Themes in the Francophone Algerian Novel

ZAHIA SMAIL (Salhi)

to the University of Exeter as a Thesis for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Modern Literature in the Faculty of Arts

August **1991**

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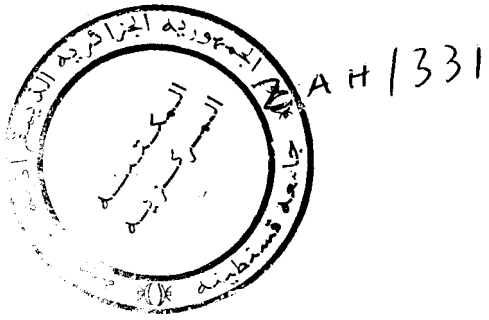
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To the one who dedicated herself to the cause of National Independence ... Only to then loose her own.

To my mother I dedicate this Thesis.

ABSTRACT

This thesis examines the development of the Francophone Algerian novel, the circumstances of its emergence, and the various phases of its progress through the pre-independence period, and the extent to which this parallels the political evolution of Algerian nationalism exemplified in Ferhat Abbas.

The thesis focuses on the major themes discussed in the novels of this period, and surveys the criticism of both the French and the Algerian nationalist inteligentsia.

The first themes in the Francophone Algerian novel are based on the authors' praise for their adopted *mère patrie,* France, for her humanitarian civilization. Deeply fascinated by this civilization, the writers of the thirties and early fourties rejected their people's "barbaric" way of life and called for their emancipation.

In the late fourties a major turn in the themes of the Francophone Algerian novel occured; whereas Taos Amrouche expressed the complaint of the alienated Algerian whose suffering is caused by her parents' naturalization, Aly El-Hammamy wrote an angry novel in which he described the awakening of his hero to a better understanding of the colonial situation in his country, and his subsequent rejection of the French civilization as a lie.

In the early fifties, the writers revealed the bad living conditions of their people, and in the late fifties their tone in blaming the colonizer for being the cause of their people's misery and alienation became explicit. the novels of this period became nationalistic and depicted an atmosphere of rebellion showing to what extent every Algerian was ready to fight the colonizer with the use of arms. Among these themes, the theme of women imposes itself both in the way they were viewed by their male compatriots and in the way they emerged in the fifties with a determination to free themselves from the webs of alienation both in the social and the colonial meaning of the word.

In the end of this work, the theme of combat as a means to achieve independence is discussed.

PREFACE

The first major motive behind this study is to counter the common opinion that the first Francophone Algerian novel appeared in 1950, whereas in reality it appeared much earlier in 1908. Those who reject these early novels argue that their writers are a group of assimilated Algerians who betrayed their people's cause, and described Algerian society with a colonial eye. For this purpose, various and major themes as they appear in the novels published between 1908 and 1962 are discussed, and the early novels are considered not only as the legitimate ancestor of the novels published in the 1950s, but also as an important and compulsory phase in the development of the Francophone Algerian novel which runs parrallel to that of the Algerian national consciousness, exemplified by Beriaat-Ai5bVs.

This work is introduced with a historical and cultural background to help the reader understand the themes of the Francophone Algerian novel as well as the socio-political environment in which it emerged.

Chapter One examines the literature of the French in Algeria, and their influence upon the native Algerians.

Chapter Two surveys the different positions of various critics concerning the fist Francophone novels by native Algerians. It also examines the major themes discussed in these novels, putting emphasis on the writers' praise for their French civilizers and their wish to become French citizens. This corresponds to Ferhat Abbas's early stage when he considered Algeria a French province.

Chapter Three studies two novels whose themes contradict those of the period of imitation, and demonstrates that the preceeding writers were wrong to put their trust in a 'civilizer' who, in reality was a 'colonizer'. The studied authors, Aly El-Hammamy and Taos Amrouche, let out the long complaint of the colonized Algerian through their respective heroes who discovered the real face of their adopted *mère patrie* France.

In Chapter Four, novels are discussed in which the authors depict their people's suffering under colonial yoke. Although their tone is not as explicit as that

of El-Hammamy or Taos, they believe the revelation of their people's malaise is in itself a revolutionary act.

Chapter five potttays a group of heroes whose sense of anger following the end of the Second World War is at its highest level. Deeply alienated and in an endless search for their national identity, those heroes concluded that only an armed revolution would free their people from the webs of colonization. So believed Ferhat Abbas in 1953.

Chapter six examines the difficult condition of the Algerian woman whose sense of alienation is due to the colonial situation in her country as well as to her position as a second class citizen in a society that favours its male members. The first section of this chapter studies the Algerian woman as seen by the male novelists of the fifties, and shows that whereas some authors gave a socio-realistic view of these women, some others had a symbolic vision of them. In section two Algerian women speak for themselves and depict their double sense of alienation.

In chapter seven the alienated heroes, men and women, join the armed revolution to rid themselves of the causes of their alienation,i.e. French colonialism.

The conclusion of this work also discusses certain post-independence concerns such as the actual condition of Francophone literature in Algeria.

Some appendices are added to this work. Appendix one gives plot summaries of the early novels which are not easily obtainable. Appendix two gives some biographical notes on novelists to help the reader have a wider idea of the writers studied and their works. Appendix three is a chronological bibliography of the Francophone Algerian novel (1908-1986), which shows the increasing number of novels published every year. Among other things, this counters the prophesy that Francophone literature in Algeria would disappear soon after .the country's independence.

In this thesis I seek to study the Francophone Algerian novel from its emergence in 1908 to the independence of Algeria in 1962. Although many

researchers studied this novel, they all seemed to agree that 1950 is the date of birth of Francophone Algerian literature. Whereas, some researchers studied a particular theme or a limitted period of time, or a specific author, my aim is to establish a global approach to this novel, discussing most of the themes it conveys, emphasizing the existing parallelism between the development of these themes and that of the Algerian Nationalist movement as exemplified by Ferhat Abbas. Among other things, these mirroring faces go to prove that one should not refuse to study the Francophone Algerian novel from the early phase of its development because of its writers' assimilationist attitudes.

The chapters of this thesis are set not only to draw a chronological order line of argument but more importantly to establish a comprehensive thematic coherence.

Although my initial ambition was to discuss all the novels published prior to 1950, it later proved that these novels are neither available in Algeria nor in Great Britain. Whereas some of them are kept in French libraries such as *La Bibliothèque Nationale* in Paris, and are available for reference only, some others seem to be totally missing. Moreover, I suffered the scarcity of any published material on these novels to an extent that apart from Jean Dejeux's work, which at least aknowledges their existence, one is surprised how these novels are ignored by most critics. Thus the novels studied in the period of imitation are not subject to my selection, but rather to the novels' availability.

In the remaining chapters, I attempted to center upon the novels of selected representative writers, studying the development of their themes throughout the pre-independence era to include their novels on the Algerian revolution.

Finally, in the conclusion of this work I attempted to inform the reader in brief about the position of the studied authors in the post-independence era.

INTRODUCTION

On July 5th, 1830, Algiers was occupied by the French forces who had quickly defeated the Dey Hussein's' resistance. Nevertheless, in east Algeria the *Bey*[2] of Constantine maintained his position as the Dey's successor. In the west of the country cAbd El-Kader was chosen as the Emir of Algeria. Both leaders organized a strong, resistance against the conquerors and caused them to suffer a number of defeats. Whereas "Le Bey Ahmed tint tête onze ans dans les Aurès à l' envahisseur"[3], in 1837 the Emir cAbd El-Kader forced France to sign the treaty of Tafna, which recognized him as the sovereign of two-thirds of Algeria. However, little by little the Emir's army weakened, and on December 23rd, 1847, he gave up fighting and went into exile with his family.

After the French conquest, colonisation spread throughout Algeria, resulting in the poverty of the Algerian people on the one hand, and the emergence of a class of feudal landlords, *colons"*, on the other.

The *colons* chose the best land on which to settle, expropriating its native owners. It is worth noting that depriving the Algerians of their land, meant depriving them of their dignity and source of livelihood. To them, the concept of land was mixed with the principle of life and of collective national existence. This was the direct reason which gave birth to a sense of deep anger and humiliation among the natives who answered El Mokrani's rallying call in March 1871. This rebellion took in both the peasants and the large land-owners and lasted for a period of seven months. Nevertheless, the French reaction was expropriating a huge number of

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1. *Dey,* Turkish ruler of Algiers before the French Conquest.

2. *Bey,* Turkish title of the Dey of Algiers' three principal vassals, the governors of Oran, Constantine and Titteri.

3. P. Balsa and C. Rulleau, l'*Algérie des algériens vingt ans après* (Paris: Eds Ouvrières, 1981), p.18.

4. *Colons,* European settlers.

hectares of land as a punitive measure. Therefore, many other insurrections continually arose, namely the rising of El-cAmri in 1876 and that of the Aurès in 1879. The most important one, however, was that of Abu cAmama in 1881, which was also the last rebellion by the Algerians who had been materially broken. The calm which followed was due more to exhaustion, as well as resignation, than to the acceptance of a system.[5]

The first three decades of the twentieth century witnessed the birth of Algerian nationalism. In this period the *colons'* wealth reached its peak, and the Algerians' poverty its nadir. The Algerian natives who used to be the masters of their land became day labourers in the *colons'* farms for very low wages; a phenomenon which created a rural proletariat which faced an endless dilemma in trying to cope with the demands of life. On the other hand, the industrial development of the cities attracted the dispossessed villagers, who did not always find employment on the *colons'* farms. Thus, in the cities the Algerian peasants provided an unskilled labour force which was ruthlessly exploited by the French industrialists. Another Algerian working class emerged in France, where the impoverished natives hoped to find better jobs to assure a subsistence for their families. It is noteworthy that this migration proved of great benefit for the Algerians, who made both material and moral gains. In France, the Algerian workers met the French proletarians who introduced them to Communist principles. This created a national awakening among these emigrants, who contributed largely to the political awakening in their own country.

In Algeria, a group of young teachers, doctors, lawyers and employees, called the "Young Algerians", worked hard for a change in the colonial situation through progress and education. Although most of them studied at French schools, they fell

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5. D.M. Gallup, "The French Image of Algeria: its origin, its place in colonial ideology, its effect on Algerian acculturation". (PhD dissertation, University of California, 1973), p.448.

under Eastern influences, namely Turkish and Egyptian. They were fascinated by the Arabic *Nanda* in Egypt and Syria, and the emergence of Modern Turkey. They thus aimed at a rebirth of an Arab race worthy of the benefits of France.

Their major aim being one of social reform, the Young Algerians founded various clubs and societies such as the *Rashidiyya* of Algiers, founded in 1902, the *Cercle des jeunes Algeriens* in Tlemcen, and the *Cercle de Salah Bey* in Constantine in 1907. They also created their own press as a means of reaching a wider Algerian audience. Some examples are, *El Misbah* in 1904, *Le Musulman* in 1909, *Le Rashidi* and *El Hack - le jeune Egyptien* in 1911.

Having studied at French schools, the Young Algerians were fascinated by the principles of the French "civilizing mission". Nevertheless, they suffered the dilemma of serving as an intermediary between their own people, who lived in ignorance, and the French "civilizers". They therefore worked for the rapprochement of the two groups, yet their main concern was to make their people understand the benefits of civilization. Nevertheless, they suffered from their people's stubborn rejection of anything brought by the French, and the *colons'* hostility to the natives, whom they wanted to remain ignorant for easier exploitation.

Although the Young Algerians encouraged the education of Algerian children, they were opposed both by the *colons* and their Algerian compatriots who did not trust the French schools, which, they claimed, were used as a means to destroy their children's cultural identity:

> Le père, soucieux de sauvegarder l'âme de son fils, avait beau déclarer l'enfant arriéré, sourd et muet, il n'avait d' autre choix. Mais il put tout de même prodiguer ses conseils, 'N'apprends rien, n'écoute rien de tout ce que dira le maître, c'est l'école du diable. Il veut te faire oublier ta race. '[6]

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6. R. Benouameur, "Littérature algérienne", (PhD dissertation, University of North Carolina, 1965), p.129.

Just as the French saw in education the most effective weapon to assimilate the natives and make them admire French civilisation and culture, the natives rejected this .education and preferred to send their children to the traditional Qur'anic schools of their cities and villages. Nevertheless, new circumstances made the natives change some of their attitudes towards French education, as it was the only key to enter administrative jobs, and thus a better life. It was commonly accepted then, that Arabic was the language of religion, while French that of bread, "Apprends le Coran pour l'au-delà et le Français pour ici bas".[7] In doing so, the natives opposed the French settlers, who in turn opposed education of Algerians for fear of losing the cheap labour the latter provided, as well as for fear of raising nationalism. However, this concept was at first limited to the leading citizens, and the subdued natives who welcomed their civilizers' project. To this elite belonged the Young Algerians, as well as the first generation of Francophone Algerian writers who, as described by Jean Dejeux, are the *évolués* who studied at French schools. This elite is mainly made of " instituteurs, de professions libérales, fils de fonctionnaires, de notables et des élites castes".[8] French education became more common only after the First World War, when the natives claimed their right in education.

To achieve equality between their people and the French, the Young Algerians stubbornly fought for their right to be French citizens without renouncing their Islamic identity, which meant native Algerians. Nevertheless, this issue was rejected by their community which branded them as renegades, and violently

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7. A.Bamieh, "The Development of the Novel and Short Story in Modern Algerian Literature" (PhD dissertation, University of London, SOAS, 1971), p. 81.

8. J. Dejeux, *Situation de la littérature maghrebine de langue française* (Algiers: Office des Publications Universitaires, 1982), p.17.

opposed by the *colons* who could only produce a form of apartheid. They claimed the natives were a filthy breed, opposed to any form of social progress.[9]

1914 was the year when many Algerians were recruited to fight under the French flag. Although they knew they were going to fight nations with whom they had no quarrel, the young Algerians thought they would obtain a modification of the discriminatory judicial system in return for their efforts. Or, to put it differently, they hoped to become equal with the French citizens in rights as well as in duties.

The Algerian participation in the war, be it on the front as fighters, or in the French factories as workers, had a great effect on the Algerians' political awakening. The returning soldiers brought ideas of freedom and independence with them. As for the workers, they had direct contact with the French trade unions, and came under their influence; a fact which served to cement a new union between these two groups who were fighting together against capitalism.

The first result of this era was the emergence of the Emir Khaled, grandson of the Emir Abd El-Kader, in 1922, who pleaded for equal treatment of both Algerians and French, equal representation in Parliament, suppression of laws of discrimination, freedom of teaching and compulsory education for Algerians.

Nevertheless, the first organized political activity to claim the independence of all North Africa, was the organization of emigrant workers in France called *l' Étoile Nord Africaine*, ENA, founded in 1925. Although this organization was affiliated to the French Communist party, when its leader, Messali El-Hadj, met the Syrian Emir Shakib Arsalan, and fell under his influence, the party adopted an Arab and Islamic trend.

In 1929, the ENA was disbanded by the authorities, but the same party returned to life under a new name, *La Glorieuse Étoile Nord-Africaine* in 1933. The

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9. Jules Roy, *The War in Algeria,* trans. Richard Howard (London: Greenwood Press,. 1975), p.27.

latter was also disbanded in 1937, but only to reappear as *Le Parti du Peuple Algérien,* PPA, as a wholly Algerian party. Another Algerian movement appeared five years after the ENA, its leaders were French-oriented Muslims, like Ferhat Abbas who formed the Federation of Elected Muslims. In 1931, Abbas considered Algeria a French province, and denied the existence of an Algerian nation. Like the Young Algerians, he considered the Algerians as Frenchmen with Muslim personal status. He claimed:

> If I had encountered the Algerian nation, I would be a nationalist and, as such, would have nothing to be ashamed of ... I have questioned history. I have questioned the quick and the dead. I have visited cemeteries. No one has spoken to me of such a thing ... You cannot build on wind, we have eliminated all fogginess and vain imaginings to link our future once and for all to that of French endeavour in this country.'°

Shaikh cAbd al-Hamid Ibn Badis, leader of the Algerian Muslim reformists, was one of the first to protest to Abbas's stand with a counter publication saying,

> We have examined the past and the present and have found that the Algerian nation has taken shape and exists. This nation has its history, marked by deeds of the highest order. It possesses its culture, its traditions, and its characteristics, good and bad, as do all the nations of earth."

Nevertheless, one must stress that Ibn Badis's notion of a "nation" is not a political one. Like the Young Algerians, he favoured the integration of Algerians into the French nation with maintenance of their personal status.

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10. Michael K. Clark, *Algeria in Turmoil* (New York: Frederick A. Praeger, 1959), p.17.

11. Ibid.

In 1931, Ibn Badis founded the association of the Algerian °*Ulama,* as a cultural and social movement which preached against drinking alcohol, smoking and gambling, habits which spread widely among Algerian youth in the first half of the twentieth century.

The *cUlama's* main concern was Arabic education. They opened several Arabic schools where children were taught during the day and the adults in the evenings. Despite great difficulties, such as the closing of many of these schools, the imprisonment of the teachers, as well as some financial difficulties, the number of these schools increased from 90 in 1947 to 181 in 1954.

As part of their efforts to stimulate a revival of Arabic as a language and culture, the *cUlama* created several cultural clubs, such as *Nadi al-tarraqqi* founded in Algiers in 1926, and issued several journals such as *al-Muntaqid* in 1925, *al-*Shihab(1925-1939), and *al-Basa' îr(1936-1956).* The °*Ulama's* efforts resulted in a great flow of Arabic poetry used by the poets who rallied round this organization as an instrument of reform. The major aspect of this poetry is its classical form and traditional language typical of the Neoclassicist movement in the Middle East. Concerning Arabic prose, Algeria had no novels written in Arabic prior to 1971. However, the Arabic short story was known early in the thirties, mainly with the well-known Ahmad Rida Huhu.

The political conditions of the thirties, also stimulated a group of Arabophone historians to write the history of their country. Books such as *Tarikh al-Jaza' ir fi al-qadim wa al-hadith (Algerian historiography: Past and Present)* by al-Mubarak al-Mili[12] and *Tarikh al-jaza' it al-cam (A General history of Algeria)* by cAbd al-Rahman al-Jilali[13] were published. In conclusion, the Algerian intellectuals split into

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12 al-Mubarak al-Mili, *Tarikh al-Jaza'ir fi al-qadim wa al-hadith,* 3 vols. (Beirut: Badran, 1964).

13 cAbd al-Rahman al-Jilali, *Tarikh al jaza' ir al-cam,* 2 vols. (Beirut: Maktabat al-hayat, 1965).

two distinguished groups; the Arabophone and the Francophone.

With the outbreak of the Second World War, Algerian political organizations came to a standstill. Their aims differed from one party to another. Whereas Messali's friends were attracted by German propaganda, Ferhat Abbas had stopped his political activities 'and concentrated his efforts on the war under the French flag. Whilst the °*Ulama,* expressed their loyalty by suspending the publication of their Arabic press.

On December 2nd, 1939, the French minister Sarraut claimed, "La mère pat rie n'oubliera pas au jour de la victoire tout ce qu'elle doit à ses enfants de l'Afrique du nord".[14] Sarraut's promises as well as the Atlantic charter which promised universal self-determination, gave birth to great illusions among the Algerians. In this era Ferhat Abbas stepped to the front of the stage with great enthusiasm. However, new horizons opened up for him after the landing of the Allied forces in Algeria, as well as after being subjected to French discrimination while he was fighting for their independence. Ferhat Abbas was no longer under any illusions and knew the era of compromises was over.

On March 7th, 1944, De Gaulle decided to reward the Algerians by granting them full citizenship without renouncing their personal status. However, this was a derisory reply to the aspirations of the Algerians whom the Second World War had made more aware of their situation. As an answer to De Gaulle, Ferhat Abbas attempted to reach a united front together with the *cUlama* and the PPA,

> Abbas tenta de réaliser avec les Ulema et le PPA un front unique: ce fut l'origine (13-14 Mars 1944) de l'association des amis du manifeste et de la liberté dont le but avoué était de rendre familière l'idée d'une nation algérienne et

14. Charles-Robert Ageron, *Histoire de l'Algérie contemporaine: De l' insurrection de 1871 au déclenchement de la guerre de libération* (1954) (Paris: PUF, 1979), p.549.

> désirable la Constitution en Algérie d'une république autonome fédérée à une république française rénovée.[15]

In 1945, the agitation among the Algerians became a kind of paroxysm, which increased the insecurity felt by the French in Algeria. This paroxysm took a more violent line of action on May 8th, 1945.[16] It all started in Setif during a march celebrating the victory in Europe day. The demonstrators were waving the Algerian flag as well as some banners inscribed with slogans such as "Long Live Algeria, Free and Independent", and "Down with Colonialism". A French police inspector tried to grab these banners, but the demonstrators showed great resistance which caused the death of the flag-holder by a policeman. This resulted in anger among the demonstrators, who attacked any European they met on their way. A campaign of repression soon followed, and the *colons* joined in with a vengeance which resulted in slaughter. After these events, the Algerians lost confidence in the French, and called May 8th 1945 "a point of no return". On the political level, two parties gained popularity; Ferhat Abbas's *Union Démocratique du Manifeste Algérien,* UDMA, and a successor of the outlawed PPA called, the *Mouvement pour le triomphe des libertés démocratiques,* MTLD. Whereas the UDMA aimed at a new Algeria in a free federation with the new France, the MTLD objected to any solution which did not imply an absolute guarantee of a return to Algerian sovereignty.

Nevertheless, after several decades of political negotiations, Ferhat Abbas declared in 1953, "Il n'y a plus d'autre solution que les mitraillettes".[17]

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15. Charles-Robert Ageron, *Histoire de l'Algérie contemporaine* (1830-1970) (Paris: PUF, 1970), p.93.

16. For more details see M. Kaddache, "8 Mai 1945", *Actualité de l'émigration,* no.88, (Semaine du 6 au 12 Mai 1987).

17. C.R. Ageron, *Histoire de l'Algérie Contemporaine* (1830-1970), p.98.

CHAPTER ONE

The Emergence of a Francophone Literature in Algeria

Section One

The Literature of the French

1. Tourist Writers and the Exotic Novel

The first Francophone literature to concern itself with Algeria derived from the first conquerors, among whom some military officers kept diaries in which they recorded various matters, such as the events of the conquest, the description of the newly conquered country with a special focus on every bizarre and picturesque detail reflecting both their fascination and amusement. Jean Dejeux testifies that these military officers wrote:

> des récits militaires, des journaux de route marqués par les images romantiques, les poncifs de l'époque ... correspondances, mémoires des officiers résonnent d' épopées et de faits d'armes toujours à la gloire de celui qui les raconte.'

It would be quite relevant to stress that the French conquest of Algeria coincided with the spread of the Romantic movement in France. In the 1850s, a steady influx of French artists into the new colony began to happen. Their aim was to satisfy their appetite for the exotic as well as to escape the creeping paralysis of an industrialized and well-ordered, but complicated, metropolitan life. They launched themselves into the unknown, escaping the familiar, to start an endless journey in a

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1. Jean Dejeux, *La Littérature algérienne contemporaine* (Paris: PUF, 1979), p.18.

new and wild country seeking inspiration for their art. However, they landed in Algeria with a prior impression of the country, which the previous writers had described in detail. Pierre Martino reports:

> Chaque voyageur emporta de France avec lui son Algérie toute faite ... Des poncifs seront ainsi créés et utilisés à discrétion: l'Algérie militaire, l'Algérie des moeurs chevaleresques, l'Algérie des grandes chasses, l'Algérie galante, l'Algérie des mille et une nuits.[2]

Those writers wrote an exotic literature in which their main concern was the desert, the palm-tree and the camel. As for the native population, either it was presented as part of the exotic decor, or totally ignored. Like most nineteenth century French writers, Guy de Maupassant described Algeria as an oriental country without any human existence:

> On rêve toujours d'un pays préféré ... moi je me sentais attiré vers l'Afrique par un impérieux besoin, par la nostalgie du desert ignoré, comme par le préssentiment d' une passion qui va naître. Je quittai Paris le 6 Juillet en plein été, sous la pesante chaleur, dans l'éblouissement furieux de la lumière.[3]

It is worth noting that the French writers of this period had two different views of Algeria. Whereas for some of them, it represented a newly-discovered country, for some others it was a recovered land. In his famous book *Le Sang des races,* Louis Bertrand[4] claimed he came to Algeria to rediscover his Latin ancestors. He insisted, in re-entering Africa, France had only recovered a province which had

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2. Pierre Martino, "La Littérature algérienne", *Histoire et historiens de l'Algérie* (Pari s: Alcan, 1931), p.336.

3. Guy de Maupassant, (1850-1893) *Au Soleil* (Paris: 011endorff, 1902), pp.5-6.

4. Louis Bertrand (1866-1941), *Le Sang des races* (Paris: Albin Michel, 1899).

been lost to the Latin realm, "French Africa of today is Roman Africa which continues to live, which never ceased to live, even during the most troublesome, barbarous time".[5] He attempted to explain away several centuries of Arab and Turkish domination, claiming that the Arabs were savage invaders, who had brought nothing to North Africa but misery and ruin. On the other hand, he glorified the Europeans of Algeria whom he called the "real" Frenchmen, a revival of the "real" romans. Bertrand praised the *colons* for their courage and goodwill as well as their struggle to build a future and a better life. Therefore, L. Bertrand's novels are not only a hymn to the *colons,* but also a reflection of the colonial society which was developing an awareness of its own identity. "By proclaiming Algeria as the exclusive embodiment and resurrection of the Latin spirit, Bertrand expresses the settlers' feelings of a distinct, different identity, even a superiority over metropolitan France".[6] Like the Algerian *colons,* Bertrand expresses his deep hatred for the native population which he excludes from his novels and qualifies as *incivilisable.* Thus, he rejects the French civilizing mission which proved to be a failure after many decades of unsuccessful assimilation. D.M. Gallup states:

> He [Bertrand] condemns as self-delusion the belief that the French are the benefactors of mankind and adoption of their democratic ideals, the dearest wish of all people ... To ban all illusions of civilizing and assimilation is for him the essential prerequisite to an education to reality.?

To conclude, Bertrand's perception was the base for all racist theories to follow among the settlers whose interests did not allow tolerance towards the natives, whom they deprived of their land. In 1840, the French governor in Algeria, Bugeaud,

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5. D.M. Gallup, *The French Image of Algeria,* p.274.

6. Ibid., p.316.

7. D.M. Gallup, *The French Image of Algeria,* pp.314-315.

stated, "Wherever there is fresh water and fertile land, there one must locate *colons*, without concerning oneself to whom these lands belong".[8] Inevitably, therefore, each group was hostile to the other, one because it was deprived of its property, the other because it could not expect anything but hatred from the dispossessed.

The first generation of Algerian-born French writers criticized their predecessors' perception. In this respect Jérome Tharaud wrote of Bertrand, "Je ne lui ferai en passant que le reproche d'avoir négligé dans sa fresque les populations indigènes, qui mèritent pourtant bien qu'on leur fasse leur part. Sa passion de la latinité l'a rendu trop sévère à leur égard et ingrat".[9]

2. The "Algerianist" Literary Movement

Towards the beginning of the twentieth century, the "exotic" novel became an outdated model, or, as S.C. Whittick[10] puts it, the *bête noir* of proponents of a new literary movement that was emerging within the colony itself. This new literary movement, called *l'Algérianisme*, was led by writers like the Orientalist Louis Lecoq," and the leader of this literary movement Robert Randau[12] who, born in Algeria, considered himself Algerian, and called for the creation of an "Algerian"

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8. Alistair Horne, A *Savage War of Peace: Algeria, 1954-1962* (London: Macmillan, 1979), p.30.

9. J. Dejeux, *Littérature maghrébine de langue française* (Sherbrooke: Naaman, 1978), p.15.

10. Sheila Collingwood Whittick, "The Colonial Situation in Algeria and its Literary Reflection", (PhD dissertation, University of London: Birkbeck College, 1980).

11. Louis Lecoq (1885-1932).

12. Robert Randau (1873-1946): *Les Colons, roman de la patrie algérienne* (Pa ris: Sansot, 1907), *Les Algérianistes* (Paris: Sansot, 1911), *Cassard le berbère* (Alger: Carbonnel, 1926), *Le Professeur Martin, petit bourgeoie d'Alger* (Alger: Baconnier, 1936).

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literature different from the metropolitan literature both in style and content, its only link with the metropolis being the use of the French language, "Une littérature qui ne demande à la métropole que la langue française pour exprimer l'Afrique du nord".[13] It is worth noting that, like Louis Bertrand, Randau considers Algeria a recovered Latin province which he calls, "une patrie franco-berbère, fille de la latinité",[14] and the *colons,* who came from various mediterranean countries to settle in Algeria, the new Romans. He insists that the *colons* differed from the urban French in various aspects, and that, their literature should also differ. He declared, "Il doit y avoir une littérature nord-africaine originale parce qu'un peuple qui possède sa vie propre doit posséder aussi une langue et une littérature à lui".[15]

In 1920, the Algerianists' manifesto was published, putting as its principal objective, "Nous voulons dégager notre autonomie esthétique ... Nous voulons une littérature nord-africaine originale".[16] For this purpose Randau's ambition went so far as to link the Algerianists' literature with the literature of the previous Latin writers, such as Apuleius, Tertullian and St Augustine, who lived in North Africa, before the advent of Islam. In his novel, *Les Colons, roman de la patrie algérienne,* Randau demonstrates that between these Latin writers and the Algerianists, there exists a strong bond, "Entre ces écrivains et nous, il y a le même goût de la richesse verbale porté jusqu'à l'outrance".[17]

The Algerianists' manifesto was followed with the creation of *l'Association des écrivains algériens,* and its official review *l'Afrique* in 1924. This literary

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13. J. Dejeux, *Littérature maghrébine de langue française*, p.17.

14. Jacqueline Arnaud, *La Littérature maghrébine de langue française,* 2 vols. (Paris: Publisud, 1986), vol.1: *Origines et perspectives,* p.28.

15. R. Randau, "Le Mouvement littéraire dans l'Afrique du Nord", *Les Belles Lettres,* no.17, (Nov. 1920), pp.350-380.

16. J. Dejeux, *Littérature maghrébine de langue française*, p.16.

17. Ibid.

movement gathered a large group of writers who pleaded for their *Algérianité,* " Nous sommes des Algériens et non des Parisiens".i[8] For this purpose they attempted to draw a portrait of this new Algerian race, which differed from the French. In his preface to Randau's *Les Colons,* Marius-Ary Leblond described this race as "race brutale, avide, pratique, franche, ayant naturellement en horreur les sentimentalités européennes et l'idéal classiciste qui anémient la France".[19] Moreover, this new race spoke a different language from metropolitan French, typical of the Algerian *colons.* It is an amalgam of the French, cul l Spanish, Italian and Maltese languages. In his long series of novels, Musette[20] created an Algerian hero, called Cagayous, who, through the use of this new language, as well as through a behaviour typical of the *colons,* proves the legitimacy of this new literary movement, as well as the concretization of the Algerianists' ambition in creating a purely Algerian literature. In their literary works, these writers used extensive descriptions of the social physiognomy of Algeria, ignoring the natives who only figured as conventional types,

> Ici on avait toujours accordé trop d'importance au paysage, on l'avait décrit, admiré; on l'avait fertilisé, embelli. Mais qui s'était intéressé aux hommes? On jugeait qu'ils fesaient partie du décor, comme les cactus, comme les palmiers. (Ne les appelait-on pas souvent avec un mépris, des troncs de figuiers?)[21]

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18. Idem., *La Littérature algérienne contemporaine,* p.30.

19. R. Randau, *Les Colons,* p.9.

20. Musette [Auguste Robinet] (1862-1930): *Les Amours de Cagayous* (Alger: Méditerranée Vivante, 1896), *Cagayous à la caserne* (Alger: Méditerranée Vivante, 1896), *Le Mariage de Cagayous* (Alger: Méditerranée Vivante, 1906).

21. Jean Pélégri, (2 June 1920) *Les Oliviers de la justice* (Paris: Gallimard, 1959), p.230.

Thus, the Algerianist writers were not solely motivated by aesthetic considerations. For, behind the smoke-screen of literary criteria, remained a racist political perception led by Bertrand's Latinist theme. "Cette manifestation prend l' importance d'un événement non seulement littéraire mais aussi politique et si j'ose dire, national. Pour la première fois, une race neuve prend conscience d'elle même" 22 , claimed Bertrand for whom the Algerianist literary movement was a proof of the birth of a new race, which according to Randau should also include some of the assimilated natives: "On ne voulait reconnaître que les assimilés ou ceux qui étaient suffisamment acculturés pour jouer le rôle d'hommes-frontieres tout en demeurant dans leur milieu".[23] For this purpose Randau devoted great efforts to bring the integrated Algerians into the circle of the Algerianist writers, teaching them to write a literature in which the point of focus is the local environment described in the language of the *colons,* which includes expressions typical of the new race and the new country. Nevertheless, such elements cannot be sufficient for the creation of an Algerianist literature whose only link with the metropolis is the use of the French language, as claimed by the proponents of this literary movement. In this vein Ghani Merad concludes:

> Les Algérianistes se voulaient autonomes. Mais en réalité, leur produit est loin d'avoir des caractéristiques spécifiques. Leur personnalité réside dans le fait qu'ils situent leur action en Algérie, ce qui ne suffit pas pour donner à une littérature un caractère national ... De même qu'il ne suffit pas d'ajouter une teinte de couleur locale ou des expressions du terroir pour faire oeuvre originale. La spécificité chez les Algérianistes n'est donc qu'une position de principe, une disposition de l'esprit, un acte de foi politique.[24]

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22. L. Bertrand, *Notre Afrique* (Paris: Eds du Monde Moderne, 1925), p.l.

23. J. Dejeux, *Littérature maghrébine de langue française,* p.17.

24. Ghani Merad, *La littérature algérienne d'expression française* (Paris: Oswald, 1976), p.28.

Nevertheless, one has to mention Isabelle Eberhardt[25] who, although a friend of Randau's, did not share the Algerianists' view of the native population. On the contrary, she took the latter's side, both in her literary works, and in real life. Moreover, she opposed the French civilizing mission, and called for real friendships with the local populations, whose moral values should be respected.

3. L'Ecole d'Alger

By the end of the 1930s, the Algerianist literary movement was in decline. A new group of writers emerged with a new style of writing and a new political vision.

Aesthetically, this new literary movement endeavoured to respond to the new political conditions of the thirties. Unlike the Algerianists who considered Algeria a recovered country, these new writers had a more realistic view. For them, Algeria was a conquered land which actually belonged to the native Algerians.

Born in Algeria, these writers had more interest in the country's social problems, and devoted their art to describe the world around them. However, while the Algerianists had based their work on Bertrand's Latinist theme,.the latter authors replaced it with a Greek Mediterranean one. *Méditerranée* was the title of a review published between 1925-1930, in which these writers published their literary works based on the sea. This characteristic is clearly reflected by the titles of their works. In 1935, Gabriel Audisio published his *Jeunesse de la Méditerranée*. One year later *Le sel de la mer*, by the same author, followed. "The sea is our mother", claimed

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25. Isabelle Eberhardt (1877-1904): *Notes de route* (Paris: Fasquelle, 1908), *Dans l'ombre chaude de l'Islam* (Paris: Fasquelle, 1921), *Mes journaliers* (Paris: La Connaissance, 1923), *Au pays des sables* (Paris: Sorlot, 1944). For more detail see: Jean Noel, *Isabelle Eberhardt, l'aventureuse du sahara (* Alger: Baconnier, 1961), and, Françoise d'Eaubonne, *La Couronne de sable. Vie d'Isabelle Eberhardt* (Paris: Flammarion,1968).

Audisio, "It is also my fatherland", he added. The author expressed his joy at living on a sunny beach, and described the deep relationship he had with the sea. "J'ai crié ' putain' à la mer, qui est ma passion" 2[6] Audisio portrayed the sea as a kind of "liquid continent" called *La Province de Méditerranée.*[27] In 1933, Albert Camus wrote *Poème sur la Méditerranée.* In 1937, Camille Bégué published *Méditerranée nouvelle,* an anthology which includes writers from Tunisia, Morocco and Algeria.

The writers of the *École d'Alger* spoke of a new Mediterranean culture, of a Mediterranean feeling, which in itself stood for their fatherland, "la patrie, c'est un cert ain goût de la vie",[28] and the Mediterranean sea a phenomenon they could feel with their skin. However, were sun, sea, sand and this Mediterranean sensibility enough to create a fatherland? This question is frankly expressed in Camus's work, where the hero is portrayed as someone caught between the beauty of nature and the sad existence of a man belonging to two countries and feeling a stranger in both, "Ils sont d'ici, mais surtout d'ailleurs, ils tiennent fermement à l'Afrique du nord mais comme à une seconde patrie".[29] This feeling of alienation is, in fact, the basis of Camus's work. In this respect, Albert Memmi remarks, "l'Etranger, n'est pas seulement un récit métaphysique, la relation d'une angoisse existentielle, c'est aussi Camus-Étranger dans son pays natal".[30]

Consequently, having endeavoured to write about philosophical and metaphysical themes, these writers failed to depict the Algerian man whom they tried to describe in their novels. In fact, they did not know the native population well

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26. Dejeux, *La Littérature algérienne contemporaine,* p.36.

27. Ibid.

28. Ibid, p.39.

29. Albert Memmi, *Anthologie des écrivains maghrébins d'expression française* (Paris: Présence Africaine, 1964), p.14..

30. A. Memmi, *Anthologie des écrivains maghrébins d'expression française,* p. 14.

enough to feel their problems.[31] Thus, they remained unconvincing figures, who were never made to speak for themselves,

> Les figures de Nord-Africains qu'ils évoquent quelque-fois sont bien dessinées mais restent de rares silhouettes, des ' ombres. La nature et les choses sont maintenant présentes, mais l'abscence des êtres continue. Comme si ces écrivains n' arrivaient pas à s'interesser longtemps et profondément à ces hommes: En vérité, ils n'en sont pas véritablement.[32]

Nevertheless, these writers portrayed with success the European milieu they belonged to. This new literary school gathered numerous writers such as Jules Roy,[33] Emmanuel Roblès,[34] Jean Pélégri, and others who created an active literary atmosphere which resulted in the famous book collection called *Méditerranéennes,* and the literary review, *Rivages.*

From 1940 to 1954, a great number of progressive literary and cultural reviews were created. Among them, were *Fontaine* (1939-47), *L'Arche* (1944-47), *La Nef* (1944) and *Forge* (1946-47). The aim of the last mentioned was to create and stimulate friendship, "forger de toniques amitiés",[35] as well as to prove that beyond the differences of language, morals and religion, the human intelligence can also

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31. Whereas in Camus's fiction the natives are mostly inactive characters, in his book, *Actuelles, III, Chronique Algérienne 1939-1958,* he depicted the misery and hunger of the natives, giving statistics and analysing facts. He claimed: " Aux Ouadhias sur 7500 habitants, on compte 300 miséreux. Dans la région de Sidi-Aich, 60 % des habitants sont indigents. .Dans le village d'El-Flay, au dessus du centre, de Sidi-Aich, on cite et on montre des familles qui restent souvent deux ou trois jours sans manger". (Paris: Gallimard, 1958), p.43.

