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**Liberating Algerian and African Minds and Literatures in
Selected Works by Mouloud Feraoun, Ngugi Wa Thiong'O,
Frantz Fanon and Kateb Yacine**

*A THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF LETTERS AND ENGLISH IN CANDIDACY FOR
THE DEGREE OF "DOCTORAT ES- SCIENCE" IN ALGERIAN AND AFRICAN STUDIES*

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ABSTRACT

This thesis discusses the continuous effects of colonization on Algerian and African minds and literatures and the effort to criticize and overcome them in the novels of Mouloud Feraoun and Ngugi Wa Thiong'O as well as in the essays of Frantz Fanon. Although most African countries gained their independence in the early 1960's, the questions of "coloni(z)ability" and "mind colonization" are still debated in many Algerian and African works of fiction and essays. Indeed, the writers and intellectuals of previously colonized countries of the continent are frequently accused of being unable to free themselves from the biases and prejudices of colonialist discourse and achieve intellectual emancipation and literary independence. Colonial education and cultural imperialism enslaved minds and "hybridized" literature. Worse, even, as a result of their subjugation, many colonized individuals and groups have come to believe that their cultures are inferior to the colonizers'. The colonized attempts to identify with the colonizers have resulted in serious psychological problems, as Ngugi Wa Thiong'O, and Frantz Fanon famously explained: alienation, fragmentation, displacement, hybridity, ambivalence, dislocation, and identity crises. These psychological problems will be investigated in the contexts of Algeria (colonized by France) and Kenya (colonized by Britain). The thesis will focus on selected works by novelists Mouloud Feraoun (Algeria) and Ngugi WaThiong'o (Kenya) and by the theoretician of colonialism, Frantz Fanon (Algerianist and Africanist). Frantz Fanon's work is particularly relevant to the thesis because he identified precisely the two main tools the colonialists used to subjugate the colonized: schools, which he called "magnets"; and force, which he called the "cannon". He argues that colonial oppression resulted in either "mindless bodies" or "bodiless minds". The ultimate goal of this research thesis is to offer some suggestions for liberating Algerian and African minds from inside after about fifty years of decolonization from outside. I will argue that even though Feraoun, Ngugi Wa Thiong'O, and Frantz Fanon have made significant inroads in curbing the nefarious effects of colonialist discourse, there is still a lot to be done to fully liberate and emancipate the Algerian and African minds: (1) Algerians and Africans still face major challenges in their pursuit of intellectual and cultural independence and sovereignty, (2) Feraoun's writings are sometimes ambivalent towards colonialism, and (3) Ngugi Wa Thiong'O and Fanon are too tightly tied to Marxism, which some scholars argue is an "imported" ideology. What is needed for Algerians and Africans to fully become independent is nothing short of a paradigm shift towards Algerian-centric and afro-centric modes of thinking. In the end, the thesis finds that even though some Algerian writers made significant inroads in curbing the nefarious effects of colonialist discourse; they fell short of freeing themselves from such discourse; only Kateb Yacine was able to seriously, openly and fully subvert it.

KEY WORDS: Decolonization, Comparative, Literature, Literary, Theory and Criticism, Mouloud Feraoun, Frantz Fanon, Ngugi Wa Thiong'O

RÉSUMÉ

Cette thèse discute des effets continus de la colonisation sur les esprits et les littératures algériennes et africaines et de l'effort pour les critiquer et les surmonter dans les romans de Mouloud Feraoun et de Ngugi Wa Thiong'O ainsi que dans les essais de Frantz Fanon. Bien que la plupart des pays africains aient accédé à l'indépendance au début des années 1960, les questions de "colonisabilité" et de "colonisation mentale" sont encore débattues dans de nombreuses œuvres de fiction et essais algériens et africains. En effet, les écrivains et les intellectuels des pays du continent, autrefois colonisés, sont fréquemment accusés d'être incapables de se libérer des préjugés du discours colonialiste et de parvenir à l'indépendance et l'émancipation intellectuelle et littéraire. L'éducation coloniale et l'impérialisme culturel ont asservi les esprits et "hybridisé" la littérature. Pire encore, en raison de leur subjugation, de nombreux individus et groupes colonisés en sont venus à croire que leurs cultures sont inférieures à celles des colonisateurs. Les tentatives d'identification des colonisés avec les colonisateurs ont entraîné de graves problèmes psychologiques comme Ngugi Wa Thiong'O, et Frantz Fanon ont expliqué à merveille : aliénation, fragmentation, déplacement, hybridité, ambivalence, mimétisme, dislocation, et crises identitaires. Ces problèmes psychologiques seront étudiés dans les contextes de l'Algérie (colonisée par la France) et du Kenya (colonisée par la Grande-Bretagne). Je me concentrerai sur des œuvres choisies des romanciers Mouloud Feraoun (Algérie) et Ngugi Wa Thiong'O (Kenya) et du théoricien du colonialisme, Frantz Fanon (algérien et africain). Le travail de Fanon est particulièrement pertinent pour la thèse car il identifie précisément les deux principaux outils utilisés par les colonialistes pour subjuguer les colonisés : les écoles, qu'il appelle les "aimants" et la force, qu'il appelle "le canon". Le but ultime de cette recherche est d'offrir des suggestions pour libérer les esprits algériens et africains de l'intérieur après environ cinquante ans de décolonisation de l'extérieur. Je soutiendrai que bien que Feraoun, Ngugi Wa Thiong'O, et Frantz Fanon aient fait des percées significatives dans la lutte contre les effets néfastes du discours colonialiste, il reste encore beaucoup à faire pour libérer complètement les esprits algériens et africains: (1) les Algériens et les Africains font toujours face à des défis majeurs dans leur quête d'indépendance intellectuelle et culturelle et de souveraineté, (2) Les écrits de Feraoun sont parfois ambivalents envers le colonialisme, et (3) Ngugi Wa Thiong'O et Fanon sont trop étroitement liés au marxisme que certains intellectuels soutiennent est une idéologie importée. Ce qui est nécessaire pour que les Algériens et les Africains deviennent pleinement indépendants n'est rien de moins qu'un changement de paradigme vers des modes de pensée algéro-centriques et afro-centriques. A la fin, la recherche constate que bien que certains écrivains algériens aient fait des percées importantes pour freiner les effets néfastes du discours colonialiste ; ils n'ont pas réussi à se libérer de ce discours ; Seul Kateb Yacine a pu le renverser sérieusement, ouvertement, et complètement.

Mots Clés : Décolonisation, Afrique, Littérature comparée, Théorie et critique littéraires, Mouloud Feraoun, Frantz Fanon, Ngugi Wa Thiong'O

المُلخَص

يتناول هذا البحث، الآثار المستمرة للاستعمار، على العقل، والأدب، الجزائريين، والإفريقيين، والجهد المبذول لتجاوزها، في روايات مولود فرعون، ونغوي وثيانغو، وكذلك في مقالات فرانس فانون وأفكاره.

على الرغم من أن معظم الدول الإفريقية، حصلت على استقلالها في أوائل الستينات، إلا أن مسائل "الإستعمار"، والاستعمار الفكري، و"الغزو الثقافي"، مازالت موضع نقاش في العديد من الأعمال الأدبية، والمقالات الجزائرية، والأفريقية. وفي الواقع، كثيراً ما يُتهم كُتّاب ومثقفو بلدان القارة التي استعمرت سابقاً، بعدم القدرة على التحرر من متحيزات الخطاب الاستعماري، وتحقيق الاستقلال الفكري، والأدبي، وهذا تحت تأثير المدرسة الكولونيالية، التي أنتجت بعضاً من الأعمال الأدبية الهجينة، والمتناقضة وجدانياً، والأسوأ من ذلك، أنه نتيجة لفهر المستعمر، أصبح العديد من الأفراد والجماعات المستعمرة، يعتقدون أن ثقافتهم أدنى من ثقافة المُستعمر.

لقد أدت محاولات الاستعمار مع المُستعمرين، إلى مشاكل نفسية وفكرية مُعقدة، كما أوضح ذلك "نغوي وثيانغو" في كتاباتهم، وفرانس فانون في نظرياته، كالتهجير، والتهمين، والتناقض الوجداني، مع الاضطراب (التضارب) السلوكي في بعض الأحيان، والتفكك، وأزمات الهوية.

في خضم البحث، سيتم التحقيق في هذه المشاكل الهويةية والفكرية في الجزائر (المستعمرة الفرنسية)، وكينيا (المستعمرة البريطانية)، وسترکز الأطروحة على أعمال مُختارة، للروائي مولود فرعون (الجزائر)، ونغوي وثيانغو (كينيا)، وكذلك فرانس فانون (الجزائري-الإفريقي)، وتتميز أعمال هذا الأخير مثلاً، بعلاقة خاصة بأطروحة البحث، لأنه حدّد بدقة، الأدوات الرئيسية التي استخدمها المستعمر لإخضاع المُستعمر، وهي المدرسة التي أطلق عليها اسم (المغناطيس)، والقوة التي سماها (المدفع).

إنّ الهدف الرئيسي من هذه الأطروحة، هو تقديم بعض الاقتراحات، لتحرير العقول الجزائرية والإفريقية من الداخل (الفكر)، بعد حوالي سبّتين عاماً من إنهاء الاستعمار من الخارج (الأرض). كما تتمحور فرضية البحث، حول أنه على الرغم من أن "نغوي وثيانغو"، وفرانس فانون"، قد حققوا تقدماً كبيراً في الحد من الآثار السلبية للخطاب الاستعماري، إلا أنه لازال هناك الكثير مما ينبغي عمله لتحرير العقول الجزائرية والإفريقية بشكل تام وكُلّي (1) ومازال الجزائريون والإفريقيون لحد الساعة، يواجهون تحديات كبيرة في سعيهم للاستقلال، والسيادة الفكرية، والثقافية (2) أحياناً ما تكون كتابات "مولود فرعون"، متناقضة (متضاربة) وجدانياً مع الثقافة واللغة الفرنسية الوافدة مع الاستعمار (3)، ويرتبط كل من "نغوي وثيانغو"، و"فانون"، ارتباطاً وثيقاً بالماركسية، التي تعتبر هي الأخرى إيديولوجية مستوردة.

كتوصية ذات صلة، نؤكد أن المطلوب من الجزائريين والأفارقة من خلال الأطروحة، ولتحقيق الاستقلال الفكري بشكل كامل، ضرورة التحول من طرق التفكير الموروث عن الاستعمار، إلى تفكير محوّر عن الجزائر وإفريقيا، وسياقاتهما التاريخية والاجتماعية. ومُجمل القول، وجدنا من خلال الأطروحة، أن بعض الكُتّاب الجزائريين، تمكنوا من تحقيق نجاحات كبيرة، في كبح التأثيرات السالبة للخطاب الاستعماري، في حين أنهم لم يتحرروا كلياً من هذا الخطاب، ويكون كاتب ياسين، قد شكّل الاستثناء بنقده للخطاب الاستعماري، بشكل جاد وصريح وكُلّي.

الكلمات المفتاحية: التحرر، إفريقيا، العقل، الأدب، النظرية الأدبية والنقد، مولود فرعون، فرانس فانون، نغوي، وثيانغو

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ALN	Armée de Libération Nationale (National Liberation Army)
BOP	<i>Barrel of a Pen</i>
DOC	<i>Devil on the Cross</i>
FLN	Front de Libération Nationale (National Liberation Front)
KANU	Kenyan African National Union
KADU	Kenyan African Democratic Union
KAU	Kenyan African Union
KCA	Kikuyu Central Association
POB	<i>Petals of Blood</i>
RB	<i>River Between</i>

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General Introduction

“...*Decolonization does not mean freedom...*”
(Fanon, *Écrits sur l'aliénation et la liberté*, 222)

Much of the history of Africa was dominated by colonialism. Colonialism was more than an “enterprise of exploitation and dominance” in the economic and political spheres; it also controlled the culture and identity of Africans. It follows that the liberation of Africa from centuries of Western domination has far-reaching implications for literary thought and intellectual practice.

In fact, Algerian and African identities, to a great extent, were profoundly influenced by Western Euro-centric norms. In reaction to the Eurocentric ideology of colonialists, many African writers undertook to reassert a “genuine” African literature and a “liberated” African mind. Such efforts found expression in a body of writings, literary and other, by prominent Algerian and African writers and intellectuals such as Mouloud Feraoun, Ngugi Wa Thiong’O, Frantz Fanon and Kateb Yacine.

The works of these writers deserve careful examination and scrutiny. Indeed, neocolonialism still exerts an influence on Algerian and African literatures through its criteria of what form and what contents are appropriate and what counts as good literature. Even though these criteria be based on Western norms, they are widely used not only to write novels, plays, and poems but also to explore and analyze Algerian and African literatures. Far from being value-free, these norms perpetuate and reinforce the alienation of African minds. Indeed, from a Euro-centrist point of view, African literature must be written in Western languages and must abide by Western norms and standards because African languages are too “primitive” to portray complex experiences adequately.

In response to the hegemony of Western literary norms, some African writers made it their mission to develop and promote an alternative literary theory. Ngugi, for example, not only wrote in the Gikuyu language but also advocated a specifically African type of literary criticism and theory. He urged African writers to draw their inspiration from African realities and folk traditions and encouraged them to use African languages in the belief that “writing in African languages is a necessary step toward cultural identity and liberation from centuries of European subjugation” (Ngugi, *Decolonizing the Mind* 59).

Other scholars, intellectuals, and writers think that to use English or French to investigate African themes and experiences or to rely on European theories and critical criteria exclusively to analyze African literature are “blatant absurdities” (Glocke 250).

2. The Choice of the Topic

Algerian and African literatures have been hindered by at least two major problems. The First problem is that many Algerian and African authors wrote in French and/or in English and, therefore, may have unwittingly worked within the parameters of the colonialist worldviews and ideologies. The Second problem is that literary critics have tended to rely on European literary theories exclusively to analyze Algerian and African literatures.

Feraoun, Ngugi, Fanon and Kateb are icons of post-colonial literary and intellectual writings. They devoted their lives to the critique of colonialism and the portrayal of the realities of their countries. Their desire to describe Algerian and Kenyan realities in a manner that is not distorted by colonialist ideology is the motive behind their interest in literary theory and criticism.

The significance of this thesis lies in the ongoing relevance of the topic. Indeed, even though Feraoun, Ngugi, Fanon, and Kateb, and others wrote about Algeria and Kenya in the 1950s, their ideas are still relevant today and can be usefully generalized to almost all postcolonial situations.

This thesis is also intended as a tribute to Mouloud Feraoun, a pioneer of Algerian literature, Ngugi Wa Thiong’O, a great intellectual and militant, who dedicated his intellectual energy to the struggle for the liberation of his native land Kenya and the minds of its people, Frantz Fanon, an Algerian in mind and heart, and Kateb Yacine, a militant for the Algerian cause, revolutionary icon and one of the founding fathers of the Algerian novel in French expression.

3. Aims of the Study

The thesis aims at arguing that even though Feraoun and Ngugi made a significant impact in identifying and opposing colonialist discourse, they fell short of freeing themselves in a literary way from such discourse. Thus, Feraoun is to be recommended for drawing attention to Algerian traditions which are marginalized in colonialist literature. He is also to be praised for depicting the misery of Algerians during the French occupation, and also for relying on Algerian values to criticize colonialism. However, he was sometimes ambivalent towards the French presence in Algeria, especially in his early writings. Ngugi focused on the marginalized segments of Kenyan population. However, he overemphasized the question of language. Furthermore, despite his commitment to criticizing colonialism fully and urging the independence of his country, he worked from within the framework of Marxism and thus “unwittingly gave credence to colonialism because Marx, being a child of the Enlightenment, believed in the ideas of progress, reason, science, and the primacy of

European civilization, which underlie colonialism” (Aoudjit, *The Algerian Novel* 155). Likewise, though Fanon was fully involved in the Algerian cause and gradually showed more powerful criticism of racism and colonialism, he did not pay enough attention to the importance of culture and religion to understand and transcend colonialism. Kateb’s *Nedjma* could deconstruct literary and intellectually the colonialist frame of thoughts due to the writer’s revolutionary mind and his Algerian committed pen.

The goal of this thesis is manifold. It purports

- a. To highlight the influence of colonialism on African minds, culture, identity and literature through an analysis of the emergence, the historical context, and the evolution of Algerian and Kenyan literatures and criticism, and a discussion of the historical, ideological, cultural and literary legacies of the French and British colonizers in Algeria and Kenya.
- b. To stress the urgency of the quest for “liberating” African literature by some African intellectuals and writers, namely Mouloud Feraoun, Frantz Fanon, Ngugi Wa Thiong’O and Kateb Yacine, with emphasis on the role of language in “universalizing” African experiences within a “de-colonial sphere of universality” based on the African socio-historical context.
- c. To shed some light on the extent, limit, and evolution of the critique of colonialism undertaken by the writers mentioned above.
- d. To detect whether full liberation of Algerian and African Minds and Literatures is possible?

4. Research Questions

The research will proceed by way of the following questions:

- a. What is the influence of colonialism on African minds, culture, and identity? How can this influence be detected and analyzed in both Algeria and Kenya?
- b. To what extent is it urgent to stress the “quest” of Algerian and Kenyan literatures liberation and what is the role of language in this context?
- c. What are the extents, limits and evolutions of Feraoun, Fanon, Ngugi, and Kateb’s Critiques of colonialism?
- d. Is full liberation of Algerian and African literatures and minds possible?

5. Focus of Inquiry

In many European writings, Algerian and African literatures are seen in a derogatory manner as ethnographic and exotic. This tendency is misguided; every work of literature needs to be seen against the background of its particular time and society, and Algerian and African literatures are no exception: the critical standards themselves need to be “Algerianized” and “Africanized” to genuinely liberate and emancipate Algerian and African literatures.

Previous attempts to liberate African minds and literatures have had limited effect. Liberation cannot be premised on the prevailing methods and standards of literary criticism that are inherently Euro-centric. Instead, it must be constructed, according to Feraoun and Ngugi, in terms of African cultures and values. What is needed therefore is a paradigm shift from a European to an African mode of thinking to reach full and genuine emancipation.

6. A Brief Review of the Literature

In addition to the writings of Feraoun, Ngugi, Fanon, and Kateb, this draws on the following secondary sources:

1. Abdelkader Aoudjit's *Algerian Literature: a Reader's Guide and Anthology, Comprehensive text and reader of Algerian literature* offers a historical and critical overview of the literature from the early twentieth century to the present. It introduces Algerian authors and provides selections from a wide range of their writings, many of which are translated here for the first time. It begins with an overview chapter that charts the evolution of Algerian literature and puts it in its proper historical context, followed by five thematic chapters: decolonization and cultural affirmation, the War of Independence, modernization and its discontents, emigration, and history.

2. Abdellahi Bulhan's *the Psychology of Oppression. A biography of Frantz Fanon*, expands on Fanon's work on the psychology of the colonized. The author reviews and assesses Fanon's life and outlines a theory of psychology which will prove useful to theorists interested in Africans. He also relates the psychology of the colonized to other fields of scholarship including philosophy, anthropology, political science, history, sociology, and mythology.

3. Ziad Bentahar's article entitled "Frantz Fanon: Travelling Psycho analysis and Colonial Algeria" shows how Fanon's reflections found resonance among a wide variety of audiences.

4. Lewis R.Gordon's *What Fanon Said. A Philosophical Introduction to his Life and Thoughts* considers Fanon as a model of 'living a thought' against all forms of reason marked by both colonialism and racism. The author engages with everything in

Fanon, from dialectics to ethics, existentialism, humanism, philosophical anthropology, phenomenology, political theory, and psychiatry and psychoanalysis.

5. Interviews with scholars Abdelkader Aoudjit, Professor of Philosophy at the University of West Virginia, on Algerian literature and thoughts and Nigel Gibson, British Scholar, on African literature and thoughts.

The thesis also draws on many other articles by Algerian critics dealing with the issue from various perspectives and angles. Among these articles three precious and groundbreaking essays by Hocine Maoui. The first essay entitled: *Decolonizing African Literature: A Question of Languages? A Case Study of Ngugi Wa Thiong'O*. The second essay entitled: *The Colonial Cultural Legacy and the Postcolonial African Novel: A Plea for an Afrocentric Approach in the Contemporary African Educational System* and the third essay entitled: *Re-Narrating the Past: Historical Reconstruction and The Postcolonial African Novel: the case of Ngugi and Armah*. Professor Maoui analyzes, in his first essay, the question of decolonization in relation to language and education on Ngugi's *The River Between*, Matigari's *Fragments* and Armah's and *the Beautiful Ones are not yet Born*. He elegantly shows how these authors were able to subvert the very premises of colonial discourse.

7. Research Methodology

This thesis is based on a qualitative research which relies on the hypothetic-deductive method, supported by content analysis and two interviews with experts in the fields of Algerian and African literatures and cultures. It accordingly enlists the help of the Cultural Studies approach, a discipline that draws selectively on different fields such as psychology and sociology, theories such as Marxism and Postmodernism, and

methods such as textual analysis and interviews, to examine how power influences cultural practices.

The choice of the Cultural Studies approach is dictated by its explanatory potential as well as by its ability to provide practical recommendations; it is a politically committed discipline. Formal approaches to literature such as Russian Formalism and New Criticism, with their focus on the structure of texts independently of their social contexts, do not provide sufficient basis for theorizing about or studying the historical and political concerns associated with the study. As to Marxism, it tends to focus on economics exclusively.

8. Overview of the Thesis

The thesis consists of six chapters. Within Chapter one, precise and pertinent-to-the-thesis definitions of the most important terms and theoretical approaches are presented. Additionally, this chapter sketches short history of colonialism in Algeria and in Africa and analyze its ongoing influence on Algerian and Kenyan educational systems and Literatures.

Chapter two provides a detailed picture of Mouloud Feraoun's life and works. Additionally, it discusses Feraoun's ambivalence in his early writings towards his French education and, by extension, towards colonialism in general, and shows later how he became more radical towards colonialism in the end of his life.

Chapter three outlines initially Ngugi Wa Thiong'O's life and works. Next, it examines his critique of both the colonial and the post-colonial conditions of Africans emphasizing his African-centered turn and his innovative narrative techniques, and shows additionally that despite his powerful critique of the multi-dimensional colonial

legacy and strong condemnation of the deplorable social situation that existed in Kenya during and after the British occupation, Ngugi is narrowly Marxist.

Chapter four is concerned with the most salient features of Frantz Fanon's life and works. It examines further his view of the psychology of oppression and the evolution of his critique of Colonialism and discusses how his critique is too closely tied to Marxism and psychoanalysis. Even though these two approaches provide considerable insight into the condition of the colonized people and can, indeed, contribute to their mobilization against their oppressors, they are of limited value because they do not take into consideration the diversity and complexity of the cultures and national identities of the colonized countries. Fanon examines as well how the issue of race brought with European colonialism deformed the lives and psyches of sub-saharan Africans and how colonial oppression was so insidious that it left Algerians no choice but to take up arms against their oppressors.

Chapter five nuances initially the intellectual controversies and critiques of some Algerian intellectuals: Kateb Yacine on Mouloud Feraoun and Malek Bennabi on Frantz Fanon. It examines as well the extent and limit of the Algerian literary and the extent and limits of the Algerian authors' subversion of the Colonialist Discourse, and analyzes further Kateb Yacine's *Nedjma* with reference to its deconstructing historiography and narratives.

Chapter six explores initially new themes, techniques, and historiography in Algerian post-war literature. It analyzes additionally the impact of the colonial historical legacy on Algerian post-war Literature with reference to rethinking – liberating history nexus and the French language issue in literature.

The conclusion brings together and sums up the findings, results, and limitations of the thesis.

Chapter One

THE SOCIAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF ALGERIAN AND AFRICAN FICTION: COLONIALISM AND ITS IMPACT

En 1962, les Algériens deviennent indépendants mais ne se libèrent pas. Le constat se réalise au milieu d'une accumulation de frustrations. De plus la France est plus présente que jamais en chaque Algérien....

Habib Tengour, ("Le fourvoisement des élites",
Cahiers Intersignes, Vol. 10, 1995)

Introduction

From the 18th century to the middle of the 20th, the Europeans thought of the countries of Africa, Asia, and Latin America as their preserve. They portrayed the inhabitants of those countries as "primitive", "uncivilized", "barbarian", and in dire need of education and civilization. During that period, the European intellectual movement known as the Enlightenment with its emphasis on the supremacy of European civilization, freedom, progress, reason and science over religion and superstition dominated the intellectual scene. Recently, however, there has been a paradigm shift away from this kind of monolithic, hegemonic, and deeply Euro-centric mode of thinking and towards multiculturalism and, in some circles, towards Afrocentrism. The purpose of the thesis in this chapter is to explain the structure and genesis of this shift.

This thesis seeks clarifying some key concepts of postcolonial studies. It aims as well arguing the influences of Albert Memmi, Jacques Derrida, Homi Bhabha on the writers and intellectuals mentioned in the thesis, namely: Mouloud Feraoun,

Ngugi Wa Thiong’O, Frantz Fanon and Kateb Yacine (Malek Bennabi and Ibn Khaldoun are as relevant as ever for any in-depth analysis of the issue of the liberation and emancipation of literatures and minds).

1.1. Key Terms and Underlying Concepts

1.1.1. African Personality

The term *personality* refers to the combination of cognitive, emotional, and behavioral characteristics that make up an individual’s distinctive character. Applied to Sub-Saharan Africa, it stands for the cultural elements that are unique to Sub-Saharan Africans including their values, worldviews, patterns of behavior, and customs. Though Kwame Nkrumah is the politician who contributed most to the promotion of the idea of an African personality in the twentieth century, the idea goes back to 1883, the year the African American intellectual Marcus Garvey delivered his famous speech: *The Origin and the Purpose of African Colonization*.

Garvey pushed forward the idea that there is a distinctive black personality by means of his organizations: *the Universal Negro Improvement Association* and *African Community League*, and his periodicals: *Negro World* (1918-1933), *Daily Negro Times* (1922-1924), *Blackman* (1929-1931), and *the Black Man Magazine* (1933-1939) (Poe Zizwe 9). He also used his newspapers and magazine to celebrate the splendor and achievement of African Americans and Sub-Saharan Africans.

Garvey warned that the Blacks should not let themselves be defined by others otherwise they would never be able to free themselves from oppression. For him, to let themselves be defined by others amounted not only to falsifying African cultures and history but, more importantly, to Africans using against themselves the tools of the oppressors. In this respect, Harvey Fierstein said: “Never be bullied into silence.

Never allow yourself to be made a victim. Accept no one's definition of your life, but define yourself" (10). He believed that Sub-Saharan Africans should define themselves from within; assert forcefully that the African personality was not the product of a supposedly benevolent colonialism.

1.1.2. Afrocentrism

It is a cultural African and Afro-American inspired ideology. It manifests a reaction to global Eurocentric/Orientalist racist attitudes towards blacks. This ideology fundamentally attempts to minimize European cultural influences upon Africans and emphasizes the restoration of historical African heritage that autonomously refers to the African and African-American identities.

Africa I have kept your memory Africa
You are inside me
Like the splinter in the wound
Like a guardian fetish in the center of the village
Make me the stone in your sling
Make my mouth the lips of your wound
Make my knees the broken pillars of your abasement
AND YET
I want to be of your race alone
Workers peasant of all lands. (Fanon, *Peau Noire, Masques Blancs*
134)

Afrocentric scholars, in their endeavors to better the life chances of Africans with Afro-Americans and all diasporic Africans, construct "model approaches in which African values and thoughts are considered the means of all inquiry" (Poe Zizwe 7). In this respect, Afrocentrists attempt to enhance an African-centered view of education, philosophy, literature, and history to carry, reveal and empower the achievements of African civilizations.

1.1.3. Alienation

As defined by *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*: “Alienation is a concept that identifies a distinct kind of psychological, intellectual and social ill; namely, one involving a problematic separation between a self and other that properly belong together”.

In Algeria, Malek Bennabi believed that “Alienation” resulted from what he called “coloniability”. Bennabi’s vision revolves almost around the issue of “civilizational bankruptcy” that resulted from the inner self of Muslim. The inner self should be filled with virtue(s), meaning(s) and value(s), according to Bennabi. The problem is that the inner self is alienated as those virtue(s); meaning(s) and value(s) are replaced with dead ideas of one’s community and by “borrowed”, “fake” and “intruding” ideas out of their “civilizational” cycle or frame, called by Bennabi “deadly” or “toxic” ideas. The issue then is that dead and deadly ideas can neither build a civilization nor enhance growing seeds of renaissance or progress. Misconceptions will revenge, but effective ideas originated from genuine and righteous virtue(s) about one’s lingual identity, meaning(s) of one’s cultural identity and value(s) of one’s intellectual identity will do the task and promote “civilisational” upheaval.

In Kenya, Ngugi represents in *Devil on the Cross* and *Petals of Blood*, the new Kenyan elites by being “Westernized” not only in their thoughts, but as well in their way of living. Many of them lost their scale of values and their code of authentic ethics and adopted instead “borrowed” western cultural values. *Gatuiria* in *Devil on the Cross* said in this respect: “there is nothing as terrible as people who have swallowed foreign customs whole without even chewing them, for such people

become mere parrots” (238). In another context within the same novel, Kihahu said about how elites’ sons are parroting Englishmen while speaking English:

All of them speak English through the nose, exactly like people born and brought up in England. If you were to hear them speak Gikuyu or Kiswahili, you would laugh until you pissed yourself. It is so funny. They speak two languages as if they were Italian priests newly arrived from Rome...the children are mine, and I don’t mind they speak their national languages like Italian foreigners. (110)

For Ngugi, alienation represents as well a metaphorical dimension for “prison” of the human personal or collective human psyche, conscious, spirit, or soul in the colonized society. In his novel *The Trial of Dedan Kimathi*, Ngugi refers to alienation in Kimathi’s rhetorical question: “what revolution will unchain these minds?” (47). Ngugi’s message reveals that the “whole of collective Kenyan minds and spirits are chained by colonial shackles”. He shows as well how *Dedan Kimathi* in this novel and the trinity of students, workers and peasants in *Devil on the Cross* “resisted all sorts of westernization and cultural alienation imposed by Colonialism in the former and Neo-colonialism in the latter”. They did not surrender to any kind of colonial domination at the expense of their own blood; they sacrificed their lives and crossed the devil (Colonialism and Neo-colonialism) by restoring their roots and original culture.

1.1.4. Ambivalence

The term broadly refers to the ambiguous way in which the colonizer and the colonized view one another. The colonizer often considers the colonized as both inferior yet exotically other, while the colonized regards the colonizer as both cruel

and oppressor yet enviable. In a context of hybridity, this situation often results in a mixed sense of blessing and curse¹.

According to Allen Frances, as mentioned in *World Book Encyclopedia*, ambivalence is a “Psychiatric term for paradoxical emotions, feelings and thoughts about one’s self, another person or situation. The most considered ambivalent feelings revolve around love and hate, acceptance and rejection, dominance and submission as well”.

A Negro tells me his dream: “I had been walking for a long time, I was extremely exhausted, I had the impression that something is waiting for me, I climbed barricades and walls, I came into an empty hall, and from behind a door I heard noise. I hesitated before I went in, but finally I made up my mind and opened the door. In this second there were white men, and I found that I too was white. (Fanon, *Peau Noire, Masques Blancs* 99)

Indeed, all people can experience the feeling of ambivalence. A person, according to psychologists, may recognize only one ambivalent feeling. The other contradictory feeling may be unconscious even though it may greatly and drastically influence the individual’s behavior (Ambivalence).

Psychiatrists consider ambivalence as a problematic issue only when it characterizes most of a person's relationships and weakens them or causes considerable personal distress.

1.1.5. Colonized’s Self –Abhorrence

When the colonized are traumatized, a common reaction is to blame themselves for their plight. This process involves the internalization of the idea that they are indeed inherently inferior; in the words of Jacques Derrida, to “abhor themselves”. This self-hatred usually extends to one’s history, culture, and ancestors.

Rachid Boudjedra in his book *Les contrebandiers de l'histoire* (*Smugglers of History*) referred to “smuggling”/”twisting” the Algerian history and how “falsifiers” of history influenced by the colonialist agenda and influenced large audience. “History distortion” resulted in Algerians’ self-hatred, self-loathing and ancestors abhorrence passed from a writer to his reader as moved from a reader to another to be rooted in the Algerian psyche as a culture. Boudjedra says:

L’inconscient du colonisé est un gouffre sans fond ! D’où ce chaos ; ce maelstrom qui fait qu’un Algérien se prend en horreur, qu’il a la haine de soi –haine de soi qui est souvent en fait de l’autre, aussi, au point qu’il se dégoute de lui-même². (12)

Feraoun in his *Journal* (*Le journal*) refers to the same issue saying:

Ils [les Français] ont été d’ailleurs, avec tant d’aisance dans leur manière....dans leurs paroles...leurs actes...nous avons été conquis non par la haine mais par leur bonté. Les manifestations de leur bonté à notre égard n’étaient que celles de leur haine. Mais leur haine était si intelligente que nous ne le comprenions pas. Nous la prenions pour de la bonté .Il étaient bons, nous étions mauvais. Ils étaient civilisés, nous étions barbares...ils étaient supérieurs, nous étions inférieurs. Voilà ce qu’ils ont réussi à nous faire croire, voilà pourquoi leur petite libéralité a pour nous les effets de leur bonté. (36-37)³

Living in a society of self-abhorrence cannot be described only as very dangerous to the human entity; the situation then portrayed the zone of non-being of the Post-colonial oppressed as described by Frantz Fanon⁴.

1.1.6. Deculturalization

Deculturalization is a key process promoted fully by the colonizer. It is a three-part process designed and implemented by Europeans, that aims to alienate Africans from their African heritage. The process first denigrates African religions, customs and languages, then teaches the African to value only the cultural trends and orientations

imposed by the one-eyed-giant colonizer, and finally assimilates the African culture into the European one by means of public education, media, history and literature (Spring).

One part of Deculturalization is (Mis) education which stands for: “public school practices of intellectual exultation, denigrating, and undermining the intellectual development of the African student”. (Miseducation).

Carter G. Woodson, Afro-American historian and essayist, elaborated the term (Mis) education further. He wrote the following in his book *The Mis-Education of the Negro*:

When you control man’s thinking you do not worry about his actions. You do not have to tell him to stand here or go yonder. He finds his ‘proper place’ and will stay in it. You do not need to send him to the back door. He will go without being told. In fact, if there is no back door, he will cut one for his special benefit. His education makes it necessary. (10)

Deculturalization with (Mis) education resulted in a ‘Conceptual Incarceration’ which means: “the state of the African intellectual enslavement and imprisonment in European belief system that results from the (mis) education⁵ of the colonizer and in the ignorance of the colonized (Conceptual Incarceration).

Re-culturalization with appropriated education derived from genuine socio-historical premises should seek restoring what Edward Said calls: “The imprisoned community to itself”⁶

1.1.7. Hybridity

Hybridity is the mixing of different cultural elements to create new areas of meaning with negotiation and new identities. It blurs and destabilizes established cultural borders (Hybridity) .

Hybridity is explored well in Ngugi's works. In his characters, Ngugi mentioned that the notion while spotting the desire of Africans to assimilate sometimes and being associated some other times. Ngugi shows that when one does not believe firmly in his identity, he is going to reflect the image of the colonizer. In this respect, John Boy was described in *Matigari* as "...the only difference between the two men was their skin color" (43). This idea evokes the title used by Frantz Fanon in his book *Peau noir, masques blancs (Black Skin, White Masks)*. According to Ngugi again, hybridity strengthened the feeling of Otherness within the community that shares in supposition the same traditions, the same values and beliefs. Ngugi portrays the essence and the meaning of otherness within the same society, between the tribesmen and the Westerner as well. In this respect, this question may be illustrated in the *River Between* and the question of circumcision that the Gikuyu cannot get rid of, whether they are Christians or not. Here they are united against the colonizer and its Western beliefs. Accordingly, the Westerner is the other.

1.1.8. Eurocentrism

Eurocentrism is another crucial concept in the study of colonialism. Titus Pop defines it as follows:

“[T]he fact, the state, the practice, conscious or otherwise, of placing emphasis on European (and, generally, Western) concerns, culture and

values at the expense of those of other cultures. Eurocentrism often included claiming cultures that were not white or European as being such, or denying their existence at all". (Eurocentrism)

In turn, Afro-centrism seeks principally inverting the imposed Binarisms of Colonial Discourses carried by Eurocentric charges, according to Fanon.

The binary logic in the Western mind made colonialism view the universe in terms of paired counters. So for the European colonialist, Africa was the binary opposite of Europe. Frantz Fanon, defines the colonial situation as the world settled by the "good" colonizer and the "bad" colonized. This binary was demonstrated in many occasions as "white"/ "black", "human"/"bestial", "civil"/ "savage", "beautiful"/ "ugly". John Thompson, the white administrator in *A Grain of Wheat* of Ngugi, represents the white colonialist's vision towards the black African. His diary notes revolve around the binary logic of the colonizer. These dichotomies used in this novel overwhelm the Western thought in many concepts.

Moreover, Frantz Fanon portrays in his book *Peau noir, masques blancs* many ideas that explicitly show the Western mind based on binaries. He says: "The feeling of inferiority of the colonized is the correlative to the European's feeling of superiority. It is a racist who creates its inferior" (93). For a black, all his ills and maledictions were instilled in his/her mind since his/her birth. The black image portrayed by the colonizer blackens his/her image about him/herself.

Indeed, decolonizing the mind will only occur if the colonized gains confidence, only when they get rid of the "black" images imposed upon them, mainly those of "inferiority", "backwardness" and "underdevelopment". In this respect, Feraoun, Ngugi, Fanon, and Kateb (other African and Algerian writers did the same, namely: Assia Djebar, Chinua Achebe, Wole Soyinka, Mohammed Dib, Aye Kwe

Armah...) consolidated their dissertations by reversing the binaries through creating positive images so as to debunk the “false” [white supremacy] that had been already imposed by the “force” [colonization] or through re-narrating the past through historical reconstruction based on epistemological therapy.

Eurocentric charges targeted the Algerian mind and literature as well. Concerning themes, some Algerian novels are denounced as “situational”. Too many novels are faulted by being too “autobiographical” or seized with culture conflict revealing odd fascination to the Algerian past.

As far as ideology is concerned, some Eurocentric critics claimed that there “is too much ‘didacticism’ frequently not of the right kind and mainly via the too much emphasis on instructional and informative qualities” (Chinweizu et al, *Towards the Decolonization of African Literature* 7-8). Other charges denounced the “protest literature” and “topicality” primarily based on anthropological and journalistic documentation and significantly considered the “local color” as a focal point (Ibid). Most of these charges, in fact, inspired from many “racist” ideological backgrounds.

Further, according to some European neutral critics, Eurocentric charges and criticism stems greatly from imperialist attitudes as the “White Man Burden” to “civilize” “backward”, “uneducated” and “uncivilized” Africans and “Social Darwinism” defending the “survival for the [white] Fittest.”

1.1.9. Identity

It broadly and frequently stands for the way in which an individual or group of individuals define/s itself/themselves. The term is so important to self-concept and national understanding. It often senses of essentialism⁷ and othering⁸.

The identity question as referred to in many parts of the thesis has been frequently considered a central theme in the works of postcolonial writers. Ngugi Wa Thiong’O, for example, is among the Post-colonial writers who stressed the notion of identity as an issue to be highlighted and cured. It is very interesting, in this context, to spot Ngugi’s view about the issue of identity in order to fully understand his literary and intellectual works. Ngugi, in his collection of essays entitled: *Homecoming: Essays on African and Caribbean Literature, Culture and Politics*, said:

The present collection of essays is an integral part of the fictional world of the *River Between*; *Weep Not Child* and *A Grain of Wheat*. Most of them were written about the same time as the novels; they have been products of the same moods and touch on similar questions and problems. (xv)

Ngugi, in his lectures and essays discussed the same themes, motifs and symbols. Themes, for instance, are recurrent and related to the question of identity and its components such as: language, home, land, place, exile, migration...His works almost revolve around how these elements affect literature and society. The way how mixture and hybridity of these issues forms the current identity of postcolonial writers, will be highlighted in this part of the thesis.

