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DOMAIN: FOREIGN LANGUAGES
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**Unveiling Women's Oppression in Assia Djebar's
*So Vast the Prison***

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

Candidates: Supervisor:

Ms. Aya MERATI

Dr. Bachir SAHED

Ms. Dounia Zad BENZAADI

2023

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DEDICATION

*To those chasing dreams,
never give up on them.*

Aya

DEDICATION

To all my family and friends

DouniaZad

ABSTRACT

The present study delves into Assia Djebar's novel, *So Vast the Prison*, to uncover and analyse the multifaceted forms of oppression experienced by women in the context of postcolonial Algeria. Through a close examination of the novel's narrative, characters, and cultural context, the research explores how Djebar masterfully portrays the intricate web of societal and gender-based constraints that confine and stifle the lives of the female protagonists. Drawing on postcolonial feminist perspectives, this study highlights the intersectionality of the women's struggles, weaving together themes of patriarchy, colonialism, identity, and resistance. In doing so, it sheds light on the ways in which Djebar's work contributes to a broader discourse on women's rights and empowerment within the complex socio-political and historical landscape of Algeria. The findings show that the novel deconstructs the plight of women in postcolonial Algeria.

Keywords: female resistance; female voice; oppression; patriarchy; postcolonial feminism; *So Vast the Prison*

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INTRODUCTION

Literature is considered to be a shared experience rather than isolated work of an individual. It is a way for the gifted individuals to express their struggle through different characters. When a writer struggles to express their emotions, to escape from the world around them and struggle to be intimate with the unconscious or their conscious, at that moment literature is born. Literature helps us fight injustice, prejudice and discrimination. It serves as the voice for the voiceless; writers are expected to discuss stories of the past to educate the younger generation and spread awareness about many important topics. Thus, literature strengthens our freedom against poverty and tyranny.

One of the literary theories that focused on these ideas is the postcolonial theory in which writers expressed their experiences and other people's stories when their countries were colonized. The study focuses on Algeria which was colonized by France from 1854 until 1962 and how the Algerian women fought and accompanied men on the journey of independence. Unfortunately, females kept facing oppression and other acts of injustice which results in many books by Algerian feminist writers who discussed female oppression and silencing like Assia Djébar, Yasmina Khadra, Maysa Bey, and Malek Haddad. Djébar's stands up against traditional patriarchy in her novels and focuses on women experiences and conditions by describing women suffering in Algeria.

The movement of feminism is one of the movements that helped in giving a voice to the voiceless women around the world. It is a movement that goes for equal rights for both sexes. The concept of feminism emphasizes the idea that men and women

should be treated equally and should have all rights that men have. It defends the rights of the oppressed, killed, raped, and all the struggles that women faced all for ages.

The study sheds light on the work of the famous Algerian francophone writer, Assia Djebar, who is an academic and a novelist. Most of her novels discuss the idea of women's silencing and the difficulties they face in life. She is a literary icon against French colonialism and fighter for independence, liberation and women rights. She devotes her talent of writing to the Algerian women and for the females who are silenced and do not have a voice. The study discusses the novel *So Vast the Prison*, in which the writer describes the difficulties that Muslim Algerian woman faced after French colonialism. This talented writer in her novel *So Vast the Prison*, had the power to represent effectively what has been silenced and absent of representation for decades.

First, the novel is divided into four parts. The writer began the novel by an epigraph which is a part of a Berber song "so vast the prison crushing me, release, where will you come from". Djebar starts her novel with an introduction entitled "The Silence of Writing" and ends with the blood of writing; where she describes her emotions, feelings and thoughts. Thus, Djebar narrates in the silence of writing a time when she was with her mother-in-law at the Hammam when she heard a woman calling her husband "the enemy" or in the Algerian dialect "l'edou".

Moreover, part one of the novel is entitled "what is erased in the heart"; it is about two lovers 'Isma' and 'l'aime'. Through the family of 'Isma' we discover the culture of the Algerian families. The second part is entitled "erased in stone" which basically discusses the discovery of an ancient monument with a bilingual inscription in Dougga, Tunisia. While the third part is entitled "a silent desire" which represents the narrator

as film director and stories across three generations about women in her family starting with her grandmother.

Djebar's relationship with feminism is very obvious in the novel because her main focus is on women experience and feminine identity. Thus, *So Vast the Prison* is considered to have a lens of feminist literature and to reflect feminist thought. Therefore, the main focus of this study is the aspect of feminism and how the writer used fiction to depict the plight of women. In this novel, Djebar focuses on the interaction between men and women and the struggles of Algerian women for social liberation. She narrates the realities of women in the postcolonial society of Algeria and the difficulties of being a woman in a Muslim society.

The postcolonial feminist theory is concerned with female rights and voice after independence. The Algerian women were victims of both: patriarchy and colonialism and their struggle to claim their freedom continued even after the end of colonialism. Djebar's work portrays the themes of postcolonial theory and subaltern studies, the concept of subalternity can the subaltern speak? It emphasizes women's history, language and the question of the subaltern. Spivak states that "the subaltern as female cannot be heard or read" (308). Subsequently, in *So Vast the Prison*, Djebar highlights female experiences as subaltern. She also sheds light on the subjugation Algerian women facing an oppressive society.

To sum up, this research is done to reveal the facts related to women oppression and silence after the end of French colonialism and how Algerian society discriminates between men and women in *So Vast the Prison* by Djebar.

The place and role of Algerian women was hidden because of those who took power and places them as second-class citizens. Women did not have enough credit for

their participation in war even though they fought alongside men. So, Djébar's purpose is not to criticize Islam but rather to criticize men, because women in Islam are highly respected in all aspects of life. However, men and family traditions with the structure of society are the reasons that made women weak and oppressed. Albeit Algerian women were oppressed from the colonizer they kept facing the same struggle after the end of French conquest.

Hence, this research examines how Djébar highlights the struggle of Algerian women and how they were treated after independence. She discusses the resistance of females against patriarchal oppression and how Algerian culture and society structures of patriarchy kept women voiceless without the rights to express themselves or their feminine identity.

Therefore, these elements are discussed in order to expose the reality of women suffering with the problematic of postcolonial women's position and the silenced females in *So Vast the Prison*.

As such, writing becomes a weapon and is considered a way of resistance and a source of hope for many women who have experienced oppression. Djébar was motivated to write this novel out of her own experience as a woman living in a patriarchal society, as well as by her interest in the experience of other women who are marginalized and oppressed. Through her writing, she sought to raise awareness about the stories of North African women and to challenge the societal norms that perpetuate gender inequality and to give voice to women who are often silenced and to shed light on the injustices that they face.

The aim of this study is to highlight the plight of women in Algeria and the obstacles that they faced after independence living in a patriarchal society. The study describes Algerian women's silence and their struggle to have a voice. Thus, the research will provide an insight into how Djébar lends a hand to the voiceless. Moreover, it is very important to focus the realities and stories of the Algerian oppressed females and how society and patriarchy play a big role in their suffering.

The dissertation seeks to provide answers to the following main question: how does Djébar use fiction to depict the plight of women in *So Vast the Prison*? To answer this question, the study endeavours to answer the following sub-questions: What images of oppression does Djébar depict in *So Vast the Prison*? How does Djébar use narrative techniques in *So Vast the Prison* to give voice to female characters within a patriarchal society? In what ways does Djébar challenge or subvert traditional gender roles and expectations through her female characters in *So Vast the Prison*?

Many researchers have shown interest in the issue of female oppression in Djébar's works. Critics have praised Djébar's profound treatment of the issues and the social struggles of the Algerian women and the effects of the French colonization on the Algerian psyche, particularly on women from her early novels, *The Thirst* (1958), *The Impientians* (1958), and *Children of the New World* (1962) to her most recent works.

Among the researchers who have attempted to explore Djébar's treatment of colonialism and Algerian women social struggle is Salmi in her article "Between the Languages of Silence and the Women's Word: Gender and Language in the Work of Assia Djébar" (2008). Salmi deconstructs the suffering of Algerian women under the influence of patriarchal oppression and gender discrimination. She discusses the desire of Djébar to get back the extracted voices of the Algerian heroic figures, which fought

against the French colonialism and remains in view of the absence of discourse. Most importantly, Djébar brings those silenced voices back to life and grants them place in modern Algerian literature and history. This study tends to address the position of women in a state of double subjugation both under the colonizer and the colonized which is the male domination. Salmi also sheds light on how Djébar employs literature to empower marginalized voices.

Another researcher who has shown interest in this topic is Fazia Aitel in her research entitled "Barbology or a New Theory of Exile and Identity", a study of exile, writing, and resistance in two Algerian novels: *Vaste Est La prison* by Djébar and *Un Passager De L'occident* by Nabila Fares in 2004. This study is both a theoretical work about exile and identity and an engaged reading of novels by Djébar and Nabila Fares. The researcher claims that she selects Djébar and Fares because both of them combine the peculiarities of Algerians and the experience of a francophone writer in general, an experience portrayed in particular by conflicting responsibilities toward oneself and toward the other due to historical and material factors. Besides, this study describes how both authors use the new form and wrestle with it to express personal issues toward language and the world even as they address the sometimes-self-absorbed role representing a community or gender.

Valerie Orlando, in her research *Djébar's Vast Est La Prison: Platform for New Space of Agency and Feminine Enunciation in Algeria* addresses the Djébar's way of translating her novels into fiction rather than using historical events to reach more audience. Moreover, Orlando notes that in this novel the feminine characters are of many classes, searching for identity and feminine place outside male domination and religious oppression. Orlando concludes her research with a striking statement about

writing and how it is up to the other authors and intellectuals like Djébar to rebuild the history to form a new space for future Algerian intellectuals' discourse, a space that will foster a more complete memory and subsequent rewriting of a forgotten history.

In this review, we can observe that researchers and critics have approached the issues of patriarchy or male domination and women silence and other issues in Djébar's novel by focusing mainly on the postcolonial and feminist theory. The feminist theory alone does not handle and cover up the colonial side and its influence on the situation of the double colonized women in the novel and its impact on the Algerian women and their role in the society. Therefore, this dissertation will focus on the representation of female voice in Djébar's *So Vast the Prison* employing Spivak's theory and shed light on the plight of women. Also the use of the narrative techniques that Djébar use through her female characters to depict women lives and experiences and how she challenged the norms and break the fear of tackling gender issues in her work.

The present research examines Djébar's portrayal of women in her novel *So Vast the Prison*. Therefore, this novel will be studied from the postcolonial feminist perspective. Feminism is a social political and cultural movement that advocates equal rights between women and men and more opportunities for women. Feminism seeks to challenge and dismantle the systemic oppression and inequality that women have faced historically. It aims to promote gender equality and empower women to have control over their lives and choices. Feminism recognizes the intersectionality of various forms of oppression such as racism, and seeks to address these issues as they relate to gender inequality.

Besides, the postcolonial feminist theory aims to give voice to the experiences of women who have been marginalized and oppressed by colonialism, imperialism and

patriarchy recognizing their agency and the main aim of the postcolonial feminist theory is to promote social justice and political transformation by challenging the intersecting form of oppression in postcolonial societies. In the light of this theory, the novel puts under scrutiny some concepts such as gender, colonialism and patriarchal traditions. As the novel is full of portrayals of marginalized women experiencing double colonization and patriarchy, which Spivak pointed to them as subalterns. The latter is a term put forward by Spivak to the group of females who have been subject to oppression and it often emphasizes the agency of subaltern groups in shaping their histories.

Furthermore, *So Vast the Prison* draws further attention to the issue of oppression of women in Algeria under colonial and postcolonial rule. The Algerian women struggle to deny basic human rights and freedom under colonialism and patriarchy and the experience of women who are subjected to gender discrimination, cultural repression and political violence. They are forced to live in a state of perpetual fear and anxiety, and their lives are shaped by the constant threat of violence and abuse.

As such, post colonialism and feminism highlight the experiences of women who have been marginalized by colonialism and patriarchy. They expose how women's bodies are commodified and used as tools of oppression. It also shows how women are constrained by cultural and societal norms that limit their potential. The postcolonial feminist perspective to *So Vast the Prison* examines the intersectionality of gender, class, and ethnicity in the lives of Algerian women.

The study challenges the dominant discourse that portrays Algerian women as passive and oppressed and shows them as agents of change. It also highlights the importance of feminist solidarity and collective action. The female characters in the

novel support each other in their struggles against oppression, and their solidarity provides a powerful counterforce to the dominant patriarchal ideology. Hence, the coming chapters will focus on the theories brought by Spivak by focusing on the complex ways in which gender, power and language intersect in the novel and the challenges of representing marginalized voices within dominant cultural narratives.