32. A. Memmi, *Anthologie des écrivains maghrébins,* p.13.

33. Jules Roy (born on April the 22th, 1907).

34. Emmanuel Roblès, (born on May the 4th, 1914).

35. Dejeux, *La Littérature algérienne Contemporaine,* p.46.

become one's native country. This review, together with *Algeria* (1948-62), and *Soleil* (1950-52), was among the first to open its pages to Algerian natives.

Nevertheless, while 1850 saw a steady influx of French writers into the new colony, 1945 saw the exodus of Algerian-born French writers from their country of birth to Paris. This exodus was mainly caused by the new political events which followed the Second World War (the events of May 1945), and was to continue until 1962.

Unlike the Algerianists, these writers were more understanding and more co-operative with the native writers. The *Paternalism* which led Randau to include some native writers within the Algerianist movement no longer existed among the writers of the *École d' Alger*. On the contrary, well aware of the barrier which separated them from the native population, they invited the native writers to the pages of their reviews to depict their society and tell the world about their people. Ghani Merad testifies:

> Contrairement à la vieille génération d'écrivains résolument réactionnaire, la jeune équipe littéraire se veut libérale. Il n'est plus question de rêver d'une Algérie autonome, livrée pieds et poings liés aux magnats de la colonisation, mais d'un territoire français dans lequel régnerait enfin l'amitié ... C'est ainsi que dans ces revues, surtout après 1945 ... Les noms musulmans comme ceux de Lacheraf, Dib, Kateb côtoiront ceux des Européens.[36]

36. G. Merad, *La Littérature algérienne d'expression française*, p.29.

Section Two

The Algerianists' Efforts to Create an Indigenous Literature

Whereas Louis Bertrand insisted that the French should give up their " civilizing mission", which proved to be a failure after several decades, Randau claimed one should never despair of integrating the natives into the civilization of their colonists, although they were slow to respond to the call; in the hope that they would sooner or later become fully assimilated, and replace their previous hatred towards the French with love for their generous *mère-patrie* who offered them the fruit of its fascinating civilization. As a civilized people, Randau believed the role of the French was "convertir à notre mentalité avec tact, mesure et intelligence, des peuples encore à l'état barbare"[37]. Nevertheless, he claimed, only those who were fully assimilated or appeared to be as such should be brought into the circle of the Algerianist writers.

In the 1930s, French education for the natives started to bear fruit, mainly through the emergence of a group of Algerian teachers, who graduated from French schools where they were taught the history of their great nation - France - and the principles of the humanitarian French writers, as well as the benefits of the French " civilizing mission". These young teachers created several reviews such as *La Voix des humbles* and *La Voix indigène* in which they exposed and discussed several social problems concerning their country. They also wrote books of a social and political nature in which they described the conditions of their people encouraging them to forget their hostility towards the French, and asking the authorities for some social reforms. We can cite examples such as *L'Algérie sous l'égide de la France,*

37. J. Dejeux, *La Littérature algérienne contemporaine,* p.28.

by Said Faci[38], *Le Problème algérien, vu par un Indigène,* by Rabah Zenati[39], *La Vérité sur le malaise algérien,* by M[ed] Aziz Kessous[40], and the most well-known, *Le Jeune Algérien. De la colonie vers la province,* by Ferhat Abbas[41]. This massive production in the thirties followed the birth of the Algerian nationalist movement. Therefore, most of those books reflected the political mood of their time, which is a plea for social reform and equality with the French. Nevertheless, the literary production by natives in the French medium, was not so fertile, and writers like Randau were very worried, as that literary silence meant the Algerians were not so integrated as to use the French language as a medium of literary expression. Thus, Randau spent great efforts in stimulating and creating a native Francophone literature. Jean Dejeux testifies:

> Robert Randau ... allait jusqu'à corriger avec une admirable patience les fautes d'orthographe ou de grammaire des manuscrits qu'on lui soumettait, et c'est grâce à lui qu'en 1925 parut enfin sous la signature d'un de ses disciples, le mouderrès Abdelkader Hadj Hamou, un roman qui s'intitulait *"Zohra, la femme du mineur".*[42]

Nevertheless, Abdelkader Hadj Hamou gave up the novel, to write books of a socio-political content, in which he discussed the conditions of the Algerian people. In 1933, together with Randau, Hadj Hamou, under the pseudonym Abdelkader Fikri,

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38. Said Faci, l'*Algérie sous l'égide de la France contre la féodalité algérienne* (Toulouse, 1936).

39. Rabah Zenati, *Le Problème algérien vu par un indigène* (Paris: Comité de l' Afrique française, 1938).

40. M[ed] Aziz Kessous, *La Vérité sur le malaise algérien* (Bône: impr. Rapide, 1935).

41. Ferhat Abbas, *Le Jeune Algérien - De la colonie vers la province* (Alger-Paris: La Jeune Parque, 1931).

42. J. Dejeux, "La littérature algérienne d'expression française", *Cahiers nord-africains,* no. 61 (Octobre-Novembre 1957), p.17.

published his famous *Les Compagnons du jardin*[43], a book in the form of a ,long dialogue between several voices which, in turn, expressed various tendencies typical of the Franco-Algerian elite. Jacqueline Arnaud comments that Randau considered this co-authored book as a proof that "les temps sont mûrs pour une assimilation véri table de l'élite indigène, dans une perspective d'autonomie interne"[44]. In fact, many other co-authored works, namely novels, between native Algerians and French writers, appeared in the thirties. Examples are, *La Tente noire, roman saharien*[45], by René Pottier and Saad Ben Ali, and *Khadra, la danseuse des Ouled Nail*[46], by Slimane Ben Ibrahim and Etienne Dinet. To stimulate further the emergence of a Francophone literature by the native Algerians, several literary prizes were given to writers, such as that to Belhadj Ali for his novel, *Souvenirs d'enfance d'un Blédard*[47]

It is worth noting that the Francophone Algerian novel of this period is a faithful imitation of the Colonial French novel, both in style and content. This tendency is enhanced mainly by the co-authored novels in which, most frequently, the French writer taught his native disciple how to write in the form of the novel and gave him his subject-matter. Furthermore, the native writers used the medium of novel writing as a means to prove their assimilation of both the French language and civilization. Therefore one can rightly call the Francophone Algerian novel of this era, a novel of imitation and assimilation.

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43. R. Randau [Arnaud] and A. Fikri [Hadj Hamou], *Les Compagnons du jardin* (Paris: Donat-Montchrestien, 1933).

44. A. Jacqueline, *La Littérature maghrebine de langue française,* p.28.

45. René Pottier and Saad Ben Ali, *La Tente noire, roman saharien,* (Paris: Les Oeuvres Représentatives, 1933).

46. Slimane Ben Ibrahim and Etienne Dinet, *Khadra, La danseuse des Ouled Nail* (Paris: Piazza, 1910).

47. Ali Belhadj, *Souvenirs d'enfance d'un Blédard,* 1941. Although it was given the *Grand Prix Littéraire de l'Algérie,* this novel was never published.

CHAPTER TWO

The Period of Imitation and Assimilation

Introduction

The Francophone Algerian novel of this period poses several problems for recent researchers, foremost among which is the identification of these novels and the date of birth of the first Algerian novel in general. Whereas some criticsl consider Hadj Hamou's *Zohra, la femme du mineur*[2], the first "Algerian" novel, while acknowledging Randau's efforts in stimulating and helping the author to produce such a novel, some anthologies and bibliographies[3] show that the first novel by a native Algerian is Seddik Ben El-Outa's *Fils de grande tente*[4], which appeared in 1908. Two years later came Slimane Ben Ibrahim's *Khadra, la danseuse des Ouled Nail,* and in 1920 appeared Caid Ben Cherif's *Ahmed Ben Mostapha Goumier.*[5] *Zohra, la femme du mineur* came after these three novels. Nevertheless, some other critics[6] reject these novels and consider the year 1950, with the publication of Mouloud Feraoun's *Le Fils du pauvre*[7], the birthdate of the Francophone Algerian novel. In fact, those who denied the existence of any Algerian

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1. Such as Dejeux, *La Littérature algérienne contemporaine,* and Aida Bamieh, *The development of the novel and short story in modern Algerian literature.*

2. Abdelkader Hadj Hamou, *Zohra, la femme du mineur* (Paris: Eds du Monde Moderne, 1925).

3. J. Dejeux, *Dictionnaire des auteurs maghrébins de langue française* (Paris: Karthala, 1984).

4. Seddik Ben El-Outa, *Fils de grande tente* (Paris: 011endorf, 1908).

5. Caid Ben Cherif, *Ahmed Ben Mostapha Goumier* (Paris: Payot, 1920).

6. Such as S.C. Whittick, *The colonial situation in Algeria,* and R. Benouameur, *Littérature Algérienne.*

7. Mouloud Feraoun, *Le Fils du pauvre* (Paris: Le Puy, Cahiers du Nouvel Humanisme, 1950).

novel prior to 1950 seem to be ashamed of these first novels and consider their writers, a group of assimilated Algerians who did not share in the sufferings of their people, and described Algerian society with a colonial eye.

Nevertheless, whether or not those pioneering writers were assimilated into French culture, and whether or not their novels were committed to the cause of Algerian nationalism, one has to bear in mind the cultural climate in which these novels emerged. Any literary work should be judged within the framework of its time. Therefore, one cannot expect the novel of the 1920s to be as politically committed as the novel of the 1950s, it would seem equally abnormal to classify the novel of the 1950s as the first step in the development of the Algerian novel. Disregarding the novels published prior to 1950, forced several critics to accuse the novel of the 1950s of having "defied the categories and predictable progression of traditional literary history, emerging ... fully adult" [8]. Another critic to describe this novel as emerging as fully adult, is M'hammed cAlawi who claimed, "Adulte dès sa naissance, elle saute à pieds joints dans l'après guerre de la littérature et de la langue de la métropole, se faisant du jour au lendemain l'héritière des acquis impressionants du long itinéraire de la littérature française"[9]. Therefore, to avoid such mistakes, one should not ignore these early novels, but consider them as the legitimate ancestor of the 1950s novels.

Although a very eminent researcher on North African literature in general and Francophone Algerian literature in particular, Jean Dejeux, who has spent over thirty years researching its origins and development,[10] bases his interest mainly on

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8. J. Roumani, "A Literature of One's Own: A Survey of Literary History and Criticism of Maghrebian Francophone Literature", *L'Esprit Créateur,* Vol.XXVI, no.1, (Spring 1986), p.12.

9. J. Roumani, "A Literature of One's Own ...", p.12.

10. In his preface to Dejeux's *Le Sentiment religieux dans la littérature maghrébine de langue française,* **Med** Arkoun wrote, "Jean Dejeux ... n'a cessé, depuis près de trente ans, de suivre partout et pour ainsi dire au jour le jour la production littéraire au Maghreb". p.5.

the novels written from 1945 onwards, while those written prior to that date have always been a matter of bibliographical notes or quick surveys with him. Well aware of this fact, Dejeux admits that this early literature is one that, "On passe d'habitude sous silence, qu'on occulte par ignorance ou pour d'autres raisons".[11] In a special number of *Dissertationes Orientales,* Svetovar Pantucek suggests that these early novels were the ultimate result of "l'occupation coloniale.du pays à une époque ou se heurtaient les opinions locales et françaises"[12]. Although he has been very objective with these early novels, Pantucek has been too brief and his work differs little from Dejeux's bibliographical approach, except in a few cases when he gives brief plot summaries of particular novels, such as *Zohra, la femme du mineur.* Rachid Benouameur, an Algerian whose PhD hesis dealt with Algerian literature, claims that the novels which appeared prior to 1950 do not deserve his attention:

> On en trouva un Abdelkader Hadj Hamou .. Un autre, Sifi, fut même honoré du fameux prix. Le génie indigène donnait toute la mesure de sa degradation . plutôt que de s'attarder sur des noms obscures ou des oeuvres oubliées, interrogeons-nous sur la nature et le degré de l'influence Bertrandienne.[13]

Accordingly, researching a literary field where the writers' names are *obscures* and the works *oubliées* could be a misleading process. Benouameur is more interested to show the influence of Louis Bertrand on the emerging novel of the 1950s.

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11. J. Dejeux, *Situation de la littérature maghrebine,* p.31.

12. S. Pantucek, "La Littérature algérienne moderne", *Dissertationes Orientales,* (Prague Academia, 1962), p.90.

13. R. Benouameur, *Littérature algérienne,. p.72.*

Aida A. Bamieh, in her thesis, "The development of the novel and short story in modern Algerian literature", states: "In the year 1925 appeared the first novel written by an Algerian proper, Hadj Harriou"[14] Purely because of the kind of ideology these writers have transmitted, Bamieh preferred to avoid studying those novels in which they described their society in European terms. Still, to put forward such opinions, the researcher should provide full examples and analysis before judging these writers' views on their society. Moreover, to study the development of the novel in modern Algerian literature, one has to take into consideration the very first attempts at novel-writing in the country. The ideology of their novels does not matter as much as its artistic value.

In a more recent PhD thesis on Francophone Algerian literature, S.C. Whittick denies, in the first instance, the availability of any novel writing in French by Algerian writers prior to 1950, "Despite more than a century of colonisation and fifty years of an Algerian-based French literature, there had been little or no evidence of indigenous Algerians expressing themselves in writing in the French medium"[15]. She then tries to give some reasons for this, such as the paucity of educational opportunities, and the absence of normal social contact between the Europeans and the natives. Thus, for her, the starting point for the Algerian novel is 1950. Nevertheless, she states that before 1950 'a kind' of novel existed, it is what she qualifies as the "odd 'indigenous' novel":

> Up until this point [1950], there had occasionally appeared the odd 'indigenous' novel, but these, in the main, had been the laborious linguistic efforts of Algerian *'évolués'* whose primary concern had been to write good grammatical French, insecure both in their grasp of the colonizer's language and their position vis à vis colonial society. These

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14 . A. Bamieh, *The Development of the Novel and Short Story in Modern Algerian Literature,* p.84.

15. S.C. Whittick, *The Colonial Situation in Algeria*, p.120.

> early Algerian authors clearly felt compelled to adopt the Frenchman's' viewpoint along with his native tongue.[16]

Thus, Whittick preferred to suppress these 'odd' novels from her work and put 1950 as the date of birth of the Algerian novel.

Jacqueline Arnauld, in fourteen years' research on Francophone Maghrebian literature,[17] gives no status to these early novels; all she says is that a group of Muslim writers wrote novels such as *Zohra, la femme du mineur* and *Ahmed Ben Mostapha Goumier*, insisting on the fact that these writers are the "assimilated" Algerians who collaborated with their contemporary French-Algerian writers such as Randau.

So much for the writers who recognized this literature but have preferred not to study it. Another group of researchers have completely ignored this literature. Among them are Claude Yves Meade'[8], Charles Bonn[19] Guy Daninos[20], Albert Memmi[21], Abdelkabir Khatibi[22], and Ghani Merad[23]. However, Claude Yves Meade's thesis deserves more attention for the ambiguity as well as the paradox it contains. Meade based his research on the period 1899-1955, which shows that the

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16. Ibid., p.127.

17. Jacqueline Arnauld, "Recherches sur la littérature maghrebine de langue française, le cas de Kateb Yacine", 2 Tomes (Thèse de Doctorat d'état, Université de Paris III, 1978).

18. Claude Yves Meade, "Le Roman réaliste nord-africain de langue française (1899-1955)" (PhD dissertation, University of California, 1957).

19. Charles Bonn, *La Littérature algérienne de langue française et ses lectures* (Ottawa: Eds Naaman, 1974).

20. Guy Daninos, *Les Nouvelles tendances du roman algérien de langue française* (Sherbrooke: Naaman, 1983).

21. A. Memmi, *Anthologie des écrivains maghrebins d'expression française.*

22. A. Khatibi, *Le Roman maghrebin* (Paris: Maspéro, 1968).

23. Ghani Merad, *La Littérature algérienne d'expression française.*

period during which the first Algerian novels were published is included. It would be quite useful, however, to know what Meade means by *"Roman Nord-Africain"*. He says:

> Par roman nord-africain, il faudra entendre dans cette étude les ouvrages composés par des français qui ont longtemps séjourné au Maghreb et qui l'ont pris comme matière romanesque; par des néo-français qui ont passé leurs années de formation en Afrique du Nord et qui écrivent sur n' importe quel sujet; enfin par des autochtones qui sortis des écoles françaises, se servent de la langue de l'occupant pour apporter des témoignages personnels sur leur monde africain [24].

However, throughout his thesis Meade suggests that the first novel by a native Algerian is Feraoun's *Le Fils du pauvre*. Consequently, he sets up an ambiguity in his thesis. Firstly he gives 1899-1955 as the period for his study, but he deliberately ignores forty-one years of novel writing by native Algerians (1908-1949), without giving any explanation. Secondly, the searcher states that by North-African novels he means any novel by "des autochtones qui sortis des écoles françaises, se servent de la langue de l'occupant pour apporter des témoignages personnels sur leur monde africain"[25]. This would in fact cover the Algerian writers whose novels were published prior to 1950!

In conclusion, these early novels have been largely forgotten either by obliteration, or by considering them an "odd" literature which does not deserve attention. In most cases, they have been ignored simply because of the socio-political affiliation of their writers, whose servility towards the French administration earned them the description of traitors and "domestic animals of colonialism".[26]

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24. Meade, *Le Roman réaliste nord-africain,* p.11.

25. Ibid.

26. D.M. Gallup, *The French Image of Algeria*, p.430.

Nevertheless, through the medium of fiction, these writers transmitted a certain system of thought typical of their time. To the dates and facts of history, their literature adds human feelings and actions.

1. Chukri Khodja, *El-Euldj, captif des barbaresques*[27]

El-Euldj reflects a historical situation as seen by an assimilated Algerian who believed France entered Algeria only to free the Algerians from the tyranny of the Turkish Corsairs. This is an example of the attitudes held by the educated Algerian élite at a time when this élite fought for integration and equality with the French. France has fascinated these 'chosen few' who were certain that Algeria has only known peace and justice since the coming of the French. "Nous voyons bien ... que l' Algérie à pris un essor prodigieux depuis le jour ou les trois couleurs ont flotté sur la blanche Alger"[28] states Dr Bendjelloun. Such a perception was, without doubt, the fruit of education at French schools where, side by side, Algerian and French pupils were taught the history of their great nation, France, and their prestigious ancestors, *les Gaulois.* Jean Amrouche, whose literary work clearly demonstrates how well he assimilated French culture, may represent better than any one else the plight of North Africans caught between the civilization of their African ancestors and Lhat of the colonizing world of France. He claims:

> Nos ancêtres, les Gaulois! Hé oui, on nous les a donnés pour ancêtres et nous avons cru que nous étions leurs fils légitimes, dés lors que nous devenions les fils de la langue française ... D'ou notre ardeur à apprendre cette patrie, notre excessive admiration pour ses grands hommes, notre

27. Chukri Khodja, *El-Euldj, captif des barbaresques* (Arras: I.N.S.A.P., 1923).

28. Preface to ***La*** *Vérité sur le malaise algérien* (Bône: Imprimerie Rapide, 1935).

> amour doctrinaire et maladroit, notre exigeant amour de néophyte pour une auguste mythologie.[29]

Therefore, the history that Amrouche[30], and his compatriots learnt at school was not their own. However, although they knew their ancestors were not the *Gaulois,* they preferred them to their 'uncivilized' ancestors whose past was not as glorious as that of the *Gaulois.* It appears that these first French-educated Algerians were made to feel ashamed of their own history, as Amrouche states:

> ... si, le livre parlait tout de même de nos ancêtres. Cela commençait à Poitiers. Le premier fait historique nous touchant, nous l'avons reçu à la figure sous les regards ironiques des écoliers européens, comme une justification anticipée de nos abaissements passés, présents et à venir. Nos ancêtres ne sont entrés dans l'histoire que pour s'offrir à la massue de Charles Martel ... Ils reparaîtront pour opposer une absurde résistance aux croisés bardés d' armures et de nobles ideaux, et prouver leur méchanceté en capturant le bon Saint-Louis. Les siècles perdent à nouveau la trace de notre existence. Alors le méchant Dey Hussein frappe un Consul de France de son évantail. Pour venger l'affront et purger la Méditerranée des pirates barbaresques, la France arrive dans ce pays misérable ... Ou Arabes et Kabyles se dévoraient periodiquement ... Nous éprouvions un mélange de honte et d'irritation, de désarroi et de colère ...[31]

It is on this concept that C. Khodja built his novel, *El-Euldj,* depicting Algeria before the arrival of the French as a haven of piracy, where disorder, violence and anarchy reigned. The novel is set in the sixteenth century. It is a

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29. Joseph Leriche, "Les algériens parmi nous", *Cahiers Nord-Africains,* no. special, 70 (Decembre 1958), p.215.

30. Jean Amrouche (1906-1962). For more details, see Alf Andrew Heggoy, *Historical Dictionary of Algeria* (London: The Scarecrow Press, 1981), pp.63-64. See also, Jean Dejeux, *Dictionnaire des auteurs maghrébins de langue française,Jp.30-32.* And, A. Jacqueline, *La Littérature maghrébine de langue française,* pp.129-159.

31. Joseph Leriche, "Les algériens parmi nous", p.215.

historical novel, in which the author mixes a group of historical figures and fictional characters. The background for these characters is Algiers, with its ports, its great mosque Ketchaoua, its Casbah with its narrow alleys, as well as its forests and beaches. All these elements take on a fictitious dimension, so that the mosques of Algiers after the prayers, "Crachent des barbares"[32] The Casbah, newly built by cArroudj, is the royal palace, and the port of Algiers is the place where the captives and stolen goods are delivered. Khaireddine Barbarossa who, historically, entered Algiers with his brother cArroudj to help the natives against the Spanish conquerors, became the head of the country, which was then a part of the Ottoman empire. In *El-Euldj,* Khaireddine is described as "le terrible Barberousse"[33] who had lost his popularity. He is the head of the Corsairs, who attacked every fleet passing through the Mediterranean Sea, and turned its sailors into slaves. He is also a blood-thirsty man, "J'ai soif de sang. Depuis quinze jours le pal chôme"[34] Moreover, he is so jealous that he would murder anyone who challenged his popularity, such as Catchadiablo, one of the most intelligent and powerful Corsairs, who captured a whole fleet full of slaves and goods, the latter sufficient to save Algiers from a probable famine. However, his drunkenness led to shameless behaviour which resulted in the death sentence[35]. In fact, Catchadiablo serves merely as a device to show Khaireddine's cruelty.

After this event, the novel turns to the story of Bernard Ledieux, through whom Khodja shows all the suffering and humiliation borne by the Corsairs' captives, as well as depicting the city dwellers, for example, Ismail Hadji. In fact, the dramatic story of Ledieux is based on these two characters, whom the author

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32. *EI-Euldj,* p.6.

33. Ibid., p.5.

34. Ibid., p.17.

35. For more details, see Appendix one.

describes in two different ways. Ismail Hadji is presented as an idiot who mixed Italian, French, Arabic and Turkish words to form what he believed was good Fre nch. He told his slave Ledieux, "... toi viens avique moi, Lou Pacha mi donni toi trabaja li moro; à la casa de moi donar El Khoubz et Fazir al-Vissalle trabaja bono emchi, ya mansis"[36]. Ledieux, who could not make sense of this mixture, answered derisively, treating his master of an imbecile[37]. Ledieux did not accept his fate, and could not comprehend the tyranny of the Turkish corsairs, in whom he saw a great injustice towards humanity. He told his friend Cuisinier, "Quelles moeurs, mon ami, quelle mentalité!. Ne crois-tu pas qu'un jour viendra ou cette façon de se jouer de l' Europe et de faire le jeu de massacre avec des existences humaines prendra fin?"[38]. Ledieux's life story is full of contradictions. Despite his insults and contempt for the barbarian Turks, he married his master's daughter, became a Muslim and above all worked as a *surveillant des captifs,* causing his rejection by his European compatriots, and to be considered by the Muslims as *Euldj*, "Les Turcs ne t' épargneront pas, de temps à autre, leurs sarcasmes. On t'appelra *Euldj* pour marquer ton origine, pour la stigmatiser même"[39], said Cuisinier who, although he suffered more than Ledieux, preferred to die rather than to convert to Islam. He is a good speaker, using very emotive words to show Ledieux's cruelty in 'assassinating' his previous religion. Cuisinier hated the Muslims as the cause of his misery, and hoped the Christians would take their revenge, "se venger sur ceux qui nous aurons roulés vingt fois dans le linceul de la mort sans nous tuer"[40] As for Ledieux, he continued to live as a Muslim and sired a son, Youssef, in whom French and

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36. *EI-Euldj,* p.27.

37. Ibid.

38. Ibid., p.33.

39. *EI-Euldj,* p.58.

40. Ibid., p.63.

Algerian blood were mingled. Youssef, however, tended to be more Algerian than F rench, and became a dynamic teacher of divinity, knowing his father's language, but considering it to be a foreign language. Furthermore, as soon as his father left Islam, he rejected him. He faced up to him with great courage and told him that he was no more than a weak person who "ne sut ni conserver sa première religion, en respectant sa nationalité, ni se contenter de sa deuxième confession"[41]. Unable to face the situation, Ledieux fell into a delirium and died.

Unlike his father, Youssef was a good Muslim, and aware of his mixed origins, he simultaneously learned the French language, read French history, and loved his religion, and became a teacher of divinity, "J'ai idée que je puis avoir du sang français dans les veines et alimenter mon cerveau de la nourriture généreuse que contient l'Islam"[42]. Accordingly, Youssef is very advanced for his time; his ideas and behaviour are, in fact, those of the author, who forgot his novel's time sequence. However, if one considers this case as an unconscious revelation of his own opinions, in some other cases Khodja seemed consciously to ignore his novel's period, namely when he comments on *Djemaa* Ketchaoua, the great Turkish mosque which at the author's time was turned into a cathedral, "Djemaa Ketchaoua est la superbe mosquée dont le minaret, plaqué d'émail, dressait sa silhouette géante vers le ciel limpide et bleu. C'est elle qui fut transformée plus tard en cathédrale"[43]. The only female character in *EI-Euldj* is Zineb, Ledieux's wife, whom Khodja portrays as a very young, attractive girl, "Une jeune fille de quatorze ans et demi ... Elle est superbe de beauté rayonnante et de splendéur fulgurante"[44]. However, this beautiful

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41. Ibid., p.132.

42. *EI-Euldj,* p.134.

43. Ibid., p.110

44. Ibid., p.72.

woman is only present as a good mother and an ideal housewife.[45]

These are the main characters in the novel. They are introduced to the reader through their acts or comments, rather than by the narrator, and reveal themselves through dialogue. The narrator's role is limited to describing the places, situating the events and sometimes, giving his opinion about certain characters. Thus, the narrative does not occupy long passages, and the dialogue flows naturally between characters, free of narrative intervention. However, on some occasions, history triumphs over fiction, and Khodja is more concerned to give information than to car ry on with his story. This results in a didactic tone. In addition to his great reliance on history, Khodja quotes from other books. To describe the mosque, Ketchaoua, he quotes from *Feuillets d'El Djezair*, as follows, "A quelques pas de là (du mihrab) s' élève le maître-autel, dont la richesse est en harmonie avec la beauté de ce temple. Il offre plusieurs espèces de marbres précieux"[46]. The way in which *ElEuldj* ends is worthy of some discussion. Ledieux, deeply disappointed by Youssef, becomes insane, saying strange things, yet the most important aspect of his long speech is its symbolism and emotion, which make one look compassionately on him as a miserable victim of history. This evaluation would lead one to hate this version of history and become ashamed of one's past, and ancestors; this is, in fact, the hypothesis on which Khodja has built the plot of the novel. Ledieux had turned to Islam because of the humiliation and torture he suffered as a Christian captive, and his desire to live as a free man. However, the cruelty of the Muslims led to his later constant remorse over his betrayal of Christianity. His case shows not only that Islam and the Moslems did not know how to welcome new converts, but also the great gap which separated Ledieux, the educated and civilized person, from the barbarian people whose lives were built on anarchy, violence and fear.

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45. Zineb as a good mother, p.77, as a good housewife, pp.94-97 and pp.101-104.

46. *El-Euldj*, p.111.

2. Saad Ben Ali and René Pottier, *La Tente noire*[47]

During the second half of the nineteenth century, a great number of French writers and artists landed in Algeria to satisfy their appetite for the exotic. They were attracted by this beautiful country which had been conquered on the other side of the Mediterranean Sea, which they described as "Terre de sable et de soleil"[48]. They escaped the complicated and boring metropolitan life, and launched themselves into a country where life was easier and more "natural".

In his novel, *La Tente noire,* Saad ben Ali takes us closer to this situation by writing about a French woman, Jeanne d'Albanès, who escaped Paris to start an adventure in the Algerian desert,

> **Elle resta assise, revivant, comme en un rêve, les heures de sa vie Européenne, *mais* elle avait fui cette existence si peu en rapport avec son caractère fantasque; d'autre part, son besoin d'indépendance et de liberté, son goût de l'aventure puisé dans la lecture ... l'attiraient vers les arabes[49].**

As it was fashionable at that time to ride a camel or a pure-blooded horse, and to be dressed as a Bedouin, Jeanne is first portrayed on "un cheval arabe à la robe blanche"[50], dressed in a Saharan costume, "la tête recouverte de son chèche, son voile de mousseline, et le corps enveloppé dans son bournous"[51]. Just like

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47. S. Ben Ali and R. Pottier, *La tente noire, roman saharien* (Paris: les oeuvres representatives, 1933).

48. Guy de Maupassant, *Au Soleil,* pp.5-6.

***49.* *La Tente noire,* p.11.**

***50.* *La Tente noire,* p.9.**

51. Ibid., pp.10-11.

Maupassant and other French writers of this era, Jeanne came to Algeria because she was attracted by its natural beauty:

> Elle était venue en Algérie, attirée par le souvenir d'images dont la seule vue avait suffi pour transformer sa jeunesse de recluse dans un chateau moyenâgeux, en une fantasmagorie colorée et sans cesse renouvelée. Elle voulait goûter à la vie sous la tente, et demander l'hospitalité à une tribu nomades?

However, during her long trip from north to south Algeria, she failed to discover "les pages colorées de Delacroix, les élans lyriques de Fromentin"[53]. Yet she still felt the desire to live as a Bedouin, which might lead her to discover the hidden beauty of the desert. Therefore, she carried on her adventure until she met a Saharan *caid,* who married her and made her a Saharan princess, dressed in the most beautiful costumes, living in the biggest and most comfortable tent, and travelling from one tribe to another like the nomads. It is worth noting that the way the author has portrayed Jeanne, reminds the reader of Isabelle Eberhardt, who, like Jeanne, left France to start a long adventure in the Algerian desert. Eberhardt converted to Islam and married an Algerian officer with whom she lived in South Algeria, in a city called El-Oued, and travelled across the desert to both Tunisia and Morocco. Unlike most of her contemporary French writers, such as Lecoq and Randau, Isabelle Eberhardt is known for her humanitarian position towards the natives, whom she liked and befriended. In her books, Eberhardt praised Islam and expressed her wish to die a Muslim, buried in the same grave together with her husband, in one of El-Oued's cemeteries which she described as *poétique:*

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52. Ibid., p.12.

53. Ibid.

> Je suis née musulmane et n'ai jamais changé de religion ... Jamais plus, si Dieu le permet, je ne remettrai le pied sur la terre d'exil [d'Europe]. Je veux que l'on nous mette un jour tous deux [son mari et elle] enveloppés d'un linceul blanc des musulmans, au fond du même trou, dans le sable blanc, dans l'un des poétiques cimitières d'El-Oued ...[sa]

Nevertheless, unlike Isabelle Eberhardt, Jeanne could not find the extraordinary beauty of the desert which had led her to leave Paris. She concluded that beauty only existed in Delacroix's paintings and the writings of the Romantics.

Through Jeanne's story, the author tried to contradict the extraordinary image of Algeria created by French writers. Nevertheless, he gave the reader another false impression as follows: the novel's second protagonist, Slimane, is actually a Frenchman disguised as an Algerian, for no reason except to benefit from the advantages the French government offered to the natives! Furthermore, Slimane proves that it was possible for a French person to become Algerian and vice-versa. This is clearly shown through Jeanne's statement, "De même que vous êtes devenu arabe sans cesser d'être français, l'heure viendra, j'en suis certaine, où tous les arabes deviendront français de coeur"[55]. Although both Slimane and Jeanne converted to Islam and adopted tribal customs, this was only on the surface, as they both remained French and Christian in their thoughts and manners. Thus it is evident that the author wrote his novel to promote a certain ideology. He was still very concerned with pleasing a foreign readership, and providing them with the most attractive images and romantic descriptions of both views and actions. One example is the sequence where Slimane discovered Jeanne in the middle of the desert, and like in the fairy tale, Slimane took his princess to his tribe, whose members began a great ceremony of welcome:

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54. Aimé Dupuy, *L'Algérie dans les Lettres d'expression française* (Paris: Eds. Universitaires, 1956), p.85.

55. *La Tente noire,* p.248.

> A leur lueur vacillante, le village, perché comme un nid d' aigle au sommet d'un monticule d'argile, prit l'allure d'un château féodale en ruines. De toutes les terrasses, des you-yous éclatèrent stridents ... Jeanne put se croire une princesse d'un autre âge, revenant à son manoir aprés une longue absence et saluée par l'allégresse de ses sujets ,,.56,

Thus Jeanne started her new life as a Saharan princess, surrounded by servants who bowed to her and obeyed all her orders. It must be emphasized that most of the characters in this novel are only created to serve Slimane and Jeanne. Moreover, the description of this *Caid* offering hospitality to an unknown French woman, welcomed by the Saharan people, raising no objection to their *Caid* sitting at dinner together with Jeanne, translating the songs they were listening to for her, while the tribespeople were sitting in the shadow, is actually surprising:

> Étendue sur le tapis, la tête soutenue par des coussins, très hauts les étoiles formaient le plus merveilleux des décors. Le Ghennaye adoucissait les reflexions de sa voix que scandaient de légers battements des mains, quelques assistants perdus dans un coin d'ombre.[57]

Indeed, the natives are always kept in the background, *dans un coin d'ombre,* never expressing their feelings, while Sliman and Jeanne can act with total freedom. Here is another false image, created mainly to seduce those European lovers of the exotic, who at the time when *La Tente noire,* was written were the author's only readership. However, one should not forget that this novel was co-authored by S. ben Ali and a French writer named R. Pottier. Moreover, one notices the author's focus on the two main protagonists, Jeanne and Slimane, whom he portrayed as good, kind and

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56. La Tente noire, p.24.

57. Ibid., p.29.

intelligent. This image is opposed to that of the indigenous population, whom the author described as naïve, ignorant, jealous, and sometimes wicked and unpleasant. In fact, these characters of whom the majority are women, are only present to reflect these characteristics. *Lalla* Sacya, one of the richest tribeswomen, detested Jeanne and did her best to irritate her. This unpleasant woman has no feelings and does not converse with any other characters apart from Jeanne. Her sole function is to cause mental distress to Jeanne.

Aicha, a pretty but naive Saharan girl, was fascinated by Jeanne, whom she made her closest friend on her first meeting with her. She is a good example of the native's weakness towards the French:

> Aicha pris la main de Nedjma et la baisa de ses lèvres fraîches, en disant naivement: comme tu sens bon, je crois respirer le parfum d'une rose éclose au soleil dans la palmeraie! 58

As for Jeanne, her friendship with Aicha was based on nothing but personal interest. For her, Aicha was a suitable person to tell her about Saharan habits and customs, to bring her closer to Saharan life and thus, realize her exotic dreams, "être aimée sous un ciel exotique par un chef à la vie aventureuse de nomade"[59]. Indeed, Aicha was the first person to whom she revealed her love for Slimane, and it was thanks to her that she married him, "Nedjma à épousé Slimane, et elle l'a épousé grâce à son amie Aicha"[60]. The author depicts the role of women in Saharan society, namely in marriage affairs, "... Les entremetteuses sont les auxiliaires presque

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58. *La Tente noire,* p.50.

59. Ibid., p.39.

60. *La Tent noire,* p.58.

obligatoires de tous les mariages arabes"[61]. Furthermore, Aicha was the girl who, knowing nothing about love, would marry any man her father would choose for her. Thus, she was the person whom Jeanne, unable to have children, chose as a wife for her husband. However,'Aicha becomes obstinate, refusing to follow Jeanne's advice, and rejecting her at the same time as all her tribeswomen. Therefore, Aicha symbolizes the native woman in her relationship with the foreign woman, who symbolizes in turn the French invaders. Jeanne came to the tribe to realize a specific ambition, which had no link with the local people. It was the beauty of nature, and life in a beautiful oasis, which attracted her. In this phase she was called Jeanne d' Albanès, and the reaction of the local people towards her was kept hidden from the reader.

In the second phase, she became Nedjma, and people who knew about her origins were very interested in seeing and talking to her.

In the third and last phase, Nedjma was violently rejected by the people of the tribe, who tried on several occasions to kill her. Thus, she once more became Jeanne d' Albanès, returning to her country of origin to forge her adventure in the Sahara. Consequently, the way the author has depicted this Frenchwoman can be considered an early, but unintentional, prediction of the future of the French in Algeria. At the time the novel was written, the French were the 'good', who came to civilize the Algerians. This corresponds to Jeanne's second phase.

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61. Ibid., p.76.