Ngugi’s vision revolves almost around looking for the best ways to restore the African ‘damaged’ identity and all what is dismantled through a systematic rejection of the colonial culture and the objective behind that is to redefine the world view and give the colonized an explicit opportunity to “define itself” through producing genuine literature based on the original components of its identity.

Indeed, many other aspects and features characterize a given identity. Among these features is language. Ngugi Wa Thiong'O's vision is clear mainly when saying that African literature is losing its identity to Europe when it comes to the question of language. He said outspokenly in his book *Something Torn and New: an African Renaissance*: "...Europhone African literature has stolen the identity of African literature" (51). In fact, Ngugi's vision is clear as considering language as a marker to one's identity; once partially lost, one's identity is partially lost too and once totally perished; one's identity is totally dismantled too.

The question of language is one of the markers to identity. Ngugi raised the question of "name" as well. He harshly criticized the way the colonizer changed the names of the colonized, and gave them foreign names to make them identified with the colonizer's culture; Ngugi himself was named James. Ngugi wrote in this respect:

They also planted their memory on our bodies. Ngugi became James...our names got struck with their names. Thus our bodies, in terms of self-definition, became forever branded by their memory. The name-mark pointing to my body defines my identity. James? And I answer: yes I am. (Ngugi, *Something Torn and New* 114)

Ngugi firmly believed that the colonizer, by doing so, would link the colonized the colonizer culture forever. Ngugi referred to the same issue in a speech delivered in 2012 entitled *Time for Africa to Reclaim the Black Body* (published in the New African Magazine); he said: "The European naming system replaced the African. The very body of the African was defined by the European identity of being: Beatrice, Desmond, James" (41). To put precisely, naming reflects greatly the influence the colonizer wanted to exercise on the colonized

1.1.10. Mimicry

According to Homi.K Bhabha, mimicry is a term “used mainly to stand for imitation”. In the context of this thesis, the term appears when the colonized/ “vanquished” imitates and takes on the culture of the colonizer/”vanquisher” (borrowed from Ibn Khaldoun) (Bhabha). Colonial mimicry is derived from the fact that the colonized wants change to reform, refine and modify. Bhabha writes, in this respect, “Almost the same, but not quite”. The same concept is mentioned by Chinweizu: “We have modelled ourselves after you; we have met your standards. Please accept us!” (Chinweizu et al 288). The European told their African converts to sing, “Wash me redeemer and I shall be whiter than snow” as recited in the African heritage.

In this way, mimicry gives the colonial subject a partial and gradual presence, as if the “colonial” is dependent for its representation within the authoritative discourse itself; the colonized is dependent on the colonizer to identify and define his entity. “The black man wants to be like the white man. For the black man there is only one destiny. And it is white.” (Fanon, *Peau noire, masques blancs* 228)

Ironically, the colonists desire to emerge as “authentic” through mimicry, through a process of writing and repetition—through this partial or half representation. Additionally, Bhabha does not interpret mimicry as a narcissistic identification of the colonizer in which the colonized cannot be an autonomous entity without the colonizer presence in his identity.

The colonists' desire is inverted as the colonial appropriation now produces a partial vision of the colonizer's presence. Bhabha said: “The observer becomes the observed and ‘partial’ representation rearticulates the whole notion of identity and alienates it from essence. In this vein, Ibn Khaldoun, the well-known influential

Maghreban thinker, refers to mimicry by saying: “The vanquished is fond of the vanquisher”.

1.2. Important Intellectual Influences

The concepts that are explored in the previous sections are drawn from a range of theoretical and methodological paradigms. The remainder of this section outlines the core ideas associated with some of the scholars who have been most influential in postcolonial studies and postcolonial writers mentioned in this thesis (Feraoun, Ngugi, Fanon and Kateb), namely: Albert Memmi, Homi Bhabha, and Jacques Derrida.

1.2.1. Albert Memmi’s Theory of the Colonizer and the Colonized

Albert Memmi was an influential and well-known author famous for his investigation of the psychological impact of colonialism on the psyche of both the colonized and the colonizer. His ideas represented powerful and useful concepts and methods for analyzing the mind of the colonized. Indeed, colonialism, which Memmi described as a “variety of fascism” (63), not only robbed the colonized peoples of their wealth but also transformed their cultures and their perceptions of themselves. In fact, at the same time that the French and the British expanded their overseas possessions, they also formed ideas about the colonized. They described the latter as “inferior”, “lazy”, and “irrational”, and deprived them of agency–capability to act and make a difference–and historicity. Memmi explained that, for the colonizer, the colonized...”Is in no way a subject of history anymore? Of course, he carries its burden... but always as an object... no matter how briefly colonization may have lasted; all memory of freedom seems distant”. (158)

Memmi further explained that in order to maintain their dominance over the colonized and prevent them from envisioning a better future and advocate change, the colonizer made the colonized believe that “[p]lanning and building his future are forbidden. He must therefore limit himself to the present, and even that present is cut off and abstract”. Memmi concluded the idea that the colonized is made a historical by saying that he “seems condemned to lose his memory”. (169)

In addition, Memmi explained, the colonizers determined and limited the ways the colonized could think and act by means of their educational institutions. He wrote:

[t]he teacher and the school represent a world which is too different from [the colonized’s] family environment. Far from preparing the adolescent to find himself completely, the teacher and create a permanent duality in him”. (172)

Memmi added in another context that bilingualism is one way the colonizer perpetuates this duality:

Here, the two worlds symbolized and conveyed by two tongues are in conflict; they are those of the colonizer and the colonized ...[and] the colonized mother tongue, that which is sustained by his feelings, emotions, and dreams, that in which is tenderness and wonder are expressed thus that which holds the greatest emotional impact, is precisely the one which is the least valued...if he wants to obtain a job, make a place for himself, exist in the community and the world, he must first bow to the language of his masters. In the linguistic conflict within the colonized, his mother tongue is that which is crushed. (173)

Throughout almost his writings, Memmi made it clear that the colonizer had not controlled their subjects only through force and educational institutions, but also through their ability to co-opt the colonized’s participation. In a sense, the colonized

were complicit in their domination by thinking that the prevailing thinking of the colonizer is natural and normal. Deeper even, the colonized often interiorized their presumed inferiority.

Still, according to Memmi, the colonial system was doomed to self-destruction. He argued that the colonized had had a choice between two courses of action in order to free themselves: assimilation or revolution. The latter was considered the only genuine course of action because the colonizer would never acknowledge the colonized as equal and would never accept the assimilation of the natives.

1.2.2. Homi K. Bhabha

Bhabha is a British academic and critical theorist of Indian descent. He is known for using psychoanalysis to study colonialism. He famously argued that cultures and discourses “were places of borders and hybridity rather than pure and stable entities”. He is credited for introducing the terms *hybridity*, *enunciation*, *mimicry*, *ambivalence*, *Interstice*, *liminality* and *third space* to the study of the postcolonial condition⁹.

Bhabha rethought the issue of identity in most of his theories and mainly in his book: *The Location of Culture*. Bhabha provided a profound scrutiny, mainly to hybridity to argue that cultural production could contribute to practical political change. Further, Bhabha interrogated identity by referring to Frantz Fanon and the postcolonial prerogative. Next, he questioned stereotypes, discrimination and discourse of colonialism and its ambivalence. He scrutinized as well the postcolonial and postmodern with reference to the question of agency and race.

Bhabha's work in postcolonial theory was greatly influenced by post-structuralism. Among his influences as well other theorists, namely: Edward Said, Jacques Lacan, Michel Foucault, and Jacques Derrida¹⁰.

1.2.3. Jacques Derrida

Jacques Derrida is an Algerian-born French philosopher. He is considered the founder of deconstruction, an approach that aims to “understand the relation between the text and meaning and dismantle their hierarchical binary structures and show their (un)decidability” (Derrida). His works have been most influential in literary criticism and in philosophy, but they are becoming increasingly significant in the fields of law, art, theology, and political science.

Derrida argued that, throughout history, philosophers had tried to answer metaphysical and epistemological questions by grounding and setting up precise definitions for terms, constructing sound logical arguments, and building coherent systems of thought. The philosophers in question had treated language as if it were a “mere tool to communicate ideas without interference or distortion” (Interview¹¹).

In contrast, Derrida stated that in language, especially written language, speakers meant more and other than what they said because words—signifiers—always included echoes and traces of other words that were both present and absent. Meaning, according to Derrida, is “inherently unstable and constantly slides away”. He popularized the word *différance*, which “evokes the ideas of difference and deferral, to refer to this endless play of signifiers” (Aoudjit, *The Algerian Novel* 51).

1.2.4. *L'école d'Alger and the Algerianists*

L'école d'Alger is an expression was used after WWII to refer to a group of Algerian-born writers of European decent including Albert Camus, Emmanuel Robles, Jules Roy and Jean Pélegri (Aoudjit, *The Algerian Novel* 7). Feraoun was greatly influenced by his friends Camus and Robles.

Concerning the *Algerianists*, Their name is mainly used to refer to the school of thought and literature emerged in the 1920s in “French Algeria” by Robert Randau in reaction to the Algerian resurrection and the emerging national. This movement was mainly founded and supported by writers of European descent like: Robert Randau, Louis Bertrand, Charles Courtin, Jean Pomier, Ferdinand Duchene, René Garnier, Albert Camus and Louis le Coq. They firmly defended their Algerianity in opposition to Metropolitan Franca and natives¹². Therefore, they systematically denigrated the Muslim culture and erased the Arab contribution to the social evolution of cultural Algeria and stereotyped the Muslim community as ignorant, lazy, predatory and cruel.¹³ They stand here because most of the writers referred to in the thesis wanted to deconstruct and subvert their discourse.

1.3. Colonialism

The term *Colonialism* refers to the practice of domination whereby some European nations conquered, settled, exploited economically, and controlled politically and culturally many African and Asian countries.

Colonialism is a complex phenomenon. As a result, different scholars define it differently. Thus, Elleke Boehemer, for example, defines it as “a settlement of territory, the exploitation or development of resources, and the attempt to govern the

indigenous inhabitants of occupied lands” (2), emphasizing thereby its economic aspect. Other academics emphasize its political aspect, describing it as an “enterprise of dominance and hegemony”¹⁴. Ngugi Wa Thiong’O goes further than both Bohemer and (author) to explain colonialism in terms of cultural and psychological subjugation rather than in strictly economic or political terms. He wrote:

In the name of that civilization, they destroyed dances, our languages, our songs, and our poetry ...colonialism then systematically tried to kill the African individual and collective image of self. (Ngugi, *Writers in Politics* 13-19)

Colonialists, on the other hand, viewed it from two angles. They considered it inevitable (White Man Burden) and positive (Civilizing Mission). They defined it within this frame of inevitability and positivity.

1.3.1. Colonizing minds: methods, and educational policies

The point of departure here is Fanon’s vision of colonialism. In his view, the colonial idea is based on colonizing minds through particular educational policies and manipulating methods. First, dividing the world colonizer/colonized; West/East; North/South but with a hegemony created to show how “white”-centric was colonialism. Second, the colonial project was based on power and violence. Third, colonialism was a European-centric racist project. Fanon believed that deconstructing these basics meant to extinguish all colonial thoughts and their premises. He believed also that the colonial project in Africa was based on some tactics and strategies. First, the policy of divide and rule; dividing Africa into ethnicities and tiny regional regions facilitated ruling Africa and weakening it (In Algeria, France used it to fuel some virtual Arab-Berber tensions). Second, keep African countries failing to be easily

controlled and manipulated. Third, instill in Africans feeling of inferiority to be easily controlled. King Leopold the second of Belgium said in 1884-1885 *Berlin Conference*: “you cannot colonize people until you instill in them complex of inferiority”¹⁵. Fourth, keep Africans far from being complacent about their cultures, selves, identities and belongings; that’s part of cultural Imperialism.

As far as colonizing minds is concerned, some African post-colonial scholars and intellectuals like Fanon, Ngugi Wa Thiong’O, Chinwuzu et al. considered this type of colonialism as “epistemic violence” and the most damaging aspect of any colonizing policy.

The range of phenomena is included that under the label “colonization of mind” highlights the following characteristics. First, the intervention of an external factor, in this context, the “colonizer” plays a great part in affecting the mental sphere of the “colonized” by teaching the Africans to be ashamed of their culture and history by rejecting their heritage. Second, the impact of the colonizer affects pivotal aspects of the colonized central aspects of the mind structure by teaching the African in schools how to admire the Eurocentric culture (Ngugi in his book *Decolonizing the Mind*) wrote: “...The world as defined and reflected in European experience of history. Their entire way of looking at the world...was Eurocentric. Europe was the Center of the Universe” (11). Third, its impact is long-lasting and hard to be removed. Fourth, clear asymmetry between the colonizer and the colonized in the colonized mind. Fifth, the mind is aware and unaware, at the same time, of the role of both the colonizer and the colonized; and sixth both the colonizer and the colonized can contribute in the mental process of the colonized voluntarily and involuntarily. Indoctrination and deculturalization or what is called popularly “brain-washing” or “brain-draining”¹⁶.

These features are shared by a great deal of various processes of mind colonization; regardless of whether these characteristics may take place in socio-political situations that are classified as “colonial”. Colonization of mind may take place, accordingly, through the transmission of mental habits by means of social systems instead of colonial structures. For instance, transmission of colonial ideals simply carried through acculturation via the family, traditions, cultural practices, language, ideology, media, politics and education.

1.4. The Impact of Colonialism on Education in Algeria and Kenya

By the end of the late 19th century, France had occupied most of the Algerian territory. However, taking over its land and dominating a country economically and politically are only the most obvious aspects of colonialism; colonialism also involves controlling the colonized peoples ideologically and culturally and, by implication, psychologically. Indeed, as soon as the French set foot in Algeria, they sought to colonize the Algerians’ minds and destroy their identity by forcing upon them their language, religion, and cultural values.

Furthermore, aware that the most efficient way to subjugate and manipulate people is to alienate them from their language and culture, the French did their utmost to erase the Algerians’ Arab-Islamic-Berber heritage and culture: they abolished Islamic courts in many parts of the country, closed Koranic schools and seminaries, and imposed strict limitations on the teaching of Arabic. Furthermore, they opened some French-language schools—making sure that only a handful of children attended them—to create subservient elite. Actions of this kind had far-reaching consequences for the psyche of the colonized people. According to Aimé Césaire, they amounted to nothing less than the thingification of the colonized.

The purpose of this chapter is to investigate the continuing impact of the forced acculturation of the colonized people on their educational systems and literatures long after the fall of the colonial empires.

1.4.1. Algeria

Colonization or what is sometimes called the “the colonial system” is multifaceted. It involves the following: the appropriation of a territory by use of military force, the political domination of the area directly or by proxy, the destruction of the indigenous culture, the development of a racist ideology to justify social inequality¹⁷, and the assimilation of an elite to the dominant culture. It is on the basis of these policies that the identities of the colonized and the colonizer with their concomitant psychological and behavioral dysfunctions are constructed.

The Algerian educational system was undoubtedly one of the institutions that suffered the most from the nefarious colonialist policies. Before 1830 the literacy rate was higher in Algeria than in France but it started to decrease significantly and immediately after the conquest. How could the French destroy a sophisticated educational system within the space of a few years?

When the French took over Algiers in July 1830, they expressed their intention to protect Algerian culture and values. Indeed, the capitulation agreement General Bourmont signed with the Dey of Algiers on July 5, 1830, stipulates that “the exercise of Muslim religion will be free. The liberty of the inhabitants of all classes and their religion, business, industry will remain inviolable” (Magrath 87). However, any hope that the French would live up to their commitment was short-lived; the French broke their promise as soon as they signed the treaty.

As mentioned previously, the first thing the French occupiers did was close Koranic schools and seminaries. The few such institutions that survived the colonialist

onslaught were put under the direct control of the French authorities and depending on whether or not they tolerated the French presence, some schools were provided with financial help while others were pushed into bankruptcy.

Furthermore, in order to prevent Algerian teachers from instilling anti-French sentiments in the minds of their students, the French created curfews for when the schools are open, accredited the teachers, and tailored the hiring requirements and the curricula to their own needs rather than those of Algerians. Thus, the French deeply intervened within the Koranic school's educational sphere. In other words, the most obvious targets of the imposition of the French educational model were the curricula, the textbooks, and the language of instruction that were carefully designed to serve the colonizer's interests and their vision of a French Algeria.

Indeed, the French cultural policy in Algeria falls within the larger context of what they called their “Civilizing Mission”. The chief apologists of the occupation claimed that the colonialists were benevolent and had the Algerians’ welfare in mind. It was, therefore, they argued, in the best interest of Algerians to adopt the French language and to be left out of the decision-making process concerning education and other cultural matters.

The school system in occupied Algeria was divided into two unequal educational tracks: the children of European settlers and a small number of Algerians were placed in one; the children of the majority of Algerians who were lucky enough to go to school were placed in the other

The students in the first track were taught the same subjects as their counterparts in France were prepared for careers in public administration, medicine, and engineering, whereas those in the second track were prepared for specific trades in agriculture and industry.

One of the architects of the French educational policy in Algeria was the statesman Jules Ferry. He believed that schools are the most effective means to win over Algerian minds; they are “non-violent” and “soft” tools. Accordingly, he introduced laws that imposed a secular, free and compulsory education for all. In a parliamentary debate on March 30, 1885, he defended the government's educational policy in Algeria follows:

There is a second point I wish to refer to. It is the humanitarian and civilizing question ...the superior races have a right in relation to the inferior races. I say they have the right because they have a duty. They have the duty to civilize the inferior races. (Maameri 4)

As part of the French assimilation policy, the traditional Algerian schools were transformed into bilingual Arabic-French schools called “Medersa” from which the first generation of Algerian “bilingual elites” graduated. However, in the 1930s, the French government reversed its policy on bilingual education and passed a law classifying Arabic as a foreign language and restricted severely its teaching. French became the unchallenged language of Algeria.

1.4.2. Kenya

African countries south of the Sahara have been formally independent for more than sixty years. Still, they continue to suffer from the colonialist campaign of cultural genocide. Some African scholars and intellectuals such as Ngugi Wa Thiong'O and Ibekwe Chinwizu et al call the colonialists' deliberate attempt to destroy the cultures of their people “epistemic violence” and think of it as the most damaging outcome of colonialism.

Among the techniques colonialists used to alter and control the African mind are the following. First, they make Africans ashamed of their cultures. Next, they brain wash them into thinking that European culture is superior to theirs and then deceive them into thinking that their salvation lies in submitting to their overlords. These methods of control were carried out through the use of the colonialists' language school curricula, as well as the media. .

Furthermore, Ngugi, in most of his writings, revealed that the colonizer "tried also to control all the cultural aspects of its colonies by abrogation and appropriation and also tried exhaustively to seize the wealth of colonies to enrich its resources"

G.D.Killam in *Critical Perspectives on Ngugi* quoted:

To make economic and political control the more complete the colonizing power tries to control the cultural environment: education, religion, language, literature, songs, forms of dances, every form of expression, hoping to control a people's values and ultimately their world outlook, their image and definition of self. (26)

Ngugi claimed as well that colonialist writers, namely Elspeth Huxley (*Red Strangers*, 1964) and Karen Blixen (*Out of Africa*, 1952), and Robert Ruark' (*Something of Value*, 1962) had foisted Africa's history by providing a distorted image of Africa's history through denigrating the *Mau Mau Movement* and the role of the trinity "workers, students, and peasants" in post-1950's Kenya¹⁸.

Colonialism in Africa was multidimensional. It played diverse roles, and used various strategies to seize and control African mind and lands.

1.5. The Impact of Colonialism on Algerian and Kenyan Fiction

1.5.1. Algeria

Aoudjit divides Algerian literature in French into three periods: (1) the period of assimilation, extending from the end of the nineteenth century (1893) to 1945; (2) the

period of decolonization and the struggle for independence from approximately 1945 to 1962; and (3) the period of self-affirmation and social criticism from the 1962 to the present¹⁹.

While this classification looks sound, colonialism and its legacy remain critical elements in understanding all phases of the Algerian novel. Two leading themes recur throughout and give Algerian literature its continuity. One is a concern with national identity, especially with regard to the legacy of colonialism. The other is history (as history is who we are, why we are and the way we are as Mac McCullough said).

Until about 1945, most Algerian writers came from well-off backgrounds; they represented a part of the Algerian society that was inclined to adopt French way of life and values.

The first period was called the period of “Mimetism and Acculturation” by Jean Déjeux (1992). Most writers, called “*les évolués*” (they had graduated from the French ideals, advocated “assimilation” and the integration of Algeria into France). These writers defended what they acquired as if they were indebted to the French “civilizer” and the “Civilizing Mission”.

Rabah Zenati (1938) in his book entitled *Le probleme algérien vu par l'indigène (The Algerian Problem viewed by the Indigenous)* glorified the presence of the French in Algeria and considered them as saviors. He said : “la bonne fortune d’avoir comme éducatrice bienveillante la nation la plus grande et la plus civilisée du monde” (Saad 3)²⁰. Furthermore, Zenati claimed that under French control, Algeria would develop, but needed to embrace French values and ideals. “Le but vers lequel il faut tendre, avant tout, c’est de nous franciser, c’est à dire de nous donner une âme française et une mentalité occidentale” (Saad 4)²¹. The “Civilizing Mission”, indeed, revolved around “westernizing” Algerians by instilling the French spirit into them.

Likewise, Ben Cherif said in 1920 that France brought light, happiness and glory to Algeria. In 1934, Mohammed Talbi published a poem entitled ‘*A notre France*’ (*To our France*) to celebrate the centenary of French presence in Algeria (Bonn, *Littérature Maghrébine* 5). Mohammed Ould Cheikh considered French presence was a golden opportunity for “bringing Algerians back to [Civilized] life”; he expressed his feelings in *Oran-Matin* (July 6, 1934).

La cause est entendue. Le pays a trouvé, sous l’égide Française, la paix et le bien être... Il n’est pas un indigène qui n’ait de la reconnaissance à la Mère patrie pour les bienfaits qu’elle lui a prodigés, et plus particulièrement pour l’avoir tiré des ténèbres, pour le faire percer dans la lumière, la vie et le Bonheur ... Nous étions morts et nous sommes ressuscités.... (Saad 5)²²

Accordingly, French occupation was viewed by this category as an opportunity to “enlighten, civilize, and educate” the natives.

In turn, in the same period, there were a few authors who linked “assimilation” to Islam requirements. For example; Salem el Koubi wrote *Contes et poems de l’Islam* (*Tales and Poems of Islam*) in 1917, in which he glorified both Islam and France (Bonn, *Littérature Maghrébine* 7).

Claiming total integration, naturalization and assimilation by these intellectual elites (called *les évolués*) never gained popular support from the Algerian masses. Other writers emerged claiming the “malaise” lived by the Algerians because of their different identical status and rights. This new wave started questioning the issue of identity, language and values.

In the 1950’s, shortly before the Algerian revolution, Algerian literature got a breath of fresh air. This was signaled by the emergence of writers, including Mouloud Feraoun, Mohammed Dib and Kateb Yacine. These writers - unlike their predecessors such as Said Guennoun (in his novel *La voix des monts: moeurs de guerre berbères*

“*The Voice of Mountains. Berbers mores of War*”, 1934) and Saad Ben Ali (in his novel *La tente noire: roman saharien* “*The Black Tent: Saharian Novel*, 1933) - did not praise the colonizer nor make an effort to entertain French readers (Saad 7).

Furthermore, the former writers were not like European *Algérianists*. These *Algerianists* included Louis Bertnard, Ferdinand Duchene and Robert Randau and those writers of *L'École d'Alger* like Albert Camus; J les Roy and Jean Pégri. For these intellectuals, Algerians and Algeria were both “parts of the Décor” as Aoudjit wrote in his book entitled *The Algerian Novel and the Colonial Discourse*.

Unlike some of their predecessors such Said Guennoun (*La voix des monts: moeurs de guerre berbère* 1934) and Saad Ben Ali, (*La tente noire: roman Saharien*, 1933), these new writers did not pay tribute to the alleged benefits of colonialism nor did they indulge in the description of exotic and attractive places to entertain their French readers. In addition, unlike European Algérianistes such as Louis Bertrand, Ferdinand Duchene, and Robert Randau and those of *L'École d'Alger* like Albert Camus, Jules Roy and Jean Pégri for whom Algerians were, at best, part of the décor, Feraoun, Dib, Mammeri, and Kateb, showed their discontent, and envisioned their dreams.(Aoudjit, *The Algerian Novel* 1)

Despite the fact that these writers showed their “soft” anti-colonial thoughts indirectly, many Algerian critics met the publication of both Mouloud Feraoun’s *Le fils du pauvre* (*The Poor Man’s Son*, 1950) and Mouloud Maameri’s *La colline oubliée* (*The Forgotten Hill*, 1952) and Mohammed Dib’s *La grande maison* (*The Big House*, 1952) with disdain for being “folkloric” and “regionalist”. Sadek Hadjeres²³ reproached them also for not showing “harsh” criticism and “rigid” condemnation of the colonizer (Aoudjit, *The Algerian Novel* 2).

French critics praised *Le fils de pauvre* and considered it a “beautiful novel”. They considered it “simple, touching, written in a language which was accessible to

everyone (Aoudjit, *The Algerian Novel 2*)”²⁴. Furthermore, the French praised lavishly *La Colline oubliée* and its writer for being faithful to his origins.

Critics, at that time, did not focus on the literary and aesthetic value of the Algerian novels. Instead, those critics raised many questions about which novels were “engaged” politically and “committed” intellectually or socially and which were not. Some critics insisted that most of the novels were committed to the Algerian cause because those novels spotlight the plight that touched Algeria and the Algerians. Hence; they were against what the French called the “Civilizing Mission”.

Other critics insisted that while some novels like *L’incendie (The Fire)*, *Le métier à tisser (The Loom)*, *Nedjma* (1956) and *L’opium et le baton (The Opium and the Stick)*, 1965) carried anti-colonialist messages; others such as *Le fils du pauvre, La terre et le Sang (Land and Blood)*, 1953), *Les chemins qui montent (The Ascending Paths)*, 1957) and *La colline oubliée* carried conservative thoughts. But critics were unanimous that “the claim of Algerian literature to humanist ideas revealed anti-colonial beliefs” (Saad 6).

In 1956, Kateb Yacine, in his well-known novel *Nedjma* (1956) was greatly influenced by the massacres of May 8, 1945. He published *Nedjma* in which he depicted revolt, protests and love. In this Novel, Kateb portrayed the Algerian’s troubled mind, his history and his society. “Pour qu’il y ait traumatisme, il faut que la mère vienne à manquer dans un moment où l’enfant a besoin d’elle”²⁵, Freud explained²⁶. The Algerian, accordingly, was in need of his mother; that is why he claimed his identity, his land, his history and his ancestors. He urged his mother Algeria to come.

Indeed, many other critics deduced a mid-way position from all the previous views. The synthesized position considered that the critics of the Algerian literature

showed a “narrow” definition of politics and considered some novels conservative or politically committed merely on the basis of their plots. These plots carried particular themes which did not explicitly reveal political events and their characters were not explicitly involved in political anti-colonial activism. Instead, this midway position declared explicitly that the conflict between Algerians and the colonizer was a deeper kind of conflict called by Jean François Lyotard’s²⁷ *the différend*²⁸.

The différend philosophy endorsed by Algerian authors urged challenging the hegemony imposed by the dominant discourse of the colonizer and giving opportunity to have a free voice to marginalized people. Tahar Djaout, Algerian writer (1982), argued that this literature was simply advocating “the claim for a name, land and the right to difference” (Saad 8). It was really a serious claim of “name”, “existence” and “identity”.

Because these writers were greatly inspired by the claim for “a land, a name and a difference”, it was accordingly anticipated that with the independence period, this literature would be so influential in the Post-colonial period, as suggested by Malek Haddad. He said in 1961 :

Ainsi que certains artistes du cinéma ont dû disparaître, bon donner leur place devant le cinéma parlant, en Algérie les écrivains de ma génération et de ma formation devront un jour ou l’autre, à brève ou longue échéance...céder la place à des écrivains algériens d’expression arabe.²⁹ (Saad 8)

The third period witnessed a dilemma between glorifying the revolution against the colonizer and the search for the Algerian identity affected by the French culture. Many Algerian writers, at that period, wrote about the revolution, the misery of Algerians and the atrocities of the colonizer.

Other category of writers such as Lacheraf and Kateb Yacine tried to move from a “war-culture literature” (“culture guerrière” as they called it in French) to other fundamental social issues which were common in Algeria at that period of time. Kateb Yacine claimed the independence of the Algerian writer from the postcolonial political régime. He said (in an interview with French radio in 1963): “the writer should be independent because he must not be inclined to power. He must not be undergoing the pressing of the country’s political regime. He has a mission to say what he feels; pleasing or not does not matter for him”³⁰ (Saad 10). Hence, writers should have intellectual sovereignty.

To conclude, one might deduce that the Algerian novel commitment to liberation was greatly significant mainly in raising consciousness and portraying the Algerian voice to the international community. This literature with its commitment brought life to the Algerian revolutionary pursuit and revealed the distorted fact that should be debunked.

1.5.2. Kenya

The impact of the colonization on literature is quite clear in the Kenya; mainly in turning the oral-based literature there into a written based one. Ngugi Wa Thiong’O’s *Weep Not Child* is the first Kenyan writer who published a written novel with its standards. Some other issues related to the Kenyan literature, namely: the questions of its teaching and the issue of its universality.

Teaching African literature to native Africans is also an issue to be tackled. Both Chinweizu (Nigeria) and Ngugi (Kenya) have tackled the issue that was later called “*The Great Nairobi Literature Debates*” (1968). This debate has been mainly approached on the teaching of literature in universities and schools. The two questions

of this debate revolve around what literatures should be taught and a call for the setting of a more relevant department.

Many proposals have been forwarded to urge for the abolition of the English Department of Nairobi as the medium through which foreign/English literature is taught and call for the setting of more relevant department. These proposals declared the following: “The English department has had a long history...it has built up a strong syllabus ...which [carried] a historic progressive continuity of a single culture ...However it is bound to become less British ...”

The damning question that was asked: “if there is a need for a ‘study of the historic continuity of a single culture’ why cannot this be African culture [that should be at] the center so that Africans view other cultures in relation to it” (Ngugi, *Decolonizing the Mind* 99).

The “Universality” of African literature had been portrayed wrongly by Westerners. They thought that “The more African literature is ‘Westernized,’ the more it is ‘universalized,” (Chinweizu et al 20). Dr. Mariba Ani (born Dona Richards), an Africanist and anthropologist, in her book entitled *Yurugu: an African Centered Critique of European Cultural Thought and Behaviour*, exposes the European cultural arrogance mainly in overwhelming the African literature and depriving it from its striking and original feature.

...Writing in exile, Ngugi did not feel the pressure of representing the historical realities of the postcolonial state in Kenya; on the contrary he wanted to use local sources to produce a universal narrative on repression and the search for freedom.(227)³¹

For Frantz Fanon, the ex-colonized could be partially liberated, but not totally colonially and racially emancipated till reaching “decolonial universality” after being “colonially universal” as referred to in *Les damnés de la terre (Wretched of the Earth)*

or *Pour la révolution africaine (Towards the African Revolution)*...unity of African is needed vitally to meet genuine emancipation; union of African nations is a step forward towards emancipation from shackles of the ex-colonizers.

To live without the former colonizer is to live in a “decolonial universality” not only from past colonization, but from “present and future universal globalization system based on global inequality and racial segregation”, Fanon argued. In African tradition “the universal” is much more linked to the “particular” of the country; “think globally and act locally”, used as a slogan for many writers.

Other issues arose in the same context that of the Critique of the African literature. Among the questions asked: who has the right and the potential to critique the African literary endeavor? What are the requirements and the standards of a competent and suitable review?

Many writers such as Chinweizu et al, Ngugi and Chinua Achebe have referred to the arrogance and the ignorance of the European critics mainly in their subjective and biased dogmatic vision to these works and their tendency to annex these endeavors to the so-called “Metropolitan” novel.

Chinweizu et al. in their book *Towards a Decolonization of African Literature* demonstrated that African writers did possess many literary forms, techniques and themes which were completely related to the African context. They also referred to the impact of the Western critics on the nature of literary endeavors produced by some African writers. Additionally, Chinweizu et al. mentioned that the European attempts to authenticity of the African works were based on the European “biased” vision and limited knowledge of Africans.

As a response to the colonizer attempts to annex and underestimate the African literary works, many writers refuted the Euro-centric charges and contested the

European biased critics. They argued that: “to ‘liberate’ the African literature, African writers should defend pure African styles, techniques, examination and practice; Afrocentrism should be highly fostered accordingly”.

Conclusion

This chapter has shown how colonialism framed and still frames the minds of the formerly colonized people. Steve Biko, the well-known anti-apartheid militant, once declared that “the greatest weapon in the hand of the oppressor is the mind of the oppressed³²”. It follows that the colonized can free themselves only by becoming creators and producers of meaning, literature and history rather than passive receptors or imitators of the West. These attempts to liberation require nothing less than a paradigm shift (based on negotiation and bridges rather than on antagonism) from a Eurocentric to an Afrocentric mode of thinking.

This testimony embodies multidimensional “revealing” and “therapeutic” roles; the former seeks “revealing” horrors of the colonizer and the latter looks for “curing” the ills of the French colonizer's legacy. It also plays an explicit role in portraying the “force” used by the colonizer to reveal the “false” reasons behind that colonialism. Thus, the pertinent recommendation drawn is that a new “history” based on genuine memory should be claimed. Glorifying Algeria’s memory and debunking the “false” [left as a colonial legacy] are the two main aspects of these roles. Further, reinforcing self-help with a conscious Algerian Nationalism and strengthening an International Approach to defend Algerians’ rights within their continent along with safe, fluid and healthy vision and relations with the international communality are two other claims of the thesis.

Another aspiration of the thesis is to claim Algeria back via a genuine vision towards a valid emancipation of the Algerian mind. In other words, decolonization of the Algerian mind refers to “re-Algerianization” of the self so as to gain cultural confidence to liberate the Algerian psyche forward towards an Algerian multidimensional renaissance. Therefore, continuous attempts should be frequently made to unchain their minds from the “false”, “alienation” and “colonizability”³³. It is legitimate to promote an Algerian and African being and belonging, one absorbed by “Algerianity”/“Africanity” freed from the shackles of colonialism and the germs of neo-imperialism.

NOTES

¹Key Terms in Post-colonial Theory

<<https://www3.dbu.edu/mitchell/postcold.htm>>

²In English:

The unconscious of the colonized is a chasm without bottom!

Hence this chaos; this maelstrom that makes an Algerian takes abhorrence, that he has self-hatred
...that is often in fact hate of the other...to the point that the Algerian disgusts himself.

(Translated from French by the researcher)

³They [The French] were, moreover, with such ease in their manner ...in their words....in their actions...we were conquered not by hatred but by their kindness. The expressions of their kindness towards us were only those of their hatred. But their hatred was very intelligent that we didn't understand it. We took her for kindness. They were good, we were bad. They were civilized, we were barbarians...they were superior, we were inferior...This is what they managed to make us believe, that's why their small liberality for us the effects of their kindness

(Translated from French by the researcher)

⁴As mentioned by Lewis R. Gordon in his book *What Fanon Said. A Philosophical Introduction to his Life and Thought* 19-68.

⁵ Other details about this issue referred to by an interesting book entitled: *The Mis-education of the Negro* written by Carter G. Woodson.

⁶ As referred to by Professor MAOUI Hocine in his article *Renarrating the Past : Historical Reconstruction and the Postcolonial African Novel : The case of Ngugi and Armah* quoted from Edward Said's book *culture and Imperialism* (259)

⁷ Being for one self and being in itself according to Jean Paul Sartre theory of Existentialism "Being and Nothingness"

⁸ Key Terms in Post-colonial Theory

<<https://www3.dbu.edu/mitchell/postcold.htm>>

⁹ From *World Book Encyclopedia*

¹⁰ Ibid

¹¹ Interview with Abdelkader Aoudjit, Professor of the University West Virginia ,United States of America

¹² Abdelkader Aoudjit. *The Algerian Novel and Colonial Discourse. Witnessing to a Différend* (7)

¹³ As referred to by: Martin Thomas in his book: *The French Empire between the Wars: Imperialism, Politics and Society*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2007 (139)

¹⁴Mentioned in a Conference (attended by the researcher) held December 8, 2017 organized by the University Paris Diderot used by the President of the session Professor Marie-Jeanne Rossignol (LARCA, Paris Diderot).

The slogan of the Conference : Histoire, politique, indépendances : Afrique et Amériques ;

¹⁵Feraoun refers to this idea in his *Journal* :

Qu'est-ce- qu'un Indigène pour un Européen ? C'est l'homme de peine, la femme de ménage. Un être bizarre aux mœurs ridicules, aux costumes particulier, au langage impossible. Un personnage plus ou moins sale, plus ou moins déguenillé, plus ou moins antipathique. En tous cas un être à part (63)"

¹⁶ Synthesis of ideas from various articles and ideas of Ngugi Wa Thiong'o, Frantz Fanon, Albert Memmi and Maru Douglas.

¹⁷ Mouloud Feraoun, in his *Journal*, describing how the relation French-teachers/Algerian pupils was :

« ...Les grands n'aiment pas leur maitres qui ne se contentent pas d'afficher le supériorité de leur savoir mais aussi la supériorité de leur race (90)»

In another context Feraoun again describes in his *Journal* a racist attitude of some of his mates saying:

J'ai lu dans leurs yeux la colère et la haine. Ils étaient là, tous les quatre à me contredire, quatre à m'insulter de leur arrogance, quatre à me cataloguer dans cette catégorie qu'ils n'aient pas, qu'ils exploitent, qu'ils voudraient massacrer et dont ils ont peur. Une peur folle. Alors j'ai pris le plus raciste d'entre eux et je lui ai crié devant les élèves.(99)

¹⁸ As referred to by Professor MAOUI Hocine in his article *Renarrating the Past : Historical Reconstruction and the Postcolonial African Novel : The case of Ngugi and Armah*

¹⁹ In his book : *Algerian Literature. A Reader's Guide and Anthology*

²⁰“The good fortune to have as a volunteer educator the largest and most civilized nation in the world”

²¹The aim which we would, above all, is to become French, that is, to give us a French soul and a Western mind"

²²The case is heard. The country has found, under French auspices, peace and well-being ... It is not a native that has recognition to the motherland for the blessings she has her prodigies, especially for have shoots of darkness to do to break into the light, life and Happiness ... We were dead and we are resurrected.

²³A communist who was born in 1928 in Larbba Nath Irathan. He led the Algerian Muslim Scouts in Mítidja in t from 1943 to 1946. He joined the PPA (the Algerian People's Party) in 1944.

Source: “Sadek Hadjeres” Encyclopedia Britannica.2010 ed. Encyclopedia Britannica Online. Web. 15 Oct. 2010.

²⁴ On a coutume de considère que le premier texte littéraire maghrébin de langue française important est de peu antérieur aux débuts de langue française important est de peu antérieur au début de la Guerre d'Algérie, qui a plus ou moins marqué aussi la plupart des lecteurs qui se tournait vers cette littérature. Ce texte est *Le fils du pauvre* (1950) de Mouloud Feraoun, autobiographie au déguisement volontairement transparent d'un instituteur issu de la paysannerie kabyle pauvre, et « civilisé » en quelque sorte par l'école française dont il deviendra un des plus fervents défenseurs (Bonn, *Littérature Maghrébine*, 7)

²⁵ "For there to trauma, it is necessary that the mother failed to be there in time when the child needs her” (The Researcher Translation)

²⁶As cited in Benrabah 65

²⁷Jean François Lyotard is a French philosopher and socialist; he was born in August10, 1924.