Therefore, the work is divided into two main chapters. The first chapter is devoted to the socio-historical context and the theoretical framework. The first section, explores the socio-historical background of the text. It focuses on the era of the French colonization in Algeria and its impact on Algerian people. Besides, the impact of the French colonization on Algerian culture and identity is also examined. The Algerian women's shifting situation during colonization and after independence is also discussed. In the second section, the Postcolonial Feminist theory is tackled along with its main concepts such as giving women voice and subverting oppression.

The second chapter, however, is devoted to the analysis of the novel from the postcolonial feminist perspective in order to unveil the realities of colonialism and gender presented in the novel. This chapter addresses female voice in the novel and discusses the use of writing as resistance, as well as the feminist discourses and its effects to provide a powerful counterforce to the dominant patriarchal ideology. In addition, the chapter deconstructs the multiple images of oppression faced by the female characters in the novel. Furthermore, this chapter explores the ways in which Djébar uses language and narrative structure to dismantle patriarchal power dynamics.

Chapter One: Socio-historical Context and Theoretical Framework

The French colonization left a profound impact on Algerian history, culture and identity. The first section of this chapter is devoted to a socio-historical framework which focuses on the impact of the French colonization on social, economic and religious context and influence on the place of women in the society. This part will also discuss the situation of Algerian women during colonization and after gaining independence. The second section is about the theoretical framework. The emphasis will be on Spivak's theory which deals with the voiceless and oppressed women in postcolonial societies with discussing postcolonial feminism.

1. The Colonial History of Algeria

The history of the Algerian colonization is a complex and multifaceted story that spans more than a century. Colonization began in 1830 when France invaded and occupied Algeria, which at the time was part of the Ottoman Empire. The invasion was motivated by a variety of factors including economic interests, the desire to spread French culture and civilization, and the need to protect French merchants and sailors from piracy along the North African coast. The fan affair that happened when the French general counsel was bit by Dey Hussein was considered as an insult to the French country. This incident was used as an excuse to justify the invasion of Algeria and to hide the real motives which were purely economic (Brown 12).

The French colonization of Algeria brought about significant cultural and linguistic changes that had a profound impact on the Algerian identity. The French authorities sought to impose French language, culture, and values, leading to the marginalization and suppression of Algerian languages and cultural practices

(Croisy85). The importance of language as a means of both control and resistance are examined by Fanon in his book, *A Dying Colonialism*. Fanon observes,

The advocates of integration, for their part, here saw a new opportunity, to promote a “French Algeria” by making the occupier’s language the sole practical means of communication available to Kabyles, Arabs, Chaouias, Mozabites, etc. This thesis, on the level of language, went back to the very basis of colonialism as the intervention of the foreign nation that puts order into the original anarchy of the colonized country. Under these conditions, the French language, the language of the occupier, was given the role of Logos with ontological implications within the Algerian society (75).

One of the most significant cultural changes was the imposition of French as the official language of Algeria. The French colonial authorities mandated the use of French in government documents, education, and public life, marginalizing Algerian languages, particularly Arabic. As a result, the access to education and employment opportunities decreased, and fostered a sense of cultural subjugation among the Algerians. Their goal was to suppress Arabic language and culture in Algeria. The teaching of Arabic in schools and universities was discouraged, while devaluing and marginalizing Algerian languages (Heggoy 182).

Arabic, being a central aspect of Algerian cultural identity, faced significant challenges during this period, impacting literature, arts, and the transmission of traditional knowledge and practices. Algerians were discouraged from embracing their linguistic and cultural heritage. The French educational system played a crucial role in cultural transformation. The French colonial authorities introduced an educational system modelled on the French system, emphasizing French language, culture, and values. As such, Algerian history, language, and cultural heritage were marginalized, leading to generations of Algerians who were educated with limited exposure to their

own culture. This educational approach resulted in a sense of alienation from their heritage, disconnection from their roots, and the erosion of Algerian cultural identity (Heggoy 185).

The cultural changes during the French colonization extended to the arts and literature in Algeria. The French introduced French literature, art, and cultural norms, promoting French styles and techniques. Algerian artists and writers were encouraged to adopt French cultural forms, often overshadowing and diminishing traditional Algerian art and literature. This assimilation approach further eroded Algerian cultural expressions and contributed to the cultural displacement experienced by the Algerian people (Croisy 86).

The imposition of French as the official language, suppression of Arabic, and cultural assimilation policies resulted in the marginalization of Algerian languages, heritage, and cultural practices. Algerians faced linguistic and cultural subjugation, leading to the erosion of their cultural identity and disconnection from their roots. The legacy of these changes can still be felt in contemporary Algeria, where efforts to revive and preserve Algerian languages and cultural traditions continue to play a vital role in reclaiming the Algerian identity and promoting cultural diversity (Croisy 88).

During the French colonization of Algeria, the economic landscape underwent serious changes that heavily favoured French interests at the expense of the Algerian population. Their aim was to exploit Algeria's resources and integrating it into the French economy. These economic changes led to weaken the Algerian economic development and left enduring impact on it.

Firstly, the French colonial administration seized vast amounts of land from Algerian farmers and redistributed it to French settlers. This land seizure resulted in the

displacement of many Algerians from their ancestral lands, leading to a loss of livelihood and exacerbating social and economic inequalities. The confiscated land was often used for cash crop production, such as wine and wheat, primarily for export to France, rather than meeting the needs of the Algerian population. Secondly, the French authorities implemented a system of forced labour, compelling many Algerians to work on public works projects without pay. This exploitation of Algerian labour contributed to the development of the French colonial infrastructure, such as roads and infrastructure, while offering minimal benefits to the Algerians themselves (Fanon 02).

Furthermore, the French colonial administration established industries in Algeria, such as textiles and mining, but these industries primarily served French interests. They relied heavily on imported raw materials and provided limited employment opportunities for the Algerians. The profits generated from these industries largely flowed back to France, rather than fostering local economic development or improving the standard of living for Algerians. Additionally, the French introduced the French franc as the official currency of Algeria, further integrating Algeria into the French economy. By that they facilitated economic control and exploitation, as it regulated trade to favour French merchants and restricted the economic autonomy of the Algerians (Bourdieu 14).

Overall, the economic changes during the French colonization of Algeria were marked by the exploitation of Algeria's resources, forced labour, land seizures, and limited economic opportunities for the Algerian population. These policies favoured the interests of the French colonizers and hindered the economic development and self-determination of Algeria. The enduring consequences of these economic changes can still be observed in contemporary Algeria, where the country continues to grapple with

economic challenges and strive for inclusive and sustainable development (Heggoy 185).

Concerning the social changes, the French authorities sought to impose French culture, values, and social structures on the Algerian population, leading to various transformations in social dynamics, divisions, and norms. The French settlers and the Algerian population were separated. This was manifested in legal and social categories, such as "French citizens," "French subjects," and "Muslims," which created unequal treatment and privileges for the French settlers compared to the Algeria(Bourdieu122).

These divisions entrenched social and ethnic inequalities, fostering a sense of hierarchy and marginalization among the Algerians. In addition, they attempted to assimilate the Algerian population into French culture, which resulted in the suppression of Algerian languages, customs, and traditions. The promotion of French language and education further marginalized Algerian languages and hindered the preservation of cultural identity. The Algerians reject to adopt French customs and values, contributing to a sense of alienation and eroding traditional Algerian social structures (Fanon 90).

Also, land seizures were a significant social change brought about by French colonization. The lands have been confiscated from Algerian farmers and redistributed it to French settlers, leading to the displacement of many Algerians from their traditional lands. This displacement caused a loss of livelihood and disrupted established social and economic systems, further exacerbating social inequalities and dislocation within Algerian society (Ruedy 11).

The French colonization had a complex impact on gender roles and women's rights in Algerian society. While some Algerian women gained access to education and

opportunities that were previously denied to them, this progress was largely limited to a small elite class. Traditional gender norms and practices were disrupted, but Algerian women faced a different set of constraints and expectations under French colonial rule (Fanon85).

The social changes brought about by the French colonization sparked resistance and nationalist movements among the Algerian population. Algerians mobilized to assert their rights, fight for independence, and reclaim their cultural and social identity. These movements, such as the National Liberation Front *Le front de liberation nationale* (FLN), became vehicles for social change and catalysts for Algeria's struggle for independence (Smith 109).

In conclusion, the social changes that occurred during the French colonization of Algeria left a lasting impact on Algerian society. The policies of division, cultural assimilation, land seizures, and gender dynamics introduced during this period continue to shape social dynamics and inequalities in modern Algeria. However, the resistance and nationalist movements that emerged as a response to these changes demonstrate the resilience and determination of the Algerian people in reclaiming their cultural, social, and political identity. Understanding these social changes is crucial for understanding the historical context and complexities of contemporary Algerian society (Bourdieu 90).

Regarding the political changes, the Algerian people experienced significant change that deeply impacted their lives and aspirations for self-determination. They aimed to establish political control and maintain dominance over Algeria. These political changes shaped the dynamics of power, governance, and resistance within Algerian society (Smith 111).

One of the key political changes was the establishment of a centralized French colonial administration, which replaced traditional Algerian governance structures. The French appointed governors and administrators to enforce their policies and maintain control over the Algerian population. This system undermined the autonomy and authority of local Algerian leaders and institutions, leading to a sense of disempowerment and marginalization among the Algerian people(Smith 112).

Another important political change was the denial of political representation and participation for the Algerian population. The French authorities limited the political rights of Algerians, categorizing them into legal and social categories that determined their level of participation and access to political power. Algerians were excluded from decision-making processes and faced significant barriers in voicing their concerns and aspirations for self-determination(Brower 175).

Furthermore, the French colonization sparked resistance and nationalist movements among the Algerian population. Algerians mobilized politically to assert their rights and fight for independence. Organizations such as the National Liberation Front (FLN) emerged, advocating for the end of French colonial rule and the establishment of an independent Algerian state. These movements challenged the existing political order, culminating in the Algerian War of Independence that lasted from 1954 to 1962(Croisy 87).

Algerians began to formulate and articulate their political ideologies, drawing inspiration from various sources, including anti-colonial movement's worldwide and nationalist ideas. These ideologies served as a rallying point for the Algerian people, fostering a sense of unity and shared purpose in their struggle against French

domination, Algerian women also started to participate in social and cultural activities represented in raising awareness of their importance in society (Croisy 87).

In conclusion, the French colonization of Algeria brought about significant political changes that affected the Algerian people's political representation, autonomy, and aspirations for self-determination. This tragic reality of Algerians especially women, resulted deep psychological and social effects from stripping women of the hijab so that it could eliminate Algerian traditions, to the decline of their role in practical life and the limitation of their work inside the home only .in the light of this miserable situation, some women's associations succeeded in attracting Algerian women and framing the women's component within civil society institutions (Reeds 430). As Lazarus observes

130 years of colonialism in Algeria, followed by eight years of Algerian revolution and the long civil war has left its scars on a nation still struggling to find its political identity (Lazarus 83).

The ongoing social and political turmoil in the country has made it even more difficult for women to find their voice and claim their place in such a chaotic environment.

2. The impact of French colonization on culture and identity

The French colonization of Algeria, spanning over a century from 1830 to 1962, left an indelible mark on Algerian culture and identity. During this period, Algeria underwent profound transformations across various aspects of its society, including language, religion, education, political structures, and social customs. The French colonization aimed at assimilating the Algerian people into French culture, leading to the marginalization of indigenous practices and the imposition of French norms and values. However, these colonial policies also sparked resistance and resilience among the Algerian population, culminating in a struggle for independence that revitalized and reaffirmed Algerian cultural identity. Examining the impact of French colonization on Algerian culture and identity provides insight into the complex dynamics between the colonizer and colonized and sheds light on the enduring legacies of this historical period(Vendervort 1).

Prior to colonization, Arabic and various regional Berber languages were widely spoken, serving as integral components of Algerian culture. However, the French colonization introduced and imposed the French language as the dominant medium of communication, administration, education, and commerce. The imposition of the French language had a twofold effect on Algerian culture and identity (Heggoy 189).

Firstly, it marginalized and suppressed indigenous languages, such as Arabic and Berber. Arabic, which had deep historical and cultural roots in Algeria, was relegated to informal and domestic spheres, while Berber languages faced neglect and marginalization. This linguistic marginalization disrupted the intergenerational transmission of cultural knowledge and contributed to a sense of cultural erosion and loss (Heggoy 189).