3. **Said Guennoun,** *La Voix des monts*[62]

The tendency to show one's people as uncivilized, and one's history as embarrassing, is also expressed by Said Guennoun who claimed that his people, the Berbers, were still at a primitive stage, with a way of life unchanged since they were created, "Quoi qu'il en soit, c'est parmi les moutons et les chèvres qu'ils poussent devant eux de pâturage en pâturage tout comme au début de leur histoire, que se déroule leur existence"[63]. Guennoun's aim is not merely to write a work of fiction, but also to study the Berbers from the psychological point of view. He describes his novel as a "modeste contribution à l'étude de la psychologie bèrbère"M; at the same time he planned an ethnological report about the Berbers:

> Quant à l'organisation sociale, elle a conservé intacte la forme patriarcale qu'on paraît lui avoir toujours connue. L' unité est la tribu, c'est-à-dire l'ensemble des rameaux directs ou collatéraux d'une seule famille, dont les membres portent le même nom, celui de l'ancêtre commun, souche de la famille, et vivent sur le même pied d'égalité complète ...65

To this end, Guennoun explains at length how the Berbers live, elect their leaders and organize their wars. This is presented as a report to the French invaders to help them subdue the Berber tribes of the Dir region. He depicts the cruelty of the continuous wars between the French and the Berbers as a device to encourage both sides to start a new page in their history and forget their enmity, "Puisse le but

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62. Said Guennoun, *La Voix des monts, moeurs de guerre berbères* (Rabat: Omnia, 1934).

63. Ibid., p.13.

64. Ibid., pp.11-12.

65. *La Voix des monts,* Ibid., p.14.

poursuivi qui est, comme toujours, de souligner les raisons pour lesquelles Français et indigènes peuvent et doivent fraterniser".[66] For this purpose, Guennoun, in playing the role of intermediary between his people and his "civilizer", bases his novel on his own experience. In his preface to this novel, L. Benazet states,

> Le commandant Said Guennoun était qualifié pour parler de ce qu'il connaît si bien.
> Le tableau évocateur d'une pacification difficile, que nous présente le commandant Guennoun, n'est pas une fiction. C'est l'histoire même d'une oeuvre complexe et généreuse dont le développement doit se poursuivre sous le signe de la collaboration.[67]

The setting of *La Voix des monts* is the Atlas mountains, more precisely the Dir region of Morocco. The people are divided into three groups; the French invaders, represented by *Capitaine* Alain, the subdued natives who live in peace and prosperity, and finally, the unsubdued natives who live in constant turmoil. *Capitaine* Alain is portrayed as a good-hearted, kind and generous man, who has tried his utmost to convince the natives that the best way to relieve their misery is to abandon their fight against him, and forget their enmity towards him. He is a pacifist who has supported those who live under his protection. Although his army is very powerful, he prefers peace to war, showing the natives that his aim was not to kill them, but to civilize them.

Those people who had been subdued lived around the French fortress, under Alain's protection. Their best men worked for him. They are the only people in the group to act and speak, the rest of them exist in silence. Their representatives are a team of traitors who give guidance to Alain in conquering the unsubdued natives. These are the official traitors, known to everyone as such. However, a secret group

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66. Ibid., pp.11-12.

67. Ibid., pp.9-10.

of infiltrators lived in the mountains among the unconquered people. These are the most dangerous, for they participate in their meetings and transmit information about their plans and decisions to Alain at the appropriate time

The last group is the Berber resistance (i.e. that part of the Berbers who resisted the French) whose main aim is to get rid of the invaders. They are brave men, who see the French presence in their land as an insult and an eternal shame. However, their war plans were constantly sabotaged before they could be carried out. It must be emphasized that the Berbers are only presented as a miserable group, and described as such. Guennoun makes no attempt to study any individual characters within this group.

Guennoun shows, however, a great knowledge of each of these different groups as he wrote. He gives a detailed classification of these people, naming the different tribes and their leaders, and giving their historical background. In doing so, the author proves that his novel is very much a result of his profession as a *chef de bureau de renseignement des affaires indigènes,* which explains his concern with giving precise information. Describing the meeting of the different Berber tribes, he writes:

> Et l'on continuait d'arriver de toutes parts, en chapelets bruyants et pittoresques que l'on identifiait de loin sur les crêtes. Il y avait là les Ichkern, les Ait Ishaq, les Ait Ihand ... les Ait Yahia de Tounfit, les Ait Sokhman d'Arbala. On y voyait jusqu'à les Ait Haddidou d'au delà l'Ayachi ou disait-on, les Imazighènes n'avaient encore à craindre que Dieu.[68]

He is also concerned with precise numbers, for example, "Il faut offrir 400 douros au maximum, dont 300 pour les auteurs de la prise et 100 pour la Djemàa"[69].

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68. *La Voix des monts,* p.28.

69. Ibid., p.75.

Moreover, one notices the author's tendency to address a particular group of people in a didactic tone. On other occasions, he refers the reader to some of his works as follows, "Comme nous l'avons déja vu dans *La Montagne bèrbère*[70], La Djemàa cumule toutes les attributions administratives, judiciaires, politiques et militaires"[71]. Therefore, Guennoun is much less concerned with the technical side of his novel, than with covering a certain number of events which he and his colleagues experienced during their mission to bring the Berbers to heel. The author's view is that the Berbers who were not willing to abandon their fight against the French were in the wrong, for any victory against the French would only be followed by tribal wars like those fought during the centuries before the coming of the French whose aim was to stop these tribal wars and bring the natives out of their tribal stage to that of nationhood. For all this, Guennoun shows his deep gratitude for the French whose efforts to civilize his people are tremendous:

> On ne vous remerciera jamais assez de ce que vous faites pour la pacification du pays. Majestueux et audacieux, vous ne reculez devant aucun danger ni aucune peine. Dès que les armes sont déposées ... vous y accourez au mépris des ' accidents' encore possibles et vous y apportez la vie et l' appel des grandes villes.[72]

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70. *La Montagne bèrbère* (Paris: Eds. du Comité de l'Afrique française, 1929).

71. *La Voix des monts,* p.177.

72. *La Voix des monts,* p.222.

4. Aissa Zehar, *Hind à l'âme pure ou histoire d'une mère*[73], and, Djamila Débêche, *Leila, jeune fille d'Algérie.*[74]

In the first decades of this century, the Algerian nationalist movement was at the stage of pleading for equality with the French; assimilation and naturalization. At that time French-educated Algerians were fascinated by the ideas of the French " civilizing mission". The position of those intellectuals who stood between their people and their "civilizers", trying to bring the two groups together was indeed a difficult one: "Tossed into a society divided into two rigidly antagonistic sides, they were torn between the loyalty towards their native milieu and the attraction of ideas which they had adopted through their education"[75]. As shown by Cherif Benhabilès in his book *l'Algérie française vue par un indigène*[76], they cherished the name of *Français*. Ferhat Abbas, whose intellectual evolution faithfully reflected the experience of French-educated Algerians, is the best example of this phenomenon. Ferhat's relationship with his French teachers had a great effect on his ideology. He was full of praise for those teachers who inspired him with love for French culture, " Nos livres ... représentaient la France comme le symbole de la liberté. A l'école on oubliait les blessures de la rue et la misère des douars pour chevaucher avec les révolutionnaires français et les soldats de l'an II les grandes routes de l'histoire"[77].

These French-educated Algerians wanted to satisfy both their people and their civilizers. They claimed that although they loved French culture and

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73. Aissa Zehar, *Hind* d l'*âme pure ou histoire d'une mère* (Alger: Baconnier, 1942).

74. Débêche Djamila, *Leila, jeune fille d'Algérie* (Alger: Charras, 1947).

75. D.M. Gallup, *The French Image of Algeria*, p.467.

76. Cherif Benhabilès, l'*Algérie française vue par un indigène* (Alger: Fontana, 1914).

77. Ageron, *Histoire de l'Algérie contemporaine*, T.2, p.541.

civilization, they were also attached to their parents' religion. Thus their assimilation was only partial. Abbas in whom the Algerian culture espoused the French reveals:

> It is French thought which is at the basis of the principles of our moral life. To the empiricism of the patrimony left to us by parents and tradition, the spirit of the French writers has added an explanation, a scientific, rational one if I may say so. And yet, Islam has remained our pure faith, the belief which gives a meaning to life, our spiritual homeland 7[8]

This situation is clearly reflected through two main novels, namely *Hind* and *Leila.*

In *Hind,* Aissa Zehar recounts the difficulties faced by those of his compatriots who wanted to send their children to French schools. Seif-Eddine, a *taleb* renowned for his erudition in the traditional sciences, feared losing his good reputation among his people after sending his two sons, Nacih and Yazid, to a French school. However, Seif-Eddine's aim was to prove the fallacy of the common belief that, "envoyer ses enfants à l'école française était les exposer au pire des dangers: la perte de la foi Islamique et l'adoption soit de l'athéisme, soit d'une autre religion qui ne repose sur rien de divin"[79]. To prove further the fallacy of such a belief, the author made his protagonist Nacih devote a similar interest to his Islamic studies and his French education. In fact, Nacih had not only learnt the whole *Qur'an,* but also explained most of its *suras,* "Comme il savait de mémoire les soixantes chapitres du Coran, chaque décès le trouvait dans la maison du défunt récitant sans se lasser les chapitres du livre saint avec des talebs beaucoup plus âgés que lui et dont il provoquait l'admiration"[80]. Just like Seif-Eddine, Leila's father, Sheikh Ibrahim, is a man renowned for putting his Muslim faith into practice, as well

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78. D.M. Gallup, *The French Image of Algeria,* p.488.

79. *Hind,* p.71.

80. Ibid., pp.76-77.

as for his generosity towards the poor of his tribe. Having himself suffered from illiteracy, he decided to educate his children, both boys and girls. Thus, he sent Leila to Algiers to achieve further education, an event which shocked his tribesmen who commented on their head's decision as "un événement sans précédent"[81]. Nevertheless, Sheikh Ibrahim wanted to give his tribesmen an example to follow, proving that just as he wanted his daughter to have an education, he also wanted her to keep her Islamic principles and beliefs, and believed that after her studies she would come back to her tribe:

> Leila resterait attachée aux principes de la religion Islamique; à chaque événement religieux, elle ne manquerait pas de se rendre chez une de ses cousines habitant la Casbah. De son côté, lui-même viendrait la voir tous les mois et la fillette passerait ses vacances aux OuledDjellal; elle y retournerait définitivement à la fin de ses études[82].

Therefore, both parents wanted their children to keep their cultural values and master their own language before attending the French school. It was then commonly thought that someone who had assimilated both languages was the one who had got the most out of their education. Thus Leila would become, "La jeune fille parfaite ... aussi érudite en langue française qu'en langue arabe"[83]. As for Nacih, it was only after mastering the French language that he became a genuinely learned man, who loved the French language as much as he loved that of his ancestors; "Il aimait cette langue autant que celle de ses aieux"[84]. Nacih made great efforts to deepen his knowledge of this 'beautiful' language, "Ce qu'il cherchait, c'était saisir la clarté de

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81. *Leila*, p.18.

82. Ibid., p.19.

83. Ibid.

84. *Hind*, p.94.

la pensée française, le mot propre pour exprimer une idée"[85], a feature which the traditional Arabic language lacks, with its tendency to use rhymed prose and imprecision of expression. To conclude, Nacih and Leila were equally interested in the two languages. They did not reject their own language in order to learn French. In the same way, their emancipation was influenced by both French and Arabic characters. Leila is influenced by several French writers such as Isabelle Eberhardt, Magali Boisnard and others. She also believed Algerian women should follow the example of their Egyptian and Turkish sisters in emancipation. She claimed, "Les Turques et les Egyptiennes sont d'excellentes Musulmanes et sont réputées dans le monde pour leur qualités d'esprit, d'initiative et d'organisation, it est grand temps pour la Musulmane algérienne de se mêler à la societé contemporaine"[86].

Therefore, Nacih's and Leila's assimilation through their French education is only partial: they both love their own language and culture, but are also attracted by the French language and culture, as eager students ready to assimilate as much knowledge as they can about this great and fascinating *"patrie"*. Both Nacih and Leila showed a desire to contribute to the rapprochement of their compatriots and the French community living in Algeria, whether by marriage, or friendship and good neighbourliness. However, their parents opposed this tendency, insisting that the Fre nch were not Muslims, and that, therefore they could never be friends. This is the point which starts the conflict between French-educated Algerians and their parents. Their education had changed them so much that they were disgusted by their parents' way of life and thought. Thus, they not only started to reject their people's customs but also wanted to look like their "civilizers". Back in her tribe, Leila refuses to live like her parents and feels as if she is reverting to primitivism. On the other hand, Leila's parents cannot understand their daughter's behaviour and think that she has

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85. *Hind,* p.95.

86. *Leila,* p.162.

become insane. They wanted her to forget about her education and behave, as well as look, like them. Sheikh Ali tells his niece Leila:

> Je me chargerai d'assurer ton avenir. Suivant nos traditions, je te donnerai le mari qui fera ton bonheur ... ton cousin Hamza, mon fils très cher, est l'époux qui te convient ... Le voile et le Haik remplaceront les costumes que tu portais à Alger et il faudra t'habituer à vivre comme tes parents. Nous n'avons jamais approuvé cette éducation et cette instruction que le Sheikh Ibrahim a voulu te faire donner ... il était écrit que tu reviendrais et que tu vivrais comme nous. Il va te falloir oublier toutes tes habitudes, pour reprendre les nôtres celles de tes ancêtres[87].

Unable to accept such a fate, Leila decides to return to the city and live with the French family of a friend, who adopt her. Before she reaches the city, Leila gets rid of her traditional dress, which she describes as "Peu pratique pour le voyage"[88], and dressed in a European suit. This symbolism is also found in *Hind.* Like Leila, Nacih found his *jallabah* very inconvenient; "Il ne songeait plus à revétir désormais les amples vétements indigènes qu'il avait portés jusqu'à son entrée au régiment. Il jugeait en effet, qu'il avait besoin de vêtements commodes pour travailler et que l' habit indigène ne répondait nullement à cela".[89] In fact, both Leila and Nacih found a contradiction between their education and the wearing of *vêtements indigènes.* This is frankly expressed in *Leila,* "Une dame d'un âge respectable les accueillît. Elle fut surprise de voir cette jeune fille habillée à la mode orientale et s'exprimant en langue française d'une façon parfaite"[90]. Thus, to be emancipated and educated like the French, also meant adopting their appearance; Nacih wanted to

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87. *Leila,* pp.29-30.

88. Ibid., p.121.

89. *Hind,* p.98.

90. *Leila,* p.121.

prove to his European friends that "un jeune musulman savait se libérer des idées et des coutumes lorsqu'elles lui paraissaient surannées"[91]. Therefore, to him, his previous dress was part of what he called "coutumes surannées". In fact, the chief reason for looking like the French was to prove that they were good pupils in assimilating their teachers' lessons. Accordingly, the writers of this era trusted France and had a great hope in her "civilizing mission", .rejected through the ignor ance of their people. Although the French-educated Algerians tried very hard to convince their people that the French aim was only to offer them a better life and to bring them out of their ignorance, their efforts were doomed to failure, which also meant the failure of their role as intermediaries between the "civilizer" and the " uncivilized". Consequently, they turned on their people and accused them of being lazy, fanatical, depraved and incapable of civilization. By doing so, the French-educated Algerians, whether they meant it or not, rejected their people and expressed their desire to become like the French, whom they imitated in clothes and manners. They saw the French as kind and good, a people with whom they could forge real friendships.

In the army, Nacih found a kindness he had never known before. He respected his French officers who, in return, appreciated his devotion and loyalty,

> Jusque parmi les officiers, en particulier le capitaine de sa compagnie, et le bon père de famille qu'était son chef de bataillon, Nacih avait de bons amis; lui les estimait et les respectait comme des chefs justes et bienveillants et eux appréciaient, comme ils en étaient dignes, sa mannière de servir, son dévouement et sa loyauté[92].

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91. *Hind,* pp.98-99.

92. *Hind,* p.98.

It was in the army that Nacih learned to organize his life, **to** appreciate the value of time as well as his good manners. He was deeply affected by the goodwill of his officers, which made him love this "civilized" and great France, "le bon esprit de ces excellents officiers laissa au coeur du jeune soldat Nacih un souvenir ineffaçable qui allait, tout le reste de sa vie; l'incliner franchement vers cette France intellectuelle dont il aimait déja la langue"[93].

France is also loved and praised by Leila who rejected her family and adopted M. Lormont and his wife as her new "parents". However, it is in the *Institut Marie,* where Leila finds a genuine sisterhood and amity among the French students who, despite the colour of her skin, always consider her as one of them. It is also among her adoptive family that Leila finds peace, love and comprehension.

Through the pages of *Leila,* the author draws a comparison between the two families; that of Leila and that of Madeleine Lormont. Whereas, the relations among the members of the Arabic family were built on hypocrisy, jealousy and hate, the members of the French family loved and respected each other, and expressed their feelings and opinions with freedom; and whereas the gap between men and women is very wide in the first family, the members of the second, men as well as women, worked together for one common objective which is the progress of the country. All this is drawn in such a way as to idealize the French example and reject the Arabic one.

Out of gratitude to her "civilizers", Leila wants to give something in return for all the kindness and knowledge she received. She begs M. Lormont to let her work in his factory so that she can give something in return for all that she has received, as well as to contribute to the evolution of her country, which was mainly the work of the French settlers who made great efforts in modernizing it:

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93. Ibid., p.98.

> L'industriel André Lormont, était très connu et aimé dans la région. A une époque ou l'on ne parlait pas encore d' industrialisation, il avait eu le mérite et le courage de créer une nouvelle branche d'activité et d'affirmer sa confiance en l'avenir économique de l'Algérie. Sous son impulsion et celles d'autres colons, peu à peu, dans la région de Bougie ... des activités industrielles diverses naquirent. Elles se développèrent. Toutes témoignaient d'un désir de progressisme et, si les difficultés se dressèrent sur la route de ses promoteurs de l'activité nationale algérienne, par la suite des résultats magnifiques devaient encourager leurs initiatives[94].

Just like Leila, Nacih also wanted to thank those who had given him the benefit of their civilization. For him, French education was the main way to break the barrier separating the two communities; the natives and the French. The illiteracy and ignorance of his people were the main causes of the misunderstanding between them and the French, whom they wrongly considered their enemies. Thus Nacih decided to devote great efforts to breaking that barrier through his profession as a teacher in the French medium. In a faraway, isolated village Nacih started his job with a great enthusiasm, faced with indifference from the villagers towards a French education which they did not trust,

> Sur quarante-deux inscrits au registre d'appel, une dizaine à peine venaient chaque jour et, évidemment, les résultats s'en ressentaient ... les parents des élèves ne montraient aucun goût pour cet enseignement d'une langue étrangère qui ferait peut-être de leurs fils des mécréants[95].

Sad and disappointed, Nacih left his teaching vocation and tried other ways to serve, as well as to "civilize" his people.

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94. *Leila,* p.42.

95. *Hind,* p.84.

After examining these earlier novels we can conclude that these pioneering writers reflected the ideas of the Young Algerians who, in gratitude to their " civilizers", and fascinated by the principles of the French "civilizing mission", wanted their people to forget their enmity towards the French. Therefore, all these novels recounted the benefits of French civilization and' the benevolence of the French whose motive was a humanitarian one, bringing civilization for the benefit of the ignorant natives. Therefore, these writers tried to bring the two sides together, informing their people about of benefits of civilization, and convincing the French that they should not give up their humanitarian mission, to which the 'ignorant' natives would sooner or later respond. This situation put these writers in a difficult position; their people called them 'renegades' and 'traitors' for all their efforts to serve them. For them, this 'civilization' came in the wake of a conquest: thus they considered it to be a symbol of Christian aggression against Islam, as well as a means used by the French to destroy their cultural identity. This situation is most obvious with Nacih whose enthusiasm and goodwill in helping to educate his people is faced with an indifference which makes him unhappy. Nevertheless, if Nacih's reaction to his people's rejection of French education is sadness, in *La Voix des monts* it is suggested that the French should use force when peaceful means prove fruitless. In this process, all these writers emphasize the image of natives as barbarians, ignorant and uncivilized, opposed to that of the French as civilized, humanitarian and intelligent. Thus each of these novels conveys its author's gratitude to French civilization. In *E1-Euldj,* the author conveys his thanks to the French, for ending the dark era of Algeria under Ottoman rule. In *La Tente noire,* Slimane's son, like most of the young people in the tribe, decides to join the French army to fight against her enemies during the First World War[96]. In *La Voix des monts,* Guennoun's gratitude to the French is mainly because their mission was to end tribal wars

96. *La Tente noire,* pp.235-238.

between the natives, and to bring them civilization. He praises their courage and faith in their humanitarian mission in which he decided to participate. In *Hind*, Nacih also shows great gratitude to the French. He depicts everything he learnt at school as a great help to him. Bewitched by his civilizers, he decided to learn their language, adopt their habits and dress like them. In brief, he wanted to be one of them, and participate in their peaceful existence, which the author opposes to the natives' unhappy existence, which suffocates the individual and hinders his development, largely by its outdated and cruel customs. Education is, for Nacih, the means of bringing his people out of their primitive condition. However, suspicious of anything brought over by the French, the natives rejected this education, which was actually meant for their own benefit. Like Nacih, Leila is very concerned with the malaise of her people. She asks the French to help improve their deplorable social conditions. In a letter to a French minister she describes this malaise, and suggests solutions to help the elderly, and prevent native children from becoming 'boot-blacks' as was then common[97]. Like most of her contemporaries, the author of *Leila* believed in the French 'civilizing mission' as well as in the benevolence of the French rulers in building a new and better Algeria:

> Quels que soient les hommes qui gouverneront la France, ils n'ignorent plus le malaise Algérien. D'éminents conférenciers, de talentieux journalistes, de brillants orateurs l'ont dénoncé. Ces hommes savent que le mal est grand, mais que le remède est à portée de la main ... Le moment est venu de construire une nouvelle cité algérienne.[98]

These are the main themes discussed in these earlier novels, which were used as a vehicle to express their authors' loyalty to the French, as well as their faith in the

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97. *Leila,* pp.158-186.

98. Ibid., p.170.

French civilizing mission. As such, like the Arabic novels in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, these novels were deliberately didactic. Their authors, each in his own way, used the novel as a vehicle to convey his own thoughts on various topics. In *El-Euldj*, the author feels obliged to tell the reader about the background of the Ketchoua mosque, and quote from other resources, as if he were writing an essay on the mosque. In *La Tente noire*, the author describes at length the jewellery made in south Algeria, naming each piece of Jeanne's jewellery, and telling the reader of its value. He does the same when he describes Saharan costumes. In *La Voix des monts* the author makes it clear to his reader that his aim is not merely to write a novel, but also to write an ethnological and psychological report of the Berbers. In fact, the whole work is a lengthy report on the French conquest of the Rif region of Morocco, an event the author had himself witnessed as a military officer. The same didacticism can be traced in *Hind* and *Leila*, whose respective authors informed the French about their people, and their people about the great deeds the French were doing for their benefit. Therefore, both writers used their novels as an opportunity to praise the French for their goodwill towards the natives and to describe their mission in bringing their civilization. Thus these writers, could not hide their position vis-à-vis the political situation, showing their desire to become French citizens with maintenance of their personal status, and hoping that their people would imitate them.

In fact, these early novels are themselves a faithful imitation of the Colonial novel, both in form and in content. However, this resulted in controversy, for it is understandable for a European writer to describe the native population in an 'exotic' manner, but rather ironic for the native writer to do so himself. In fact, the native writer found himself in a complex situation, for he wanted to imitate the French without being French, and as such he detached himself from his people whom he described in a similar manner to the European writer.

From the technical point of view, these novels can be qualified as the first, immature attempts at novel writing by Algerians. However, they stand as valuable documents which reflect the situation of the first Francophone intelligentsia. Finally, it is worth noting that the perception expressed through these novels is that of the nationalist leaders. Ferhat Abbas is a prime example; in his book *Le jeune Algérien* he considered Algeria as a French province, and pleaded for his people to be integrated into the French nation. In fact, Abbas's evolution as a political leader is faithfully reflected through the evolution of the Francophone Algerian novel, from its emergence in the first three decades of this century until the independence of Algeria in 1962.

CHAPTER THREE

A Transitional Period

Intrduction

In his book *Le Jeune Algérien,* Ferhat Abbas happily considered Algeria a F rench province and pleaded for the Algerian's right in French citizenship with maintenance of their personal status. Thus with the advent of the Second World War, he called for Algerian mobilization to defend their nation 'France' against her enemies. Nevertheless, being subject to racial descrimination by the French officers and soldiers who considered him nothing but an *indigène* while he was fighting for *their* independence, made Abbas review his opinion about "humanitarian" France. This resulted in his *Manifest du Peuple Algérien,* in which he pleaded for the abolition of colonization, and political autonomy for Algeria. Naturally, this manifesto was rejected by the French authorities who refused even to consider its demands. Abbas's position was accelerated by some other events, such as the landing of the Allied forces in Algeria, and in particular the events of May 1945, when thousands of Algerians were killed on the streets of Sétif, Guelma and Kharata, for nothing but for celebrating the end of the war, which, for them, also meant their independence as a reward for fighting under the French , as promised by the French authorities. During these events, Algerian settlers showed the extent to which they despised the natives, drawing up an eternal barrier between the two sides, the colonists and the colonized. Moreover, they demanded the execution of Ferhat Abbas, who was arrested and indicted for jeopardizing French sovereignty. This event resulted in a radical change of Abbas' position; he, who had considered Algeria a French province, now rejected assimilation as a lie, and emerged as the leader of the nationalists, who believed that France could not become the political nation of the Algerians, because she could not detach herself from her colonialist perspective. In his book *La Nuit Coloniale,* Abbas looks back to the stage when he

pleaded for his people's integration in the French nation, and called it "l'âge des illusions". In fact, the political events which followed the Second World War not only affected political leaders, but also, Algerian intellectuals in general. Therefore, a change in the subject matter of the literature was inevitable.

1. Aly El-Hammamy, *Idris*[2]

In his novel Idris, El-Hammamy attempts to depict the development of his protagonist from childhood to death, an evolution which can be compared to that of Maghrebian nationalism.

The novel is set amongst a Berber tribe called Tiziran in the north of Morocco. The passion and precision with which the author describes this region betrays both his nationalism, and his position as a teacher of geography and history. This becomes more evident when he tells the reader about Idris's ancestors, "Des âges immémoriaux à la conquête musulmane, le Djebel, sauf en quelques endroits de sa côte, était resté strictement fermé à toute intrusion étrangère. Aucune population conquérante n'avait osé l'aborder"[3]. Therefore, his character is a pure Berber, whose characteristics differ little from those of Jugurtha or Hannibal. Accordingly, the author attempts to search for Idris's identity by insisting on different stages of history, and their effect on the character of the Berbers, who resisted the invasion of different civilizations and cultures. He explains with great precision the fact that all

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1. F. Abbas, *Guerre et Révolution d'Algérie, vol.1; La Nuit Coloniale(Paris:* Julliard, 1962), p.114.

2. Aly (sic) El-Hammamy, *Idris* (Alger: SNED, 1976). First published in Cairo: Imp. Sociale, 1948. The novel was actually written between December 1941 and July 1942.

. 3. Ibid., p.23.

such invasions conformed to local ideas instead of imposing their own on the Berbers. In this way he explains the success of Islam in North Africa:

> • Ne l'oublions pas, c'est l'Islam seul qui triompha en fin de compte. Les berbères eux mêmes y mirent la main ... Dynasties et chefs arabes' suivirent le même chemin. Commes les carthaginois, ils s'africanisèrent. Et sans rien perdre des qualités intrinsèques à leur race ils devinrent de fermes et purs maghrébins.[4]

El-Hammamy puts emphasis on the different events which had an impact on the evolution of his protagonist such as, "Les clefs des villes Andalouses, les faucilles d' Alcazar et la mort un peu dramatique du Sultan Abd-El-Malek: Voilà les thèmes favoris qui bercèrent l'enfance d'Idris"[5]

The second chapter of this novel speaks of Idris's childhood and education, emphasizing his primitive life, the poor educational system, and various social problems such as the use of drugs and tobacco. One notices the author's great reliance on description; he gives a full picture of the *m'sid,*[6] relating its different functions, and describing the building from both outside and inside:

> Le m'sid était une vieille maisonnette de pierre couverte de chaume ... La bâtisse était généralement noire de suie ... Sur le parterre, de vieilles nattes de palme salies, graisseuses, rongées et criblées de trous et de déchirures. Une élévation en terre battue barrait la partie inférieure du pan du mur du m'sid: c'était la doukkana sur laquelle s'asseyait le maître.?

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4. Ibid., pp.33-34.

5. *Idris,* p.42.

6. *M'sid,* primary school, where children are taught the *Qur'an.*

7. *Idris,* pp.47-48.

Having fully described Idris's background, the author takes us outside the Tiziran on a long journey with Hadj Allal,who is on his fourth pilgrimage around the Islamic world. Hadj Allal is intelligent, gifted and from his travels he has learned a great deal about the world, a knowledge he transmits to Idris whose only world was a closed tribe. El-Hammamy describes Hadj Allal's journey from his tribe through Tunisia, Tri poli and Egypt to Arabia. En route, he spends a week in Alexandria with the Maghreb immigrants, among whom he could understand the real significance of the word *Patrie,*

> Là où les liens tissés par la religion s'étaient distendus au point de se rompre complétement, les rapports nés d'un même lieu de naissance accusaient une force devenue à la longue indestructible grâce à l'effet catalyseur déterminé par la puissanse du sol et l'hérédité du sangs.[8]

The author concludes that it is when abroad that one comes to know and love one's nation better. By" nation", the author means the Maghreb: Algeria, Morocco and Tunisia, all three linked by the great Atlas mountains;

> L'Atlas se drapait dans ses velours de nacre et d'émeraude. Les villes du Maghreb, poudreuses et enflammées, tourbillonnaient dans les souvenirs comme des ondées d' allégresse. L'Oûm-er-Rebi, La Koutoubiah, les plaines du Haouz, Fez et les eaux hantées du Sebou, les bosquets de Tlemcen, les Jardins de la Mitidja et les cimes du Djurdjura, Alger-la-blanche, Tunis-la-verte, les palmeraies du sud, les Oasis de la Pentapole: toute la freque nationale.[9]

Having spent a week among the homesick Maghrebians, Hadj Allal goes to Cairo, and is dazzled by its charm. One notices the author's detailed description of Cairo, a

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8. *Idris,* p.73.

9. Ibid., p.75.

technique he also used with Alexandria.[10] In the Cairo of the period after Djamal-Eddine al-Afghani's and Muhammad Abdu's death, Hadj Allal meets Al-Azhar's Maghrebian students , attending some classes with them ;he learns only that all forms of superstition should be banished from the mind as they are at the basis of the Muslim's ignorance. The idea was to return to the first sources of Islam, a doctrine called the *Al-Salafiyya:*

> Le salafisme c'est dans la philosophie musulmane, le retour aux sources primitives de l'Islamisme en faisant abstraction des adjonctions rituelles et sectaires qui ont enserré la croyance, le dogme initial, le Credo-base, d'une couche de doctrines compliquées et superfétatoires. Rejetant tout, faisant table rase des novations postérieures à l'époque mahométane et rachidite, il n'admet que le Coran.[11]

Hadj Allah is a *Salafite* who believes only in God and his prophet. He suffers terribly from the condition of the Islamic world in which people have lost confidence in God and in themselves, and adore saints as intermediaries between themselves and their Creator.

A few days after the death of Mustapha Kamal Atatürk, Hadj Allal leaves Cairo for Mecca, passing through Jedda. If everything in Cairo was flourishing, this was not the case in Jedda where everything reflected decay, "ville grise, sans eau, aride, nue et tristement monotone"i[2]. Furthermore, whereas the people in Cairo are described as the leaders of the Arab *Nandah*, those in Jedda are described as a gang of thieves who use the pilgrimage to rob the pilgrims[13].

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10. After a pilgrimage to Mecca, the author's parents settled in Alexandria in 1922. In 1946, El-Hammamy was living in Cairo.

11. *Idris,* P.93.

12. Ibid., p.95.

13. Ibid., pp.95-96.

During his pilgrimage Hadj Allal met an Egyptian who became his closest companion, with whom he discussed different issues concerning the Islamic world. On several occasions Hadj Allal's companion gives long *cours d'histoire abrégée'*[14] in which he criticizes and discusses various matters, mainly the dangers of superstition.'S He tells Hadj Allal about the decline of the Islamic countries, its causes and its solutions. He concludes, true Islamic faith is shown in the love for one's native country, "La vraie foi consiste à s'occuper avant tout de son propre pays. Consacrer le plus clair de sa pensée et de ses ressources au relèvement de sa patrie menacée d'abrutissement et de servage"[16].

The pilgrimage over, the two characters separate. The Egyptian student who only appears to transmit Azhar's thought in full to Hadj Allal disappears from the novel, and Hadj Allal continues his journey. From Mecca he joins Al-Madina and takes the train for Damascus. The next point in Hadj Allal's itinerary is Istanbul, which he found exceptionally attractive. A group of exiled Maghrebians greets him, conducting him to his host, a Kabyle man from Tizi-Ouzou, called Hadj Bachir. Allal spent more than a month in Istanbul visiting different areas, which all reflected to him, peace and beauty. However, he has a feeling that an event of great import ance is about to happen. Indeed, before reaching his tribe, Hadj Allal is informed of the Turkish revolution. He is overwhelmed by optimism; he believes great changes, for the benefit of the people, are happening in the East:

> C'est que l'esprit de l'orient venait de changer et que, dorénavant, chaque pays, revenant aux lois éternelles qu'a toujours dictées le sol et le sang, et à l'enseignement de son

14. This course goes from p.107 to p.122.

15. Ibid., p.108.

16. Ibid., p.123.

histoire, devait lui-même veiller à son propre salut.[17]

Back in Tiziran, Hadj Allal transmits his knowledge to Idris; he wants him to fight for his country, by new means, unknown to his forefathers, "Celui de l'école et de l' entreprise économique"[18]. However, when the Tiziran tribe fights the Spanish invasion, Idris, side by side with his father, his teacher Si Abd Es-Salam and some of his friends, joins the rebellion. The author describes the horrors of war, which brought suffering for humans and animals alike[19]. He condemns European colonialism by means of the innocent soldiers whom he describes as victims of their colonialist regime; "Ces soldats, tous des recrues, étaient de pauvres paysans que la conscription militaire avait arrachés du foyer familial pour les jeter vers ces terres d'Afrique où beaucoup d'entre eux finissaient, un beau jour, le front troué d'une balle ou le flanc d'un coup de poignard"[20]. As for Idris, he is horrified particularly when he shoots a Spanish officer, who could have killed Hadj Allal a few minutes earlier. However, the most repulsive moments for him were those after the battle when both sides tended their wounded, and counted their dead and missing.

After being taught by his father, and following his experience in the battle to repel the invasion; Idris is sent to Tetouan, where the educational system was no better than Si Abd Es-Salam's. The next stage in Idris's development as a character, is his stay in Fez [sic] where he attended the Quaraouiyine [sic] University. The author seizes this opportunity to give the reader the historical background of both Fez and the Quaraouiyine, the harsh living conditions of, and the education gained by, the students in their university residences. For this purpose, he classifies the

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17. *Idris*, pp.144-145.

18. Ibid., p.152.

19. Ibid., p.161.

20. Ibid., p.160.

teachers, into two distinct groups, the first of which he names *type de professeur fossile*[21]. The second group is represented by the leaders of *la regénéréscence intellectuelle et sociale du Maghreb* who opposed the first group, "Face aux Roudanis, aux Qoris, aux Ben Zaidouns, échos mourants d'une ère révolue, cette pléiade s'était formée et developpée grâce à un travail acharné et à ses méthodes de concevoir et d'aborder les choses"[22]. The leaders of this group are Si Tachfin, who is under the influence of the *Nanda* in the Arab East, and Si El-Ouennoughi who studied in France. It was among these teachers, and their students, that nationalism was born as a secret organization .The members of this group also left their classrooms to join the popular insurrection led by cAbd El-Kerim El-Khattabi in 1924.

Although the reader is informed that "Idris fut un des activistes les plus entreprenants du groupe"[23], the latter is not seen participating in any of these political activities. One may conclude that Idris as an individual character is not as important for the author, whose main interest lies in depicting the evolution of the nationalist movement through Idris's own development.

Idris has grown up with a love for his native country, which has been invaded and which is a constant sourse of sorrow to him. Like the Algerian nationalist leaders prior to the 1954 revolution, Idris kept asking himself, "Que fallait-il faire ? Lutte armée ou lutte par l'éducation?"[24]. He is misled by the colonial reality; the French " civilizing mission" is a mere lie, great injustice reigns in his society; the wealthy *colons* are happy and free while his people suffer the perpetual anguish of the colonized.

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21. *Idris,* pp.210-219.

22. Ibid., pp.234-235.

23. *Idris,* p.234.

24. Ibid., p.289.

Later on in the novel, Idris is arrested along with his teacher and friends. He takes pride in the revolt of his people, which the French, together with the Spanish, can defeat with great difficulties.[3] Thus Idris and his friends concluded, "La lutte armée est terminée ... La véritable lutte qui demeure et qui sollicite avant tout notre attention et nos forces, c'est dans l'éducation et le travail qu'il va falloir l'affronter. II nous faut créer une conscience nationale qui soit digne de notre volonté de vivre"[26]. For this purpose they create a Nationalist party, and publish an Arabic paper, and a F rench paper, in which they expressed their claims, and publicized their case abroad. They decide to negotiate some reforms with the local authorities, whose only reply was to declare martial law in Fez. Consequently, the Moroccan activists start a general strike, which is followed by widespread arrests. Among the arrested is Si Ben Zeidoun, who had died in the previous rebellion, "Mort tué d'une balle au front au nord d'Ain Médiouna"[27]. One wonders whether the author forgot the death of this character, or intentionally recreated Si Ben Zeidoun to take part in the strike as a symbol of the undying struggle against colonial occupation. Si Ben Zeidoun is arrested, questioned and severely tortured. Yet, he stands as a hero and challenges the authorities. He turns into a symbol representing the whole population of North Africa; "Si Ben Zeidoun reçevait son baptème de la cravache. Ni plus, ni moins ... le peuple nord-africain, c'est Si Ben Zeidoun"[28]. Someone else to undergo torture is Idris's friend *Le Slaoui,* who escapes from jail and joins the strikers, who decide to go on a peaceful march. The colonialists respond with violence; "à droite et a gauche, des morts, des mourants, des blessés"[29]. Idris knows nothing can stop the

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25. Ibid., p.290.
26. Ibid., p.306.
27. Ibid., p.302.
28. Ibid., p.370.
29. Ibid., p.382.

angry demonstrators although he vainly tries to pacify along with Si Tachfin.