Source : “Jean Francois Lyotard” *Encyclopedia Britannica*. 2010 ed. *Encyclopedia Britannica Online*. Web. 15 Oct. 2010

²⁸ Jean François Lyotard was the initial philosopher who used the term *Différend*. *The Différend* addresses instances of linguistic injustice where the victim is rendered speechless due to her/his inability to use the language dictated by the abuser. This stripping away a victim’s voice is a greater offense than the violation in the first place. The injustice of the *différend* is not just that a wrong has occurred, but that the victim is not able to communicate about it due to the measure of control imposed upon him or her by the victimizer through a domination of the language used or the linguistic rules applied pertaining to the wrong done. In other words: “The *différend* is signaled by this inability to prove. The one who lodges a complaint is heard, but the one who is victim, and who is perhaps the same one, is reduced to silence”.

²⁹“As some film artists had to disappear, bunting their place before the talkies, Algerian writers of my generation and my training will one day or another, in the short or long term give the floor to Algerian writers writing in Arabic ...”

³⁰« Il faut que l’écrivain reste indépendant, parce qu’il ne doit pas être mêlé au pouvoir. Il ne faut pas qu’il subisse les pressions du pouvoir. Il a une mission qui consiste à dire qu’il sent ; que ça plaise ou non » (The researcher translation)

³¹ As qtd. in Simon, Gikandi. *Ngugi Wa Thiong’O*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000 (227)

³²“The colonization of each other’s minds is the price we pay for thought”, Mary Douglas.

Source:

The New York Times, May 22, 2007, front page; quoting the British anthropologist Mary Douglas on occasion of her death on May 16, 2007 at the age of 86.

³³ Term used by Malek Bennabi , Algerian thinker, philosopher and writer, to express any “possible vulnerability towards acceptance and influencability vis-à-vis colonialism”

Chapter Two

EXTENT, LIMIT, AND EVOLUTION OF FERAOUN'S CRITIQUE OF COLONIALISM

Feraoun's novel [Le Fils du pauvre] is more than just a testimony in which he recounts the daily life of his Berber mountain village, the emigration of his father to Paris, and especially his adolescent efforts to succeed in becoming a teacher rather than a simple shepherd. Through its austere authenticity and the modesty of its form, it became a classic for young Algerians, and marked, moreover, the birth of postcolonial Francophone literature of the Maghreb

(Assia Djebar, *Le fils du pauvre* Préface)

Introduction

This chapter explores some facts about Feraoun's life and his writings. It investigates, further, how he criticized colonialism and to what extent he shows some ambivalence towards his French education and, by extension, towards colonialism in general.

2.1. Mouloud Feraoun. Growing up Poor

Mouloud Feraoun¹ is an Algerian author and educator. He was born on March 08, 1913 in Tizi-Hibel. He grew up in a family of poor *fellahs* (peasants) made up of five children. He was the third child and the first boy.

At the age of seven, Mouloud Feraoun entered Taourirt-Moussa Primary School, near his native village. Having won a scholarship, he joined Tizi-Ouzou Middle School in 1928. Four years later, he successfully obtained a spot at the Teachers College of Bouzaréa in Algiers.

After his graduation from the teacher's college, Feraoun began his career as a teacher in his native village Taourirt-Aden (1936-1937). A year later, in 1938, he

married his cousin Dehbia with whom he had seven children (Feraoun, *Le journal* 223).

After teaching in several other schools in the same region (Taourirt-Aden 1936-1937, Taboudrist, 1937-45; Ait-Abdel-Moumen, 1945-46; Taourirt-Moussa, 1946-52), Feraoun was appointed principal of a school in Fort-National (Larba Nath Irathen) in 1952. Because of the harassment pressure he suffered at the hands of Archard, a French administrator and member of the *Sections Administratives Spécialisées* (SAS, Specialized Administrative Sections), in July 1957, he moved to the suburbs of Algiers, precisely to the Nador School in Clos Salembier, as principal. The following year, he became an inspector and co-director of the Centres de Services Sociaux Éducatifs (The Centers for Social and Educational Services) at Château Royal near Algiers (Feraoun, *Le journal* 223). The United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) to enable the poorest in society to receive a formal education established the centers.

Mouloud Feraoun was assassinated in March 15, 1962 in El-Biar while having a discussion over the Algerian postcolonial education at the CSES. Two ordered Feraoun and five other colleagues outside: *Organisation Armée Secrète* (OAS) [Secret Armed Organization] brigades and were machine-gunned.

Germaine Tillion wrote in *Le monde* shortly after Mouloud Feraoun's assassination, a few days before the ceasefire, which signaled the end of the War of Independence:

This honest man... this man who never did wrong to anyone, who devoted his life to the public good, and who was one of the greatest writers in Algeria, has been murdered ... Not by accident, not by mistake, but called by his name and killed with preference. (Lenzini, *Mouloud Feraoun. Un écrivain engagé* 360)

He was a man of hope; he preached hope; he instilled hope and continues to instill hope to Algerians through his legacy. His Friend Emmanuel Roblès wrote: “Feraoun was ill-understood by both the Europeans and the Arabs of Algeria...he is the one who wanted us believe desperately in a new and free nation which can enrich the cultures and forces of its entire people (358)”².

Roblès added in another context: “Here he is as patient, generous, impregnated with the virtues of these mountaineers..., in love with honor and justice (يوسف 9-11)”³

2.2. His Works

Feraoun wrote many novels with his unique descriptive style: *Le fils du pauvre* (*The Poor Man's Son* 1950), *La terre et le sang* (*Land and Blood* 1953), *Les chemins qui montent* (*The Ascending Paths* 1957), and *La cité des roses* (*The Roses Housing Project* of 2007). Feraoun also wrote many short stories, describing the daily life of peasants in his village *Jours de Kabylie* (*Kabylie Days*, 1954), as well letters *Lettres à mes amis* (*Letters to One's Friends*, 1969), and a war diary *Journal* (*Journal 1954-62*) (*Aoudjit, Algerian Literature* 68-69). Finally, Feraoun is known as the editor of an *anthology of Mhand ou Mhand poems: The Poems of Si Mohand*.

Le fils du pauvre (The Poor Man's Son, 1950)

Les Cahiers du Nouvel Humanisme first printed Mouloud Feraoun's *Le fils du pauvre* in a limited edition in France in 1950. One year after, Feraoun was awarded the “Grand Prix Littéraire” of the City of Algiers. *Éditions du Seuil* then reprinted the novel in 1954, under the supervision of Paul Flamand and Emmanuel Roblès. For the

1954 edition, the seventh and final chapter were rewritten and about fifty pages were deleted from the end of the work (*Le fils du pauvre x*).

Le fils du pauvre has become a classic. Many critics considered it as one of North Africa's greatest and artistic literary masterpieces. It opened the way for an Algerian literature deeply rooted in the Algerian social and cultural context, environment and experience. *Le fils du pauvre* is a semi-autobiographical novel that is simple in both form and style. The story revolves around a young boy nicknamed Fouroulou Menrad, struggling to get an education.

The story tells the story of a boy named "Fouroulou Menrad" who grew up in one of the villages in the rugged and forgotten hills of Algeria, covering the period from 1910's to 1940's, a time of great economic hardship, colonial injustice and horrific misery...

The novel is made up of four parts: '*La famille*' (The Family), '*Le fils aîné*' (The Eldest Son), '*Bouzaréa*', and '*La Guerre*' (The War) (Feraoun, *Le fils du pauvre*). The first part is the longest one; it is written in the first person; the others are written in the third person. This part is devoted to Fouroulou's experience torn between rural Taourirt Moussa and urban Algiers. The second, third, and fourth parts put the story in a larger context by tackling the issue of colonialism and World War II.

Feraoun started writing the *Le fils du pauvre* on the eve of Second World War in 1939 after his graduation from the teachers college in Bouzaréa, where he met his friend Emmanuel Roblès. The novel takes place in a village in the forgotten hills of Algeria where the author was born and raised.

Throughout the novel, Feraoun alludes to many characters drawn from Greek mythology and world literature such as *Odysseus* (7) and *Don Quixote* (3). In addition to Feraoun's descriptive and reportage-like text, he also places himself as an insider

and story to provide the reader with an opportunity to taste the element of drama in the text.

Feraoun's unique narrative techniques enable the reader to be acquainted with the most striking features of the writer's village: its *djema*, pottery making, and agricultural activities. The narrator is virtually omniscient. Feraoun was inspired by the grand traditions of nineteenth-century French realists: Emile Zola, Guy de Maupassant, Gustave Flaubert and Honoré de Balzac. To serve his purpose; Feraoun uses realist narrative techniques and the indirect discourse.

The first person plural frequently introduces information about Feraoun's village traditions: "as we say..." and "as we Kabyles...." This technique shows that the narrator is speaking from within his culture and that he addresses the French reader. Feraoun's novel is written in a simple but not shallow style, a style that is profound but not complex and ambiguous.

The most prominent themes of the novel are misery, injustice, patience and perseverance. These themes are omnipresent vividly in Feraoun's novels. Life in rugged and forgotten hills in Algeria is an ongoing struggle against hunger, destitution, misery, injustice and debt. It is also precarious. Men are unable to feed their families; emigration is seen as the only solution to many Algerians, including Ramdane, Fouroulou's father, and Amer n'Amer in *Les chemins qui montent*. Medical care is entirely absent. Not surprisingly, "death cuts people down in the prime of youth" (Aoudjit, *Algerian Literature* 70)

Feraoun further describes how the Fathers are destitute and mothers suffer silently and are vulnerable; they often die during childbirth and infant mortality is widespread. Feraoun recounts the heartbreaking story of his lovely aunt Nana who is not only abandoned by her husband Omar but dies during childbirth because nobody

can stop her bleeding. Fouroulou's other aunt, Khalti, suffers a major anxiety attack after her sister Nana dies. She goes insane and disappears into a river with a strong current.

As a young boy, his older sister, Baya, frequently takes Fouroulou to the house of their two maternal aunts who live on the same street as their parents. Nana, the youngest aunt, is twenty and is loved by the neighborhood who calls her "our Yamina". Nana often spoils Fouroulou. Khalti, Nana's sister treats him as an equal and he enjoys her stories heartily

The first part of the novel entitled '*Family*' opens with Faraoun's apologies to both "past and future tourists" whose romantic vision of Algeria often renders blind to the harsh realities of his village existence. A detailed description of Tizi village with reference to its origins, customs, and traditions follows and provides useful background information to the French reader.

Fouroulou Menrad, the protagonist of the story, is depicted as a loved and lovely little boy in a very poor family that ekes out a living from farming, raising livestock, shepherding, or emigrating to work in French factories. Like many adult males in the village, Fouroulou's father, Ramdane, goes off to France for a year or so to work at the lowest jobs and hopefully send money home so that his family staves off starvation and deadly diseases.

One morning, Ramdane urgently asks Fatma, Fouroulou's mother, to wash the little boy's hands, face, neck, and feet, explainin that Fouroulou is to join the village school to be taught by the *Roumis* (The French).

At first, Fouroulou does not really enjoy going to school at first. His best moment of the day is eleven o'clock, the lunchtime when couscous is waiting at home.

Because of his lack of interest in school, Fouroulou repeats the first grade. This does not sit very well with his teacher who reports him to his father.

Fouroulou's father, Ramdane, is the sole breadwinner of the seven-member family; he has to make tremendous efforts in order to make ends meet. After Fouroulou's grandmother who, according to everyone, was the pillar of the house, the dwelling along with the pottery, the livestock, and the debts are divided between her two sons. This obviously makes the burden heavier on both Ramdane and uncle Lounis' shoulders. The brothers are exceptionally worried at the approach of special occasions such as the *Aïds*, when special foods as well as new *gandouras* for the children.

The second part of the book entitled *Le fils ainé* ("The Elder Son") opens with the birth of a new Menrad baby which represents Fouroulou's passage from the only to the eldest son, as the title suggests. This part focuses on the daily life and struggles of the family. As if poverty were not enough to deal with, Fouroulou's family has to battle disease.

One morning, and after being bed-ridden for days, Ramdane leaves the family under the care of his brother to go and work in France; emigration the last resort to both feed his family and pay his debts.

Meanwhile, fortune smiles on Fouroulou; he is awarded a scholarship to study in Tizi-Ouzou secondary school. Facing a housing problem, Azir, a fellow student, suggests to Fouroulou to live with him the coming four years in the Protestant mission across the street from their school. The latter accept the students who come from the mountains and provide them with furnished rooms as well for-free breakfast. Sharing the same room and circumstances, Fouroulou and Azir shortly become close friends. Together, they go to the missionary meetings regularly, after which they go back to

their room to resume their studies. Shortly after, and thanks to Azir's support, Fouroulou sets himself to work harder.

Fouroulou's departure from his village makes his family sad. He is missed and everybody feels the void he leaves at home. Fouroulou, in turn, feels calm and well adapted in his new environment. He almost cannot believe what is happening. From time to time, the young boys' fathers pay a visit and spend the night with them. Ramdane is proud to hear the villagers speak well of his son, though he dearly misses the latter's help in the field.

Due to his hard work, Fouroulou wins one of the few places reserved for Muslim students at the École Normale of Bouzeréa (teachers college) in 1932. He admires his lecturers. More importantly, he considers this as “insurance of prosperity” for himself and for his family.

Fouroulou spends three years in this Teachers college, which he considers sacred experience that he feels unable to put into words. Fouroulou, then, goes back home, gets married and starts teaching his fellow villager's children as well as supporting an extended family of as many as fifteen people, including his cousins who are left penniless after their father's death.

The third part of the book entitled '*La Guerre*' (War) (dated 1944), discarded by a Paris editor fifty years earlier opens with the breaking out of the *Second World War* and contains some rather biting criticism of the French, especially Vichy regime. Fouroulou appears initially confused about war and unsure of the emotions provoked in him. He bears witness to his fellow men misery. His village experiences a cruel starvation and the families of Aït-Tabous can no longer find barley at their markets. Their empty bellies are at the mercy of Vichy whose special services have blocked their supplies. The end of the war did not put an end to the misery of Algerians.

Fouroulou describes life to be still tough, cruel, difficult, and beset by shortages of all kinds.

Feraoun succeeds in showing how Fouroulou is able to achieve his dream through hard work, patience and perseverance despite the harsh conditions that are caused by Colonialism. He unveils the nature of the Algerian *nif* (dignity) exemplified by his father Ramdane and uncle Lounis. He shows determinism and hard character in his matriarch Tessadit and tenderness and devotion in his mother, his aunts Nana and Khalti. He reveals the imperfection of the human nature by means of Helima and her daughters. Throughout his first novel Feraoun suggests that all misery he sees around him is caused first and foremost by colonialism.

The last part of the Mouloud Feraoun's novel which was deleted from 1954 edition was published in 1972 in *L'anniversaire* (The Anniversary) which Feraoun divided into three subsections: "*Bouzaréa*", *La Guerre* ("the War") and *epilogue* ("*epilogue*"). This part shows more about misery and injustice in colonized Algeria. In the second, subsection "*La Guerre*")

Feraoun describes how the World War II worsened life in Algeria. He recounts how "deplorable parade of misery personified...[how] a young man waiting in line shamelessly reveals to anyone passing behind him a bit of filthy buttock...[while another] does not even try to hide a swarthy testicle freed by the trip in his narrow pants (Feraoun, *L'anniversaire* 128-131)."⁴

This part of the novel shows further how extreme poverty is not the only thing destitute peasants faced, they also endured humiliation and abuse because of a combination of colonialism, war and the Vichy regime. This trial pushed people to behave in a peculiar way. Feraoun says that misery is such that "one is ready to cheat

a friend, swindle a brother or break one's promise" just to have enough not to starve.

(Feraoun, *L'anniversaire* 133)⁵

The editor of his book *Le fils du pauvre* summarized the story by saying:

...Feraoun accomplished what few writers ... had been successful at doing in their fiction, which was to take readers inside a time and place, inside the experiences of people burdened by the history and hardships of colonialism in Algeria, inside the misery, poverty ... and most important, inside their hopes (xiii)

Patience and perseverance are two other virtues Feraoun mentions. These themes permeate all Feraoun's works but especially *Le fils du pauvre*. Patience and perseverance are well pictured in Fouroulou's life, his father's Ramdan and uncle Lounis hard work to survive, his aunt Nana, who was abandoned by her husband, and his hard working grandmother, Tassadit, who keeps a whole family alive.

Fouroulou faces his family's extreme hardships with great diligence and determination. He was profoundly affected by his father's fight against illness and his decision to emigrate to France to provide for his family. The latter's subsequent letters encourage the schoolchild to work hard to master the French language so that he can write back without a translator. Later on in the same chapter, Fouroulou's perseverance leads to his remarkable success and being awarded a scholarship to join Tizi-Ouzou secondary school, followed by winning a seat in the École Normale de Bouzaréa.

Fouroulou's patience and determination to poverty and hardship are truly remarkable. In a few words, Feraoun's strong connection to his culture, on the one hand, and his use of the French language and his French education on the other hand, were the two poles of his existence that motivated him to write his first text *Le fils du Pauvre*⁶.

La terre et le sang (Land and Blood, 1953)

This is Feraoun's second literary work in which he offers a poignant portrait of the living conditions of Algerians and his fellow villagers in the 1920's and 1930's. It revolves around the life of Amer who leaves his village Ighil-Nezman, like many of the villagers, to work in the coalmines of France. There, Amer accidentally kills his uncle Rabeh. That event sets off a series of unexpected events and made Rabah's family want to seek revenge. Amer stays in France to work for many years and finally returns to Algeria with his wife Marie, the illegitimate daughter of his uncle Rabeh who died under highly suspicious circumstances.

The novel opens with Amer and his Marie's arrival to his native village Ighil-Nezman, followed by flashbacks to past events and circumstances. In 1910, Amer emigrated to France to escape poverty. Instead of an Eldorado, he is shocked to find that Algerian miners live in deplorable conditions. Too young to work, he spends his first year in France cooking for his compatriots. He thinks his father would be disappointed if he knew that he is a cook, doing domestic work like a "little girl".

During World War I, Amer is captured by the Germans and for five years works in various forced labor camps where he witnesses all kinds of atrocities, humiliation and despair. One day, Marie is sexually harassed by her mother's lover, Joseph Mitard (Feraoun, *La terre et le sang* 77-78). That day, Marie leaves the house, wandering from one region to another across France for a whole year. She works as a prostitute to survive and she is abused because she is a minor and destitute. By the end, she moves back to Paris and her lover puts her in a hotel. He is arrested for theft shortly after. Destitute and pregnant, Marie is obliged to work as a 'cleaner' in the hotel. She spends almost five years there cleaning, washing, and polishing.

After the war, Amer goes to Barbès in Paris to look for Marie. He ultimately finds her and marries her a short period after. They live for three years in Paris before moving back to Algeria. As soon as they settle in Algeria, they are absorbed by the village's customs, rivalries and intrigues.

There in Ighil-Nezman, Amer's father Kaci and mother Kamouma sell their land to survive. A few years later Kaci dies, leaving Kamouma a destitute widow. Worse, even, her family, the Ait Hamouche, does not welcome Kamouma because everyone suspects Amer of being responsible of his uncle's death. It falls on Slimane, Rabah's brother, to avenge him.

Amer's major concern is to help his family survive. The first thing he does is buy Tighezrane, his family's land. Amer is expected to share to hate his uncle Slimane and even confront him as soon as they meet. However, the encounter moves smoothly and pleasantly, mainly thanks to Ramdane, Slimane's Father-in-law's wisdom (Feraoun, *La terre et le sang* 74). To prove his good will, Amer permits Slimane to work the land. Still, that does not put an end to their feud.

Slimane and Chabha have been married for ten years, but they do not have children. Amer's mother, Kamouma, and Chabha's mother, Smina, keep pushing their children to have an affair, hoping that Chebha would get pregnant. Amer is reluctant, but accepts eventually. Tongues begin to wag in the village; Slimane begins to question his wife's faithfulness. He gets into a fight with Amer in a quarry and both die in an explosion (Aoudjit, *Algerian Literature* 237).

This novel is not an autobiography, but rather one of Feraoun's two novels about emigration. In this novel, Feraoun shows, through Amer's story, the gripping daily life of poor emigrants forced to leave their homes by the misery of colonized Algeria.

Land refers to how it is precious in the village life to be given a blood of Amer N' Amer's uncle accidental death. "Land and blood! The two essential elements in every person's destiny (Feraoun, *La terre et le sang* 239)", as symbolized Feraoun. Among other themes of the novel are human imperfection, ambivalence, and identity crisis. The critique of colonialism and its disastrous effects on Algerians permeates the whole novel. Colonialism is the cause of the misery of Algerians, their emigration to France, as well as their mistreatment when there.

Published in 1953, one year before the outbreak of the Algerian revolution, *La terre et le sang* provides an accurate and highly informative image of Muslim-Berber-Arab social, cultural and religious practices in Algeria's countryside before 1962 (Feraoun, *La terre et le sang* 234). This novel, in brief, tackles many issues such as misery, emigration, rural customs, and mixed marriages but the critique of colonialism is always in the background. *La terre et le sang* won the renowned *Prix du Roman Populiste*, a French literary prize that rewards works of fiction that depict life in the colonies in a manner that shows humanity of their inhabitants, especially the modest social classes (232).

Les chemins qui montent (The Ascending Paths, 1957)

This novel continues where *La terre et le sang* left off. It tells the story of young Dehbia passionately in love with Amer n'Amer (Marie' son). Dehbia is distressed by her village life. She reflects on her childhood misery and her conflict with Mokrane, Amer n'Amer's rival. She was born at Ai-Ouadhou, a predominantly Christian village, of a Christian father and a Muslim mother from Ighil-Nezman, Melha. She recalls her hard times and difficult childhood. Dehbia describes how Christians in her village are frustrated, not only because the French do not recognize them as their own,

but also because the villagers do not warmly accept them. When she is ten years old, Dehbia's stepfather dies. Melha takes her daughter to her native village Ighil-Nezman where she works for the Ait-Slimane family carrying water. Dehbia describes her life in Ighil-Nezman, the hardships she faced and hostility of the villagers toward her mother Melha who left the village and came back after a long absence with a Christian daughter. Dehbia is considered a pariah.

Dehbia describes her love for Amer. Deep in her heart she knows that she can only dream of marrying Amer. Still, she cherishes the time they embraced passionately, even if it was only for a brief moment.

Amer n' Amer recounts his life, starting with his mother's death. He recalls as well the hostility of his fellow villagers after he founded a communist cell in Ighil-Nezman. He goes further back in his memory to remember the abuse and humiliation he faced as an orphan.

Amer n' Amer left the village to seek a better life in France as his mother advised him. In Paris, he tried to distance himself live from his fellow Algerians to finally become the Frenchman he thinks he is destined to be. Soon after, he changes his mind as he is treated just like all Algerians; his efforts to become French end in grief and hardship. He endures disdain and verbal abuse like his compatriots. The fact that he has a French mother did not make any difference. He realizes that Algeria would always remain his haven; it is part of him (Aoudjit, *Algerian Literature* 241).

After ten years, Amer leaves Paris to begin his life afresh in his country. Nothing has changed in his village. Life in Ighil-Nezman seems more miserable than before, now that he knows how the French live. This part shows clearly how ambivalent Amer n' Amer is toward France.

The novel ends up with the protagonist's intense sense of ambivalence, isolation, and non-being. Amer n'Amer's life turns to be a nightmare. He feels that he is in a kind of a cultural limbo, and that he fits neither in Algeria nor in France.

The only remedy to his depression is the presence of Dehbia who shares his hybridity. However, he cannot marry her as he thinks he cannot offer her the life she merits. Dehbia, though caring, cannot give what he expects from her. By the end, Amer n'Amer commits suicide or so it appears.

Like the other Feraoun's novels, *Les chemins qui montent* tackles the issues of hardship, emigration, ambivalence, and identity crisis but it is, above all, a scathing critique of colonialism.

La cité des roses (Housing Project of Roses, 2007)

This novel split into two parts. Feraoun uses in the first part the third person narrator and uses in the second part the personal pronoun I to express his days and nights. In this autobiographical novel, Feraoun changes his style to include many flashbacks in a form of a diary.

The title of the novel is ironic; it does not reflect the reality Feraoun describes. As in previous novels, describes life is in the colonial times; the ravages of the war, and the violence and inhumanity of colonialism⁷.

In 1958, Feraoun was forced to move to Algiers after being harassed by the French administrator of Larba Nath Iraten. In Algiers, fear and repression were omnipresent. Feraoun became more critical of colonialism than ever before.

Feraoun wrote this novel to object to colonialism and its atrocities. The publisher asked Feraoun to modify his manuscript. Feraoun understood that the reason

behind the request was more political than professional. Forty-five years after Feraoun's death, his son Ali submitted the manuscript for publication in 2007.

In the midst of this miserable life and echoes of deaths everywhere, a love affair develops between an Algerian school headmaster and a French woman, Françoise. She does not really know what to make of this new infatuation she already loved a handsome Frenchman and an Algerian man. Their love is rather impossible as they are already married (Feraoun, *La cité des roses* 107).

Françoise is also conflicted because she still loves MG, the French officer of "Les Unités Terrestres"⁸ even though he "préchaît l'intégration des âmes à tout prix et la fraternization obligatoire" (Feraoun, *La cité des roses* 50)⁹.

The Algerian headmaster seems ambivalent about the relationship as Françoise is. Both belong to two opposing camps: the colonizer and the colonized. Feraoun writes : She is "engagée sur une pente...!" (63) and he is aware that "[il] n'était pas un traître mais un hybride. Personne n'en voulait plus, il était bon pour le couteau, la mitraillette ou tout au moins la prison (18)"¹⁰.

Françoise has little or no contact with her Algerian neighbors; she is not popular because of her pro-position towards colonialism. In a dialogue with the narrator, she expresses outspokenly her pro-France position. In a heated conversation with the headmaster, she says: "[c]ommes ici il a pouvait leur apporter quelque chose disait elle. Quand nous ne serons plus là, ils seront un peu plus malheureux voilà tout. Et vous avec eux, monsieur l'irréductible (Feraoun, *La cité des roses* 114) ". The head master replies : "c'est votre orgueil qui est irréductible...votre complexe de supériorité....ils croient avoir fait l'Algérie et la montrent orgueilleusement à qui serait tenté de diminuer leur mérite (114)"¹¹

In *La cité des roses*, Feraoun explores many themes, namely: love, liberty, exile and identity. Feraoun uses a perfect linear narrative technique in the form of diary as in his *Journal*. In all dialogues that are found all over the novel, Feraoun makes clear that all communication between the French and the Algerian characters is impossible. The lack of communication between the two parties symbolizes the idea that the only solution to the thorny situation is the independence of the country.

Le journal (The Journal 1955-1962)

In November 1, 1955, one year after the outbreak of the Algerian revolution, Feraoun started writing his diary. It ends on March 14, 1962. One day before, the OAS assassinated him. Feraoun wanted to publish his journal to inform the public about the situation, but the editor declined his request on the pretext that it was too violent and the situation too delicate.

The representatives of France, here, have always treated me as an enemy since the troubles began, yet they would like me to act like a good French patriot---simply out of gratitude because France has made a headmaster and a writer of me...as though all that were a generous gift I'd only had to hold out my hand for. As though in return I ought to support the French cause to the detriment of my own people, who may be in error but who suffer and die ...I'am simply asked to die as a traitor and then I should have paid my debt. (Feraoun, *Le journal*)

To protect his manuscripts, Feraoun gave it to his friend Emanuel Robles who hid it in his garden. In *Le Journal*, he recorded everything, detailed all his preoccupations, and narrated all the major events that took place. On February 5, 1962, he wrote: "De Gaulle will deliver a speech to end up the war in Algeria. How many victims would be? OAS is killing... with cowardice of all...a blessing to deaths, peace to those alive... stops violence... vive liberty (345-346)".

On February 22, 1956, Feraoun sent a lucid letter to the League of Teachers showing his position to what the French called the insurrection. He said :

J'ai pour la Kabylie, écrivait-il, une tendresse filiale que j'ai voulu exprimer dans mes livres. J'en ai donné une image sympathique mais non une image trompeuse. Que puis-je écrire à présent alors que l'angoisse me noue la gorge ? Dirai-je sa souffrance ou sa révolte ? [...] Il s'agit seulement de comprendre pourquoi cette unanimité dans la rébellion, pourquoi le divorce est si brutal. La vérité c'est qu'il n'y jamais eu mariage ! Les Français sont restés à l'écart. Ils croyaient que l'Algérie, c'était eux. [...] Ce qu'il eut fallu pour s'aimer ? Se connaître d'abord. Un siècle Durant on s'est coudoyé avec curiosité, il ne reste plus qu'à récolter cette indifférence réfléchie qui est le contraire de l'amour. [...] Les comptes, c'est la reconnaissance de notre droit à vivre, de notre droit à l'instruction et au progrès, de notre droit à être libre. (Feraoun, *Le journal* 10)¹²

On May 6, 1957, he wrote describing how savage the colonizer was. "I come back from Algiers after three days there, I saw people in misery...French soldiers beating, stealing, torturing and killing... (227-228)."

On December 12, 1960, he describes how life was after the famous demonstrations of December 12, 1961, saying: "there were ninety deaths and one thousand five hundred injuries in Algeria. Thirteen deaths and seventy injured today... (309-310)."

In a scathing critique of the hypocrisy of the colonialists, he writes: "civilized people think they offer moral lessons to the world with killing innocents... with no consciousness...they kill...civilized people happy with their wrong doings... (348)."

Feraoun's journal is both a diary and a historical testimony. The writer shows his pain and ache towards what was happening in Algeria. He was present in flesh, mind, and soul with the Algerian cause. He added, at the end, "Oui, je me battrais

parce que j'ai vécu dans ce pays que je crois être le mien (Feraoun, *Le journal*)¹³. He says:

I had given myself a fortnight to escape from my horizons, my friends, my habits and my worries. As an obsession followed the image of my country in revolt, a country determined to proclaim its suffering, its anger and its hatred. I was proud to hear his voice, but frightened that he would not be understood that the raucous cries that from his throat are not intelligible to the attentive world that listens to him [...] It is generally believed that such questions which would be frightening, now comes, must not be asked now or all efforts must be of liberation. (Feraoun, *Le journal* 34-61)¹⁴

In most of his works, Feraoun mixes romantic narratives, diary and history-like writing carrying profound messages in a simple, yet not shallow language.

2.3. Extent, limit, and evolution of Feraoun's critique of colonialism

This part recapitulates Feraoun's critique of colonialism and investigates to what extent he shows some ambivalence towards his French education and the French people and, by extension, towards colonialism in general in his early novels. It also investigates how his denunciation of colonialism became more radical in *La cite des roses* and *journal*. In short, this section explores the extent, the limits, and the evolution of Feraoun's critique colonialism.

2.3.1. The Ambivalence of Feraoun's early writings

Feraoun's early novels, especially *Le fils du pauvre*, are sometimes rejected out of hand on the grounds that they are merely ethnographic, even apolitical. As Aoudjit put it:

The publication of *Le fils du pauvre* in 1950 was uneventful. While French critics gave it lavish praise and described it in a not so subtle

paternalistic tone as “a beautiful novel” and “simple, touching, written in a language, which is accessible to everyone,” Algerian critics met it with indifference. (Aoudjit, *The Algerian Novel* 1)

Readers who are already familiar with the writer’s life and career can easily tell that *Le fils du pauvre* is full of personal details. For instance, there is almost no difference between the author and the novel’s main character. Both were born in the same period (1912-13) and both were raised in poor mountains villages. Furthermore, both Feraoun and Fouroulou lived in extreme poverty. Finally, both struggled to get an education and had the misfortune of seeing their fathers emigrate to France.

However, *Le Fils du pauvre* is not strictly autobiographical. Like *La terre et le sang*, and *Les chemins qui montent*, it is a means of cultural affirmation and a powerful indictment of the deplorable social and economic conditions of Algerians during the occupation of their country. Feraoun evokes the values, customs and traditions of Algerians as a challenge to the colonialist ideology. He presents the unique experience of being Algerian during the colonial period. He also shows the Algerians’ profound love of their land and his affection and respect for the humble peasants and emigrant workers : “cette terre aime ses enfants, elle reconnaît tout de suite les siens ; ceux qui sont faits pour elle et pour que elle est faite..., il faut la découvrir et pour cela, il faut l’aimer”. (Feraoun, *La terre et le sang* 31)¹⁵

Despite the fact that Feraoun reveals the deplorable situation of Algerians, pointing out their poverty, their lack of quality health care, education, and social services, he does not put the blame on the French—at least not explicitly. Indeed, sometimes he seems to welcome their presence.

To start with, he shows a strong affection for the French school. He believes that it is thanks to its administrators and educators that Fouroulou, a “humble”

shepherd succeeded in escaping his fate to become a teacher and a brilliant writer.

Furthermore, he is full of praise for his teacher M. Lemberg:

M.Lemberg est un homme admirable. Sa haute taille légèrement voûtée, sa démarche un peu raide, comme celle d'un officier, la longue barbe qui orne sa belle figure inspirent un respect mêlé de crainte. Il a aussi une voix forte, grave, mesurée. Mais près de lui, quand il vous a regardé de ses yeux pleins de franchise, de douceur, de naïveté, le respect se transforme en confiance absolue. (Feraoun, *Le fils du pauvre* 165)¹⁶

Feraoun also speaks highly of the Catholics missionaries and compares them favorably to the Muslim clerics:

Azir expliqua qu'un missionnaire est un homme de bien, fait pour aider les pauvres, à peu près dans le genre des Pères Blancs. En plus de tous les services qu'il rendait aux malheureux montagnards, chaque soir, il les réunissait dans une grande salle pour leur parler de religion, les conseiller, les éduquer. C'était admirable. (Feraoun, *Le fils du pauvre* 163)¹⁷

La parole est aux cheikhs ! L'un d'eux sort un vieux livre en arabe tout noir de fumée, enveloppé dans un mouchoir. Il lit quelque chose d'incompréhensible, appelle sur nous la baraka puis, sans transition, les foudres du ciel ne nous apaisons pas. Instantanément, ma grand-mère tremblant va effleurer le livre saint de ses lèvres timides... (Feraoun, *Le fils du pauvre* 55)¹⁸

Worse, even, not content with belittling the Muslim clerics, Feraoun puts down Muslim clerics by suggesting that, unlike Christianity, they are segregationist:

Le dimanche, on se sent un peu différent des autres, un peu supérieur, affranchi en quelques sortes puisque les barrières conventionnelles entre home et femmes, jeunes et vieux, disparaissent dans le temple de Dieu... Les musulmans les ferment, au contraire. (Feraoun, *Les chemins qui montent* 22-23)¹⁹

However, nowhere is Feraoun's ambivalence towards colonialism more explicit than in *Jours de Kabylie* where he calls the French teachers "apostles" and says, in a language reminiscent of colonialist propaganda that they teach reason and humanity:

Les premiers instituteurs fabriquèrent de la bonne terre dans leur jardin et, dans leur classe, ils cultivèrent les petits esprits éveillés mais absolument sauvages Les écoliers du Bled sont de vulgaires écoliers (131-134)²⁰

Le cheikh est un homme instruit, il ne saurait ni mentir, ni tromper. Ce que l'on exige de lui, il n'a aucun mérite à le donner. Nos anciens réussirent ce prodige de faire de l'école du village lieu où l'on envoie les enfants pour qu'ils deviennent meilleurs, le temple d'une religion nouvelle qui n'exclut pas l'ancienne, car elle s'adresse au cœur et à la raison, se sert du langage humain et enseigne la vérité humaine²¹

Ainsi chez nous, ceux qui ont... ces vieux maîtres ne disent pas qu'ils furent des apôtres et des saints. Ils disent que ce furent d'honnêtes gens, toujours prêt à rendre service, des savants qui avaient bien vite gagné l'admiration, l'estime et le respect. Très souvent ils ajoutent : que Dieu leur réserve une place au paradis. (Feraoun, *Jours de Kabylie* 132-133)²²

2.3.2. A more radical critique : *Journal and La cité*

Starting with his *Journal*, Feraoun's attitude towards the French presence in Algeria undergoes a paradigm shift; it becomes unequivocally pro-independence: He says:

"La vérité... Les Français croyaient que l'Algérie c'était eux : non messieurs, l'Algérie c'est nous. Vous êtes étrangers sur notre Terre (Feraoun, *Le journal* 62)"²³

It seems that Feraoun, finally, came to the realization that there is no way the French and Algerians can be friends as long as colonialism is in place. In a message to his friends Camus and Robles, he says:

Ce pays s'appelle bien l'Algérie et ses habitants des Algériens. Pourquoi tourner autour de cette évidence ? Êtes-vous Algériens mes amis ? Votre place est à côté de ceux qui luttent .Dites aux Français que le payé n'est pas à eux , qu'il sont emparé par la force et entendent y demeurer par la force .Tout le reste est mensonge , mauvaise foi

.Tout autre langage est criminel parce que , depuis des mois ,se commettent des crimes au nom des mêmes mensonges ; depuis des mois meurent des innocents sont surtout des indigènes .Des gens qui ne font rien pour sortir de leur condition...la justice a toujours appelé le malheur sans avoir jamais supprimé la force. (Feraoun, *Le journal* 108)²⁴

Feraoun's pro-independence stance is also apparent in his empathy and praise for the fighters of the Armée de Libération Nationale (National Liberation Army, ALN):

Les hors-la-loi sont des nôtres. Ils se comportent en Kabyles et ont soin de ne pas nous blesser. Selon le cas ils flattent notre fanatisme, notre orgueil, nos espoirs, ou alors ils partagent nos idées, nos conceptions démocratique de la société, nos sentiments humanitaires. Ils ont de tout parmi eux. N'importe qui se sentirait à l'aise dans le maquis [...] l'objectif pour les patriotes était donc de prouver que l'Algérie n'est pas territoire français contrairement aux prétentions gouvernementales. (Feraoun, *Le journal* 61-69)²⁵

Feraoun refers to two love affairs in *Le journal* and *La cité des roses*. In *Le journal*, the protagonist's lover is *Claire*. The name *Claire* ("clear" in English) symbolizes the author's conviction that the relationship between Algeria and France must end. The same message is conveyed by the failure of the relationship between Françoise and the school headmaster in *La cité*. Accordingly, the Algerians and the French must divorce even though they cohabited for almost a century and half.

For the Algerian headmaster, Françoise represents the two faces of France: a supposedly civilized France that preaches the ideals of liberty, equality, and fraternity, which the writer would like to believe, and an uncivilized, tyrant, oppressive France that used all its power to subjugate and oppress the Algerian people.

In *La cité des roses*, Feraoun shows that the relation between the Algerian school headmaster and Françoise is uneasy. It traps both in an ambivalent situation. The schoolteacher feels torn between his love and his values:

Tous deux, nous n'attendions plus grand-chose de ce lundi. Peut-être le baiser d'adieu avec des larmes de bêtes. Peut-être rien du tout : une simple poignée de main parmi toutes les autres. Enfin, dans le domaine du possible, double crise de colère suivie d'une vive altercation pour s'en aller avec de la rancune. Une fausse rancune qui masquerait notre tristesse...En fin de compte, ça été la poignée de main, accompagnée d'un regard chargé de toute la tristesse du monde et aussi d'un soupçon de promesse. (59) ²⁶

The schoolteacher finally chooses to preserve his dignity and put an end to his dilemma. Françoise (in *La cité des roses*) and Claire (in *Le journal*) who represents France also decide to give up their lovers.

As time goes by, Feraoun becomes even more militant : “Vous les dupes, taisez-vous, nous criaient les jeunes. Cachez-vous ou alors disparaissez à jamais. Nous sommes des musulmans...Bravo mes chères petits, vous ne voulez plus que nous soyons les dupes. (Feraoun, *La cité des roses* 169)”²⁷

Feraoun adds : “Plus que jamais, il s'agissait pour les Français de garder l'Algérie en supprimant toute opposition. Il s'agissait pour nous de reconquérir notre liberté et d'être maitres chez nous (166).” ²⁸.

