

On the other hand, comparable to literature, cinema also accommodates a reflecting image of the Algerian resistance since the French invasion. The director Mohammed Lakhdar-Hamina, in his 1975 work *Chronique des années de braise* [Chronicle of the Years of Embers], shows the Algerian War of Liberation from a peasant's perspective. Bedjaoui interprets that this six-part film chronicles the pivotal moments in Algeria's history, from the expropriatory [Years of Ashes] to the start of the uprising. It describes the May 8, 1945, repression without explicitly naming it, as well as the rigged elections of 1947, which led nationalist party activists to resort to military conflict to drive out the invader. It presents an intriguing view of history despite the author's wish to use fiction to tell the epic story of a protracted struggle (11).

Alternatively, the Algerian incident and its nationalists and guerrilla fighters inspired several non-Algerian directors of Arabian and European nationalities. *Jamila, the Algerian* is a 1958 Egyptian historical film. Directed by Youssef Chahine, the film highlights the story of the significant female nationalist and fighter Djamila Bouhired while also depicting the Algerian people's battle against French rule. Khouri exposed that *Jamila (Jamila, the Algerian)* quickly gained popularity in Egypt and the rest of the Arab world and helped to inspire widespread support for the Algerian fight against French colonization. It was an example of a new type of Arab cinema and mirrored the concerns of Egypt's new political elite. It also added to the left-nationalist policies of the Nasser administration and those of comparable governments in Syria, Iraq, and Yemen (33). The film was informed by postcolonial popular rhetoric that was developing throughout the Arab World.

In addition to her influential literary works and cooperating with Malek Alloula, Djébar's 1979 film *La Zerda ou les chants de l'oubli* (The Zerda and the Songs of Forgetting) won the prize for Best Historical Film at the 1983 *Berlin International Film Festival*. The film uses montage to explore the 'resistance behind the mask' of colonial violence. Hillauer states that "zerda" is a colloquial term for a well-known gathering and joyous festival. The movie *Zerda* celebrates finding those parts of the communal past that the protagonist believed were permanently erased from public consciousness (309).

The performance of the Algerian women in the struggle for independence was never less valuable than the men's role. Women participated both before and after the inauguration of the national liberation war in 1954, and this participation persists until the combat is completed by the independence of Algeria. Turshen claims that the French military and police detained and tortured 2,200 mujahidat (women fighters) and executed six people before commuting their punishments. Until Amrane Minne

released her studies in 1993 and 1994, there was little information about the women who had fought for their freedom. Survivors started to share their experiences and print their memoirs (891).

The majority of these women participated with the FLN. Eager declares that the FLN leadership approved the use of women in the national liberation fight due to practical necessity, as they had an easier time slipping past French roadblocks and were perceived as less dangerous despite concealing explosives in handbags and strollers. As a result, Algerian women were revealed in the second stage of the veil and began to dress in European fashions to give them a more European look (108).

Further, the FLN developed its views of women in response to French colonialism, which sought to win Algerian women over to European ways through the politicized veil. Also, the actual number of women who participated in the movement is not known, but 11,000 were registered as veterans by the Ministry of War, compared to over 300,000 men. However, a great number of women were not able to complete the appropriate forms for certification due to illiteracy, meaning that rural women were not included. Twenty-five percent of all women involved in the war were urban women, mostly drawn from the French-educated middle class. Many were employed as clerical workers, nurses, or accountants, while others were unemployed young women. Rural women gave refuge to the Army of National Liberation out of fear or compassion (Eager 108).

Furthermore, Algerian women took part in large-scale protests against the French government during the war's closing years, replacing men in areas of public militancy and street demonstrations; these roles ranged from making flags to taking the lead in advanced columns and singing the Algerian anthem.

3. The Battles of Algerian Women

Assia Djebar is considered an Algerian novelist and feminist who wrote frequent and substantial literary works. On June 30, 1930, she was born in Cherchell to a prominent Arabo-Berbero-Andalusian family from Chenoua, and her mother was a Berber. She started learning French at the primary school for boys in Mouzaaville at the age of four, where her father, Tahar Imalhayne, a "local" teacher, taught (Violet et al. 1). She wrote *La Soif*, her debut book, which was published in 1957. Three additional books were written after that: *Les Impatients* (1958), *Les Alouettes naïves* (1967), *Children of the New World* (1962).

This last was written in French, entitled '*Les Enfants du Nouveau Monde*', *Children of the New World*, and translated into English by Marjolijn de Jager. It consists of nine chapters, each named after one of the novel's characters, which are Cherifa, Lila, Salima, Touma, Hakim, Hassiba, Khaled, Bob, and Ali. Again, the narrative begins with the death of an elderly woman in the courtyard of her home, killed by a falling bomb fragment, in the second year of the Algerian war for independence in May 1956 and ends with the insurgents in the mountains. It follows a number of interconnected residents of an Algerian town called Blida, and many of the major characters are women who get affected by the war.

A resistance leader's wife, Cherifa, must abandon her home for the first time to inform her husband that he will soon be arrested, and Lila must live alone because her husband left to join the rebellion, in addition to a young child named Hassiba, who travels to the maquis while hiding in the woods, and Salima, who works as a teacher and joins the political activism with the nationalists, to be arrested and prisoned by the French police. The characters also experienced a struggle with the patriarchy, male-dominated traditions, and marriage issues in Algerian society.

Italian director Gilberto Pontecorvo, born November 19, 1919, and died October 12, 2006, was a part of the political cinema movement of the 1960s and 1970s and is best known for his war film *The Battle of Algiers*, in Italian *La Battaglia di Algeri*, which premiered at the Venice Film Festival on August 31, 1966, where it won the Golden Lion. Originating from Saadi Yacef's memoir, *The Battle of Algiers* was produced by Antonio Musu, Igor Films of Rome, and Yacef Saadi, the Casbah Film Company (Algiers).

Filmed in Algiers in 1965, where its events take place in the casbah during the war of independence in 1957, the events revolve around the major characters Ali La Pointe, who joins the FLN and meets Djafar, one of the FLN leaders, as well as the three Algerian women who transform themselves into French women and plant the bombs, and Le Petit Omar, a thirteen-year-old seasoned combatant, in addition to the French colonel Mathieu.

The Battle of Algiers highlights the moral and historical implications of violence in political conflict. Thus, this movie speaks to the deepest emotional yearnings for justice and human respect. It contrasts military strategies and political philosophies, reveals the inner workings of an urban guerrilla movement, and charts the historical process of the Algerian liberation struggle. It is still regarded as a classic due to its complex handling of political and historical themes (Hamadi 22).

4. The Rise of Postcolonial Feminism

Before entering into the specifics of the postcolonial feminist approach, some key terms and terminology, such as postcolonialism, postcolonial theory, and feminism, must be defined. Postcolonialism as a concept has been substantially tackled. Considerable researchers and critics have attempted to use it as a central item for their

research and studies, and it is difficult to give a certain meaning to this term. According to McLeod, "the term 'postcolonialism' is not the same as 'after colonialism,' as if colonial values are no longer to be reckoned with" (33). He claims that this term does not establish a fundamentally new period of history or portend the arrival of a perfect world free from the problems brought on by colonialism. In contrast, it acknowledges both past consistency and change. So, it acknowledges the material realities and discursive modes of representation established through colonialism while also recognizing the promise, possibility, and continuing necessity of change, as well as the fact that important challenges and changes have already been achieved (33).

Furthermore, postcolonialism is a neologism that captures a unique moment in world history, a combination of experiences and insights from a hitherto silenced part of the world. It seeks alternatives to the colonial era, creating a new vantage point from which to review the past and the future (Mishra et al. 378). Although postcolonialism asserts that everyone has a right to the same level of financial and cultural well-being, the divide between westerners and non-westerners makes today's world one of inequality. The growth of the European powers, which ruled over 90% of the world's land area, made this divide definitive in the 19th century (Young 2). Postcolonialism's ideology holds that African, Asian, and Latin American peoples have the right to access resources and financial well-being, and their cultures have the power to change western societies. It is based on the justification that the three non-western continents are economically unequal and heavily dependent on Europe and North America (4).