The reader is caught up in a world of death and terror, which he only leaves after Idris's mortal injury[30]. In his tutor's house, Idris lay on a carpet next to *Le Slaoui*, whose injury was less serious. He knew he was dying and regretted that he would no longer serve his country, "J'eusse bien voulu vivre encore, le pays a besoin de nous"[31], he concludes, "Nous devons passer à travers ce chemin semé d'ornières pour que le pays vive et pour qu'un jour ceux qui viendront après pourront trouver devant eux une terre libre"[32].

The author draws our attention to the example of Idris who fought for his tribe, and died in the streets of Fez; he sees this as proof of the transition from tribalism to nationhood. Two months after Idris's death, *Le Noiraud* and some other Djeblis who took part in the demonstration, left Fez to join the Tiziran which appeared to them to be as great as ever. The author emphasizes on the characters' attachment to their land, for which they constantly battle and die, and which they lovingly plough and tend. These characters are, like the author, fully committed to the national cause. In fact, appart from being genuine nationalists, these characters have no hobbies or any personal feelings. They are always preoccupied with the battle for their independence. However, at the end of the novel, having failed to obtain any positive results from the Fez massacre, which reminds the reader of the May 1945 events in Algeria, Si Tachfin and his students cannot think of any other solution: like the Algerian nationalist movement after 1945, they came to a standstill. However, an optimistic view of the future is given by the author, because he believed that his people would sooner or later, unite and achieve independence.

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30. Ibid., p.384.

31. Ibid., p.390

32. Ibid., p.388.

Having endeavoured to paint a wide picture of the Islamic world at a crucial point in its history, as well as to teach his people the true version of their history, to awaken them to rise against the colonialists, El-Hammamy could not avoid overloading his novel with didacticism. His aim was not to write a novel for the sake of creating a literary work, but to use his novel as a means of transmitting his ideas, telling the world that the previous North-African novels[33] which focused on beautiful oases and pretty Saharan princesses are not representative of the region where people struggle and die, and where poverty and injustice streched to their utmost limits. Therefore, El-Hammamy's aim was to contradict the images and concepts of previous North African writers. In comparing *Idris* and *EI-Euldj,* the first aspect one notices is the two writers' different ways of looking at their history. Whereas in *ElEuldj* the Ottoman era is described as one of slavery, hunger and constant fear, and Kheireddine Barbarossa as a barbarian, and a tyrannical ruler, in *Idris,* the Ottomans came to help the Algerians against the European invasion. Thanks to their courage, they defeated the invaders, and at the request of the Algerian people, the Ottomans stayed in the country to protect its shores from any foreign invasion, as well as to return the country to its position of strength and leadership in the Mediterranean area:

> Oran, Alger, Tunis subirent des descentes accompagnées d' essais d'occupation qui n'eurent heureusement aucune suite. Au centre et à l'Est du Maghreb, l'Islam fut sauvé à temps par l'intervention opportune des Ottomans. Barberousse expulsa les Espagnols de Tlemcen et d'Alger. Les corsaires, plus tard, firent le reste.[34]

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33. The author qualifies his novel as *Roman nord-african.*

34. *Idris,* p.40.

Thus the Ottoman era is depicted not as one of slavery and misery, as shown in *El-Euldj,* but as an era of security and military strength, until the French came, not to fr ee the natives from Turkish tyranny but to impose their own tyranny. Evidence for this was the long armed resistance led by the Algerian *Emir* Abd El-Kader against the French invasion, "Abd El-Kader prenait en mains la direction de la lutte après la fuite du Dey"[35]. After Abd El-Kader, several other heroes emerged, and faced the F rench with great courage. Among these one can mention El-Mokrani:

> A l'appel du Bachagha Mokrani, la Kabylie, le vieux bastion de l'irrédentisme nord-africain, se souleva, de Cherchell à Akbou. Les cimes du Djurdjura retentirent de nouveau au cri de guerre célèbre comme au temps de Firmus et de Jugurtha ...
> Mokrani tomba sur le champ de bataille avec beaucoup d' autres de ses compagnons tandis-que le Cheikh El-Haddad, un pieux des vieilles épopées maghrebines, était relégé avec ses deux fils et un nombre considérable d'insurgés aux Antipodes où l'exil et le climat eurent finalement raison d' eux.[36]

This goes to prove that the Algerians had never welcomed the French, but constantly went into battle against them until they finally got evicted them. As for the Ottomans however, there were no popular insurrections against them at any time, which proves that they entered and ruled the country with the consent of the natives. Moreover, Aly El-Hammamy demonstrates that Algeria did not take "un essor prodigieux depuis le jour où les trois couleurs ont flotté sur la blanche Alger"[37], but entered upon an era of humiliation and injustice, which provoked several national uprisings. Consequently, the author places more emphasis on evoking the names of the Maghrebian heroes who emerged against the French. The purpose of this was to

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35. Ibid., p.262.

36. Ibid., pp.269-270.

37. R. Benouameur, *Littérature algérienne,* p.125.

demonstrate to Chukri Khodja, the author of *El-Euldj,* and all those who were made to feel shame at their history, "Nous éprouvions un mélange de honte et d'irritation"[38], that their ancestors were as glorious as the *Gaulois.* Moreover, he corrects the version of history passed on by French teachers to their native pupils. These teachers said that the French entered Algeria to exact revenge on the *méchant* Dey Hussein, who struck the French consul with his fly-whisk, and on the same occasion freed the Algerians from the tyranny of the Turkish Corsairs. Through the character, Si El-Ouennoughi, who teaches his fellow countrymen the correct version of history, El-Hammamy casts doubt on the whole legend; "Il serait tout de même fort curieux de savoir si les joues du Consul Deval reçurent reellement ce fameux coup de chasse-mouches que la légende a depuis légué à l'histoire"[39]. Thus Aly ElHammamy proves to Chukri Khodja that his concept of his country's past is one received at a French school, designed to teach native pupils to be embarassed of their past, and to favour *Gaulois* history, "l'enseignement officiel ... devait tout d'abord apprendre à dire aux petits nord -africains ânonnant les manuels mis à la portée de leurs mains: 'les Gaulois, nos ancêtres! "'[40]. In this fashion El-Hammamy rejects French historiography, a fact which can be considered as part of the rejection of the colonial self-image. Similarly, it is worth mentioning that like El-Hammamy, the Algerian historians Abd al-Rahman al-Jilali and Al-Mubarak Al-Mili in their books *Tarikh al-Jaza'ir al-am,* and *Tarikh al-Jaza'ir fi al-qadim wa al-hadith,* respectively attempted to write the local version of Algerian history, rejecting the French version. Like these two historians, Aly El-Hammamy took it upon himself to relate the genuine version of the history of the *Maghreb*[41] from the beginning until the present,

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38. Joseph Leriche, "Les algériens parmi nous", p.125.

39. *Idris,* p.260.

40. Ibid., p.238.

41. *Maghreb:* by Maghreb, the author means the three Maghrebian countries: Morocco, Algeria and Tunisia all in in one.

depicting all the victories of the past, from the time of the Berbers via the coming of the Arabs to the twentieth century, mentioning such names as Jugurtha, Massinissa, H annibal, Tariq Ibn Ziyad, Ibn Toumart, who all proved their courage and heroism to the world. In the process, Aly El-Hammamy takes the reader back to the time of Numidia the great and her illustrious hero Hannibal:

> Fou d'enthusiasme, le bèrbère naguère rebelle à tout genre de servitude, élevait Hannibal à la hauteur d'un Dieu et lui consacrait des *tumuli* qui jalonnèrent l'Afrique du Nord d' un bout à l'autre. On apprit ainsi la prise de Sagonte et la fuite de Paul-Emile sous les coups des lanciers numides. Les Pyrénées fureut emportées et la Gaule Méridionale envahie sans coup férir .,,[42]

This demonstrates that the Maghreb had at times been a powerful nation. El-Hammamy bases his opinion on Ibn Khaldoun's theory about the history of states: each state evolves in a circular movement from strength to weakness, and from weakness to a reborn strength, and so on. In this process, he shows that Europe was gaining strength at a time when the Maghreb was entering a period of decline, particularly after "le désastre de l'Islam en Espagne"[43]. It is worth noting that the author analyses the different causes of this decline very carefully, through different stages up to the nineteenth century, when the three Maghrebian countries fell under colonial domination; he insists that there have been no nations as tyrannical and barbaric as the European colonizers, who had never ceased dreaming of an *Africa Christiana,* a concept which spearheaded European colonialism in Africa, from the times of the Berbers up to the twentieth century, with Louis Bertrand's attempts to prove that North Africa was only a realm lost to the old Latin Empire and which had

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42. *Idris,* p.25.

43. Ibid., p.40.

been restored to a new one. This was the phenomenon of the Christianization of Nort h-Africa. With regard to this, the author denounces the shortcomings of the defective efforts of "Les Confesseurs des rois Catholiques"[44], among whom he cites the famous Cardinal Lavigerie:

> Dès le IVe siècle, Donat, évêque schismatique de Cartage, répandait aux hypothèses Osées que le Cardinal Lavigerie, évêque conformiste de cette même Carthage, allait formuler au XIX siècle: bien que celui-ci savait bien qu'il ne saurait y avoir d'accord possible entre les thèses spirituelles d'un apostalat religieux et les autithèses toutes pragmatiques de l' imperialisme de nos jours.[45]

In *Idris,* El-Hammamy contrasts the character of Lavigerie with that of Padre Torcuato, a Spanish priest sent to North Africa to accomplish his mission in Christianizing the natives. However, unlike Lavigerie, Padre Torcuato sees his mission in the terms of a humanist priest, whose aim was not merely to Christianize the North Africans, but also to give them the benefit of his knowledge in sciences and history. Moreover, he denounces the colonial system, in that it uses religion for political ends, and feels remorseful about the Christianizing mission being attributed to Christian priests. To a group of students he avows:

> L'inquisition, cette institution qui viola les saints préceptes de notre Seigneur Jésus Christ, a fait beaucoup de mal à vos aieux qui, il me plait infiniment de le reconnaitre, moi moine Chrétien, ont toujours été probes et magnanimes à l' égard des non-musulmans. Elle à voué un grand nombre d' entre eux au bûcher et aux galères. D'autres ont été repoussés de leur patrie et sont allés mourir dans des terres lointaines ... Nous avons assez berné le monde!.[46]

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44. *Idris,* p.41.

45. Ibid., p.31.

• 46. Ibid., p.196.

In this way, the author makes an European confirm Europe's cruelty towards the colonized countries, a contrast with the image given in *El-Euldj,* in which the European convert, Lediousse, describes the Muslims as cruel. In fact, no one had obliged Lediousse to become a Muslim, it was all done of his own free will, and according to the novel no political aim promped his conversion. However, as far as Christianity was concerned, religion was used for political ends. Padre Torcuato confirms this; "L'église, née pour la rédemption et la concorde, à été mise au même niveau que la caserne et le bagne"[47] Likewise, Cardinal Lavigerie was not motivated by evangelical but by political ambitions. History shows Lavigerie as a "missionary", in whom all the cruelty of colonial policy was exposed. This becomes more evident in his policy towards a group of orphans whom, during the terrible famine of 1866-1867, he had saved from starvation and converted. However, he refused to return them to their families for fear of returning them to their parents' "fanatic faith" and " animal-like" existence. This resulted in the creation of a group of Christian individuals among their Muslim fellow countrymen, who rejected them, and treated them as renegades. As already stated by El-Hammamy, these converted Algerians had to leave their country and settle in exile where they were not welcomed.

2. **Taos** *Amrouche, Jacinthe noire*[48]

The result of Lavigerie's work was to create cultural hybrids, who never felt at home either in their homeland or in exile. This drama is expressed through the case of Reine, the central figure in Taos Amrouche's *Jacinthe noire.* In fact, Taos's

47. Ibid., p.197.

48. Taos Amrouche, *Jacinthe noire,* written between 1935-1939, only published in 1947 (Paris: Maspéro, 1972).

biography shows to some extent that she was a victim of an act similar to Lavigerie's.

Taos's father and mother were Algerians converted to Christianity. The father was educated by the Pères blancs. He had to reject his former religion, and turn to Christianity in return for his education. The mother, an orphan, was brought up in a F rench girls' school, where she benefited from a charity act organized by, M. Sabatier, who wished to give a French education to a minority of indigenous girl orphans. This was still interrupted by Maselot, who saw a great danger in giving a diploma to native girls. Consequently, unable to become a teacher, Taos's mother worked in a hospital, where she met Belkacem Ou Amrouche, whom she married .

In her autobiography, *Histoire de ma vie*[49], Taos's mother expresses all the bitterness she endured; she could not "se lier ... intimement ni avec des français, ni avec des arabes. Je suis restée, toujours, l'éternelle exilée, celle qui, jamais, ne s'est sentie chez elle nulle part"[50].

Taos's *Jacinthe noire* is based on a daily account of Reine's experience at a boarding house in Paris, where she stayed among a group of French girls. Although a Christian, and of French nationality, Reine was not accepted by the group who considered her to be a' dangerous member of the house, "Cette Reine de race mysté rieuse, de sang africain, je la trouve dangereuse"[51]. For her part Reine did not find it easy to adapt to her new milieu. Although she missed her parents and the country she had left, she kept trying to find harmony among the French girls who either ignored or humiliated her. In the end, Reine concluded that belonging to the same religion and speaking the same language as the other girls was not enough to

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49. Fadhma A.M. Amrouche, *Histoire de ma vie* (Paris: Maspéro, 1968).

50. Jean Dejeux, *Dictionnaire des auteurs maghrebins,* p.32. For more details, see Fadhma Amrouche, *My Life Story*, trans. Dorothy Blair (London: The Women's Press Ltd., 1988).

51. *Jacinthe noire,* p.46.

make her belong to them. Rather, she felt like a hybrid who belonged to neither side. Reine expressed her deep regret for having left her people as well as her ancestors' religion:

> Je fait partie de la catégorie de ceux qui se sont séparés des leurs, qui ont rejeté la foi de leurs ancêtres pour suivre le Christ. La solitude des êtres qui me ressemblent ... est particulièrement pesante. C'est une solitude pathétique, absolue.[52]

In fact, she blames her parents for having converted rather than suffer hunger, and accuses Christianity of being the main cause of their unhappiness, and having uprooted them from their native country. Before her rejection by the French, Reine's parents were rejected by their fellow villagers, whose constant anger had forced them to flee their homeland. In a conversation with her friend Maithé, Reine reveals that their suffering was the ultimate result of having betrayed their homeland:

> Nous pensions pouvoir étouffer en nous la voix du pays, la voix de la mort. Mais ce pays que nous avons fui, ce pays auquel nous avons voulu échapper, il est en nous. Comment échapper à ce qui est soi-même, à ce que l'on aime inexprimablement?[53]

Reine, who takes on all the distress and pain of her parents converted and in exile, tried to explain that they were deceived by appearances. She accuses the French " civilizing mission" of making similar cultural hybrids, who could find acceptance neither among the French nor among their own people. Furthermore, she proves that if one may give up one's nationality and one's religion, one cannot abandon one's culture. Although she attends church on a regular basis, the prayers there had never

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52. Ibid., p.267.

53. Ibid., p.159.

been anything for her more than, "un mystère incompréhensible"[54] Therefore, her Christianity is only a superficial faith, which had no links with her culture or traditions. At the end of the novel, Reine rejects the French people for their hypocrisy and artificiality, and decides to join her natural, sincere, sensitive people. Thus, Taos reverses the picture of the previous novels, where the writers and their protagonists were dazzled by the supposed kindness and generosity of the French. To conclude, Taos's literary work as well as that of her brother Jean, can be called an expression of the dramatic "disruption" experienced by those writers who, although converted, did not become true Christians, but individuals split between Islam and Christianity, unable to abandon their culture as well as their religion. Therefore, the character Reine, presented as out of place in both Christian and Muslim environments, reflects Taos's feelings at her own position, which she expressed with greater precision in her second novel, *La Rue des tambourins*[55]. Both Taos and Jean always felt that they were Algerians whose ancestors were not the *Gaulois* but the *Imazighen*[56]. Both Taos and Jean spent great efforts in researching and publishing several works concerning Berber literature and songs.[57] By doing so, they not only

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54. Ibid., p.176.

55. T. Amrouche, *La Rue des tambourins* (Paris: La Table Ronde, 1960).

56. Imazighen: the Berber word for Berbers.

57. I. Jean Amrouche.
1 - *Chants berbères de Kabylie* (Tunis: Mononotapa, 1939), republished by Paris: Charlot, 1947, as *Introduction et chants traduits et (adaptés) du Berbère.*
2. "L'Eternel Jugurtha - Propositions sur le génie africain" in *L'Arche,* no.13, (Fev. 1946), a long essay in which he attempts to explain the Algerian soul through the character of the Berber hero Jugurtha.
II. Taos Amrouche.
a) *Le Grain magique,* contes, poèmes et proverbes berbères de Kabylie, 1966. (A collection of Berber tales, poems and proverbs)
b) *Records.*
1. *Chants berbères de Kabylie,* BAM - LD 101 (Grand prix du disque 1967).
2. *Chants de processions,* Méditations et danses sacrées berbères, SM302-280.
3. *Chants de l'Atlas,* Traditions millénaires des berbères d'Algérie et chants berbères de la meule et du berceau, ARN 34 278 et ARN 34 233, Arion.
c) *Emissions Radiophoniques*
1. 1944-1945 at Radio-Alger, "Traditions et coutumes Kabyles".
2. In Paris 1949, "Chants sauvés de l'oubli", monodies berbères et espagnoles.

reappraised their culture, but also tried their best to confirm their origins, and prove that, although Christians, they are Algerian Berbers first and foremost and are no different from their Berber compatriots. This may also be considered an attempt at searching for one's roots, while their literary works, that is, Taos's novels and Jean's poetry, are a bitter expression of rootlessness.

Just as in Taos's and Jean's work, El-Hammamy also reappraises, the culture and past of the ancestors. Thus *Idris* can fairly be considered a passionate search for a national culture and identity denouncing the old tricks of colonialism, as well as examining the colonialists' idle dream of an *Africa Christiana*. In his "L'éternel Jugu rtha - Propositions sur le génie africain", Jean Amrouche attempts to illustrate the Maghrebian soul through the character of the Berber hero Jugurtha, showing the Maghrebian compared with the European, as well as emphasizing the fact that Jugurtha, the Berber who revolted against the Roman invaders, continues to exist in the soul of every Maghrebian who by nature does not accept any form of submission. Jean Amrouche affirms:

> Je suppose, pour plus de commodité, qu'il existe un génie africain: un faisceau de caractères premiers, de forces, d' instints, de tendances, d'aspirations, qui se composent pour produire un tempérament spécifique.
> Il y a dix-huit millions de Jugurtha, dans l'île tourmentée qu'enveloppent la mer et le desert, qu'on appelle le Maghreb. On reconnaît d'abord Jugurtha à la chaleur, à la violence de son tempérament. Il embrasse l'idée avec passion; il lui est difficile de maintenir en lui le calme, la sérénité, l'indifférence, où la raison cartésienne échafaude ses constructions. Il ne connaît la pensée que militante et armée pour ou contre quelqu'un.[58]

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3. From 1957 to 1963, "Souvenons-nous du pays" (Chronicle in Kabyle language).

58. Jean Amrouche, "L'Eternel Jugurtha", pp.58-59.

More precisely, he adds, "Un des traits majeurs du caractère de Jugurtha est sa passion de l'indépendance, qui s'allie à un très vif sentiment de la dignité personnelle" .[59]

By insisting on what he calls *Le génie africain,* Amrouche proves the illegitimacy of Louis Bertrand's claims that the Maghrebian is uncivilized and barbarian. Bertrand states:

> Nous, français, sommes chez nous en Algérie. Nous nous sommes rendus maîtres du pays par la force, car une conquête ne peut se réaliser que par la force et implique nécessairement le fait qu'il y a eu des vainqueurs et des vaincus. Lorsque ceux-ci ont été matés, nous avons pu organiser le pays et cette organisation affirme encore l'idée de supériorité du vainqueur sur le vaincu, du civilisé sur l' homme inférieur.[60]

Jean Amrouche also criticizes those who believed that Algeria, or the Maghreb as a whole, was a land returned to the folds of Empire. He insists that the Berber never submits, even in defeat. Just as Jugurtha had challenged the Romans, so the Maghrebians will challenge the French invaders too. This same tendency is expressed in *Idris.* Aly El-Hammamy shows that this desire for an *Africa Christiana* is as old as history. However, due to a certain trait in the Berber's personality this desire is constantly frustrated. Bertrand was not the first to dream of the *Africa Christiana;* and the Berbers have throughout their history, expressed their hostility towards any invasion including that of the Romans. In this respect El-Hammamy cites the case of Hannibal, "Fils de Hamilcar, il avait, tout jeune enfant, accompagné son père dans de nombreuses expéditions militaires que celui-ci avait dirigées contre

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59. Ibid., p.63.

60. Charles Henri Favrod, *La Révolution algérienne* (Paris: Pion, 1959), p.44.

l'Italie. On lui avait dès le berceau, inculqué la haine du nom romain"[61]. As for Jugurtha, like El-Mili, El-Hammamy refers to him as a *héros national:*

> Un autre héros national prit l'étendard échappé desmains phéniciennes. Jugurtha fit son apparition sur la scène avec *des moyens de lutte nouveaux* on le vit tantôt combattre et vaincre les légions de Marius, tantôt, quand les circonstances l'exigaient, faire appel aux ressources d'une remarquable diplomatie.[62]

Jugurtha emerged after a long era of Roman domination, an era during which " Rome eut en Afrique tout ce qu'elle voulut: villes, capitoles, arcs de triomphe, théatres, arènes ... tout ce que la pièrre put enfin de compte donner. Mais elle n'eut pas autre chose"[63]. Indeed, nothing of the *Pax Romana* is left in North-Africa except the Roman ruins. This is a hint to the French occupation, which will come to an end, like the Romans' s, because Jugurtha's soul lives on in the hearts of the Maghrebians, who since the arrival of the French have never downed arms.

Yet something betrays their courage and heroism, hence the need to find *des moyens de lutte nouveaux*. The character Hadj Allal sadly tells his Egyptian friend about his people's desperate fight against the invasion, "Nous n'avons à opposer aux canons et aux mitrailleuses des français que la poitrine de nos enfants"[64]. Yet the Egyptian states that courage is not enough:

> Personne ne vous dénie le courage. Vous êtes des guerriers-nés. Mais le courage n'est pas tout en ce moment. C'est même peu de chose en ce siècle de machinisme et d' organisation nationale ... l'union ne régne pas parmi vous

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61. *Idris,* p.24.

62. *Idris,* p.27. Emphasis mine.

63. Ibid.

64. *Idris,* p.118.

> ... vos caids et ce que vous appelez vos chérifs sont tous ou presque à la solde de l'étranger .,[65]

However, if El-Hammamy constantly seeks to find the best way to lead his people, and to achieve independence, Said Guennoun seems to loose confidence in his people in his novel *La Voix des monts* and, instead of a search for *des moyens de lutte nouveaux,* he encourages his people to down arms and join the French camp. Both writers are very concerned with the ethnology of their people, yet there remains a difference in the way they see their people; whereas Guennoun viewed the Berber's *guerrier-né* nature as a bad trait to be suppressed, Aly El-Hammamy presents this bravery as a good thing prefering death to submission. Moreover, whereas Guennoun's aim in describing the Berber wars against the French was to appeal to his people for a ceasefire, to forget the bad times of continual war and start a fresh page with the French; "Puissent nos compatriotes français, arabes et berbères, trouver dans ce passé de guerre également glorieux pour tout le monde, de nouvelles raisons de s'estimer et de s'aimer"[66]. El-Hammamy prefers his people to remember their identity, the courage and glory of their ancestors and their tremendous hate for any invader, whatever his aim. Therefore, the difference remains in that whereas the first aimed at reconciliation, "let us forget", the second aimed at division, "let us remember". Accordingly, whereas Guennoun stood on the French side, El-Hammamy sided with his people.

Another feature of contrast is that whereas in the one novel, the central figure is the French *Capitaine* Alain, and the other characters are presented as a crowd of people who usually act as one, in the other novel, the central figure is Idris, a Berber whose forefathers "descendait, depuis des millénaires, des premières populations

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65. Ibid., pp.119-120.

66. S. Guennoun, *La Voix des monts,* p.19.

berbères"[67]. As for the French, they are presented as a group of people including the settler, the governor, the priest, who all came to the Maghreb for a single aim; to colonize. However, in *La Voix des monts,* the French only came to "civilize". In fact this is a point shared by all the novels of the period of "imitation"; we can compare *Hind* and *Leila, jeune fille d'Algérie.* Both Nacih, in *Hind,* and Leila, believed in the French "civilizing mission", and had great confidence in the French, whom they saw as great humanists who aimed at civilizing the uncivilized. However, neither Nacih nor Leila did realize that the interest of the French was only based on 'civilizing' a very small élite whom they turned into a group of learned and emancipated individuals who could not be entirely like the French, or could they remain like their people. Hence, these individuals played the role of intermediaries between the two groups. Being dazzled by the intelligence and the apparent kindness of their civilizers, neither Nacih nor Leila could see any danger of being uprooted. In fact, they enjoyed their role as intermediaries, as well as their superiority to the illiteracy of their people. However, this was a temporary situation. For this mediating role turned the indigenous intellectual into a hybrid, a phenomenon presented as a dramatic disruption in Taos's *Jacinthe noire* which can be considered a step further in the evolution of the intellectuals' relationship with the French. In this fashion Yetiv Isaac rightly qualifies *Jacinthe noire* as the forefather of the novel of alienation, "Ce roman est sans doute l'ancêtre du 'roman de l'aliénation' qui sera prédominant, à partir de 1952".[68]

It is undeniable, however, that both Nacih and Leila aimed at the emancipation of their people or, in other words, at their evolution and well-being, with French help. Yet they appear to ignore the fact that the French, even as

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67. Idris, p.22.

68. Yetiv Isaac, "Le Thème de l'aliénation dans le roman maghrebin d'expression française" (PhD dissertation, University of Wisconsin, 1970), p. 84.

civilizers, had invaded their country, and turned it into a French province. Both Nacih and Leila praise French civilization, her history and writers, and do not realize that the French as colonizers, were different from French writers and artists. Both Nacih and Leila believe in French writers as great humanists and admire their principles. Reine is also attracted by French writers, but realizes that the French presented in books are very different from reality. This can be explained by the fact that Reine is more emancipated than Nacih and Leila, and has lived in France, as pa rt of a very small minority amongst the French community. This is different from the French in Nacih's and Leila's milieu, who were in the minority.

In *Idris* the bitterness with which the author rejects the French is much greater than that shown in *Jacinthe noire.* Si El-Ouennoughi, Idris's teacher, like Reine, Leila and Nacih, has read French literature and philosophy. Yet he denounces French writers as being mere theoreticians who wrote about humanist values, but who never believed in them, for in reality they are no different from the French colonialists. El-Hammamy begins to depict this contradiction between theory and practice, by examining the so-called *Les Droits de l'homme,*

> Cet athéisme d'état, cette démocratie de parade, cette laicité de clubs et de salons à grand effet spectaculaire, n' empêchent pas les français pourtant d'envahir pays après pays et d'y instituter des états de moeurs peu compatibles avec l'esprit de cette déclaration des droits de l'homme qui à remplacé le catéchisme dans leur charte nouvelle.[69]

This leads to the conclusion that what was valid in metropolitan France was not valid in the colony. This becomes even clearer with Si El-Ouennoughi's declaration:

> En France on panthéonise Zola pendant qu'en Afrique on persécute ses emules. En France, le contrat social inspire

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69. *Idris,* pp.197-198.

> les travaux d'un parlement libre et souverain dans la plénitude de ses droits tandis qu'en Afrique l'indigénat sévit, calqué sur les lois d'esclavage qui gouvernèrent jadis la Pax Romana. En France on compose, lit et propage Germinal. En Afrique on bannit le droit de penser et d' écrire. En France la liberté brandit ses flambeaux au coin de tous les carrefours. En Afrique le droit de conquête règne avec la rigueur de ses tribunaux répressifs et les décisions comminatoires de ses gouverneurs.[70]

Further on in the novel, the author points his finger at the French writers who spread humanist values by means of their books, but with regard to their government's colonial policy, they either kept quiet, or actually supported it. Therefore, whereas the humanitarian Victor Hugo played *la politique de la sourde oreille,* Lamartine supported his country's project of colonizing Algeria:

> Ni Lamartine d'ailleurs, ni Hugo. Personne n'osa s' interesser au Maghreb envahi ou à l'Islam attaqué ... Lamartine et Hugo se sont fourrés dans le même sac que Châteaubriand en ce qui nous concerne. D'autres encore les suivirent dans cette tour aux préjugés ... En 1833, quand, sous la pression d'une opinion publique alarmée, on commença à envisager en France l'éventualité de l' évacuation de l'Algérie ... Lamartine s'éleva farouchement contre le principe de l'évacuation.[71]

As for Idris, the author presents him as being misled by this contradictory aspect of French thought. Idris had read *Raphaèl, Salammbô, Germinal* and *Azyadé* and through Lamartine, Flaubert, Zola and Loti he vainly tried to:

> ...pénétrer cette âme française si étrangement tissée de contradictions et de paradoxes. Mais il ne put jamais la comprendre. Souvent, en confrontant ce que disaient les français et ce qu'ils faisaient; l'ideal qu'ils affichaient et les actes qu'ils exerçaient en comparant la perfection de leurs

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70. Ibid., pp.279-280.

71. Ibid., pp.261-263.

> lois à l'esprit terre-à-terre et mesquin de leur administration et de leurs tribunaux dans leurs rapports avec les nord-africains; en tâchant d'étudier la déclaration des droits de l' homme et le code de l'indigénat ... souvent, en perdant inutilement son temps à un tel jeu, il se rendait compte de son incapacité à saisir les réflexes d'une âme aussi vaine que les mirifiques confabulations tramées par tels virtuoses de la plume auxquels il avait fini par vouer une certaine confiance.[72]

To conclude, Nacih and Leila love and trust the French as civilizers whose principles were based on humanist values; whereas Reine and Idris face the contradiction between French principles and action both in their colonizing of Algeria under cover of a "civilizing mission", and in their creation of "cultural hybrids" who endured endless conflict for this reason. However, this conflict does not exist for Leila and Nacih who are presented as learned, knowing the right path to follow, unlike their people. Thus the conflict is that of generations; they want their ' uncivilized' and ignorant parents to be like them. Nacih and Leila cannot understand the resistance of their people towards French culture and education. They feel only compassion for them because they are rejecting something which could have helped them to escape their ignorance. As for Reine, she affirms that, although educated and Christianized, she is no different from her .grandmother, who stayed in her native Kabylia with all the principles and beliefs she has inherited. Idris, on the other hand, has a great respect for his father, whom he loved and looks up to as an example, "son père avait toujours été pour lui un guide loyal et sûr ..."[73]. Idris, unlike Nacih and Leila, loves his ancestors and expresses his pride in their courage and their great love for freedom. It is undeniable though, that like Idris, Nacih and Leila aim at the progress and evolution of their people. The difference remains in that whereas the

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72. Ibid.; p.262.

73. Ibid., p.278.

latter saw this evolution within the framework of the French "civilizing mission", in *Idris* it is frankly stated that "on prétend nous civiliser à coups de canon"[74].

Thus the French were no more than a colonialist power, whose aim was to gallicize the local people. Idris, who reads French books, likes the scientific aspect of their analysis, a characteristic which is lacking in Arabic thought of the Middle Ages and in his time; he only rejects the French "civilizing mission" which was but a mere alibi to colonise the so-called 'uncivilized'. This civilization is rejected because it comes in the wake of colonialism. El-Hammamy asserts that the French aims as colonialists were the same throughout their various colonies. Accordingly, the French stray far from the great principles of their "civilizing mission" which is a mere *façade brillante* which no longer attracts. Likewise, most images given by the authors of the period of imitation, are largely contradicted in *Idris* where the *colon*, shown as hard working, intelligent and kind, in *Leila* and *Hind*, becomes greedy, criminal, lazy and drunken. The author proves the truth of this with the case of the exiled *Filalien* who is presented as a victim of the settlement project, "Sa modeste vie résumait tout un débat de l'histoire coloniale de l'Afrique du nord. Elle en traduisait les servitudes et, dans sa triste éloquence, elle dénonçait les conditions actuelles nées de l'invasion étrangère et la colonisation du Maghreb"[75]. In brief, the story of the *Filalien* is that after long years of hard work as a gardener, he succeedes in buying a few acres of land, which he turns into a beautiful garden planted with various vegetables, fruit trees and flowers which he sells in the market every day; until a new settler comes to his area, where he is promised some of the most beautiful and fertile acres in the region by the French authorities, which happen to be in the *Filalien's* garden. This latter is summoned by the Mayor, who wants to buy his land. Having refused, the *Filalien* is obliged to choose between two alternatives,

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74. Ibid., p.276.

75. Ibid., pp.75-76.

"vendre sa propriété au prix qu'il lui fixerait ou risquer de subir une expropriation"[76]. In the end he gives up his land and choose exile. This story sums up the reality of the *colon,* who settles in the colony after taking the land from the natives.. After having described the *Filalien* as hard-working, honest, thrifty, wise and generous, the author describes the *colon:*

> Il aimait le vin ... Il aimait les femmes des autres ... Il aimait, aussi, l'argent ... n'avait rien d'un sectaire ... Homme lige d'un député opportuniste à tendances laiques prononcées. ses fonctions et son goût de lucre l'inclinaient à ménager les susceptibilités religieuses de ses paroissiens [77]

Moreover, much as Leila and Nacih respect and admire the settlers, Idris hates them, and sees in them the direct cause of his people's misery. As he watches, from a distance, a group of settlers who have become very wealthy, Idris feels revulsion and anger, "Des colons enrichis et cuvant leur vin. Pour cela, le burnous et la djellaba suaient. Rejetant son torse en arrière, les yeux brillants et les narines gonflées, Idris .. . de toutes ses forces, cracha dans la direction de cette pourriture"[78].

It may be worth mentioning, that like Idris, Leila is very concerned about the misery of her people and, like him, she tries to find a way to end their poverty; for example, Dahmane, the boot-black, whom she tries to help. Even so, the main difference between the two novels lies in the fact that whereas in *Leila* there is great confidence in France as a civilization, so that the author publicizes Dahmane's story to enlist the help of the French, in *Idris,* El-Hammamy denounces forcefully French policy, which is behind the actual deplorable situation in the Maghreb. He thus

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76. Ibid., p.80.

77. Ibid., p.287.

78. Ibid., p.287.

demonstrates the paradox in novels like *Leila* where the author asks for French help even though they are the actual cause of the situation. In fact, Dahmane himself is only a symbol of colonized Algeria, and a victim of colonialism; 'a truth which can be easily deduced from reading *Leila.* To sum up, in *Idris* accusations are made against the colonialists as the direct cause of the discomfort and privation of the colonized. To this end, El-Hammamy shows the result of a century of French domination which is supposed to be a century of civilizing the 'uncivilized':

> En cette journée du 14 Juin 1930 où la France fêtait dans la joie des splendeurs spectaculaire le centenaire de son occupation, l'Algérie ... ne comptait pas une quarantaine d' avocats et de médecins musulmans, aucun ingénieur, cinq ou six officiers sortis des écoles militaires et qui devaient obligatoirement finir leur carrière avec le quatrième galon .. . Pas de juges, pas d'entrepreneurs, pas d'ouvriers spécialisés, aucun auteur digne de ce nom. Par contre, des légions pullulantes de cireurs de bottes, des hordes d' ouvriers agricoles payés selon les conventions du *Khammessat*[79], des ouvriers de mines et des docks rétribués à des salaires de famine.[80]

In conclusion, with *Idris* Maghrebian nationalism has progressed one step further, beyond the phase of nationalist demands for social reforms. The Algerian author's hopes in the French are destroyed, there are now no links left between him an d his colonizer. He Thus gives up all hope of being accepted by his "civilizer", and decides to return to his people to side with and represent them.

In his book, *The Wretched of the Earth,* Franz Fanon explains this return as follows:

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79. *Khammesat,* share cropping arrangement.

80. *Idris,* p.281.

> In order to ensure his salvation and to escape from the supremacy of the white man's culture, the native feels the need to turn backwards towards his unknown roots and to lose himself at whatever cost in his own barbarous people. Because he feels he is becoming estranged, that is to say because he feels that he is the living haunt of contradictions which run the risk of becoming insurmountable, the native tears himself away from the swamp that may suck him down and accepts everything ... He not only turns himself into the defender of his people's past; he is willing to be counted as one of them, and henceforward he is even capable of laughing at his past cowardice.[81]

This return can be rightly considered as showing the failure of the colonial system which produced "integrated" individuals who would never reject what their *mère patrie* had given them, or encourage their people to rise against this "generous" France, who had provided them with the fruits of her civilization. Therefore, this return marks a great failure for the colonialists as follows:

> Every native won over, every native who had taken the pledge, not only marks a failure for the colonial structure when he decides to lose himself and to go back to his own side, but also stands as a symbol for the uselessness and the shallowness of all the work that has been accomplished. Each native who goes back over the line is a radical condemnation of the methods and of the regime.[82]

Indeed, the novels *Idris* and *Jacinthe noire,* which mark this about-turn, prove to what extent the return of the native intellectual to his people is a danger to his colonizers. This can be summed up by one major fact, namely that whereas previous Algerian writers have used their novels to tell the colonialists about their people, El-Hammamy and Taos tell their people about the colonialists. This change in the narrator's view point means that more interest is devoted to the people and that the

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81. F. Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth,* trans. Constance Farrington (London: MacGibbon and Kee, 1965), pp.175-176.

82. F. Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth,* p.178.

author's hopes are based on his people's ability to reject the invaders, not on the invaders'ability to civilize them. Both writers desire to awaken their people and encourage them to acquire self-confidence.

CHAPTER FOUR

A Period of Revelation

Section One

A Thematic Approach

As I have already shown, *Idris* marked not only the transition from the concept of a tribe to that of a nation, but also the novel's transition from a novel of imitation to a novel of protest and revelation in which the writers exposed their own ideas and depicted their people in their continuous struggle for existence.