Convinced that the Algerians are different from the French and Algeria cannot be France. Feraoun says : “La lutte s'est engagée entre deux peuples différents, entre le maitre et le serviteur...les Algériens n'ont pas attendu le xx^e siècle pour se savoir Algériens. La meilleurs preuve c'est que tout de suite on s'est groupé derrière les libérateurs” (Feraoun, *Le journal* 64)²⁹

Overall, the impossible love affairs in *Le journal* and in *La cité des roses* symbolize of the impossibility of any reconciliation between the two communities as long as colonialism was in place.

Conclusion

Working within the conventions of the realistic novel, Feraoun has succeeded in creating a vivid picture of Algerian society during the colonial period. He has also succeeded in presenting a scathing critique of the way the French treated Algerians at home (*Le fils du pauvre*, *La cité des roses*, *Le journal*) and in mainland France (*La terre et le sang*, *Les chemins qui montent*). However, despite his strong condemnation of the deplorable social situation that existed in Algeria during the French occupation, his critique of colonialism in his early novels does not go as far as to reject colonialism as a system. Nevertheless, Feraoun's novels are still worth reading for the following reasons: they provide a strikingly realistic picture of life in Algeria from the beginning of the twentieth century to the end of the War of Independence. They therefore help make sure that the tragic events that marked that period are not forgotten, they help keep alive the customs and traditions of Algerians' ancestors, they invite comparison with more radical critiques of colonialism such as Kateb Yacine's *Nedjma*, and they provide a good example of realist literature by combining incisive social critique with elegant language. In sum, Feraoun is so important for his achievements as much as for his shortcoming.

NOTES

¹Mouloud Feraoun est considéré comme l'un des plus grands écrivains de la première génération de la littérature algérienne en Français, mieux connue sous l'appellation « génération 5 ». Cette littérature, dont le père fondateur n'est autre que Jean Amrouche... Kateb Yacine, Mouloud Mammeri et Mouloud Feraoun lui-même seront récompensés chacun à leur tour pour leur œuvres... Mouloud Feraoun explique cet engouement par l'importance que prennent ces écrivains aux yeux des français. Ce sont avant tout des témoins de leur temps, et de leur société, mais avec une vision endogène (Chibani)

²Original text in French : « Feraoun aura été mal entendu... par les Européens comme par les Arabes d'Algérie... Lui qui voulait croire désespérément en une nation nouvelle et libre qui pourrait s'enrichir de cultures et de forces de tous ses enfants ? »

³« Le voici tel qu'il était patient, généreux, tout imprégné des vertus ... épris d'honneur et de justice », (Translated from French by the researcher)

⁴As cited from Abdelkader Aoujit book *Algerian Literature. A Reader's Guide and Anthology* (70-71)

⁵Ibid.

⁶Feraoun says about his first novel :

J'ai écrit " *le Fils du Pauvre*" pendant les années sombres de la guerre, à la lumière d'une lampe à pétrole. J'y ai mis le meilleur de mon être... Le succès qu'il emporté m'a encouragé à écrire d'autres livres... l'idée m'est venue que je pourrai essayer de traduire l'âme... kabyle... la difficulté est de l'exprimer le plus fidèlement possible" (Messaoud)

⁷Solenn Gaya, Journalist at *LiverEscQ* says :

Elle est écrite sous la forme d'un journal intime-technique familière à Feraoun... au fil des échanges épistolaires, il lui avoue que ce n'est pas elle qui l'occupe... mais son pays... dans ce roman posthume, l'écrivain fait montre d'une écriture engagée ; il y exprime sans ambages ses prises de position politiques en faveur de l'Indépendance de son pays (Gaya)

⁸"Terrestrial Units" (Translated from French by the researcher)

⁹preached the integration of souls at all costs and compulsory fraternization" (Translated from French)

¹⁰The teacher was not a traitor but a hybrid. A person who had not been accepted... he was good for a knife ... or a gun or at least a prison" (Translated from French)

11

We have had the opportunity to talk about this independence many times and Françoise cannot believe in it. As if it could bring them something, she said. When we are no longer there, they will be a little unhappy that is all. You with them Mr. irreducible" "...It is your arrogance which is irreducible... your superiority complex ... they believed they had made Algeria and proudly show it... to those who tempted to diminish its merit

(Translated from French by the researcher)

12

I have for Kabylia ... a filial tenderness that I wanted to express in my books. I have a nice image about it but not a misleading one. What can I write now when anxiety ties my throat? Shall I say this suffering or this revolt? [...] It is only a question of understanding: why this unanimity in the rebellion? Why the divorce is so brutal? The truth there has never been a marriage. The French have stayed away. They

believed Algeria was their own [...] what it took to love yourself? Know yourself first. A century during which we elbow each other with curiosity...all that remains is to reap the thoughtful indifference which is the opposite to love [...] accounts are the recognition of our right to live, our right to have education and progress, our right to be free (Translated from French by the researcher)

¹³“Yes, I would fight because I lived in this country which I believe to be mine”

(Translated from French by the researcher)

14

Je m'étais accordé une quinzaine pour m'évader de mes horizons, mes amis, mes habitudes, mes inquiétudes. Comme une obsession m'a suivi l'image de mon pays en révolte, un pays décidé à clamer sa souffrance, sa colère et sa haine. Et j'étais fier d'entendre sa voix, mais effrayé qu'il ne se fasse pas comprendre, que les cris rauques qui sortent de son gosier ne soient pas intelligible du monde attentif qui l'écoute [...] On estime en général que de telles questions qui seraient angoissantes, venu le moment, ne doivent pas se poser à présent ou tous les efforts doivent être des efforts de libération... [...] (Original text)

¹⁵“This land loves its children, it immediately recognizes them; those who are made for it and for it to be made ..., you have to discover it and for that, you have to love it” (Translated from French by the researcher)

16

Mr. Lamber is an admirable man. He is tall, slightly arched waist, his slightly stiff gait, like that of an officer, the long beard, which adorns his beautiful figure; inspire a respect mixed with fear. He also has a strong, serious and measured voice. But close to him, when he looked at you with his eyes full of darkness, gentleness, naivety, respect turns into absolute confidence

(Translated from French by the researcher)

17

Azir explained that the missionary is a good man, made to help the poor, more or less like the White Fathers. In addition to all services he rendered to the fortunate mountaineers, each evening he gathered them in a large room to discuss about religion, advise them, educate them. It was admirable.

(Translated from French by the researcher)

18

The word is up to the sheikhs! One of them pulls up an old smoke-filled Arabic book wrapped in handkerchief. He reads something incomprehensible, called Baraka (blessing) and then, without transition, the lightening of the sky did not calm us down. Instantly, my trembling grandmother will touch the holy book with her shy lips.

(Translated from French by the researcher)

¹⁹“On Sundays, we feel a little different from others, a little superior, somewhat freed since the conventional barriers between home and women, young and old, disappear in the temple of God ...Muslims close them on contrary” (Translated from French by the researcher)

²⁰“The first teachers made good soil in their garden and in their class; they cultivated the little awake, but absolutely wild spirits. The school children of Bled are vulgar...!” (Translated from French by the researcher)

The sheikh is an educated man; he can neither lie nor deceive. What is inquired of him has no merit to give. Our elders succeeded in their miracle of making the village school the place where children. Our elders succeeded in this miracle in making the school village the place where children are sent to become better, the temple of new religion, which does not exclude the old, because it is aimed at heart and reason. Uses human languages to teach humanity.

(Translated from French by the researcher)

²²Some regions of Kabylia had primary schools as soon as the school laws of the third republic were applied. The first teachers were apostles. They taught little awakened, but absolutely wild spirits...[They taught humanity]...(Translated from French by the researcher)

²³“The truth ...The French believed Algeria is theirs: no gentlemen...Algeria are ours. You are strangers on our land” (Translated from French by the researcher)

This country is called Algeria and its inhabitants called Algerians. Why people turn around this evidence? Are you Algerians my friends? Your place is then next to those who are struggling. Tell the French that this land is not theirs. Everything else is a lie and fake faith...crimes have been committed in the name of those lies. Innocent people die have been dying on the name of the same lies..., mainly natives. People who do nothing to go out of their condition...justice has always called for misfortune without ever having removed force (Translated from French by the researcher)

The outlaws are ours. They behave like Kabyles and take care not to hurt us. Depending on the case, they flatter our fanaticism, our pride, our hopes ...they share our ideas, our democratic conceptions of society and our humanitarian feelings. They have everything among them. Any would feel comfortable in the maquis [...]The objective of the patriot was therefore to prove that Algeria is not French territory contrary to the French governmental claims

(Translated from French by the researcher)

Both of us have a little expectation of this Monday. May be the farewell kiss with tears...May be nothing at all: a simple handshake among all the others. Finally in the realm of the possible, a double tantrum followed by an intense argument to go away with resentment. A false grudge that would mask our sadness ...In the end, it was the handshake, accompanied by a look charged with all the sadness in the world and also a hint of promise (Translated from French by the researcher)

²⁷“You fools, be quit, the young people were shouting at us .Hide yourself or disappear forever. We are Muslims...well done my dear little ones...you no longer want us to be the dupes” (Translated from French by the researcher)

²⁸“More than ever, it was for the French to keep Algeria by suppressing all opposition. It was for us to regain our freedom and to be masters of ourselves” (Translated from French by the researcher)

²⁹“The struggle started between two different people, between the master and the servant ...the Algerians did not wait for the twentieth century to know themselves as Algerians. The best proof is that immediately we grouped behind liberators” (Translated from French by the researcher)

Chapter Three

NGUGI'S MARXIST CRITIQUE OF COLONIALISM

I write about people: I' am interested in their hidden lives, their fears and hopes, their loves and hates, and how the very tension in their hearts affects their daily contact with other men: how, in other words, the emotional stream of the man within interacts with the social reality

(Ngugi Wa Thiong'O, *Homecoming* 31)

Introduction

Ngugi was a man of thoughts and words. He lived a brief, yet interesting life. He expressed his revolutionary ideas in novels, in plays, as well as in essays. Moreover, he was both a good thinker and a sophisticated writer. Ngugi's revolutionary ideas cannot be understood independently of his life. Consequently, before any thought is given to the way he criticized colonialism, it is necessary to draw a short sketch of his difficult formative years.

3.1. A Life of Struggle

Ngugi was born James Ngugi on January 5, 1938, in Kamiriithu, a small village in Kenya's Central Province. He used the upheavals that shook his hometown as a microcosm of Kenya's fight for independence. He also used it for a communally developed theater from 1977 to 1982.

Being the son of a tenant farmer, Ngugi had to share the meager resources of his extended family with twenty-eight other children and their parents. The conflicts within his family, which were exacerbated by the anti-colonial struggle, profoundly affected the young boy:

As I write I remember the nights of fighting in my father's house; my mother's struggle with the soil so that we might eat, have decent clothes and get some schooling; my elder brother, Wallace Mwangi , running to the cover and security of the forest under a hail of bullets from colonial policeman; his message from the forest urging me to continue with education at any cost...uncles and other villagers murdered because they had taken the oath...I remember too some relatives and fellow villagers who carried the gun for the white man and often became his messengers of blood. I remember the fears, the betrayals...the moments of despair and love and kinship in struggle and I try to find meaning of it all through my pen. (Simpon 6)

Ngugi attended first Kamaandura School until eleven-years old and then Karing'a Independent School in Mangangua. Later, he entered Alliance High School¹. The latter's Christian teaching gave Ngugi a precise knowledge of the Bible which he often acknowledges.

K/Gikuyu society is lacking in mythological background. The Bible provides a convenient framework. For example, the idea of destiny with regard to the Israelites and their struggle against slavery. K/Gikuyu people have had similar experiences².

Another traumatizing event in Ngugi's childhood was the cruel punishment of students who were caught speaking k/

K/Gikuyu instead of English:

The culprit was given corporal punishment three to five strikes of the cane on bare buttocks-or made to carry a metal plate around the neck with inscriptions such as I AM STUPID or I AM A DONKEY. Sometimes the culprits were fined money they could hardly afford. And how did the teachers catch the culprits? A button was initially given to one pupil who was supposed to hand it over to whoever was caught speaking his mother tongue. (Robson 5)

After graduating from the Alliance High School, Ngugi enrolled at the Makerere University of Uganda, which greatly influenced his intellectual development. Afterwards, he attended the University of Leeds. He held many teaching positions at several Universities including the University of Nairobi and Yale University, and lectured widely in Europe and Australia.

Despite the fact that Ngugi did not take part in the *Mau Mau* anti-colonial rebellion, he used its ideals to criticize the post-independence political system of Kenya. He believed that the leaders of the newly independent nation betrayed the hopes of Kenyans. He sought, further, to revive his compatriots' anti-colonial memories to raise up against their government in order to build a new Kenya (Ngugi, *Devil on the Cross* 20). Ngugi was not only concerned with establishing a new political system, but also with rescuing his country's national identity battered by colonialism.

Anne Holden Ronning, in an essay entitled "*Reading of the Particular: The Postcolonial in the Postnational*", says: "Ngugi's prolific writings are a key to ways of emerging ourselves, and though he is writing of an African context, much of what he states is equally applicable elsewhere in our globalized world (30)". Ngugi, as a touchstone to reconstruct the Kenyan post-colonial identity, (Ngugi, *Devil on the Cross* 21) uses the pre-colonial history, memories and past.

Intellectuals such as Ngugi Wa Thiong'O, Obi Wali, Frantz Fanon, and Chinweizu et al inaugurated a new, and modern African literature. This literature is away from any "submission" or "apprenticeship"; it aimed at raising a black consciousness that opposes a counter-message to the colonial discourse. For Ngugi, the writer is a product of a society and has a responsibility towards it; literature,

accordingly, "...is not something belonging to a surreal world, or a metaphysical ethereal plane, something that has nothing to do with man's more mundane, prosaic realm of attempting to clothe, shelter and feed himself" (Ngugi, *Detained: a Writer's Prison Diary* 6).

3.2. His Works

At Makerere University in Uganda, Ngugi began writing short plays to contribute in some competitions organized there. Ngugi used to write in English, and then he turned to the K/Gikuyu language in his later writings. His major works include: *Weep Not Child* (1964), *The River Between* (1965), a *Grain of Wheat* (1967), *Black Hermit* (play, 1968) *Homecoming* (1969), *Petals of Blood* (1977), *Devil on the Cross* (1982), *Matigari* (1989), *Decolonizing the Mind* (1986), *Moving the Center* (1993), *Writers in Politics* (1997) and *Penpoints, Gunpoints and Dreams* (1998). His novels and plays were translated into more than thirty languages (Ngugi, *Petals of Blood*). His main themes are colonialism and Imperialism, poverty, the African culture and its alienation and the issue of language in the African literature.

***Weep Not Child* (1964)**

Ngugi's first novel *Weep Not Child* (1964), which he wrote when he was still a student at Makerere University, is about a child crying over the loss of his people's ancestral land as the result of the British occupation. The novel shows the cruelty of the British colonizer in dealing with the Mau Mau³ rebellion.

The River between (1965)

The *River Between* (1965) was published as part of the “Inspirational and Influential African Writers Series”. It tells the story of two neighboring tribes separated in the colonial period as differed in faith resulted from the colonial impact on the region.

More precisely, this novel explores life on the Makuyu and Kameno ridges of Kenya in the early days of the colonial period in the region. Faced with a new religion, Kenyans are torn between those who fear the unknown and those who see beyond it.

Some Kenyans were converted to Christianity as they follow Joshua, a character in the story and one of the first people of the village who converted to Christianity. He defended his independence of his tribe from colonialism.

Waiyaki, an ambitious young man who wants to preserve the African values from European influence, tries to unify the two factions through education. The *Times Literary Supplement* wrote that the novel “ has rare qualities of restraint, intelligence and sensitivity” the *Guardian* described as “[a] sensitive novel about the G/Kikuyu in the melting pot that sometimes touches the grandeur of tap-root simplicity” (Ngugi, *The River Between*). It is a fascinating insight into life during the British occupation of Kenya and a scathing critique of colonialism and its legacy.

A Grain of Wheat (1967)

A Grain of Wheat was first published in 1967. The title was derived from the Gospel. The novel revolves around Kenya during the State of Emergency and its struggle for independence from 1952 to 1959. Ngugi refers to the “*Uhuru*” day celebration (December 12, 1963) as a “D day” when former patriots and resistance fighter

General R and other plan on publicly to execute all those who collaborated with the colonizer and, especially, the traitor who betrayed Kihika the famous resistance fighter (Ngugi, *A Grain of Wheat*). It was, during this period that Ngugi was first introduced to Frantz Fanon's work *Les Damnés de la terre (The Wretched of the Earth)* (Ngugi, *A Grain of Wheat*).

Petals of Blood (1977)

Petals of Blood was written in the United States and it took five years to complete it. At the launching of this novel in July 1977, Ngugi revealed his motive behind writing novels.

I came to realize that Kenya was poor, not because of anything internal, but because the wealth produced by Kenyans ended in developing the western world... There aid, loans and investment capital that they gloat about are simply a chemical catalyst that sets in motion the whole process of expropriation of Kenya's wealth, with, of course, a few leftovers for the 'lucky' few...

This was what I was trying to show in *Petals of Blood*: that imperialism can never develop our country or develop us, Kenyans. In doing so, I was only trying to be faithful to what Kenyan workers and peasants have always realized as shown by their historical struggles since 1895. (Ngugi, *Writers in Politics*)

This novel caused a huge controversy that led to its writer being imprisoned for denouncing the corruption, violence, and brutality of independent Kenya. Commenting on the novel, Ugandan author Moses Isegwa said: "Reading him like feeling a fire scorching your psyche, your heart, your being" (Ngugi, *Petals of Blood*). *Petals of Blood* was Ngugi's last novel to be written first in English.

The novel revolves around a murder that took place in Ilmorog. Four suspects were subsequently detained: headmaster Munira; teacher and political militant

Karega; Wanja, the spirited barmaid; and Abdulla the storekeeper. Indeed, Ngugi wrote about other crimes in relation to murder, mainly corruption, fear and intimidation.

As the murder is intensively investigated, Ngugi narrates stories of his characters and shows how both the lives of the suspects and those of the victims are inextricably linked to the fortunes of their villages and to the mess Kenya was facing in its postcolonial stage.

Devil on the Cross (1982)

Ngugi wrote *Devil on the Cross*-(1982) while detained without trial by the government of Jomo Kenyatta, which wanted to silence him. The novel was written fully in the K/Gikuyu language after the Ngugi's famous "Farewell to English" and then he translated it to English.

Ngugi, indeed, wanted to lead his people to freedom crucifying the devil that is Capitalism instead of Jesus. He considers Marxism, in the novel, as a savior to Kenyans from the exploitation of some capitalists to the Kenyan farmer and worker.

The devil can also be sexual harassment and religious hypocrisy. The novel is allegorical; it was written allegedly on toilet paper, while Ngugi was in jail. The novel is one of the most powerful critiques of modern Kenya ever written.

Through the characters of Wangari, Wariinga, Gaturia and Muturi, the novel tackles many themes including elitism, corruption, exploitation, *Uhuru* (freedom), education, religious hypocrisy, despair, evil, turmoil, greed and sexual harassment.

The novel *Devil on the Cross*-tells the tragic story of Wariinga, a young woman whose parents are detained when she was two years old. Her aunt became her

caregiver. The novel shows Wariinga's life of struggle against sexual harassment, despair, turmoil, instability, evil and corruption caused mostly by greed and money.

Wariinga is made pregnant after forced to have an affair with "Rich Old Man of Ngorika" a friend of her aunt's husband. The old man deserts her. Wariinga comes back with her child to Secretarial School to work at a Campion Construction. Kihara, Wariing's manager there, harasses her sexually.

Wariinga decides to look for another job elsewhere. After being harassed and being unable to pay her rent, Wariinga traumatized. She uses the ambi cream to bleach herself and tries to commit suicide.

After all she endured; she fainted on her way to the railroad track where she wanted to put an end to her life. She meets Munti, a young man, who helps and invites her to the devil's feast in Ilmorog "Demon's Feast" (a meeting of Kenyan businessman who are sharing how they earned their profits; most of them profited on the back of poor).

When Wariinga understands that the Feast is taking place in her neighborhood "Ilmorog", she accepts going. On her voyage on a taxi-transport, Fortunately, Wariinga meets Munit (an African Studies educator) who comforts her, Wangari (a worker), Muturi (a mechanic) and executive Mwireriwa Mukirai. The taxi-driver Mwaura is a man who loves money and the rich. The passengers get acquainted with the driver. Mwireriwa Mukirai explains that the feast will be a challenge, as the visitors will pick the seven cleverest criminals in Ilmorog. He sets that this challenge is not generally sorted out by the devil. Visitors from the International Association of Theft and Robbery from all over the world (America, England, Germany, France, Italy, Sweden and Japan) will visit the feast.

At the “Devil’s Feast”, a meeting or gathering of Kenyan and international businessmen, members of *the International Association of Theft and Robbery* (The association which sought only thighs (sex) and ties (corrupt power) in Ngugi’s words) share their experiences on how they earned money on the backs of the poor. Wariinaga and Muturi are disgusted, while Wangari and Muturi are frightened by what they have heard and they choose to call the police.

When the police show up, they capture Wangari and drag him away. Muturi asks the students, workers and peasants of her village for help. Muturi believes that the rich devils competing against each other in the devilish society of grabbing. Students, peasants and workers should crucify extorting, and confiscating.

Two years later, Wariinga’s old chief, Kihara, with the support of the International Association of Thieves and Robbers purchases the carport where Wariinga worked. Meanwhile, Wariinga falls in love with Gatuiru. Gatuiru introduces her to his parents. Wariinga is shocked to find out that the old rich man who impregnated her is none other than Gatuiru’s father; she kills him in a fit of rage.

At the end, Wariinga bravely puts an end to her relationship with Gatuiru and she joins the trinity of peasants, workers, and students.

For Ngugi, Wariinga’s ordeal symbolizes the land (Kenya), fire symbolizes Corruption, and water symbolizes Marxism. Ngugi uses Wariinnga’s nightmares to foreshadow the grim future of Kenya.

Ngugi’s message to Kenyans is to keep hope, to live in hope; he urges the good trinity of students, workers, and peasants to act, fight and crucify the devilish other trinity of extortion, confiscation and greed. According to Ngugi, Marxism and honest proletarians should crucify the devil that is capitalism and colonialism. Indeed, he dedicates his novel to “all Kenyans, struggling against the neo-colonial stage of

imperialism” (Ngugi, *Devil on the Cross* 5). In *Devil on the Cross*, Ngugi also tackles issues of elitism, betrayal, ethnicity and education.

Decolonizing the Mind: the Politics of Language in African Literature (1986)

Ngugi’s work *Decolonizing the Mind: the Politics of Language in African Literature* (1986) is a collection of essays in which he advocates the linguistic liberation of Africa as a vital step towards the emancipation of the African mind. Ngugi is one of the most prominent advocates of the revival of traditional African languages. His book has become a classic on the issue of language in post-colonial Africa.

3.3.1. Early Critique of Colonialism in *Weep Not Child, the River Between, and A Grain of Wheat*

Ngugi drew his inspiration from many sources. The most obvious of these sources is the Independent Movement of Land and Freedom Army, known as the “Mau Mau Rebellion”. The influence of the Mau Mau Rebellion on Ngugi’s thought is apparent in his essays *Barrel of a Pen* and *Decolonizing the Mind*, as well as in his novels *Petals of Blood* and *Devil on the Cross*.

At the time he wrote the aforementioned essays and novels, Ngugi was a supporter and admirer of Jomo Kenyatta, the former nationalist leader and Prime Minister of Kenya from 1963 to 1978.⁴

Ngugi’s attitude towards Kenyatta began to change with the publication of *A Grain of Wheat* in 1967. When in detention by order of Kenyatta, Ngugi wrote:

In the novel *A Grain of Wheat*, I tried through Mugo who carried the burden of mistaken revolutionary heroism, to hint at the possibilities of New Kenya. But that was in 1965-66 and nothing was clear then

about the extent to which Kenyatta had negated neither his past, nor the sheer magnitude of the suffering it would cause to our society today. (Ngugi, *Detained: A Writer's Prison Diary* 90)

Although frequently associated with the *Mau Mau Rebellion*, Kenyatta officially ignored the contribution of the freedom fighters, claiming the urgent need for national reconciliation (Robson 20).

The roots of the *Mau Mau Rebellion* as Ngugi believes come from: the alienation of land from a largely peasantry, mainly from the K/Gikuyu as well as from the exploitation of surplus labour through the Kipande System (Robson 22). The tradition of political resistance to colonial rule was presented by the KCA (K/Gikuyu Central Association) and KAU (Kenyan African Union) after 1946 (Kenya).

Through *The River Between*, *Weep Not Child*, *A Grain of Wheat* and *Petals of Blood* as well as *Devil on the Cross*-and other essays, short stories and major plays, Ngugi has tried to recreate a “living past” in which Kenya survived and still survives.

Ngugi’s nonfiction explores some themes also found to the world of in his novels. It deals mainly with the cultural and linguistic imperialism of the West and its impact on the tribal nature of Africa. The essays in *Homecoming, Essays on African and Caribbean Literature, Culture and Politics* (1972) focus on the significant social functions of Africa literature. *Writers in Politics* (1981) and *Decolonizing the Mind: the Politics of Language in African Literature* (1986) explore the Kenyan social and political issues and stress the need for positive and fundamental reform (Ngugi, *Writers in Politics*).

As a revolutionary writer, Ngugi is considered one of the most significant interpreters and disciples of Frantz Fanon anti-colonial thought. In his struggle against colonialism and its cultural heritage, Ngugi stressed the “claiming back” of the African forms of history and culture. This task would take place by reconstructing new national identities based on local knowledge and histories. Ngugi, in this respect, was conscious enough to use the African cultural and oral heritage in his anti-colonial discourse and protest novels. In *Petals of Blood*, Ngugi says:

Imperialism ...can never develop a country or a people .This was what I was trying to show in *Petals of Blood*; that imperialism can never develop us, Kenyans. In doing so, I was only trying to be faithful to what Kenyan workers and Peasants have realized as shown by their historical struggle since 1895. (Uwasomba 15)

Indeed, the protest discourse was the last step that occurred after an evolution that moved from assimilation to conformism to protest, revolutionary temper and liberation. Frantz Fanon reveals the antinomy between the colonial and anti-colonial discourse.

In the first, the colonized intellectual proves that he has assimilated the occupier’s culture. In a second period the colonized writer becomes uncertain and decides to go back to his past...Finally , in the third period, called the struggle ,the colonized writer ,after trying to lose himself in the people and with the people, sets out, on the contrary ,to shake them out of their lethargy. (Nebbou 3)

Moreover, deep conviction pushes Ngugi to say frequently that literature and art have a primary commitment to freedom and can only flourish in free states. Literature should be harnessed to “liberate” lands and “minds” from the claws of imperialism. Ngugi believes that: “writers and their works are implicated in the larger struggles which define political life in wider society.” (Uwasomba 16)

Though these works Ngugi underscores the need to use African languages rather than the European ones, *Decolonizing the Mind* also contains Ngugi's pledge to write only in Kikuyu, calling this collection "farewell to the English language", in what was called the "Epistemological break". Ngugi has not written any fiction since that time in English. However, he has released nonfiction works in English *Moving the Center: the Struggle for Cultural Freedom* (1992) which explores some social issues such as the importance of language to national identity, the impact of globalization on native cultures and Ngugi's hope for a strong Africa.

Many critics note that Ngugi's advocacy of African languages to liberate the African mind follows directly from Fanon's (Lovesey 11). Ngugi and Fanon remained sincerely committed to the ideas of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels. They believed that the anti-colonial revolutionary movements in Africa must have Marxist roots.

The political literature of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels was important and soon overshadowed Fanon. Or rather, Marx and Engels began to reveal the serious weaknesses and limitations of Fanon, especially his own petit bourgeois idealism that led him into mechanical overemphasis on psychology and violence, and his inability to see the significance of the rising and growing African proletariat. (Carol 23)

Ngugi joins Fanon in believing that a rejection of the colonizer's linguistic and cultural forms is a precondition for achieving a "genuine" freedom. Ngugi adopts an Afro-centric perspective to dismantle the Eurocentric patterns based on imperialist ideas imposed by the colonizer on Africans. He urges meanwhile Africans to decide about their destiny.

3.3.2 Late Critique of the Colonial Legacy and Eurocentrism in *Petals of Blood*, *Devil on the Cross*-, *Decolonizing the Mind*, and *Writers in Politics*.

In his later writings, Ngugi shifts his focus from criticizing colonialism in *Weep Not Child*, *the River Between* and *Grain of Wheat* to criticize its psychological, intellectual, literary, economic and political legacy in *Petals of Blood*, *Devil on the Cross*, *Decolonizing the Mind*, and *Writers in Politics*.

In *Devil on the Cross*-, Ngugi depicts the new Kenyan leaders as a “fake” imitation of the British elite. Ngugi notes that the Kenyan elite lost its roots and “swallowed” the Western values. This part of the thesis shows that both *Petals of Blood* and *Devil on the Cross*-focus on the cultural alienation of Africans.

For Ngugi, Imperialism is total: it has economic, political, military, cultural and psychological consequences for the people of the world today (Ngugi, *Decolonizing the Mind* 2). Imperialism was linked to Capitalism according to him. Capitalism is a Devil/Corruption to be crucified by Marxism on the “Fanonian”⁵ way (as mentioned in his novel *Devil on the Cross*-). Capitalism is “the rule of consolidated finance capital” (Ibid). Ngugi’s understanding of imperialism can be traced as follows in the same book:

Imperialism disrupts the entire fabric of the lives of its victims: in particular their culture, making them ashamed of their names, history, systems of belief, languages, lore, art dance, song, sculpture, even the colour of their skin. It thwarts all its victims’ forms and means of survival, and furthermore it employs racism. (Ngugi, *Decolonizing the Mind* 3)

Indeed, in this book, Ngugi considers “colonial cultural alienation” an alienation or detachment from one’s self, identity, and heritage. This detachment is one of the greatest threats to the African entity, identity and presence.

Many factors led to the cultural alienation of the African elite, mainly the Western education. These Western schools aimed at shaping the African mind in a manner that is foreign to their own culture and to themselves. In Ngugi’s novels, the Western style of education is “swallowed” blindly in its form and content. Kenyans who go to Western schools are fascinated by the English culture and under-estimate their African values. They show frequent pride in Western values and abhorrence to their African values.

In addition to the Western school, the church played a pivotal role in promoting cultural alienation. The church dropped up African names and took up new western names.

The church frequently equates black with evil and white with good. The young girl Wariinga is baptized Jacintha Wariinga and notices the white color skin of Mary, Jesus and God’s angels. The church works to push Africans not to be proud of their blackness and consider the color black a “curse”. Ngugi urges African intellectuals to reject imperialism and fight its plans.

To explain how the enslavement of the new African elite is deep-rooted, Ngugi writes in his play *The Trial of Dedan Kimathi*: “Their universities where they give our children an education to enfeeble minds, make them slaves, apes, parrots, shadows of the men and women they could have been” (9). When talking about the post-independence period, Ngugi portrays the elite in Marxist terms. He divides the elites into moneyed and non-moneyed⁶. The role of the revolutionaries is to awaken the

masses against cultural imperialism and its agents among the moneyed and alienated elite⁷.

According to Ngugi, "...liberation is attained when the people are said to be truly free when they control all the tools, instruments, the means of their physical, economic, political, cultural and psychological being (Uwasomba 6)". In short, for Ngugi, people are considered free only when they control the means and the context of their multidimensional survival.

In his writings, Ngugi, defends the idea that "being black has values which are themselves good, contrary to the European impression." (Nebbou 13)

Ngugi in *Devil on the Cross* wants to reveal that the Devil is the corruption, which is a result of Colonialism and Capitalism. True Marxism inspired from genuine thoughts produced by true elites who should be involved in the whole scene to reshape the social, intellectual and political entities in Africa in general and Kenya in particular should urgently crucify Capitalism, according to Ngugi.

In *Decolonizing the Mind. The Politics of Language*, Ngugi writes: "In writing this book I was only trying to be faithful to what Kenyan workers and peasants have always realized as shown by their historical struggles since 1895 "(4). Ngugi stores great faith in the African "peasantry" and believes that preventing detachment of one's self from his roots will be with keeping native African languages alive. The latter might take place by empowering the lower classes, which will be able to "bring out renaissance in African cultures", and therefore preventing the African nations from their neocolonial condition of oppression.

According to Ngugi Wa Thiong'O, Western education is a key factor in maintaining colonized minds, even to the extent it may be so hard or impossible for

people to imagine surviving without a formal Western education. Ngugi raises the following question, “what is the goal of education?” Answering that question leads to another question much deeper “what kind of person do I want to be? What kind of mind I want to have? “Colonized minds want to be similar to their ex-colonizer ones; colonized minds are fond of the colonizer”.

In addition to the disasters, dysfunction, debt-over-hang, illiteracy and squalor that racked the African continent, doubt, hesitations and paranoiac attitudes took over the minds of its elite. The African intellectual, then, lost confidence in himself, his family, and his society.

Moreover, African intellectuals often were in cahoots with the ex-colonizer. Kenyan elites’ alienation is apparent in their behavior, attitudes, their names, and the languages they spoke.

Ngugi *Devil on the Cross* shows clearly how the African intellectuals’ “colonized minds” were fascinated by the former colonizer’s way of life. For instance, on the eve of the marriage ceremony of Wariinga and Gaturia, Gaturia’s father sent cards used in Europe to invite guests to wedding ceremonies.

By contrast, in traditional Africa, people attend wedding ceremonies in their clothes without any artificial touch and bring whatever presents they can afford. The use of cards establishes a social hierarchy separates the rich from the poor. Ngugi opposes the urban elite to the rural peasantry. The urban is influenced by its continuous contact with the Western way of life: “On the outer edges stood foreign guests and tourists, dressed very lightly for a sunny day and bemusedly watching the drama unfolding before them as if they were studying the ridiculous products of their own civilizing mission.” (247)

Gatuiria, in this respect, said: “there is nothing as terrible as a people who have swallowed foreign customs whole without even chewing them, for such people become more parrots” (Ngugi, *Devil on the Cross* 238). Wariinga dressed in the K/Gikuyu, She admires the African clothes but her father feels ashamed of the way Wariinga dressed and says: “I would like you to take off this cloth and these necklaces and these earrings made of dry maze stalks and to put on clothes and jewelry made in France.” (Ngugi, *Devil on the Cross* 251). His attitude towards African clothes is a clear indication of his alienation

Ngugi’s suggests an Afro-centric paradigm based on Afrocentricity to find solution to the issue of mind colonization. Afrocentricity stands for an “African-centered perspective” on African concerns. Indeed, its fundamental challenge is “how to bring social justice”. Keto Tsehloane has summarized Afrocentricity as “an enfolding term that stands for the ‘complex theoretical process of knowledge formation’ which revolves principally around Africa and Africans. These Africans place themselves at the center of knowledge creation (Poe 13)”. Furthermore, Afrocentrism, according to Keto, is “the social practices that stand out from the resettlement and move of knowledge about Africans and peoples of African descent outside Africa” (Poe 14). In fact, many definitions had been attributed to Afrocentricity and Afrocentrism.

Among the best-known scholars who constructed the Afrocentric paradigm are Kete Asante and Keto Tsehloane.

Both stated explicitly the following paradigm (Poe 14):

1. There must be an individual and organizational agency in the social, historical and intellectual spectrum,

2. There must be a political, psychological and philosophical location,
3. There must be an appropriate interpretation called hermeneutics and historicity,
4. There must be an explicit critique and nexus delinking to what might relinquish the African traits,
5. There must be a denunciation of Eurocentric domination,
6. There must be an assertion of an African genuine personality, identity, culture and genius,
7. There must be an explicit collective acceptance of Africa that is a part of the universal human cultural heritage and an entity that “embraces diversity”,
8. There must be an explicit openness to include all contributions of Africans to the benefit of humanity’s collective cultural entity. (Poe 15)

Kete Asante emerged as one of the prominent theorists who tackled the issue of relevance, identity, and language. Ngugi advocated “the search for a liberating perspective within which to see ourselves clearly in relationship to ourselves and other selves in the universe. (Ngugi, *Decolonizing the Mind* 87)”

Another Ngugi’s claim towards an Afro-centric approach to literature revolves around “liberating the school curriculum”. This liberating process became essential as minds are required to be “liberated” Ngugi suggested in his book *Decolonizing the Mind: The Politics of Language* in African Literature that the first are to be intensively trained was African orature, followed by African written literature, followed by “third world” literatures and then the rest of the world’s literature. The latter taught lately might be placed in its appropriate position compared to the African.

Furthermore, Ngugi's Afro-centric Perspectives to "Liberate" the African Mind are described the term as follows: "Culture embodies those moral, ethical and aesthetic values, the set of spiritual eyeglasses, through which people come to view themselves and their place in the universe (Ngugi, *Decolonizing the Mind* 14)". Accordingly, culture is explicitly celebrated in people's way of life, rituals, beliefs, religions, ideals, values. This set of values transmitted from the past to the present is embodied in a cultural organism that undergoes constant change and based on a socio-historical context.

Concerning the African culture, imperialism and its effects caused its transformation from one cultural mode to another. Frequent contacts with the West mainly during the colonial era resulted in a great change in the colonized culture. The latter had principally affected the colonized way of thinking and tortured its psyche. This is what Ngugi and other intellectuals called "cultural colonization".

Ngugi frequently refers to this kind of colonization. Ngugi considers that the most-fundamental area of colonial hegemony was the "mental universe of the colonized, the control, through culture, of how people viewed themselves and their relationship to the world (Thiong'O, *Decolonizing the Mind* 16)". This hegemony called by Ngugi "the cultural bomb"...the impact of which to [polish off] people's belief in their names, in their languages..., in their heritage of struggle...in their potential and ultimately in themselves" (Ngugi, *Decolonizing the Mind* 17). Accordingly, colonialism is when the metropolitan center controls the edge; cultural imperialism takes place when the metropolitan culture controls the culture of the periphery.

In Ngugi's *Devil on the Cross-*, Gatuiria, the researcher in culture and education, says the following: "Our culture has been dominated by the Western

cultures. That is what was called in English cultural imperialism. [The latter] is the mother to the slavery of the mind and the body” (58), as Ngugi writes. Therefore, controlling the mind and the body is more lasting than managing the land alone.

In addition to Ngugi, many postcolonial novelists evoke counter-narratives. These narratives are evoked to challenge the seeds and the effects of cultural colonialism and to “preserve their identity and the existence of their history (Said xiii)”. Ngugi says, in this context, “No country is entirely free since it is culturally colonized.”

Ngugi defines liberation “a renunciation of the entire colonial practice and the wrecking down of the psychological structures instilled in the African minds. Liberating the mind, therefore, stands for the rejecting the “false” about one’s past in order to restore the lost African identity. In other words, Ngugi thinks that Liberation of the African mind and psyche refers to “re-Africanization” of Africans. Therefore, postcolonial African novelists work to unchain the African mind from the ‘false’ consciousness imposed upon them.

Alienation is also apparent in the new Kenyan elites’ tongues. These elites consider any mispronunciation or misspelling in English as sacrilegious whereas they do not care about mistakes in their native tongues. In this respect, Kihahu takes a pride in the fact that Kenyan youth masters English and speaks it fluently like true Englishmen.