Postcolonial theory first appeared in the US and UK academies as part of a larger wave of new and politicized fields of humanistic inquiry. As a body of thought, this approach tackles diverse aspects and takes into consideration the political, aesthetic, economic, historical, and social impacts of European colonial rule. Thus, this theory is a new expression of the West's historical will to power over the rest of the world, which

is being reinscribed within a neo-colonial 'new world order'. So, the postcolonial theorists argue that Third World cultural producers send 'primary' material to the metropolis, which is then turned into a 'refined' product by the metropolitan cultural elite for their primary audience. This work is then re-exported as 'theory' to the Third World (Moore et al. 18).

Young claims that postcolonial theory seeks to alter how people perceive and act in order to create a more just and equitable relationship between the various peoples of the globe, deals with topics that are frequently the focus of other academic fields and pursuits, such as women, development, ecology, social justice, and socialism, and seeks to impose its alternative knowledge on both western and non-western power systems (7).

Furthermore, many theorists raised new and special ideas concerning this discourse, and their works became sources of inspiration for several critics. Edward Said is one of these theorists, best known for his book '*Orientalism*'. His idea of postcolonialism is based on the false image of the Orient or East that has been created by western explorers, poets, novelists, philosophers, economists, and imperial administrators since Napoleon's occupation of Egypt in 1798. Said considers *Orientalism* as a style of thought based on an ontological and epistemological distinction between "the Orient" and "the Occident", and that this discourse has been used to prepare for military campaigns and colonialism against the Orient, or as a justification for the occupations and horrors that accompany them (5).

In addition to Frantz Fanon, the revolutionary psychologist who wrote numerous works within the field of postcolonial theory such as *The Wretched of the Earth* and *Black Skin, White Masks*. His works have been significant in providing a way to conceptualize the construction of identity under colonialism as well as the relationship

between nation, nationalism, national consciousness, and national culture in an anti-colonial context. His rendering of the role of the 'native intellectual' in the struggle for national independence is particularly important (McLeod 67).

The feminist theoretical frame has no specific definition. In her book *Encyclopedia of Feminist Theories*, Lorraine Code argues that feminism is a theoretical career dedicated to creating critical-constructive critiques of institutionalized oppression and marginalization of women. White western feminist theorists saw it as their primary task to develop critical analyses of the structural features of patriarchal societies, which led to women and men living lives that were significantly dissimilar from one another in terms of structure, materialism, and experiential diversity. Instead of focusing on how these experiences were differentiated along class, racism, sexual orientation, age, ability, ethnicity, or religion, feminists focused on how sex-gender lines were differentiated. The prevailing theory was that males held greater influence than women in patriarchal cultures and had easier access to what was valued (5).

Whereas many critics and theorists have considered this tool a western-specific scheme that centers around "whitestream" feminism, Grande claims that mainstream feminism is dominated by white women, who structure their ethno-political discourse on the basis of their interests and capital investments (330). As a result, the postcolonial feminism theory has appeared as a reaction to the traditional rules of mainstream feminism.

Therefore, postcolonial feminism is the study of colonialism and neocolonialism in relation to gender, country, class, ethnicity, and sexualities in the various settings of women's lives, subjectivities, employment, sexuality, and rights (Schwarz et al. 1). Besides, it is essential for addressing the mistreatment of Third World women and unfair circumstances, and it requires a strict historical and logical approach to its subject

matter and own comprehension. The most sophisticated grasp of modern "reality" may be a postcolonial feminism that tackles the problems affecting the most "backward" regions of the globe (66).

Additionally, postcolonial feminism is the challenge to dominant patriarchal ideologies by women of the Third World; contesting local power structures or racialized or Eurocentric perceptions of men and women in the First World are two examples of what it might entail. Postcolonial feminism starts with the assumption that colonialism's active legacies, such as the institutional facilities granted to elite groups by colonial powers or taken by later elites, actively shape its politics. All women who are fighting for equity must deal with these postcolonial conditions (Young 109). Postcolonial feminism is concerned with the anxieties of being a woman in a postcolonial environment. It focuses on campaigns for civil, human, and political rights, equality in the law, education, and workplace, and discrepancies between western values and those that feminists outside the west may choose to adhere to (115).

5. The Discourse of Subalternity and Resistance

On February 24, 1942, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak was born in Kolkata (previously Calcutta), five years before India became independent from Britain. She may have developed a later interest in the subaltern, the most marginalized and impoverished people of society, as a result of her early experiences in India (Riach 9). The most notable aspect of Spivak's work is her openly political use of modern cultural and critical theories to contest the influence of colonization on how we read and approach literature and culture.

Additionally, Spivak's critical comments draw on a variety of theoretical perspectives, such as Marxism, feminism, deconstruction, postcolonial theory, and

globalization research. She focuses on the cultural texts of those who are marginalized by western culture, challenging the disciplinary conventions of literary criticism and academic philosophy. She has also challenged other prominent intellectuals like Edward Said and Homi Bhabha (Riach 1).

First published in 1985, "Can the Subaltern Speak?" is an influential essay by Gayatri Spivak. While subalterns' ability to communicate is undoubtedly explored, the focus is on whether they can be heard. According to her, there are a number of obstacles in the way, but the most crucial is that stronger individuals, such as academics, religious figures, or others who enjoy an advantage in society, always advocate for them. The privileged deprive subalterns of their own opinions when they do this. Spivak believes that if subalterns could talk and have a platform to be heard, they would have powerful political influence (Riach 11).

Furthermore, "subaltern" is a term used in academic discourse to refer to a subject who is marginalized and oppressed. It is a heterogeneous group and cannot be easily categorized. The founder of this study, Ranjit Gaha, defines the subaltern as diverse, heterosexual, and overlapping (Yashodha 393-394).

Spivak argues that colonialism, patriarchy, and academic study all have two things in common: an incorrect assumption that their values are universal and a persistent silencing of subaltern perspectives. She investigates that two famous radical thinkers, Gilles Deleuze and Michel Foucault, undervalued their contributions to the cultural dominance of the West and misrepresented themselves as unbiased skeptics while secretly holding prejudice against Western values (66-67).

Secondly, she discusses the difference between *darstellen* (aesthetic representation) and *vertreten* (political representation) in Karl Marx's 1852 essay "Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte". She then critiques the Subaltern Studies

Group for treating subalterns as an impersonal mass, and describes a changing identity that can have a variety of characteristics using the term "subaltern," explaining that her interpretation of the term varies depending on the situation. Karl Marx's 1852 essay "Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte" discusses the difference between *darstellen* and *vertreten*. Spivak then critiques the Subaltern Studies Group for treating subalterns as an impersonal mass (70-71).

Then she examines the 1829 prohibition of sati by the British imperial administration in India. Sati is a type of widow sacrifice where a Hindu widow "ascends the pyre" of the dead husband and immolates herself upon it, demonstrating how it served to uphold colonial authority, keep men in charge of women's lives, and contrast British civilization with "savage" Indians (93).

In addition to the experience of Bhuvanewari Bhaduri, a member of the Indian independence movement who was a subaltern and preferred suicide over committing a political murder in the decades preceding Indian freedom, she attempted to "speak" with her body by ending her own life because she was unable to do so through formal routes, and this illustrates a circumstance in which a subordinate had worked hard to communicate, to the point of turning her suicide into a message (103).

The idea of resistance has been examined by a lot of postcolonial and anti-colonial scholars and activists from different perspectives and points of view, and this concept is applied in the literary works concerning the postcolonial critic. In particular, three of the major postcolonial scholars have tackled the concept of resistance and examined it using different objectives and understandings, starting with Frantz Fanon, who established his particular opinion regarding resistance in his published critical works against colonialism.