Although those writers always mentioned names like Roblès, Camus, Roy, and other French writers, as their predecessors in literature, apparently ignoring a whole generation of Algerian writers, they did not imitate their predecessors, but tried to write on some aspects which neither Camus nor Roblès could depict. In a letter to Emmanuel Roblès, Mouloud Feraoun,[1] believing himself to be the first Algerian to write about his people, states,

> Ce sont les premiers, Camus, Roblès, etc. qui par leur talent ont su nous ouvrir un horizon littéraire qui nous était fermé. Je n'avais jamais cru possible de faire véritablement entrer dans un roman un vrai bonhomme kabyle avant d'avoir connu le docteur Rieux et le jeune Smail.[2] Tu vois ce que je veux dire. Vous les premiers vous nous avez dit: voila ce que nous sommes. Alors nous, nous avons répondu: voila ce que nous sommes de notre côté. Ainsi a commencé entre vous et nous le dialogue.[3]

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1. Most critics on Algerian literature consider Feraoun's *Le Fils du pauvre* the first Francophone Algerian novel.

2. Docteur Rieux in Camus' *La Peste* (Paris:Gallimard,1947).
Smail in Roblès' *Les Hauteurs de la ville* (Paris:Chrlot,1948).

3. M. Feraoun, *Lettres* d *ses amis* (Paris: Le Seuil, 1969), p.154.

Feraoun's letter proves that he and his fellow Algerian novelists did not ignore the F rench novel which had greatly influenced them, and incited them to write 'authentic' Algerian novels which were in opposition to the image of their Algerian compatriots created by the French writers. In fact, if Feraoun wanted to write about his people it was mainly to say, "voila ce que nous sommes de notre côté".[4] In a letter to Camus, Feraoun expressed his displeasure at the absence of the indigenous population from Camus', *La Peste* whose Algerian setting, Oran, was only conventional, "J'ai lu *La Peste* .. j'avais regretté que parmi tous ces personnages il n'y eût aucun indigène et qu'Oran ne fût à vos yeux qu'une banale préfecture française".[5] Feraoun concluded that Camus and other French writers did not try to get to know the indigenous population, thus„ could not write about it. Therefore, Feraoun and his fellow Algerian writers wanted to write about their own people, depicting their daily occupations, their feelings and customs. They aimed at painting a huge fresco of their compatriots. They, thus wrote about something they knew very well, with unmistakable sincerity, "J'ai l'intention d'écrire, de parler de mes compatriotes tels que je les vois".[6] They preferred to give their readers repulsive, sad and tragic, but authentic, images, rather than follow the French models in which attractive and exotic places were described with no mention of the native population. Therefore, they created genuinely Algerian novels in which the central hub of activity is either an Algerian village or city, the central figure is an Algerian character, and both the events and the characters are, unlike those in the novel of imitation, convincing. Moreover, they peppered the narrative with either Berber or Arabic words whose meanings differ radically from their French equivalent, such as

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4. Ibid.

5. Ibid., (letter to Albert Camus), p.203.

6. Ibid.

Timechret and *Sehja.*[7] These writers depicted their own lives 'to go native' as far as possible. Thus, most of them wrote autobiographies wherein they revealed their own anxieties and sufferings which were at the same time those of thousands of Algerians.

1. Mouloud Feraoun, *Le Fils du pauvre*[8]

Written in 1939, it was only published in 1950 by *Les Cahiers du Nouvel Humanisme* with the author's own resources after great efforts. The manuscript which the author wrote three times by hand was refused by *Les Editions Latines* who wanted to impose a preface, by someone he did not know, upon the author. When he refused, the manuscript was returned to him, "Mon histoire avec les Editions Latines s'est mal terminée. Mon refus les a indisposés, semble-t-il, ils m'ont renvoyé ma marchandise".[9] It is worth noting that this novel first appeared under the title, *Le Fils du pauvre, Menrad instituteur Kabyle;* it was in four parts as follows: *La Famille, Le Fils ainé, Bouzaréa, La Guerre.* This first edition, a run of one thousand copies, sold very quickly. A second edition, omitting the two last parts, appeared in 1954 with Editions du Seuil. Emmanuel Roblès, who advised his friend Feraoun to do so, states that Feraoun planned to make the two parts the subject of a sequel to *Le Fils du pauvre.* They both agreed that the novel lacked unity in its first version. However, as he was murdered in 1962 by the O.A.S., the promised sequel was never written. In his preface to *Le Fils du pauvre,* Feraoun introduced to the reader the

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7. M. Mammeri, in *La Colline oubliée,* explains the two words as follows:
Timechret: Sacrifice de moutons ou de boeufs fait par tout un village à certaines occasions.
Sehja: Choeur de jeunes gens.

8. Mouloud Feraoun, *Le Fils du pauvre* (Alger: E.N.A.L., 1986).

9. M. Feraoun, *Lettres à ses amis,* p.36.

protagonist Fouroulou Menrad who, like Feraoun, is a modest village teacher„ an *" instituteur du bled "* who kept a diary amongst his pupils' exercise books. Menrad knew he was an ambitious student, but was held back by a lack of means and opportunities. Therefore, as an_ indigenous student, he could only become a primary school teacher who lived amongst the 'blind', his illjrterate villagers with whom he endured the endless struggle for survival.

Feraoun tells the reader that having failed to complete further study, Menrad decided to become a writer. However, although he had read Montaigne, Rousseau, Daudet and Dickens his ambition did not go beyond painting a portrait of his own life which he wanted to transmit to his children and grandchildren. He thought, "sa vie valait la peine d'être connue. A la rigueur, il n'avait pas besoin de se faire imprimer. Il laisserait un manuscrit".[10]

The novel starts with a description of Fouroulou's village, its roads, houses and inhabitants. The author gives a realistic but unattractive image of his village, which could be any Kabyle village in Algeria.l t He also talks about his people who, although they fear isolation and prefer to live in groups, from time to time quarrel for unconvincing reasons; but they are always brought together again by sad or happy events, and forget their enmities. In Fouroulou's village there are no permanent social classes; rich people become poor and the poor can become rich, for they all depend on their land. Always using the first person, Fouroulou writes about his family depicting one member after another. He first portrays his uncle Lounis, who is the opposite of his father, Ramdane. Then he tells the reader about his uncle's wife Helima and his mother Fatma. It is with great admiration that Fouroulou describes his grandmother who led the Menrad family after the death of her husband, "C'était en somme ma grand'mère qui nourrissait la famille, pareille en quelque sorte, à une

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10. *Le Fils du pauvre,* p.6.

11. Ibid. pp.8-10.

mère poule donnant à chacun la becquée".[12] Fouroulou depicts his childhood, from memory; he introduces himself to the reader as the *Fils unique* who came from a poor family. However, unlike other poor children, Fouroulou was spoilt by everyone except Helima, who hated him for the simple reason that she herself had no male children. Unlike Helima, Lounis loved his nephew whom he taught to become a real Kabyleman.[13] However, to the Menrads' disappointment instead of *Le lion du village*, Fouroulou became "doux, aimable, patient; je savais flatter les plus audacieux, je donnais ou je prêtais sans trop de difficultés ce qu'on me demandait".[14] Among the events which marked his childhood, the narrator cites the incident which resulted in a serious dispute between his family and Boussad's.[15] The village notables calmed both sides for none of them wanted to have recourse to the French courts, which they did not trust, "inutile d'aller à la justice française qui compliquerait tout".[16] Further on, Fouroulou tells the reader about his two aunts, Nana and Khalti, who lived together in an attractive little house. Whereas the elder, Khaki, is described as lacking in common sense, superstitious and a good story teller, Nana is kind, wise and pretty. Both sisters were potters, but Nana's pottery was far more beautiful than Khalti's, and so were her carpets. By describing his aunts' work Fouroulou describes in details Berber pottery and carpets. The major event marking Fouroulou's childhood was his starting school, "Je me souviens, comme si cela datait d'hier de mon entrée à l'école".[17] In fact, this point is the start of the author's education, which reveals several truths; firstly, French education was

12. Ibid., p.20.

13. *Le Fils du pauvre*, pp.22-23.

14. Ibid., p.24.

15. Ibid., pp.28-37.

16. Ibid., p.36.

17. Ibid., p.48.

not offered to every Algerian child; Fouroulou's father told his wife, when she proposed postponing their child's school entry until the next day, "Demain toutes les places seront prises".[18] It also shows the poverty of Fouroulou's parents, whose life was a continuous struggle to feed their children. Fouroulou notices his parents' indifference to his studies and he concludes, "les pères de famille qui passent leur temps à essayer de satisfaire les petits ventres peuvent-ils s'occuper également des petites cervelles? ..."[19] Although, Ramdane worked very hard, his efforts only led to the usual couscous, "le couscous est la seule nourriture des gens de chez nous".[20] Apart from this, Fouroulou and his fellow villagers ate all sorts of herbs and fruits they could find in the fields. One of the most pathetic events which left an impression on Fouroulou is when together with his friend, Said, they visited their fathers at work and were invited to take part in the delicious lunch the boss offered his labourers. Both children were so charmed by the potato soup and the white couscous served with meat, that despite their parents' warnings not to go to the work ground again, they could not forget the joy they felt after such a delicious meal, "la joie animale de nos estomacs avides".[21] Thus, they both returned. Whereas Said's father sent his son away, Fouroulou's father pretended not to be hungry and offered Fouroulou his meal, going home to eat the black couscous his son did not like. This latter testifies, "ce jour-là, il retourna au travail le ventre à moitié vide, mais il grava, une fois pour toutes, dans le coeur de son fils, la mesure de sa tendresse".[22] In fact, Fouroulou's hunger was shared by every person in his village where life was a long struggle for survival; each villager had to work hard. Nevertheless the reward of their

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18. *Le Fils du pauvre,* p.49.
19. Ibid., p.35.
20. Ibid., p.58.
21. Ibid., p.59.
22. *Le Fils du pauvre,* p.61.

labour was always very poor.,

The narrator's village is cut off from the world; the French occupation had no impact on its structure and no one benefited from the so-called "civilizing mission". This did not exist for the villagers, who were dependent on nothing except their own hard work. No mention is ever made of any doctor or hospital; Fouroulou's aunt Nana dies during childbirth, Khalti gives way under the shock, and becomes insane: no one thinks of giving her psychiatric treatment. In fact, the sole trace of this "civilizing mission" is the tiny primary school which was directed by two Kabyle teachers.

Although Feraoun did not point his finger at the French authorities for causing of his people's misery, he shows what the situation was like for his fellow villagers, whose hard work never succeeded in achieving a better life. Therefore, he let the reader judge the situation, which he portrayed in a very realistic way as he an d his compatriots experienced it.

In the second part of the novel, "par modestie ou par pudeur",[23] Fouroulou let a friend take over the narrative and tell his life story, which resembled that of thousands of Algerians. After a long illness which prevented Fouroulou's father from working, the family reached the nadir of poverty, especially after they had sold their animals, mortgaged their field and house, and borrowed money from the money-lender at a higher rate of interest. To recover his house and field, Fouroulou's father decided to emigrate to France, "c'était l'ultime ressource, le dernier espoir, la seule solution".[24] One of the saddest events in Fouroulou's life was, in fact, the eve of his father's departure; Ramdane, tormented by the separation, prayed in the darkness while his children were asleep. However, Fouroulou could hear his father's prayers, " Ramdane dépeignait son embarras, sa misère. Il sembla à Fouroulou qu'une

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23. Ibid., p.89.

24. *Le Fils du pauvre,* p.96.

présence surnaturelle planait au-dessus deux et entendait tout ... la douleur de son père lui serrait la gorge et des larmes se mirent à couler silencieusement sur ses joues".[25] Dressed in his cousin's old European suit, Ramdane, like a thief, left his family at dawn. A few weeks later he sent them a letter informing them that he had found a job and would soon send some money. Ramdane's letter reflected his attachment to his land; he missed his trees as much as he missed his children. Determined to save his parents from poverty, Fouroulou worked hard at school and passed his examinations. To reward him, his 'illiterate' father sent him a shoe catalogue and a love story which he thought were of great importance. After a serious accident which forced him to stay in hospital for several weeks, Fouroulou's father left France and rejoined his family with enough money to recover his property and pay his debts. Although he was convinced that education was only for the rich, " les études, c'est réservé aux riches",[26] and wanted his son to work with him to improve the family situation, he encouraged Fouroulou to study further. For his part, well aware of his parents' sacrifices, he saved more than half of his grant which he gave to his father every month. Even so, the Menrads' situation did not improve. After four years of hard work, Fouroulou came to the final exam which would decide his future, "Ou devenir instituteur, ce qui signifiait l'aisance pour toute sa famille, ou redevenir berger".[27] It is on this note that the novel ends. Nevertheless, from the novel's introduction, the reader knows that Fouroulou passed his examination, became a school teacher and saved his parents from misery.

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25. Ibid.

26. *Le Fils du pauvre,* p.111.

. 8 Ibid. p.126.

2. Mohammed Dib, *La Grande maison*[28]

Like Fouroulou Omar, Dib's protagonist lives in constant hunger. In fact, like Feraoun, Mohammed Dib wanted to depict the daily life of his people, and similarly focuses on his childhood memories, "Le souvenir le plus, marquant de ma petite enfance c'est la période scolaire, l'école primaire: ce que j'ai ressenti alors se trouve dans *la Grande maison".*[29] Consequently, *La Grande maison* opens with an episode where the schoolchildren are fighting for a piece of bread. The very first sentence of the novel reads: "Un peu de ce que tu manges!".[30] The novel's setting - *La Grande maison* also called *Dar Sbitar,*- is a place where people spend their time cheating hunger.[31] Like Fouroulou's village, *Dar Sbitar* is a closed world where people suffered all sorts of hardships; from hunger to bad living conditions, "Dar Sbitar était pleine comme une ruche".[32] Therefore, most of the time the inhabitants quarre1.[33] However, as in *Le Fils du pauvre,* they forget their enmity to celebrate different occasions, and never turn to French courts, which they do not trust, "ce qu'ils appellent la justice n'est que leur justice".[34] Whereas in Fouroulou's village people were almost equal, Omar reveals that, in his city there are rich people who can eat whenever they like and poor people who, like him, are constantly hungry. Although his mother, Aini, works all the time, she cannot always manage to provide her

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28. Mohammed Dib, *La Grande maison* (Paris: Le Seuil, 1952).

29. "Deux écrivains algériens de passage à Paris: Kateb Yacine, Mohammed Dib", *Les Lettres françaises,* february 7, 1963,p.5.

30. La Grande maison, p.7.

31. Ibid., p.57.

32. Ibid. p.72.

33. Ibid., pp.107-108.

34. Ibid., p.52.

children with their daily bread. Unlike Fouroulou's father, who suffers in silence, Aini is always angry. She is depicted as a rebel against her fate, "Mon lot à été le malheur"[35] and tyrannical, not only with her three children, whom she beats mercilessly, 3[6] but also with her mother whom she maltreats.[37] Aini's language is very rude for she swears constantly. To her handicapped mother she says, "puisses-tu mourir sur ta couche"[38] and, "Puisses-tu manger du poison".[39] To Dar Sbitar's landlady she says, "Vieux garagouz! ... Pense que chaque jour te rapproche de la tombe; tu n'attends pas la mort alors qu'elle est en toi déjà. Et tu passes ton temps à contempler les murs de ta maison; qu'ils tombent sur toi. Misérable! ...Tfou! Crapaud malfaisant".[40] Although, she knows that her anger cannot improve her situation, Aini finds some relief in shouting.[41] In fact, her behaviour is only the result of the hard life, she cannot accept. In the darkness the rebellious Aini complains loudly; although she works so hard, the fruit of her labour was very little, "Ce travail me démolit la poitrine. Je n'en peux plus. Mes jambes sont sans forces. Tout ce que je gagne ne suffit pas pour acheter assez de pain. Je travaille autant que je peux pourtant. Et à quoi ça sert?"[42] Like Fouroulou, Omar feels sad and embarrassed on hearing his mother's complaints. He knows his mother is anxious, largely because she has had to smuggle some fabrics from Oujda to sell them to the rich ladies of her city. Omar knows his mother is risking jail, and does not accept the

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35. Ibid., p.30.

36. *La Grande maison,* p.12 and pp.102-103.

37. Ibid., p.32 and pp.142-143.

38. Ibid., p.32.

39. Ibid., p.142.

40. Ibid., p.106.

41. Ibid., p.73.

. 42. Ibid., p.127.

idea. Yet there is nothing he can do to prevent her from smuggling. Unlike Fouroulou's father, who believes it is his duty to provide his children's food, working faithfully, Aini constantly rebels against the burden of her children. "vous êtes fixés sur moi comme des sangsues. J'ai été stupide. J'aurais dû vous lacher dans la rue et fuir sur une montagne déserte".[43] Therefore, although Fouroulou works hard at school for a better future, Omar, like his mother, desires death , "Quand nous aurons travaillé toute la vie, au bout il nous reste l'hospice ou la mendicité. Si la mort survient alors, nous dirons: tant mieux".[44] Also, like Aini, Omar is depicted as a boisterous and rude child, who becomes most impertinent to his mother to whom he says, "la ferme, putain! "[45] and, "Maudite! Maudits, tes père et mère!".[46] He becomes worse with his neighbours, "Omar exhiba son petit membre ... et fit des gestes obsènes".[47]

On the other hand, Dib depicts the indigenous bourgeoisie through *Tante* Hasna, who collects her leftovers and offers them to Aini's family. For Hasna, it was natural that her society should be made up of rich and poor people. Thus, the poor would remain poor for ever and the rich, rich for ever. *Tante* Hasna does not believe in the value of Omar's education, mainly because he tells her, "Je vais à l'école ... Et j' apprends des choses. Je veux m'instruire. Quand je serais grand, je gagnerai beaucoup d'argent".[48] *Tante* Hasna replied fiercely,

> Il te faudra travailler comme une bête si tu veux seulement vivre ... l'instruction, ce n'est pas pour toi, ver de terre.

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43. *La Grande maison* , p.30.

44. Ibid., p.143.

45. Ibid., p.33.

46. Ibid., p.35.

47. Ibid., p.104 and see p.77.

48. *La Grande maison*, p.86.

> Qu'est-ce que tu te crois pour prétendre à l'instruction? ... N' espère pas le bonheur. Qui es-tu, qui es tu pour espérer le bonheur? N'espère pas vivre tranquille, n'espère pas.[49]

Consequently, Omar dislikes *Tante* Hasna not only because she wants him to remain poor forever, but also because she dislikes people like Hamid Saraj, and his plea for the rights of the poor, and denounciation of the tricks of colonialism. Whereas his mother and the other people at *Dar Sbitar* believe it is their destiny to remain poor, Omar keeps asking himself, "Pourquoi sommes nous pauvres? ... personne ne se révolte ... Pourquoi ne se révoltent-ils pas? Ont-ils peur? De quoi ont-ils peur?"so Yet Hamid Saraj is not afraid; he speaks the truth to many, inciting them to revolt: " Il faut en finir avec cette misère".[51] Whereas *Tante* Hasna believes that Hamid Saraj is a trouble-maker who should be arrested, Aini believes he is a nationalist leader working and risking his life for the poor, "On a compris beaucoup de choses. Si ce qu'il dit se réalise, ce sera le bonheur de tous les pauvres gens".[52] Although both Aini and Omar disapprove of *Tante* Hasna's claims, none of them try to bring her to face the truth, for they depend on her leftovers; on several occasions Omar goes to her house asking for a piece of bread.[53] Omar is very aware of this dialectic, and realizes that in his world there are so many contradictions and lies.

At school his teacher tells him that France is his *mère patrie* and asks him to describe an evening around the fireplace, something of which he knows nothing. He and his friends conclude, "celui qui sait le mieux mentir, le mieux arranger son

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49. Ibid., p.87.

50. Ibid., pp.117-118.

51. Ibid., p.120.

52. Ibid., p.93.

53. *La Grande maison.*, p.96.

mensonge est le meilleur de la classe".[54] However, if the pupils were asked to write about hunger, Omar could do a very good composition, "Il avait apprivoisé sa faim. A la longue, il put la traiter avec l'amitié due à tin être cher: mère bien aimée, mère faim, je t'ai réservé les mots les plus tendres".[55] In fact, hunger is Omar's faithful friend, who never leaves him. Nevertheless by the end of the novel, he has had enough of its company, and wants to know, "le comment et le pourquoi de cette faim".[56] Omar knows that people like him are to be found all over the country. To the torments of hunger, World War Two added a sensation of fear and panic. Like the whole population of Tlemcen, the inhabitants of *Dar Sbitar* are terrified. They all believe it is the apocalypse.S[7]

3. Mouloud Mammeri, *La Colline oubliée*[58]

This atmosphere of terror and alarm also reigns amongst the inhabitants of Tasga, the central hub of activity in *La Colline oubliée.* Like Feraoun and Dib, Mammeri wrote of his own experiences, and those of his people, "Je me disais alors que mes experiences et celles de mes proches camarades Kabyles valait la peine d' être mises noir sur blanc".[59] Like Feraoun, Mammeri kept a diary. Nevertheless, he wrote, not of his childhood, but of his youth; he described his novel as "Une remouture de ma jeunesse. Je sentais que mon adolescence fichait le camp. C'était

54. Ibid., p.21.

55. Ibid., pp.109-110.

56. Ibid., p.174.

57. Ibid., pp.177-182.

58. Mouloud Mammeri, *La Colline oubliée* (Paris: Plon, 1952).

59. Idem, Interview, *L'Effort algérien* (28 November 1952).

pour moi tout à la fois une façon de la revivre et de m'en débarrasser" [6°] Likewise, Mammeri, behind the mask of his character, the narrator Mokrane, describes his youth in Tasga, to which he returns after a long absence, which had separated him from his friends, with whom he had formed the *Taasast* group. In fact, the young men of Tasga are divided into two groups, those of the *Taasast:* the *évolués* who organize their meetings in Mokrane's house, in a high-up room from which they can see the whole village, and Ouali's *La bande* who meet in a vast field, far from the village houses. Whereas the first group is composed of rich and educated young men, who discuss various subjects, the second is mainly comprised of Tasga's poor and illiterate young men, who meet at night and organize their *sehjas*, during which they play music, sing and dance. Mokrane reveals that while he and his friends lack in nothing, those of *la bande* cannot always satisfy their hunger. Thus, as in Omar's city in *La Grande maison*, there are both rich and poor people in Tasga. The narrator reveals, because there were no jobs available in Tasga, the poor took up various unskilled jobs either in France or *"chez les arabes".*[61] The main figures of *La bande* are the great Ouali, Raveh and Mouh, "le Flûtiste Virtuose",[62] who all called those from *Taasast* either *les rupins* or *les fascistes.* However, the narrator says he was the least rich of his group for it was with great difficulty that his father paid for him to study in Bordeaux. The richest of all was Idir whom everyone liked greatly, not for his money, but for his artistic talent. Idir is not a student, but a vagrant who, has visited several different countries. In addition to Menach who studies in France, and Meddour who studies in Algiers, the group of *évolués* also includes two girls: Sekoura and Aazi. The whole group organizes its meetings during the summer. Nevertheless, the outbreak of the Second World War makes further meetings

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60. Idem, Interview, *El-Moudjahid* (10 December 1967)

61. *La Colline oubliée,* p.36.

62. Ibid., p.25.

impossible. The women of Tasga are terrified at the thought of all the men going to fight the Germans. However, they all believed the war was going to bring some changes to their monotonous life,

> On ne parlait plus que de cela, les femmes à la fontaine, sur les routes, les hommes sur la place publique, dans les cafés, les marchés. Pour des raisons diverses et par une étrange inconséquence chez ces hommes et ces femmes qui n'en auraient à subir que les ruines, c'était presque dans l' allégresse qu'on attendait la guerre. Enfin un grand événement, essentiel, puisqu'on y laissait la vie, général, puisqu'il affectait tout le monde, allait briser la monotonie de vivre.[63]

In fact, the people of Tasga, like those of *Dar Sbitar* or Tizi, suffer all sorts of hardships and curse their bad luck in vain, "quel était la cause du mal".M To the bad economic conditions is added the problem of the weather; as in *Dar Sbitar,* the summer in Tasga, is too hot and the winter too cold.

Unable to provide daily bread for their families, most of the men, like Fouroulou's father in *Le Fils du pauvre,* have to leave their village. An atmosphere of dissatisfaction reigns among the elderly, who all believed that a curse has been brought on to them by the youths, who do not respect their ancestors' customs. To this is added the mobilization of the young men of Tasga. Mokrane describes the eve of his friends' departure, when all the villagers escort the mobilized men, in an atmosphere of grief and mourning : "Tasga ne se remettrait pas du mal dont elle souffrait, quand tous les jeunes capables de travailler à sa guérison, seraient partis".65 It is in this sad atmosphere that Mokrane marries Aazi; he reveals that their wedding is not as happy as they had dreamt it would be, mainly because of the separation

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63. *La Colline oubliée,* pp.31-32.

64. Ibid., p.32.

65. Ibid., p.44.

brought by the war. Mokrane, together with his friends, is mobilized, "Tasga nous vit partir au milieu du même deuil et des mêmes gémissements qui avaient accompagné ceux de septembre".[66]

In this atmosphere of anger and confusion, the author presents a generation of young people, who could not resist the appeal of the unknown: "tous pourtant ne cédaient pas à l'attrait aveugle et irrésistible de l'inconnu".[67] Whether rich or poor, Mokrane's fellow countrymen all live with a dilemma. However, the saddest tale of all is Menach who loves Davda, the seductive wife of Akli, whom he visits at night during her husband's absence. The impossible nature of this love depressed Menach and he leaves the *Taasast* **to join** *la bande.* **To be accepted among them the elegant Menach wore dirty clothes and grew a beard. In fact, he is fascinated by the** *Sehjas,* **and particularly by Mouh with whom he starts a homosexual relationship. Both men love each other and find escape from their dilemma in their relationship. Although Mouh is married he never tells Menach, as he has left his wife and mother, and lives in Menach's village, where he works as a shepherd. In fact, Mouh, like Menach, loses interest in everything and believes he is free to live as he likes; "Je laisse la fortune à ceux qui se préparent une vieillesse heureuse ... ce que je veux moi, c'est user de ma jeunesse qui est un don de Dieu et qu'il est sacrilège d'étouffer".[68] Thus to escape their boring life, Mokrane, Meddour, Menach and all those from** *la bande* **join the training barracks. Unlike Idir, it is with regret that they leave their village. However, Idir, the vagrant artist, who is so enthusiastic about his mobilization[69], is the first to be let down by his military milieu; he tried so hard to become a pilot, but as an indigenous soldier he is only wanted among the ground staff. In the end he is**

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66. Ibid., p.58.

67. *La Colline oubliée,* p.38.

68. Ibid., p.70.

69. Ibid., p.58.

so disgusted by the army that he looks forward to his release. So do the others whose fatigue, anger and disgust, reach a crescendo. Mokrane reveals, "nous nous étions promis de ne rien faire pendant un an aprés notre démobilisation".[70] Consequently, after their demobilization the men from *Taasast* lose interest in their studies and decide not to join their universities. Whereas Meddour, the school teacher who used to believe in the virtues of the French "civilizing mission", has a great effort to rejoin• his school, and decides to replace his tie with the *chéchia*[71] of his people, Mouh splits with Menach and rejoins his wife and mother. As for Menach, he starts his long nocturnal walks again, dreaming of the inaccessible Davda. Nevertheless, the saddest tale of all concerns Idir, who goes mad, shaking Tasga every night with his screams, "Idir était devenu taciturne ... Crotté, barbu, hâve, l'air d'en vouloir à tout le monde".[72] As for Mokrane, he is tormented by many things, especially by his mother's decision to get rid of his barren wife, Aazi, whom he loves . To try to conciliate the two, Mokrane goes to see the *cheikh,*[73] asking him to calm his mother; Yet to Mokrane's disappointment, the latter refused. The wise *cheikh*, like the young people of Tasga, is also angry, "Maudit, tout ce siècle est maudit et vous n'êtes que deux brebis du troupeau. Maudit parceque vous vous êtes écartés de la voie" 7[4] Moreover, Mokrane is tormented by the poverty of his people; as an observer he describes his village during the war which brought most of its immigrants to Tasga. These appeared in all sorts of costumes; "la variété des costumes n'était qu'un signe de la bigarure des pensées".[75] However, whatever the costume, everyone "cherchait

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70. *La Colline oubliée,* p.72.

71. *Chéchia,* an indigenous woollen hat.

72. Ibid., p.74.

73. *Cheikh* [sic], the village's head.

74. *La Colline oubliée,* p.79.

75. Ibid., p.80.

la voie qui mènerait à un nouveau salut".[76] Among them, there are the Islamists, the Communists, those like Akli, who profit from the circumstances of the war, and the crowds of beggars, who walk in their ragged clothes asking for charity, "des bandes de mendiants promenaient de porte en porte leurs loques, leurs os saillants et leur vois dolentes".[77] The narrator concludes, this war has not brought any of the great ch anges for which his co-villagers Ahcene and Azouaou had fought and died, and some others, captured in Germany or Poland, had never returned. On the contrary, it has created more disorder, more dissatisfaction and more misery among the villagers. The narrator asks, "Le pays arabe est riche: ou était passé tout de blé? Les usines des français sont nombreuses et puissantes: qu'avait-on fait de tant d'étoffes?"[78] Like Omar and Hamid Saraj, Mokrane and his friends "cherchait en vain la cause de tout cela".[79] They all conclude that their misery is due to the anarchy of the government. Even so, the conscripts are called up again after American forces land in Algiers, and the whole population of Tasga, having lost confidence in everything, was desperate. Aazi, grieving over her husband's mobilization, forgets the torments of her barren state for she knows she might never see her husband again. In fact, while Mokrane goes to bring Mouh's mother to see her son before he die of typhus, an outbreak of which had occurred in Tasga, Aazi is rejected and Mokrane is asked to take another wife who would give him a son. Having refused to do so, Mokrane, deeply affected, leaves Tasga without seeing Aazi, who, he is told, has left him because she knows he would never come back.

Once again Tasga is deserted by Mokrane, Meddour and Menach. As for Ouali, he joins the maquis where many of the rebels live together, "Ouali alla

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76. Ibid., p.81.

77. Ibid.

78. Ibid., p.82.

79. La Colline oubliée.p.86.

rejoindre dans le maquis quelques spécialistes qui pour des raisons diverses y vivaient dèja depuis longtemps".[80] In fact, Ouali and his sort act as their people's judges because they have their own reasons for not trusting the French courts. Amidst all these events the narrator tells of the dilemma of Ibrahim and Sekoura who, like Fouroulou's.parents, and Aini, suffer hardship in providing their children's daily bread. After an illness which obliges Sekoura to stay in hospital for two weeks, Ibrahim has to borrow money at a high rate of interest from his boss. He has to do the same again after Sekoura gives birth. Although Ibrahim works hard every day, he cannot earn enough to feed his family. On top of this he has to pay taxes for his house, his field, his olive trees and the roads. Unable to do so, Ibrahim is threatened with jail. Thus, the only solution is to borrow more money at a high rate of interest from his boss. Having refused to seek another loan, the boss entices him away from work and later makes him mortgage his olive trees, threatening to seize his field if he does not pay his debts. Therefore, like Fouroulou's father, and any Kabyleman who mortgages his land, Ibrahim loses a part of himself very dear to him. Suffering even more than he, his old mother goes mad. She keeps describing every olive tree:

> Elle rappela une à une, et comme si elles étaient d'hier, toutes les campangnes d'huile qu'elle avait faites ... elle parlait de chaque olivier en particulier, comme elle parlait de Melha ou Kels - ouma ou d'une autre de ces vieilles qui avaient été jeunes avec elle; elle connaissait chaque buisson, chaque arbre.[81]

To recover his olive trees, save his land from being mortaged, his family from hunger and his son from becoming a victim of illiteracy,

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80. Ibid., p.125.

81. *La Colline oubliée*, pp.241-242.

> Ibrahim était décidé à lui faire continuer ses études, dût-il lui même crever à la tache, c'était assez de lui comme illettré. Lmouloud, s'il était instruit pourrait se débrouiller dans les villes, se défendre contre le caid, le percepteur, contre tous les chefs de la création, contre tous ceux qui le pressuraient, lui, Ibrahim, sans qu'il pût jamais rien contre eux.[82]

Ibrahim, like Fouroulou's father, decides to leave his village.. He reveals his plan to Sekoura in the dark; he will work in a mine in the Sahara. Sekoura is very upset, and tries in vain to dissuade him, "quand tu ne seras plus là, notre misère me paraîtra hor rible. Mon coeur enfantera la peur, et je n'aurai personne pour le calmer".[83] Nevertheless, Ibrahim leaves his family at dawn, while the whole village is asleep.

The author shows the corruption of the whole system; Ibrahim is exploited, and is then dismissed by his boss because he refuses to borrow money from him at a high rate of interest. Although he knows he has not committed any error leading to the loss of his job, there is no justice for him to depend on. The same holds true when Ibrahim asked the *caid* for a *laisser-passer.* Although he is very poor and has to leave his family in order to pay his debts, Ibrahim still has to pay the *caid.* He rebelled, "C'était illégal et injuste".[84] However, his mother, who has already offered the *caid's* wife her last hen and a basketful of eggs, convinces him he should do so because he can do nothing against the system. Furthermore, the narrator depicts the absurdities governing his people; he focuses on his own case;- after she has been rejected for her infertility, Aazi discovers she is pregnant. Her rejection is thus absurd, particularly as it causes so much remorse for Mokrane, who reveals in his diary, "Que puis-je reprocher exactement à ma femme? La coutume? Les dires?

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82. Ibid., pp.244-245.

83. La Colline oubliée, p.244.

84. Ibid., p.

Les plaintes de ma mère? Ah! Pourquoi ya-t-il des pentes qu'on ne remonte plus?"[85] As he anxiously awaits his demobilization, Mokrane remembers his past with Aazi and cannot continue with his diary. Therefore, as in *Le Fils du pauvre,* the narrator abandons his role, another narrator takes over and completes the story of Mokrane, who dies in an ironic twist, in the snow, before he can reach Tasga. A few days later, Aazi gives birth to her son, whom she names Mokrane.

After the deaths of Mokrane and Mouh, Menach decides to leave Tasga for ever,

> Pour Menach cette fois c'était bien fini. Il n'avait plus de raison de tenir à ce coin de terre, ou il avait épuisé son adolescence: ses deux meilleurs amis y étaient morts, les autres camarades disparus, la veuve de son ami le plus cher était comme morte et la femme qu'il avait aimée était mariée. Le Cheikh et Na Ghné n'allaient pas tarder à quitter eux aussi Tasga pour toujours.[86]

At the end of the novel Tasga is depicted as a deserted place where nothing but grief and horror reign.

To conclude, Feraoun, Mammeri and Dib played the role of witnesses who reflected the situation of their people, their problems and anxieties; and also showed what their people were really like, painting an authentic representation of them and showing others that like everyone in the world, their compatriots were human beings whith feelings and dreams, deserving a decent life. Therefore, they all tried to present ordinary people in their endless struggle for survival, people who wanted to know the reasons behind their hunger and suffering. Thus, they did not point the finger at the colonists, but preferred to be as objective as they could, letting the

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85. Ibid., p.181.

86. *La Colline oubliée,* p.251.

reader judge the situation for himself. In short, they were observers, who revealed what they saw and experienced.

Section Two

Political Contestation

> Décrire une humanité moins belle et plus vraie, une terre aux couleurs moins chatoyantes mais plus riche de sève nouricière: des hommes qui luttent et qui souffrent, et sont les répliques exactes de ceux que nous voyons autour de nous.[87]

Feraoun's literary work can be described as revolutionary, not only because it inaugurated a new era in the history of the Algerian novel, an era in which the novelist's concern is the Algerian in his daily struggle for survival, described in very realistic terms, avoiding glossing over the ugly or repulsive to present an attractive image for the French reader, but also revolutionary vis-à-vis the literature of the Algerian-born French writers. Feraoun expressed his displeasure at the absence of authentic Algerian people in the novels of Roblès, Camus and other Algerian-born F rench writers, who all reflected an alien reality based on alien experiences. Thus, the writing of *Le Fils du pauvre* was an attempt to offer his people a place in fiction as well as to create a genuinely Algerian novel which differs from the French novel not only in its content but also in its language; although written in French, this novel cannot be described as French, not only because the writer peppers his narrative with Berber words but also the writer's imagery and logic differ greatly from that of the French.[88] According to Feraoun, an 'Algerian' writer is one who describes the Algerian condition from within the Algerian society. Thus, although Camus and Roblès were great humanitarian sympathizers with the Algerians, they could not

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87. Mouloud Feraoun, *L'Anniversaire* (Paris: Le Seuil, 1972), p.54.

88. For more detail, see conclusion.

express the feelings of the Algerian people as could an Algerian writer who had experienced these same feelings. Feraoun explains this fact as follows:

> Si nous sommes absents dans l'oeuvre d'un Camus qui ne cesse de proclamer noblement la misère et la grandeur de la condition humaine, si les algériens de Moussy, qu'on ne peut imaginer plus authentiques et plus proches de nous, nous coudoient continuellement sans nous voir, c'est que ni Moussy ni Camus ni presque tous les autres n'ont pu venir jusqu'a nous pour suffisament nous connaître.[89]

To achieve his aim to create a genuinely Algerian novel, Feraoun depicted his own world, or more precisely, his own experience. Thus, being realistic in his writings, he told his readers about the condition he knew best, providing them with firsthand information about life in Kabylia, as well as the difficulties a native son of the poor had to overcome to achieve further education.

As such, what was the critics' reaction to *Le Fils du pauvre?* The first thousand copies of the novel sold out in less than a year. In the same year it was awarded *Le Grand Prix Littéraire de la ville d'Alger*. In 1954, the novel was republished in a second version by *Le Seuil.* In short, it was a great success. The French critics who described it as "Un beau roman, simple, touchant, écrit dans une langue accessible à tous",[90] were pleased by its optimistic tone, and also interpreted it as praising the French "civilizing mission" thanks to which a son of poor people could become a school teacher. However, Feraoun's aim was in fact to tell the world of the bad conditions his people lived under, and show metropolitan readers that Algerians were human beings and needed to be treated as such. Therefore, by describing the daily life of his people at a time when the colonists were contesting

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89. M. Feraoun, *l'Anniversaire*, p.55.

90. Youssef Nacib, *Mouloud Feraoun,* **(Alger-Paris:** SNED- Fernand Nathan, 1982), p.30.

their very right to existence, Feraoun "performed the valuable service of helping to dispel the myths, misconceptions and deliberate racial calumnies that were propagated in the colony à propos of the indigenous population" 9[1] As for the Algerian critics, they preferred at first to pass no comment on the novel. Yet later on when Mammeri's *La Colline oubliée* was published, Algerian 'nationalist' critics savagely attacked both writers, for what they referred to as their ethnic bias and narrow regionalism. As they were both Kabyle writers, Mammeri and Feraoun were accused of embittering relationships between Arabs and Kabyles at a time when Algeria needed an unified populace to face their common enemy.