All of them speak English through the nose, exactly like people born and brought up in England .If you were to hear them speak K/Gikuyu or Kiswahili, and you would laugh until you pissed yourself. It is so funny. They speak the two languages as if they were Italian priests newly arrived from Rome...The children are mine, and I do not mind that they speak their national languages like Italian foreigners. (Ngugi, *Devil on the Cross* 110)

In *Decolonizing the Mind, the Politics of Language* Ngugi describes well colonial alienation as follows:

Colonial alienation takes two interlinked forms: an active (or passive) distancing of oneself to the reality around; and an active (or passive) identification with that which is most external to one's environment. It starts with a deliberate disassociation of the language of conceptualization, of thinking, of formal education, of mental development from the language of daily interaction in the home and in the community. It is like separating the mind from the body so that they are occupying two unrelated linguistic spheres in the same person. On a larger social scale, it is like producing a society of bodiless and headless bodies. (28)

Ngugi explains how the Kenyan elite use incorrectly national its languages. He attempts to show how university students and teachers behave as if they were babies in pronouncing their native languages but produce correct and fluent English. Ngugi mentions Gatuiria, a research student in culture, who masters English but does not master his mother tongue, despite his continuous fight against cultural imperialism.

In addition to “swallowing” English traditions and languages, the Kenyan alienated elite change their names to Western ones. Traditionalists who keep their traditional names become victims of sarcasm. For example, Ndikite, says: “Fellows, who think they are highly educated just because they have dropped their precious foreign names, call themselves Wa, Ole, Arap, or Wuodh this or that.”(Ngugi, *Devil on the Cross* 179)

Ngugi views also language as a key tool to colonize minds. English, for instance, is often associated with colonialism today at the expense of local languages. According to Ngugi, to be thoroughly liberated, one has to learn or relearn another language; Ngugi stops writing in English and used his G/Kikuyu language.

Ngugi's objection to Colonialism appears further in his Afro-centric approach to literature, which urges finding solution to the issue of language. Ngugi in *Decolonizing the Mind. The Politics of Language in African Literature* defends the linguistic liberation of the African studies, including literature and post-colonial studies.

Ngugi's approach offers an anti-imperialist perspective on the ongoing debate about Africa and its future. The language's role in both combating and perpetrating imperialism and the conditions of neo-colonialism in Africa were also highlighted. This approach was also considered as a "farewell to English" since the emancipation of the African mind starts through liberation of tongues, minds and literature.

According to Ngugi, communication pushes the evolution of culture and language is a carrier of the histories, values and aesthetics of its culture. He writes:

Language as a culture is the collective memory bank of a people's experience in history. Culture is almost indistinguishable from the language that makes possible its genesis, growth, banking, articulation, and indeed its transmission from one generation to the next. (Ngugi, *Decolonizing the Mind* 15)"

3.4. The Role of African Critics in the liberation of African Mind and literature

The fundamental assumption in this thesis is that contemporary African culture and mind are under foreign domination. On the one hand, the African mind has to get rid of all the remnants of the colonial period. On the other hand, the African mind has to build new foundations for an African genuine modernity based on African identity.

Concerning the Role of African Critics in the "Liberation" of African Minds and Literatures, Chinweizu Ibekwe in his book *Towards the Decolonization of African Literature* asks some other questions about the contribution of critics to African

writers to “liberate” and “Africanize” their techniques. Indeed, light should be shed on the secondary not the primary role of critics. Their role is that of helpers, or legislators.

These critics should support the cultural liberation of the African individual. They are required to supply to both the writer and the audience a well-researched knowledge valued in a pure traditional way.

African critics ought to refine and develop an African aesthetic, encourage awareness of African traditions, memory, and history and play the role of critical thinking that orient the transmission of African cultural and intellectual values. These authors assume that most critics used European standards in their critiques of African works.

Among the fallacies that are committed by those critics is in their habit of trying to force African works towards an “alien” and “Eurocentric” aesthetical standards.

This kind of criticism keeps insisting on the application of Western paradigms to African works. These critics advocate that the African work with the Western concept would be universal and recognized by all spheres of the world. Indeed, this vision reflects the complex of inferiority that responds to foreign cultural hegemony with a “proof”: “We have modeled ourselves after you; we have met your standards. Please accept us!” (Ibekwe 288). That is the proof!

These attitudes must be attributed to the failure of the African learned critics to evolve a contemporary African aesthetic. To do so, it is necessary to urge a serious search into African oral and written traditions—an endeavor that African learned critics tends to contempt.

The essential task to be done nowadays by the African critics is to formulate an African aesthetic. In literature, for instance, they are required to include a poetics, a narrative rhetoric and dramaturgy that are adapted to the needs of contemporary Africa (Ibekwe 289).

Indeed, African critics should urge recording, assembling, and analyzing the rich store of traditional heritage in African languages and materials both written and oral.

The scarcity of available material should not prevent those critics from doing their work. Since there is a treasure of materials, an intense research should be enhanced without any fragile excuses or delay.

Another challenge that faced both African writers and critics is how to reconstruct the African historical narratives through re-narrating the past from pure African perspectives rather than from Western Materials. Ngugi with others expressed fully their objections to some colonialist writers like Joseph Conrad and Joyce Cary. Ngugi rejected radically these “racist”, “biased” and “distorted” colonialist narratives to the African past and pre-colonial “years of savagery”. Ngugi countered and opposed the colonial discursive propaganda; he attempted to validate Africa’s historiography based on the African socio-historical-cultural context.

To liberate means to be fully human and entirely ready to be an active citizen in a shared world, but with one’s own proper vision of things. African intellectuals and writers must raise their educational, intellectual and artistic vision above the bygone days to eschew the colonial impediments and fight for genuine development of one’s self, one’s literature, one’s sphere of existence.

Conclusion

Ngugi early writings differ from his later ones. Ngugi shifts his focus from direct critique of colonialism in the first stage (*Weep Not Child, the River Between and Grain of Wheat*) to a powerful critique of the colonial psychological, intellectual, literary, economic and political legacy in the late stage (*Petals of Blood, Devil on the Cross, Decolonizing the Mind, and Writers in Politics*).

Ngugi explains postcolonial African situation departing from Marxism in terms of class struggle and the role of peasantry. Ngugi also adhered to the Marxist ideological line that stresses the non-moneyed working class solidarity”.

In this respect, Marxism as portrayed by Fanon, Nugget is different from Karl Marx and Amilcar Cabrel’s vision, mainly because Fanon and Ngugi viewed the peasantry as a revolutionary against the comprador class and the petite bourgeoisie. Marx and Cabrel who thought of the peasantry as a backward class in contrast to the bourgeoisie and the proletariat see the opposite.

Ngugi’s Marxist objection to colonialism and Eurocentrism via his Afro-centric approach emphasizes the restoration of historical African heritage based on the African identity.

However, despite his powerful critique of the colonial multidimensional legacy and strong condemnation of the deplorable social situation that existed in Kenya during and after the British occupation, Ngugi shows to be narrowly Marxist.

NOTES

¹A model used for Siriani School in his novel *Petals of Blood* and other novels.

²As quoted in James Stephan Robson in his Master of Arts Thesis entitled *Ngugi Wa Thiong'O's Fight against Colonialism and Neocolonialism: an Exploration of the Theme of Betrayal* (4)

³The origin of the word “*Mau Mau*”: is not clear. Karari Njama relates it to many misconceptions: Firstly, a mispronunciation of “*umauma*” (out out), a K/Gikuyu reference to oust European rule. Secondly, misperception of some European journalists at the Naivasha Trial in 1950 of the expression “*mumumumu*” which means “whispered voices within an oathing hut”. Thirdly, a “secondary usage” invented after the term became popularized in Swahili,” Mzangu Arudi Uingereza, Mura Africa Apote Uhuru’ which means in English ‘Let the European return to England and the African obtain his freedom’ (Donald L. Barnett and Karari Njama. *Mau Mau from within*. New York: Monthly Review Press, 1966. 51-54)

The name “*Mau Mau*” did not exist according to some other references. But, it came into use to explain the existence of the *Land and Freedom Army* during the period of Emergency in Kenyan Colonial History from 1952-1962. According to some other references the “*Mau Mau*” was a revolutionary movement that was not fully successful (David Maughan-Brown. *Land, Freedom and Fiction. History and Ideology in Kenya*. London: Zed Press, 1980).

To my mind, Ngugi kept the rebellion successful and alive through its survival in his fiction and essays (Ngugi Wa Thiong'O. “*Mau Mau is coming back: The Revolutionary Significance of the 20th October 1952 in Kenya Today*” from *Barel of a Pen: Resistance to Repression and Neocolonialism*. Trenton, New Jersey: Africa World Press. 1983 7-31)

⁴In *Weep No Child*, Kenyatta is portrayed a positive image. Boro calls him “Black Moses”. Njoroge naively hopes that Jomo can lead them out of the “wildness”. In *A Grain of Wheat* a mere rumor of Kenyatta’s arrival at a village would command a standing room only crowd (Robson 37)

⁵Marxism as portrayed by Fanon is different from Amilcar Cabrel vision, mainly because Fanon viewed the peasant as revolutionary against the comprador class and the little bourgeoisie. Cabrel sees the opposite.

⁶ As referred to in a thesis defended by Djiby Diaw from the University of Gaston Berger of Saint-Louis in Senegal.

⁷Ibid.

Chapter Four

FRANTZ FANON: COLONIALISM AS ALIENATION

*The disease is alienation
The cause is colonialism
The cure is revolution
The destiny is freedom*

---Frantz Fanon

Introduction

This chapter exposes some facts about Fanon's life and his writings. It investigates that even though his early critique of colonialism was strong; it was not powerful enough to undermine it.

4.1. A Life in the Service of the Oppressed

Frantz Fanon was born on July 20, 1925 in Fort-de-France, the capital city of Martinique, which was then a French Colony. Fanon's father, Casmir, was a customs inspector. His mother, Eléonor, was a French citizen working as a shopkeeper. In Fort-de-France, where Fanon grew up, people suffered from harsh poverty and infectious diseases such as leprosy, malaria, and tuberculosis. Being raised in a somewhat prosperous family saved Fanon from being affected by such diseases and granted him the chance to get an education (Fanon, *Les damnés de la terre* 6).

Fanon was educated in the Martinique where the French curriculum was dominant. It was part of the colonial system to assimilate the subjects of the French Empire and transform them into Frenchmen. Therefore, the first words Frantz Fanon learned at school were "je suis Français" (I am French) "Nos ancêtres les Gaulois" (Our ancestors...the Gauls). The two slogans of the French School Fanon attended

(Karklins 17). In Martinique, French was the official language instead of Créole, which was seen as the language of the uneducated lower class. After he finished his primary school, Fanon became interested in reading. He was fond of classical French literature and philosophy. In 1939, he attended the lycée Schoelcher in Fort-de-France (Fanon, *Les damnés de la terre* 6).

With the outbreak of the *Second World War*, Fanon left Martinique to fight in the French army. After the war ended in 1945, Fanon returned to Martinique and joined again the lycée Schoelcher to finish his secondary schooling (Fanon, *Les damnés de la terre* 7). After getting his baccalaureate, Fanon went to France to pursue his higher education. He first enrolled in a dental school in Paris; then he left it thinking that dentistry was not for him. Thus, he opted to study medicine, specifically psychiatry (Adnan 16).

Fanon obtained his degree as a psychiatrist in 1951. He built his knowledge of the condition of the colonized. He based his theories on his expertise in psychiatry: “If psychiatry is the medical technique that aims to enable a man no longer to be a stranger to his environment, I owe it to myself to affirm that the Arab, permanently an alien in his country, lives in a state of absolute depersonalization” (Fanon, *Pour la révolution africaine* 53).

Fanon’s presence in Algeria is divided into two periods. In 1953, Fanon started his work as “Head of Department” at the Blida-Joinville Psychiatric hospital. After three years, he gave up his job to join the FLN.

The struggle for independence was met with exceptional violence from the French forces. Fanon identified closely with the liberation movement and his political sympathies eventually forced him out the country, whereupon he became an

ambassador for the FLN, as well anti-colonial theorist. “There comes a time when silence becomes dishonesty”, Fanon said (Fanon, *Pour la révolution africaine* 54).

From the middle 1950s, a radical move changes Fanon’s universe. He dislocates his own “I”: it is no longer “we Frenchmen”, or “we Martinicans”, but rather “we Algerians” (Azar 24).

Fanon’s inclination towards the Algerian revolutionary movements began to escalate before his official resignation. During the years, Fanon treated Algerian wounded fighters of the ALN. Moreover, he hid them from French officers and smuggled medicine to the FLN members (Karklins 68). Fanon became increasingly committed to the Algerian revolution.

Following his resignation, Fanon left Algeria to assume a set of responsibilities as an active member of the FLN in Tunisia. As a journalist for *El Moudjahid*, the FLN’s newspaper, Fanon wrote editorials in which he identified the aims of the FLN. Furthermore, he provided his own analysis of the methods used by France to control her colonies (Karklins 47). In this respect, Fanon wrote an article entitled “*Disappointment and illusion of French Colonialism*” in which he stated:

The first tactic of the colonial countries consists of basing themselves on official collaborators and feudal elements. These Algerians, who have been particularly singled out by a series of compromises, are regrouped and requested publicly to condemn the seditious movement that disturbs the peace of the community. (57)

In Tunisia, Fanon served as an international representative for the FLN. In 1958, he attended the *All-African People’s Conference* in Accra. Prominent African leaders such as Kwame Nkrumah and Patrice Lumumba headed the conference. The meeting

emphasized the necessity of “violence” for decolonization (Adnan 19-20). Thus, Fanon’s contributions as a member of the FLN were having a profound influence.

For Frantz Fanon, 1959 was a very important year. Undertaking a mission for the FLN, Fanon was severely wounded. Looking for treatment in Rome, he escaped two assassinations. The Provisional Algerian Government then appointed Fanon as ambassador to Ghana in February 1960. Fanon made further efforts to establish a southern flank in Mali and recruit volunteers to fight in Algeria (Adnan 20). While carrying out his duties in Ghana, Fanon again escaped a kidnapping attempt by French agents (Karklins 95). Hence, the Algerian revolution became Fanon’s center of interest as he embarked on a series of missions that could have cost him his life. Algerians called Fanon “the militant, the fighter, the artist, the intellectual, the anthropologist, the psychiatry.... (Gordon 21)”

In 1960, at the age of 35, Fanon’s health was deteriorating. He was diagnosed with Leukemia. On December 1961, Frantz Fanon passed away¹. After some negotiations, Fanon was granted his last wish: to be buried on the Algerian soil. On June 25, 1965, fanon’s body was moved to the martyrs’ cemetery at Ain Kerma (Macey 6)

At the age of 35, he knew that he would die. But the wrestler didn’t want to say it. His experience would die with him. He would make exposés to the ALN officers with the Tunisian frontiers and then elongate the most often. He dictated to his wife and his nearest a text typewritten gradually read n fragments by his friends who asked after it. This text is the *Wretched of the Earth*². C.CHAULET (Editor of the book)

For Algerians, Fanon’s memory will always live on. At his funeral, some of Fanon’s Algerian comrades delivered his speeches³. Belkacem Krim, the *Vice President of the*

Provisional Government of the Algerian Republic, owned up his reverence and gratitude to Fanon while bidding him farewell:

In the name of the Provisional Government of the Algerian Republic, in the name of the Algerian people, in the name of all your brothers in struggle and in my personal capacity, I bid you farewell...the heavy obligations you faced as a conscientious doctor did not interfere with your militant activities on behalf of your oppressed brothers...various international conferences, and especially those in Accra, Monrovia, Tunis, Conakry, Addis Ababa and Léopold ville provided you with an opportunity to make known the true face of our revolution and to explain the realities of our struggle...your loss causes us great pain, Frantz Fanon ! You will always be a living example. Rest in peace, Algeria will not forget you. (Macey 4-5)

4.2. His Works⁴

Frantz Fanon is a philosopher and psychoanalyst, revolutionary, and writer. He is frequently called the voice of the third world. Throughout his brief, but exceptional life, Fanon was committed to Freedom and liberty.

Fanon's belief in liberty and justice strengthened his commitment to defend the colonized nations' struggle to overthrow colonial domination. Bhabha referred to Fanon's works by saying: In the people's memory of English socialism the mention of Frantz Fanon stirs a dim, deceiving echo: *Peau noire, masques blancs*, *L'an cinq de la révolution algérienne*, *Les damnés de la terre*, *Pour la révolution africaine*, ---Theses memorable titles reverberate in the self-righteous rhetoric of 'resistance' ...” (K.Bhabha, *The Location of Culture: Discussing Post-Colonial Culture* 10).

Fanon's works include a set of articles *L'Esprit* and *El Moudjahid* newspaper and his four published books. Most of Fanon's writings except for *Peau noire, masque blanc* (1952) (Black Skin, White Masks), were published while he was in Algeria. In 1959, *L'an cinq de la révolution algérienne* or *La sociologie de la*

révolution algérienne (A Dying Colonialism) was published followed by *Les damnés de la terre* (The Wretched of the Earth) in 1961, and finally *Pour la révolution africaine* which was compiled and published in 1964 (Fanon).

Fanon wrote many other articles, namely “The Attitude of the Maghrebian Muslim towards Madness” and “Sociotherapy in a Ward for Muslim Man” respectively in collaboration with Dr. Sanchez and Dr. Azoulay. He says: “Je cherche quand j’écris...à toucher affectivement mon lecteur...c’est à dire irrationnellement, presque sensuellement” (Fanon, *Peau noire, masques blancs* 10)⁵

***Peau noire, masques blancs* (Black Skin, White Masks, 1952)⁶**

Black Skin, White Masks was originally published as *Peau noire, masques blancs* in France. It stemmed from the article “The Lived Experience of the Black man” that was published in *L’Esprit* (Fanon, *Peau noire, masques blancs* 10). Fanon used such an illustrative title to explore the crisis of self-identification among the colonized blacks. According to Fanon, the “Negro” is “black” but the “white” mask, which reflects the effect of the European colonialism, subsumes his identity. In this respect, Fanon states, “white civilization and European culture have forced an existential deviation on the Negro” (Rose 6) “...when people like me, they tell me it is in spite of my color, when they dislike me they point out that it is not because of my color. Either way, I am locked into the infernal circle (102). Thus, wearing the white mask contradicts the black identity with all what it encompasses native ethnicity, history and culture.

In this work, Fanon highlighted one of the major effects of colonialism: “inferiority complex. This inferiority complex determined the relations between “black” and “white” people.

The “White” hated the “Negro” because, in the Western view, the black color is associated with “impurity”, “sin”, and “ugliness”. The “white” color, on the other hand, is a symbol of purity, justice, and virginity. Furthermore, the black Antillean accepted such judgment and despised himself (Fanon, *Peau noire, masques blancs* 7). It is clear, according to Fanon that the inferiority complex of blacks stemmed from the whites’ racist attitudes and the way they look at blackness.

Anyone who was “black” was to be considered “lazy”, “dirty”, “ugly” and “uncivilized”. Turning “white” was a common reaction among the “black” colonized population. “As a defense against the burden of his race, the “Negro” would imitate the European’s manner of speech, dress, and when possible seek sexual partners” (Fanon, *Peau noire, masques blancs* 8). Hence, the “inferiority complex” leads to a desire to be “white” through adapting the “white” culture (language), marrying a “white” person or behaving like white people.

In *Peau noire, masques blancs*, Fanon raises the issue of adopting the colonizer’s language. He argues that the inferiority complex drives the black to underestimate his language. He, however, views the “European” language as superior and strives to learn it. “In Martinique, the one who masters French is feared because he talks like a white man...black men want to prove to white men, at all costs, the richness of their thought, the equal value of their intellect” (10-11).

Furthermore, Fanon believes that speaking a language is in fact to adopt its culture. *Peau noire, masques blancs* serves as a means to help ending the estrangement of the “black”. Fanon asserts, “This book, it is hoped, will be a mirror with a progressive infrastructure, in which it will be possible to discern the ‘Negro’ on the road to desalination” (142).

According to Fanon, the book has the same function as psychoanalysis. As psychoanalysis frees the neurotic from his illness, *Peau noire, masques blancs* helps liberate the “black” from his hallucinatory attempt to become white (Fanon, *Peau noire, masques blancs* 100).

Moreover, Fanon, through this book, provides his own view about the human nature. In the same respect, he said: “No attempt must be made to encase man, for it is his destiny to be set free” (Ibid 101). Fanon recalls Rousseau’s emphasis on freedom called liberty, and Marx’s notion of alienation. He referred to two main aspects of being human. Oppression occurs when these aspects are alienated from each other. The universal nature of human beings, according to Fanon, includes freedom.

Fanon, in *Peau noir, masques blancs*, does respond to his own question What a ‘Black Man’ wants to be? The answer is brief and simple, but devastating. A ‘Black Man’ wants to be ‘White’. This pathology is forced upon “blacks” by the European culture. Colonialism, slavery and other means used by the West to dominate the rest of the world gave rise to some social practices, discourses and ideologies that sought to justify oppression while trying to pass for universal values. For instance, “universal” criteria of beauty are inspired from “European” and “white” models. “Black” people, then, can never conform them fully and abandon themselves individually and collectively in permanent quest to be accepted by “whites” (Fanon, *Peau noire, masques blancs* 10). The result is profound and disturbing feelings of inferiority⁷.

To put it concisely, *Peau noire, masques blancs* was the first attempt to target the psychology of racism. It scrutinizes the effects of European colonialism. Moreover, it shows how the oppressed are chained by their “epidermalization inferiority complex” to the extent that they emulate their oppressors.

L'an cinq de la révolution algérienne (A Dying Colonialism, 1959)

An enlightening and illuminating sociological account of how, during the Algerian War of Liberation, Algerians changed centuries-old social and cultural patterns and embraced certain ancient cultural practices long derided by their colonialist oppressors as primitive, in order to combat their oppressors. In *L'an cinq de la révolution algérienne*, Fanon starts his intellectual anti-colonial project.

In 1959, Fanon wrote *L'an cinq de la révolution algérienne* five years after the outbreak of 1954 Algerian War of liberation. The book is a series of political essays. It includes five chapters each targeting one of the following aspects: women, radio, the family, medicine, and the European minority in Algeria. Fanon adds three appendices: Women in the Algerian Revolution, A testimony by Charles Geromini, and another by Yvon Bresson.

In these essays, Fanon did not emphasize the subjugation of colonized Algerians. He rather highlighted the spirit of an endless resilience, resistance and eternal revolutionary spirit among the Algerians (Fanon 2). *L'an cinq de La révolution algérienne* is one of Fanon's sociological⁸ works that mirror the Algerian revolution. The works reflects the Algerian culture as well. This book is so militant; its reading helps the reader to understand why Fanon says to the colonized: "having a gun is the only chance you still have of giving a meaning to your death!"(181).

Fanon, in this work, started showing his clear position towards the Algerian Revolution and called for an effective armed struggle against the French colonial rule. He wrote therefore to advocate "violent" revolution as a means to end colonialism.

This book emphasizes also some aspects, perspectives and dimensions of the Algerian culture mainly the veil and the integration of the radio. Here below some extracts from the book:

Imperialism leaves behind germs of rot, which we must clinically detect and remove, from our land but from our mind, as well...decolonization is quite simply the replacing of a certain 'species' of men by another 'species' of men. Without any period of transition, there is a total complete and absolute substitution.

In the first chapter of this book is entitled *L'Algérie se dévoile (Algeria Unveiled)*, Frantz Fanon tried to account for the cultural changes in Algeria before the War of Independence.

N'êtes-vous pas Jolie ? Dévoilez-Vous !
"Removed and reassumed again and again, the veil has been manipulated, transformed into a technique of camouflage, into a means of struggle". (Fanon, *L'Algérie se dévoile* 37)

This chapter reflects Fanon's examination of the strategies used by the colonizer to control the colonized.

One of these methods was unveiling the Algerian women to destroy a symbol of uniqueness of the Algerian culture. Fanon said in the same book *L'an cinq de la révolution algérienne*

At an initial stage, there was a pure and simple adoption of the well-known formula. 'let's win over the women and the rest will follow...If want to destroy the structure of the Algerian society, we must go and find them behind the veil where they hide themselves and in the houses where the man keep them out of sight...Every veil fell ...was a negative expression of the fact that Algeria was beginning to deny herself and accepting the rape of the colonizer... (Fanon, *L'Algérie se dévoile* 37-38)

The veil is an Algerian symbol of identity; removing it means destructing the Algerian cultural essence. Fanon writes:

The occupying forces, in applying their maximum psychological attention to the veil worn by Algerian women, were obviously bound that a woman was “saved” and symbolically unveiled... these test-women, with bare faces and free bodies, henceforth circulated like sound currency in the European society of Algeria. These women were surrounded by an atmosphere of newness. The Europeans over-excited and wholly given over to their victory, carried away in a kind of trance, would speak of the psychological phenomenon of conversion were held in esteem. They were envied. The benevolent attention of the administration was drawn to them. (42)

Unveiling this woman is revealing her beauty; it is baring her secret, breaking her resistance, making her available for adventure. Hiding the face is also disguising a secret; it is also creating a world of mystery, of the hidden. In a confused way, the European experiences his relation with the Algerian woman at a highly complex level. There is in it the will to bring this woman within his reach, to make her a possible object of possession. (44)

He adds:

We have seen that on the level of individuals the colonial strategy of destructing Algerian society very quickly came to assign a prominent place to the Algerian woman...it was the colonialist’s frenzy to unveil the Algerian woman, it was his gamble on winning the battle of the veil at whatever cost, that were to provoke the native’s bristling resistance. (46-47)

For Algerians, then, the revolutionary woman emancipated herself not because of outside pressure but by the internal needs to fight fiercely against colonialism.

***Les damnés de la terre* (The Wretched of the Earth, 1961)**

Les damnés de la terre (1961) is a brilliant analysis of the psychology of the colonized and their path to liberation.

Together with Jean-Paul Sartre’s preface, the book was published under the title “*The Damned*” (Lewis R. Gordon opted for this translation as well) in 1963. In

1965, Grove Press reprinted the book with the title “*The Wretched of the Earth*” (N. C. Gibson 70). The French title of the book derives from the opening lyrics of the “*The Internationale*”; the nineteenth century anthem of the left wing. The words were composed by the Frenchman Eugène Pottier in 1871. It tells the experience of working people in struggle:

Debout, les damnés de la terre / Arise, damned of the
Earth
Debout, les forçats de la faim/ Arise, prisoners of hunger
La raison tonne en son cratère/ Reason thunders in its
volcano
C’est l’éruption de la fin/ this is the eruption of the end
Du passé faisons table rase/ let us make a clean slate of
the past
Foulesclave, debout, debout/ Enslaved masses, arise,
arise
Le monde va changer de base/ The world is going to
change its foundation
Nous ne sommes rien, soyons tout/ we are nothing, we
will be all.

C’est la lutte finale/It is the final struggle
Groupons-nous, et demain/Let’s gather, and tomorrow
L’internationale/The international
Sera le genre humain/Will be humankind

(Fanon, *Les damnés de la terre* 13)

Throughout the poem, Eugène Pottier describes the situation of the working class in the capitalist world and urges them to arise and ask for their rights. By using *les damnés de la terre* as a title, Fanon makes a kind of an analogy. According to Fanon, “the damned” does not refer only to the working class. It rather refers to the colonized.

Fanon wrote *Les damnés de la terre* in 1961. The book was written several weeks prior to Fanon’s death and was published posthumously. Written a year before the Algerian independence (1962), the work echoes Fanon’s call for the oppressed to rebel against the oppressor. Throughout the book, Fanon uses the experience of

French Algeria and her fight for independence to present his critique of colonialism and its social and mental effects on the [oppressed] people (Fanon, *Les damnés de la terre* 11). Hence, *Les damnés de la terre* represents Fanon's theories about colonialism in Algeria that can be generalized to scrutinize the state of other colonially oppressed people.

Come, then, comrades, the European game has finally ended; we must find something different ...we must grow a new skin, we must develop new thinking, and try to set foot a new man. (Fanon, *Les damnés de la terre* 11)

Throughout the book, Fanon insistently points at violence as the most effective solution for the Algerians to achieve freedom.

***Pour la révolution africaine* (Toward the African Revolution, 1964)**

Fanon covered the most active period of his life in his *book Pour la révolution africaine*. The work is a compilation and series of essays, articles, and periodicals he authored in *El Moudjahid* and *L'Esprit*. *Pour la révolution africaine* was published posthumously (1964) under the title *Pour la révolution africaine* in French. In the book, Fanon spots more light on some pertinent issues of oppression such as colonialism, racism, and culture in Africa. Out of his experience as a psychiatrist, he portrayed the situation of the colonized. Moreover, Fanon believed that unity of African would help their liberation.

In section one of the book's first chapter, Fanon talks about "*The North African Syndrom*" where he challenged the stereotyping prejudices of French doctors against Algerians in particular and Maghrebians (Maghrebis) in general, whose complaints of illnesses or pain are often dismissed as whining and laziness. Fanon

talks instead about these troubled men whose lives were disrupted by colonialism.

Fanon says:

Without family, without love, without human relations, without communion with the community, the first encounter with himself will be a neurotic mode, a pathological mode. He will feel empty, lifeless, in bodily struggle with death, a death on the side of death, a death in life, and what is more pathetic than this man with strong muscles who tells us in his truly broken voice: "Doctor, I'm going to die" (Fanon, *Pour la révolution africaine* 18)

In the second section of the book's chapter, four entitled: "*Algeria Face to Face with French Torturers*", Fanon targets the tortures exercised by French soldiers on Algerian patriots. Unlike some French intellectuals who opposed torture and favored colonial domination, Fanon believes that colonialism cannot function without torture. Thus, Fanon claims that torture is a means of colonialism. "Torture in Algeria is not an accident or an error or a fault. Colonialism cannot be understood without the possibility of torture, of violating, or of massacring" (Fanon, *Pour la révolution africaine* 66).

Fanon's major themes tackled in his writings: colonialism, racism, culture, inferiority complex and most importantly liberation in Africa (his works mainly revolve around Revolution: the Ultimate Pursuit to Liberation and "Violence" as a Necessity and a Unifying Force)

4.3. Frantz Fanon: Colonialism as Alienation

This part recapitulates Fanon's critique of colonialism and explains his attitude towards his French education and the French racial system and, by extension, towards colonialism in general. It also investigates how his denunciation of colonialism became more radical calling for an "Ultimate Pursuit to Liberation" and "violence" as

a “Necessity and a Unifying Force”, mainly after 1957. In short, this section explores the revolutionary evolution of Fanon’s critique of colonialism.

4.3.1. Early critique of Colonialism and Racism in *Peau noire, masques blancs*

In *Peau noire, masques blancs*, Fanon explored some issues mainly related to the racism of the colonizer and the complex of inferiority/dependency of the colonized.

For Fanon, It was a watershed to hear Aimé Césaire the Martinican teacher, poet and father of the negritude saying: “how it is nice to be black!” Hearing a model saying so after being student in Paris coming to his native Antilles was great discovery to Fanon.

The colonial idea, which revolves around Euro centrism, is unveiled in Fanon’s argument in “Racism and Culture” (chapter two in *Pour la révolution africaine*) when he foreshadows his later active engagement against colonialism.

Fanon focuses on the issue of racism in colonized societies. He argues that the binary system of colonizer/colonized, good/evil, and civil/savage is based on the race to which one belongs, “it is clear that what divides this world is first and foremost what species, what race one belongs to...you are rich because you are “white”, you are white because you are rich” (Fanon, *Les damnés de la terre* 5).

Fanon compares the compartmentalized colonial world to that of the Apartheid in South Africa. Racism is apparent through the existence of towns for natives and towns for Europeans (3). Such radical division leads to a psychological marginalization creating an inferiority complex among the colonized. Hence, racism is an inevitable outcome of the colonial Manichaeian mind set (Ibid 6).

Limits of Fanon's vision in *Peau noire, masques blancs* (1952), are showed, mainly in the European intellectual influences. The latter that framed his thoughts before 1954. Before 1954, Fanon critique of colonialism did not move beyond personal criticism of the colonial mind racist nature. Fanon criticized mainly what colonialists saw as inevitability of colonialism.

Frantz Fanon concludes that without colonialism, "a reciprocal relativism" of different cultures emerges. By this, Fanon deconstructed through his theories "epistemologically" and "psychoanalytically" the concept of a superiority of one race over another by considering it "pathology" and a sign of historical injustice, mainly in his *Peau noire, masques blancs*. The latter merits to be read as he succeeded to a great extent to explore objectively the colonial project based on colonial racism and historical injustice.

For Fanon, "native intellectuals" educated in colonial schools are prepared to admire colonial values and serve the European values like "adopted children" greedily [trying] to make Western Culture their own" (Fanon, *Les damnés de la terre* 218)

Fanon considered this group of people submissive to all that comes from their colonizer. Being alienated from their cultures facilitated being easily influenced by the western thoughts and the colonizer agenda. Fanon writes : "l'aliénation est de nature presque intellectuelle. C'est en tant qu'il conçoit la culture européenne comme moyen de se dépendre de sa race, qu'il se pose comme aliéné" (Fanon, *Peau noire, masques blancs* 14)⁹.

The colonial project was mainly based on instilling what Fanon referred to constantly as the inferiority complex. The latter pushed the colonized to 'no-being' and to belong to 'no-where' (R.Gordon 19). Leopold King of Belgium, colonizer of

Congo, said, in this respect, “You cannot colonize people until you instill in them a sense of inferiority” (Kebede 539-562).

In *Peau noire, masques blancs*, Fanon refers to this inferiority complex many times. He says: “...wearing the white mask contradicts the black identity with all what it encompasses: native ethnicity, history and culture...In Martinique, the one who masters French is feared because he talks like a white man!” (Fanon, *Peau noire, masques blancs* 10). He adds: “Any colonized-that is, any people within which a complex of local cultural inferiority originated-is placed in relation to the language of the “civilizing” nation; that is-the metropolitan culture”¹⁰. Fanon said in another context:

Psychologists speak of a prejudice having become unconscious. The truth is that the rigor of the system rendered the daily affirmation of superiority superfluous...The racist in a culture with racism is therefore normal. He has achieved a perfect harmony of economic relations and ideology in his environment ...in fact; race prejudice obeys a flawless logic. A country that lives, draws its substance from the exploitation of other peoples, makes those people inferior. Race prejudice to those peoples is normal. (Fanon, *Pour la révolution africaine* 38-42)

For Fanon, it is high time breaking with copycatting whites and feeling guilty to be black.

Fanon’s main point, in this respect, is that a society premised on colonialism, whose normative social field is a racist one, closes off the future for the colonized and forces them to react and “dive into the abyss of the past as the condition and source of their freedom” (Fanon, *Pour la révolution africaine* 44).

4.3.2. A more radical critique of colonialism in *L'an cinq de la révolution algérienne*, *les damnés de la terre*, and *Pour la révolution africaine*

Starting with *L'an cinq de la révolution algérienne*, Fanon's attitude towards the French colonialism in Algeria undergoes a paradigm shift; it becomes unequivocally revolutionary.

Fanon chose social transformation and revolutionary struggle. For him, keeping silent or passive is unbearable. Fanon was of the opinion that neutrality in such urgent historical situation was an attitude sullied by bad faith. He tackled many themes in this sense.

In *L'an cinq de la révolution*, Fanon clearly states that liberation is not only of soil, but also of mind and soul. He says:

It is not the soil that is occupied; it is not the ports or the airdromes. French colonialism has settled itself in the very center of the Algerian individual and has undertaken a sustained work of cleanup, of expulsion of self, of rationally pursued mutilation. There is not occupation of territory, on the one hand, and independence of persons on the other. It is the contrary as whole; its history, its daily pulsation that are contested, disfigured, in the hope of final destruction. Under these conditions, the individual's breathing is an observed, an occupied breathing. It is a combat breathing. (65)

In *Les damnés de la terre*, Fanon advocates the use of violence as a means for the colonized to attain liberation. He argues that decolonization is in itself a violent act “national liberation, national reawakening, restoration of the nation to the people or commonwealth, whatever the name used, whatever the latest expression, decolonization is always a violent event”: (1) Fanon defines decolonization as “the encounter between two congenitally antagonist forces” (2). For

Fanon“...Decolonization does not mean freedom...” the “force” or “violence” is the starting point of colonization to end up the ‘false’ propagated for against the oppressed (Fanon, *Les damnés de la terre* 32).

The colonizer forces the natives to relinquish their lands and lives using bayonets and cannons. Thus, decolonization can only occur through the adoption of a similar “violence”. Decolonization for Fanon has two senses: The physical act of freeing a territory from external control by a colonizer, and the psychological act of freeing the consciousness, the mind and spirit of the native from alienation caused by colonialism (emancipation)¹¹.

According to Fanon, the most efficient solution to eradicate colonialist Manichaeism and reorganize the colonized society is revolutionary violence. It is only through violence, a language that the colonizer understands, that decolonization can take place. When the colonized succeeds in achieving a real decolonization, he is no more a “thing” but “a new man”. The previously colonized will then live in an organized society where “the last shall be the first” (Fanon, *Les damnés de la terre* 2). Such a situation cannot be reached unless the two protagonists’ colonizer/colonized meet in a murderous conflict (Ibid 3). Thus, Fanon claims that real decolonization and reordering of society necessitates the use of violence; ‘Decolonization is a violent phenomenon’. He states:

Decolonization is always a violent phenomenon...Colonization or decolonization: it is simply a power struggle. The exploited realize that their liberation implies using every means available, and force is the first...the *Front de la Libération Nationale* (FLN) in a famous tract stated that colonialism only loosens its hold when the knife is at its throat...the tract merely expressed what every Algerian felt deep down: colonialism is not a machine capable of thinking, a body endowed with reason. It is naked violence and only gives in when confronted with greater violence... [that] evokes for us the searing bullets and

bloodstained knives which emanate from it. (Fanon, *Les damnés de la terre* 23-37)

Fanon claims that the Algerians are profoundly convinced that “what was taken by force can only be restored by force”; the colonial situation urges them to take arms and fight. They believe that the ultimate path toward liberation is revolution:

When the Algerians reject any method, which does not include violence, this is proof that something has happened or is in the process of happening. The colonized peoples, those slaves of modern times, have run out of patience. They know that such madness alone can deliver them from colonial oppression. A new type of relationship is established in the world. The peoples of the Third World are in the process of shattering their chains, and what is extraordinary is that they succeed. (Fanon, *Les damnés de la terre* 34)

Fanon expresses his opportunity to witness the extraordinary examples of honor, self-sacrifice, love of life, and disregard for death in an Algeria at war...the Algerian fighter has an unusual way of fighting and dying...” [They] throw [themselves] body and soul into the national struggle (Fanon, *Les damnés de la terre* 221-233).

Fanon was impressed as well by the Algerians’ self-sacrifice as their continuous struggle to maintain their dignity. As he witnessed the war, Fanon went on describing how things changed with the outbreak of the revolution.

Fanon refers to the extent to which relationships among Algerians changed during the course of the war. People become much more attached to each other.

Fanon criticizes colonialism and clearly states that the transformation of the Algerian woman through her revolutionary commitment caused a radical change in the family structure. He says:

The struggle for national liberation and more and more total character of the repression have inflicted grave traumatism upon the family group: a father taken into custody in the street in the company of his children, stripped along with them, tortured before their eyes: the sharply experienced brotherhood of men with bare, bruised, bloody shoulders; a husband arrested, dragged away, imprisoned. The women are then left to find ways of keeping their children from starving to death. (Fanon, *L'an cinq de la révolution algérienne* 99)

The Algerian family in its transformation changes the Algerian society. Fanon puts:

On November 1, 1954, the Revolution reopened all the problems: those of colonialism, but also those of the colonized society. The colonized society perceived that in order to succeed in the gigantic undertaking into which it had flung itself, in order to defeat colonialism and in order to build the Algerian nation, it would have to make a vast effort of self-preparation, strain all its joints, renew its blood and its soul. In the course of the multiple episodes of the war, the people came to realize that if they wished to bring a new world to birth they would have to create a new Algerian society from top to bottom. In order to fulfill his aspirations, the Algerian must adapt himself at an exceptional pace to this new situation. The truth, for once, eluded its traditional trustees and placed itself within reach of any seeker. The group, which formerly looked to the father to determine its values, now had to seek this each for himself, as circumstances dictated. Every Algerian faced with the new system of values introduced by the Revolution is compelled to define himself, to take a position to choose. (Fanon, *L'an cinq de la révolution algérienne* 101)

Fanon states that the patriarchal family and paternal order would change as the son I the family is obliged to make his choice. He says:

The militant would replace the son and undertake to indoctrinate the father. However, it would not be the son's words that would convince him. It would be more, than anything would, the dimensions of the people's commitment...thus new forms of paternal opposition, veiled manifestations of paternal opposition became known. When, for example, a young Algerian would decide to join the 'maquis', the father would no longer formally forbid it. (103)

Further, Fanon believes firmly that colonialism did its best to make Algeria socially dispersed. Since the beginning of the Algerian revolution, the French tried to separate

Algerians from one another, of fragmenting them, in order to make any social cohesion impossible. Fanon pictures some horrific scenes of the Algerian family during the colonial times:

A woman led away by soldiers who comes back a week later. It is unnecessary to question her to understand that she has been violated dozens of times. A husband taken away by the enemy who comes back with his body covered with contusions, more dead than alive, his mind stunned. Children scattered to the winds, on numerable orphans who roam about, haggard and famished. (119)

Fanon calls colonialism the “tyranny and the great wound inflicted on the Algerian soil and on the Algerian people” (Ibid).