Secondly, the dominance of the French language led to a linguistic divide within Algerian society. The urban elite and those who embraced French culture became proficient in the language, enabling them to access better education, employment opportunities, and social mobility. On the other hand, those who continued to primarily speak Arabic or indigenous languages faced limited access to education and economic advancement especially for women, this linguistic shift impacted how women expressed themselves, communicated, and navigated their role within the colonial framework. This linguistic divide, in turn created social and cultural divisions within Algerian society, impacting the formation of a unified national identity (Heggoy 190).

However, it is important to note that the French colonization's impact on language was not entirely one of erasure and assimilation. Despite the colonization's efforts, the Arabic language and indigenous languages remained resilient among the majority of the population. These languages continued to serve as vital tools for communication, cultural expression, and the preservation of Algerian identity. Women's use of language reflects their resistance to colonial control and their struggle to assert their own identities within this linguistic context (Heggoy 191).

After gaining independence in 1962, Algeria embarked on a path of linguistic reclamation and cultural revitalization. Arabic was declared the official language of Algeria, and steps were taken to expand its use in education, media, and administration. Efforts were also made to recognize and preserve indigenous languages, leading to the official recognition of Berber languages in the Algerian constitution in 2016. These initiatives reflect a commitment to reclaiming and celebrating the linguistic diversity that is fundamental to Algerian culture and identity (Smith 112).

In conclusion, the French colonization's impact on language in Algeria was significant and complex. It led to the marginalization of indigenous languages and the dominance of the French language in various spheres of life. The act of language suppression can silence marginalized groups, including women. Women's stories, experiences, and voices might be side-lined or disregarded within a colonial linguistic framework. However, Algerian culture and identity demonstrated resilience in preserving and revitalizing their linguistic heritage. The post-independence period has seen efforts to reclaim and promote Arabic and indigenous languages, reflecting a commitment to cultural diversity and the recognition of language as a crucial element of Algerian identity.

During the era of French colonization in Algeria, significant religious changes unfolded that intricately intertwined with the plight of Algerian women. The colonial period ushered in a complex web of transformations that affected both the spiritual landscape and the lives of women. This juncture marked a collision of cultures, values, and norms that left an indelible mark on Algerian society (Croisy 85).

French colonial policies sought to impose secularism and diminish the influence of religion in public life. This shift had a profound impact on Algerian women, who traditionally played vital roles within the religious and communal spheres. The disruption of religious institutions by the colonial administration altered the ways women could access religious knowledge and participate in leadership roles, thereby altering their engagement in matters of faith (Lazarus 85).

The introduction of Western ideals of gender roles further exacerbated the challenges faced by Algerian women. As colonial powers imposed their patriarchal norms, Algerian women grappled with reconciling their traditional roles with the

newly introduced norms. The clash of cultures reshaped perceptions of femininity and family dynamics, leaving women to navigate the complexities of identity in a changing landscape (Croisy 85).

Access to education became a double-edged sword for Algerian women. While colonial influence led to increased educational opportunities for some, the curriculum often held secular and Western biases. This impacted their religious knowledge and understanding of Islamic teachings, thus influencing their roles as carriers of faith within families and communities (Lazarus 84).

The legal arena also bore the weight of colonial transformation. The imposition of French legal codes often clashed with Islamic jurisprudence, impacting women's rights in matters of marriage, inheritance, and family structure. The redefinition of legal frameworks altered women's societal positions and their ability to uphold religious values within their families (Hiddleston 95).

Amidst these changes, Algerian women showcased remarkable agency and resilience. Some actively resisted the imposition of new norms and practices, finding ways to adapt while upholding their religious identities. The emergence of hybrid religious practices demonstrated their ability to blend traditional Islamic values with new influences, illustrating their capacity to navigate complex terrains (Hiddleston 95).

The intersection of nationalism and religion further shaped women's experiences. The struggle for national independence became intertwined with religious identity, leading women to engage in nationalist movements that sometimes incorporated religious symbolism. This dual fight underscored their determination to not only regain their nation's sovereignty but also to assert their rights within the religious sphere (Duranti 111).

The legacy of these religious changes continues to reverberate in Algeria's cultural fabric. The discussions about women's rights, religious practices, and the delicate balance between tradition and modernity persist, embodying the enduring impact of the religious transformations that unfolded during the turbulent era of French colonization.

French colonization in Algeria had a profound impact on education, intricately intertwined with the roles and status of Algerian women within society. The colonial period witnessed a deliberate effort to reshape the educational landscape, shaping not only the intellectual sphere but also the social fabric that women were woven into (Salhi 87).

Under French colonization, education became a potent tool for cultural assimilation and control. The French administration aimed to propagate Western ideals and values, often at the expense of indigenous knowledge and traditions. Algerian women, who were traditionally the bearers of cultural heritage, found themselves at the crossroads of this educational transformation (Cooper 146).

For Algerian women, the impact of French colonial education was multifaceted. On one hand, the establishment of schools provided opportunities that had previously been limited. Education opened doors for some women to access knowledge, skills, and perspectives beyond their immediate surroundings. However, these opportunities were often constrained by the colonial curriculum, which emphasized French language and culture while marginalizing Algerian heritage (Heggoy 191).

This curriculum shift had a significant ripple effect on women's roles within society. As education became more accessible, the dynamics of traditional gender roles began to shift. Women who acquired education faced a complex negotiation between

their newfound knowledge and their traditional roles as caretakers, often challenging the societal norms that had been deeply entrenched (Heggoy 191).

Furthermore, the limited availability of education for Algerian women also reflected the broader gender disparities perpetuated by colonization. Women's access to quality education was often hindered by socio-economic factors, cultural constraints, and colonial policies. This uneven access to education further perpetuated existing inequalities and kept many women from fully participating in the changing educational landscape (Aitel 12).

Despite these challenges, Algerian women exhibited remarkable resilience. They navigated the educational landscape, adapting their roles while preserving cultural heritage. Many women became pioneers, utilizing education as a tool for empowerment and progress. Their participation in schools, activism, and nationalist movements demonstrated their agency and determination to forge their own paths within a changing society (Cooper 140).

As we reflect on the impact of French colonial education, it becomes evident that it was not a mere academic endeavour, but a complex terrain where the destinies of Algerian women and society intertwined. The educational transformation orchestrated by colonial powers paved the way for women to challenge traditional norms, assert their agency, and strive for a redefined place in the societal narrative. The legacy of their struggle and accomplishments continues to resonate, embodying the spirit of resilience in the face of educational change. The legacy of French colonization in Algeria left an indelible mark on the intricate tapestry of cultural assimilation, intricately tied to the struggles endured by Algerian women. The colonial period witnessed a deliberate effort to reshape the cultural landscape, resulting in a complex

interplay of influences that reshaped both society and the role of women within it (Rulon 230).

French colonization sought to assimilate Algerian culture into the framework of French ideals. This process of cultural assimilation carried profound implications for women, as their traditional roles and values were often reshaped to align with the expectations imposed by the colonizers. Algerian women found themselves at the crossroads of preserving their heritage and adapting to new cultural norms (Duranti, 110).

As the colonizers introduced Western concepts of gender roles, Algerian women encountered an upheaval of their traditional identities. The newfound ideals of femininity and family dynamics brought about by colonial influence conflicted with their established cultural values. This struggle led women to navigate the fine line between upholding their cultural heritage and adhering to the newly introduced norms (Smith 111).

Education emerged as a key vehicle for cultural assimilation. Algerian women's access to formal education became an arena where these assimilative efforts were palpable. The curriculum often emphasized colonial ideals, potentially eroding local customs and traditions. This educational shift not only influenced women's understanding of their own culture but also impacted their ability to transmit these cultural values to the next generation (Heggoy 195).

The imposition of the French language further deepened the process of cultural assimilation. Algerian women, as the primary communicators of culture, found themselves at the forefront of this linguistic shift. The language barrier created

challenges in preserving traditional stories, practices, and cultural nuances, further eroding their ability to maintain the integrity of their heritage (Heggoy 195).

However, amid these challenges, Algerian women displayed remarkable resilience. Many resisted the wave of cultural assimilation, finding innovative ways to adapt while safeguarding their cultural legacy. They became cultural custodians, ensuring that their customs and traditions survived despite the onslaught of foreign influences (Lazarus 83).

The impact of cultural assimilation on women's plight cannot be understated. It redefined the parameters of their identity, their roles, and their ability to preserve their heritage. Yet, it is the stories of these women's resilience that persist as a testament to their determination to navigate this complex terrain. The post-colonial narrative echoes with their struggles and triumphs, reminding us that the thread of cultural heritage, woven with the struggles of women, remains an integral part of Algeria's rich tapestry

3. The Situation of Women During Colonization and After Independence

During French colonization of Algeria, Algerian women experienced significant challenges and discrimination. The French colonial rule had a profound mark on the lives of Algerian women, transforming their social, cultural, and legal status. Under French colonial rule, Algerian society was organized according to a patriarchal system influenced by the inherited local traditions and customs.

However, the policies introduced by the French administration further exacerbated the existing gender inequalities and imposed French cultural standards. A significant consequence of French colonization on Algerian women revolved around the erosion

of their legal rights and societal standing. Traditional Islamic law was replaced by the French legal system, resulting in the side-lining and disempowerment of Algerian women. This shift in legal codes favoured men, particularly in matters such as marriage, divorce, and inheritance, considerably limiting women's rights and autonomy. Moreover, access to education faced severe limitations for Algerian women during the French rule. Educational priorities were directed towards French settlers, neglecting the education of Algerians, especially girls. Consequently, this contributed to low literacy rates among Algerian women, depriving them of opportunities for personal and intellectual advancement (Cooper 144).

Moreover, the impact of French colonization extended to the disruption of established Algerian social frameworks, resulting in the attenuation of women's roles within society. Previously integral to their communities, Algerian women experienced a decline in their influence as the French administration endorsed male leadership and introduced French cultural standards. Despite enduring a multitude of injustices and limitations throughout the period of French colonization, Algerian women were far from passive recipients of these hardships (Ahnouch 16). Instead, many women proactively engaged in resistance against the French rule, even though such actions often led to severe repercussions. Their involvement in the quest for independence assumed diverse forms, encompassing support for nationalist movements, orchestrating protests, and in some instances, even taking arms as part of their dedication to the cause (Hiddleston 90).

In general, the condition of Algerian women throughout the era of French colonization was characterized by bias, constrained rights, and being pushed to the fringes. The policies and actions of the French administration eroded their legal

standing, constrained their educational opportunities, and destabilized established societal frameworks. Nevertheless, Algerian women showcased remarkable strength and defiance. They actively participated in the wider fight for independence, setting the stage for subsequent endeavours aimed at achieving gender parity in Algeria (Cooper 149).

Following the attainment of independence from French colonial dominance in 1962, Algerian women held optimistic expectations for increased gender equity and societal advancement. The recently formed Algerian government, under the leadership of the National Liberation Front (FLN), diligently undertook substantial initiatives to tackle gender inequalities and advance the cause of women's rights (Heggoy 87).

The Algerian Constitution of 1962 ensured parity between men and women, acknowledging women as complete citizens entitled to equal rights and duties. Subsequent legal measures aimed to elevate women's legal standing and safeguard their entitlements in diverse realms like marriage, divorce, and inheritance. Notably, the Family Code of 1984 ushered in reforms designed to amplify women's rights within family affairs, extending more autonomy and legal safeguards to them. In the post-independence era, the government prioritized women's education. This resulted in a significant surge in female literacy rates, and dedicated efforts were channelled into facilitating girls' access to primary and secondary education. Furthermore, there was remarkable growth in women's enrolment in higher education institutions, enabling them to pursue professional vocations and contribute to the nation's advancement (Ahnouch 25).

Algerian women demonstrated active engagement across a spectrum of sectors, encompassing politics, education, healthcare, and the labour force. They emerged as

prominent figures within public life, assuming roles in government, parliament, and public administration. Women's associations and civil society entities played a pivotal role in championing women's rights and combating gender-related biases. Yet, despite these encouraging advancements, hurdles and inequalities endured. Deep-seated traditional patriarchal standards, firmly entrenched in cultural and societal traditions, continued to present challenges to the comprehensive achievement of gender parity (Hiddleston 100).

Certain interpretations of Islam with conservative leanings at times restricted women's independence and prospects, especially in more traditional parts of the country. In post-independence Algeria, concerns persisted about violence against women, encompassing domestic and gender-based violence. Measures to counter such violence have been implemented through legal revisions and the establishment of support mechanisms for victims. Nevertheless, there remains a need to heighten awareness, reinforce legal safeguards, and provide comprehensive assistance to survivors. The economic and societal changes that accompanied the nation's independence also reverberated within Algerian women's lives. While some experienced enhanced access to employment prospects and economic empowerment, others, especially those from marginalized communities, encountered obstacles in securing decent jobs, economic resources, and social services (Orlando 94).