Both writers replied that far from being narrow - minded regionalists, by describing the society to which they belonged, they could provide a realistic image of the conditions of poverty they knew best. Mammeri claimed, "On ne parle bien, on n'apporte d'expérience authentic que sur des êtres et des choses dont on a une intime connaissance".[92] However, the criticism of the nationalist intelligensia intensified after Mohammed Dib's *La Grande maison* followed *La Colline oubliée* a few months later. Although Dib made his region, Tlemcen, the setting of his novel, the nationalist critics did not accuse him of being a narrow-minded regionalist. Consequently, whereas their duty was to consider any literature by any Algerian writer as Algerian, the nationalist critics were in fact the first to create a division between Arab and Kabyle writers. Having said this, one must mention that the French critics had something to do with the matter; the French press greeted *La Colline oubliée* with a hypocritical acclaim calling it "Le roman de l'âme berbère",[93]

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91. S.C. Whittick, *The Colonial Situation in Algeria,* p.129.

92. Mouloud Mammeri, "Entretien sur la littérature algérienne", *Revue de presse*, no. 114 (Avril 1967).

93. M. Monoyer, "Le Roman de l'âme berbère", *l'Effort Algérien* (Alger: 30 October 1952).

"Le beau roman Kabyle".[94] They, maliciously exploited the ethnographic data, through which the author sought to reaffirm his cultural roots and prove that his people owned a rich patrimony, for their own political ends. The award of *Le Prix des Quatre jurys* for *La Colline oubliée* worsened the situation; the French critics went on praising the great 'Berber' novel, and the nationalist critics were increasingly embittered, rejecting the novel simply because it was applauded by the colonists. The sole victim of the affair was Mammeri, whose novel, apart from any political considerations, was good. However, the artistic element of the novel was secondary for the Algerian critics, who only considered a novel good if it opposed the colonial order, "Une oeuvre signée d'un algérien ne peut nous intérésser que d'un seul point de vue: Quelle cause sert-elle? Quelle est sa position dans la lutte qui oppose le mouvement national au colonialism",[95] claims M.Ch. Sahli. Therefore, his criticism of *La Colline oubliée* is based on the fact that it did not deal satisfactorily with the reasons for the people's suffering. The 'militant' critics wanted the novel to be a means of accusation. As for M. Lacheraf in his article, "La Colline Oubliée ou les consciences anachroniques", he criticized Mammeri for being 'regionalist', "Il n'y a pas que l'amour de 'la petite patrie' qui anime ce livre, il y a aussi la façon presque agressive, injuste, avec laquelle on retranche la communauté régionale du reste du pays".[96] He added:

> Quant à l'accueil favorable réservé par une certaine presse française à ce roman, il ne doit pas nous surprendre. Il s' explique aisément par une ignorance profonde des réalités algériennes et surtout par ce vernis folklorique teinté de

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94. R. Janon, *La Dépêche Quotidienne,* (Constantine: 24 September 1952).

95. M.Ch.Sahli, "La Colline du reniement", *Le Jeune Musulman,* no. 12 (2 Janvier, 1953).

96. M. Lacheraf, *"La Colline oubliée,* ou les consciences anachroniques", *Le Jeune Musulman,* no. 15, (Feb. 1953), pp.4-6.

> réminiscences qui flatte l'imagination d'un lecteur habitué aux artifices de la littérature coloniale.[97]

Moreover, far from understanding that Menach's despair was behind his homosexual relationship with Mouh, Lacheraf severely criticized Mammeri for even speaking of such a 'shameless' matter- which in any case was illogical:

> Mais pourquoi diantre, Menach éprouve-t-il le besoin de par la volonté de l'auteur de mener, parallélement à ses amours avec la belle Davda des amours contre-nature avec un jeune berger? Ces amitiés particulières avaient-elles leur place ici, étant donné le milieu et les circonstances qui déterminent le comportement du personnage?[98]

Thus, seeing Mammeri's attempt to expose the ills of his people as another way of serving the colonizer, as well as betraying his own people, Lacheraf's anger reached its crescendo in declaring, "Mammeri à été calomnié; il doit se défendre et procéder sans retard et publiquement à une mise au point claire et nette".[99] Like Lacheraf and Mohammed Cherif Sahli, Mahfoud Kaddache was extremely critical; he criticized Mammeri for a lack of commitment to the Algerian national cause, and for failing to pillary the colonial powers for the deplorable situation of his people,i[0°] More aware than these three critics, Mohammed Salah Dembri tried to analyse the strategy of the colonial press who exploited the ethnographic data contained in *La Colline oubliée* for their own political ends,

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97. Ibid.

98. Ibid.

99. M. Lacheraf, *"La Colline oubliée,* ou les consciences anachroniques".

100. Mahfoud kaddache ," *La Colline oubliée* de Mouloud Mammeri", *La Voix des jeunes,* no. 8 (Feb. 1953), p.15.

> Devenus maîtres de l'administration algérienne, ils pensaient l'occasion propice pour casser le front nationaliste ... et de susciter parmi l'élite algérienne un antagonisme éthnique, une séparation régionaliste. Les critiques littéraires se mirent donc à l'oeuvre, exploitant l' origine Kabyle de Mammeri, sollicitant les ambiguités de l' oeuvre ... mettant à profit le décalage historique ... Sérinant le dithyrambe ... Le berbérisme avait souvent servi dans la politique coloniale en Algérie, pourquoi pas une nouvelle fois?101

Other critics such as Jean Sénac wished Mammeri had not tackled such a complex topic, "Mais pourquoi diable a-t-il été choisir une matière aussi violente, une situation aussi épineuse que celle de la jeunesse algérienne à la croisée des chemins! Comment n'a-t-il pas senti que son sujet était de toute évidence le drame d'un peuple mis en demeure de choisir son destin".[102] Nevertheless, it appears that Senac did not understand that Mammeri was a realist writer and, as such, it was part of his duty to reflect reality as witnessed by himself, not as the 'militant' critics would have preferred. This is also the reason why, instead of depicting a group of positive heroes, whose main objective would have been the anti-colonial struggle, Mammeri presented the youth of Tasga as subject to an 'interior' crisis in their endless quest for self-fulfilment. Lacheraf, who did not understand this quest, criticized Mammeri for writing a novel of despair and escapism.[103] This led to the paradox that, whereas nationalist critics accused Mammeri of writing 'escapist' literature, they in fact wanted him to avoid the truth, and write about what things *should* be like, not about how things actually were. Well aware of this fact, Mammeri, like Feraoun, preferred to confront the reader with the most desperate, yet the deepest, truths about himself,

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101. Mohammed Salah Dembri, "Querelles autour de *La Colline oubliée* de Mouloud Mammeri", *Revue algérienne des lettres et des sciences humaines,* no.1 (1969), pp.168-169.

102. Jean Sénac [Comma Gérard], *"La Colline oubliée", Terrasses,* no. 1 (June 1953).

103. A. Khatibi, *Le Roman maghrébin,* p.53.

"confronter mon lecteur avec la vérité la plus profonde et quelque-fois la plus désespérée de lui même".[104] For these writers, the revelation of the actual situation was in itself a revolutionary act. The exposure of the sufferings of their people and the bitter expression of their pathetic condition, demonstrates these authors' yearning to effect changes. In this vein, Jean Paul Sartre wrote:

> Parler c'est agir: toute chose qu'on nomme n'est déja plus tout à fait la même, elle a perdu son innocence. Si vous nommez la conduite d'un individu vous la lui révélez: il se *voit*. Et comme vous la nommez, en même temps, à tous les autres, il se sait *vu* dans le moment qu'il se *voit;* son geste furtif, qu'il oubliait en le faisant, se met à exister enormément, à exister pour tous, il s'intégre à l'esprit objectif, il prend des dimensions nouvelles, il est récupéré .. Ainsi, en parlant, je dévoile la situation par mon project même de la changer; je la dévoile à moi-même et aux autres *pour* la changer ... l'écrivain "engagé" sait que la parole est action: il sait que dévoiler c'est changer et qu'on ne peut dévoiler qu'en projetant de changer.[105]

Thus assuming Sartre's view, these writers, although fiercely criticized for their lack of commitment, were in fact truly committed to the national cause. In fact, the success of their novels lies in the aspects disliked by the militant critics, regarding the reality they depicted. Aware of this, Mammeri wrote:

> Le fond du problème, c'est que mon critique trouvait scandaleux que mon roman ne soit pas une simple et sanglante condamnation du colonialisme. Mais mon critique se trompait de cible. *Ce que j'écrivais, c'était un roman,* ce qu'il fallait me demander (ou se demander) c'était: est-ce-que la peinture était fidèle au modèle vrai et pas aux figures d'artifice qu'une mauvaise idéologie leur substitue ... Le véritable engagement consistait à présenter cette société telle qu'elle était dans la réalité et non pas telle

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104. Abdallah Mazouni and Mouloud Mammeri, "La littérature engagée, l'art en pays révolutionnaire", *Le Jour,* Beirut (27 May-3 June, 1966), p.4.

105. Jean-Paul Sartre, *Qu'est ce que la littérature?* Coll. idées (Paris: Gallimard, 1967), pp.29-30. [Sartre's emphasis]

> que l'aurait reconstruite un choix de héros dits positifs ou retraduite un discours idéologique, c'est-à-dire un mythe. *Le premier devoir d'un romancier est le devoir de la vérité.*[106]

Moreover, it is worth noting that in their criticism of *Le Fils du pauvre* and *La Colline oubliée,* which they compared to *La Grande maison,* the nationalist critics did not take into consideration that whereas the first two novels were written before the events of May 1945, the latter was written after. The difference between the two periods lies not only in the new direction of Algerian nationalism after these events, but also in the fact that the opportunity for an Algerian writer to publish a novel at that early period was almost non-existent.[107] In fact both writers wrote their works with no thought of publication. Mammeri revealed, "il était très difficile et presque impossible de faire paraître quelque chose en littérature".[108] Another point to consider is the severe censorship faced by both Mammeri and Feraoun; the former states: "J'étais contraint à la litote, à certaines ambiguités, parfois même - et cela est plus grave - à certains choix qui eussent été autres dans un contexte politique différent".[109] However, if the former had to suppress a certain number of passages from his novel, the latter suppressed more than half of *Le Fils du pauvre* in order to have it republished by *Le Seuil* in 1954. Although Feraoun withdrew the second half of his novel on Roblès's advice, for aesthetic reasons, it so happened that the suppressed part is also the one most critical of the French. In this part Feraoun speaks of the deception felt after the Second World War. Hoping for change, the Algerians had fought and died under the French flag, yet the situation after the war

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106. Tahar Djaout, *Mouloud Mammeri* (Alger: Laphomic, 1987), pp.31-32 [emphasis mine]

107. See *Supra,* pp.104-105. (Feraoun's efforts to publish *Le fils du pauvre),p.*

108. S.C. Whittick, *The Colonial Situation in Algeria,* p.137.

109. . Mammeri, "Entretien sur la litterature algérienne".

became worse, than before. Feraoun focuses on the economical crisis which deprived his people of their dignity. He criticizes the colonial media for telling lies and accuses the colonial regime of being behind the privation and famine of his people. Consequently, although nationalist critics praised *La Grande maison* for being the kind of novel which precedes revolutions,'[10] it contained nothing more than the preceding two novels. The only difference, however, was the tone in which Dib wrote his novel. Nevertheless, one must understand that a novel like *La Grande maison* would not have appeared if novels like *Le Fils du pauvre* and *La Colline oubliée* had not paved the way. Also it is obvious that *La Grande maison,* which the author wrote after the events of May, was written in a more candid style and had a more accusatory tone than the preceding novels. Having said that, one may add that the militant critics praised *La Grande maison* for the same reasons for which they rejected *La Colline oubliée.* On the other hand, the French critics who applauded *La Colline oubliée* as being a genuine work of art, described *La Grande maison* as being a pamphlet, "l'un est une oeuvre digne d'entrer dans le prestigieux olympe de l'art, l' autre est un pamphlet. L'un divise, l'autre réunit dans l'amour. L'un parle au coeur un langage qui efface les frontières et les races, l'autre souffle sur la rancune avec des arguments empruntés à la propagande".[1]" In fact, *La Grande maison* was neglected by everyone apart from the French communists and the nationalist critics, not because it was of lesser merit, [12] but because it was explicitly accusatory and deeply committed to the Algerian national cause. Moreover, the characters *in La Grande maison* are in constant revolt against their fate- Aini is a case in point; although she suffers less than Fouroulou's father and Ibrahim in *La Colline oubliée,* she is rebellious, while the other two seem to suffer in silence. Thus, the three

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110. J. Sénac, *"La Colline oubliée",* p.99.

111. La Dépêche Quotidienne. (Feb. 7th, 1953).

112. It was awarded *Le Prix Fénélon* in 1953.

authors expressed more or less the same anxieties in describing the same conditions. The difference remains in that Dib's tone was more straightforward, and that *La Grande maison* did not contain the ethnographic data seen in the other two novels.

Nevertheless, these two factors are due to the respective periods in which the three novels were written. It is obvious that the massacres of May 1945 left their effect on Dib who, being a realist as a writer, was concerned with reflecting his people's condition and describing their feelings. The three novels depicted Algerian society before the second World War and the hope of the people that the war's end would bring some changes to their appalling condition. However, both Mammeri and Feraoun showed that the war brought none of the changes for which many Algerians had fought and died, bringing the anger and despair of their people to crisis point. By stressing this state of anger, both writers had, in a way, pointed out the reasons which were to lead to the massacres of May 1945. Also, whereas the events in the earlier novels ended in 1944, *La Grande maison* ended just as the war broke out.

Mouloud Feraoun states that Dib, Mammeri and himself have all contributed to the fulfilment of a common cause, namely that of telling the world of the terrible conditions their people faced:

> Chacun à parlé de ce qu'il connaît, de ce qu'il à vu ou senti, et pour être sûr de dire vrai, chacun à mis dans son livre une grande part de lui-même. Mais puisque la vision reste la même sous des angles différents, des drames identiques ont été observés ... Le témoin qui assiste au perpétuel spectacle de la misère à crié tout d'abord la faim des hommes: celle des villes surpeuplées ou de la montagne aride. C'est le thème poignant de *La Grand maison*, qu'on retrouve plus voilé dans *Le Fils du pauvre*, *La Colline oubliée* ...
>
> L'écrivain ayant dénoncé la faim comme un mal profond mais guérissable qu'il importait vite de soigner à désiré faire connaître le malade, non établir des ordonnances ou proposer des remèdes. C'est pourquoi il à sacrifié au folklore, au régionalisme étroit. Pour la même raison d' ailleurs tout entier à son idée, il ne s'est pas soucié d' esthétique, ou d'irréprochable pureté formelle. Le côté

> documentaire de son oeuvre garde a ses yeux la plus grande importance, il lui consacre toute son attention parce qu'il sait, hélas, que l'observateur qui à étudié la société musulmane de l'extérieur ne l'A jamais bien comprise.[113]

Therefore, the Algerian writer who endeavoured to describe the condition of his people and reflect reality as he saw it, did not endeavour to write an aesthetically successful novel. In a letter to Claude Yves Meade, Dib wrote, "Il y a oeuvre algérienne dans la mesure ou cette oeuvre reflète d'une manière ou d'une autre la réalité nationale algérienne".[114] To the same author, Feraoun said, "Le roman algérien doit être d'abord un témoignage aussi sincère, aussi objectif que possible. Ceci est exigé de nous par la situation qui nous est faite dans le monde".[115] Consequently, the Francophone Algerian novel is a result of a political condition which stimulated Algerian writers to describe reality. This wholly explains the biographical aspect of these novels, the authors' concern with ethnographic detail, their focus upon the regions they came from and the documentary aspect of their novels.

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113. M. Feraoun, *L'Anniversaire,* pp.55-56.

114. C.Y. Meade, *Le Roman réaliste nord-africain,* p.177.

115: Ibid., p.23. .

CHAPTER FIVE

Realism, Alienation and Revolution: The Algerian Novel Comes of Age

1. Mouloud Feraoun, *La Terre et le sangs*

In the three novels discussed above, the authors described their own experiences. However, in *La Terre et le sang*, Feraoun tells his readers of his father's experiences as an immigrant.[2] Like the French Naturalists, he decided to go to the French mines to get a closer view of Algerian miners. In a letter to some of his French friends Feraoun wrote,

> J'ai cette année des parents un peu partout en France et je voudrais aller dans le nord pour voir les mineurs Kabyles pour la raison que dans mon roman il sera question d'un bonhomme qui a vadrouillé un peu partout ... **Il** me faut beaucoup de précisions sur la vie des nôtres en France. Cela fera toute une partie du bouquin. J'hésite à l'écrire sans voir de près.[3]

However, he was unable to go to the French mines and instead met Algerian immigrants in Paris and stayed with them for a certain period of time, not far from *La rue de la Goutte d'or* and *La rue Myrha* where Amer, the central figure in *La Terre et le sang*, lived for three years. Marie-Hélène Chèze states:

> S'il n'a pu mettre à éxécution son projet d'aller voir dans le nord des mineurs Kabyles comme ceux qu'il met en scène dans son roman, il décrit cependant, avec les accents d'une vérité confirmée depuis par de nombreux témoignages, la vie misérable et dure de ces hommes: la recherche du travail, toujours pénible et mal rétribué, l'entassement dans les dortoirs crasseux, les repas de midi faits d'une tartine

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1. M. Feraoun, *La Terre et le sang* (Paris: Le Seuil, 1953).

2. In *Le Fils du pauvre*, Feraoun describes his father's departure for France and focuses on its effect on him, his mother and his sisters. In *La Terre et le sang* he describes the effect of immigration on the immigrant himself.

3. M. Feraoun, *Lettres a ses **amis,*** p.51.

> beurrée et d'une bouteille de café, et suivis d'une pause à même le sol, sur le lieu de travail.[4]

La Terre et le sang focuses on a group of Algerian immigrants in the north of France. The novel shows how difficult it was for North-Africans, with their deep feelings for their homeland, to leave their countries and people. If Fouroulou's father, in *Le Fils du pauvre,* Ibrahim and Menach in *La Colline oubliée,* Amer, Rabah and Ramdane in *La Terre et le sang,* did leave their villages, it was only because they were forced to do so. In fact, the whole phenomenon of immigration as presented in these three novels: "directly contests the colonizer's image of the native as a creature who is profoundly indifferent to material well being, devoid of normal 'human' needs"[5]; the novelists proved that if Algerians had to go to the land of their colonists, it was not in order to visit other people's countries, but rather to sell their labour at whatever price, to provide a more tolerable standard of living for their families. Feraoun emphasized the appalling living conditions of the immigrants who were not treated like human beings; they lived in cramped, overcrowded and squalid rooms in the lower part of the town and were only offered the most risky jobs which the French refused.

In the first lines of his novel, Feraoun affirmed, "l'histoire qui va suivre a été réellement vécue"[6], and took it upon himself to portray the life of the immigrants both in France and in his own country.

Whereas in *Le Fils du pauvre* and *La Colline oubliée,* the authors described the effects of the fathers' departure on their families, *La Terre et le sang* describes

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4. M.H. Chèze, *M. Feraoun - La Voix et le silence (* Paris: Le Seuil, 1982), pp. 67-68.

5. S.C. Whittick, *The Colonial Situation in Algeria,* p.398.

6. *La Terre et le sang,* p.7.

the anguish of the immigrant himself, as he plunges into the unknown in order to save his people from starvation.

Amer, the central figure in *La Terre et le sang*, leaves his village in tears. Although deeply moved by his parents' words, he knows he is to save them from their misery, "Il était jeune et robuste, avait fréquenté l'école, ne flânait pas *à* l' ouvrage. Il pouvait abandonner ses travaux Kabyles, apprentissage ingrat et aller gagner gros à l'usine".[7] The description of his departure is sad and gruesome; packed together with his sea-sick fellow compatriots in the bows of the ship, Amer thinks only of the new job he is about to find, the boss he will obey, the hard work he will do and the wages. He is afraid that his compatriots might abandon him in a country where everything looked strange and frightening. Nevertheless, "un de ses compagnons le prit par la main et tous les quatre avancèrent ensemble, hésitants, timides, apeurés, l'air sérieux et humble".[8] Amer knows his fear and anguish are shared by his compatriots, who are all relieved at the sight of the group of Kabyle immigrants who had settled in the north of France several years previously. The pri ncipal figure in the group is Rabah, who helps the new immigrants to find employment as miners. As for Amer, who dreams of becoming a factory worker, he becomes a cook for the group, who feed him and pay his rent, until his uncle Rabah can forge "some papers" to enable him to join the mine. Nevertheless, for the time being, Amer forgets his parents and learns, like Rabah, to take care of no one but himself. For their part, convinced that their son will never come back, Kaci and Kamouma sell their land in order to survive.

Although his working conditions are very poor, Amer is convinced, "c'est dans la fosse que l'on à l'impréssion d'être un homme".[9] Thus, with his compatriots,

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7. *La Terre et le sang,* pp.16-17.

8. Ibid., p.52.

9. *La Terre et le sang,* p.57.

he knows the daily hardship of a miner, working hard in the darkness of the mine, and he admires strong miners like his Uncle Rabah and the Pole, André, who uses Amer's friendship to kill his rival, Rabah, whom hé suspected of being his wife's lover.. In fact André plans the murder so well that he hids the truth from Amer and makes the Kabylian miners believe that Rabah has died of an accident. Although they do not believe André's claim, Rabah's compatriots know that the authorities would never pay any attention to their protests anyway. Should Amer, who had witnessed the 'accident', tell the truth, he would be arrested, and accused of having murdered his uncle, who was officially declared to have committed suicide,

> Si Amer avait parlé autrement, il aurait été arrété. De quel poids ait été son témoignage, à côté de celui d'André? On savait bien comment les choses se passaient, dés qu'il s' agissait "d'arabes". Il suffisait de voir la manière d' enquêter. Tout le monde était pressé d'en finir. André n' avait qu'un témoin. Le pauvre Rabah avait pour lui l'équipe entière. Mais on n'insista pas. André fut mis hors de cause.' °

In addition to this injustice suffered by North African workers, Amer reveals that his compatriots, who work harder than the others, are paid less, badly treated and exposed to the most risky tasks. However, whereas the Polish workers support each other, the Kabyles keep their tribal attitudes, and are split into several tiny groups according to the areas they come from in their own country. Amer, feeling remorse for having kept silent over Rabah's murder by André and for having neglected his old parents, leaves the northern France. After experiencing captivity in Germany, hard labour, humiliation and loneliness, Amer goes to Paris where people are celebrating the end of the First World War. However, feeling he is a failure, he becomes "un homme ruiné et pitoyable, sans ressort et sans freins. Il avait besoin de

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10. Ibid., p.66.

se refaire".[11] To this end, he decides to respond to the strong call of his homeland and tries to find Marie, Mme André's daughter, whose father, he believes, was Rabah. After a long quest he succeeds in meeting her, he marries her and takes her to his home village, Ighil Nezman, as the lost daughter of Rabah, "le sang de Rabah revient dans celui de sa fille. Oui, il revient dans notre terre. La terre et le sang!".I[2] Amer is greatly relieved to atone for his previous cowardice with regard to Rabah's family. Back in Ighil Nezman, Amer, together with Marie, is glad to have escaped " cette vie de chien pauvre"[13] they have led in Paris. Moreover, he is pleased to find his mother once more, and save her from the pain and misery she has been suffering in his absence. He is also proud of recovering *Thighezrane,*[14] his parents' ancestral land which they had sold while he was in France. In fact, this ancestral land is portrayed as a character, that exercises a strong influence on the other characters; most of the events in the novel are provoked by this ancestral land, which the author presents parallel with the theme of family (blood) as follows: Amer's return to his *terre natal* is described as a response to its call. It is described as a mother, "Nous en sortons et nous y retournons ... elle aime ses enfants. Quand ils l'oublient trop, elle les rappelle".[15] Moreover, Amer brings back from France *'le sang'* of Rabah in his daughter Marie. So important is this factor of inheritance in Ighil-Nezman that, as in *La Colline oubliée,* barrenness is seen as a disaster for those so afflicted, as on their deaths, others would inherit their land. In fact, from *La Terre et le sang,* it appears that the only reason the families of Ighil Nezman fear barrenness is because they love their land, and will let no stranger take possession of it. It is within this context

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11. *La Terre et le sang,* p.69.

12. Ibid., p.124.

13. Ibid., p.45.

14. *Thighezrane,* the name of his parents' last piece of land.

15. *La Terre et le sang,* p.115.

that Feraoun presents the characters of Chabha and Slimane who, after ten years of marriage, have no children. Slimane, Rabah's brother, was the last member of a prestigious family. He is not only tormented by his infertility and the idea that his cousins are waiting for his death to take over his land, but also by the promise he had made his uncle that he would avenge Rabah. Although, Chabha's father, Ramdane, tries to convince Slimane that Amer is not the murderer,[16] Slimane endures constant nightmares in which his dead Uncle Ali reminds him of his promise. However, as he knows that Marie is his niece, Slimane decides to forgive and befriend Amer. For his part, Amer, whose only concern in Ighil Nezman is Slimane, welcomes the latter and offers him work on his land.

In fact, Amer, whom the villagers have welcomed back as one of their own, and respect for having redeemed his ancestral land, lives in a state of alienation; the Amer who has returned is different from the one who had left the village several years previously. He feels like an uprooted olive tree, "Il est homme dans ce pays qui l'a connu enfant. Sans transition. Et pareil à l'olivier adulte qu'on arrache de sa plaine pour le transplanter dans les terrains schisteux d'Ighil Nezman, it va falloir se remett re à donner racines".[17] Moreover, although he has spent most of his money on buying Thighezrane, Amer feels that there is a considerable rift between himself and his land. He understands that, although he loves Thighezrane, the ties which linked him to it have been severed for ever. Consequently, he offers it to Slimane who will cherish it as a loving husband,

> Amer, le coeur serré, comprit qu'il aimait bien Thighezrane mais que c'était fini: ils étaient étrangers l'un à l'autre. Thighezrane ne lui en voulait pas. C'était Slimane qui convenait, Slimane qui pouvait la travailler, l'entretenir

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16. *La Terre et le sang,* pp.84-91.

17. Ibid., p.49.

> comme un amoureux, cueillir la récolte comme un avare car notre terre aime les fellahs rudes et avares.[18]

Feraoun stresses this image of the land as a loving woman, to the extent that in some passages he appears to refer to the *colons* who exploit the land of the Algerians without loving or caring for it, claiming, "Il y a des signes qui ne trompent pas, qui sont évidents mais qu'on ne peut pas expliquer: c'est l'accord entre les gens et la glèbe" .[19] He adds:

> Notre terre est modeste. Elle aime et paie en secret. Elle reconnaît tout de suite les siens: ceux qui sont faits pour elle et pour qui elle est faite. Ce n'est pas seulement les mains blanches qu'elle repousse, ni les paresseux ou les chétifs mais toutes les mains mercenaires qui veulent la forcer sans l'aimer ... Elle ne veut même pas de mains qui prétendent l'embellir. Elle n'a que faire d'allées bien droites et ratissées, de fleurs étrangères, de clôtures rectilignes avec barières de menuisier. Sa beauté, il faut la découvrir et pour cela il faut l'aimer.[20]

After his long years of separation, Amer cannot make his beloved land fruitful. Feraoun uses the same image for the barren couple of Slimane and Chabha; whereas Amer offers Slimane his land to make it fertile, Chabha's mother, in agreement with Amer's mother Kamouma, pushes Amer into making Chabha pregnant. Although at first they reject their mothers' plan, Amer and Chabha later become very attached to one another. Chabha finds in Amer the sexual satisfaction Slimane cannot give her, whereas Amer's relationship with Chabha can be explained as part of his attempt at *réenracinement,* which he has failed to find in redeeming

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18. Ibid., p.163.

19. *La Terre et le sang,* p.162.

20. Ibid., pp.162-163.

Thighezrane. He vows, "... après tout, le véritable amour c'est chez soi qu'on le trouve".[21] In fact this relationship is also an attempt to escape from his feeling of alienation due to his association with Marie, who not only reminds him of his sad exile in France, but also symbolizes the alienation of French civilization.

For his part, Slimane who had suspected Chabha of infidelity on several occasions[22] endures a constant dilemma, not only because his wife had betrayed him, but also because Amer, who he believes has killed Rabah, had also betrayed his brother Slimane. In secret, Slimane, deeply disillusioned, prepares a plan to avenge both his love and his brother Rabah. Like André, Slimane rids himself of his rival in a planned accident in which both men die. As for Marie, being pregnant, she decides to stay in Ighil Nezman so that Amer's son is born on his father's ancestral land.

144ε2. Mouloud Feraoun,Les *Chemins qui montent*[23]

A sequel to *La Terre et le sang, Les Chemins qui montent* has Amer's heir, whom Feraoun called Amer N'Amer, as its central figure.

As in the first two novels, Feraoun divides *Les Chemins qui montent* into two parts of approximately equal length. Both parts start with a death sentence. However, whereas the first part is narrated by Dehbia who describes the sudden death of her lover Amer, the son, and its effect upon her, the second part takes up twelve days in Amer's diary which he had started on the day of his mother's funeral. Therefore, whereas the first part appears as a flash-back starting with Amer's death and goes back to Dehbia's childhood, her relationship with Amer and her dilemma after his sudden death, the second part is a daily account of Amer's crisis after his mother's

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21. Ibid., p.173.

22. La Terre et le sang, pp.211-217.

23. M. Feraoun, *Les Chemins qui montent* (Paris: le Seuil, 1955).

death recalling his childhood, his exile in France, his return to Ighil-Nezman and ending on the eve of his death. The following morning Dehbia takes possession of Amer's diary and writes its concluding chapter; she says: "C'est à moi de conclure. Ce soir je voudrais veiller à ta place. Ce serait la trezième nuit, j'écrirais le treizième chapitre".[24] Both Amer and Dehbia are presented as "pas comme les aut res".[25] On the one hand Amer is the fruit of a mixed marriage between Amer ou Kaci and Marie, on the other Dehbia was born of a marriage between a Muslim mother and a Christian father from the Ait-Ouadhou, where the Kabyles were converted to Christianity. Both characters are conscious of their hybrid nature. Amer says of himself, "Je suis un bâtard authentique! "[26] and describes Dehbia as " Dehbia à le teint clair ... personne n'en veut dans le village. C'est une étrangère, une chrétienne, une malheureuse".[27] For her part, Dehbia believes, "qu'elle n'est pas une fille comme les autres. Et par là, elle ressemble à Amer qui n'était pas un homme comme les autres".[28]

Although, at first sight it seems that the novel simply relates the love affair between Amer and Dehbia, Feraoun's aim was rather to focus on the dilemma experienced by people like Amer and Dehbia. Dehbia's problems started at the age of nine when her drunken father, who wished her dead, vowed that she was not his daughter, "petite vermine, tu peux crever, tu n'es pas ma fille! ".[29] She therefore suffers from being a fatherless bastard, the daughter of a shameless woman. Yet she feels a grudge against her real father, whom she will never know, for having made

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24. *Les Chemins qui montent,* pp.12-13.

25. Ibid., p.19.

26. Ibid., p.207.

27. Ibid., p.145.

28. Ibid., p.19.

29. *Les Chemins qui montent,* p.22.

her an outcast. Dehbia's last refuge is Christianity. However, she finds that so many people around her have turned to Christianity only for material gain, and then having failed to acquire a better standing amongst the French settlers, turn on Jesus and the Ch ristian priests. Feraoun describes the first converted villager who went to both church and the mosque with irony,[30] and describes the Christian villagers who celebrate both Islamic and Christian festivals, "Ils jurent par les saints du pays, pratiquent la circoncision comme les bon musulmans et célèbrent les Aids aussi bien que la Noël.[31]

After the death of her husband, Dehbia's mother, Melha, together with her daughter, is rejected by her in-laws. Thus, she decides to return to her village, Ighil-Nezman, where no one welcomes them either. On the contrary, both mother and daughter are faced with the most hostile reception.[32] Melba explains to Marie the reasons for her return; not only because she is now a widow, but also because her child is a girl and therefore nobody will want them:

> Je suis veuve comme toi. Pas tout à fait d'ailleurs. Tu as un fils et j'ai une fille ... c'est que moi, là-bas, je n'ai rien. Tu comprends, il a fallu partir quand le père de Dehbia est mort. Personne quasiment n'a voulu de nous".33

Therefore, Melha feels her daughter to be a burden in a society where women were considered inferior unless they were rich or belonged to a noble family, which is not the case with Dehbia. Although Dehbia is very attractive, Melha is convinced that no one in the village will take her for a wife, "tout le monde la désirerait mais aucun

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30. Ibid., pp.25-26.

31. Ibid., p.26.

32. Ibid., p.42.

33. *Les Chemins qui -montent,* p.140.

jeune homme n'en voudrait faire sa femme",[34]- not because Dehbia is a Christian, as they all make out, but simply because she is poor. Therefore, Meiha in averse to the men in her village, whom she suspects would like to take advantage of her, tells Ma rie:

> Quand je suis arrivé à Ighil-Nezman, ces vieux barbons ont tous eu la même pensée: Plus assez jeune pour tenter les jeunes ou pour trouver mari. Donc elle est pour nous! D' honneur, pas question avec moi. Seulement, leur hypocrisie est plus grande encore que leur désir".[35]

The rebellious Meiha, like Feraoun himself, criticizes the way marriages are arranged in Ighil-Nezman. Meiha, as a proud woman, refuses to imitate the other women in her village, who are prepared to pay anything to arrange a marriage for their daughters. However, privately, she thought Amer would be the ideal husband for Dehbia as they are both poor and are both 'hybrids'.

Indeed, Meiha is right; Amer too, suffers the consequences of being fatherless, poor and a half-breed. In his diary, he reveals all the suffering he has experienced from childhood to manhood; as a child he was not recognized as a citizen of Ighil-Nezman; the villagers called him "le fils de madame",[36] until his grandmother, Kamouma, 'shouted out in public that he was the legitimate son of Amer and should be called Amer N'Amer. In fact, she had always protected him against those who humiliated him. Amer knows that if he was beaten up and humiliated in the past it was only because he was the son of the French lady and was fatherless:

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34. Ibid., p.23.

35. Ibid., p.46.

36. *Les Chemins qui montent,* p.117.

> J'ai toujours su ... que personne ne nous aimait, qu'on nous voulait du mal sans toutefois aller jusqu'à nous en faire ... mes frayeurs d'enfant m'ont marqué pour toute la vie. C' était terrible. Dehors, je n'avais personne".[37]

Inevitably therefore, Amer grows to hate his fellow villagers, and wishes his mother had left Ighil-Nezman before he was born, "j'aurais, peut être moins souffert ailleurs, je ne serais pas si totalement Kabyle. Tu sais, je ne t'en aurais pas voulu".[38] Therefore, Amer does not attach a deep significance to his origins; he would have preferred to have been born in France and not know who his father was. Nevertheless, he realizes that his mother, like all Kabyle families, hoped to make him a respectable educated man to be proud of. However, his French education only added to his half-and-half nature and, although he is a brilliant student he is expelled from college for reading the Communist papers which had been banned. Therefore, Amer is rejected by the French school, symbol of French civilization, and also by his own people, especially after organizing a Communist cell in Ighil-Nezman, where he gathers young people together and teaches them the principles of Communism.

Amer reveals that the youths like him and listen to his talks, making them dream of a world where justice and friendship reign between united workers all over the world, but the elders dislike him and reject him for having no respect for their traditions and religion. In fact, they fear that he will turn their sons into renegades. Thus, Amer is rejected by his father's generation, as well as by the French authorities who have received reports about him. Terrified of what is in store for her son, Marie encourages him to go to France, not only to escape punishment by the authorities, but also to find work. Amer is only too glad to emigrate to the country whose people, according to the Communist papers he has read, "tendait large sa main rugueuse et

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37. Ibid., pp.118-119.

38. Ibid., p.121. ,

fraternelle au peuple algérien exploité"[39], and also glad to leave behind Ighil-Nezman, an isolated village cut off from the rest of the world, "Cet horizon bouché de tous les côtés par les montagnes ... un horizon circulaire qui se creuse et se rétrécit comme l'entonnoir infernal".[40] As for his fellow villagers, Amer feels they were only too glad to get rid of him, "Parti, 'le fils de madame'! Bon voyage, qu'il reste là-bas chez les infidèles, ses oncles".[41] Nevertheless, the day of his departure is one of the saddest days of his life; so many men were leaving their families to work for very low wages in a faraway country. Amer has the impression that families were seeing their menfolk for the last time.

Being half French as well as half Algerian, would Amer be treated better than his compatriots? Some of his fellow villagers believe so, yet Amer does not escape any of the humiliations or the poor living conditions endured by his compatriots. Like them all, he is called many racist names, such as *bicot, Noraf* and *Ratton,* but unlike them, he finds himself rejected by both sides. Therefore, he undergoes a lengthy identity crisis, calling into question his mixed origins, his Fre nch education and his praise for the French "civilizing mission", "Puis-je d'un seul coup oublier mon origine semi-française, l'école française, la justice française, l' intelligence française, la force française, toutes mes admirations de semi-français pour l'écrasante superiorité française".[42] Nevertheless, the French racists made him understand that he had a country and that outside that country he would always be considered an alien:

- Hé, va dans ton pays, raton!

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39. *Les Chemins qui montent,* p.180.

40. Ibid., p.175.

41. *Les Chemins qui montent,* p.121.

42. Ibid., p.127.

> Alors j'ai compris que j'avais un pays et qu'en dehors de ce pays je ne serais jamais qu'un étranger.[43]

Amer's disappointment in the French is so significant that his previous praise and interest turns into bitter hatred and aversion forcing him to leave France and return to his own country, which now seems dearer and more attractive. He says:

> J'ai eu hâte de partir, d'aller le revoir, pour en prendre possession, le fouler de mes pieds, emplir mes yeux de ses différents horizons, respirer son air chaud, recevoir son soleil brûlant, avaler sa poussière blanche, dévorer à pleine dents ses fruits sucrés, courir après ses filles brunes ...[44]

Pleased to be back in his own country, he wants to tell the French that Algiers is far more attractive than Marseille. However, to his deep disappointment, Amer discovers that Algiers no longer belongs to him, but to the French. He wants to scream in disgust at the wealthy *colons* who take the best berths in the ship, "Vous vous trompez, Messieurs - dames, vous n'allez pas chez vous!".[45] Thus his last illusions are destroyed; he is not only fatherless, poor, rejected by both the French and his own people, but is also denied a fatherland. Amer decides to return to his village, where at least no one could tell him, "Va dans ton pays, bicot".[46] Nevertheless, his fellow villagers do not approve of his return. Angry and humiliated, he claims:

> Tas d'imbéciles vous ne voulez pas de moi, je sais ... croyez-vous que les français, mes oncles, veulent de moi,

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43. Ibid., p.127.