Fanon shares with colonized Algerians the same conception of decolonization: something that can be achieved only through revolutionary violence.

In *l’an cinq de la révolution algérienne*, Fanon describes the torture practiced by the colonizer on the colonized. Fanon believes that the French implemented a repressive system of torture and other human rights violations to squelch the Algerian struggle for national liberation.

Fanon ends in *L’an cinq de la révolution* :

The crushing of the Algerian Revolution, its isolation, its asphyxiation, its death through exhaustion-These are mad dreams. The Revolution in depth, the true one, precisely because it changes man and renew society, has reached an advanced stage. This oxygen which creates and shapes a new humanity –this, too, is the Algerian Revolution. (179)

Fanon in this sense uses a liberating force, an approach called “psychopolitics” which is genuinely influenced by emancipator therapeutic methods (Gordon 84). His critique of colonialism appears clearly in the way he describes the horrific tortures of the colonizer and its hopeless attempts to dehumanize Algerians and suffocate the Algerian Revolution.

In the last chapter of *Les damnés de la terre: "Colonial War and Mental Disorders"*, Fanon provides a selection of clinical case studies of both French soldiers and their colonized victims. As a psychiatrist, Fanon sought to diagnose the reasons behind the psychotic disorders of his patients.

According to the French colonizer, the Algerian is "a senseless killer", "a habitual killer" or "a savage killer". Fanon, however, argues that the behavior of the Algerian is not the result of some innate characteristics or natural predispositions. It is rather, the direct consequence of colonial experience. Though Algerians are physically treated, they need to be psychologically cured. Their traumas can only end when colonialism is over:

we believe that in the cases presented here the triggering factor is principally the bloody, pitiless atmosphere, the generalization of inhuman practices, of people's lasting impression that they are witnessing a veritable apocalypse...The oppressed will always believe the worst about themselves. (Fanon, *Les damnés de la terre* 183)

Fanon associates the mental and psychological troubles of the Algerian people with the colonial situation.

Decolonization...influences individuals and modifies them fundamentally...It brings a natural rhythm into existence, introduced by new men, and with it a new language and a new humanity. Decolonization is the veritable creation of a new man. But this creation owes nothing of its legitimacy to any supernatural powers the 'thing' which has been colonized becomes man during the same process by which it frees itself. (Fanon, *Les damnés de la terre* 184)

Through the cases he studied, Fanon claims that the colonial context in Algeria gave rise to criminality and other social and personal pathologies. Among the cases, that Fanon included in his book is the case of two Algerian schoolchildren who killed their

French friend. Their crime was a reaction to the violence and fear inflicted on Algerians. That was clearly revealed through the conversation Fanon had with the two boys:

We were not angry with him. Every Thursday we used to go and hunt together with a slingshot up on the hill behind the village. He was our best friend. One day we decided to kill him because the Europeans want to kill all the Arabs. We cannot kill the 'grown-ups,' but we can kill someone like him because he is our own age. We did not know how to go about it. We wanted to throw him into a ditch, but this might only have injured him. So we took a knife from home and we killed him. However, he was a friend of yours? So, why do they want to kill us? His father is in the militia and says we all ought to have our throats slit. (Fanon, *Les damnés de la terre* 199-201)

The second case was about a nineteen-year-old ALN fighter who killed a French woman:

I left the town where I had been a student to join the ground resistance movement. After several months, I received news of home. I learned that a French soldier had killed my mother at direct range. In addition, two of my sisters taken to the barracks. One day we went to an estate owned by white settlers where the manager, a notorious colonial, had already killed two Algerian civilians. It was night when we arrived at his house. However, he was not at home. Only his wife was in the house. On seeing us, she begged us not to kill her... However, I kept looking at the woman and thinking of my mother...The next minute she was dead. I'd killed her with my knife. (Fanon, *Les damnés de la terre* 193).

Fanon warns: “Be wary of those that want to silence you and depoliticize you and send you “back to the caves” or to the domestic sphere”. Fanon brings *L’an cinq de la révolution* into closure saying: “Revolution, at its core, is truth, precisely because it changes man, renews and advances society. The oxygen invents a new humanity. This, precisely, is the Algerian revolution” (174).

After 1957, Fanon argues repeatedly that revolutionary violence unifies the colonized. He states, “The armed struggle mobilizes the people; it pitches them in a single direction, from which there is not turning back...Violence is man re-creating himself” (Fanon, *Les damnés de la terre* 50). In this context, Fanon believes that everyone will take part in achieving liberation and “no special merit should go to the leader” (51).

For Fanon, once people use violence to reach liberation, nobody will be allowed to come out as a “liberator”. A liberation that is attained through “violence” will be the triumph of everyone. Indeed, “It is impossible to discuss Fanon without discussing the many violence-laden Algeria today...Violence is the only thing the masters listen to... Nothing else” (J.Julian 64).

For Fanon: “Violence is a cleansing force; it rids the colonized of their inferiority complex, of their passive and despairing attitude. It emboldens them and restores their self-confidence” (Fanon, *Les damnés de la terre* 51). Fanon mentions various notions of “violence” in his writings: force, physical or psychological injury, aggression, coercion, militancy and radicalism, but: Why does violence matter according to Fanon?

For Fanon, Decolonization has many components: (1) Total, complete decolonization of one “species” of man; (2) brings into being “new men, new language and new humanity”; (3) The production of the new man is uniquely a result of their act of obtaining their freedom (Ibid 52).

“Violence” is necessary for four main reasons: (1) Two moral reasons: to liberate the native consciousness and restore its humanity and as a natural response to the violence perpetrated by the settler, (2) Two practical reasons: to physically bring

down the colonial: political, social, intellectual, economic structures; and to build solidarity in the struggle for freedom.¹²

Considering violence as the only solution to liberation, Fanon ends *L'an cinq de la révolution* saying:

Non la violence du peuple algérien n'est pas haine de la paix ni rejet du contact humain, ni conviction que seule la guerre peut mettre fin au régime colonial en Algérie. Le peuple algérien a choisi l'unique solution qui lui était laissée et ce choix nous nous y maintiendrons¹³

Le général de Gaulle dit : 'il faut briser le peuple algérien. 'Nous lui répondons : ' Négocions, trouvons une solution qui soit à la mesure de l'histoire contemporaine. Mais sachez que si vous voulez briser le peuple algérien, il faudra que vous acceptiez de voir vos armées se briser contre le rempart des glorieux soldats algériens. (Fanon, *L'an cinq de la révolution algérienne* 166)¹⁴

Revolutionary violence needs no justification because it is the unavoidable consequence of colonialism itself. Established through armed invasion, imposed through force and perpetuated by brutal hegemony, colonialism is "violence in its natural state and it will only yield when confronted with greater violence" (Fanon, *Les damnés de la terre* 61).

Fanon as an ambassador to Accra witnessed the Africans' attempts at decolonization. In the fourth chapter of his *Pour la révolution africaine*, Fanon describes the necessity of African solidarity to remove the colonizer in the article: "Accra: Africa Affirms its Unity and Defines its Strategy". Throughout the article, Fanon highlights the significance of the Accra Conference, which was held in April 1958. The meeting was instrumental in hastening the liberation of the continent. African independent states showed their enthusiasm to help the colonized ones. Their strategy was to prevent the oppressors' operations. To do so, members of the

conference debated the use of “violent” and “non-violent” means in the process of decolonization (Fanon, *Pour la révolution africaine* 154-155).

Conclusion

After the outbreak of the Algerian Revolution in 1954, Fanon’s position towards colonialism gradually evolved to be more and more radical and revolutionary after being limited to denouncing racism and influenced by the French leftist perspective on colonialism. By 1957, Fanon became a staunch supporter of the Algerians and joined the Algerian revolution. Throughout *L’an cinq de la révolution* (1959), *les damnés de la terre* (1961) and *Pour la révolution africaine* (1964), Fanon believes that it is better to fight an imperfect revolution than to remain, degraded, subservient, and colonized. Currently, African scholars are still reassessing Fanon’s analyses, paying a particular attention to his prophetic warning, mainly about the comprador class, post-independence corruption, and tribalism in Sub-Saharan Africa. What really makes Fanon’s critique of colonialism unique is his psychological examination of the colonized. Fanon’s model of criticism continues to be effective today, even as Fanon’s influence appears to have shifted from the political to the cultural domain.

NOTES

¹ In an interview, Nigel Gibson said:

Fanon identified with the Algerian revolution and considered himself part of that. The government after independence named a few roads and schools after him...Fanon's identification with the Algerian liberation struggle was a result of the impossible situation Fanon found himself in while working at Blida-Joinville Hospital. The psychic health of the Algerian people as a whole, not only those at the hospital, was at stake. He could no longer work, he argued in his resignation letter, in a situation which encouraged the systematic dehumanization of the people

²Original text in French :

A 35 ans, il sait qu'il va mourir. Mais le lutteur ne veut pas ce qu'il a à dire, son expérience, meurt avec lui. Il va faire des exposés aux officiers de l'ALN à la frontière tunisienne puis allongé le plus souvent, il dicte à sa femme et à des proches, un texte qui, dactylographié au fur et à mesure, est lu par fragments à des amis qu'il appelle auprès de lui. Ce texte, c'est lui des « Damnés de la terre »

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³Ahmed Ben Bella, First President of Independent Algeria, said: "In the name of the Government, I declare that Fanon has been not only our brother-in-arms but also our guide--because through his spiritual and political testament he has bequeathed us a doctrine that guarantees the Algerian Revolution" (Wyrick 153)

⁴In another question raised in an interview with Nigel Gibson, he answered: "Certainly the [influential role is] important for the black movement in the USA and the anti-apartheid struggle in South Africa and even in Algeria. His works have been translated into many languages ..."

⁵ "I try when I write ...to affect my reader emotionally-that is to say, irrationally almost sensually".(Translated from French)

⁶"*Black Skin, White Masks* is a negritude testimonial in which Fanon acknowledges blackness albeit from the point of view of his French colonial upbringing and Césaire's adaptation as place the peoples of African descent in the French Empire", as quoted I Christian Filostrate,

⁷"White men consider themselves superior to Black men" (Fanon, *Peau noire,masques blancs* 10)

⁸ Another title to the book : *La sociologie de la révolution algérienne*

⁹"Alienation is of an almost intellectual nature. It is as he conceives a European culture as a means of depending on his race, that he poses as insane".(Translated from French by the researcher)

¹⁰Original text : « Tout peuple colonisé-s'est-à-dire tout peuple au sein duquel a pris naissance un complexe d'infériorité culturelle locale-se situe vis-à-vis du langage de la nation civilisatrice, c'est-à-dire de la culture métropolitaine » (Fanon, *Peau noire,masques blancs*).

¹¹From Encyclopedia Britannica 2010 Edition.

¹²Ibid

¹³No, the violence of the Algerian people is neither hatred of peace, nor rejection of human contact, nor conviction that only war can end the colonial regime in Algeria. The Algerians have chosen the only solution left to them and they will stick to...

¹⁴Charles de Gaulle says: we must break the Algerian people ...'we answer, we negotiate; let us find a solution that matches contemporary history. But know that if you want to break the Algerian people, you will have to accept to see your armies break against the rampart of the glorious Algerian soldiers (Translated from French)

Chapter Five

NUANCING INTELLECTUAL CONTROVERSIES AND CRITIQUES OF ALGERIAN INTELLECTUALS: KATEB YACINE ON MOULOUD FERAOUN AND MALEK BENNABI ON FRANTZ FANON

...an intellectual is one who has achieved a certain amount of education which lifts him a little above the others and this elevation places him in a privileged position. As a result, he remains exposed to all types of conflicts, contradictions, polemics, ambition and even catastrophes. Whether he likes it or not, he becomes the centre of interest, of discord, of ridicule, of fashion or of scorn. His words are swallowed whole or spat out in disgust, and his action never goes unnoticed

(Mike E.Elate. *The Intellectual as an artist in Soyinka's Five Plays* retrieved from *Mélanges africaines* 221)

Introduction

This chapter explores the different manners French-language Algerian writers viewed the colonialist discourse and its effects. Mouloud Feraoun, Mohammed Dib, Mouloud Mammeri, for example, fell short of freeing themselves from the hegemony of colonialist discourse. Of all Maghreban writers, only Kateb Yacine made significant inroads in curbing the nefarious effects of colonialist discourse and was able to seriously, outspokenly and fully subvert it¹. He wrote what was unanimously called a novel of “ruthless and rigorous combat”²; he was by excellence” the “terrible boy” of the Algerian revolutionary literature.

5.1. Kateb Yacine³ on Mouloud Feraoun and Malek Bennabi on Frantz Fanon

5.1.1. Kateb Yacine on Mouloud Feraoun

Kateb Yacine⁴ is an Algerian novelist, essayist, playwright, revolutionary militant and poet. He was born in 1929 in what is now Zighoud Youcef in the Constantine province. He belongs to a well-educated family (his maternal grandfather was a judge and his father was a lawyer). His mother Jasmine was fond of literature and poetry; she was also a marvelous storyteller⁵. He wrote many novels, numerous plays, and poems. His masterpieces *Nedjma* (*Nedjma*, 1956) became an instant success and spurred the development of a revolutionary literature of high quality in Algeria and the rest of the Maghreb. Kateb published his first collection of poems, *soliloques*, in 1946⁶.

Kateb Yacine published other poems in literary journals and magazines, *Forge* (1947), *Soleil*, *Simoun* and *Terrasses* (1950-1953). He, then, published his play *Le cercle des représailles* (*The Circle of Reprisals*) in 1959. *Nedjma*, for which Kateb is most famous, was published in 1956. The part that was omitted from the original version of *Nedjma* was reworked and published as *Le polygone étoilé* in 1966. In 1970, he published a play on the Vietnam War and Ho chi Minh, *L'Homme au Sandales de caoutchouc* (*The Man in the Rubber Sandals*)⁷.

In the seventies and eighties, Kateb wrote and directed plays in French and in the Algerian dialect throughout Algeria and in a number of French cities. He was active in Sidi Bel Abbès. His masterpieces of the time include *Mohamed prends ta valise* (*Mohamed take your Suitcase*), *La guerre de deux mille ans* (*The Two-Thousand Years War*), *Le roi de l'ouest* (*The King of the West*) and *La voix des*

femmes (The Voice of Women). He was awarded the National Grand Award Prize of letters in France 1987. Kateb died of cancer on October 28, 1989 in Grenoble (France) (Tamba 2).

Mouloud Feraoun⁸ who had been recommended, in this thesis, for shedding light on the Algerians marginalized in colonialist novels such as those of Albert Camus, he should also to be praised for drawing attention to the fact that Algerians were destitute and forgotten during the French colonial period. Most importantly, he deserves great admiration for relying on Algerian values to criticize colonialism⁹. However, he was sometimes ambivalent towards French education and values in his first works—as mentioned in chapter two of the thesis.

Compared to Feraoun's lukewarm critique of colonialism in his later writings, Kateb's critique of colonialism is radical. Not only did he denounce the injustices of colonialism, but he also subverted its ideological premises such as Eurocentrism, the linearity of history and the idea of progress. The result is a total refutation of the colonialist version of Algerian history¹⁰. Furthermore, Kateb rejected the notion of a static and constraining Algerian identity advocated by both the colonialists and some demagogues such as the Islamists and the Berberists. He favored instead a vision of Algeria as a nation whose identity is shaped by “a common Amazigh ancestry and temperament, Islam, Arabic language and culture, a shared experience of struggle against colonialism, as well as French language and culture” (Aoudjit, *Algerian Novel* 353).

Indeed, Kateb was equally “critical of those who want to disregard the Amazigh or Arabic dimensions of Algerian personality as well as those are nostalgic of an Arab-Islamic golden age and who want to obliterate the transformations brought

by the French colonizer” (Aoudjit, *Nedjma: Kateb* 93). He criticized harshly the colonialists’ repression of the Amazigh and Arab heritage of Algeria as well as their inclination to call Algerians “Arabs” as if the word denoted an immutable and simple essence (Aoudjit, *Algerian Literature* 359).

Concerning the use of French in his writings, Kateb stated clearly his position many times and on many occasions. He said that French is a “war booty to be used wisely...” (Djaidar, *Kateb Yacine* 69). In the same context, he added: “Je parle le français, j’ai écrit en français pour dire aux français que je ne suis pas un français”¹¹ and “French language shaped my Algerian soul (Aoudjit, *Nedjma: Kateb...93*)¹²”

Following Kateb, a few writers, set French aside and wrote in Arabic to communicate with the Algerian masses. The majority of the Algerian writers of the 1950s could not and wrote in French, in which they excelled. After writing *Nedjma* and *Le polygone étoilé* in French, Kateb ceased to use French as a means of expression and turned entirely to the vernacular Algerian dialect in his writings of the seventies and eighties in order to reach a larger audience. Critics often describe Kateb as the “product and the reflection of Algerian culture and thought”¹³. Even though he wrote in French, he did not adopt recognize it as his own language. In one of his interviews, he advocated the use of the Algerian colloquial language that Algerian masses can understand (1998).

Despite his decision to use colloquial Arabic instead of French, Kateb acknowledged that colonialist ideas were gradually entrenched in colonized societies due to the institutionalization of the French language and its use schools. He believed that Algerians cannot truly express their concerns in French because the latter carries an ideology and values that reinforce colonialism. Therefore, Kateb criticized Feraoun

and all Algerian writers who kept writing in French and, as a result, unwittingly supported the colonialist ideology.

Kateb kept urging Algerian writers to adopt an Algerian-centric approach to literature aimed at reviving the Algerian past and glorifying its history: “I write in French because France has invaded my country [...] that I am compelled to write in French to survive. But though writing in French, my Algerian or Berber roots are still alive”¹⁴ (Maameri 11). Throughout his writings, Kateb extolls the courage and bravery of prominent Algerian historical figures Emir Abdelkader and Jugurtha.

Despite being slightly influenced by Jean Paul Sartre; Bertholt Brecht and William Faulkner and meeting many writers in France and elsewhere in Europe, Kateb kept away from the Parisian intellectual circles. He succeeded remarkably in adopting a revolutionary stance while remaining true to his roots.

The above is only a sketch on the way of understanding Kateb’s thought. It is complex and multifaceted. His insights can be explored and analyzed further from a postmodernist, a historiographic, and a narratological point of view.¹⁵

5.1.2. Malek Bennabi on Frantz Fanon

In his autobiography *Mémoires d’un témoin du siècle* (Memoirs of a Witness to the Century, 1965), Bennabi reports that he was born November, 1, 1905 in Constantine into a destitute family. He was the only boy of four children.

In 1908, Bennabi lived through the collective emigration of a large number of Algerian families to neighbouring countries Tunisia, Morocco, and Libya fleeing poverty and the harsh conditions of colonial life.

After the end of World War II, Bennabi lived a period that marked the start of his most intellectually-productive years. He started organizing his ideas and writing them down and subsequently produced his first and most influential books. His first works were *Le phénomène coranique* (*The Qur'anic Phenomenon*, 1946), and then, *Labbaik, pèlerinage des pauvres* (*Labbaik, The Poors' Pilgrimage*, 1947), his only novel. After that he published *Les conditions de la renaissance* (*The Conditions of Renaissance*, 1948), which was badly received back home. On his visit to Algeria in 1948, Bennabi gave lectures to explain the essential ideas of his book (Bennabi, *Colonisabilité* 10-11).

During the 1950s, Bennabi engaged in a variety of intellectual activities in Egypt. After his participation in the Bandung Conference in 1955, he came to several conclusions in terms of solving the problems of the third world. He believed that liberal political thought is important, even vital for third world countries to achieve true and full independence. He, therefore, collected the lectures he gave previously in a book he published in Cairo entitled the *L'Afro-asiatisme* (*Afro-Asian Idea*, 1956). His stay in Egypt helped him master Arabic which he used in his later writings.

In Egypt, Bennabi published *Le problème de la culture* (*The Culture Issue*, 1957), *Dans le souffle de la bataille* (*In the Whirlwind of the Battle*, 1961), *Le problème des idées dans le monde musulman* (*The Problem of Ideas in the Islamic World*, 1970), and translated his previous books into Arabic (Bennabi, *Colonisabilité* 20).

Bennabi had also found himself surrounded by an Arab-Islamic culture which he indulged in with interesting discussions, debates and controversies in the company of Mohamed Hamouda Ben Sai, Umar Kamel Musqawi, Mahmoud Shakir, and other

intellectuals. In addition, Bennabi travelled to many Arab countries where he gave lectures and organized conferences in Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, and Libya (El-Mesawi 20). All these travels had a deep influence on Bennabi's intellectual project.

Bennabi returned to Algeria, two years after its independence from France. He was first appointed a consultant at the Ministry of Education, then Rector of the University of Algiers, then Head of the Higher Education Department (Bennabi, *Colonisabilité* 10). Bennabi had a preference for intellectual work over administrative work and politics.

Bennabi resumed his intellectual activities in Algeria focusing mainly on the reconstruction of Islamic civilisation. The three well-received lectures he gave on Algeria as an independent state were collected in the books: *Discours sur la culture* (Discourse on Culture, 1958), *L'ideologie et la civilisation* (Ideology and Civilisation) (Bariun 122).

After resigning from his position as Head of Higher Education in 1967, he launched in his home a regular intellectual forum that gathered a number of Islamist students. Moreover, he spent his time actively taking part in lectures, seminars and conferences both at home and abroad, in addition to publishing several other important books. "During this period, he founded the annual conference on Islamic Thought that lasted up to the 1980s" (El-Mesawi 216). On March 1972, he travelled to Damascus, where he delivered two of his last lectures, later published in a book "*Le role du musulman dans le dernier tiers du XX^e siècle*" (*The Role of the Muslim in the Last Third of the Twentieth Century*, 1972) (Bennabi, *Islam in History and Society* 20)¹⁶.

Bennabi passed away at his home in Algiers, on October 31, 1973. He was diagnosed with Prostate cancer which spread to his brain. This disease persisted despite the medical treatment he underwent abroad. He now rests in Sidi M'hamed cemetery in Algiers.

As far as Bennabi's ideas¹⁷ are concerned, he is considered one of the most accomplished and best-known contemporary Algerian thinkers. He is famous primarily for his reconciliation of Islamic thought with nationalism. He is known as well, for what he called the "civilization cycle", issues of culture (s), and the march of history, the problems of ideas, and the conditions of a renaissance of Islamic thought, globalization, and economics.

Bennabi viewed all civilizations as being based on reform, renewal, and renaissance. He provided a renewed-vision of Islamic thought that is not based on simplistic thinking and rituals practiced blindly by soulless men (Bennabi, *Colonisabilité* 20). His works served as a model for a group of Algerian students and intellectuals from the 1950s through to the 1970s. The concepts of renewal, colonizability, and renaissance, that he developed, became part of the cultural landscape¹⁸.

Bennabi considered any blind reliance on imported ideologies a perpetuation of what he called "colonisability" which stands for "inward acceptance of colonialization" (Bennabi, *Colonisabilité* 30). He said: "'Colonisability' is mainly based on the inferiority complex of the *intellectomanes*" (fake intellectuals) who believed colonialism fulfilled a "civilizing mission" (Bennabi, *Colonisabilité* 190).

Bennabi was critical of Frantz Fanon for "overlooking Algerian culture". Further, he criticized Frantz Fanon for being co-opted by a borrowed ideology,

Marxism, which has little to do with the Algerian socio-historical context (Bennabi, *Islam in History and Society* 5).

Moreover, Bennabi was deeply critical of the fact that Frantz Fanon was not Algerian and not Muslim. He considered Fanon more African than Algerian. He described him as “a musician who chants an African music, carries an African soul with all its history and ills. (مالك بن نبي، *الفضايا الكبرى* 109)

The substance of Bennabi’s critique of Fanon was that unless a militant was immersed in the culture of a people and draws his inspiration from its values and its aspirations, he could not contribute efficiently to its liberation (Bennabi, *Islam in History and Society* 90).

Frantz Fanon, on the other hand, believed that “it is better to fight an imperfect revolution than to remain still, degraded, subservient, and colonized”. Indeed, Fanon was more involved in the revolution than Bennabi. While the former served as, journalist, a doctor and military doctor, the latter was never a member of the FLN which he criticized many times.

Despite the criticism Fanon was subjected to, what really makes his critique of colonialism unique is his psychological examination of the colonized. Fanon’s model of criticism continues to be effective today, even as Fanon’s influence appears to have shifted from the political to the cultural domain.

5.2. The Extent and Limits of the Algerian authors’ subversion of the Colonialist Discourse.

As mentioned before, Mouloud Feraoun’s critique of colonialism was based on liberalism which is insufficient in undermining the colonialist discourse as it focused

more on the individual (Aoudjit, *The Algerian Novel* 73). Therefore, it was considered limited to liberate a whole colonized people individually.

Mouloud Feraoun believed in Liberalism as an appropriate ideology to liberate his country though he was against colonialism. Feraoun proved to be ambivalent to a great extent (mainly in his early works) as he could not detect the imperialist implications of French liberalism. Kateb Yacine, by contrast, not only deconstructed colonialist historiography but used innovative techniques to do so.

5.3. Kateb Yacine's Deconstruction of Colonialist Historiography in *Nedjma*

From previous chapters, it was safe to assume and note down that the Algerian writers of French expression, along with Frantz Fanon, denounced directly or indirectly the injustices of colonialism. They all promoted a real appeal to Algerian values, but only Kateb Yacine could subvert the philosophical assumptions of colonialist discourse and French historiography and challenge its objectivity, linearity and progress (Aoudjit, *Nedjma: Kateb* ...82). In this thesis, we will focus mainly on *Nedjma*.

Nedjma is a complex novel that uses innovative narrative techniques such as the use of juxtaposition of multiple versions of a single story as told by a variety of narrators (Ibid 83). The story of *Nedjma* is structured around four characters: the brothers Lakhdar and Mourad and their cousins Mustapha and Rachid.

These protagonists of the story wander across the country in incessant search of work. The story also describes what they see, their fights with the colonial authorities and their arrests and escapes from colonial prisons. The story describes through flashbacks the first narrative that revolves mainly around the participation of

both Lakhdar and Mustapha in the traumatic events of May 8, 1945. These bloody events in Algeria resulted in thousands of Algerian demonstrators being killed by the French army with the help of the air force, the police, and civilian militias (Kateb, *Nedjma* 5).

The second narrative engages fully with Algeria's pre-colonial and colonial history.¹⁹ Kateb refers to some Algerian historical figures, namely: Emir Abdelkader (Kateb, *Nedjma* 96), Jugurtha (96), the Numidians (164, 165, 166, and 210) and Beni Hillal (17). He tells extensively how Algerian peasants were driven to the mountains and to less fertile lands; he describes the hardships of colonialism, including destitution and continual harassment (Aoudjit, *Nedjma: Kateb...83*). Kateb criticizes and laments the division of Algerians in the years preceding the Algerian Revolution

The third narrative concerns more the lineage of the four friends' married cousin, the mysterious Nedjma, loved by all the men in the story. Rachid's obsession with Nedjma's pedigree and his family's origin sets up a semi-mythical fourth narrative about the *Keblout* tribe, from which Nedjma as well as the four protagonists originated (Aoudjit, *Nedjma: Kateb...84*). Accordingly, all these narratives are tightly interlinked through framing, thematic concerns, plot parallels and cause-and-effect relationships.

The novel shifts smoothly, artistically, and elegantly between these narratives. Indeed, the major message of *Nedjma* is to engender a consciousness of the Algerians' hard conditions and deplorable life during the French colonial times and to open up a possible horizon and instill hope for Algerians to master their own destiny.

The novel's four narratives revolve around four main themes: national independence, undermining the colonialist representation of Algerian identity,

restoration of the lost Algerian image based on the Algerian real past and memory building up essentials of the Algerian identity and social cohesion, and recovery of Algerian history (Aoudjit, *Algerian Literature* 356).

Kateb Yacine showed as well that the re-articulation of Algerian identity was marred by some disputes. First, defining the Algerian nation was a matter of controversy and source of an acute tension among the nationalist factions. Second, at the conceptual level, the idea of identity was “riddled with ambiguity, driven with contradictory meaning, and encumbered by reifying connotations” as Roger Brubaker and Frederick Cooper Wrote (Aoudjit, *Nedjma: Kateb...*82).

Moreover, the major obstacle to recovering Algerian history, indeed, lied in the “deep grammar” that underlined colonialist history, including its taken-for-granted Enlightenment notions of objectivity, linearity and inevitability²⁰. “Kateb’s objective, therefore, was not simply to uncover those aspects of Algerian history that had been neglected and repressed or conveniently forgotten in colonialist history, but a critique of the power-knowledge nexus of which colonialist historiography is part” (Aoudjit, *Nedjma: Kateb* 81-83). Kateb’s project also embodied questioning essentialist thinking on the grounds that it was divisive and colonialist.

To destruct the colonialist narratology and literary line, Kateb Yacine used innovative narrative techniques, including: shattering the chronological order of the narratives, having the same event narrated by different characters, depicting the past via reflections and dreams of the characters and presenting history in the form of a spiral (Aoudjit, *Nedjma: Kateb...* 85). Many critiques praised Kateb for doing so.

In addition to questioning colonialist history, *Nedjma* is also enjoyable. His descriptions, poetics, diction, and techniques are gripping:

Nedjma ...nue dans sa robe (...). Epuisée, elle s'assoit à même le carrelage...Les seins se dressent. Elle s'étend. Invivable consommation du zénith; elle se tourne, se retourne, les jambes repliés le long du mur, et donne la folle impression de dormir sur les seins²¹. (Kateb, *Nedjma* 66-67)

Another good example of the originality of Kateb style is the following:

(...) J'ai tracé sur le sable un plan
Un plan de manifestation future.
Qu'on me donne une rivière et je me battraï.
Je me battraï avec du sable et de l'eau. De l'eau fraîche, du sable
chaud. Je me battraï.
J'étais décidé. Je voyais loin. Très loin. Je voyais un paysan arc-bouté
comme une catapulte. Je l'appelais, il ne vint pas. Il me fit signe.
Il me fit signe qu'il était en guerre.
En guerre contre son estomac. Tout le monde le sait...
Tout le monde sait qu'un paysan n'a pas d'esprit.
Un paysan n'est qu'un estomac, une catapulte.
Moi j'étais étudiant. J'étais une puce
Une puce sentimentale...les fleurs de peupliers...
Les fleurs de peupliers éclataient en bourre soyeuse.
Moi j'étais en guerre. Je distraçais le paysan.
Je voulais qu'il oublie sa faim. je faisais le fou. Je faisais
Le fou devant mon père paysan. Je bombardais la lune
Dans la rivière²². (Kateb, *Nedjma* 54)

Furthermore, Aoudjit mentions in an article entitled: *Nedjma: Kateb Yacine's Deconstruction of Algeria's Colonial Historiography* that Kateb Yacine (*Nedjma*) depicts the past by means of the characters' reflection, dreams and recollections frequently using stream of consciousness—that is, showing thoughts and feelings as they flow spontaneously and randomly through the minds of the characters (81). The adoption of first-person point of view and stream of consciousness also served as a valuable means of spotting the narrative quality of historical writing and criticizing the idea of objectivity (83).

Another technique used by Kateb was the scrambling of the distinction between genres. Although there is a narrative thread running through *Nedjma* (Aoudjit, *Algerian Literature* 355), dreams (126), memories (the events of May 8, 1945), interior monologues (98), journal entries (75-79), historical events, poems and myths all interrupt in the story. Moreover, the history of Algeria was well written in a semi-poetic style, illustrating mainly the events of May 8, 1945. Different representations of history were more like works of literature than like science (Aoudjit, *Algerian Literature* 355).

Kateb's novels, including *Nedjma*, embodied instances where they referred consciously to themselves as constructed narratives, a postmodernist technique called *metafiction*,²³ reinforcing the idea that historical representations were constructions (Aoudjit, *Algerian Literature* 355). For example, at one point Mourad compares his and Rachid's knowledge of *Nedjma*'s history and ended up concluding that his knowledge was more accurate as Rachid did not have all the facts, "because he could not have known what I know" (Kateb, *Nedjma* 97). Even Rachid himself seemed to consider the whole *Nedjma* story as nothing but delirium²⁴ (98).

While Kateb wrote during the colonial period of Algeria and must be understood within the Algerian socio-historical context of the 1950s, he offered a vital contribution to the reassessment of the connection between narrative techniques and ideology.

Kateb finds that narrative techniques can serve or challenge the established discursive power relations. These narrative techniques make of Kateb Yacine a precursor of postmodernist literature, where ethics and pragmatism replace ontology²⁵.

It is quite safe to affirm that *Nedjma* is a genuine masterpiece that shows political commitment and formal innovation. It calls not only calls into question the traditional (mis) conception of history and the essentialist rhetoric of colonialism, but it also subverts the conventions of the novel.

5.4. The Role of Algerian Critics in the “Liberation” of Algerian Mind and Literature

The works of the Algerian writers in French expression deserve careful examination and scrutiny. Indeed, this thesis approves that neocolonialism still exerts an influence on Algerian literatures through its criteria of what form and what contents are appropriate and what counts as good literature. Even though these criteria be based on Western norms, they are widely used not only to write novels, plays, and poems but also to explore and analyze Algerian literature. Far from being value-free, these norms perpetuate and reinforce the alienation of the Algerian mind. Indeed, from a Eurocentrist point of view, Algerian and African literatures must be written in Western languages and must abide by Western norms and standards because African languages are too “primitive” to portray complex experiences adequately.

Colonialist critics usually ignore several important facts about Algerian literature. The first fact is that the Algerian novel is a mixture of Algerian traditions and borrowed literary forms and structures from Europe, mainly in the colonial period. The second fact is that the Algerian novel's audience is different from that of the European novelists. The third fact is that the colonial discourse is deeply

embedded in Algerian culture and traditions that's why, many Algerian and African writers made use of songs, historical scenes, and local languages.

Kateb in Algeria as Ngugi in Kenya argued for a radical reinterpretation of Algeria's and Africa's history. Their core arguments were based on their firm belief that the colonialist distorted the histories of their countries.

Conclusion

The Algerian novelists of French expression lived through a turbulent period of the history of their country. They played an important role in the liberation of Algeria. They shouted loud and clear that the only way their country can achieve independence is through armed struggle. They also depicted in a compelling way the horrors of the war and discussed its psychological and social consequences.

Novels should be analyzed with appropriate attention to plot, theme, character development, style, and narrative techniques. The writing style of Mouloud Feraoun's *Le fils du pauvre*, for example, is simple but not shallow; his diction, plot, and characterization serve his purpose well.

Kateb Yacine's text (*Nedjma*) combined stream of consciousness techniques (modernism) with multiple points of view and often shuffled the distinction between non-fiction, fiction and metafiction narratives. Accordingly, Kateb was proved to be modernist/'postmodernist' writer who brought fragments to the Algerian novel aiming at "deconstructing the colonialist discourse" with a cyclic use of historical reconstruction.

Feraoun, Ngugi, and Fanon made significant inroads in their critique of colonialism, but they did not go far enough for two reasons: they did not question

colonialist historiography, and they used realist techniques that remain within colonialist historiography²⁶. Kateb Yacine, by contrast, not only deconstructed colonialist historiography but also used innovative techniques to do so.

NOTES

¹Mohammed Dib also got an anti-Eurocentric discourse through most of his writing(s)

² Borrowed from Saad, Mohammed. «In Search of Identity: Algerian Literature during and after Occupation.» *Westminister* (2014). (3)

³ Kateb Yacine is the pen name of Mohamed Khaloutti

⁴ Kateb yacine's Works: The list below shows a schedule of Kateb yacine's works:

Sr.No.	Title of the Book	Publisher and place of publication
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1.	<i>Le Cercle des représailles</i> (Théâtre)	1958 Seuil and Points
2.	<i>Le Polygone étoilé</i> (roman)	1966-1970 Seuil and Points 1970 Seuil and Points
3.	<i>L'Homme aux sandals de caoutchouc</i> (Théâtre)	1986-2012 Sindbab
4.	<i>L'oeuvre en fragments</i>	1991 La découverte
5.	<i>Soliloques</i> (Poèmes)	1994 Seuil
6.	<i>Le Poète comme un boxeur</i> (entretien)	1999 Seuil
7.	<i>Minuit passé de douze heures: écrits journalistiques 1974-1989</i>	1999 Seuil
8.	<i>Boucherie de l'espérance</i> (Oeuvres théâtrales)	2004 éditions des femmes-Antoinette Fouque
9.	<i>Parceque c'est une femme</i> (Théâtre)	

⁵Synthesis of many references: Britannica Encyclopedia 2010 Edition and *Algerian Literature. A Reader's Guide an Anthology* by Abdelkader Aoudjit.

⁶Ibid.

⁷ Encyclopedia Britannica 2010 edition.

⁸ « Cette terre aime ses enfants, elle reconnaît tout de suite les siens ; ceux qui son faits pour elle et pour que elle est faite..., il faut la découvrir et pour cela, il faut l'aimer »

Saddek Mebirouk. *Ecrivains Algériens D'expression Française*. Constantine: Numidia books, 2018. 14-26.

⁹ Mohammed Dib also fought the colonizer, but less aggressively than Kateb Yacine.