Bhandari affirms that Fanon considered resistance an opposition that argues for the freedom of colonized people through materialist communal resistance against colonial authority. In this paradigm of resistance, Fanon endorses the use of violence in the struggle for liberation against the colonial authorities, focusing on the abolition of colonialism through the application of revolutionary power (95). He believes that revolutionary violence is the most effective way to resist colonial oppression.

The Wretched of the Earth is an extremely powerful work by Fanon that motivates a lot of anti-imperialist movements. The most challenging part of the book is Fanon's defense of the use of force in anticolonial resistance. He defended the use of force in anticolonial resistance by arguing that colonization was predicated on brutality rather than culture or the rule of law. He argued that colonial rule was an effort to normalize and legitimize the acts of imperial brutality that led to the country's initial occupation and continued colonial rule (Young 123).

However, Edward Said believes in cultural resistance concerning the negative image of the colonized people that is included in the colonizer cultural elements and focusing more on the literary works and narratives. According to Jefferess, postcolonial studies argue that the economic and political structures of colonialism cannot be separated from the 'stories' the beneficiaries of colonialism construct to understand and legitimize them (14). So, literature is regarded as the primary cultural modality through which the colonial order is constructed.

Clearly, Said, in his 1993 book *Culture and Imperialism*, claims that stories are at the core of what colonizers and writers say about foreign areas of the world. He thinks that European literature, from travelogues to novels, served as a vehicle for colonial people to establish their own identity and past, as part of the colonial education effort

and to assert European identity and past. He uses stories to illuminate colonialism's discursive conceptions of power and identity, similar to other postwar critics (14).

In addition to the *Orientalism* case, which examines the ways in which colonized peoples have interacted with imperial rhetoric and how many of these tactics remain even under different conditions and creates a strategy for tackling the cultural output of those societies impacted by colonialism, this criticism of Orientalism highlights crucial issues for Orientals who are subjugated, such as how history might be rewritten and how it might be added to (41).

Bhandari demonstrates that the primary objective of this type of resistance is to expose colonial authority and provide alternative readings through writing and reading from marginalized perspectives. Likewise, writing serves as a form of defiance to supplant the colonial rhetoric about the colonized, and many postcolonial authors and thinkers engage in writing to foster a favorable perception of the subjugated. They also read colonial narratives to reveal the colonialist mindset that underlies the colonial rhetoric (93).

Whereas the postcolonial theorist Homi Bhabha examined another form of resistance related to subversion, this type seeks to subvert the colonial hegemony and authority of knowledge production. Bhandari states that Homi Bhabha proposes a third space of cultural enunciation that subverts binary thought and essentialist identities produced by colonial knowledge, and his argument suggests that the third space is a liminal and interstitial space where multiple cultures negotiate ambivalence, so living in the third space is a fertile ground for colonized people to form their own subjectivities and create new signs of identity. It is a place where the crossing of time and cultural differences occurs and where new forms of identity are formed. It also redefined preexisting cultural codes and ethnic traits (94). While colonial power may never be

total, this does not mean that it is not enduring or oppressive. Bhabha appears to construct resistance as the failure or incompleteness of colonial authority, which is too broad to have any political currency (Jefferess 31).

Finally, this chapter served as a basis for the examination of the works chosen. Hence, the second chapter aims to explore resistance activity against colonialism and patriarchy, and the position of women in terms of double colonization through Djébar's *Children of The New World* and Pontecorvo's *The Battle of Algiers*.

CHAPTER TWO: RESISTANCE BETWEEN COLONIALISM AND PATRIARCHY

Throughout their works *Children of the New World* and *The Battle of Algiers*, Djébar and Pontecorvo strive to give voice to the voiceless and demonstrate the extent to which women have suffered under patriarchy and the plague of war in Algerian society. Whereas the former favors imaginary characters, the latter wants to go into history to unearth stories about real-life individuals. Therefore, this chapter will demonstrate the relevance and diversity of anti-colonial action and resistance in connection to Algerian women who found themselves caught between two jailers and battling two adversaries, patriarchy and colonialism, additionally to presenting a postcolonial feminist reading about Algerian subaltern women and their strategies to make their voices heard and emancipate themselves via their words and actions.

1. Colonialism and Anti-colonial Resistance in *CNW* and *BOA*

Colonial dominance has motivated the Algerians to take up the responsibility of resistance and fight this brutal force for their rights and independence by joining the guerilla war. The issue of resistance is a source of inspiration for Djébar, which is discussed in most of her works, and also for Pontecorvo, as it is portrayed in his famous *The Battle of Algiers*. In *Children of the New World*, Djébar has developed characters who act and speak against imperial dominance, showing their uniqueness and agency. The book is set in the context of Algeria's liberation struggle from French colonialism, and portrays a transition into "the New World," in which Algerians, both male and female, are to be regarded as "children". Pursuant to Loomba, the undeveloped and uncivilized people are depicted as children in the white men burden, who are framed as parental (Loomba 217).

Therefore, Djébar's use of "children" as a symbol for the renewal of Algerian life, on the other hand, may indicate the artificiality of her speech. Reliving life as a child is melodramatic rhetoric that exploits popular emotions by romanticizing tropes. Again, in *Children of the New World*, Bachir's experience shows the Algerians willingness to fight for their rights. Bachir claims, "What do my studies and all the rest of it mean to me now? Nothing. I want to act, like the others, like the brothers" (126). His proclamation manifests that the liberation of his country is more important than his studies, even though he is highly praised for his academic achievements and his father's desire for him to finish his studies.

Bachir represents the strong ambition of the Algerians to practice in the liberation war as the only solution to gain their independence by claiming, "I'm going to join the resistance... For some people going to war is a duty, for others it's a heroic departure. For me, it's a necessity, a real chance" (186). Additionally, Ali's choice to leave his wife Lila and join the revolution was driven by his devotion to serving the needs of his country and the necessity of raising political consciousness, as he said, "One can only be liberated by consciousness, and what our country needs most of all is political consciousness" (CNW 107).

Djébar's portrayal of the resistance is not particular to the war of independence but also to the previous events that helped to increase the Algerians consciousness about the inevitability of revolution. Notably, Youssef remembers the events of May 8th, when he understood that a native nation is not shared territory, but blood, spilled together on the same day, interrupted by the same songs (121). Youssef states, "We, the oppressed, the subjugated, the 'lowly Arabs,' we whose blood was used to water the fields of their 'great war'" (119). This shows the exploitation of the Algerians by the French government for their own interests. Thus, the Algerians rebelled to get rid of this subordination.

Comparable to Djébar, Pontecorvo in *The Battle of Algiers* depicts characters who suffer oppression and injustice from the French colony and decide to alter the situation by entering the decolonization war. Ali La Pointe, the film's protagonist, is an uneducated worker and boxer who has had run-ins with the authorities since childhood. He joins the FLN and becomes a prominent participant in the Algerian independence struggle. Before joining the FLN, the film portrays Ali's experience of being arrested by the French police officer in 1944, where he observes through a gap in the wall of his group cell as wardens decapitate an Algerian prisoner (00:8:47-00:12:20). Pontecorvo indicates through editing that the prisoner's death helps to radicalize Ali against his country's colonial domination rather than deter him from political actions.

Correspondingly, Ben M'Hidi, who is one of the FLN leaders, organizes a general strike to show support for the FLN and Algerian independence. After being captured, he takes questions from reporters with Mathieu. Ben M'Hidi answers the reporters: "Give us your bombers, and you can have our baskets", after indicating that involving women to carry bombs is intrinsically cowardly (BOA 1:29:10). Yet M'Hidi supports the FLN's practices, which he considers harmless in comparison to the crimes done by hegemonic nations like France and the United States. Again, M'Hidi's nationalism and noble thoughts are apparent when he said to Ali: "You know, Ali, it's hard to start a revolution. Ever harder to continue it. And hardest of all, to win it. But it's only afterwards, when we have won, that the true difficulties begin" (1:07:46-1:8:02). He emphasizes the difficulty of starting a revolution and the need for long-term measures to achieve independence.