Throughout time, Algerian advocates for women's rights and groups have persisted in their pursuit of additional advancements and parity. They've championed alterations in legislation, rallied against prejudiced behaviours, and fostered women's empowerment and prominence in leadership roles. These endeavours have played a role in propelling forward strides in women's rights, fostering heightened gender

consciousness, and acknowledging women's indispensable contributions to Algerian society (Hiddleston 99).

In broad terms, the condition of Algerian women post-independence has witnessed substantial enhancements, characterized by progress in legal entitlements, education, engagement in politics, and the empowerment of women. Yet, despite these positive changes, enduring obstacles persist, emphasizing the requirement for continuous strides in order to attain complete gender parity and guarantee the welfare and rights of every Algerian woman.

Through her compelling literary creations, Djébar delves into the lives of Algerian women, spanning from the colonial era to the post-independence era. Her narratives navigate the intricate layers of Algerian women's experiences, illuminating their challenges, fortitude, and impactful roles in shaping the nation's history. In her work *So Vast the Prison*, Djébar meticulously explores a range of themes intertwined with Algerian society during the French colonial epoch. With her artful storytelling, Djébar offers a window into the world of Algerian women, effectively underscoring their adversities, resilience, and determination to defy and overcome hardships (Accad 17).

Djébar's book eloquently illustrates the repressive characteristics of French colonial rule and the ensuing consequences on Algerian women. Within the novel, the characters grapple with different manifestations of bias and dominance, which strip them of their autonomy and relegate their voices to the periphery. Djébar masterfully underscores the methods through which these women combat these stifling forces, presenting instances of rebellion and endurance. Through their stories, she accentuates the significance of defiance in reclaiming individual identities and confronting the hierarchies of colonial authority (Hiddleston 04).

In *So Vast the Prison*, Djébar intricately navigates the intricate dance between patriarchal customs and the dominion of colonization. The narrative delves into the societal expectations hoisted upon Algerian women, encompassing assigned gender roles and circumscribed freedoms. Within the confines of these expectations, Djébar's characters chart their course, defying traditional gender norms and forging paths toward independence and self-determination. By casting light upon the juncture of patriarchy and colonial influence, the novel scrutinizes oppressive frameworks that stymie women's agency (Lazarus 85).

Language, a central player in the narrative, mirrors the imprint of linguistic imperialism during the colonial era. Djébar examines the reverberations of the imposition of the French language by colonial authorities, investigating its repercussions on Algerian women's educational access and their capacity to articulate their thoughts. This exploration unveils the loss of native language and cultural heritage, unearthing a struggle for identity and an endeavour to find channels of self-expression. Furthermore, Djébar accentuates the potency of language as a tool for resistance and the reclamation of cultural identity (Ben Salem 3).

In *So Vast the Prison*, Djébar seamlessly intertwines personal anecdotes with shared memory and historical context. By means of her characters' introspection and recollections, she constructs a tapestry that blends individual remembrances with collective history, effectively countering the dominant historical narratives. The novel underscores the necessity of acknowledging perspectives often marginalized, and reclaiming histories that have been muted. Djébar's narrative disrupts the authoritative colonial account, placing the experiences of Algerian women at its forefront (Drissi 4).

A central motif in the book is the significance of unity and camaraderie among Algerian women. Djébar vividly illustrates the bonds forged amongst women as they navigate a shared journey of suffering and defiance. Through gestures of support and empowerment, women collectively challenge the barriers enforced by colonial rule and patriarchal structures. This recurring theme magnifies the potency derived from a shared fight and the transformative potency of solidarity (Rulon 226).

In essence, Djébar's *So Vast the Prison* delves deeply into the tangible experiences of Algerian women throughout the era of French colonialism. The novel navigates various themes encompassing oppression and resilience, traditional gender roles, language and selfhood, the interplay of memory and history, as well as the bonds of solidarity and sisterhood. Djébar's storytelling casts illumination on the intricate facets of Algerian women's realities, creating a space for their muted voices and contributing to a more comprehensive comprehension of Algerian society. Through her exploration of these themes, Djébar confronts prevailing narratives, cultivates empathy, and prompts introspection regarding the impact of women's experiences in shaping both history and identity (Orlando 88).

In her work "Fantasia: An Algerian Cavalcade" (originally titled "Fantasia: l'OuedOumDrou" in French), Djébar delves into the accounts of Algerian women amidst the striving for independence. The book harmoniously weaves individual anecdotes, historical occurrences, and evocative poetic imagery to portray the pivotal role played by women in the battle against colonial dominance. Within the pages of the book, Djébar reveres the noteworthy contributions of women to the national liberation movement, underscoring their vibrant involvement, unwavering resolve, and the sacrifices they made in their pursuit of independence (Taoua 15).

Djebar's literary creations also delve into the era following independence, scrutinizing the intricate intricacies and obstacles that Algerian women encountered after liberation. In "Algerian White" (originally titled "Blanche-Neige, ou les 7 nains et demi" in French), she artfully depicts the challenges faced by women in a society wrestling with the balance between established customs and contemporary influences. The narrative delves into how cultural and political shifts impacted the lives of Algerian women, alongside their endeavours to carve out their individual identities while manoeuvring within the confines of societal anticipations (Lachman 4).

Throughout her literary endeavours, Djebar effectively amplifies the hushed narratives and lived encounters of Algerian women. She squarely challenges the prevailing accounts and provides a platform for women to reclaim their personal histories, self-determination, and unique perspectives. Djebar's literary works resound with the unwavering resolve, strength, and intricate nuances characterizing Algerian women, vividly portraying their instrumental roles in the pursuit of independence and their ongoing quest to shape their individual trajectories within a swiftly evolving society. By meticulously exploring women's experiences both in the era of colonization and in the aftermath of independence, Djebar masterfully underscores the intricate connections between gender, identity, and political emancipation. Her written expressions stand as a resounding testament to the significance of recognizing and amplifying women's voices within the narratives of history and societal metamorphosis. As Ahnouch observes:

Djebar thus bestows cultural identity upon words and language, inviting her readers whether they speak the language of Berbers, Arabs or French, to come together all Mediterranean, in an intercultural linguistic space, made up of voices, rather than languages (Ahnouch 796).

This quote highlights the transformative power of Djébar's writing, emphasizing her ability to transcend linguistic boundaries and create a rich intercultural tapestry. By giving cultural identity to words and language, Djébar invites readers from diverse linguistic backgrounds, including Berbers, Arabs, and French speakers, to converge in a shared Mediterranean space defined not by distinct languages but by the collective resonance of voices. In doing so, she fosters a sense of unity and connection, reminding us that storytelling and shared experiences can bridge linguistic gaps, enabling a deeper understanding of cultural diversity and shared humanity (Ahnouch 797).

In conclusion, Djébar's literary exploration of the lives of Algerian women during and after the French colonial era serves as a profound testament to their resilience, agency, and the complexity of their experiences. Through her works such as *"So Vast the Prison," "Fantasia: An Algerian Cavalcade,"* and *"Algerian White,"* Djébar meticulously uncovers the various layers of oppression, resistance, and transformation that Algerian women have encountered throughout history. Her narratives challenge the dominant historical narratives by focusing on the voices and perspectives of women who were frequently overlooked and silenced. She emphasizes the enduring bonds of solidarity among women, their significant contributions to the struggle for independence, and their ongoing pursuit of identity and self-determination in a changing society.

Moreover, Djébar's exploration of language as a tool for both oppression and empowerment underscores the significance of cultural identity and self-expression. Her literary creations provide readers with a unique intercultural space, inviting them to engage with the voices and experiences of Algerian women across linguistic boundaries (Cooper 175).

Ultimately, Djébar's literary legacy stands as a testament to the importance of recognizing and amplifying women's voices within the broader narratives of history, societal transformation, and the ongoing pursuit of gender equality. Her works continue to inspire reflection, empathy, and a deeper understanding of the intricate intersections of gender, identity, and political emancipation in Algeria and beyond.

4. Empowering Silenced Voices: Women and Postcolonial Theory

Postcolonial feminism theory is an approach that focuses on the intersections of gender, race, class, colonialism and how they shape women's experiences in the post-colonial era. It focuses on the social, political and cultural effects of colonization. The aim of this theory is to critique the ideologies and power structures that emerged as a result of colonialism (Castle 630).

One of the major feminists of post-colonial feminism is Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak who is very famous in postcolonial studies. She focuses on the effect of colonialism on culture and society. Her subaltern studies explore the way subaltern groups are marginalized and the way individuals are oppressed and silenced.

The theory of Spivak is about the people who are silenced and oppressed in the post-colonial societies. Spivak argues that the subaltern is a free individual that has the right to speak for himself. Also, in this theory Spivak focuses on the importance of the subaltern voice who struggles to speak and have his own voice (Benedict 208).

Spivak has focused on the effacement of subaltern women and the idea of "can subaltern women speak? Also, the novel can be read in the lens of Spivak's ideas on

the subaltern, which focuses on the importance of giving a voice to the silenced women(Maji 02).

One of the main concepts of Spivak is to give women a voice after the end of colonialism. According to her, most societies marginalize women and silence them. Thus, she insists on the importance of giving women a voice. She sheds light on diversity of women experiences in postcolonial societies (Spivak 71).

Spivak's interest is on the voice of the subaltern; her analysis is about the struggle and politics of representations in the postcolonial societies. So, Spivak's goal is to give these voiceless humans the right to speak and respect that they deserve in the society.

She encourages this oppressed category to speak and narrate their stories, experiences and realities. Spivak also inspire people to listen by discussing the power of voice and listening to the other (Mohammed Imran1).

Spivak used the term of "subaltern" to refer to the lower class and the voiceless groups. She focused on that the most subaltern groups in all over the world are women, because they are seen as weak and less ability in the society. Moreover, Spivak suggests that the subaltern is mostly the people from the third world; because they are oppressed and different and separated by gender faiths and other fields. Spivak refers to women and people who could not raise their voices as subalterns because they are kept silent and have no voice, and even when they try to speak, their voices are not heard (WaqarIAndleeb and Javed 1029).

Post colonial feminist theory is about the oppressed women in once colonized countries. The post colonial theorists discussed the sufferance of these women; from

“double colonization, identity, colonialism and patriarchy”. In this distress, women are not fighting only the colonizer but also her oppressor brother (Tyagi 02).

The theory of postcolonial feminist shows that women are colonized in the same way men are. However, men tried to mute women role and put them behind the walls on the name of culture and traditions. Spivak believed that white women achieved some rights that could not be possibly achieved by their sisters from the third world (Naoual 03).

Post colonialism and feminism serve as powerful tools of discussion to change the situation of the marginalized women in the whole world, and the females who are voiceless and oppressed within various societies. In light of this; postcolonial feminism has the power to work as a strong reason for reshaping women's roles which leads to many types of decolonization. It aims to highlight the uniqueness and individuality of women. Thus, Postcolonial feminism seeks to answer an important question which is why women are treated as second class citizens, oppressed and enjoyed fewer opportunities than males (Chambers 10).

The concept of "postcolonial feminism" becomes more known, just like the concept of «Third World, » These terms reflects the unity and diversity of women and their voices across postcolonial societies. It also focuses on the differences between women and the how each one of them is affected by many factors like class, religion, gender, and colonialism. As a result, there isn't a single postcolonial feminist agenda that all women agree upon, because feminism differentiate just like the women it represents. What connects these feminist movements is the awareness of inequalities and a desire to changing them. Women have special and different interests, and this is

mirrored in the different forms of feminism advocated by postcolonial women writers, critics, and activists in social, literary, political, and cultural contexts(Sandra 29).

To sum up, Algeria was colonized by France for 130 years. After many years of violence and oppression Algeria made huge efforts to rebuild the country after independence; to decolonize education, language and culture in order to build a new society. This period is called Post colonialism which refers to the period that follows the end of colonial rule and decolonization. The postcolonial studies always had a special corner for the female Arab and the Algerian ‘others. Particularly the challenges encountered by Algerian women and the confrontations with patriarchal actions targeted at them. So, they are seen as victims of the ugly society (Murdoch 27).

5. Unveiling Women’s oppression in Postcolonial Realities

Postcolonial feminism is a theoretical framework that combines insights from postcolonial theory and feminist theory to understand the experiences of women in postcolonial societies. It emerged as a response to the limitations of mainstream feminism, which often failed to address the specific concerns and complexities faced by women in colonized or formerly colonized countries. Postcolonial feminism acknowledges that the experiences of women are shaped by intersecting systems of power, including gender, race, class, nationality, and colonialism. It recognizes that the oppression and marginalization faced by women cannot be understood solely through the lens of gender but must also consider the historical and social contexts of colonialism, imperialism, and globalization (Hamam 10).