¹⁰ Chinua Achebe said about the same issue: "Until the lions [Africans] have their own history, the history of the hunt [Africa] glorifies the hunter [the colonizer] "

¹¹ In English : “I speak French, I write in French to tell the French that I’ am not French”

¹² See Appendix 01

¹³ As mentioned in Abdelkader Aoudjit book *Algerian Literature. A Reader’s Guide and Anthology*

¹⁴ In French: “J’écis en Français parce que la France a envahi mon pays et y occupe une position si puissante que je suis obligé d’écrire en Français pour survivre. Mais bien qu’écrivant en Français, mes racines algériennes ou berbères sont toujours vivantes”

¹⁵ To be explained in chapter 6

¹⁶MalekBennabi’s Works: *The list below shows a schedule of Malek’s works (Adnan Khalil 43-44):*

Sr. No.	Title of the Book	Published in
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1.	<i>Le Phénomène coranique</i> (The Quranic Phenomenon) الظاهرة القرآنية	1946
		1947
2.	<i>Here I am.</i> (The only novel).	1948
3.	<i>Les Conditions de la renaissance</i> (Conditions for Renaissance) شروط النهضة.	1954
4.	<i>Vocation de l'Islam</i> (Director of the Muslim World) وجهة العالم الإسلامي	
5.	<i>L'afro-asiatisme</i> (The Afro-Asian Idea) الفكرة الإفريقية الآسيوية	1956
6.	<i>A Talk on the New Instruction.</i>	1959
7.	<i>Le problem de la culture</i> (The Problem of Culture) مشكلة الثقافة.	1959
8.	<i>La lutte Idéologique aux pays colonisés</i> (Intellectual Struggle in the Colonies) الصراع الفكري في البلاد المستعمرة.	1960
9.	<i>Idée au Commonwealth Islamique</i> (The Idea of an Islamic Commonwealth) الكمنوالث الإسلامي.	1960
10.	<i>Reflexions</i> (Reflections on the Arab Society) تأملات	1961
11.	<i>Naissance d'une société</i> (Birth of a Society) ميلاد مجتمع	1962
12.	<i>Perspectives algériennes</i> (Algerian Horizons) أفاق جزائرية	1964
13.	<i>Mémoires d'un témoin du siècle</i> (A Memories of a Witness to the Century 1965) (Part One). 1. مذكرات شاهد على القرن...جزء 1	1965
14.	<i>Produce of Orientalist Impact on Contemporary Islamic Thought.</i>	1969
	انتاج المستشرقين	1970
15.	<i>Mémoires d'un témoin du siècle</i> (Diary of a Landmark of the Century) (Part Two). 2. مذكرات شاهد على القرن جزء 2	1971
16.	<i>Problème des idées dans le monde musulmans</i> (The Problem of Ideas in the Muslim World) مشكلة الأفكار في العالم الإسلامي	1972
	152	
17.	<i>Le musulman dans le monde de l'économie</i> (The Muslim in the World of Economics) المسلم في عالم الاقتصاد	1972
18.	<i>Le role du Musulman dans le dernier tier 20^{ème} siècle</i> (The Role of the Muslim in the Last Third of the Twentieth Century) (Two	1978

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- Malek Bennabi was born in January in 1905 in Constantine; East of Algeria. He received his primary Quranic and French schooling at Tébessa (A small town on the Tunisian-Algerian border) where his father worked as an officer in the Islamic judiciary.
 - From **1921 to 1925**, Malek Bennabi completed his secondary studies at the Médersa or what was called then “the Lycée Franco-Arabe of Constantine.” In this period, he came into contact with the reformist movement founded and led by **Abdelhamid** Ben Badis.
 - **In 1925**, he first attempted to pursue graduate studies in France, but this attempt was unsuccessful due to the lack of financial means. **In 1927**, Malek Bennabi was appointed as assistant officer to the sharia court of *Aflou* South of Oran. In the following year, he was transferred to the court of Shelghoum Laid (Small town near Constantine) from which he resigned after a dispute with a French clerk of the court.
 - **In 1930**, Malek Bennabi went to Paris to continue his studies. Following a politically motivated rejection of his application by *Institut National des Langues et Civilisations Orientales* (French National Institute of Oriental Studies), in Paris, he joined a polytechnic school from which he graduated as an electrical engineer in 1935.
 - **In 1931** he became the Vice-President of the Muslim Association of North African Students in Paris. Under the pressure of hard financial conditions as a result of unemployment and his family’s worsening conditions, Malek Bennabi left France and immigrated to Egypt.
 - **1938**: Malek Bennabi became the director of the Centre Culturel du Congrès Musulman Algérien (Cultural Center of the Algerian Muslim Congress) founded by an Association of Algerian immigrant workers; the Center was closed by the French authorities after few months.
 - **After the Second World war (1945)**: Malek Bennabi was compelled to accept a job in Germany. There he managed to write his first book *The Quoranic Phenomenon*. The manuscript of the book was subsequently destroyed during an air raid. Malek Bennabi re-wrote the book again and published it in 1946 in Algiers.
 - **In 1947** he published his only novel *Lebbeik* depicting the spiritual journey of a poor Algerian pilgrim to Mecca and to Medina.
 - **In 1948** Malek Bennabi first published his controversial book: *The Conditions of a Renaissance*.
 - **1949-1955**: Malek Bennabi devoted his time to a sustained contribution to the major Muslim press in Algeria, namely *The Algerian Republic* led by Ferhat Abbas and the *Muslim Youth* of the *Ulema* Association led by El Bashir El Ibrahimy.
 - **1954**: He published his fourth book the *Vocation of Islam* in Paris; the publication was by the renowned Editions du Seuil.

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- **1956:** Malek Bennabi was invited to India to present his book *L'Afro-Asiatisme* in which he set out the theoretical and cultural foundations of the non-alignment movement whose first seeds were sown during the Bandung Conference in 1955. The same year, he left France and ended up in Cairo where he decided to settle (1956-1962).
 - **On September 1, 1956:** He requested the political leadership of the Algerian *National Liberation Front (FLN)* in Cairo to be employed as military male nurse with the fighting units of the *National Liberation Army (ALN)* inside Algeria so that he could write the internal history of the Algerian revolution. He received no reply to his request.
 - **June 1957:** Malek Bennabi published in Arabic, French and German a booklet under the title *SOS Algeria* in which he denounced the bloody atrocities committed by the French army against Algerians. He continued to defend the Algerian cause by his own means.
 - **1957-1962:** Malek Bennabi organized a series of informal seminal works for Muslim students in Cairo. This period witnessed richness in production and activism in travels since he published in French and Arabic his book *L'Afro-Asiatism* and other books as *On the Origins of Human Society; The Idea of Islamic Commonwealth* and *The Ideological Struggle in the Colonized Countries*; Bennabi travelled in the same period to Syria and Lebanon where he delivered interesting public talks and met many thinkers and intellectuals.
 - **1964:** Malek Bennabi was appointed as Director of Higher Education. At the same time, he carried his intellectual activities and contributed regularly to the local press with weekly contributions in the French-language Journal *Révolution africaine* (African Revolution);
 - **1968-1970:** After resigning from his position as Director of Higher Education, he devoted his life to intellectual activities, including seminars, conferences both at home and abroad. During this period, he founded the annual Conference on Islamic Thought that lasted up to the 1980s.
 - **After 1970s,** Malek Bennabi published a number of other books, including his *two-volume memoirs, Problem of Ideas in the Muslim World, Algerian Perspectives, Islam and Democracy.*
 - **October 31, 1973:** After a long tour that took him in 1971 and 1972 to Mecca, Damascus and Beirut where he delivered numerous talks about “The Muslim Role in the Last Third of the Twentieth Century”, Bennabi died in Algiers.

¹⁸Ibid

¹⁹ As referred to by Abdelkader Aoudjit in his, book *Algerian Literature. A Reader's Guide and Anthology* (355)

²⁰ As referred to by Aoudjit in his book the *Algerian Novel and Colonial Discourse. Witnessing to Différend* (356)

²¹In English:

“Nedjma...naked in her dress (...) exhausted, she sits on the tiled floor...her breast rise. She is spreading. Unlivable consumption of the zenith; she turns, turns around, her legs folded against the wall, and gives the crazy impression of sleeping in her breasts...”

(The researcher translation)

²²In English:

(...) I drew a plan on the sand
A plan for future manifestations.
Give me a river and I will fight
I will fight with sand and water. Cool water, hot sand.I will fight.
I was determined. I could see far.Very far.I saw a peasant braced as if a catapult.I called him; he did not come.He motioned to me.
He signaled to me that he was at war.
At war with his stomach.Everyone knows it...
Everyone knows that a peasant has no mine.
A peasant is just a stomach,a catapult.I was a student.I was chip.
A sentimental chip...the popular blossoms...
The popular blossoms burst into a silky fluff.I was at war.I distracted the peasant.
I wanted him to forget his hunger.I was playing the fool.I did
The fool in front of my peasant father.I was bombarding the moon
In the river ...

(The researcher translation)

²³ To be further explained in Chapter 6.

²⁴What Abdelkader Khatibi calls in his book *Le Roman maghrébin* le « délire poétique » in Kateb's words, it appears such delirium :

« L'ouverture de l'espace des pères (n'était) qu'illusion...homme du vieil échec chargé de gloire, lui seul avait réellement vécu... » (Kateb 50)

Mentioned as well in Aoudjit's article entitled: *Nedjma : Kateb Yacin's Deconstruction of Algeria's Colonial Historiography* (88)

²⁵ As referred to by Abdelkader Aoudjit in his, book *Algerian Literature. A Reader's Guide and Anthology* (355)

²⁶ We join the idea of Aoudjit in his book *Algerian Literature. A Reader's Guide and Anthology* (355)

Chapter Six

NEW THEMES AND NEW TECHNIQUES IN ALGERIA'S POST-WAR LITERATURE

J'écris en Français parce que la France a envahi mon pays et y occupe une position si puissante que je suis obligé d'écrire en Français pour survivre. Mais bien qu'écrivant en Français, mes racines algériennes ou berbères sont toujours vivantes

Kateb Yacine
(Interview of Kateb Yacine with *Jeune Afrique* about « La Francophonie » in 1966)

Introduction

This chapter goes on demystifying some familiar approaches to postcolonial Algerian literature. It emphasizes as well history-literature linkage with reference to some techniques used by some Algerian writers. It seeks as well to (de) inherit the colonial legacy and its impact on the literary, cultural and intellectual scene. Furthermore, this chapter re-examines the issue of the use of the French language in Algerian literature and the various themes and concerns tackled by Algerian writers of French expression.

6.1. Approaches to Post-war Algerian Literature: Themes, and Narrative techniques.

6.1.1. Approaches

6.1.1.1. Cultural Studies

Cultural studies is an innovative interdisciplinary field of research and teaching that is theoretically, politically, and empirically engaged in cultural analysis. It emphasizes the way in which culture creates and transforms individual experiences, everyday life,

social relations, and power. It draws on methods and theories from literary studies, sociology, history, communication studies, cultural anthropology and economics¹. It raises more questions than answers (Bressler 264).. This discipline influenced three approaches to literary theory and practice: post colonialism, African-American criticism and gender studies.

6.1.1.2. Historiography and Historiographic metafiction

Historiography is the way historians gather, analyze, and then arrange their findings in the form of narratives. It also studies how historians explain why the events they study happened the way they did.

Concerning Historiographic metafiction, it is an expression used first by, Canadian literary theorist Linda Hutcheon, in the late 1980s. She defines it “in terms of its ability to contest the assumptions of the “realist” novel narrative history, to question the absolute knowability of the past, and to specify the ideological implications of historical representations, past and present and exhibit many of its techniques” (Aoudjit, *Algerian Literature* 354). Historiographic metafiction covers three domains: fiction, history, and theory. It is used broadly for works of fiction, which combine the literary devices of metafiction and those of historical fiction².

In Algeria, Kateb Yacine, for instance, used successfully historiographic metafiction techniques in *Nedjma* by the usage of “juxtaposition of multiple versions of a single story as told by a variety of narrators. Kateb’s novels then are not traditional novels, but rather belong to *Historiographic metafiction*” (Aoudjit, *Algerian Novel* 354).

In Kenya, Ngugi, in his late writing, insisted on the fact that the metanarrative of Kenya's nationalist history has to be reviewed, revised, and reconstructed in a way to give credit and credibility to active actors in Kenya, namely the trinity: peasants, workers, and students.

6.1.2. Themes

6.1.2.1. Modernization

Many definitions were attributed to Modernization. AS Aoudjit in his, book *Algerian Literature. A Reader's Guide and Anthology* (295) explains:

Modernization has never been a painless process anywhere. Algeria, during the last fifty years, has experienced profound social and cultural transformations resulted from government programs of modernization. These programmes were based mainly on building new industries, launching agrarian reforms, expanding means of communication, constructing new railroads and modern highways. Public education, for instance, received the greatest attention; it received 40 % of the state budget. All these transformations led to population growth and urbanization and raised the standards of Algerians' way of life as well as their expectations. (295)

The process of modernizing a country in the wake of independence brought some conflicting values, mainly between tradition and modernity, city and countryside. Two Algerian writers in Arabic expression associated with these conflicting values brought by the agrarian reforms are Abdelhamid Benhedouga and Tahar Ouetar who described the drama of peasants from a Marxist point of view. Rachid Boudjedra, Rachid Mimouni and Tahar Djaout raised their tones as they criticized vehemently all sorts of rigid bureaucracy and impractical government economic plans. Their novels are overwhelmed by anger and revolt.

6.1.2.2. Modernity

It was a historical period characterized by a set of values and practices. The period witnessed as well some socio-cultural norms dominated the scene in the wake of 1400's-1500s Renaissance, the 1600s-1700s Age of reason, also called the "Enlightenment" in Europe. Modernity had a tremendous influence on the rest of the world.

Concerning Algeria, modernity has an uneasy relationship with Islam(ism). Modernity is a complex and multidimensional phenomenon rather than a simple, unified and coherent one. It includes different schools of thought moving in many directions, especially in the Muslim world. Islam and modernity raised controversies, which are often discussed in contemporary sociology of religion. The history of Islam chronicled different interpretations and approaches³ of the Koran and the tradition.

Islamic modernists, for instance, argued that Islam and modernity are in "harmony and compatible" and "asserted the need to reinterpret and reapply the principles and ideals of Islam to formulate new responses to the political, scientific, and cultural challenges of the West and of modern life (Esposito 647)". The reformists, on the other hand, challenged the status quo maintained by the conservative Muslims scholars, who saw the established law as the ideal order that had to be followed and upheld the doctrine of *El-Taqlid* (imitation / blind following) or *El-Tekdis* (holifying) as mentioned by Malek Bennabi⁴.

The Algerian *Muslim Ulema association*, for example, saw colonialism as a major cause for the problems the Muslim world. Jamal al-Din al-Afghani (1838–1897), Mohammad Abdou (1849–1905), Mohammad Rachid Rida (1869–1935),⁵ Cheikh Abdelhamid Ben Badis (1889-1940), Cheikh El Bachir El-Ibrahimi (1889-

1965), and Malek Bennabi (1905-1993) were the best-known leaders of Modernist and renewed-Islamic discourse.

In Algerian literature, Rachid Boudjedra, Rachid Mimouni, Yasmina Khadra, Ahlem Mostaghanemi and Mohamed Sari tried to describe the slide into cruelty of Islamist fundamentalists to understand the motives of their horrific actions towards modernization and modernity.

In addition to the issues of tradition, modernity, modernization, bureaucracy and religious extremism and conservatism, the condition of women and the patriarchal society got into conflict with modernity and modernization. The condition of women is tackled by all the Algerian writers mentioned above.

6.1.2.3. Modernism

It was a period of literary history that lasted from early 1900s to early 1940s (precisely 1914/1945); it was an art movement by excellence. Modernist writers rebelled mainly against clear-cut storytelling and formulaic verse from the 19th century. Literary modernism was a move away from previous traditions, considered archaic by some, into experimenting with new literary forms and narrative techniques (Modernism)⁶. Innovative writers who depicted the breakdown of the society and its bleakness following the world wars marked this period. Modernism influenced to a very far extent some Algerian writers, including Kateb Yacine.

6.1.2.4. New Narrative techniques

New Narrative techniques were mainly known in connection with literary fictional narratives, including: literary technique, literary device or fictional device. They were

specific methods created by the narrative to convey what he wants. They were used as well to convey a given meaning to the audience and make it more complete and interesting. Historiographic metafiction techniques were used extensively by Kateb Yacine to expose his conception of history⁷.

6.1.2.5. Postmodernism

Postmodernism showed the “ethnic, sexual, social and cultural” struggles in societies that were fully overwhelmed by “paradoxical” phenomena. In this contemporary period, it is quite fashionable to criticize or reject modernism because of its “paradoxical and contradictory” traits.

As for literature, many critics find it better to define literary postmodernism against literary modernism, which is considered more popular. In numerous ways, postmodern literary styles serve to dispute, reverse, mock, and reject the basic principles of Modernist literature. For instance, instead of following modernist literary search for meaning in a chaotic world, postmodern literature tends to reject the very possibility of meaning (Postmodernism in Literature)⁸. The Postmodern novel and other literary genres, for example, are often presented as a parodies or mimics of the Modernist literary quest for meaning. Furthermore, this thesis emphasized as well the formative influence of modernism on Malek Bennabi. Bennabi thought, in this respect, that modernism might bring raise consciousness among Algerians to “purify” the “Algerian education and its philosophies” from ideologies of the ex-colonizer instilled in the “Men of Boulitique”⁹ (Musqawi 100) and “Intellectomane¹⁰” (Bennabi, *Colonisabilité* 55). These beliefs should be stripped away from the Algerian mind towards an “intellectual decolonization” after “land liberation.”

In turn, Bennabi criticized some major reformist and modernist creeds as “overlooking the real causes of backwardness and emphasizing its symptoms”. Muslims could not provide groundbreaking ideas and systematic foundations to ignite in Man of civilization the will to change as colonization was not the unique cause of backwardness, but inner vulnerability and internal acceptance to an external colonial power, called by Bennabi, *Coloniability* or *Colonizability* which facilitated the external colonial action and its permanence internally within the ex-colonized mind¹¹.

6.1.2.6. New Historicism

It was the American branch of cultural poetics. Its founding father was Stephan Greenblatt. It is called *cultural materialism* in the United Kingdom. New Historicists declared that: “all history is subjective, written by people whose personal biases affect their interpretation of the past¹²”. Bressler explains as well: “history is one of many discourses or ways of seeing and thinking about the world”. New Historicism claimed as well to provide its adherents with a practice of literary analysis that spotted more light on the interrelatedness of all human activities, admitted its own prejudices and gave a full understanding of a text than did old historicism and other interpretive approaches (Bressler 238).

6.1.2.7. Postcolonialism and the Post-colonial Theory¹³

Postcolonialism, also called *post-colonial studies* and *post-colonial theory*, is “the critical theory that explores how colonialism shaped and still shapes the relationship between Europe and its former colonies¹⁴”. It “investigates the experiences of

subjugation, resistance, representation, difference, and migration in relation to the West”¹⁵.

The postcolonial theory does not refer only to the field of postcolonial studies, but also to other academic concerns and areas related to globalization, feminism, ethnic and cultural studies. As mentioned in the *Companion of Post-colonial Studies*: “One of the claims frequently made about postcolonial theory is that, in one way or another, the ‘child’ of postmodernism” (Ray 431).

John Lye, in his essay *Some Issues in Postcolonial Theory*, said that the” postcolonial theory revolved around, mainly the notion of ‘otherness’ and ‘resistance’”. He wrote: “Post-colonial theory deals with the reading and writing of literature written in previously or currently colonized countries, or literature written in colonizing countries which deals with colonization or colonized people” (10)¹⁶.

The same theory referred to how literature of the colonized tried to restore identity and self-expression to regain the lost past. *Encyclopedia Britannica, the World Book Encyclopedia, Encyclopedia Universalis* agree that “Post-colonialism (Postcolonial theory, post-colonial theory) “as specifically post-modern intellectual discourse that consists of reactions to, and analysis of the cultural legacy and intellectual heritage of colonialism¹⁷”.

Ashcroft in his book *The Empire Writes Back*, said: “marginality...became an unprecedented source of creative energy” (12). For Ashcroft et al, these thoughts were presented in postcolonial texts since the colonial times (Ashcroft 13). Accordingly, the postcolonial theory was based on European theories and was dominated by a Eurocentric approach.

6.2. Issues in Post-war Literature

6.2.1. History-Literature Nexus in Post-colonial Algeria

History is always considered a major concern of Algerian literature writers. Before the 1950s, writers could not well digest the fact that the Algerian past could not be understood apart from the colonialist discourse. This discourse which “belittled, degraded and marginalized” Algerian history and amplified the so-called European-civilizing mission”. Instead, Kateb Yacine re-examined familiar narratives of Algerian past and their assumptions to reconstruct Algerian history. He revised well how the past had been understood and how it had been used as a remedial work and therapy to recover Algerians’ issues and concerns. Ngugi, in Kenya, did the same thing by rejecting historical archives based on the West and developing a more Afrocentric approach to Kenya’s history to better analyze the past, interpret the present and foresight the future.

In the post-independence period, issues of identity and national origin have become prominent and different aspects of the Algerian past have been emphasized. Kateb Yacine mixed critical commentaries on history, literary creation based on historical events and political issues with a historical background (Aoudjit, *Algerian Novel* 351).

Kateb Yacine, compared to other writers who referred to history and could not manage well their use of the historical material, was able to see history in a cyclic way and from various perspectives compared to Mohammed Dib, for example, who preferred viewing Algeria’s history in a linear way.

Kateb considered some of these writers unable to free themselves from some historical mines as they were simply trapped by one-dimensional, hegemonic and

simplistic reading of history. Kateb Yacine, in this respect, was able to avoid being imprisoned in a “mythical” past and “rigid” conservatism (Aoudjit, *Algerian Literature* 355). He was able to subvert the colonialist discourse, by not being trapped by the reproduction of the colonialist historiography, discourse and the way of looking at identity in terms of rigid boundaries, origins, and authenticity (Ibid).

Kateb could have that multidimensional and global vision to history that helped him seeing that the myths of ethnic and cultural inequality as “colonialist made” to “divide and rule”. Kateb believed firmly that “ideas of authenticity and ethnic purity lead inevitably to ethnocentrism, intolerance and exclusion” (Aoudjit, *Algerian Literature* 352). Kateb Yacine was aware that the one-dimensional reading of Algerian history was quite “dangerous” and built on questionable and doubtful epistemological and ontological assumptions about both history and ethnicity.

He worked objectively and artistically to pepper literature with history without neither foisting history nor blemishing it with distorted narratives. Moreover, Kateb Yacine showed vehemently that “there had been many versions of the past”. All these versions were related to narratives and memory, which were not history as they were “subjective, provisional, fallible and subjects to ideological and political biases” (Aoudjit, *Algerian Literature* 352).

Kateb Yacine also questioned the idea of a stable pure identity; instead, he emphasized the hybrid character of Algerians. The mixed character of the Algerian personality was best exemplified in the character of Nedjma in his novel *Nedjma*. She was a daughter of a French Jewish woman and Algerian father who could be either Sid Ahmed, Si Mokhtar, the puritan or Rachid’s father (Kateb, *Nedjma* 97).

Moreover, despite the fact that Kateb wanted going beyond subjectivism of literature, he used some traditional techniques. These techniques set traditional historical novels apart from the discipline of history, such as presenting events from a personal point of view with an imaginative style rather than impersonal and “rigid” language used by professional historians (Aoudjit, *Algerian Literature* 356).

Kateb Yacine referred as well to some Algerian historical figures, namely: Emir Abdelkader (Kateb, *Nedjma* 96), Jugurtha (96), the Numidians (164, 165, 166, and 210) and the Beni Hillal (17). In addition, Added to Kateb, Assia Djebar in her *Memoria* refers to the Algerian Revolution, Dib to Emir Abdelkader, and Malek Haddad to Ben Badis. They engaged partially or fully, directly or indirectly, in the Algerian cause. Assia Djebar joined the famous 1956 Strike of students; Kateb Yacine participated in the 1945 Manifestations and Dib did not stop denouncing atrocities of what he called the fire or the plague (colonialism). Algeria’s History was forcibly kept present in its literature in those writers¹⁸.

Analyzing history-literature linkage should not and never be detached from history liberation. Liberating the Algerian mind and emancipating the Algerian literature cannot be fully accomplished as a mission without decolonization of the Algerian memory as well as history.

The Algerian historian Mohamed el-Korso tried to awaken the Algerian consciousness by telling Algerians. He said: “We have to tell the truth about history so that the coming generations can extract lessons and avoid the errors of the past; we have to liberate the Algerian history [...] and recuperating archives”¹⁹. Introducing forcefully the problematic of rehabilitating the collective memory of the Algerian revolution in particular and the last millennium in general...²⁰

In addition to El-Korso, Zahir Ihaddaden, Algerian historian, in his book entitled: *L'histoire décolonisée du Maghreb (L'Algérie de 1510 à 1962)*, wrote the following passage in his preface:

L'histoire du Maghreb, dans son ensemble et tout particulièrement l'histoire de l'Algérie a été toujours présentée selon des thèses colonialistes. Ces thèses avaient pour objectif de nier l'existence de cette histoire, de la falsifier, ignorant les réalités historiques et déformant les événements. Aujourd'hui, nous subissons ce fait sans réagir, comme une fatalité qui s'est acharnée sur nous, la contre réalité devenant la vérité historique. Il est temps de réagir.²¹

In a press conference at the establishment of art and cultures in Algiers, El-Korso clarified his goal of enlightening the Algerian public. He added that: “one must say courageously all the truth, be it good or bad in order to permit future generations to extract lessons from the past and avoid, in this way, factions and divisions in the future” (El-Korso 3).

Mohamed El-Korso qualified the law of February 23, 2005 as Rejecting Algeria's nationalist History and denying its memorable landmarks. A law that was adopted by the French parliament and considered by Algerian historians as “whitening and cleansing...selective and selected history”. Politicians and officers involved in what the French called the “Algerian war” wanted to perpetuate the colonialist thought and culture”. This law (February 23, 2005) is merely whitening history to make [people] forget the “gloomy” colonial past in Algeria, the Algerian historian deplored. Historians are not “courageous” enough to tell all the truth” (El-Korso 5). This was why “there are always ‘secret’ facts”, he regretted. Many Algerian

historians, namely Mohammed Herbi, El Korso and others shared almost the same vision towards the colonialist archives.

Another problem that faced Algerian historians is the lack of serious history writings mainly those free from “political and ideological bias”. “The main problem of the African social historiography is not the succession of written tradition to oral but the interaction of the two traditions in context politically dominated by the written” (Bekkat 58). A.Khelladi, an Algerian writer, in his book *Peurs et mensonges (Fear and Lies)* wrote : “Je parle de l’aspiration au chaos, au néant, au vide absolu, au suicide, je parle d’un peuple dont l’existence est entièrement tournée vers son inexistence. Un peuple qui a falsifié sa mémoire et sa religion pour organiser sa propre ‘fin du monde’ ”²² (Benrabah 225) .

Algerians should be ready to “debunk” what was “distorted” in their history by the “colonial ideology” and the “colonialist discourse” based on falsification(s) and confiscation(s) which restricted the Algerian history to a “tissue of absurdity” and an “eternal resumption of unintelligible events”, as Mohammed C. Sahli mentioned in his book *Décoloniser l’histoire (History Decolonized)*.

Many Algerian historians and novelists wrote serious, objective, and reliable writings about the Algerian history far from the colonialist version. Names like Abou El Kacem Saadallah, Mohammed Cherif Sahli, Mohamed El-Korso, Mohamed Harbi, and Mostepha Lacheraf are plausible.

In literature, Assia Djebar, Kateb Yacine, Mohamed Dib Rachid Boudjedra, Amine Zaoui, Waciny Laredj, and Tahar Djaout (Ngugi Wa Thiong’O, Chinua Achebe, Wole Soyinka, and Aye Kwe Armah in sub-saharan Africa) tried to “deconstruct” the colonialist historiography to different extents.

They believed firmly that decolonizing Geography “land” was considered never “full” and “final” without liberation of “history”, “mind” and “literature”. They could not build on the prevailing methods and standards of the colonizer or the ideological pronouncements that emerged in the 1960’s and 70’s.

Instead, this Algerian history must be locally constructed with an Algerian hand²³. What is needed indeed is a paradigm shift from a “distorted” history-made in “colonized” Algeria to a “Liberated” one “produced” and “reproduced” by generations of the postcolonial sovereign Algeria. Liberating the Algerian history, therefore, is a tool among others in the continuous process of liberating the Algerian minds. The process is never final. It is ongoing and needs to be continually produced and reproduced.

6.2.2. The Issue of Language

Language is always considered a multidimensional issue in Algeria. It is a subject of reflection, debate and controversial discussions. The choice of language in literature is often regarded to be tightly linked to the issues of history, identity and origins. In addition, it often implies taking a cultural position with inclination towards a given political creed or ideology. Since the postcolonial period and still, language has been considered a crystallizing point of an ex-colonial conflict. The question of what language to choose in writing is thorny, if not delicate and explosive in some cases.

The choice of language has a political dimension, which turns it contentious. Francophone writers are sometimes doubted by the masses. They are seen as “denying” their own cultural identity, origins and accused of being “alienated”,

“uprooted” and “westernized”²⁴. Therefore, they are regarded as not fully involved in their fellow men matters and concerns.

Other critics believe that a foreign language may bring its realms and specific set scale of values. Ahmed Taleb El Ibrahimi, Algerian writer and politician, said: “By borrowing the language of the colonizer, we also borrow, unconsciously, his intellectual approach, even his scale of values²⁵”. Defending or refuting what El Ibrahimi said will be debated and demystified accordingly.

Some writers considered the presence and use of many languages in Algeria as richness to be exploited and invested. Tahar Djaout, Algerian Journalist and writer, declared: “Algeria is a trilingual country. It has the chance to open the world's three windows instead of one, to be able to eat three crops instead of one. But this chance was confiscated from the start²⁶”. Tahar Djaout²⁷ analyzed the issue of language from an original perspective.

This thesis works to observe this issue of language. It aims at doing so from the perspective of the present to find a “therapy” to the linguistic symptoms left by the colonizer and joins Assia Djebar to “put an end to the inner turmoil caused by a bilingualism which seems to limp with both legs²⁸. To one day, stop speaking your native language like a child learning to walk and the language of one’s education like a masked foreigner²⁹”

6.2.3. Narratives techniques of Algerian novelists

This thesis safely notes down that even though Algerian writers write in a foreign language, which is French, there are many similarities and differences between them. For similarities, they all directly or indirectly denounced the injustices

of colonialism; they all promoted genuine appeal to the Algerian values. For instance, Assia Djébar, Kateb Yacine and Mohammed Dib referred to significant events in the Algerian history: Assia Djébar in her *Memoria* referred to the Algerian Revolution, Dib to Emir Abdelkader, Kateb to Jugurtha and Malek Haddad to Ben Badis. They were all involved, directly or indirectly, in the Algerian cause. Assia Djébar joined the famous 1956 Strike of students and described how savage was colonialism (*L'amour, la fantasia* /Love, Fantasia: an Algerian Cavalcade), Kateb Yacine participated in the 1945 Manifestations (*Nedjma*), and Dib did not stop denouncing the atrocities of what he called the fire or the plague (*l'incendie*/The Fire).

Concerning differences, these writers used different techniques. Dib's novels were linear and in one piece and Kateb's *Nedjma* was fragmented. Both writers used a variety of narrative techniques. Dib's techniques were realist; he used a third person point of view and described the most sordid aspects of social life using a well-refined artistic language. Kateb was a modernist/postmodernist writer. He combined stream of consciousness techniques (modernism) with multiple points of view and often blurred the distinction between non-fiction and fiction. Dib usage of realist techniques prevented him from the most profound and fundamental assumptions of traditional historiography and therefore did not go far enough in his criticism of colonialism; Kateb did. Assia Djébar was criticized not to be fully involved in the Algerian revolution in her early writings because of her "unpolitical" thematic, though as she referred many times to the hard times of Algerians and endorsed claims of the Algerian revolution.³⁰

6.3. (De) Inheriting the Colonial Discourse in Algerian Literature

Colonization (or what is generally called the “colonial complex”) can be portrayed in many ways. It was pictured as (1) colonization began with a forced, involuntary entry; (2) the colonizing power altered or destroyed the “indigenous” culture of the colonized; (3) members of the colonized people tended to be governed by representatives of the colonizer; (4) the system of dominant–subordinate relationship was backed by a racist ideology (Kortright 3). This process of colonialism created identities of both the colonized and the colonizer with pathological effects. “Assimilation” (in its negative connotation) to the colonizer was a paramount pathological tool used by the colonizer to subjugate the colonized.

In the case of Algeria, among the cultural elements that had been explicitly affected by the French colonization: education, history and literature. In the postcolonial period, particularly both the Algerian education and literature assured, not only the supremacy of European language, but also showed a “tortured psyche” and “ego” called by Malek Bennabi the “colonial coefficient”, “Coloni(s)ability”; or “the ability to being colonized or the vulnerability/acceptability to colonialism”.

In this respect, Frantz Fanon, in his book: *Peau noire, masques blancs* said:

Every colonized people –In other words, every people in whose soul an inferiority complex has been created by the death and burial of his local culture originality –finds himself face to face with the language of the civilizing nation, that is with the culture of the mother country. (17-18)

Algerian Education and psychology were also subjugated. As many critics stated. The “yoke” of Algerian epistemic locations, styles of expression, forms and aims of learning seemed to be explicit in the colonial period. The colonizer is schooling arrangements with their deforming intentions, thoughts, and outcomes were strategically set to serve its cultural, political, literary and ideological interests. This part of the thesis is intended to investigate the colonial cultural legacy in Algeria particularly intellectual and literary heritage left by the colonizer and how to (de) inherit it.

Many scholars wrote about the impact of the French colonial cultural legacy on the Algerian education. Allowing all who read their books and novels to understand that the colonizer did not halt at “permanent” inhabiting the land of the Algerians or Africans, but “attempted and often succeeded” at settling in their minds. The colonial discourse, in this respect, “carried a particular representation and a special perspective used by ex-colonial power ‘center’ to make ex-colonized subject ‘periphery’ obey left-colonial practices” (Young 121).

The colonial texts and discourses left some intellectual matters, concerns, and questions like: Do these texts of the colonizer resisted by the colonized? Do the colonized texts contribute in de-colonizing consciousness of its fellow readers?

These questions invoke exploring the “Nationalist Discourse” which countered the colonial assumptions since the 1950s through three main phases: anti-colonial nationalist elites received “modern” European culture, anti-colonial nationalist elites looked for mass support by emphasizing traditional values to restore power from the colonialists and anti-colonial nationalist elites realized the ideas and re-counteracted neocolonialism by other means (Bressler 265).

Conclusion

Precisely, most Algerian writers of the postcolonial period in French did not try to resist the “French language” as a means of communication and writing, but they opposed the colonialist ideology and wanted to destruct its basis. Liberating alternative themes, approaches and philosophies frequently suggested and derived mainly and fully from the Algerian socio-historical context, can liberate the Algerian literature from all sorts of foreign ideological, intellectual, lingual and cultural influence.

To answer the question: why do Algerian writers fluent in their languages, write literature in French expression? This thesis can safely conclude that writing in French allows Algerian writers to transcend oppositional thought and the domination of fixed origins and identities. As Abdallah Laroui puts it, it resists the “loss of the self in the absolutes of language, culture, and the saga of the past³¹.” Additionally, writing in more than language allows one to tap into two different literary traditions and enrich both. Rachid Boudjedra’s, Mohammed Sari’s, Wassini Laredj’s, and Amine Zaoui’s novels are all the more remarkable because they straddle the French and the Arabic traditions³².

NOTES

¹ Adapted from encyclopedic definitions: World Book Encyclopedia, Universalis, Cultural Studies UNC

² Encyclopedic definitions derived from Universalis, World Book Encyclopedia and Britannica

³ As referred to by the researcher in an article entitled: *The Idea of Change and Philosophy of Renewal in Malek Bennabi's Thoughts* published in *El Mi3yar Revue* at El-Emir Abd-el-Kader Islamic University in 15/9/2020.

⁴ Ibid

⁵ Most Dates of birth and death derived from *World Book Encyclopedia*.

⁶ Modernism. *Encyclopedia Britannica. Encyclopedia Britannica Ultimate Reference Suite*. Chicago, 2011.

⁷ As referred to before in Aoudjit, *Algerian Literature* (257).

⁸ Post Modernism. *Encyclopedia Britannica. Encyclopedia Britannica Ultimate Reference Suite*. Chicago, 2011.

⁹ Men of politics and resonant populist speeches as called by Malek Bennabi.

¹⁰ A French word used by Bennabi for Fake intellectuals who frequently showed off in public arenas.

¹¹ As referred to by the researcher in an article entitled: *The Idea of Change and Philosophy of Renewal in Malek Bennabi's Thoughts* published in *El Mi3yar Revue* at El-Emir Abdelkader Islamic University in 15/9/2020.

¹² As referred to in Stanford Philosophy of History in an article entitled: *Philosophy of History* first published in February 18, 2007 and revised in Nov24, 2020.

¹³ Post-colonial writing, according to Meinhof, engendered two literary discourses:

1. The colonial discourse that conforms to the European image of Africa like Alan Paton's books;
2. The anti-colonial discourse that mixes the historical novel and the social/protest novel including the works of Ngugi WaThiong'O, ChinuaAchebe and Wole Soyinka

(As mentioned by Dr.Abelkadder Nebbou in his article: *The Colonial Discourse Vs the anti-colonial Discourse in West African Post-colonial Literature*)

¹⁴ Source:

Key Terms in Post-colonial Theory

<<https://www3.dbu.edu/mitchell/postcold.htm>>

¹⁵ Post-colonialism as a body of a theory and a study of political and cultural change has gone and keeps going through three major stages:

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1. A basic and initial awareness of the psychological, social and cultural inferiority resulted from a state of being colonized or ex-colonized;
 2. The progressive struggle for sovereign ethnic and cultural being with autonomous political belonging;
 3. A rising consciousness and digest to any cultural overlap and civilization hybridity.

Source:

Key Terms in Post-colonial Theory

<<https://www3.dbu.edu/mitchell/postcold.htm>>

¹⁶ Concerning the use of hyphen (Post-colonial) and non-use of hyphen (postcolonial), the difference is that 'Post-colonial' (with hyphen) stands for a period that comes chronologically after colonialism. 'Postcolonial', on the other hand, signifies the persisting impact of colonization/colonialism on the colonized/ ex-colonized across times and geographical regions (Postcolonialism, *World Book Encyclopedia*). Other critics consider it as an American English variant.

¹⁷ Synthesis of the above mentioned encyclopedias' definitions.

¹⁸ As referred to by the researcher in an article entitled: *Intellectual and Literary Language Controversies of the Algerian Post-colonial Novel in French Expression* to be published in December 2020 in *Ichkalat Journal* (University Center of Tamanghasset, Algeria)

¹⁹ As translated by the researcher from an article written by Chekar Amar and published by 'L'expression', an Algerian newspaper; the article was published 4 July 2012.

²⁰ As translated by the researcher from an article written by Chekar Amar and published by 'L'expression', an Algerian newspaper; the article was published 4 July 2012.

²¹ "The Maghreb history, in its entire entity and particularly, the history of Algeria has always been presented according to the colonialist theses. These theses got promoted for an objective to negate the existence of this history, to falsify it and ignore its historical realities and distort its events...It is a high time to react!" (The Researcher Translation)

²² "I speak of the desire for chaos, nothingness, absolute emptiness, suicide; I speak of a people whose existence is entirely focused on his people. People who falsified his memory and his religion to organize his own "end of the world" (The Researcher Translation)

²³ Chinua Achebe, Nigerian writer, said once: "Until the lions [Africans] have their own historians, the history of the hunt [Africa] glorify the hunter [the colonizer]"

²⁴ As referred to by the researcher in an article entitled: *Intellectual and Literary Language Controversies of the Algerian Post-colonial Novel in French Expression*, published in 25 December 2020 in *Ichkalat Journal* (University Center of Tamanghasset, Algeria).

²⁵ « En empruntant la langue du colonisateur, nous empruntons aussi, et de façon inconsciente, sa démarche intellectuelle, voire son échelle de valeurs » Ahmed Taleb Ibrahimi

Mohamed, B. *Langue et pouvoir en Algérie. Histoire d'un traumatisme linguistique*. Paris: Les Colonnes d'Hercule -Seguier, 1999, 104.

²⁶ « L'Algérie est un pays trilingue. Elle a la chance d'ouvrir sur le monde trois fenêtres au lieu d'une, de pouvoir s'alimenter à trois cultures au lieu d'une seule. Mais cette chance a été dès le départ confisquée»

Tahar Djaout

Mohamed, B. *Langue et pouvoir en Algérie. Histoire d'un traumatisme linguistique*. Paris: Les Colonnes d'Hercule -Seguier, 1999, 241.

²⁷ Tahar Djaout made clear in a 1996 interview that, regardless of the decision to the 'Arabization' policy in the post-colonial Algeria, French remained as the primary language of literary expression in Algeria. He said:

We tried to eclipse the French language. However, even after those long years of Arabization, the production of ideas in our country is done mainly in French, and whether we like it or not, it must be taken into account... When all is said and done, what we must be interested in nowadays is not a language in which one expresses oneself but what it is saying.

Katz, Liza. "Writing the Cry: French and Francophone Literature", 2011. 1-4.