Moreover, Pontecorvo depicts the Algerian resistance as a responsibility for different categories of society, including children and women. The little Omar is one of the children who helps the guerrilla fighters and puts himself in danger in order to liberate his country and make communication amongst the fighters easier, especially

when he distributes messages to FLN members while avoiding French scrutiny. At the end of the film, Omar dies with Ali in the wall-cavity refuge (BOA 1:52:33-1:52:47).

Besides, one of the important FLN female members is Hassiba. In the film, Hassiba is shown in a veil hiding a gun to give it to Ali in order to kill the French policeman (00:14:08-00:15:32). She is also one of three women who disguise themselves as members of Algiers' secular population in order to place bombs in public locations where the French settlers live.

French colonialism influenced Algeria in a variety of ways, as other colonial powers and countries did around the world. This affection can be witnessed in a wide range of postcolonial narratives and cinematic productions, including Djébar's *Children of the New World* and Pontecorvo's *The Battle of Algiers*. Clearly, numerous postcolonial theorists consider colonialism's cultural effects and changes as the most dangerous and damaging policy, with effects that can last even after the colonial period, imprisoning colonized people, controlling their lives, and touching their identity and culture, including their education, language, and religion.

Since French military repression was insufficient to dominate Algeria, cultural factors, such as the Muslim education system, were replaced with the French educational system for Europeans and a few Algerians. This idea is clearly represented in Djébar's *Children of the New World*, where several Algerian characters choose to attend French schools rather than Quranic schools. Lila and her father Rachid, Bachir, Ali, Touma, Zineb, and Salima are the main Algerian characters who prefer the French educational system. Overall, the Algerians believed that it was essential to absorb the characteristics of the French colonial system (language and culture) in order to be prepared to resist it. This was seen as a way to protest injustice, gain knowledge, and even redeem themselves (Benrabah et al. 128).

Hiddleston states in her book *Assia Djebar: Out of Algeria* that, in addition to highlighting the horrors of colonial imposition, Djebar's works demonstrate the power of colonial influence and the successful assimilation and acculturation of the educated Algerian minority (183). But this contribution has a negative attitude toward some characters, such as Touma. After she was raised in a small family in the village, Touma was sent to a French school by her father, and then she decided to work as a secretary in an office (CNW 170). Her passion for French culture and language, as well as her public interactions with French people, led to her betrayal of her people and country. Djebar reflects Salima's feelings after being prisoned and watching Touma with the French policeman Captain Martinez, which proves her complicity with the colonists against her people. She states: "all she has experienced in life is exertion, hesitation, quest, but never betrayal" (68).

Further, the situation of Touma brings up the idea of the antagonism between town and country that is explained by Fanon, which is one of the colonial mechanisms where the people of the highlands and upcountry are rallying against the townspeople who imitate the European culture (WOE 112). So, the colonial culture's attachment, including the use of their language and customs, is utilized to foment discord among indigenous people. Therefore, Djebar depicts the Arabic language as "the language of a militant" (CNW 126). In which the Algerians used to resist the French authority. and Islam against the use of Christianity for the expansion of colonial rule, and this image is clear when the Algerians raised the green flags of Islam in front of the church on May 8th 1945 (126). According to Johan Galtung's theory of violence, in the field of cultural violence Rituals, symbols, forms of cultural production, and language are all nonviolent aspects of culture, but the conceptual framework they reinforce enables structural and direct violence (Jefferess 19).

Paradoxically, Pontecorvo in *The Battle of Algiers* illustrates Algerians use of French cultural representations, including language and practices, as both a defense strategy and an approval of the presence of the remaining French, even if they end up physically departing the nation. Pontecorvo depicts the three FLN women members, or *fidayate*, changing their Muslim robes, cutting their hair short, and putting on makeup; one of them bleaches her hair blonde.

Obviously, these women tried to imitate the European style (00:41:34-00:47:08). This transformation and their use of the French language with the French soldiers and people in the public areas permit them to pass through checks unnoticed, the explosives in their handbags undetected, so that they can carry out the bombing missions that have been assigned to them. And also, he portrays the use of the French language by the FLN when communicating with the nationalists as a rooted dependency on colonialism; it is portrayed in the scene where Ali receives a letter written in French from the FLN leader, and he orders the little Omar to read it. (00:13:27), even the name of the protagonist, 'Ali la pointe,' contains a French word.

French troops raped, looted (taking 50 million francs from the treasury in the Casbah), desecrated mosques, and destroyed cemeteries. It was an inauspicious beginning to France's self-described 'civilizing mission,' whose character on the whole was cynical, arrogant, and cruel. (Toth qtd in Evangelista 27-28)

The quote sheds light on the political influence of French colonization on Algerian society, by enacting abusive and arrogant practices that harmed the situation, which had a detrimental impact on the Algerian people, and restricted their privileges. The political crisis led the Algerians to use violence and gave rise to it. Djebbar portrays the Algerians reaction to these policies by bringing back the significant historical event of May 8th 1945. Algerians congregated peacefully to celebrate their freedom and rights, while France reacted with brutality. Djebbar narrating Youssef's experience on this day,

says, “That same day, massacres had taken place in martyred towns: Setif, Guelma, Constantine. Young Youssef was discovering that a native country is not shared land, not even shared misery, but blood, shed together on the same day” (CNW 121).

Along with this, Pontecorvo enhances France's colonial political authority by demonstrating several scenes. He shows Ali La Pointe being arrested for running a street gambling table, chased by a French colonial policeman, and attacked by a group of white French settlers to ensure France's political influence (BOA 00:7:54-00:8:40). Evangelista notes that “the system of colonial domination was fundamentally destructive of native life and welfare” (28). By employing increasingly violent and harsh means, the French administration encouraged the FLN's rebellion to escalate to the point where it resorts to violence in order to maintain the rights and liberty of Algerians.

2. Women’s Resistance under Double Colonization

The word "patriarchy" refers to male dominance over women and children in both the public and private spheres. The patriarchal family focuses on legitimacy to ensure that the critical activities of reproduction and socialization take place within its boundaries. Millett states that patriarchy determines that the status of both child and mother is largely or ultimately dependent on the male through a uniform and universal restriction. The male figure's position within the family is monetarily and ideologically powerful due to his social prestige and economic power (35).

In *Children of the New World* Djebbar reflects on and criticizes patriarchy and considers it a set of societal norms and behaviors in which men rule, oppress, and exploit women. As follows, Djebbar portrays the experience of Lila within an Algerian patriarchal family. Since public education changed in 1930 due to Algerian laborers’

demand for French education (Bouaziz 28). Lila's father Rachid, did not submit to his father and patriarchal household structure rules that indicate that the responsibility of a wife and children is simply to strengthen a man's sincerity and authority. Rachid decided to send Lila to a school where she could be well educated and disagreed with his father's regime, which claims that "She's a girl! She can perfectly well attend Koranic school, just like the rest. It'll be quite enough for her to say her prayers and understand the Koran" (CNW 129). With his strong decision, Rachid resists the patriarchal traditional and Islamic rules; he wants his daughter to be free and approves her right to education.

In addition to the education issue, Djebbar highlights the marriage issue, which is also dominated by the patriarchal social structure. Cherifa was forced to be married to a man she did not love for three years. She thinks: "Nothing worse than being forced to live with a man whom everything inside her had instinctively rejected" (10). The patriarchal mandate of essentialization assumes that all women want to be mothers and that maternal desire is inherent (O'Reilly 67). However, Cherifa denied that she would be able to raise a child when her husband wanted her to. Djebbar exhibits that subaltern women can defend themselves and protest against repressive husbands. Cherifa challenged the patriarchy when she refused and said: "No! God has not given me any children. I don't want any!" (CNW 11).