44. *Les Chemins qui montent,* p.127.

45. Ibid., p.128.

46. Ibid., p.126.

> eux? Erreur! Demandez à vos enfants. Ils vous diront comment je'me suis comporté chez mes oncles, si j'ai failli à ma nature de Bicot, ... si je n'ai pas partagé les humiliations, la chambre et la soupe des gars d'Ighil-Nezman, à Paris et ailleurs.[47]

However, his mother's death increases his solitude, since with her death he loses not only his links with French civilization, but also his links with Ighil-Nezman.. Therefore his life comes to a standstill.

To illustrate Amer's dilemma, Feraoun depicts two kinds of characters, one good and one evil. The "benefactor" is portrayed through the angelic figure of Dehbia, who loves and wants to help Amer, whereas the evil character is shown through the satanic Mokrane, whom Feraoun portrays as emerging from the Middle Ages to oppose the modern Amer who has repudiated his ancestral heritage. Between the two men stands the pretty Dehbia, who like Amer, suffers from the fact she is considered an outcast, but more than that, suffers from being a woman in a society which refuses to accept her as one of its own. Ironically, however, she is forced to endure the same restrictions that are imposed upon all the women of Ighil-Nezman.

Like Amer, Dehbia dislikes Mokrane, who, on several occasions humiliates her and tries to take advantage of her. To him, Dehbia is just a pretty girl whose beauty attracts him, but because she is poor and a Christian he would never marry her. Although he agreed to marry Ouiza, whom his father chose for him, he also wished to pursue Dehbia and 'destroy' her, "La petite Chrétienne dont la beauté le narguait et choquait son âme de bon Musulman fanatique ... pour lui, elle méritait d'être violée sans pitié",[48]- not only because he knows that Amer and Dehbia are in love, but also because he has suspected his wife of having an affair with Amer. Thus,

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47. Ibid., p.122.

48. *Les Chemins qui montent,* p.58.

the satanic Mokrane takes revenge upon Dehbia whom he rapes savagely. He reveals to her:

> J'ai épié cet homme, il m'a pris mon honneur. Maintenant il va te prendre, toi que j'aime, il va t'épouser. C'est fini. Il ne me laissera rien. Il m'arrachera le coeur et les entrailles, il me videra, entends-tu? Tu seras à lui, à lui pour toujours. Toute à lui. Et moi je n'aurai rien. Écoute, pour ce qui est de l' honneur, tu lui diras que c'est fait: je me suis vengé.[49]

Although this idea of revenge has some justification, Mokrane's act against Dehbia had been conceived much earlier, even before Amer returns from France. In fact, for Mokrane, Dehbia has always stood as a symbol; above all he considers her an outsider, "cette petite Chrétienne".[50] However, as she appeals to him more than any other girl in the village, he considers her a devil driving him mad, "C'est le diable qui veut me séduire, le diable prend tous les visages, qu'il soit maudit".[51] Therefore, he tries to convince himself that his wife is prettier than Dehbia, whom, in any case, he would not take to a wife because he was socially superior to her. Accordingly, Dehbia symbolizes the inaccessible, and also shows up his inadequacy. Thus, she turns into an ideal to be destroyed and defiled.

Amer does not accept Dehbia as an ordinary person either, but instead as a symbol of virtue and purity. Amer knows that Dehbia, like him, is a victim of society, he also knows that as a woman she is far more alienated than he is. Although he loves her very much, it is a sad rather than happy love. Dehbia is so perfect that she seems unreal. For him, she is not only a lover but also a good friend and a sister,

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49. *Les Chemins qui montent,* p.97.

50. Ibid., p.87.

51. Ibid., p.77.

"N'est-ce pas cela l'amour, l'amitié, la fraternité? Hein, Dehbia, ma petite soeur?".[52] Although he is convinced of their great love and their need to be together, Amer looks into the future; he believes, neither his society, nor his position in a colonized country where jobs are scarce, will allow them to be happy together. Whenever he thinks of marriage he draws a comparison between himself, as a person in a colonized country and the happy colonist who is lacking in nothingS[3], and comes to the conclusion that he would never be able to make Dehbia happy:

> Dehbia, tu es faite pour moi. Je ne dis pas non, vois-tu. Mais quoi, j'aimerais bien que tu aies un trousseau de mariée. J'aimerais bien te prendre dans un lit et non par terre, sur une natte, t'offrir une table, des chaises, et que tu mènes, l'humble existence des filles du peuple, que tu tournes un robinet pour avoir de l'eau, que tu aies des assiettes blanches, toute une pile, et que dans ces assiettes tu puisses mettre quelque chose ... Puis-je te garantir de la faim, du froid, te soigner à l'auréomycine, t'empêcher d' avoir des enfants ou, eux, les empêcher de souffrir?[54]

Thus, Amer is not only disgusted with his miserable position in a colonized land where, with his people, he leads a very primitive life, while the 'others' whom he calls 'les élus' live in 'paradise', but also with the ignorance of his people, who, although they are poor and miserable, always seem to make life even harder for themselves, as well as for their children, "Nous sommes prisonniers de nos coutumes".[55] Therefore, Amer is at war both with himself and with his society; he refuses to lead the kind of life his forefathers led; he dreams of a happier life not only for himself, but also for all his people. Nevertheless, misunderstood by them and not

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52. *Les Chemins qui montent,* p.195.

53. Ibid., pp.195-196.

54. Ibid., p.197.

55. Ibid., p.202.

accepted by 'the others', the French, Amer prefers to die. He knows that to live like his people would be a great mistake. He thus, refuses to father other half-breeds who would suffer like him, if not more. He "reveals, "Nous ne nous marierons pas, nous n'aurons pas d'enfants, nous ne voudrons pas de cette existence, parce que nous avons le droit de repousser un injuste châtiment et que l'existence à Ighil-Nezman est un châtiment immérité".[56] Nevertheless, Dehbia cannot understand Amer's crisis. Whereas she is at war with her village, his conflict is more universal; he rebells not only against his people, but also against the universe, and against the principle of colonization, against his condition as one of the colonized, and the issue of a mixed marriage. Therefore, unable to understand him, Dehbia cannot save him from nihilism. Although she warns him about Mokrane, Amer seems to like the idea of being killed by him. Indeed, unable to overcome his solitude and alienation he finds liberation only through suicide, seeing it as a way of rejecting the miserable condition he has had to endure. One might describe this rejection not only as an act of revolt but also as an act of revenge; from childhood to manhood Amer has experienced a permanent sense of rejection; he was rejected by both his people and the French. He cannot, therefore, find a refuge on either side. To avenge himself he not only rejects both sides, but also rejects Dehbia, who wants to help him, and encourages his rival Mokrane to put an end to his dilemma, to save him from the heavy burden he has had to carry unwillingly.

The novel which opens with the sudden death of Amer, returns to his death at the end. It is worth noting that, although the reader knows right from the start that Amer is to die, the novel does not lack an element of suspense which makes the reader follow the progress of events and the evolution of characters step by step.

In conclusion, Feraoun's aim was to depict the dilemma endured by a generation of Algerians who, attracted by the principles of the French "civilizing

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56. Ibid., p.135.

mission", and rebelling against their ancestral traditions, decided to repudiate the latter, and go to France, their *mère Patrie.* In France, the hero faces all sorts of humiliation and is abruptly rejected. Thus, after discovering that the principles of the "civilizing mission" were mere lies, and that France was not his *mère Patrie* as he had been told at school, he decides to return to his own country. Nevertheless, he discovers that he cannot fit into his own society either. Realizing that he belongs to neither side, his suffering and sense of isolation increase. He sees himself not only as an 'error of history' but also as a 'monster'. In this vein Jean Amrouche, himself a victim of the same dilemma as Amer, wrote, "Les hybrides culturels sont des monstres. Des monstres très intéressants, mais des monstres sans avenir".[57]

In fact Mouloud Feraoun shares Jean Amrouche's opinion that the cultural ' hybrids' had no future; the lives of the two Amers, father and son, both end in tragic death. The difference between the two was that the son's sense of isolation and alienation was greater than his father's. As a result, the father did not want to die, whereas the son planned to commit suicide as an escape from his alienation. Feraoun reveals,

> Dans *Les Chemins qui montent,* ce que j'ai voulu dépeindre ... C'est le désarroi d'une génération à demi-évoluée, prête à se fondre dans le monde moderne, une génération digne d' intérêt, qui mérite d'être sauvée et qui, selon les apparences, n'aura bientôt d'autre choix que de renoncer à elle-même ou de disparaître.S[8]

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57. J. Amrouche, "Colloque avec Jules Roy et Jean Daniel", *Afrique-Action,* (13.02.1961).

58, M. Feraoun, *Lettres a ses amis,* p.122.

3. Moulou.d Mammeri, Le Sommeil du juste[59]

As in *Les Chemins qui montent,* Mammeri's *Le Sommeil du juste* portrays a generation ill at ease and in conflict both with their own people and with the colonists. *Le Sommeil du juste* is divided into four parts as follows: 'the father' *(le père),* 'the son' *(le fils),* 'the angel' *(l'ange)* and finally, 'all in the green paradise' *(tous au vert paradis).* In the first part, the author introduces his characters, principally the father and his three sons: Mohand who has spent his youth working in France for the Renault factories until he became seriously ill with tuberculosis, the well-educated Arezki, who studied at French schools, and Sliman, the youngest son, whom his father wants to become a mason.

Mammeri portrays the father as a fanatical but naive old man, faced with the problem of trying to apply his traditional code of values to a world where everything seems to turn against him, and where he faced many disappointments in a short period of time. The father believes those whom God has chosen to rule the people should be just and helpful. He therefore, expects the *Komisar*[60] to help solve his problems, and cannot believe how cruel and unpleasant he is when he meets him. He not only warns him about his son, Sliman, who would like to be involved in politics, but also prosecutes him for shooting his son Arezki, and seizes both his shotgun and his family's ration book. What strikes the father most is that his cousin, Toudert, is working for the *Komisar,* against his own people, and that his son Sliman would like to marry the daughter of a man with whom his father has been in disagreement for thirty years. He is deeply disillusioned, and sees his world tumbling down around

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59. M. Mammeri, *Le Sommeil du juste* (Paris: Plon, 1955).

60. *Komisar,* the Berber word for the French *commissaire,* meaning a police superintendent.

him. His other two sons Sliman and Arezki add to his sorrow by leaving him with the disabled Mohand.

In fact, his troubles all start after he shoots Arezki, who has not only rebelled against the traditional values of his people, but also openly declared that God did not exist. The Scandalized villagers complain to his father, who, unable to believe his friends' claims, questions Arezki. Arezki makes his father come to the conclusion that God does not exist through logical argument. Unable to stand his son's blasphemous statements, his father shoots him, but misses. Arezki is scared stiff and runs away to Tasga, the village where he had studied at the French primary school. He reveals, "Ce coup de fusil à été providentiel: it m'a libéré".[61] In fact, like Amer in *Les Chemins qui mentent,* Arezki describes his village, Ighzer, as an isolated place cut off from the world, whose people lead a very primitive life. The educated Arezki can see how dead and outmoded his people's traditional values were. He rebels against his father who plans to kill his cousin Toudert, not because of the way he reports to the French authorities, but because of an old vendetta going back three centuries.[62] However, what stimulates Arezki's rebellion is the fact his father forces him to marry Mohand's wife after the latter's death. Greatly influenced by the advice of his teacher, M. Poiré, Arezki rejects his ancestral heritage, which he describes as, "votre sagesse fossile, votre monde, votre pauvre petit monde, si vous saviez comme je m'en moque".[63] Like Ferhat Abbas in the period before the Second World War, Arezki is full of praise for his French teachers, like M. Poiré, who he claims, has freed him from the web of his people's ignorance, "Vous brisâtes les portes de ma pri son et je naquis au monde".[64] To fill the void, Arezki joined the ranks of the

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61. *Le Sommeil du juste,* p.116.

62. *Le Sommeil du juste,* pp.35-58 and pp.88-91.

63. *Le Sommeil du juste,* p.135.

64. Ibid., p.120.

young Algerians mobilized to fight against the Germans. He promised his teacher that he would do his best, "Je vous promets, mon cher maître, que je m'y battrai sans faiblir pour le triomphe d'une cause que je sais être, malgré vous, la votre"[65] Nevertheless, like Meddour and Mokrane in *La Colline oubliée,* Arezki soon loses the enthusiasm he had on joining the army. He discovers that the principles taught by M. Poiré were mere lies. Although mobilized to fight in the French ranks for a cause which was not their own, the quarrel belonging to the French, Arezki and his compatriots are treated as belonging to an inferior race and are forced to believe, "à grade égal, le gradé indigène doit obeissance au gradé Européen".[66] He suffers inwardly as he is always served after the Europeans, "les Européens d'abord!".[67] Moreover, he is classified as an *Imann,*[68] a word, of which he tries in vain to find the meaning, "Imann, mes frères, il n'y a nulle trace de vous dans *tout ceci.*[69] Vous êtes morts, bien morts, si morts qu'il faudrait pour vous tirer de la tombe une force plus qu'humaine".[70] He is thus greatly disillusioned, and starts the painful quest for his own identity. Like Ferhat Abbas after the war, Arezki questions all that he has learnt at school and read in his books. He comes to the conclusion, that he had been seduced and deceived for too long by the ideals of a great civilization, for which he has rejected his ancestral heritage; "Je tourne, tourne et ne sais plus ... II faudrait d' abord que je cesse d'être ébloui, que je me retrouve ... si du moins je ne suis pas égaré dans les dunes ... définitivement".[71] So, in a symbolic act, as if to destroy the

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65. Ibid., p.121.

66. Ibid., p.128.

67. *Le Sommeil du juste,* p.125.

68. *IMANN,* Indigène Musulman Algérien Non Naturalisé.

69. *tout ceci:* he means his books.

70. *Le Sommeil du juste,* p.138.

71. *Les Chemins,* p.139.

influence European culture has had upon him, Arezki burns all his books and urinates on what he called, "l'ideal, les sentiments, les idées"[72], which have all turned out to be lies. Nevertheless, he can do nothing to escape his fate as an indigenous conscript burdened with the most difficult tasks, and facing the most dangerous battles against countries for which he feels no hostility, such as Germany and Italy. In this respect one may quote Ferhat Abbas, whose crisis after the Second World War was similar to Arezki's, "la colonie française n'admet l'égalité avec l'Algérie Musulmane que sur un autre plan: Les sacrifices et les champs de bataille. Et là encore, faut-il que l' indigène se batte et meure à titre indigène, avec une solde et une pension de mercenaire, même s'il est diplomé et spécialisé".[73]

Throughout his stay in the army, Arezki takes up a very long letter to M. Poiré, expressing his feelings of humiliation and dissatisfaction, and trying to prove to him that the fine-sounding principles of *Liberté, Egalité, Fraternité,* are only concerned with the French and not with him or his compatriots. His stay in Paris, following the armistice, further confirms his opinion of the hypocrisy of the so-called "civilizing mission". In a state of deep frustration, he declares that he has fought for the French freedom, but not for his own, "On avait signé l'armistice pour tout, pour les Sudètes, la bombe atomique, la Ruhr, l'empire des Indes, Hiroshima, n'importe quoi, mais pas pour moi".[74] He is upset to discover that the country he has fought for will not offer him a place to live, so he decides to join the Algerian Nationalist party as revenge on the French, and partly to find a new doctrine to cling to, after his rejection of European culture, "Ce qu'Arezki cherchait c'était une doctrine pour vivre quelque chose qui pût remplacer la parole du maître".[75]

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72. Ibid., p.145.

73. Yétiv Isaac, *Le Thème de l' alienation,* p.22.

74. Le Sommeil du juste, p.249.

75. Ibid., p.183.

To serve the National party, Arezki becomes involved in a fraud, with Marthe, a newspaper agent, who urges him to participate in a competition, to which she already knows the answer. Arezki wins the prize and donates his share to the National party. He is to rue this after meeting the party leader, who leeds a comfortable life, while he himself often goes hungry for several days, and especially after the police discover the fraud.

Whereas Arezki's journey takes him to the land of the colonists, and other European countries such as Germany and Italy, Sliman's odyssey takes him from his tiny village to the world beyond; on the way he experiences all sorts of injustices an d exploitation in his long quest for a job that never turns up. This situation is worsened by the fact that he speaks neither French nor Arabic, and cannot communicate with the people he meets. Sliman is a lost vagrant until he meets Lounas, a Kabyle man also on an endless quest for a job, as well as the Algerian nation. Unlike Sliman, Lounas at least knows "Comment on se procure du pain et des raisins pour ne pas mourir de faim".[76] During his odyssey Sliman discovers the colonist in his different forms, such as *Le colon, Le gendarme* and *Le garde-champêtre*. Lounas teaches him not only to rebel against the exploitative colonist as the direct cause of unemployment, misery and hunger, but also to forget his tribal origins and simply say "Je suis algérien".[77]

Through Lounas, Mammeri portrays the ideal hero who refuses to belong to any particular tribe or region, and devotes himself to the advent of a free Algeria. He is described as "Militant éclairé et lucide qui combat en même temps les vieilles coutumes, le sectarisme périmé de son peuple et les exactions du colonialisme" 7[8] Lounas warns his companion against the promise of the French government to

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76. *Le Sommeil du juste,* p.63.

77. Ibid., p.71.

78. Yetiv Isaac, *Le Théme de l'aliénation,* p.158.

reward the Algerians for having fought for them against the Germans. Little by little Sliman is roused to a better understanding of the situation at home. However, a letter from his father telling him to return home causes Sliman to argue with Lounas, who advises him to forget about his father, "Il faut laisser tomber le vieux. Tout ça c'est des histoires du temps passé" 7[9] Before they separate, Lounas predicts to Sliman that a new era is about to come, "C'est bientôt l'aube. Bientôt nous aurons fini de souffrir" .[80] On his return Sliman is a different man from the one who had left the village. Yet he soon notices the huge gap between Lounas's ideals and the worries of his fellow villagers; haunted by the old feud, his father spends all his time and energy planning to kill his cousin Toudert, especially since the latter has became a traitor, faithfully informing the local authorities about every event in the village. Moreover, he seizes all the father's property on a mortgage, and hurts him deeply, especially after deciding that Sliman should not marry his daughter, but the widow of Mohand after the latter's death. At this stage Sliman writes to Arezki asking him to return home. In his surprise at reading what he describes as "le récit indifférent des coutumes d'une tribu barbare"S[1], Arezki knows his return to Ighzer would be "un enterrement de première classe".[82] Back in Ighzer, Arezki decides to join the Communist party, of which Sliman is also a member.

Soon after Arezki's return, Toudert celebrates his son Akli's wedding. On the same evening the party comrades organize their meeting in the huts of the village. En route to join his comrades, Arezki is informed that Toudert has reported the meeting to the authorities, who arrest the nationalists gathered there: "Si to ne to caches pas,

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79. *Le Sommeil du juste,* p.71.

80. Ibid., p.79.

81. Ibid., p.188.

82. Ibid., p.202.

tu seras ramassé. L'amin vous à tous vendu".[83] Well aware of his imminent death, Mohand kills Toudert. Consequently, the whole family, except for the real murderer, who has died, are sent to jail, "En prison j'ai retrouvé Sliman, le père et Akli ... toute la famille en somme ... unie comme toujours"[84] says Arezki, who keeps asking himself, "De quel crime sommes-nous positivement coupables? C'est Mohand qui *à* tué Toudert et Mohand est mort".[85] Nevertheless, of them all, the educated Arezki is considered to be the most guilty; the judge, who continually repeats that he does not understand anything, blames him because he has been to university, and learned ' proper' behaviour, "vos professeurs vous avaient fait accéder à la pleine lumière du monde et de vous-même, et c'est vous, vous seul, qui par cet acte stupide vous êtes enfoncé dans la nuit".[86] Arezki who knows the judge will never understand him, and would, in any case, only condemn him, prefers to keep silent. His refusal to defend himself is a further condemnation of the French law courts which - as seen in the previous novels - the natives did not trust. The final message of this novel suggests that despite the deplorable conditions experienced by the Algerians, a new era was dawning; in the last minutes of his trial Arezki describes a new dawn painfully emerging out of the darkness; "l'aube c'est de la nuit que péniblement elle s'extrait même quand d'abord elle à l'air d'y être sans recours enlisée, et après l'ombre c'est le grand soleil".[87]

Arezki's statement is a direct symbol of the painful revolution which will free the Algerian people from colonialism. Therefore, although, Mammeri proves, like Feraoun, that there is no happy ending for cultural 'hybrids', there is a suggestion

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83. Ibid., p.220.

84. Ibid., p.236.

85. Ibid., p.237.

86. *Le Sommeil du juste*, p.252.

87. Ibid.

that a new era is dawning in which the causes of cultural hybridity will be removed. The difference between Amer in *Les Chemins qui montent,* and Arezki is that the former is unable to adapt to the future, and therefore, prefers to die in the end. Moreover, unlike. Arezki, Amer was not fully 'Algerian'.. and so carries the seeds of alienation in his blood. By his death, Amer brings an end to his kind and symbolically suggests an end to the causes of hybridity.

Mammeri, who sees *Le Sommeil du juste* as a sequel to *La Colline oubliée,* depicts the evolution of both his characters and his fiction from his first novel to his second. He claims:

> L'unité s'en est dégagée d'elle même, si bien qu' actuellement on peut dire que *La Colline oubliée,* c'est le tableau particulier d'une Algérie livrée au système colonial dans une situation en apparence sans espoir et qui fuit dans le rêve ou dans une misère sans fond, l'horreur de son destin. *Le Sommeil du juste* c'est l'Algérie de la veille de l' explosion et où déjà, presque tous les éléments sont prêts pour le sursaut de révolte qui devait, après le premier Novembre 1954, s'accomplir en révolution.[88]

4. Mohammed Dib, *L'Incendie*[89]

Whereas Mammeri sends his hero Sliman to work for a short period on a *colon's* farm, where he strikes the settler for beating a young native shepherd, Dib takes us to Bni Boublen where the *colons* had taken possession of the most fertile land and turned it into large estates where they employed, as labourers at very low wages, the natives who had formerly owned the land. In *L'Incendie,* Dib makes a sharp contrast between the declining economic situation of the Algerian natives

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88. M. Mammeri et A. Mazouni, "La littérature engagée, l'art en pays révolutionnaire", p.4.

89. *L'Incendie* (Paris: Le Seuil, 1954).

against the increasing prosperity of the *colons.* In other words, he focuses on both the exploiters and the exploited, suggesting that if the Europeans' standard of living is high, the only reason is the fact that the natives' standard of living is very low. Therefore if the *colons* were able to find very cheap labour, this demonstrates that the natives had no laws to protect them and no chance of claiming their rights. *L' Incendie,* sequel to *La Grande maison,*[90] is in fact the second volume of a trilogy, entitled *Algérie,* in which Dib wanted to paint a large-scale picture of Algeria on the eve of World War Two. Whereas in *La Grande maison* the central hub of activity is *Dar Sbitar,* a woman's world in which the child Omar is the intermediary between Dar Sbitar and the outside world, in *L'Incendie* Dib shows Omar going to Bni Boublen in the countryside and accompanying Zhor, his neighbour, on a visit to her sister Mama. Mama's husband, Kara Ali, is one of the few native landowners not deprived of their property by the *colon.*

In the countryside, Omar meets children even poorer than himself, "Omar avait rencontré là des enfants plus misérables que lui, des enfants qui avaient l'air de sauterelles tant ils paraissaient malingres et nerveux ..."[91] He also meets Comandar, an old man who had lost both his legs during the First World War, as a soldier fighting in the French ranks. Comandar, with his deep relationship with the land *(La terre),* "Comandar appartenait à cette terre à l'égal des arbres épars alentour"[92], impresses Omar with his long discourses on ancestral land. As a result, the child Omar becomes very attached to this man, who brings him closer to a better understanding of the colonial system.

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90. *La Grande maison,* the first volume of Dib's trilogy, *Algérie,* is discussed in Chapter Four.

91. *L'Incendie,* p.8.

92. Ibid., p.15.

Although the milieu in which Dib places his hero is different from Dar Sbitar, the aspirations of the people remain the same. An atmosphere of total boredom reigns in the quarter of Bni Boublen inhabited by the labourers; most of them are longing for a change. Ba Dedouche claims:

> Nous dorlotons notre ennui, nous le chérissons. On peut vivre longtemps avec ça. Un jour on le découvrira et si ce jour-là nos devoirs ne nous apparaisent pas clairement, nous traînerons inutilement notre existence jusque ... Jusqu' au jour de la Resurrection! Mais si je ne crois pas mentir, le moment ou nous comprendrons nos nouveaux devoirs sera tôt arrivé.[93]

As for Slimane, the singing poet and labourer, he reveals through his songs that his people are looking forward to a new day:

> Nous guettons le jour,
> Du fond des yeux nous regardons
> Sur les montagnes
> Se délier la nuit incombustible;
> - Des feux
> Allumés chaque soir
> aux foyer de nos demeures,
> Des feux de joie parmi les monts
> gagnent les frontières du monde.[94]

Laden with seditious imagery, *L'Incendie* is charged from the beginning with an atmosphere of rebellion. This atmosphere is developed especially through the dream of the peasants of Bni Boublen: a riderless white horse crossing the ruins of the ancient city of Mansourah. Ever since, the peasants who have seen the horse, those who dream of their country's freedom, would wake every night to watch for its return. In a monologue, Comandar reveals:

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93. *L'Incendie,* p.15.

94. *L'Incendie,* p.18.

> Et depuis, ceux qui cherchent une issue à leur sort, ceux qui, en hésitant, cherchent leur terre, qui veulent s' affranchir et affranchir leur sol, se réveillent chaque nuit et tendent l'oreille. La folie de la liberté leur est montée au cerveau. Qui te délivrera, Algérie? Ton peuple marche sur les routes et te cherche.[95]

Comandar's words show that the people in *L'Incendie* are little different from Lounas, Sliman and Arezki in *Le Sommeil du juste,* for they are all on a const ant quest for the Algerian nation. In this context, Dib introduces the symbolic character of Moulkheir, who has witnessed the "jours sauvages de la liberté, avant l'arrivée des français".[96] Moulkheir tells the peasants of their glorious past and the greatness of their ancestors, "Son grand-père était un grand guerrier, un grand cavalier, un sage plus sage que tout les autres, dont la justice et la bonté, mais sourtout la bravoure, étaient plus grandes que chez les autres hommes de la tribu .."[97] Her claims, like Comandar's, cause the peasants to dream of a better life and rebel against the *colons,* who not only exploit them, but also want to possess them.

However, Comandar claims the peasant, not the *colon,* is the master of the land. He foresees, therefore, a time when he will defend his land and home by force. Indeed, the peasants are already at that stage; they revolt against their deplorable position which leads to a strike. Through this strike they assert their rights to a higher wage, "Nous n'avons demandé que des salaires plus justes. Est-ce un mal que de demander d'avoir juste, tout juste, à manger?"[98] As a result, two peasants are arrested. The peasants, are inflamed with anger and decide to unite and continue with

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95. Ibid., p.26.

96. Ibid., p.29.

97. L'Incendie, p.29.

98. Ibid., p.36.

the strike. Meanwhile, they meet every day to discuss their overwhelming problems, challenging the *colon's* claims that the peasant is dirty, lazy and inferior: "Le fellah? Un feiffé paresseux ... Le fellah sent mauvais. Le fellah n'est qu'une bête. Le fellah est grossier ..."[99] In fact, they understand the reasons for their misery, and blame on the *colons* who have taken over their property and driven them into extreme poverty. Ba Dedouche, one of the many dispossessed land-owners, describes the past with nostalgia, "J'avais ma terre ... j'avais mes bêtes et mes semences ... j'avais une petite maison aussi. Je vivais heureux avec ma femme et ma fille Rim ... Les colons m'ont tout pris".t[00] Sad as he is, Ba Dedouche assures his companions that he is happy and that the *colons* are miserable. They will be even more so, he says, when there are no *colons* left at all, "Quand il n'y aura plus de colons, ils seront bien malheureux! "101 For their part, well aware that the peasants are increasingly aware of their position, the *colons* begin to feel insecure. More frightened even than the *colons,* is Kara Ali, a native landowner with pro-French leanings, who sees a great danger in the unity of the peasants. He accuses Hamid Saraj, the Communist militant, pursued by the police, in Dar Sbitar, of spreading seditious ideas among the peasants, who would never unify solely on their own initiative. Kara Ali declares, "Si cet ennemi de Dieu qui s'appelle Hamid Saraj n'entraînait pas avec lui l'ensemble de nos fellahs. C'est cela qui est grave. Pourquoi se mettent-ils tous d'accord?"[102] Unlike Kara Ali, the other two native land-owners, Ben Youb and Bochnak, do not object to increasing their labourers' wages. Thus, whereas Kara Ali is hated by the peasants, these two are respected. Kara Ali, who has never expected a 'simple' peasant to challenge and insult him, is maddened by Slimane's claims, accusing him of imitating the *colons,*

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99. Ibid., p.39.

100. L'Incendie, pp.53-54.

101. Ibid., p.55.

102. Ibid., p.40.

the *caid* and the *gendarmes*[lo3,] a thief. Moreover, he, warns him not to get involved in other people's business.[104]

As a result, Kara Ali reports Hamid Saraj to the 'authorities as the trouble-maker who has turned the ignorant peasants into a threat. Hamid Saraj, the Communist militant, gathers the peasants together in secret on several occasions and teaches them how to organize their meetings, and to challenge the colonizer. Moreover, he makes them understand that their strength lies in unity, not only amongst themselves, but also between the workers in their country and the workers of the whole world, "avec ceux qui travaillent ... Qui souffrent et luttent, l' alliance est indispensable".[105]

Therefore, because he poses a danger to the colonialists, Hamid Saraj is arrested and tortured. His arrest is followed by a general strike which spreads throughout the countryside. As the police agents and the *gendarmes* start their patrols across the fields, the *colons* declare, "il faut se défendre maintenant".[106] Aware of their rights, the labourers decide to hold a meeting. Over five hundred peasants gather and express their determination not to stop the strike. The authorities are frightened by the new solidarity between the city workers and those in the countryside, "Les cadres syndicaux réunis à Tlemcen décidèrent de constituer un comité de soutien aux fellahs. Ils lancèrent un appel à tous les travailleurs; l'organisation de la collecte des fonds de solida rité fut immédiatement entreprise".[107] The peasants express their anger, rebelling against their miserable existence. They all claim, "Nous mourrons à petit feu. Nous demandons notre droit à la vie pour nous et

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103. *L'Incendie,* pp.67-71.

104. Ibid., p.72.

105. Ibid., p.92.

106. Ibid., p.123.

107. L'Incendie, p.124.

nos enfants".[108] When questioned about the cause of the strike they all agree, "C'est la misère".[109] What added to the peasant's misery was the fire started in their huts while they were asleep; an atmosphere of terror, anger and despair reigned among them. This incites them further to rebellion. Slimane concludes, "Une volonté de révolte incommensurable, débordante, s'apprête à secouer le système tout entier et sa carcasse de plomb".no According to Dib, the fire heralds the start of a new era. It can never be put out until it has reached every part of this oppressed country:

> Un incendie avait été allumé, et jamais plus il ne s' éteindrait. Il continuerait a ramper à l'aveuglette, secret, souterrain, ses flammes sanglantes n'auraient de cesse qu' elles n'aient jeté sur tout le pays leur sinistre éclat".[111]

Omar, who has witnessed all these events, asks Comandar, "Pourquoi ont-ils arrêté ces hommes?"[112] The old man explains that to the colonists, they were all guilty, tarred with the same brush. At this point Dib returns with Omar to *Dar Sbitar,* where the people's condition has worsened since the outbreak of the Second World War, making life even more difficult than before. Omar has changed since his visit to Bni Boublen, where he has witnessed the peasants' awakening to a better understanding of their situation under colonial yoke. Omar had left the countryside in a turmoil, an explosive situation reigned and every peasant was "une poudrière".[3] On the point

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108. Ibid., p.124.

109. Ibid., p.127.

110. Ibid., p.131.

111. Ibid., p.130.

112. Ibid., p.140.

113. *L'Incendie*, p.33.

of exploding, "Il suffit maintenant qu'une étincelle tombe dessus". n4 [t4] Back in his own town, Omar's attention is drawn to the European children who, unlike him, know no hunger and lack nothing. Omar is humiliated by them and wants to rebel against his position.

Like' Le *sommeil du juste, L'Incendie* shows the Algerian people at the limit of their endurance; men, women and children alike all awaken to a better understanding of their condition under colonial yoke, and aspire for a change. In other words, the author depicts an inseructional atmosphere and conveys the message that the people a re dreaming of a new era in which the causes of their suffering (i.e. colonialism) will be removed.

5. Mohammed Dib, *Le Métier à tisserlls*

In *Le Métier d tisser,* the final part of the trilogy, *Algérie,* Omar, **a** fourteen-year-old adolescent, has left school and is apprenticed to a weaver in a **dark and** airless cellar. There Dib portrays a diverse group of people, like the old convict Hamra, the two religious men Lamine and Skali, the big, good-hearted Ocacha, **the tyrannical Choul** who goes against his workmates to support the boss and the strange Hamedouch, who, volatile and at times wicked, fascinates and frightens Omar in equal measures.

On his first day at work Omar is terrified, and not at all happy to be employed in this dark cellar. His unfriendly reception by his workmates adds to his disappointment, "Il aperçut les tisserants qui l'examinaient avec hostilité. Ils avaient tous les traits usés et blêmes".[116] Like Aini and the labourers of Bni Boublen, the

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114. Ibid.

115. Le Métier à tisser (Paris: Le Seuil, 1957).

116. Le Métier à tisser, p.24.

weavers are unhappy with their working conditions; they are not paid regularly by their employer, Mahi Bouanan. Moreover, their wages are too low, and do not satisfy the weavers who have lost faith in their work, "Je ne crois plus à rien, je ne crois plus à ce que je fais"."[7] They all know there is no future in their jobs, and sooner or later they will be replaced with modern machinery. The sum total of their achievement would then be only exhaustion and unemployment Ocacha tells Omar:

> Quel dommage de travailler dans un atelier de tissage. Notre métier ne vaut rien, regarde ce que je suis: c'est tout ce que tu pourras être, un jour, à ton tour. Et attends! Tu le resteras jusqu'à la fin de ta vie ... II faut apprendre autre chose, frérôt! Bientôt d'ailleurs tout sera fait à la machine. Dans dix ans, il n'y aura plus de tisserands.[118]

The airless, dark and narrow cellar in which the weavers work, and spend most of their time increases their stress and anger; "Notre existence est étroite à rendre folle une punaise! ... Notre âme est comme cette cave. Là haut, les hommes libres; ici des esclaves".t[19]

In addition to daily verbal insults, Hamedouch physically attacks Omar on several occasions. Hamedouch appears to be suffering an internal crisis, as if he were insane. Unhappy in himself as well as at odds with the world in which he lives, he is tormented by something he himself does not understand, "Une incompréhensible hostilité le dressait contre tout le monde, on le sentait prêt à commettre toutes les violences".[120] He beats Omar, but also asks him to hit him back. Failing to provoke

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117. Ibid., p.62.

118. Ibid., p.70.

119. Le Métier d tisser, pp.63-64.

120. Ibid., p.125.

Omar, Hamedouch states, "Je m'ennuie".[121] Further on he describes himself as "Je suis un misérable ... une ordure qu'on foule aux pieds, voilà ce que je suis. Qu'est-ce que je fous en ce monde? Où vais-je? J'ai le coeur pourri!".[122] In his dissatisfaction with his condition, Hamedouch aims for a better life. So does Ocacha, in whom Omar has found a good friend to replace Comandar. Ocacha tells Omar that Algerians have been deprived of human dignity, and need to be respected and treated as human beings:

> Il faut accorder aux hommes le respect qui leur est dû ... les hommes qui respectent leurs semblables, il n'y en a plus sur ce sol. Les Européens, par exemple, avec quels yeux vous regardent-ils?"[123]

He explains to Omar that if the boss who exploits them, Mahi Bouanan, lacks respect for them, considering them "des affamés sans idéal, plus proches de la bête que de l' être humain, des fainéants qui prétendent vivre sans travailler ..."[124], neither is he himself respected by the French who think of him as "l'arabe, l'individu sans ideal vautré dans la crasse et le laisser-aller".[125] In their awareness of the lack of status accorded to them, the weavers realize that extreme measures are called for. Like Arezki in *Le Sommeil du juste,*[126] they conclude, "Nous sommes descendus trop bas. Nous ne pourrions redevenir des hommes par les voies ordinaires; nous nous venons

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121. Ibid., p.126.

122. Ibid., p.129.

123. Ibid., p.124.

124. Le Métier d tisser, p.125.

125. Ibid., p.125.

126. "Il foudrait pour vous tirer de la tombe une force plus qu'humaine", p.138.

obligés de bouleverser le monde. Peut-être même de l'épouvanter".[127] Therefore, as in *L'Incendie*, an atmosphere of rebellion pervades *Le Métier d tisser*, especially as Ocacha and Hamedouch both dream of possessing weapons. The former tells Omar, " Il me semble qu'il suffirait que tout le monde ait une arme".[128] For his part, Hamedouch declares on behalf of all his workmates, "Assez de vivre comme nous avons vécu!"[129] Further on he states, "l'humiliation, l'esclavage, la peur nous ont pervertis jusqu'à la moelle. Nous ne ressemblons plus à des hommes".[130] Nevertheless, Hamedouch's dream came true, unlike Ocacha's; he steals an automatic pistol. He claims that he has had enough of fine-sounding political speeches and feels the time for action has arrived, "Il n'y a que l'action qui paye!".[131] Although both Ocacha and Hamedouch aim for radical change, they differ in one basic respect; whereas the former believes in the goodness of the people, "le peuple, c'est le royaume de Dieu ... c'est la saine respiration du monde. Personne n'a enseigné le peuple, et pourtant il porte la vérité en lui",[132] the latter rebells against his people, and also denies the existence of what one might call a 'people':

> Je regarde tout le monde et je constate qu'en général, il n'y a pas de peuple. De vrai peuple, il n'y en a pas! Il n'y en a pas quand on réunit des gens en tas et qu'on leur crie: 'vous êtes le peuple, le peuple qui fait tout, qui sait tout!' Ce peuple-là, c'est du vent!"[133]

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127. Le Métier d *tisser,* p.65.