Postcolonial feminism emphasizes the intersectionality of gender with other axes of oppression, such as race, class, and nationality. It recognizes that women's experiences

are shaped by multiple and interconnected forms of discrimination and privilege. It critiques ethnocentrism and challenges the Universalist assumptions of Western feminism. It acknowledges the importance of cultural diversity and seeks to understand women's experiences within their specific cultural, social, and historical contexts. Postcolonial feminism highlights the agency and resistance of women within postcolonial societies. It recognizes that women are not passive victims but actively engage in challenging and transforming oppressive systems. It also seeks to challenge and dismantle the legacies of colonialism. It critiques the power dynamics, inequalities, and hierarchies that persist in postcolonial societies and calls for social, political, and economic decolonization (Hamam 15).

Furthermore, Postcolonial feminism emphasizes the importance of amplifying the voices and experiences of marginalized and subaltern women. It recognizes the power dynamics that marginalize certain groups within postcolonial societies and aims to centre their perspectives in feminist discourse. Postcolonial feminism advocates for global solidarity among women across different cultures and nations. It recognizes the interconnectedness of women's struggles worldwide and calls for collective action to challenge systems of oppression (D'Souza 18).

Overall, postcolonial feminism provides a critical framework to examine the complexities of gender, power, and colonial legacies. It challenges Western-centric perspectives, calls for inclusivity, and seeks to create a more inclusive and equitable feminist movement that addresses the unique experiences of women in postcolonial contexts (Hamam 11).

Oppression is a central concern within postcolonial feminism theory. Postcolonial feminism recognizes that women in postcolonial societies face intersecting systems of

oppression rooted in gender, race, class, nationality, and colonialism. It analyses how these intersecting power structures perpetuate various forms of oppression and marginalization (Merriman 20).

In postcolonial feminism theory, gendered oppression is examined within the context of postcolonial societies, where the experiences of women are shaped by intersecting systems of power. Postcolonial feminism recognizes that women in these societies face multiple forms of oppression, including those related to gender, race, class, nationality, and colonialism. It acknowledges how patriarchal norms and practices perpetuate gender inequalities, limiting women's autonomy, access to resources, and opportunities (Chambers 7).

Postcolonial feminism sheds light on the intricate relationship between women's oppression and the aftermath of colonial rule. This perspective critically examines how colonization not only subjugated colonized nations but also disproportionately affected women within those societies. The oppression of women within the postcolonial context is deeply intertwined with a range of factors, including cultural norms, economic disparities, and power dynamics (Lazarus 66).

During colonialism, women often faced dual forms of oppression—both from their own societies' patriarchal structures and the added layers of control imposed by the colonizers. While seeking to dismantle the colonial yoke, postcolonial feminists underscore how the legacy of these dual oppressions continues to reverberate in the lives of women in the post-independence era. Economic inequalities further exacerbate women's oppression in the postcolonial world. The colonial legacy often left postcolonial nations grappling with uneven development, contributing to disparities in education, employment opportunities, and access to resources. These inequalities

disproportionately affect women, as they are frequently relegated to the margins of the economy, often in low-paying and precarious jobs. Cultural norms and traditional gender roles persist even after colonial rule ends. These norms can act as a barrier to women's full participation in society, limiting their access to education, political representation, and decision-making processes. Postcolonial feminism highlights the need to challenge these norms and advocate for gender equality in order to create a more just and inclusive society (Mohanty 122).

Furthermore, the intersectionality of postcolonial feminism recognizes that women's experiences are shaped by factors such as race, class, and ethnicity. Women from marginalized backgrounds may face compounded forms of oppression, as colonial legacies and societal norms interact in complex ways to create layered systems of discrimination (Smith 51).

Postcolonial feminists advocate for a comprehensive understanding of women's struggles within the postcolonial context. They call for policies and initiatives that address both the historical legacy of colonization and the ongoing challenges faced by women. By amplifying the voices and experiences of marginalized women, postcolonial feminism aims to reshape the discourse around gender and power dynamics, ultimately striving for a more equitable and just society (Chambers 5).

Feminist theorists aim to analyse how women are portrayed in various social and cultural contexts. These portrayals often reinforce male dominance in both societal and personal relationships, perpetuating unjust power dynamics. Feminists particularly address the unfair power imbalances where women are defined by men. Their roles are constrained within patriarchal structures, leading to their oppression and relegation to the outskirts of societal matters. Consequently, feminists are devoted to establishing

gender equality, with a focus on reshaping social frameworks and dismantling stereotypes associated with femininity and motherhood (Hooks 14-15).

Nevertheless, it's important to note that women's challenges cannot be viewed through a single lens. Their struggles are influenced by numerous social and cultural factors, making their situations distinct and not directly comparable. Feminist theories developed in Western contexts often fail to comprehend the experiences of women in the third world. These women are not only subjected to male dominance but also affected by the impacts of colonialism. Interestingly, while nationalist ideologies uphold patriarchal norms, confining women within traditional roles, Western feminist perspectives, due to their inaccurate portrayal of third world women, inadvertently contribute to the further marginalization of colonized women (Nandagiri 8). As Spivak writes,

Between patriarchy and imperialism, subject-constitution and object-formation, the figure of the woman disappears, not into a pristine nothingness, but a violent shuttling which is the displaced figuration of the "third-world woman" caught between tradition and modernization (qtd. In Gandhi 89).

Spivak's exploration of the subaltern, marginalized groups often excluded from mainstream discourse is central to understanding the oppression of women. Her essay "Can the Subaltern Speak?" raises crucial questions about the representation of the most marginalized voices and whether these voices can genuinely be heard within dominant systems of power. This concept has direct relevance to the experiences of oppressed women, as they often find themselves on the peripheries of societal structures. Spivak's work draws attention to the challenges of accurately representing women's experiences within patriarchal and postcolonial contexts, where cultural biases and power dynamics distort their voices (Hamam 11).

Furthermore, Spivak's emphasis on self-representation aligns with the feminist pursuit of empowering women to voice their experiences and challenges. Her insights highlight the agency of women and the importance of allowing them to speak for themselves rather than having their narratives interpreted solely by external parties. This resonates with feminist efforts to break free from the confines of oppressive patriarchal norms and challenge the dominant discourse (Spivak 69).

Additionally, Spivak's theoretical framework also engages with the colonial legacy that continues to shape the lives of women in postcolonial societies. She recognizes that women are not only oppressed by gendered structures but are also affected by the broader impacts of colonization. This perspective emphasizes the interconnectedness of various forms of oppression and underscores the need for intersectional analyses of women's experiences (Mohanty 15).

In summary, Spivak's theories and concepts provide a valuable lens through which to examine the oppression of women. Her focus on representation, agency, subaltern voices, and the postcolonial context all contribute to a more nuanced understanding of the multifaceted challenges that women face. By addressing the complexities of women's oppression within intersecting power structures, Spivak's work enriches feminist discourse and aids in the ongoing struggle for gender equality and justice.

Chapter Two: Voicing the Perils of Oppression in *So Vast the Prison*

French colonialism left Algeria with deep scars; therefore, Djébar's works shed light on the struggles of the country's people, particularly its women. Djébar plainly paints

the journey of setting female voices and bodies free from patriarchy oppression by focusing on the struggle of the subaltern visibility through the lens of Algerian women. The terms of 'prison,' 'body,' and 'voice' are somehow connected and represents the power of language and the quest for emancipation. Djébar blends her personal experience through fictional characters and storytelling in order to convey the message of women liberation. She presents feminist themes so as to show the female desire or empowerment in a North African society; she used feminism as a tool to share women stories and break them free from society chains. Furthermore, Djébar uses language as a weapon, using diverse multiple techniques and voices to stand against stereotypes and cut off colonial and patriarchal narratives. Writing also becomes an act of resistance because it reveals the hidden truths and makes readers understand the difficulties of Algerian women's lives, their presence, and their contributions to history.

1. The Struggle of the Subaltern Visibility

Djébar's novel is about liberating women voice and female's body. In the first part the writer introduces the Algerian culture and she wrote about "the hammam" which is the only place Algerian women can be free from men and patriarchy domination. Djébar had the voice and the courage to discuss what is unspeakable or considered to be a secret or haram in our society; in the place of those who are silenced, Djébar revealed females' reality in Algeria. She focused on the experiences of females and described their desires.

After more than a century of French occupation -- which recently came to an end, bit by bit, through carnage -- a territory of language survives between two people, between two memories; the French language, body and voice, settles itself inside me like a prideful prison, while the maternal language, in its full orality, in rags, resists and attacks, between two breathless sighs ... I am, at

once, a besieged stranger and native, she who goes to her death out of bravado, illusory effervescence of the spoken and written word(Drissi 3).

The term 'prison', 'body' and 'voice' are somehow connected to each other. Through language and writing the body and voice of the Algerian females can no longer be in prison; words can liberate women, bodies that are hidden underneath the veil. Also she focuses here on the power of language in liberating women bodies. The bodies of Algerian women were regarded as invisible and unseen for the world. However, Djebbar focused on the importance of words to give these females their rights. She wrote to give power and a hand of help for these women to speak and have a voice against any form of oppression (Faulkner 79).

In addition, Djebbar writes:

This word, l'e'dou, I first heard in this way, in the damp of the vestibule from which women arrived almost naked and left enveloped head to toe. The word enemy, uttered in that most warmth, entered me, strange missile, like an arrow of silence piercing the depths of my then too tender heart. In truth the simple term, bitter in its Arab flesh, bored endlessly into the depths of my soul, and thus into the source of my writing.... Suddenly one language, one tongue, struck the other inside me. The voice of a woman who could have been my maternal aunt came to shake the tree of my hidden hope. My silent quest for light and shade was thrown off balance, as if I had been exiled from the nurturing shore, orphaned (*So Vast the Prison* 14-15).

According to Djebbar the word "le'dou" was only used to refer to the French colonizer but the Algerian women were using it to describe their husbands for not letting them take their time in the "Hamman" which is a metaphor for women oppression by men. Furthermore, depending on her words; the prison was not only for

guilty people, it was in the Hammam, in the walls and the invisibility of women bodies (Drissi 04).

Asma declares:

So there I was, a spectator, and I thought I was perhaps ready to set out. For the first time also, probably for the first time in my life, I felt I was 'visible,' not the way I felt during my adolescence, nor after I was twenty, when I would smile at some compliment, some flattery from a man, either a friend or a stranger, thinking then, 'It's my semblance, my ghost you are seeing, not myself, not really me ... I myself am in disguise, I wear a veil, you cannot see me' (50).

When we write about voice and body, we shed light on the character and personality of Asma which reflects self-affirmation sensation. This feeling led her to have a relationship with a younger man even though she was already married. This dangerous love story made her feel her body and express her voice and emotions. The character experiences the feeling of visibility. She felt she is seen after many years of hiding her true self. She describes her old self as a ghost, someone who neither seen nor heard with no body or voice. But after many years of torture she feels she is seen, heard and respected. Women from the third world struggle to discover their true identity after independence because colonialism and men patriarchy affected their characters and even their souls! Women felt lost in their own bodies and unseen from the inside; no one truly knew how their feelings from inside are and society saw them only as an image rather than persons (Flores 255).

The scene of the dance is also full of body liberation moments, when she said:

I must have danced more than an hour without stopping ... The rest of the audience was enveloped in a half-light. There were one or two other dancers, and also a couple

who joined me in monopolizing the dance floor lit by a dim red light, one of the four musicians would make a conspiratorial sign to me and set off again with a new beat that he seemed able to guess in advance would be the rhythm of my body (59).

The act of dancing is seen as a form of expression for the subaltern because it allows them to be visible. Djébar shows that the marginalized presence of the subaltern persists at the edges, lacking complete illumination or recognition. The control of the subaltern on the dance floor refer to the domination of the subaltern for a period of time which Spivak refers to as "strategic essentialism, «where the marginalized individuals are in search for identity in relation to culture.

The third part "a silent desire" is a journey about the women voices of today and yesterday; how women were thirsty to scream their voices and free their bodies. Djébar were their voice and broke their silence with her writing which was a step forward. She described how women were prisoners by patriarchy and society structures. The last part "blood of writing" is about women simulation with patriarch, tradition, history and gender roles.

Djébar's main purpose in the novel is women emancipation. She used her talent as a weapon for freedom and as well as to describe the plight of Algerian women in colonial Algeria. Even though there were many difficulties, Djébar defined women's role historically, politically and culturally (Orlando 84).