Likewise, Djebbar illustrates multiple women's marriage experiences that are influenced by patriarchal standards. Youssef's sister Zineb is one of the victims of patriarchal rules, which ensure that women cannot defend themselves or take personal decisions regarding their life choices. Zineb was obliged by her brother Youssef to be married to a person she did not know or accept as a husband (28). In the same way, Djebbar pictures Amna and Hakim's relationship as a traditional marriage based on traditional patriarchal standards. Power, dominance, hierarchy, and competitiveness

define the patriarchal system. As a result, patriarchy is a social structure and practice in which men rule, oppress, and exploit women (Sultana 3).

Likewise, Amna represents the subaltern and marginalized Algerian women within colonized society, as she lives in a family where her husband is the boss and the dominant, and her role as a mother is to raise children and take care of them in the presence and absence of the father. Again, Amna's sighs are often due to exhaustion and financial worries, as she has not grown accustomed to Hakim's habit of sharing his salary with his family at the beginning of each month (CNW 46). Djébar appears to explore Gayatri Spivak's perspective on subalternity and communication by emphasizing the effacement of the subaltern woman in her essay "Can the Subaltern Speak?" and responding in the negative.

[...] Fadila Ahmed argued “we, the women of Algeria, have two jailers: colonialism...and the apathetic men who hang on to customs and traditions inherited not from Islam but their ignorant fathers. The second...is worse than the first” (qtd in Schultz 5).

As well, Asia Djébar uses her novel *Children of the New World* to demonstrate the status of Algerian women inside colonized Algeria and their struggle with the double marginalization of the patriarchy and colonialism. She describes several experiences of women with this struggle in terms of resistance and battle and the reasons that inspire them to act, talk, and fight against the patriarchal traditions and the colonial domination.

Clearly, Cherifa is one of the most significant female characters who serve to undermine patriarchal conceptions of women as well as participate in the fight against colonialism. While the traditional customs of the Algerian family and society compel the young women to stay at home and avoid leaving it without a male ranger, Cherifa challenges these patriarchal rules and decides to go out alone after she realizes that her husband is in danger and can be caught by the French police. Djébar writes: “Cherifa interrupts, as she waits, rising, wanting to leap up and run across the city to look for

Youssef, find him, warn him: "You're in danger, in real danger" (50). Indeed, when Cherifa summons the courage and confidence to go out of her house, she decides, "I have to act" (84). Djebbar states that acting for women who are enslaved by custom and experience it as instinct is a strange word. She adds that acting for the first time means a new world for Cherifa and a new way to prove her existence (84).

Furthermore, Djebbar's novel challenges patriarchy and connects it to the colonial assault. It depicts female characters across a wide spectrum of positions, highlighting their agency and action in the face of colonial patriarchy. Women's empowerment is portrayed as a gender in transition, catalyzed by the development of a nationalist consciousness (Yassir et al. 95). In spite of challenging patriarchy, Cherifa also opposes colonial status. Djebbar writes: "Cherifa walks the long street for the first time... Cherifa's heart beats in haste and shame and she stares at the end of the street as if it were her salvation" (CNW 86). Cherifa's desire to act encourages her to walk on the city streets, where the danger is real and she could be known by Touma, an Arab girl who serves the French police and informs about the nationalists. Djebbar adds:

[...] That's why she crossed the entire town, bared her presence to so many hostile eyes, and at the end of her trek discovered that she was not only a prey for the curiosity of men—a passing shape, the mystery of the veil accosted by the first glance, a fascinating weakness that ends up being hated and spat upon—no, she now knows that she has existed (143).

The quote makes it clear that Cherifa, with her strong decision, discovers a means to prove her existence and has the strength to resist two powers that control her entire life. She is successful in liberating herself from the prison of subalternity imposed by colonialism and patriarchy. Djebbar's portrayal of Algerian women's speech appears to address Gayatri Spivak's essay on subalternity. Spivak has stressed the marginalization of the subaltern woman and their struggle with double oppression by claiming that:

Both as object of colonialist historiography and as subject of insurgency, the ideological construction of gender keeps the male dominant. If, in the context of colonial production, the subaltern has no history and cannot speak, the subaltern as female is even more deeply in shadow (82).

Along with, Salima according to the depiction of Djébar, is one of the silent and passive Algerian women who served their lives to fight against colonialism. She chose to participate in political activities after completing her education, which caused her to be arrested by the French police and imprisoned. Djébar notes: “Salima is now in one of the cells of this prison. She doesn’t know what time or day it is” (CNW 56). During her captivity, she is subjected to maltreatment and rough interrogation tactics, as Djébar writes: “Through the long hallway again. How many times has she been through here? She remembers that at some point she was interrogated two or three times on the same day” (63). A woman under torture such as Salima has no weapon to defend herself except her “pride” (64) and courage. She said: “I’m not afraid. Why don’t you just torture me?” (65).

Besides, Salima sacrifices her life and works as a teacher to assist her family. Unlike the other girls in town, she is not bound by the patriarchal rules of Algerian Muslim culture. However, she chooses to combine education and work. Djébar states that Salima has the strength to take responsibility as a man and would face any challenge to care for her family, believing she is the delegate of her people to another world (64). Despite this, she endures torture and exile in prison for the sake of her people, family, and country.

In the same way, the young girl Hassiba has a long desire to participate in the struggle for independence, and she is enthusiastically engaged in the battle. Hiddleston declared that “for Hassiba, working in the mountains with the maquis is a sign of defiance and power” (37). On her way to the mountains, Hassiba said passionately: “I

want to go there, to the resistance, I want to work with those who fight! Last year their answer was, 'You're too young, you really have to think this through.' Now I'm sixteen. I've thought about it a lot: the revolution is for everybody, for the old and the young. I want to shed my blood for the revolution" (148). The bravery of Hassiba allowed her to show no hesitation, and by her declaration, she denounces both the male dominance in the field of resistance that rejects her desire and intimidates her and the colonial status by choosing to fight and resist hand in hand with the guerilla fighters in the mountains.

Therefore, Djebbar has challenged colonial assumptions about Algerian passivity and the stereotype of the Algerian woman as weak and docile (Kaced 396). Like Spivak, Djebbar raises similar concerns about Algerian subalterns: can they speak, resist, act, and talk? And here it is important to investigate the suicide story of Bhuvanewari Bhaduri, who was part of an organization participating in the military war for Indian independence. Bhuvanewari committed suicide because she was unable to face the work of carrying out a political assassination and was aware of the need for trust (Spivak 103).

With this story, Spivak proves that subaltern women cannot be heard or read. Thus, Djebbar emphasizes the subaltern Algerian woman's voice and vision in anti-imperialist and nationalist situations, as well as in the social field. Hence, their battles and warfare work remain to be done to recover their wartime memories and incorporate them satisfactorily into an Algerian war historiography that has so far been dominated by masculine narratives (Alexander et al. 29).

One of the main characteristics advocated by postcolonial theorists and researchers is the use of violent measures against colonial power for independence. Fanon is one of the most significant scholars who supports the idea of violence in the operation of

'decolonization," which is for him 'a violent phenomenon' (Jefferess 11). Similarly, Pontecorvo through parts of *The Battle of Algiers* film, depicts the use of violence by female characters inside the resistance activities they are permitted to conduct, as well as the crucial role they played in one of the film's pivotal scenes.

Previously, the account of the involvement of women in *The Battle of Algiers* had tremendous effects. Pontecorvo portrays the FLN's use of three of its female members in the most difficult tasks of resistance. Halima, Hassiba, and Djamila, FLN members, take off their burkas or 'veil' and arrange their hair and makeup to resemble Algeria's secular society; this metamorphosis permits them to pass through checks unnoticed, the bombs in their handbags undetected (00:41:34-00:47:8). In *The Wretched of the Earth*, Fanon demonstrates that violence against colonizers is a redemptive reversal of the symptomatic practices of violence directed towards each other by the colonized. In the anticolonial fight, ritualistic behaviors are redirected to a higher cause, where the colonized shift the violence away from themselves and against their oppressors (Marso et al. 98).