²⁸ As referred to by the researcher in an article entitled: *Intellectual and Literary Language Controversies of the Algerian Post-colonial Novel in French Expression*, published in 25 December 2020 in *Ichkalat Journal* (University Center of Tamanghassat, Algeria).

²⁹ From: Barbara Winkler. On Writing in the "Language of the Enemy" Assia Djebar and the Buried Voices of Algerian History". *Arabic Literature. Post Modern Perspectives* (2010) edited by Angelika Neuwirth, Andreas Pflitsh and Barbara Winckler. London: Saki, 432

³⁰ As referred to by the researcher in an article entitled: *Intellectual and Literary Language Controversies of the Algerian Post-colonial Novel in French Expression*, published in December 2020 in *Ichkalat Journal* (University Center of Tamanghassat, Algeria).

³¹ Laroui, A. *The Crisis of the Arab Intellectual: Traditionalism or Historicism*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976, 156.

As declared by Abdelkader Aoudjit in an e-mail interview conducted on May 21, 2017.

³² As declared as well by Abdelkader Aoudjit in an e-mail interview conducted on May 21, 2017.

NOTES:

1. Most sentences and expressions from either French or Arabic to English are translated by the researcher
2. English titles of French novels used in the paper are mostly borrowed from Britannica Encyclopedia. CD-ROM, 2010 edition.

Conclusion

Approach, Methods and Tools

The approach followed to this qualitative-based research is the hypothetic-deductive method, which has been supported by content analysis and two interviews with experts in the fields of Algerian and African literatures and cultures.

This thesis analyzed the emergence, context (social, political, and economic), and evolution of Algerian and African literatures (with a particular focus on the novel). It showed how the works of Algerian and African authors are a reaction to and a reflection on society's ongoing social and political problems: colonialism and neocolonialism (Aoudjit, *The Algerian Historical Novel* 11).

Furthermore, because specific aspects of writers' lives influence their works, this thesis included biographies of the authors. Besides being a function of social and biographical context of their authors, literature is also a function of predominant intellectual trends (11).

The research investigated the extent, limit, and evolution of Mouloud Feraoun, Ngugi Wa Thiong'O, Frantz Fanon, and Kateb Yacine's critiques of colonialism. It recapitulated as well Feraoun's critique of colonialism and investigated to what extent he shows some ambivalence towards his French education and the French people and, by extension, towards colonialism in general in his early novels. It also investigated how his denunciation of colonialism became more radical in later novels.

Furthermore, many critics have positively, constantly, and consistently acknowledged Ngugi as one of the most interesting voices in Africa. His fictional works are noted for carrying clearly apparent political agendas and ideological dogmas. His attempts to give a literary voice to the colonized, peasantry and the poor make him well known as a writer of the masses, of the peasantry, of the destitute

people, and all who is voiceless. Other critics have also praised Ngugi's role as an influential postcolonial African writer, mainly in his portrayal of corrupt post-liberation African political regimes and some intellectual elite.

Ngugi's critics and essays have been acclaimed as powerful explorations of pertinent political, social, literary issues in Africa, in general and Kenya, in particular. Furthermore, reviewers have confirmed that his non-fiction works have provided much-needed Africa perspectives on world affairs.

The thesis attempted as well to check the extent to which Frantz Fanon was influenced as an eyewitness to the Algerian cause. Findings of the thesis figured out that Fanon became gradually, but fully committed to the Algerian cause mainly showed in his powerful critiques of colonialism and its effects. It came to a conclusion that Fanon portrayed his firm advocacy of revolutionary "violence" as an inevitable unifying force that can eradicate colonization. He believed that colonization was in itself a "violent" act that could only and inevitably be eliminated through a similar "violence".

All these novelists and thinkers believed firmly that the Algerian and African identities were hijacked and, as a result, an urgent therapy is needed to heal what they thought was a deep wound in the psyches of their people. This therapy consists in the rejection of Eurocentric ideology based on colonialists' discourses and philosophies in all their manifestations, and the affirmation of their own values and cultures.

Findings and Discussion

The study finds that some Algerian writers made significant inroads in curbing the nefarious effects of colonialist discourse; they fell short of freeing themselves from such discourse; Only Kateb Yacine was able to seriously, outspokenly and fully subvert it. He wrote what was unanimously called a novel of ruthless and rigorous “combat” (Déjeux 11).

Kateb’s literary philosophy revolve all around deconstructing colonial Eurocentrism and promoting “Anti-Colonial Discourse” to claim “land” , “name” and “difference”. Kateb identifies in *Nedjma* (1956) Algeria as a star shining in the heavens, coveted and conquered, passing from one conqueror to another, but never “supplied” or “subdued”.

He was the “terrible boy” of the Algerian revolutionary literature “by excellence”. Other writers, such as Mohammed Dib and Mouloud Feraoun also combated the colonizer, but less aggressively than Kateb Yacine.

Mouloud Feraoun, for instance, is to be commended for drawing attention to Algerian traditions marginalized in colonialist literature. Feraoun is also to be praised for drawing attention to the misery of Algerians in the forgotten hills of Algeria during the French occupation and for relying on Algerian values to criticize colonialism. However, he was sometimes ambivalent towards the French education and values in his early writings. Mouloud Feraoun could bring “centeredness” to the Algerian forgotten cause, but he could not free himself from “ambivalence” toward the French school.

Fanon analyzed perfectly the colonized psyche and urged revolution to meet liberation ; he recalls as well Rousseau’s emphasis on freedom and liberty and Marx’s notion of alienation. Yet he was not fully able to go beyond Marxism, Existentialism,

and Psychoanalysis that some thinkers such as Malek Bennabi warned against as imported ideologies (though some critics consider those ideologies as universal rather than borrowed).

Malek Bennabi criticized Frantz Fanon for being absorbed by Marxism. He considered easy acceptance or blind reliance on imported ideologies a perpetuation of what he called “colonisability” which stands for “inward acceptance of colonialization” (Malek Bennabi, *Colonisabilité* 30). “Colonisability”, he argues, is based on the inferiority complex of the “*intellectomanes*” (fake intellectuals) who believed colonialism carried a “civilizing mission” (190).

Moreover, Bennabi was critical of the fact that Fanon was not Algerian. Bennabi considered Fanon more African than Algerian. He described him as “a musician who chants an African music, carries an African soul with all its history and ill” (مالك بن نبي , القضايا الكبرى 109)

Indeed, Kateb , compared to other Algerian writers in French, did not only draw attention to the misery of Algerians during the colonial period but subverted the philosophical assumptions of colonialist discourse and French historiography—its objectivity, linearity and progress. (Aoudjit, “*Nedjma: Kateb Yacine's Deconstruction of Algeria's Colonial Historiography*” 81-87)

He believed also that expressing the Algerian context in French expression, but not with the aim of carrying the French culture but rather by deconstructing the French colonialist discourse. Therefore, he kept urging an “Algerian-centric” approach(s) to literature towards remembering the Algerian past and glorifying its history by a “therapeutic” device(s) to “decolonize” the Algerian mind with the land and “reconstruct” the Algerian memory with polyglot richness. Kateb said: “I write in French because France has invaded my country and hold such a powerful position

there that I am compelled to write in French to survive. But though writing in French, my Algerian or Berber roots are still alive” (Maameri 11).

We join again Aoudjit in what he found in his article *Nedjma: Kateb Yacine's Deconstruction of Algeria's Colonial Historiography* and we conclude with what Kateb could subvert. He departed with a final aspiration to deconstruct the colonialist historiography. He believed firmly that this colonialist historiography was the child of European Enlightenment. As such, it was built on three major assumptions: The course of history is linear; History has a final aspiration—that is, the emancipation of humanity with the European nations leading the way; history as a discipline is objective, and ultimately it is impartial. Kateb subverted all these elements by showing that “history is not linear, does not have predetermined goal, historical knowledge is not objective, and colonialist history is biased in favor of the colonizers”. Kateb did all these subversions through fragmentation, multiplication of points of view, a spiral view of history, myth and fiction (81-97).

By the end, this research project does not assume that an entire “liberation” and a full “emancipation” of the Algerian and African minds and literatures is possible. However, the investigation has discerned the valuable contribution of Mouloud Feraoun, Ngugi Wa Thiong’O, Frantz Fanon, Malek Bennabi, and Kateb Yacine to “genuine liberation” of Algerian and African literatures and Minds.

Study Limitations and recommendations

As with the majority of studies, the design of the thesis at hand is subject to some constraints and limitations. They mainly resulted from insufficient previous studies in this vast field of cultural studies (in English), mainly in Algeria. I faced some hardships addressing some hypotheses, research questions, and narrowing down the scope of the study while analysing various complex data on the area of study. On the other

hand, despite the fact that reading Mouloud Feraoun, Ngugi Wa Thiong'O, Frantz Fanon, Malek Bennabi and Kateb Yacine works was a passion that I really enjoyed, I found myself facing slight hardships reading in French and writing (analysing) in English with continuous translations that took me long time and hard efforts.

However, based on the research findings, it is quite safe to conclude that the thesis served some hopes to find the way to “liberate” Algerian and African literatures from some stereotypes and clichés ; to work seriously at ending some controversies about the issue of French language use in the Algerian literature and to enlarge my intellectual potential to comprehend, analyze, synthesize, criticize, evaluate, produce, and reproduce something critical about Algerian and African literatures. The ultimate aim of this research is to argue that the liberation of Algerian and African literatures requires nothing short of a paradigm shift: from realist to postmodernist concepts and narrative techniques.

The study of Algerian and African writers using a Cultural Studies approach has led me as well to conclude recommending Mouloud Feraoun, Ngugi Wa Thiong'O, Frantz Fanon, Malek Bennabi and Kateb Yacine is a necessity. They are either no longer relevant (revolution), focus exclusively on one aspect of culture (language), or use worn out narrative techniques (realism). The liberation of the Algerian and African minds and literature requires a paradigm shift to new concepts and new narratives techniques. This kind of postmodernist techniques that have been used by Kateb Yacine (*Nedjma*) and later by Rachid Boudjedra (*La Prise de Gibraltar*), Tahar Djaout (*L'Invention du Desert*), Mohamed Sari (*Pluies d'or*), and Amin Zaoui (*Le Dernier Juif de Tamentit*) (Aoudjit, *The Algerian Historical Novel* 14-16)

As pertinent and final recommendation, it is safe to encourage other researchers and University teachers in the field of Cultural Studies to read more about Mouloud Feraoun, Ngugi Wa Thiong'O, Frantz Fanon, Malek Bennabi and Kateb Yacine and expose them into further examination and scrutiny. Further researches are needed to reflect the thesis findings and results upon a syllabus renewal following a well-structured approach at the Algerian University.

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Appendix One

Interview of Abdelkader Aoudjit

In order to support, illustrate and consolidate the already stated facts about Algerian literature and its critique of colonialism, I conducted an interview with Professor Abdelkader Aoudjit. He is one of the most prominent researchers about Algerian literature and professor of Philosophy at Northern Virginia Community. Professor Aoudjit is the author of *The Algerian Novel and Colonial Discourse: Witnessing to a Différend* (Peter Lang, 2010), *Algerian Literature: A Reader's Guide and Anthology* (Peter Lang, 2017), and *The Algerian Historical Novel: Linking the Past to the Present and Future* (Peter Lang: 2020).

The interview was conducted on May 21^t, 2017 via e-mail. The questions of the interview proceeded gradually following the flow of ideas already tackled, throughout the whole paper and mainly some other concerns of its last chapter. Through the interview used as a Tool of Research to my study, I ended by referring to the Algerian Literature. Some other questions refer as well to the Francophone Literatures, their critique of colonialism and their pertinence to the Algerian context.

1. To what extent can Algerian and African writers and intellectuals contribute to the liberation of Algerian and African minds and literatures?

One way Algerian and African writers and intellectuals can contribute to the liberation of their compatriots' minds and literatures is to help them remember a past that is in danger of being forgotten.

Another way they can do so is to help articulate a national identity that is complex, dynamic, and inclusive rather than one-dimensional.

Still another way is to draw from the long history of struggle against colonialism and the country's socialist ideals to encourage civic rather than ethnic or religious nationalism exclusively.

2. What have Algerian and Kenyan intellectuals and writers contributed to the decolonization of their countries?

Algerian intellectuals helped show that that seemingly objective or scientific descriptions—mostly negative—of Algerians spread by the colonialists are not in fact natural but are rather constructed along political and ideological lines—See Mohamed Cherif Sahli's *Décoloniser l'histoire* and Mostefa Lacheraf's *L'Algérie: nation et société*.

Sahli's and Lacheraf's goal is essentially reconstructive; to challenge what they perceived to be a biased and unfair picture of Algerian history and to produce a more representative picture of Algerians and their past.

Going even further, KatebYacine in *Nedjma*, uses sophisticated narrative techniques such as the multiplication of points of view, stream of consciousness, the blurring of the distinction between genres, in combination, to disrupt many implicitly accepted historical categories and assumptions, such as linearity, objectivity, and impartiality. These techniques also open new possibilities.

The recognition that representations of the past are constructions, in the sense that what historical facts mean is produced rather than discovered, permits colonialist history to be challenged and alternative visions put forward. The recognition that history was used in the past to support political agendas and ideologies indicates that previously marginalized groups may also use it in the service of their moral and political ideals. That was Kateb's choice. He intentionally set out to replace colonialist history with a new one, and that new representation of the past is to be put forward for an explicitly moral and political purpose.

Algerian writers of the 1950s challenged and deconstructed the ideology that demeaned their people and vilified their culture. They were defiant: they called for armed struggle and reversed the subject-object relationship at the basis of colonialist ideology. Algerians become subjects; they are the heroes, and the French settlers, military, and police are the villains.

3. What kind of impact did the French colonization have on Algerian culture and literature?

The violent encounter with France resulted in the acquisition of a new language and new cultural elements: our educational and administrative systems, for example, are modeled on the French systems. It also accelerated the modernization of the country. This is, however, a controversial issue; Mostefa Lacheraf, for example, believed that without colonization Algeria would probably have made more progress than it did under colonialism.

As regards literature, metropolitan French writers—Balzac, Zola, Robbe-Grillet, the surrealists—greatly influenced Algerian authors. The *pieds-noirs* writers, namely the Algerianistes (Robert Randau, Louis Lecoq, and Jean Pomier) and the members of the *Ecole d'Alger* (Gabriel Audisio, Albert Camus, Emmanuel Roblès, Claude de Fréminville, Jean Pélégri, and Jules Roy). They served as foils—adversaries—to refute their negative portrayal of Algerians, to deconstruct their ideological assumptions, and to reverse the subject-object relationships on which these *pieds noirs* novels are built.

4. How can Algerian and African writers and intellectuals contribute to the liberation of Algerian and African literatures and awaken their compatriots' minds?

Encourage a culture of non-violence.

Encourage a culture of respect for human life.

Encourage a culture of tolerance.

Encourage a culture of solidarity and justice.

Encourage a culture of equality between men and women.

Encourage a culture of responsibilities rather than rights only.

5. What would you tell us about the following?

A. The disease is alienation

Alienation, in the Marxist sense of workers' losing some of their human nature or essence because of their lack of control over the conditions and the products of their labor is pervasive in capitalism. However, it is not the only disease that plagues modernity. Modern man also suffers from anomie, powerlessness, and the subordination of all aspects of his life to economic and bureaucratic requirements of control and efficiency. Modern man does not seem to have any firm guidelines on how to behave towards others; he feels estranged from the world in which he lives, and has the impression that his life is run by impersonal forces over which he has no control.

B. The cause is colonialism

The colonial past is sometimes invoked as an explanation for Algeria's social and political ills. This is true in some cases. The fact that a segment of the population—most of our parents and grandparents—is illiterate is due to the fact that only 16% of Algerians attended school. The problem, however, is not colonialism but neocolonialism. Indeed, the West still influences its former colonies through economic, political, and cultural pressures, often by means of international organizations like the United Nations and predatory financial institutions like the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. Pseudo NGOs such as Human Rights Watch and Amnesty International—which I call “the Trojan horse of imperialism”—are also used to pressure weaker countries.

C. The cure is revolution

In the context of occupied Algeria the cure was certainly, revolution because there was no way Algerians could achieve independence by peaceful political means. However, the cure is not always revolution; political ideals can sometimes be fulfilled by persuasion rather than force, by reform rather than by revolution.

D. Destiny is freedom

For the Algerian revolutionaries destiny was certainly freedom in the sense that they believed strongly in their cause and were confident they

were going to triumph. However, they did not believe that freedom was preordained, something that was going to happen independently of the human will.

6. Are the languages inherited from the ex-colonizers used as “proxies” in conflicts between writers?

I do not believe this is the case. Writing in French allows Algerian writers to transcend oppositional thought and the domination of fixed origins and identities. As Abdallah Laroui puts it, it resists the “loss of the self in the absolutes of language, culture, and the saga of the past” (*Crisis* 156)

The relationship between Algerians who write in French and those who write in Arabic has always been one of friendship and mutual respect. Furthermore, Feraoun, Dib, and Mammeri greatly influenced Arabic-language writers Abdelhamid Benhedouga—who translated some of their works—and Tahar Ouettar.

It should also be noted that many Algerian novelists write in both French and Arabic: Mohamed Sari, Amin Zaoui, Waciny Laredj (Laroui 156).

7. Have English and French succeeded in displacing or replacing other native languages in Africa, at least in literature?

French has neither displaced nor replaced Arabic and Tamazight in Algeria. The colonial experience was such that Algeria shares a unique historical and cultural experience with France and, as a result, French language has become a legitimate part of the Algerian cultural landscape and identity.

In an interview on French television in 1956, KatebYacine said: “the French language has shaped our [Algerian] soul.” In a more recent interview with Algerian-born journalist Jean Daniel, he said: “You will find a new Algerian literature of French expression, whose foremost advantage for me will be that Algeria cannot be locked either in Arabism or Berberism. There is a place for French. We are the country of three languages and three roots” (Daniel 16)

8. Has the dominance of English or French caused Algerian and African culture to be undervalued and marginalized?

Arabic was to some extent undervalued before independence and somewhat in the 1960s because it was tied closely to religion and was taught mainly in mosques while French was associated with science, progress, and modernity, and was taught in modern schools. This is no longer the case; to be educated in Arabic no longer means to be religious. Furthermore, Arabic is used to teach many academic subjects that used to be taught in French: philosophy, psychology, physics, mathematics, etc.

9. What does it mean to write in a language that is not one's own?

It was an issue for Malek Haddad who stopped writing after the war but it was not an issue for Mouloud Mammeri and other authors. Algerian writers grew up speaking French and mastered the language.

10. What does it mean to have more than one language to write in?

Writing in more than language allows one to tap into two different literary traditions and enrich both. Sari's, Laredj's, and Zaoui's novels are all the more remarkable because they straddle the French and the Arabic traditions.

11. Why did writers like Mouloud Feraoun, Kateb Yacine, Chinua Achebe, Wole Soyinka and Ngugi Wa Thiong'O, all of them fluent in their mother tongues, write in English or French?

Feraoun and Kateb wrote in French because they could not write in Arabic even though they spoke their native dialects.

12. How can Algerian and African writers express their experiences in languages, which may embody different kinds of lives-and developed in socio-historical contexts other than theirs? In other words, can these writers express their experiences in languages that represent the cultures they want to resist?

The culture the French language allegedly embodies is not monolithic. In truth, it embodies different experiences, values, ideologies, ideals, and attitudes that are sometimes antagonistic: progressivism and conservatism, secularism and Catholicism, the experience of the rich as well as that of the poor, Parisian and provincial cultures, etc. If Marcel Proust who was from a well to do and highly educated family and Michel Ragon who lost his parents when he was eight years and lived with a dirt-poor peasant family in Fontenay-le-Comte could express their experiences so can the Algerian writers. The French language is rich, flexible, and versatile enough to express or evoke their innermost feelings.

“The Algerian writers of the 1950s did not try to resist the French culture as much as the colonialist ideology”.

13. The Algerian war of liberation is said to be one of the most important decolonization wars of the 20th century. What can you say about that?

The Algerian Revolution is in many ways unlike any other liberation war in the annals of history:

- It showed how justice could triumph over force. The defeat of the colonial power was more a moral and political than a military victory.
- It galvanized world public opinion like no other liberation war.
- It was the first time in history an occupied country exported a war to the occupying one.
- It was a multidimensional revolution: military, diplomatic, and cultural.

The musical and theatrical troupe, La Troupe Artistique du FLN and the soccer team, L'Equipe du FLN de Football, toured the world to increase international awareness of the Algerian Revolution.

- The FLN was well organized that it was practically a state within a state.

14. How would you refute the French claim of bringing civilization “mission civilisatrice” to colonized Algerians?

A. This alleged “mission civilisatrice” is a myth the French promoted to justify their invasion.

B. Algeria was much more developed economically and socially than the colonialists as they and their apologists portrayed it:

1. According to Mostefa Lacheraf, when the French landed in Algeria in 1830:

“La France trouve en face d'elle une société bien organisée, à la civilisation propre, parfois comparable à celles du Bassin méditerranéen, peut-être imparfaite dans son développement, mais dont l'amour de la liberté, rattachement à la terre, la cohésion, la culture, le sens patriotique, les ressources et les idéaux communs à défendre contre l'ennemi national, donnent leurs preuves tout au long d'une guerre de conquête de près de 40 ans.” (Lacheraf 73)

“France found before her a well-organized society, with its own civilization, comparable to the other societies of the Mediterranean basin, perhaps imperfect in its development, but one whose love of liberty, attachment to the land, cohesion, culture, sense of patriotism, resources, and common ideals it would defend against the national enemy, as it proved during the course of a war of conquest that lasted almost forty years”.

2. Algeria enrolled in its schools more children, proportionally, than did France at that time.

General Valazé noted in his report to la Commission d'Afrique during its January 1834 meeting: "Presque tous les Arabes savent lire et écrire. Dans chaque village il y a deux écoles" (Lacheraf 73).

"Almost all Arabs can read and write. In every village there are two schools."

15. The Algerian war of liberation is a major theme of Francophone literature. Who among Francophone intellectuals, you think, was successful in describing the Algerian struggle accurately?

Mohammed Dib, Assia Djebar, Yamina Mechakra, Rachid Boudjedra, and Malek Haddad described the Algerian struggle accurately. However, they emphasized different aspects of it, and emphasized them to different degrees. Djebar's *Les Enfants du nouveau monde* and Mechakra's *La Grotte éclatée* are primarily concerned with the experience of women. They provide poignant descriptions of their fears and their hopes.

Boudjedra focuses in *Le Vainqueur de coupe* on the activities of the FLN in France, and Haddad in *La Dernière impression* focuses on the dilemma of Algerian intellectuals. Only Mouloud Mammeri in *l'Opium et le bâton* provides a comprehensive view of the war: in the cities, in the countryside, civilian life, the activities of the ALN, of the Armée des frontières, in addition to the dilemmas of the intellectuals, which Haddad tackled.

Mohammed Dib in *Qui se souvient de la mer* also draws a moving portrait of the war but its complex narrative techniques and style make it too difficult for the average reader. *l'Opium et le bâton* is the quintessential novel of the Algerian War.

16. Fanon was among those thinkers who supported decolonization struggles, and in particular, the Algerian one. To what extent were his writings influential for the colonized people?

Fanon did influence some intellectuals. His writings give a particular type of insight into the relationship between the colonizers and the colonized that is absent from the more traditional writings of journalism and literature. This insight encouraged many intellectuals to take a stand against colonialism and inspired many in Africa to take up arms against colonialism. He also had an impact on the Black Panthers movement in the United States.

17. What kind of relationship was there between Fanon and Algeria?

Algerians adopted Franz Fanon and proudly claim him as one of their own. He, in turn, identified himself as Algerian, espoused their cause, and participated fully in the anti-colonial struggle in word and deed. He also immersed himself wholeheartedly in Algerian culture. It is significant that he

died not as Frantz Fanon but as Ibrahim Omar Fanon. He studied the Koran intensively but did not convert formally to Islam.

18. Do you agree that Fanon's experience in Algeria fueled his selfless devotion to the Algerian cause?

Yes, I believe that the horrors Fanon experienced as a psychiatrist and editor of the FLN newspaper, *El Moudjahid*—abject poverty, exploitation, executions, and mental illness—had much to do with his commitment to the Algerian cause.

19. *Les damnés de la terre* is one of Fanon's striking writings about decolonization. What are your thoughts concerning the book?

Fanon is rightly credited with being the first intellectual who systematically incorporated psychoanalysis into his work on colonialism. His writings had an incalculable influence on the development of post-colonialist literary criticism and theory as well as Third worldism.

20. Fanon has been called "the apostle of violence." In *Les damnés de la terre*, he advocates the use of violence as a means for the wretched to get their freedom. Was Fanon implicitly pushing the Algerian people to carry on their struggle against the French colonial rule? Was violence in *Les damnés de la terre* justifiable?

When Fanon wrote *Les damnés de la terre* the revolution was already underway; he did not influence it. He did, however, articulate masterfully the frustrations and hopes of Algerians. Revolutionary violence was justified because Algerians could not free themselves through reform. Violence was the last resort.

21. In the last chapter of *Les damnés de la terre* "Colonial war and Mental Disorders," through presenting a series of clinical cases of both Algerian and French patients, Fanon claims that colonial violence was embedded in the Algerians' bodies and minds. Thus, decolonization is not only physical but also psychological. Robert Fulford goes on claiming that "it was Fanon who brought to modern culture the idea that violence can heal the spiritually wounded" and that "Fanon argued that violence was necessary to Third World peoples not just as a way to win their liberty but, even more, because it would cure the inferiority complex that had been created by the teachings of white men." Do you agree with this claim?

Fanon used Hegel's famous master/slave dialectic exposed in *The Phenomenology of Spirit* and Sartre's philosophy presented in *L'Être et le néant* successfully to argue in favor of revolutionary violence. His work is original and innovative but he was not the one "who brought to modern

culture the idea that violence can heal the spiritually wounded.” Many Algerian writers affirmed the same thing long before, albeit using different arguments and different forms of expression. A good example is Jean Amrouche’s poem “Le Combat Algérien.” (Amrouche 19-22)

22. What did *Les damnés de la terre* add to decolonization struggles in the Third World in general and the Algerian struggle in particular?

Even though he remains one of the most cited authors in the literature on colonialism Fanon’s thought seems to be on the wane. Its highpoint came in the 1960s and the 1970s when Marxism was in the ascendancy. I do not believe Fanon had a direct influence on the decolonization process.

23. What was Fanon’s message to the Algerian people in *Les damnés de la terre* (“*The Wretched of the Earth*”)?”

Fanon called for Algerians to break from France, violently if necessary, to create their own state, and to develop their own culture and identity not modeled on French principles.

24. What does Fanon represent for the Algerian people? Is he remembered today in Algeria, the country which he defended vigorously? In other words, is *Les damnés de la terre* (*Wretched of the Earth*) given the interest it deserves?

Fanon is celebrated as a **staunch** defender of the Algerian revolution. The psychiatric hospital of Blida where he worked, and a high school and a boulevard in Algiers are named after him. He is also buried in Algeria. In Ain Karma, precisely. Historians and political scientists still read *les Damnés de la terre*.

25. Does a ‘comprador class’ still exist in Algerian and African societies?

This is the kind of question logicians call “complex questions.” I do not believe there has ever been in independent Algeria a “comprador class” in the sense of a class that is allied with the former colonial power, continues its policies, and has total hegemony on the economy and the politics of the country. I find Fanon’s belief that one class was going to take over the country after the war rather simplistic.

26. In a few words, what would you tell us about Frantz Fanon’s legacy in Africa in general, and Algeria in particular?

Fanon’s works, which originally signified cultural disruption and radically new ways of interpreting the relationship between the colonizers and the colonized, are now recognized as part of the post-colonialist and third-worldist scholarship traditions. They have become classic texts in the literature on colonization. Fanon still exerts some influence on historians and social

scientists. *Les damnés de la terre* also remains a living testimony to the plight of Algerians during the French occupation.

27. We move now to your three books entitled: *Algerian Novel and Colonial Discourse: Witnessing to a Différend–Algerian Literature: A Reader’s Guide and Anthology*, and *The Algerian Historical Novel: Linking the Past to the Present and Future*. Would you provide us with the message you want to deliver through the books? According to you: In what ways the Algerian history affects its novel? How has the Algerian novel evolved? What heritage will be left to future generations?

A. The goal of *The Algerian Novel and Colonial Discourse: Witnessing to Différend* is to provide a critical introduction and a new approach to the works of Algerian novelists. Beginning with an overview of their novels, this book goes on to discuss critical approaches to them, challenging the widely held notion that they are merely ethnographic, upholding the status quo. *The Algerian Novel and Colonial Discourse* provides a new reading, and, most significantly, argues that they are best read as witnesses to the kind of conflict Jean-François Lyotard calls a *différend*—a conflict in which one suffers an injustice and is at the same time deprived of the means to argue. *The Algerian Novel and Colonial Discourse* then examines the issue of humanism that the novels allegedly both appeal to and reject and demonstrates that the Algerian authors’ condemnation of colonialism is both a coherent political position and consistent with their critique of liberal humanism.

B. The purpose of *Algerian Literature: A Reader’s Guide and Anthology* is to offer the reader a historical and critical overview of Algerian literature—in French and in Arabic—from the early twentieth century to the present, introduce Algerian authors, and provide selections from a wide range of their writings, many translated for the first time. The selections included in *Algerian Literature: A Reader’s Guide and Anthology* have been carefully chosen to reflect the richness and diversity of Algerian literature. Accordingly, they are extracted from various literary genres: novels, plays, and poems. Furthermore, they are from works that belong to different literary movements: realism, modernism, and postmodernism.

C. Writing obviously does not take place in a vacuum; on the contrary it is structured by the social situation in which it occurs. Algerian literature is doubly involved in history: it reflects it and influences its course at the same time.

The new Algerian writers are as committed as their elders to making sense of the social and cultural changes that have taken place in the country and to reevaluating the past in view of the needs and the ideals of the present.

History remains one of the major preoccupations of Algerian writers because history is often looked at to make sense of the present and find solutions to current social and political problems. It is also often used to legitimize present structures of authorities, institutions, and policies, or to undermine them. At a more fundamental level, however, the past is often evoked to articulate and assert a national identity and thereby elicit a sense of collective pride and allegiance to a state or a nation by underlying its past strengths and achievements.

The new Algerian writers are as committed as their elders to making sense of the social and cultural changes that have taken place in the country and to reevaluating the past in view of the needs and the ideals of the present. They, however, approach the past in a manner that is significantly different from that of traditional historical novelists.

The Algerian Historical Novel: Linking the Past to the Present and Future investigates for precisely what purpose, on what philosophical grounds, and using what techniques, novelists Rachid Boudjedra (*La Prise de Gibraltar*), Tahar Djaout (*L'Invention du désert*), Assia Djebar (*Loin de Médine*), Waciny Laredj (*La Maison andalouse*), Mohamed Sari (*Pluies d'or*), and Amin Zaoui (*Le Dernier juif de Tamentit*) engage with the history of Algeria. It also examines what the study of these authors can contribute to the larger debate concerning what this type of historical fiction can do with or reveal about the past that history as a discipline and the traditional historical novel cannot. I advocate that *La Prise de Gibraltar*, *L'Invention du désert*, *Loin de Médine*, *La Maison andalouse*, *Pluies d'or*, and *Le Dernier juif de Tamentit* are best read as works of historiographic metafiction. I argue that these novels combine poststructuralist ideas and postmodernist narrative techniques to draw attention to previously neglected people and events in history and provide revised perspectives on them and others and, more importantly, to problematize the way Algerian history is thought and is used to address two major social and political concerns confronting Algerians: national identity and religious fundamentalism.

Thank you for your collaboration

Analysis

I found the interview and Aoudjit's work helpful for this thesis for the following reasons:

1. They provided me with an overview that charts the evolution of Algerian literature and its critique of colonialism and puts it in its appropriate historical context.
2. They made me more aware of the importance of history to make sense of the present and envision the future.
3. They helped me understand better many concepts that are crucial to the thesis such as alienation, *différend*, modernity, postmodernity, etc.
4. They enabled me understand literary theory better.

The interview and the books confirm and provide support to my hypothesis that Feraoun, Ngugi, and Fanon did not go far enough in their critique of colonialism, in comparison to Kateb Yacine who questioned the very bases of colonialist ideology.

Appendix Two

Interview of Nigel Gibson

In order to support, illustrate and consolidate the already stated facts about Fanon's stand toward the Algerian Revolution, I conducted an interview with Professor Nigel Gibson. Gibson is a British expert in the fields of African thought, post colonialism, and African Studies and he is recognized as one of the most prominent scholars on Frantz Fanon.

The interview was conducted on April 1, 2015 via e-mail. The questions were designed to obtain additional information on the main themes of the dissertation. The focus of the interview, however, is Frantz Fanon: his writings, his involvement in the Algerian War, and his legacy.

1. The Algerian war of liberation is said to be one of the most important decolonization wars of the 20th century. What can you say about that?

This is certainly true. After the loss in Vietnam (Dien Bien Phu) the French did not want to lose Algeria which was considered "French." It was a violent and bloody war. In both Kenya and Algeria there were systematic torture and brutality, but in Kenya the British were able to defeat "Mau Mau" and organize a transition. The French could not keep Algeria, with its large European population. Algeria's liberation was a world event and there were many hopes attached to that liberation.

2. To what extent were the French true in their claim of bringing civilization to colonized Algerians?

Well, they brought European civilization, which meant that it was brought with an enormous amount of violence and based on expropriation of land and people. European civilization meant pauperization for most of the people.

3. The Algerian war of liberation was the focus Francophone literature. Who among Francophone intellectuals, you think, was successful in describing the Algerian struggle accurately?

Alleg's *La Question* is important but I am not sure about describing the struggle. Fanon does well in *L'an cinq de la révolution*.

4. Fanon was among those thinkers who supported decolonization struggles in particular, the Algerian one. To what extent were his writings influential for colonized people?

Certainly important for the black movement in the USA and the anti-apartheid struggle in South Africa. His works have been translated into many languages how influential they are I am not sure.

5. Fanon and Algeria, what kind of relationship was there between the two?

Fanon identified with the Algerian revolution and considered himself part of that. The government after independence named a few roads and schools after him.

6. Do you agree with the opinion that Fanon's experience in Algeria fueled his selfless devotion to the Algerian cause?

Yes, Fanon's identification with the Algerian liberation struggle was a result of the impossible situation Fanon found himself in while working at Blida-Joinville Hospital. The psychic health of the Algerian people as a whole, not only those at the hospital, was at stake. He could no longer work, he argued in his resignation letter, in a situation, which encouraged the systematic dehumanization of the people.

7. *Les damnés de la terre* is one of Fanon's most striking writings on decolonization. Would you like to share with us your thoughts concerning the book?

Too much to say, I have written extensively on the book. See my books "*Fanon: The Postcolonial Imagination*" and "*Fanonian Practices in South Africa*".

8. Fanon has been called "the apostle of violence". In *Les damnés de la terre*, he advocated the use of violence as a means for the wretched to get their freedom. Was Fanon implicitly pushing the Algerian people to carry on their struggle against the French colonial rule?, was violence in *Les damnés de la terre* justifiable?

He is not an apostle of violence. One has to begin from the problematic. Colonialism is a form of violence that is also internalized by the colonized. Non-violence is not an alternative (or only for those privileged). Fanon wants people to take action; to commit to an act against colonialism is violence. The colonial regimes' actions in creating the native give rise to an opposing reaction- the native's violent response to it. Anti-colonial violence spells the end of the colonial regime and thus, it is an indicator of decolonization. Any revolution must be violent.

9. In the last chapter of *Les damnés de la terre* "Colonial war and Mental Disorders", through presenting a series of clinical cases of both Algerian and French patients, Fanon claimed that colonial violence was embedded in the Algerians' body and mind. Thus, decolonization is not only physical but also psychological. The writer Robert Fulford claims that "it was Fanon who brought to modern culture the idea that violence can heal the spiritually wounded" and that "Fanon argued that violence was necessary to Third World peoples not just as a way to win their liberty but, even more, because it would cure the inferiority complex that had been created by the teachings of white men".

Do you agree with this claim?

Yes and no. Fanon does not cure psychological disorders. If you read that chapter closely, he does not say that violence cures mental disorders. The Colonial war (torture, trauma, etc) creates mental disorders and thus the successful end of the war would end them, but those afflicted by the disorders would not be cured. They would need counseling and therapy... etc.

10. What did “*Les damnés de la terre*” add to decolonization struggles in the Third World in general and the Algerian struggle in particular?

It is a crucial theoretical text. It fosters for thinking about decolonization. It influences as well generations of ‘non-conformist’ intellectuals.

11. What was Fanon’s message to the Algerian people in his last book *Les damnés de la terre*?

Emancipation and liberation comes from your actions and struggles. Be wary of those that want to silence you and depoliticize you and send you “back to the caves” or to the domestic sphere.

12. What does Fanon represent for the Algerian people? Is he remembered today in Algeria, the country that he defended vigorously? In other words, is *Les damnés de la terre* given the interest it should be given?

No.

Analysis

My interview with Professor Gibson strengthened the historical facts and the arguments of the dissertation. As a prominent scholar on Frantz Fanon, Professor Gibson provided me with some invaluable information—that confirms my hypothesis. By stating explicitly that Frantz Fanon—succeeded to a far extent in describing accurately the Algerian war of liberation, especially in *L’an cinq de la révolution algérienne (Dying Colonialism)*. Thus, he supports my thesis, as stated in chapter three, that the book is one of Fanon’s most depictive works on the Algerian Revolution.

The second point discussed in the interview was about Frantz Fanon’s experience and relationship with Algeria. Professor Gibson claimed that Fanon identified with the Algerian revolution and considered himself part of it. He agreed that Fanon’s experience in Algeria fueled his selfless devotion to the Algerian cause. He went to argue that Fanon’s identification with the Algerian liberation struggle was a result of the horrendous situation of Algerians Fanon witnessed while working at Blida-Joinville Hospital. He could no longer work in a situation that encouraged the systematic dehumanization of the people. As referred to in chapter three, Fanon deliberately stated that the conditions under which he worked were challenging. For him, the problem stemmed from the daily events that depersonalized Algerians and alienated them from their humanity in their own country.

More importantly, I asked Professor Gibson about his view concerning Fanon's book *Les damnés de la terre*. He stated that the book is a crucial theoretical text for thinking about decolonization; the book has influenced generations of intellectuals. He added that he had written extensively on the book and mentioned some of his books: *Fanon: The Postcolonial Imagination* and *Fanonian Practices in South Africa*. Then, I moved to discuss one of the central themes in the book, violence. I asked him what he thought about Fanon's call for violence as a means of decolonization. Professor Gibson claimed that colonialism is a form of violence that is also internalized by the colonized. Non-violence is not an alternative. Fanon wants people to take action. According to Gibson, to act violently is to contest colonialism. It is the colonial regimes' actions in creating the native that gives rise to an opposing reaction: the native's violent response to it. Anti-colonial violence, according to Gibson, spells the end of the colonial regime and thus, it is an indicator of decolonization. It follows that all revolutions must be violent. As mentioned in chapter three, in *Les damnés de la terre*, Fanon advocates the use of violence as a means for the colonized to attain liberation. He argues that decolonization is in itself a violent act. For him, violence is the starting point of colonization. The colonizer forces the natives to relinquish their lands and lives using bayonets and cannons. Thus, decolonization can only occur through the adoption of a similar violence.

Finally, I asked Professor Gibson about the message that Fanon wanted to convey to the Algerian people through his work *Les damnés de la terre*. He replied that Fanon's message to colonized Algerians was, "Emancipation and liberation comes from your actions and struggles. Be wary of those that want to silence you and depoliticize you and send you "back to the caves" or to the domestic sphere". The clarifications and arguments that Gibson provided by confirming my hypothesis that in *Les damnés de la terre*, Frantz Fanon provided a significant support for the Algerian revolutionaries' belief that war was the only solution to end colonialism.