In the first pages she discussed the importance of having a voice;the writer described the struggle of losing her voice and said, "For a long time, I believed that writing was dying, dying slowly" (11). Thus, only with her pen, the writer Djébar had the power to share the stories of Algerian women and describe their reality.

Djebar exposed Algerian women thoughts, bodies, and their presence in the world. She described the city of Algeria as a prison and a place where women are tied up and do not have the ability to speak out. However, Djebar express her anger by writing and used it as a tool for liberation (Morgan 610).

Between the one who shouts, sending her voice soaring over the confined area of the patio, and the one on the other hand who never speaks, who contents herself with sighing or let herself be interrupted until her voice is permanently stifled [. . . The only really guilty woman, the only one you could despise with impunity, the one you treated with manifest contempt, was "the women who raises her voice(203).

Here Djebar narrates the impact of patriarchy and social norms on Algerian female voice and body. She encourages these women to have a voice and speak up even if there is no one to listen to them. She wanted them to overthrow their silence and rebellion against the injustice and speak for themselves because these muted subjects grow with the struggle of voice. Thus, they are voiceless: "to speak out, to get a voice, to be a text of her own (Kasic 2).

2. So Vast the Power of Language

Djebar, the Algerian female writer, stands among the group of Maghrebian authors who employ French as their medium to express themselves through the language of the oppressors. Her intricate rapport with language is compounded by gender dynamics and the conventional perception that women, especially in traditional settings, bear the responsibility of language. Having been brought up within the Arab-Berber cultural heritage while receiving education in French, she embodies a complex identity. She

has lived through the era of colonial dominance and the struggle for liberation, and her existence in exile is characterized by a yearning for home that she channels through her writing. This amalgamation of experiences compels Djébar to confront a crucial quandary: her utilization of the language of the “Other”. To unravel these intricate experiences and grapple with her “linguistic exile,” Djébar finds recourse in autobiography. This genre allows her to navigate her individual history while engaging with the very language that was once associated with the oppression (Ben Salem 20).

I write to clear my secret path. I write in the language of the French pirates who, in the Captive's tale, stripped Zoraïd of her diamond-studded gown, yes, I am becoming more and more like a renegade in the so-called foreign language (177).

Djébar suggests that Writing in French is not a personal choice but it is more like a result of being trapped within the strong influence of France, symbolized by the hexagon and its military power. Djébar talks about the difficult relationship between language, identity, and colonization. When she writes in the language of the French, it's like she is describing herself as a rebel, someone who is moving away from her own culture and embracing the language of the colonizer. For Djébar writing is a way to express herself and push back against this foreign influence; She is trying to find her own path in a world where foreign ideas have a lot of control. When she mentions taking away Zoraïd's fancy gown, it's a metaphor to show how her culture and history are slipping away because of the colonizers. The author shows how Djébar is struggling to stay true to herself while using the language the colonizer in order to discover who she really is and resist their power over her (Flores 250).

Djebar's concerns regarding language extend beyond personal apprehensions, encompassing a broader national dilemma and aligning her works with the postcolonial discourse. Globally, postcolonial language politics often revolve around the confrontation between a colonial language and local oral languages. In Algeria, this is evident in the colonial legacy where elites emerged from the educational system using the imported language, French, side-lining their native languages, Arabic or Berber. Berber, in particular, faces marginalization, lacking the status and power enjoyed by Arabic. While Arabic is the national language, Berber's exclusion stems from its limited use in key domains like education and literacy. Negative perceptions are rooted in bias, especially from speakers of major languages like French (Ben Salem 21).

Djebar strategically unites Arabic and Berber, linking them with the private female realm, contrasting them against the public "common" adversary, French. She emphasizes that unless marginalized languages are embraced and defended by their speakers, external efforts won't secure their status and roles effectively.

While the content and narrative strategies diverge between each autobiographical novel, a noticeable aspect emerges: the presence of the collective "we" lurking beneath the individual "I" that narrates. This distinct characteristic renders the exploration of personal identity a more intricate journey for Djebar—an exploration that intertwines her quest for identity as a writer and Algerian woman with the collective quest for identity felt by countless oppressed and voiceless women within her nation (Ben Salem 21).

The use of the autobiography is considered as a rebellious act. It involves an implicit agreement to expose one's inner self, a particularly risky undertaking when the narrator or author is a woman. Especially within a Muslim society, the collective "we"

envelops and dominates the individual "I." Self-expression remains an unfamiliar practice. Djébar acknowledges the challenge of asserting oneself within a Muslim society, hinting at the inability of women to speak for them due to conforming to societal norms. She suggests that each woman resigns herself to collective expectations, entrusting her fate to a memory foreign to her culture. Djébar takes the risk of unveiling her true self, including her voice and body, which could lead to her estrangement from her conservative community. This deviation is perilous, as it invites various forms of disaster (Hiddleston92).

So Vast the Prison is a reflective narrative in which the storyteller looks back on her own life, sharing her personal experiences and journey. However, her narrative encompasses more than just her individual events; she also delves into the lives of other women. Through the lens of the first-person narrator, the story paints a broader portrait of a woman who is emblematic of the realities within a traditional society (Lazarus 87).

Djébar perfectly intertwines an intricate tapestry of elements, encompassing allusions to her personal history, the historical context of Algeria, an unfolding film project, and contemporary occurrences within Algeria in her novel, *So Vast the Prison*. The common thread uniting these diverse components is the theme of the condition of Algerian women. Djébar characterizes her Algerian quartet as a dual autobiography, wherein her own narrative intermingles with a collective chorus of other women's experiences, as well as the story of her nation (Lazarus 87).

Through her writing, she adopts a method to assess Algerian society and probe its essence using the perspectives and voices of women, who have historically been rendered unseen. Djébar challenges her culture's suppression of women by

deconstructing the established norms of autobiography, history, and fiction, thus forging hybrid narrative constructs and strategically placing them side by side.

Djebar structures her autobiographical novel with concise chapters that prompt an examination of the purpose of writing. She characterizes writing in the initial chapter as a gradual demise, likening it to a process of petrifying or congealing something that once possessed life. In this opening section, she recounts her inner struggle against the inclination to remain "self-effacing" and sceptical of language. In her concluding chapter, she revisits the question of how she can engage in writing today, particularly when surrounded by the presence of numerous deceased witnesses—individuals who fell victim to her country's violence. She then underscores the urgency of writing as a means to give voice to those who have been silenced. She emphasizes that although we might perceive the departed as absent, they transform into witnesses who seek to express themselves through us (*So Vast* 357).

In addition, Djebar provides a counterpoint to her initial perspective of fiction as distinct from reality through her framing of *So Vast the Prison*. Her last chapter, serves as an urgent call to remember and bear witness to the unspeakable atrocities committed in Algeria. Djebar's technique encourages the reader to embrace the role of an activist stance rather than passive observer. She uses art as effective tool for intervention and societal change. *So Vast the Prison* stands as a retort to an authoritative Algerian regime that has enforced a monolithic approach to language (modern literary Arabic) and ideology, particularly through the application of regressive Islamic laws in present-day political and social contexts. As response to that, Djebar sought to form an Algerian identity rooted in the multilingual voices of Berber and dialectical Arabic

spoken by Algerian women from both her familial background and the collective history of the nation (Lazarus 88).

In Part I, the term "enemy," which the woman in the Moorish bath called her husband, become the catalyst for the narrator's contemplation on gender dynamics. Across a narrative spanning around a hundred pages, the narrator revisits her experience of unrequited love for a man, leading to a violent confrontation with her spouse, ultimately resulting in their separation and divorce. Within this narrative, the husband's transformation into an adversary marks the culmination of a role attributed to him through generations of urban memory. He becomes a symbol of "the enemy" (Djebar 109).

Djebar expertly navigates between personal and collective history, maintaining intentional ambiguity in her autobiographical sequence. This ambiguity blurs the line between reality and fiction, aiming to highlight the urgent societal crisis of violence against women in contemporary Algeria. Djebar's own encounters with Algeria's oppressive social policies targeting women and intellectuals are profoundly personal. She personally faced domestic violence, witnessed friends' losses during the 1992-2002 civil war, and experienced years of exile in France and the United States (Lazarus 88).

Part one delves into the protagonist's personal history, while Part two shifts to the discovery of an ancient inscription in Dougga, Tunisia, disrupting the novel's structure. The italicized conclusion of Part II links this account to the theme of women's exclusion and resistance, featuring Berber Princess Tin Hinan as a significant figure. She defies history's norms and transmits the ancient alphabet, safeguarding Algeria's oldest language (Lazarus 88). Djebar counters the government's monolingual policy

with an alternative narrative rooted in multilingualism and women's contributions, presenting the Dougga inscription as both historical and mythical.

Her history had long been told like a dream wreathed in legends, a fleeting silhouette as evanescent as smoke, or a ghost, or a myth, an imaginary figure. She suddenly became solid thanks to archeological discoveries...in 1925 (*So Vast* 164).

In the extensive Part III, Djébar weaves a tapestry of narratives, alternating between references to family, friends, literary characters, and her film project. This section rejects linear chronology in favour of a multi-layered approach, linking stories of women across time and circumstances, all tied together by themes of confinement and resistance. The chapter titles mirror a musical structure and cleverly use the term "arable" to denote fertility and potential for cultivation (Lazarus 89).

Acknowledging the power of language, Djébar employs her arsenal of words to confront misogyny and regressive ideologies in her country. Drawing from new historicism's ideas, she crafts a new history of Algeria that re-establishes women's roles and contributions. In doing so, she challenges the long-promoted authoritarian view of Algerian history and fosters socio-political transformation (Cooper 152).

Keeping a careful distance from Algerian feminist movements, Djébar chooses to express her activism through various forms of artistic creation. In her novel, *So Vast the Prison*, she takes on multiple roles—historian, autobiographical writer, novelist, and filmmaker—to address women's representation, experiences, and societal involvement (Lazarus 91).

In the final chapter, Djébar assumes the role of a poet, evoking human emotions to potentially drive action. Her works, published in French and translated into various languages, have faced limited readership in Algeria due to language policies. While in

exile, she addresses social injustice, aiming to ignite change among international readers in the Diaspora. *So Vast the Prison* becomes a Maghrebian novel that delves into Algeria's identity crisis, highlighting the exclusion of women. Similar to Sophocles' Antigone, who chose exile for resistance, Djébar rejects hollow political discourse. Instead, she communicates through her blend of personal testimony and history, inviting readers to respond (Lazarus 92).

3. Djébar's Portrayal of Women's Imprisonment

Djébar's *So Vast the Prison* "deals with the different lives of the oppressed women of French colonialism and the conservative norms and traditions of Algeria. Djébar mix her personal experience with the other female's characters in order to show her desire to live free as a modern woman in a traditional Islamic society. The main question in Djébar's novel is "is there is a hope to escape from oppression of patriarchy and society?" (Bakay 120).

The majority of women lives were shaped by the oppressive and conservative patriarchy as Djébar describe it as the "prison". She uses the prison as a metaphor to portray women oppression; the prison is a symbol that represents confinement, restrictions and denial of freedom (Bakay 120). Djébar portrays women as being confined by the structure of culture and traditions so; these norms limit their choices and self-expression. She also describes how women are living as if they are tied up by the miserable conditions and shows the difficulties and struggles, they face every day being women. As we all know it is very difficult for women to ask for their rights and express themselves, especially after the end of colonialism because it is beyond their control (Suyoufie 231).

In the world of stories, we often come across tales that show us a reflection of society and all the different parts of being human. Djébar's amazing book, *So Vast the Prison* proves how powerful storytelling can be. It talks about feeling like an outsider and the difficult lives of women who are treated unfairly in a society where men have more power. Djébar goes deep into things like cultural identity and how women are treated in less developed parts of the world, and how they're connected to Algerian society. She takes us on an exciting journey with lots of interesting characters, showing us how hard it can be to find who you really are and how tough it is when people don't see you for who you are in a busy society (Kershaw 51).

Often during my childhood, I saw the terrifying grandmother abandoned to her rages and her magical dances. Then, afterward, when she would reemerge from them, she was as much in cool control of herself as she was of her entire household" (*So Vast* 311).

Throughout the novel; dance is seen as an important tool to be recognized both for women and for the writer. Djébar shows that dancing plays a huge role in her life as a child. These dances are full of intense emotions and unfamiliar moves, which serve as means for the grandmother to escape from the confinement or prison that she is obliged to go back to it. These dances might be similar to zar ceremonies, which are women's dances rooted in a mix of popular Islam and traditional African religion(Kershaw 64).