Likewise, Pontecorvo depicts women invading public spaces filled with *pieds noirs* in a tense moment of dramatic irony. The filmmaker heightens the suspense by moving between ambient sounds and rhythmic music that reflects the bomber's mental pain. Therefore, the percussion emphasizes the significance of this period in the war's history. It commemorates the freedom of women, who are now revolutionary combatants, as well as the Algerian people's self-defense (Mellen 33).

The scene of these three women is based on Zohra Drif, who planted a bomb in the Milk Bar café in Algiers in 1956, killing three French youths and injuring several others. Baya Hocine, a commando in the resistance movement, was arrested and sentenced to death by the French. Aicha Bouazzar, a member of resistance groups, was

responsible for ambushing French forces in certain areas of Algeria, and she was given a "big Italian machine gun" (Rohloff 4-5).

3. Algerian Women under Algerian Eyes: *CNW* and *BOA*

Concerning the postcolonial feminism studies, the subaltern studies identify with individuals who have been oppressed by a bigger authority and are afraid to advocate for their rights for fear of reprisal.

[...] Feminism in a postcolonial frame begins with the situation of the ordinary woman in a particular place, while also thinking her situation through in relation to broader issues to give her the more powerful basis of collectivity. It will highlight the degree to which women are still working against a colonial legacy that was itself powerfully patriarchal - institutional, economic, political, and ideological (Young 116).

Hence, in her influential essay "Can the Subaltern Speak?" Spivak maintains that subaltern women have been silenced by patriarchal moral norms and their representation in colonial narratives. Despite their efforts to convey their narratives, their voices were not heard, leading to their silence in the dominant political systems of representation (Bhagwat et al. 43). Equally, Algerian women have been pushed to the periphery of society, history, and culture in male-dominated situations, becoming subjects of double colonization as a result of various types of oppression. In their attempts to reclaim their voice, the Algerian women decided to resist, as it is portrayed in Djébar's *Children of the New World* and Pontecorvo's *The Battle of Algiers*, as a challenge to Spivak's assumption that the subaltern women are unable to speak for themselves and have their voices heard.

Firstly, in *Children of the New World*, Djébar represents characters who seek to rebel against subaltern circumstances, each character has its own way of resisting. Cherifa, who "remained silent" succeeded in breaking the subalternity from both

patriarchy by refusing her first husband's desire to have a child when she claims defending her own choice: "No! God has not given me any children. I don't want any!" (11). And from the colonial authority when she takes her strong and brave decision to assist her husband Youssef and walks outside alone, challenging the danger of being arrested by the French informers and police. Through these decisions, Cherifa succeeds in contributing her voice and giving the best representation to the resistant subalterns.

Additionally, other characters regarded education as a tool for revolting against the constraints of subalternity. Lila considered her father's decision to send her to school emancipation from her patriarchal family's "opinions, principles, fears, and cowardice, from everything that remains of a clan, tribe, and a dead past, that painless liberation did, indeed, seem fortunate to her" (130). Lila's father, Rachid considered education a way of liberation; he said, "My daughter will be a liberated woman" (133).

In the same way, Salima's intention to study was influenced by her desire to help her family and defend her national status. Because women were considered symbols of Algerian national identity and culture, the French thought that appealing to them by enhancing their position would break up the independence movement (Leonhardt 46). Conversely, Lila and Salima break these thoughts by incorporating these promotions, including education, into their anti-colonial activism.

Salima as mentioned, succeeded in making her voice hearable through her assistance in the political activism with the nationalists, which caused her imprisonment by the French police (CNW 56). and by establishing her "pride" as a voice against colonial torture. Following Salima and the other courageous women's steps, and despite her youth, Hassiba was inspired to join the mujahedeen in the mountains to combat colonial oppression, she claims heroically. "I want to walk with the fighters. I want to suffer with the fighters. Night and day" (148). Hassiba has burst down the boundaries

of the subalternity, which is promoted by patriarchy and colonialism, to fight alongside men.

In *The Battle of Algiers*, violence represented the most successful and morally appropriate strategy for women to be heard. Pontecorvo shows the resistance of the subaltern Algerian women to the patriarchal and colonial boundaries by depicting them taking on men's responsibilities and roles, which is very clear in the mission of planting bombs by the three *fidayates*. These missions assist women in recognizing the importance of community and solidarity (Zhao 24). The director represents the three militant women as silent characters, which brings back the story of Bhuvaneshwari's suicide in Spivak's essay. These subaltern women sacrifice their lives and struggle expressively in order to get their voices recognized. As Schultz states: "Algerian women who turned to violence, then, served not only to liberate the nation, but to liberate themselves as well" (14).

In addition to their violent strategies, the subaltern female characters in *The Battle of Algiers* participated in non-military and nonviolent activities. In one of the important scenes in which the director depicts Hassiba, a veiled woman waits near the café and hides a gun under her veil in order to assist Ali's mission of killing the French policeman and guide him to Djafar, the leader of the FLN (00:14:08-00:15:32). Hassiba, one of the three women who plant bombs in the public spaces where the French people live, succeeded courageously in carrying out several violent and nonviolent missions, using both colonizer methods by adopting a "European look", and her country's most important cultural symbol, which is "the veil".

Both of the works, *The Battle of Algiers* and *Children of the New World*, emancipate different interpretations of marriage. Djébar narrates different experiences of arranged marriages and forced marriages within the colonial era, she provides a critique of the

status of marriage and depicts it as an extension of patriarchy where women have no choice in who they marry.

For characters such as Cherifa and Zineb, marriage is not an individual choice but a family matter. Cherifa has no advantages from her first marriage in terms of happiness, she devolves into an emotionless object “her fingers would spend hours cutting, sewing, and trying on. What marvelous recreation, but recreation that was a translucent pause in a lackluster life” (CNW 10). She sees her wedding day like the May 8th massacres, *a gray dawn* (121).

Like Cherifa, Zineb was forced by her brother to be married to a person she does not know, she said, “He isn’t handsome, he isn’t ugly, but I don’t want him to come near me, I don’t want him touching me!” (28). In her study about “Education and Marriage of Women in Colonial Algeria”, Bouaziz states that women were subjugated by their fathers or other legal guardians, and after marriage, they became subjugated by their husbands (40).

In addition, Djebbar demonstrates the issue of patriarchal marriage and family structure from different backgrounds. Amna is one of the oppressed women who is imprisoned by the patriarchal norms that obligate her to comply with her husband’s desires and needs. She is a wan person who listens to orders, bends her head, goes away, a faithful echo (50). Throughout Amna’s experience, Djebbar demonstrates how traditional marriage keeps women silent, passive, and usually oppressive.

From a different perspective, Djebbar narrates the experience of the marriage of true equals between Ali and Lila. Lila inspires her choices and decisions from her father’s courage and challenge in his patriarchal family. Despite his traditional marriage, her father Rachid was not bound by the patriarchal family standards, he has different views

of what a family should look like and what Lila considers "the perfect family" (130), as well as "Western habits" as his patriarchal family contemplates.

The Algerian family structure has experienced a mutation due to the patriarchal system, which gave the father ultimate authority over the family members, forming an extended model of several generations living under the same roof (BOUGUESRI et al. 83-84). Rachid wants to break from this situation and live alone with his wife (CNW 129). Accordingly, Lila's expression of respect for her husband's decision to join the resistance even though it causes her anguish is a result of a successful arranged marriage, where she has the absolute right to choose the person she wants to live with. This is an example of a modern couple where Lila decided to tell her father, "You ought to see Ali" and he gently accepted her desire (136).

The institution of marriage in *The Battle of Algiers* differs from the one in *Children of the New World*. Pontecorvo portrays a group of citizens gathering for a wedding, a traditional wedding of Mahmud and Fathia being performed in secret, and an FLN member arriving to officiate it (00:23:20-00:24:26). The director depicts marriage as an anticolonial matter that is under the jurisdiction of the FLN; this behavior could be seen as a rebellious act in Algerian colonized society and an approval of the FLN's Islamic commitment. In this case, Evangelista said: 'Pontecorvo's film subtly portrays the links between Islam and a liberation movement that, in its most basic elements, was inspired by (French) enlightenment values of secular egalitarianism and democracy' (40). Along with this, the FLN has established a rival revolutionary government in the Kasbah, which is seen as a transition from pretending to represent a group to truly representing them, with public acceptance and obedience (Roberts 2).



Figure 1. Wedding Ceremony. *The Battle of Algiers* (1966)

From another dimension, Djebbar and Pontecorvo provide different visions about marriage and its significance in colonized Algeria, which can shape a patriarchal-dominated project that limits female freedom of thought and decision, as portrayed in *Children of the New World* with Amna and Zineb, and, in the same sphere, an emancipation from this patriarchal regime as for Lila and Cherifa after her divorce. Besides, it is a way of resisting colonial laws and control and also portraying the Islamic dimension of the FLN's nationalism, as in the marriage of Fathia in *The Battle of Algiers*.

Besides, the veil is an extremely contentious topic in postcolonial and postcolonial feminism studies. In his significant essay entitled 'Algeria Unveiled' published in 1959 as 'L'Algérie se dévoile', Frantz Fanon writes: 'The woman seen in her white veil unifies the perception that one has of Algerian feminine society. Obviously what we have here is a uniform which tolerates no modification, no variant' (43).

The initial step to possessing Algeria is to possess or conquer an Algerian woman. Fanon considers the veil adopted by Algerian Muslim women as an objective for the

colonizer and believes that if it is abolished, Algerian society would be destroyed (44). Correspondingly, Djebbar and Pontecorvo establish a connection between the veil and resistance from a converging viewpoint.

Djebbar narrates the journey of Cherifa outside her house in order to alert her husband: “a passing shape, the mystery of the veil accosted by the first glance, a fascinating weakness that ends up being hated and spat upon” (CNW 143-44). Cherifa obtains a new sensation of confidence by entering the streets of public spaces where “she knows that she has existed” (144). And the veil assists her mission by preventing Touma from recognizing her (92). Djebbar also invalidates the patriarchal presumption of submitting women by keeping them away from modernity through the veil. Rachid opposes his father by sending Lila to school without properly forcing her to wear the veil, he said: “Times are changing and even girls will need to be properly prepared!” (129).

Similarly, Pontecorvo portrays the veil's connection with resistance. By offering various visuals and applications for it, Hassiba, the prominent female member of the FLN, uses her veil to hide and transport the weapon to Ali (BOA 00:14:08-00:15:32). Algerian women played a key role in the war, smuggling weapons through French checkpoints to prevent men from carrying out attacks on the Muslim Casbah. This prevented the men from carrying out their attacks (Evangelista 42). Lazreg in her book "The Eloquence of Silence: Algerian Women in Question," mentioned that: *'The veil became women's refuge from the French denuding gaze'* (53). Yet in the battle of Algiers, the veil served as an insurance policy for women and facilitated their political engagement.



Figure 2. Hiding Weapon under the Veil. *The Battle of Algiers* (1966)

In a different position, the director depicts the FLN female members removing their veil and replacing it with a westernized European style to get access to areas that are virtually entirely the domain of *Pieds-Noirs*. The scenario breaks the consideration of the unveiled Algerian women by the colonial as pivotal sites of its control. Pontecorvo reflects the real image of the crucial role of Algerian women in urban networks and the maquis during the struggle for independence and their courageous attendance in these dangerous missions. The three *fidayate* Halima, Hassiba, and Djamila are under the male gaze, these women, carrying purses or baskets holding bombs, are able to infiltrate Algiers' European districts and plant the bombs in high-traffic locations (BOA 00:48:20-00:54:12). In this case, MacMaster notes:

The young *fidayate* certainly were required to carry out tasks that broke the conventions of 'respectability' and honourable behaviour: dressing in a chic western mode of short skirts and make-up so as to pass easily through parachutist check-points, moving about unescorted in urban space, and making contact alone with unknown males (317).



Figure 3. Unveiled *Fidayate* in European Style. *The Battle of Algiers* (1966)

Aside from considering it an essential traditional and cultural symbol that should be protected, the FLN used the veil as a useful and secure instrument in its operations for both men and women. Pontecorvo shows FLN leader Djafar leading a meeting to propose changing tactics and posing as women under a white veil. Under their veil, Ali and Djafar run through the labyrinthine walkways and hide weapons so they could defend themselves after being considered by a military patrol, until they find a home to take refuge in (BOA 01:24:36-01:25:58). Wearing the veil was a form of resistance against colonial authorities and a viable instrument for attacks (Leonhardt 47).



Figure 4. Posing as Veiled Women. *The Battle of Algiers* (1966)

Throughout *The Battle of Algiers* and *Children of the New World*, both Pontecorvo and Djébar provide an iconic depiction of the veil and its presence in the major events and significant moments in Algerian history. The “historic dynamism of the veil,” as it is discussed by Fanon, indicates that the veil was a mechanism of resistance, but its value for the social group remained strong. In connection with the revolution, it became an instrument, helping the Algerian woman cope with the new challenges (55).

On the one hand, Djébar highlights one of the crucial parts of history in colonized Algeria, which is the 8 May 1945 manifestations, where people arrived from every direction and gathered to raise their national voice, “even women, their veils slipping off as they tried to hold on to them with their teeth, and children” (CNW 119). With a determined attitude, the women stopped singing and began to fight, using their bare hands against bullets. They filled old baskets with stones and put some of them in their veils, engaging in “a laughable battle’ where ‘people using their bare hands against bullets” (120). On the other hand, Pontecorvo reflects a view on December 11th, 1960, where a group chants and moves towards the French, with several women wearing ‘the veil’ and leading the wave. When the police push back, the women push forward again, waving green and white flags (BOA 01:54:10-02:00:40).

4. The Intersection of Gender

Many narratives and cinematic works have been preoccupied with the issue of gender and the position of women within colonized Algeria, as well as in postcolonial feminist studies, where postcolonial feminists explore how gender and sexuality are shaped within nationalism and imperialism. Steadman states that masculinity is equated with strength and rationality and attributed to the French, in contrast to Algeria's feminine, emotional, weak, and inferior population. Gender ideologies complement those of race and nation in order to legitimize French dominance (KACED 392). The ideological construction of gender perpetuates male dominance in colonial historiography and insurgency (Spivak 82).

In *Children of the New World* Djébar investigates how the Algerian conflict affects men and women in both public and private fields, questioning gender stereotypes and challenging women's established gender norms by appearing weak, sympathetic, and submissive. Concerning this novel, Mortimer states that the gender gap in decolonization in Algeria is significant, with men struggling to break the yoke of French colonialism and women seeking agency and political independence from the colonial power (148).

Salima and Hassiba's characters serve as symbols of resistance to gender inequalities. Initially, Salima with her political engagement in the revolution proves that she is not someone who is fragile and that she is capable of dealing with difficult situations well, notably in prison, where she was subjected to abuse and segregation. With her pride and passion, she expected that “one single certainty awaits her: the triumph of her arrogance and pride in the duel, while from here on in it's actually a question of her being born—of a true awakening” (CNW 198).

Also, Hassiba contributed to the struggle and joined men in the mountains, challenging the dominating rhetoric used by male leaders to persuade her by telling her: “You’re too young, you really have to think this through...life on the mountain is hard. You’ll have to travel on foot every night. Night is our time. And we walk’ and she responds: ‘I want to walk with the fighters. I want to suffer with the fighters. Night and day” (CNW 148). This implies that Algerian men and women collaborated against colonialism and were equally committed to the resistance. Without a doubt, Djebbar departs from the typical stereotype of “men’s roles as heroic soldiers and women’s passive observance” (Hiddleston 38).