Djébar tries in her writing to bring back things that were lost or forbidden. She creates stories from repeated Berber origins, from Turkish, Tuareg, and European predecessors. Moreover, she keeps trying to blend different Algerian time periods, cultures, histories and languages, and to create new methods for people to express themselves. This shows her strong belief in having many perspectives and including everyone, as she shapes an Algeria that hasn't been acknowledged and fights against its

history being erased. Djébar highlights the challenge of talking about Algerian women's resistance. As Hiddleston describe it: "*Vasteest la prison*" both looks into and breaks down the idea of women in Algeria resisting in their own unique way (Murdoch 24).

Djébar paints a vivid a picture of the Algerian females and give the readers a closure look into the sufferance they endure. These females were obliged to deal with the fact that they have to be seen as the "other" and are not fully accepted to be humans with full rights. Thus; they were oppressed by colonialism and the society norms with patriarchy. Through Djébar's characters we have the ability to feel of this category and connect with their existence. Because these forms of oppression still exist and women are in prison until now.

I was keenly, consciously, happily aware of myself ... as being truly 'visible' for this almost adolescent young man with the wounded gaze. Visible for him alone? My visibility for him made me visible to myself (So Vast 64).

Djébar reflects on a moment of self-awareness and empowerment. She describes the attention that she received from this man as she call him "the Beloved" this attraction makes her feel seen and valued. The exchange of looks with this young man gives her the feeling of freedom and independent mixed with individualism (Hiddleston 94).

However, we note that Djébar wrote in a complex way when she communicates. Even her writing is done in complicated structures in order to challenge the norms. Also, she tried to build respect and understanding between different groupe of people and cultures (Murdoch 25).

Moreover, Djébar focuses on the impact of French colonization and oppression on Algerian women. She shed light on the complex difference of gender, culture, and politics. But she focuses on the oppression of patriarchal structures and traditional themes of forced marriages; limited access to education and women struggles to achieve their dreams. Through her work, Djébar explores the condition of women and the true case of their liberation which is almost impossible in a strict society. Djébar spoke for the oppressed female's voices that were silenced and she gave them a voice to stand up against all forms of oppression (Geeseey 54).

Djébar experience was not like the other females because she was an important figure in Maghreb literature where she experiences a unique life where women of Islam were oppressed. She wrote many stories that tackle the issue of independence and she fought against the oppression of women in the name of tradition (Duranti 107).

Even though the novel was written in the French language; Djébar was full of patriotism, she talked honestly about the suffering of the Algerian women and her positions and experiences in an Algerian society. Freedom is something powerful that people desire to achieve it. One of the features of post modernism is to liberate the self from oppression and be powerful. Djébar search for the voices of the silenced women from the dominant male and expose all the forms of oppression. Thus, she criticized the various forms of oppression that oppress the intellectuals to have a voice (Rulon 234).

Furthermore, the concept of the "subaltern" refers to the marginalized and oppressed individuals of the society. As Spivak quotes: "The two sentences go a long way to legitimize each other. One never encounters the testimony of the women's voice consciousness. Such a testimony would not be ideology-transcendent or "fully"

subjective, of course, but it would constitute the ingredients for producing a counter-sentence. As one goes down the grotesquely mistranscribed names of these women, the sacrificed widows, in the police reports included in the records of the East India Company, one cannot put together a “voice.” The most one can sense is the immense heterogeneity breaking through even such a skeletal and ignorant account (castes, for example, are regularly described as tribes). Faced with the dialectically interlocking sentences that are constructible as “White men are saving brown women from brown men” and “The women wanted to die,” the metropolitan feminist migrant (removed from the actual theatre of decolonization) asks the question of simple semiosis— what does this signify? —and begins to plot a history”(Gafaiti 816).

The term “subaltern” originally comes from Antonio Gramsci’s Marxist theory. Spivak’s theory says that people have different identities and that oppression operate through complex interactions of race, gender, sexuality and class. As Gayatri mentions “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” (Spivak 287).

On the other hand, *So Vast the Prison* also discusses the oppressed women voices. Like Spivak, Djebbar is interested in the oppressed and marginalized groups. She describes the post-colonial society of Algeria and points out on violence and oppression against women. One of the main discussed themes in *So Vast the Prison* is the idea of confinement and imprisonment; physically and psychologically. All of the women stories in the novel are prisoners and confined by the expectations and “can the subaltern speak?” where Spivak affirms that “the subaltern woman will be as mute as ever” (Spivak142).

She gave importance to the role and participation of Algerian women and transmitting them into stories. Thus, she gave these women the feeling of power and voice.

Djebar tried to awaken the silences voices by telling their stories to show that the French colonial was not the only oppressor of women. Her purpose was to give the muted female a voice and release them from their misery after many years of violence and patriarchal oppression and uses the stories to give them a voice and visibility (Khannous 41).

Subalternity refers to the condition of being oppressed or marginalized in a strict society and in her novel Djebar highlights the subaltern status of women in the Algerian society. Moreover, the novel addresses many different issues like: gender inequality, patriarchy, and the effect of colonialism (Croisy87).

The novel also shows how women can empower themselves by forming supportive relationships with one another. Through their solidarity the female characters is “so vast he prison” are able to resist the oppressive forces that seeks to silence them. The writer explores the idea of giving women a voice by highlighting the oppressive societal norms that silence them. Through the struggle of the females and their experiences we realize the importance of breaking free from patriarchal structures (Murdoch 19).

So Vast the Prison explores the experiences of women living in post-colonial Algeria. It highlights the impact of colonialism on Algerian society. Thus, the writer portrays the struggle of female characters. Spivak's theory of subalternity is applied to postcolonial literature. Because it discusses the marginalized people who are silenced and excluded from dominant discourses (Abderrazag4).

Through her images of female characters, Djébar criticize the structures that have been perpetuated by colonialism and highlights the ways in which women are excluded from dominant discourses. Djébar criticizes women silence and shed light on the sufferance of the females who were denied the right to be mentioned in history as fighters. Through Djébar's characters the struggle of women and the subaltern group were heard and the significance of diversity and complexity of women's experiences in post-colonial societies was limitations placed on them by their culture and society. Djébar shows how women are oppressed and unable to escape from the cultural norms (Bernhardt 1996).

The female characters in Djébar's novel demonstrate resilience, potency and determination through their action. They share their stories and experiences because they found their strength in sharing their struggle. Despite the societal constraints the females found a way to express their desires and creativity. Additionally, Djébar focuses on the importance of storytelling as an act of resistance. She gave a voice to the experiences of the silenced women. The novel discusses the different experiences of women in postcolonial Algeria. The stories of the different women in the novel express how Algerian women are voiceless and oppressed by patriarchy and colonial legacies. She also focuses on how women are important in the struggle for social and political change.

4. Fighting Female Oppression

Djébar explores feminist themes and experiences of women in North African societies. In her novel, feminism is depicted as a weapon and a strong tool for resistance. Djébar narrates many scenes of women oppression happening at different time in history of Algeria. She describes the notion of feminine experience and retells

the history of women in Algeria. Djébar focused on the feminine unity, individuality, mobility and freedom of choice linking between women in order to strengthen their voice of resistance. But here we shed light on the difference between Islamic and western point of view and borrow from both; when we read *So Vast the Prison*, we discover the social context of Muslim Algeria and the division between men and women that the society command and confirm these ideas by saying:

[I come] from a world and a culture profoundly marked by traditional sexual segregation (women inside, separated from the men who are outside, the masculine public sphere opposed to the intimate, family sphere, the monotonous speech of men's spaces different from feminine polyphony murmurs and whispers or, on the contrary, outcries in female society (Hiddleston 92).

Djébar tells her personal life and gave the opportunity to other women to share her feelings as a cultured Arab woman who lives in a traditional society. She describes the women of today and the women of yesterday. Also, she narrates stories about her as Algerian women as well as stories from her family members (Donadey 28).

So Vast the Prison consists of a series of different narratives and moments that confirm the use of feminism as a weapon in the novel by Djébar to break free from society norms. In the first part, Djébar narrates a short love story between a married woman who later on separates from her husband because of her younger lover. The female character “Isma” is already married but falls in love with a man called “l’aime”. Through the story of “Isma” we discover the culture of the Algerian families such as the hammam and remarriage. Moreover, Djébar’s novel is written to show the hidden truth of the Algerian women. In the Hammam women can meet each other and feel free to express their feelings because it is only for women (Hiddleston 93).

The scene of the divorce and the separation from her husband shows the reality of the Algerian families and traditions. The family of the girl did not think of their daughter's life but rather focused on people's opinion and society norms. Divorce in Algerian families means "shame" for the females. They take the whole responsibilities while men on the other hand do not do the same because after all they are "men" and they cannot be a "shame" in an Algerian family (Orlando 91).

Djebar highly shared her feelings and describes her emotions especially in the scene of the siesta. She narrates her experience and considers her awakening from that siesta as the beginning of new life. The scene is full of new dreams, light and the sensation of self and agency. We feel that the atmosphere is giving freedom and revival feeling for both "the writer and the reader". As Djebar wrote: "everything seems lit by some pure iridescence" (Hiddleston 9). She gave importance to the sounds, physical sensation and visual details rather than social interaction. Through feeling the words and imagining the scene we have this insight of childish sensation as if the writer wants to forget her consciousness and allow herself to feel her skin and have this feeling of autonomy. In addition, the scene of the dance is a symbol of breaking free from society norms, men, family and expectations. She just wanted to let her body control her thoughts through the rhythm of the music, and forgets she was surrounded by people then said, "At the same time; I felt I was alone, suddenly bursting out of a long night, under these red spotlights, finally reaching shore"(60).

So, this scene represents liberation of women physically and mentally and the dance scene affirms Djebar's ideas on womanhood and that females should speak their minds and express their feelings either physically or mentally.

Another scene that confirms Djébar rebellion and feminist thoughts on the novel is when she described the man she loves by saying "the precise line drawn by his eyebrows, the helix of his ear, his slight Adam's apple, his somewhat projecting upper lip, and how reflected glints of green or blue-green on his jacket, his shirt it mattered little what played across his face" (26). We note that these words mean that she made a reverse to the women and men role. Most of the time, we find that men are the ones who flirt with women and have the courage to make the first move. Here Djébar made the opposite and described the features of the man she admires in the novel the way camera concentrates on the heroines in the French films (Hiddleston100).

In the other section, Djébar tells her experience as a film maker and speaks instead of all the oppressed women and shows her rebellion. Another scene that we have to discuss is the comparison of the camera as the small gap of the female veil that shows the light. In this scene Djébar is discovering herself and her process of resistance and liberation by telling the other females' stories (Hiddleston 101).

Djébar confirms her feminist role by narrating the story of the grandmother Fatima and her experience as a powerful woman who married at a young age; we discover Fatima's strength to stand against French soldiers in order to protect her children (Hiddleston 101).

Besides, another key feminist point of view in the novel is the critique of oppressive gender norms and societal expectations placed upon women. Djébar examines the limitations imposed on women by traditional and conservative ideologies, which restrict their freedom, suppress their voices, and confine them to predefined roles. The novel challenges these norms by portraying women who strive to break free from these constraints and seek liberation.

Djebar also emphasizes the importance of education and intellectual empowerment for women. Through her characters, such as Nadia and Aicha, she highlights the transformative potential of education in empowering women to question the existing social order, challenge oppressive structures, and assert their identities she quotes; "The fight for women's rights is inseparable from the fight against all forms of oppression" (Hiddleston 97).

She portrays education as a means of liberation for women. Nadia, a university professor, embodies the transformative power of education. Through her intellectual pursuits and teaching, Nadia seeks to empower her students and challenge societal norms that restrict women's potential. Djebar explores the intersections of gender and politics. She examines how women's experiences are shaped by the broader political context and how their participation in political struggles can be both empowering and challenging. The novel delves into themes of resistance, activism, and the ways in which women navigate their roles as political actors within a patriarchal society (Taoua 13).

As a result, Djebar's feminist attitude in the novel serves as a weapon to share common stories of the oppressed females in Algeria.

She shows the violence done against these women. But, in my opinion; Djebar relationship with feminism is very complicated, because she is affected by French culture and French feminists because the Arab and Algerian Islamic culture rejects these ideas. Even though Many Arab and Algerian feminists are working within their respective societies to challenge these misconceptions and promote a more inclusive understanding of gender equality. They highlight that feminism is not a rejection of

culture or religion but rather a movement seeking justice, equality, and empowerment for all individuals, regardless of gender.

5. Writing as Resistance for the Voiceless

The writings of Djébar are very interesting which makes her readers obliged to read and listen. The French colonialism last for 130 years followed by 8 years of war left many scars on Algeria as a country and on its people who are still having difficulties in their political identity.

For Djébar, the oppression done to Algerian individuals and especially for women is not from the past but the struggle is a continued process that is still happening today. Thus, Djébar states and describes the reasons of her writings by saying: "I only know one rule...: to write only out of necessity... What sustains [me] is the will to say or the fierce desire to not forget..." (Lazarus 83).

Djébar's writings show the conditions of Algerian women and their fight for social change. She wrote about the Algerian females' silence and muted history and challenged the ideology of patriarchy. She wrote about her grandmother Fatima, her mother Bahia and about her other aunts and she narrates how they wanted change in a strict society. She also wrote about her father who fought for his girls' education: "[We need] to send our daughters to school, all of our daughters, in these villages and in the old cities as well, where traditions benumb them" (Lazarus 84).

The grandmother of Djébar is called Fatima. She was given by her father at the age of 14 to an old rich man who has two wives already. Even though she was still a child, she succeeded to handle a big house. When she becomes widowed at the age of 17, she learned how to buy and sell property. She became completely free when she got

divorced from her third husband. Fatima was the first Arab women to contact a French doctor during Typhus epidemic and by doing so she gets the chance to save her daughter's life (Lazarus 85).

On the other hand, Djébar's mother Bahia was controlled by tradition but sometimes she was independent for example when she travelled alone to France during the Algerian war to visit her son who was in prison. Djébar narrates the personal stories of the women in her family indicates the social policies of the Algerian society (Geesey 156).

For Djébar, writing is a form of resistance, when religion, country power or oppression forces people to do things they don't agree to; writing is the answer. At first Djébar believed that writing can bring change to Algeria, but at the end she was disappointed. She believed in the power of language to provide justice and socio-political change. Through writing writer can defend the silenced and voiceless individuals who lost their rights. Thus, writing means resistance (Lazarus 91). She focused on individual experiences and their emotions she quotes:

With its smell, perhaps.
With its vomit or its phlegm, easily.
With the fear that is its halo.
Writing, of course, even a novel...
About flight.
About shame.

Djébar had only her words as a weapon. She attacks the ideology done against women and asks for social change. She participates by her words to socio political change and also to change the point of view of Algerian women. Djébar wrote her novel as historian, writer, novelist, filmmaker and a poet; to change the Algerian sight of women. *So Vast the Prison* was first published in the French language but translated

later on to many languages. Djébar mastered French because of the encouragement of her father.

For Djébar writing means tolerance and aims to reveal the hidden truth about how women are living in Algeria. The readers travel through Djébar's words and imaginary. Furthermore, Djébar uses a Berber song to show how important languages and music are. Thus; she uses her writing to promote tolerance and unveil the concealed realities of women's lives in Algeria, taking readers on a journey through her vivid language (Ahnouch 795).

Djébar depicts writing as “dying, slowly dying “; she portrays her combat against her impulse to be “self-effacing” in the first chapter, but in the last chapter she questions how she can write again today. She sheds light on the importance of writing to expose the realities and to speak for those who are silenced (Lazarus 92). She vividly depicted the struggles, constraints, and silencing experienced by women in a patriarchal society. By portraying the often-harsh reality faced by Algerian women, Djébar aimed to disrupt established power structures and provoke readers to question and challenge oppressive norms.

The writing style of Djébar played an important role in using her words as a weapon. She used narrative techniques and linguistic innovation to convey her message effectively. For example, she used many voices and perspectives in her novel to emphasize on the diversity and complexity of women's lives (Lazarus 84).

So Vast the Prison is a story of a woman and a pen as Djébar describes her reason to write by saying:

I write to reveal a secret path for myself, and ... it is in a language described as 'foreign' that I become more and more disloyal. Having lost my maternal heritage, and having gained what? If not freedom, then the simple mobility of the stripped bare.

For Djébar writing means tolerance and aims to reveal the hidden truth about how women are living in Algeria. The readers travel through Djébar's words and imaginary. She tells us that writing is like a personal adventure where they discover things about themselves. Hence, this quote shows how writing can help someone explore who they are, especially when it comes to languages and identity. It's like a journey of self-discovery through their words (Ahnouch 795).

Djébar's novel focuses on the experiences of women living under colonial rule in Algeria. Through her writing, she gives a voice to these women who have been historically marginalized and silenced. By centering their stories and perspectives, Djébar challenges the dominant narrative and provides a counter-narrative to colonial history (Ahnouch 780).

Djébar's characters defy the stereotypical representations of Algerian women perpetuated by colonial discourse. She portrays complex, multidimensional female characters that struggle against societal expectations and find their own agency. By doing so, Djébar subverts the colonial narrative and presents a more nuanced and authentic depiction of Algerian women (Drissi 04).

Djébar's writing often explores the themes of history and memory, particularly in relation to Algeria's struggle for independence. In *So Vast the Prison*, she delves into the historical context of colonial Algeria and sheds light on the often-overlooked contributions of women in the anti-colonial movement. By reclaiming and highlighting

these stories, Djébar challenges the erasure of Algerian women's roles in history and emphasizes their agency and resistance.

Djébar's narrative technique involves weaving together multiple voices and perspectives, including first-person accounts, letters, and diary entries. This polyphonic approach not only reflects the diversity of Algerian society but also disrupts the dominant colonial narrative. By offering a multiplicity of voices and perspectives, Djébar undermines the authority of a single narrative and invites readers to question and challenge dominant power structures.

[And] what would happen if this strange writing came to life, taking on the voice of the present, spelling itself aloud, singing out? ... At this moment, it is the very meaning of this alphabet - and its music, its vibrant orality - that is being revived, no longer to be silenced (149-50).

Djébar searches for the roots of language and writing with deep emotions. She doesn't just tell us the story of writing; she also makes it alive by envisioning its sound and the emotions it carries. She shows how writing and language can be so powerful. Also, Djébar emphasizes on the importance of writing and about the idea that words on paper could have a voice; she shows how writing is a tool to connect people from all over the world with each other (Ahnouch 796).

To bring it all together, Djébar used writing as a form of resistance in *So Vast the Prison* by giving voice to marginalized women, challenging colonial stereotypes, reclaiming history, and employing a narrative technique that disrupts the dominant narrative. Her novel serves as a powerful means of resistance against the oppressive forces of colonialism and patriarchy, advocating for the recognition and empowerment of Algerian women.

Conclusion

Postcolonial Literature has contributed a great deal for intellectual battle of defending cultural principles and identity in postcolonial communities. In the urge to prove their cultural and societal stand; Postcolonial authors have taken the burden to claim their identity throughout expressing the ideologies before, in and after colonialism. In this regard, women condition in postcolonial community is to be undertaken seriously. Women have contributed a great deal to the independence of their countries. Even though, their role was not admitted widely because of the inferior representation of women within colonial and postcolonial societies. Even after liberation of the country, perspectives towards female have not experienced liberation. The question of gender has been a main concern of many authors.

The present research has explored female voice in Djébar's *So Vast the Prison*. It has employed the postcolonial feminist theory of "Subalternity" brought by Gayatri Spivak to examine different contexts and structures that contribute to the dehumanization and degradation of the female subject in Algeria. Thus, analysing Djébar's novel in the light of this theory has brought insight into diverse life experiences of Algerian women in the midst of overlapping patriarchal oppressions.

The socio-historical context in which this literary work has produced reveals that gender roles within the Algerian society are predominantly prone to cultural, social and political dimensions. Indeed, the sweeping patriarchal ideology which governs the different aspects of social relations offers a fertile ground for gender discrimination. By focusing mainly on the plight of Isma, Tin Tinan and Nana as subalterns, this dissertation has unveiled the truth concerning the position of women under the combined oppressions of hegemonic masculinity and gender stereotypes.

The oppression imposed by colonization on Algeria has brought into the scene of literature a generation of postcolonial feminist writers with a desire to portray through their fictions the influence of cultural and colonial hegemony on women. This generation thus seem to believe in the African saying that “the history of the hunt will always glorify the hunter until the lions produce their own histories” (LaGarrett 1);

i.e., they seek to rewrite the history from a colonized and oppressed stands with a more focus on women, for they are in most times considered as the oppressed of the oppressed.

So Vast the Prison masterfully captures the multifaceted plight of Algerian women amidst the tumultuous backdrop of the struggle for independence from French colonial rule. Through intricate storytelling, Djébar unveils the intricate layers of oppression and resilience that these women embody. The novel portrays their struggles against societal norms, patriarchy, and the burden of tradition. Djébar's characters have navigated the shifting landscape of their nation's history, contending with the complexities of identity and their roles as both agents of change and preservers of culture. The book's narrative eloquently has brought forth the voices of these women, showcasing their indomitable spirit as they challenge preconceived notions and emerge as catalysts for transformation. With vivid prose, Djébar paints a vivid picture of the resilience and determination of Algerian women, etching their stories into the annals of history and lending them the recognition they rightfully deserve.

In addition, the novelist has highlighted several important themes. It has delved into the experiences of Algerian women during and after the struggle for independence from French colonial rule. The novel sheds light on the challenges these women face in a society that is undergoing significant transformation. It also has examined the

complexities of identity, the impact of colonialism, and the role of women in shaping the course of history. The narrative has weaved together personal stories with larger political and social issues, creating a rich tapestry of perspectives.

Djebar pays meticulous attention to the nuanced experiences and struggles of Algerian women. She highlights their challenges, aspirations, and contributions within the context of a society undergoing radical transformation during the fight for independence. Djebar's focus extends to the intersectionality of identity, as she weaves together themes of gender, colonialism, culture, and nationhood. Through her prose, she gives voice to these women, shedding light on their agency, resilience, and the complex negotiations they make between tradition and modernity .by intricately detailing their stories, Djebar emphasizes the essential role that Algerian women play in shaping the destiny of their nation.

Within predominantly patriarchal societies such as the Algerian society, power operates on the principle of gender as culturally constructed rather than on the basis of biology. In plain words, men's attitudes, behaviours, utterances, gestures and dress codes are associated with notions of power whereas women's expected expressions, behaviours and attitudes are associated with notions of weakness and docility. Indeed, this dichotomy is considered as the root of gender discrimination within a society. For instance, boys are preferred than girls. *So Vast the Prison* depicts the plight of the Algerian women as victims of male hegemony. Captivatingly, it draws attention to the way in which women are made accomplice in the prejudice and marginalization of the other sex.

The issues and themes discussed in this dissertation has denoted that Djebar has engaged in this feminist movement. In that she gives voice to those voiceless women

and takes them out from the darkness of marginalization into the light of her fiction. The author has woven her writing with the stories of double-oppressed women who seem to resist Spivak's subaltern theory.

Through storytelling, the novel portrays the power of narratives to empower individuals and communities. The act of sharing personal stories becomes a means of resistance and a way to shape the collective memory. The novel underscores the importance of telling the stories of those who have been marginalized or silenced. It emphasizes the need to give voice to the experiences of Algerian women, whose contributions were often overshadowed.

All in all, *So Vast the Prison* narrates a journey that starts with patriarchal domination and gendered violence however ends as a moving account of courage and meaningful resistance and sheds light on their efforts to assert their agency and reclaim their identity. The novel encourages readers to recognize the voices, experiences, and contributions of Algerian women throughout their nation's transformation, and it serves as a testament to the enduring spirit of individuals who strive for freedom and self-expression.

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الملخص

هذه الأطروحة تناقش اصوات النساء اللواتي تم اسكاتهن من طرف اعراف المجتمع والسلطة الأبوية في رواية آسيا جبار "واسع السجن". هذه الرواية تسلط الضوء على محنة المرأة من خلال إظهار كيفية معاملتهن في الجزائر، وكيف تم التعامل معهن أثناء الاستعمار الفرنسي وبعد الاستقلال. يستخدم البحث منظور النسوية ما بعد الاستعمار، ونظرية جاياتريسيفاك حول نساء العالم الثالث المهمشات في المجتمع. وبالتالي، يأخذنا الفصل الأول إلى ماضي الجزائر أثناء الاستعمار، حيث يكشف عن كيفية قيود المرأة في مجتمع مهيمن عليه سواء بالحكم الاستعماري أو الأنماط التقليدية. أما الفصل الثاني، فهو تحليل للرواية من منظور نسوي يستعرض العديد من قصص النساء الجزائريات المضطهدات. وبالتالي، أدى البحث إلى استنتاج واضح؛ حيث تصور الرواية رحلة النساء الجزائريات لاستعادة هوياتهن ووكالتهن، وأهمية مكانتهن في المجتمع.