Similarly, the Algerian struggle's gendered aspect is significant in Pontecorvo’s *The Battle of Algiers*. His depiction of Algerian women as active agents in the struggle has caused many scholars to regard the film positively in terms of gendered characterization. Moreover, anti-colonialism and nationalism were gendered battles, with Algerian women's support for the revolution strengthened by France's inability to Europeanize them (Sawers 84). O’Leary argues that the film is addressed to a gendered male North, showing that women are 'other' to the colonizing North (66).

Like portrayed by Pontecorvo, Algerian women participated actively in the violence, contradicting widespread assumptions about gender roles in the national struggle. Hassiba conceals a pistol in her basket and delivers it to Ali, in one of the most dangerous and common roles played by Algerian women within the struggle. So, like men, women were trusted by the FLN in the transportation and usage of weapons, Leonhardt claims that the FLN used female fighters as propaganda for their cause, claiming that women could only achieve equality by fighting for a country free from colonial domination (48).

Furthermore, in a metaphorical and complex scene, Pontecorvo depicts the three young *fidayates*, Halima, Hassiba, and Djamilia. Their participation in the most difficult tasks by carrying bombs into the European quarter, although represented as silent, proves their major role in the resistance along with men, especially in the armed struggles. Schultz notes:

Algerian women proved to be a resourceful force for the FLN due to their ability to move past French checkpoints—either due to French authorities' sexist assumption that they posed no threat to the Europeans or because the French police wanted to gain these women's approval, and perhaps interest, by extending kindness and deference to them as they smuggled bombs and other weapons into urban centers. Due to the lack of scrutiny applied to their gender, Algerian women became invaluable assets for the liberation movement (8).

Yet Djebbar and Pontecorvo exert a coordinated attempt to overcome gender norms by highlighting women's crucial part in the war for independence, and the core of national identity they manifest by standing alongside men for the sake of their mother country and breaking from the gendered subalternity.

Conclusion

In the second chapter we attempt to study Djebbar's novel *Children of The New World* and Pontecorvo's film *The Battle of Algiers* from a postcolonial feminist attitude, using Spivakian perspective of subalternity, in order to address the political, cultural, and social effects of colonialism on Algerians, emphasizing the numerous tactics and policies utilized by colonial power to retain control and suppress rebellion. The female characters in these works eventually decide to fight against colonial and patriarchal power, emphasizing the significance of resistance and the struggle for freedom, where both Djebbar and Pontecorvo attempts to voice the subaltern oppressed women.

GENERAL CONCLUSION

This dissertation analyzed resistance against patriarchy and colonialism in Djébar's *Children of The New World* and Pontecorvo's *The Battle of Algiers*, using Spivak's postcolonial feminist theory of subalternity to consider the circumstances that contributed to women's oppression and rebellion in Algeria. This study has revealed that the two works express identical concerns, allowing us to view Algerian resistance activity and female history from different perspectives. Both Djébar and Pontecorvo have given voice and agency to subaltern and marginalized subjects to speak against oppressive forms of domination, including colonialism and patriarchy.

Djébar's *Children of The New World* is not only riveting as fiction, but it also showed us deeply Algeria's struggle for national liberation (1955-62) and enabled us to recognize what it implies to be a member of military and political resistance. Despite the datedness of the revolutionary battle, this work could remain innovative and interesting, and researchers are still investigating this literary work, which maintains such immediacy. Djébar succeeded in investigating the conflict, which is consequently a double-edge, against the foreign opponent, or colonizer, who confiscates territory and dispossesses Algerians, and against the internal enemy, patriarchy and traditions that subjugate women.

Similarly, Pontecorvo's *The Battle of Algiers* is an extraordinary political film that portrayed the national liberation struggle taking place in Algeria from 1954 to 1962. Pontecorvo exposed the reality of French colonialism, and revealed the numerous tactics utilized by Algerians to liberate their nation, as well as the status of women within this struggle and the essential function they played in resisting both colonized

and traditional norms by presenting them in the most courageous and dangerous tasks, contrary to prevailing notions that women are weak and defenseless.

The first chapter of this research established a socio-historical context for analyzing the selected works. It effectively gathered the socio-historical context of French colonialism in Algeria as well as the theoretical framework of the postcolonial feminist approach. The socio-historical context offered a synopsis of some general and important concepts, including colonialism and its different shapes and definitions, in addition to the process of decolonization and its origins in Algeria, with the reasons that pushed these two movements. Moreover, this part tackles the main theme of the study, resistance, and its representation in some of the narratives and cinematic works, giving more importance to the situation of women in this period and their relation with resistance, by investigating the issues that lead them to choose resistance under the double oppression of colonialism and patriarchy, to sum up with a general summary for both of the selected works.

Additionally, in the theoretical framework, postcolonial feminism was included to give women the consideration that postcolonial and feminist scholars did not. Despite the fact that women were repressed and subordinated, numerous works offered women a voice and demonstrated their status in various ways. Also, this part demonstrated Spivak's concept of the subalterns, which was applied on the two works, and provided an analysis of her influential essay "Can the Subaltern Speak?", in addition to the way in which resistance is theorized in postcolonial studies and the different forms and views of this concept from different scholars, including Frantz Fanon, Edward Said, and Homi Bhabha.

The second chapter sought to provide an extensive examination of the novel and the film. The selected works highlighted the impacts of colonization on the Algerians

from different perspectives and encompassed political, cultural, and societal impacts where the colonial power utilized an assortment of techniques and policies to maintain control over the Algerian people and destroyed any attempts at rebellion. In addition to the various forms of resistance employed by Algerians in their struggle for independence, Further, the female characters in the two works ultimately decided to speak out for themselves and fight both colonial and patriarchal authority.

Therefore, Djébar narrated different experiences of subaltern Algerian females who succeeded in breaking free from oppression and raising their voice by resisting with strong decisions and words, as Cherifa, or by joining men in the mountains, as Hassiba, or by using their education and incorporating it into political activism, just like Salima and Lila. So, she tried to voice women who struggled in the face of patriarchal beliefs and rejected the colonial rhetoric that subjected colonized people to conventional ideas of primitiveness, intensity, and subjugation. Likewise, Pontecorvo presented an intriguing representation of women and their involvement in resistance activism, specifically in violent resistance as for the three *fidayate*'s mission, in addition to their nonviolent activities and their significance and important role in assisting the FLN members' operations.

The research provided a thorough comprehension of several essential processes connected to resistance as a central theme by implementing a postcolonial reading for both of Djébar and Pontecorvo's works. To clarify this, the study applied Spivak's concept of subaltern. In these works, it is revealed how the colonial and patriarchal institutions played along to keep women in Algeria doubly shadowed, women in Algeria are excluded, dehumanized, and regarded as the property of males. However, some of these women have questioned Spivak's idea of subalternity and chosen to resist.

In addition to marriage and the veil, which are connected to both patriarchal standards and resistance, Djébar and Pontecorvo presented opposing perspectives on the concept of marriage. Marriage, for Djébar, defined an instrument of oppression for women like Cherifa in her first marriage and Amna, who was subjugated by her husband and had no way of making her voice heard. In contrast to this, Pontecorvo considered it one of the methods used in the national activism against colonial laws, as depicted in the marriage of Fathia and Mahmud organized by the FLN, which proved the Islamic dimensions of its nationalism. The veil also had relevance in resistance actions, which were captured in both works and demonstrated throughout numerous of the significant historical events and essential missions.

The present dissertation emphasized Djébar and Pontecorvo's portrayal of the Algerian people's long struggle for independence, which is an excellent representation of postcolonial struggle. Women struggled under both colonial and patriarchal conditions, leading them to resist and strive to have their voices heard. Therefore, postcolonial feminism reflected its capacity to offer researchers and scholars the necessary tools to reach out to every woman and shed light on her situation.

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