128. Ibid., p.138.

129. Ibid., p.170.

130. Ibid., p.182.

131. Le Métier d tisser, p.170.

132. Ibid., p.147.

133. Ibid., p.182.

Whereas Ocacha is at war with the colonists, Hamedouch is at war with both the colonists and his own people, and also with himself. His aim is to destroy everything around him; he befriends Omar, yet he savagely beats him up and provokes a fight which results in Omar's dismissal.

In conclusion, the discomfort and moral distress suffered by the weavers is due to a single factor, the colonial order which made the Algerians aliens in their own land. Dib focuses on the weavers' bad working conditions, almost imprisoned in the dark cellar, symbolising the life imprisonment of Algerians under colonial domination, he also turns his attention to the uprooted rural masses who go about in hungry groups begging, and almost naked throughout the city of Tlemcen. Dib describes them as "fantômes grotesques. Lentement, leur foule, hommes, femmes, vieillards, enfants, prenait possession de tous les quartiers".[134] The author uses various terms to describe these people. On some occasions he calls them "ce peuple errant"[135.] On others they become, "l'armée grouillante de meurt-de-faim",[136] He also makes the different characters in the novel express their own opinions on them. Whereas the French authorities call them 'vermin' and lead several campaigns to ' clean' the city by transporting them in large lorries back to where they have come from,[137] Omar's mother, Aini, and her sort claimed, "ce sont nos frères de sang et des hôtes que Dieu nous envoie".[138] Hamza, one of the weavers, concludes, "Le pays fermente et le pays c'est eux. Ils se sont mis en marche ... et c'est le pays qui marche" .[139]

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134. Le Métier d *tisser,* p.12.

135. Ibid., p.14.

136. Ibid., p.17.

137. Ibid., pp.83-84.

138. Ibid., p.89.

139. Ibid., p.93.

In describing the uprooted masses side by side with the angry weavers Dib's aim was to assemble evidence of his people's oppression and their need to regain their status as human beings, placing all the blame on the shoulders of the colonists as an impersonal vampire-like force leading those they had colonized to the nadir of poverty.

The aim of Dib's trilogy, *Algérie,* was to paint a comprehensive portrait of his country on the eve of World War Two. Although Omar seems to be the central figure in the trilogy, in which the author describes his evolution from childhood to adolescence, and with it his awakening to a better understanding of his condition as a native in a colonized country, Algeria is the real hero of the trilogy and Omar's ' awakening' is symbolic of the birth of the Algerian national consciousness.

It is worth noting that unlike the heroes of Feraoun and Mammeri, Omar's conflict is solely with the colonists. Whereas Amer and Arezki suffer a great deal from the restrictive traditional customs of their people, which both Feraoun and Mammeri condemned, Dib shovels all the blame onto the colonizer. Having a child as his hero helps him to avoid dealing with such a crucial issue. In fact, Dib seems to believe that the people's attachment to their traditional values helped them resist colonial invasion on the cultural level. Nevertheless, Dib's involvement in the Algerian Communist party made him concentrate on the working classes which, when united, would overthrow the colonial order; from Aini who works for a Spanish *colon,* through the peasants of Bni Boublen, to the weavers of Tlemcen, Dib describes the conditions of the working classes and affirms his deep confidence in the workers, whose efforts would lead to a brighter future.

Le Métier d tisser, ends with the landing of the allied forces in Algeria. At the sight of them Omar shouts with joy, "les A.Me.Ri.Cains!"[140] Here Dib was expressing the hopes of the people who all believed in the new era that was coming,

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140. *Le Métier d tisser,* p.204.

"Le coeur d'Omar sauta dans sa poitrine ,sous l'effet d'une joie insensée. Un impossible espoir l'étreignat".[141]

In fact, the landing of the allied forces in Algeria was to have a great impact on Ferhat Abbas's evolution as a nationalist leader, in reality. He believed that a new world order was imminent, mainly because the Atlantic Charter promised universal self-determination. Ferhat Abbas produced his famous *Manifeste du peuple Algérien,* which he submitted to the allied forces as well as to the French governor general, demanding the abolition of colonization and some social reforms.[142] In this context Arnaud Jacqueline wrote, "Le débarquement américain de Novembre 1942 amorce un tournant: celui qui mène aux promesses du discours de Constantine, deux ans plus tard, et à la disillusion brutale du 8 mai 1945, radicalisant la volonté de coupure chez bon nombre d'algériens".[143]

6. **Kateb** *Yacine, Nedjma*[144]

Did France keep her promises? Did she reward those who, like Arezki[145] had fought for her against her enemies?

Nedjma, a novel written by Kateb Yacine, who himself took part in the demonstrations of 8th May, answers these questions and describes Algeria after the Second World War.

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141. Ibid.

142. The text of this manifesto is cited in, Claude Collot and Jean Robert Henry, *Le Mouvement national algérien (Textes 1912-1954)(Paris:* L'Harmatan,1978), pp. 152-170.

143. A. Jacqueline, *La Littérature maghrébine de langue française*, p.187.

144. Nedjma (Paris: Le Seuil, 1956).

145. In *Le Sommeil du juste.*

Like the heroes of Feraoun, Mammeri and Dib, Kateb Yacine's heroes are in revolt, in one way or another, against the colonial order. However, unlike the three preceding authors, Kateb Yacine is a rebel in two respects; he rejected both colonial domination, and the accepted European literary tradition which the others had faithfully respected. In this way *Nedjma* was unique in its genre until Dib's *Qui se souvient de la mer* was published. [tab] Kateb's novel, a great innovation in the style of the Algerian novel, can be classified amongst the new wave of "le nouveau roman". In this context J.P. Monego wrote, "The author's deliberate assault on literary form, a unique departure in the 1950s, expresses his will to escape imprisonment and to achieve liberation on both the level of creative writing and on the socio-political plane".[147] Thus, before dealing with the themes of *Nedjma*, some aspects of the novel need to be pointed out. *Nedjma* is a complex work with many different layers of comprehension. It is very rich in symbolism with no chronological order. Adding to the novel's complexity are the mysterious origins of the heroine Nedjma, whom Kateb places in an incestuous world as an enigmatic magnet of attraction, attracting simultaneously the four friends; Mourad, Lakhdar, Rachid and Mustapha, who all love her and want to possess her while she is married to Kamel, who is probably her brother.

Along with the four young friends, Kateb introduces an old man, Si Mokhtar, who, together with Rachid's father, takes Nedjma's mother, a French Jewess, to a remote grotto where both sleep with her. The next morning Rachid's father is found dead, shot with his own rifle. Therefore, it is not clear whether Nedjma is Si Mokhtar's daughter, and therefore Kamel's sister, since the latter's mother was Si Mokhtar's mistress, and his father, *le puritain,* had a sexual relationship with the

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146. Mohammed Dib, *Qui se souvient de la mer* (Paris: Le Seuil, 1962).

147. J.P. Monego, *Maghrebian Literature in French* (Boston: Twayne Publishers, 1984) , p.78.

French Jewess; or whether she is Rachid's sister. Moreover, Sid-Ahmed, Mourad's and Lakhdar's father, has also had a love affair with Nedjma's mother. Consequently, Nedjma might also be the sister of the two brothers Mourad and Lakhdar. Thus, like her daughter Nedjma, the Jewess had four lovers; Sid-Ahmed, Si Mokhtar, Rachid's father and *Le Puritain*. when Nedjma is born, the Jewess disappears and her daughter is brought up by Lella Fatma, Mustapha's aunt, who declared her to be her own daughter. Therefore, Nedjma knew neither her mother nor her father.

The attractive Nedjma, meaning "star" in Arabic, whom Kateb describes as " la sirène chargée de noyer tous ses prétendants"[148] and "Sultane sans Sultan"149, " Ogresse au sang obscure"[150,] is elusive, avoiding those who try to possess her. Nevertheless, the four friends never give up their amorous pursuit of Nedjma, who is shown to us more through her effect on the four protagonists than through her actual presence. Whereas Mourad was brought up with Nedjma, by Lella Fatma, the other three join them after the May demonstrations. Lakhdar, Mourad's brother, comes to his aunt's house after having been arrested for his part in the May uprising. As for Mustapha, who, like Lakhdar took part in the uprising, he also joins in after his arrest, inviting Rachid to stay with him. It is worth noting that Rachid has met Nedjma at an earlier stage and was present, together with Si Mokhtar, at her wedding, and that Si Mokhtar, although well aware that Kamel was Nedjma's brother, did nothing to prevent this possibly incestuous relationship.

Rachid, obssessed by Nedjma's mysterious origins, befriends Si Mokhtar, his father's murderer, whom he constantly follows hoping to get the truth about Nedjma from him. Finally, having revealed to Rachid the whole truth about Nedjma's

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148. Nedjma, p.187.

149. Ibid., p.109.

150. Ibid., p.179.

mysterious origins, Si Mokhtar proposes to kidnap Nedjma from the incestuous nature of her marriage and take her to the Nadhor, their common tribe:

> Nous irons vivre au Nadhor, elle et toi, mes deux enfants, moi le vieil arbre qui ne peut plus nourrir, mais vous couvrira de son ombre ... et le sang de Keblout retrouvera sa chaude, son intime épaisseur. Et toutes nos défaites, dans le secret tribal comme dans une serre - porteront leurs fruits hors de saison. Mais jamais tu ne l'épouseras! [151]

At the same time, Rachid rids himself of his three rivals and has Nedjma all to himself. Nevertheless, he is only allowed to admire her and dream of her, as if she is an inaccessible star. However, a black man then emerges in the Nadhor, spying on the couple, Nedjma and Si Mokhtar. He suspects them of an unnatural love affair as he does not see Rachid. Consequently, he shoots the old man in the leg and disappears. Rachid reveals that the negro was one of the faithful people who has kept to their tribe, whereas Si Mokhtar and himself were among those who had deserted their ancestral land, "Comme tous les mâles de la tribu sont exilés ou morts, ce nègre fidèle au Nadhor natal pouvait même nous chasser, puisque nous étions de ceux dont les pères avaient vendu leurs parts de terre et contribué à la ruine de l'oeuvre ancestrale".152

After suffering in agony for some time, Si Mokhtar dies and is buried by the Keblouti men, who took Nedjma to join her tribeswomen in the sacred confines of the Keblouti virgins. As for Rachid, he was chased out, for Keblout, the ancestor, had said that only women were to be protected: "Keblout à dit de ne protéger que ses filles. Quant aux mâles vagabonds dit l'ancêtre Keblout, qu'ils vivent sauvages, par

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151. Nedjma, p.129.

152. Ibid., p.146.

monts et par vaux, eux qui n'ont pas défendu leur terre".[153] As a result, Rachid joins his three friends, who after a long search for jobs, finally find employment on a construction site in a far off village. Nevertheless, all of them were haunted not only by the inaccessible Nedjma, but also by their past; Rachid is burdened from birth with the duty of avenging his father, which he never fulfils. In fact, his search for Nedjma makes him forget his duty, and finally, when he knows who Nedjma really is, he neither avenges his father nor can possess this elusive woman. Lakhdar and Mustapha, who took part in the May uprising, are haunted by these events, which profoundly affect them. Through monologues both heroes relate their memories and describe their adventures, as well as the bloody massacre they have both witnessed. Lakhdar reveals that on May 8th, he saw the 'people' and knew what he was capable of, "le peuple était partout, à tel point qu'il devenait invisible, mêlé aux arbres, à la poussière, et son seul mugissement flottait jusqu'à moi, pour la première fois ... je me rendais compte que le peuple peut faire peur".[154] As for Mustapha, he saw the hatred and the contempt the *colons* felt for the natives, and their argument that the Arabs were smelly and deserved to be exterminated. They were pleased by the slaughter following the demonstrations, and judged the army should have given them permission to punish them in a better way:

F :
Qu'est-ce qu'ils peuvent puer!

Mme F:
Je t'en prie! J'ai déja envie de vomir!

B :
Ils croient que l'armée est faite pour les chiens.

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153. Ibid., p.151.

154. Nedjma, p.56.

F :

Cette fois, ils ont compris.

N :

Tu crois? Moi je te dis qu'ils recommenceront. On n' a pas su les prendre.

Mme N:

• Mon Dieu, si la France ne s'en occupe pas, ce n'est pas nous qui pourrons nous défendre!

F :

La France est pourrie. Qu'on nous arme, et qu'on nous laisse faire. Pas besoin de loi ici. Ils ne connaissent que la force.[155]

Although the uprising taught Algerians not to trust the French any more, and that independence would never be obtained by relying on promises, their conditions only worsened; the *colons* became more aggressive than previously, and obviously more wary of the natives, to whom they showed more violence.

On the construction site the four friends, together with a large group of other workers, are supervised by a French *colon,* M. Ernest, who worked for another *colon* called M. Ricard. When they are recruited Ernest tells the four friends, "Ya qu'a faire ce que je dis. Vous travaillez dix heures. On vient le Samedi".[156] Like all other *colons,* M. Ernest sees his workers as hard working 'creatures' fated to be exploited without mercy. To illustrate his behaviour Ameziane showed the old scar left by Ernest's beating. Not long afterwards, Ernest strikes Lakhdar on the head and injures him. Unable to take such a humiliation, Lakhdar strikes him back, and is immediately arrested. A few days later, he escapes from jail and goes in hiding in his friends' squalid and humid room, which they rent from an Italian lady, who does not care about the condition of her rooms, which are only allocated to the natives.

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155. Nedjma, p.230.

156. Ibid., p.45.

Not long after Lakhdar's escape, Mourad, who had watched M. Ricard's wedding ceremony from a distance, could not resist reacting to the sight of a native servant being beaten by the groom in front of his guests, who were making fun of her. Mourad,_unable to control himself, attacks M. Ricard and kills him. The police, appear on the scene immediately, and arrest him. Well aware of the trouble that awaits them, the three friends decided to leave the village and to separate; Rachid decided to go to Constantine and Lakhdar to Bone, but Mustapha took an unspecified direction, "Je prends un autre chemin".'[57]

At this point the novel, which opens with Lakhdar's escape, followed by Mourad's arrest, after which the remaining friends separate, ends with the sequence it started with. It has thus come full circle. M. Mildred describes this circular structure as follows, "The novel has come full circle, but the structure, a mosaic of scenes, fragmented time sequences, flashbacks, dreams, hallucinations, like the colors in a kaleidoscope, can take new shapes".[158]

Rich in symbolism, *Nedjma* can be understood on many levels. Nevertheless, one should not push its symbolism too far. Kateb Yacine, unhappy with the many interpretations that followed the publication of his novel, gave a seminar in Algiers and declared, "Il ne faut pas pousser un symbole trop loin. Un symbole est toujours fragile; si on veut le littéraliser, it se détruit".[159] He explained that Nedjma was not a mere creation; she actually existed and he was in love with her. However, as she was married to another man she herself turned into an inaccessible 'star'. In other words, an impossible love. As he worked on his novel, this woman became closely identified with the colonized country possessed by the French. He declared,

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157. Nedjma, p.256.

158. Mortimer Mildred, *The Algerian Novel in French* (1945-1965), PH.D disse rtation, (Columbia University, 1969).

159. M. Gontard, *Nedjma de Kateb Yacine* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 1985), p.15.

"Nedjma, oui, finit par symboliser l'Algérie".[160] One may consider Nedjma's mysterious origins and Rachid's quest to find her identity as a symbol of the Algerians' search for a national identity.

In conclusion, the writers of this period depicted a group of heroes who endured a deep feeling of anger and alienation, particularly after the end of the Second World War and its aftermath, namely the May events 1945 during which the Algerians discovered that France was not their *mère patrie,* and thus turned into an endless search for the Algerian nation. In fact, Amer's journey in *Les Chemins qui montent,* Arezki, Sliman and Lounas in *Le Sommeil du juste,* the uprooted peasants of *L'Incendie* and *Le Métier* d *tisser* are symbolic of the Algerian quest for a national identity in their alienation. Furthermore, the physical attacks made by Lakhdar and Mourad upon the French *colons,* similar to those of Lounas and Sliman in *Le Sommeil du juste,* prefigure the revolution which would soon come and overthrow the colonial order. Therefore, an atmosphere of rebelion pervades these novels which all suggest that extreme measures are called for to fulfil the Algerian people's need to regain their status as human beings. Like Ferhat Abbas who in 1953 claimed, "Il n'y a plus d'autre solution que les mitraillettes"[161,] the authors of this period all suggested that only an armed revolution would free the Algerians from the webs of colonisation.

160. Ibid.

161. F. Abbas, *La nuit coloniale,* p.114.

CHAPTER SIX

Women in the Algerian Novel of the Fifties

Section One

Algerian Women as Seen by the Male Novelists

Although the Algerian novelists of the fifties had focused on the alienation of their heroes, and described their continual quest for national identity as a colonized people, this quest is only attributed to male characters. The female characters portrayed in these novels do not seem to share the anxieties of their male compatriots, nor do they experience any colonial alienation. Their worries are limited either to the daily struggle to provide bread for their children, such as Aini in Dib's trilogy, *Algérie,* and Kou in Mammeri's *La Colline oubliée,* or to the problem of infertility like Aazi in *La Colline oubliée,* and Chabha in *La Terre et la sang,* or to problems of sentiment due to the pressure of custom. In this vein, one may cite Davda in *La Colline oubliée,* and Chabha in *La Terre et la sang.* Whereas these images of woman as mother, wife and lover may be qualified as socio-realistic, other images of woman as goddess and symbol of purity are presented by writers such as Kateb Yacine and Mouloud Feraoun, who both give a symbolic colour to their heroines Nedjma and Dehbia, in their novels, *Nedjma* and *Les Chemins qui* montent,respectively.

1. The Symbolic Vision of Women

Like the colonized Algeria, whose historical roots are shrouded in mystery, both Nedjma and Dehbia are of unknown origin. Although both girls know their mothers, they are in the dark as to their paternity. Furthermore, both heroines are of mixed blood; whereas Nedjma is the child of a Frenchwoman and an unknown

Algerian father, Dehbia is the.result of a relationship between an Algerian woman and 'probably' a Christian priest. Therefore, both heroines are halfbreeds who carry the seeds of alienation in them. As they speak both French and local Algerian languages,(Dehbia speaks Berber, Nedjma speaks Arabic), and they are half-French, half-Algerian, they differ from the French as well as from their Algerian compatriots. Nevertheless, they still endure the same restrictions that were imposed upon all women in their society.

Both Nedjma and Dehbia are described as pretty women possessing the power of attracting men, only to lead them to their destruction. Nedjma is seen as " La sirène chargée de noyer tous ses prétendants".' She is also condemned to be the " fleur irrespirable".[2] Like Nedjma, Dehbia is an elusive woman, whose love pushes Amer into despair and disillusion,[3] and whose beauty turns Mokrane mad and aggressive; he desires Dehbia greatly, but his social position only allows him to marry a girl like Ouiza, whose parents are wealthy. However, he is content not to leave Dehbia to Amer, and decides not only to rape the girl, but also to kill her lover. Dehbia stands as a symbol between these two men,Mokrane and Amer. She symbolises Mokrane's inadequacy, and so, for him, she is an image to be defiled, whereas for Amer she symbolises virtue and purity to such an extent that she seems unreal. As such, therefore, she is not only misunderstood but also cannot understand the role attributed to her, and so cannot understand Amer's own crisis.[4]

Unlike Nedjma, Dehbia is poor, belonging to the lower classes of society. Although her looks attract most of those who see her, her poverty stops them wanting to marry her. Dehbia is well aware of this, and reveals, "Les jeunes qui me

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1. *Nedjma,* p.187.

2. Ibid., p.179.

3. *Les Chemins qui montent,* p.37.

4. For more details, see Chapter Five, pp.157-160.

désirent ne cherchent qu'a me salir".[5] Her mother, similarly claims, "tout le monde la désirerait mais aucun jeune homme n'en voudrait faire sa femme".[6] Dehbia rebels against this vision of herself as an object of an exclusively sexual desire, and grows up to hate her fellow villagers who put her down as a Christian and an outcast, despite her prettiness. In fact, Melha knows this is a mere excuse; had Dehbia been rich, all the village men would have asked for her hand. After Amer's death, Dehbia is in total despair. Her mother, who has previously found an old man's request for Dehbia's hand immoral, comes to admit that no other man will marry her daughter. She therefore decides that she should not let her miss her last chance, "Elle aura toutes les clés et sera maîtresse de maison; le président est riche".[7] Thus the pretty Dehbia, who had attracted the youths of her village, ends up in the hands of a man from her father's generation. Ironically, Nedjma meets the same fate; she ends up in the hands of the old black man who had placed a veil over her head, "Nedjma menant à bonne fin son jeu de reine fugace et sans espoir jusqu'a l'apparition de l' époux, le nègre prémuni contre l'inceste social ..."[8]

Thus both heroines, goddesses to others, are unhappy and end up in marital seclusion; while Nedjma is veiled in black, " ... aprés l'avoir maintenue de force au Nadhor et veillée nuit et jour devant le campement des femmes ... elle voyage parfois sous sa garde[9], voilée de noir à présent".[10] Dehbia, becomes the wife of an important man, and must respect her new status; she has nothing to do outside her home. Her new duties are limited to satisfying her rich husband. It must, however, be mentioned

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5. *Les Chemins qui montent,* p.69.
6. Ibid., p.23.
7. Ibid., p.99.
8. *Nedjma,* p.187.
9. The Negroe's.
10. *Nedjma,* p.183.

that, whereas Kateb's heroine is mostly revealed through the dialogues of the four protagonists, Lakhdar, Mourad, Rachid and Mustapha who speak about her in turn, Feraoun's heroine is a more active character, who speaks for herself and participates in most of the events in the novel.

Besides this image of woman as an elusive goddess, another form of symbolic figure may be found in novels such as Feraoun's *La Terre et le sang* and Mammeri's *La Colline oubliée.* In these novels the image of the woman intermingles with that of the ancestral land as follows; while the men must leave their villages for another country to sell their labour, the women stay on their ancestral land. In *La Colline oubliée* Mammeri reveals that the women of Tasga have never passed over the Kabyle mountains, but stayed permanently on their ancestral land, "... Ces paysannes qui n'avaient jamais été plus loin qu'Aourir, le village à côté, pour ,qui la colline d'Icheriden était un monde éloigné ... "[11] In fact, on their departure, the men are separated not only from their wives and mothers, but also from their ancestral land.

This image first appeared in Feraoun's first novel, *Le Fils du pauvre,* where Ramdane, by force of circumstances, leaves both his family and his land. In fact, he only departs after having mortgaged his land. Therefore, his aim is not only to save his family from the threat of starvation, but also to redeem his ancestral land. In his letters, he asks his children to obey their mother as well as to take care of their land, "Il demande a ses enfants d'être sages, d'obeir à leur mère. Il ne faut pas mener la chévre dans le champ d'oliviers où il y a de jeunes gréffes".[12] As he asks them first to obey their mother and secondly to take care of their land, this shows up the links between the maternal figure and the land. These links are further reinforced in Feraoun's second novel, *La Terre et le sang,* where the two factors *la Terre,* 'the

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11. *La Colline oubliée,* p.30.

12. *Le Fils du pauvre,* p.98.

land', and *le Sang*, 'the blood', which signifies 'the family' are of paramount importance, "La terre et le sang! Deux éléments essentiels dans la destinée de chacun ".[13] In this novel the land is described as a loving woman who only responds to love and careful treatment. Amer, who has married the French Marie, discovers that his land Thighezrane, which he has redeemed for a high price, does not respond to him. He feels that there is a considerable rift between himself and his land, which only responds to those, like Slimane, who have never betrayed her and whose life is a close relationship between man and land. He gives the land his love and care and it rewards him with its best fruit: "Notre terre est modeste. Elle aime et paie en secret. Elle reconnaît tout de suite les siens: ceux qui sont faits pour elle et pour qui elle est faite".[14] Throughout this novel Feraoun stresses the strong bond which exists between land and mankind, "Il y a des signes qui ne trompent pas, qui sont évidents mais qu'on ne peut pas expliquer: c'est l'accord entre les gens et la glèbe".[15]

This land is not only portrayed as a loving woman, but also as a mother. Amer's mother, Kamouma, as a forsaken mother, symbolizes the forsaken land; both await the return of the prodigal son, to save his mother from the hard life she endures in his absence, and to redeem his land sold to someone other than its original owner. Thus, both Kamouma and Thighezrane, the ancestral land, called on Amer to return home, " Oh! Amer, notre terre n'est pas méchante. Nous en sortons et nous y retournons ... Elle aime ses enfants. Quand ils l'oublient trop, elle les rappelle".[16] For his part, Amer is described as an uprooted olive tree, who after fifteen years of separation, has to put down roots again on his ancestral land.[17] However, whatever

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13. *La Terre et le sang*, p.124.

14. *La Terre et le sang*, p.162.

15. Ibid.

16. *Les Chemins qui montent*, p.115.

17. *Les Chemins qui montent*, p.49.

Amer's difficulties in readapting himself to the life of his people, he is much better off than those who died in exile, such as Rabah who, killed by the Pole André, lies buried in France. Ramdane, Chabha's father, explains the drama of those who do not respond to the call of their motherland to Amer:

> Tu comprends à quel point ils sont à plaindre, ceux qui sont morts, étrangers, dans une terre où ils ne trouveront rien et sur laquelle personne des leurs ne passera ... C'est un triste sort, bien sûr ... c'était écrit: la tombe de Rabah devait se trouver en France. Non ici. La voix de notre terre n'a pas été assez forte.[18]

2. The Socio-realistic View of Women

The links between land and woman, suggest that women must be, fertile and generous like the land. In *La Colline oubliée*, Sekoura, who gave birth every single year after her marriage is described as "Kou, elle, était féconde, elle était, comme la terre, maternelle, et généreuse".[19] The novelist draws a comparison between Kou, and Aazi, who after several years of marriage, could not have children. In fact Aazi's sterility is the only reason for the drama endured by her and her husband Mokrane. Their love and happiness are constantly interrupted by Mokrane's mother, who claims that there is no need to keep a barren daughter-in-law, "Elle n'a pas d'enfant. Qu'avons-nous à faire d'une femme qui n'a pas d'enfant ...?"[20] Although Aazi is an exemplary wife and daughter-in-law, she ends up being repudiated, not by Mokrane who is very attached to her, but by his father, who decides to reject Aazi during Mokrane's absence. Ironically, however, only a few weeks after she is repudiated,

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18. Ibid., p.116.

19. bid., p.100.

20. Ibid., p.77.

Aazi discovers that she is pregnant. Overjoyed by her discovery, she writes to inform Mokrane. Nevertheless, before he can reach his wife and village, Mokrane dies tragically in a snowstorm. By means of his tragic end Mammeri criticizes the custom of repudiating and ill-treating wives for their sterility.

Like Mammeri, Feraoun devoted great efforts to depicting the awful condition of his women compatriots. In addition to the problem of barrenness, he emphasizes the lot of women who gave birth merely to female children, suggesting that it was no better than that of the barren ones. In *Le Fils du pauvre,* the narrator shows how much he was spoiled and loved by all; simply because he was the only male child in the family, he could beat and ill-treat his sisters without being punished for it. The narrator also draws a comparison between his mother, and his uncle's wife whose children were all girls; whereas the former was proud, the latter was rather envious. In *Les Chemins qui montent,* Feraoun lays more emphasis on this state of affairs; Melha tells Marie that, although they are both widows, they differ in that Mari e has a son, while she only has a daughter. Feraoun also criticizes 'arranged marriages'; he demonstrates that this phenomenon did not only put the girl's parents to the trouble of finding her a suitable husband, which made the girl's mother offer many presents which were beyond her means to the would-be husband's mother, but also brought them to the nadir of humiliation. Furthermore, through the case of Mokrane and Ouiza, whose marriage was arranged by their parents, Feraoun proved that such marriages were not only unhappy but also immoral as no feelings of love were shared between the bride and the groom who only discover each other on the wedding night, or the night of the 'rape', as Feraoun describes it. He skilfully draws a picture of the couple, who fear each other and panic at what will happen to them. To start off with, Mokrane can only enter the nuptial room after getting drunk. His friends advise him not to hesitate and to 'jump' on his bride without mercy. They also order him to leave his room as soon as he has accomplished his mission:

> **Écoute, lui dirent-ils, il ne faut pas hésiter. Tu fonces tout de suite, sinon tu es fichu ... Tu n'as pas besoin de demeurer avec elle toute la nuit, sors tout de suite ... Elle n' aura qu'à se débrouiller.[21]**

In language that revolts and disgusts the reader, Feraoun describes Mokrane's wild assault on Ouiza whom he 'attacked' while she was asleep:

> **Il était furieux et se sentait fort, prêt à cogner. Il se jeta rageusement sur Ouiza qui dormait. Et avant qu'elle revint de son sommeil, l'affaire était réglée. Elle ne poussa qu'un petit cri mais ne réussit pas à se délivrer. Il se leva triomphant pour sortir,lui dit d'un ton supérieur: - Fille d' Ahmed, tu peux pleurer. Je suis un homme, moi![22]**

In *La Colline oubliée,* Mammeri makes his emancipated protagonists protest at arranged marriages, which they describe as a 'wild custom'; "La coutume barbare de joindre deux êtres qui s'ignorent".[23] However, unlike Feraoun's example, Ibrahim and Sekoura love each other after their marriage, and share their joys and sorrows together.

Although both writers expressed their opinion on their -women compatriots, as well as showing sympathy towards them, they did not make their heroines revolt against their condition, nor did they portray them as expressing their anger or dissatisfaction. These women seem to accept their fate in silence, and endure the consequences of being born female. Nevertheless, we should mention that both writers introduced characters like Davda and Melha, who, though well aware of their

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21. ***Les Chemins qui montent,*** **p.81.**

22. **Ibid., p.86.**

23. ***La Colline oubliée,*** **p.18.**

condition as women in a society that favoured men, are unable to go beyond a verbal account of their hard and unfair fate. Davda tells her lover Menach:

> Oublies-tu Menach, quelle est chez nous la condition d'une femme, qu'elle n'a pas le droit de rester à bavarder avec un homme seul à seul, pas le droit d'attendre tous les soirs même dans le coin le plus caché de son coeur un autre que son mari ...2[4]

Accordingly, Davda, victim of an arranged marriage joining her to a rich man whom she does not love, feels obliged to sacrifice her love for Menach, and to remain faithful to her husband.

To Menach she explains how hard it is for her to devote herself physically to the husband, who possesses her while her heart and soul are with the one she really loved:

> Tu n'as pas pensé quel calvaire c'était pour moi de subir chaque soir les propos de Mouhouch, ses moustaches tailées, sa chéchia de laine, quand dehors je savais très bien que tu regardais le ciel en pensant à moi.[25]

She also reminds him of the danger that awaits for her if her adulterous love is discovered, "Si je t'avais écouté une seule fois, quel supplice aurait été ma vie ensuite" .[26] Like all her countrywomen, Davda fears a scandal from her people, who would only condemn her without devoting any effort to understanding her.

Unlike the 'wise' Davda, Chabha, in *La Terre et le sang*, cannot hide her

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24. *La Colline oubliée,* pp.233-234.

25. Ibid., p.235.

26. *La Colline oubliée,* p.235.

feelings for Amer. Therefore, she ends up in the middle of a scandal[27] provoked by another woman who condemns her in public, telling everyone about her adulterous relationship with Amer: "Amer et Chabha se trouvèrent bientôt en plein champ visuel de l'opinion, tels deux gibiers nocturnes sous un brutal faisceau de projecteur" .[28] Therefore, Chabha is not only condemned by her society, but also ends up as a widow, accused by her people of being the cause of the tragic accident which resulted in the deaths of both her lover and her husband. As for the author, Feraoun, he suggests that Chabha's act is the ultimate result of an arranged marriage, and the unavoidable consequence of her barren state which has condemned her to a sad existence. Her love for Amer is both an attempt to find the sexual satisfaction she had not found with her husband, and an effort to become pregnant and escape the sad fate of barrenness.

It is worth noting that among the male writers of the fifties, Feraoun was the one who was most interested in the condition of his female compatriots of whom he drew a sad but realistic portrait:

> Chez nous, la femme est vraiment le sexe faible; elle le sait et se prend en pitié. Elle qui est sensible, la vie la contraint à l'insensibilité: certaines partagent le lit avec une rivale officielle; d'autres sont condamnées au célibat et à la chasteté; et nombre d'entre elles sont tenues d' accepter celui qu'elles n'ont pas choisi, fût-il vieux, difforme ou vicieux. Elles se soumettent, étouffent la voix du coeur; il leur reste, avec une déception parfois sans bornes, non le dégoût qui empoisonne l'éxistence, mais une espèce de scepticisme qui leur fait supporter leur sort et absoudre par avance tout acte de rébellion auquel peut se livrer l'une des leurs.[29]

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27. *La Terre et le sang*, pp.204-210.

28. Ibid., p.203.

29. *La Terre et le sang*, pp.37-38.

Whereas Feraoun and Mammeri depicted the lot of their countrywomen in the rural areas of Kabylia, Dib's interest was based more on the urban milieu which he made the setting of most of his novels.

In *La Grande maison*, the central hub of activity is Dar Sbitar, a woman's world in which, apart from the child Omar, no • other male figure appears. Dar Sbitar's women are all presented as anxious, and suffer in various ways from heartache. This group of women is made up of widows, married as well as repudiated women, young girls whose parents' concern is to marry them off, and innocent little girls like Omar's two sisters, Mériem and Aouicha. Nevertheless, as in the novels of Mammeri and Feraoun, the first female figure to appear in Dib's fiction, is a mother in her everyday struggle to provide food for her children. Questioned on this point, Dib replied:

> La femme ne commence à avoir une certaine réalité, à prendre une place dans son milieu, à devenir un personnage dans toute la force du terme, qu'à partir du moment où elle est une mère ... La femme jouissant d'une autonomie d' identité et de comportement, acceptée comme un fait social n'est pas encore entrée dans nos moeurs, ni donc dans notre littérature. Sauf, une fois de plus, sous l'aspect de mère.[30]

Aini is the central and most significant figure among the women at Dar Sbitar. A widow for many years, she is portrayed at the limit of her endurance. She has taken on the responsibility of bringing up her three children by herself. Although she has always worked like an automaton to provide food for her children, she hardly succeeds in making ends meet. In disappointment, Aini rebels against her fate, and takes her anger out on her poor children, forcing them to share her despair and suffering.

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30. Aida Bamieh, *The Development of the Novel and Short Story in Modern Algerian literature*, p.282.

Aini is described as having lost everything that could make her an attractive feminine figure. She is not only gaunt but also has a hard voice and hard looks, showing signs of severe deprivation, both in the emotional and the physical sense, " Elle était devenue anguleuse, toute en gros os. Depuis longtemps, tout ce qui fait le charme d'une femme avait disparu chez elle. Efflanquée, elle avait aussi la voix et le regard durs".[31] Aini has sacrificed her feminity and health for her three children, and acts as father and mother both in bringing them up. For their sakes, she runs the dan ger of smuggling in some materials, which she sells to the rich ladies in her city, in so doing, she not only faces the trouble of crossing the borders to Morocco, but also runs the risk of jail:

> Elle essayait de lutter. Elle ruminait sans cesse des idées. Par quels moyens gagner plus d'argent? Omar ne pouvait croire que pour augmenter leur revenu, sa mère acceptait, avec cette légèreté d'encourir la prison.[32]

Nevertheless, despite the anger of her complaints, Aini is more proud than otherwise of her achievements. She tells her neighbour with pride:

> C'est moi qui travaille pour tous ici. Tu les vois de tes yeux? L'aînée pissait sur elle quand leur père me les à laissés ... Je dis que je travaille pour eux ... C'est sûr. Je me fatigue, je me tracasse, je me casse la tête ... Mais c'est leur bien. Le bien qui leur est dû. Il arrive jusqu'à eux, à leur bouche même. Personne ne pourra le leur ôter.[33]

In conclusion, the female figure portrayed through Aini is that of a strong and determined woman, devoting all her efforts to bringing up her children. Although she

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31. *La Grande maison,* p.131.

32. Ibid., p.129.

33. *La Grande maison,* p.59.

is angry most of the time, rarely showing a tender side to her children, Aini is still their only support in life. They understand that if life is hard for them, it is even harder for their mother, who goes through the constant worry of feeding them every single day. Like the women in Feraoun's novels, those in Dib's are condemned to a hard existence. From childhood to adulthood their lives are an endless account of misfortunes.

Through Omar's two sisters, Aouicha and Mériem, Dib depicts the sad fate of his compatriots. Like Melha in Feraoun's *Les Chemins qui montent,* Aini found her two daughters a heavy burden. She not only complains about them, but has also beaten them and described them as a "plague". She argues that whereas Omar would support her in the future, her two daughters are only extra mouths to feed. She claimed:

> Une fille ne compte pour rien. On la nourrit. Quand elle devient pubère, il faut la surveiller de près. Elle est pire qu' un aspic, à cet âge-là. Elle vous fait des bêtises dès que vous tournez le dos. Ensuite il faut se saigner les veines pour lui constituer un trousseau, avant de s'en débarrasser.[34]

However, Dib proves the fallacy of Aini's argument; her two daughters help her at home, as well as working in a factory when they can go out to work. In fact, the two girls suffer a lot more than Omar, and cannot enjoy their childhood. They are sad and desparate to such a point that their little faces reflect all the suffering they have endured in silence:

> Le visage de Mériem était impassible. De la voir ainsi, de voir les ombres de son âme transparaître sur ses traits, sans trop savoir pourquoi, Omar eut peur. Il lui arrivait souvent de surprendre en lui un tel déchirement. Chaque fois il s'en

34. Ibid., p.90.

> défendait avec désespoir. Son regard revint sur elle. Il vit dans ses yeux une prière. Le seul désir de Mériem était-il de quitter la vie?[35]

In the awareness of her sad life and desperate future, Mériem's hopes cannot contain but a desire for death.

In *L'Incendie*, Dib similarly depicts the ravaged features of Aouicha who, although a teenager, has lost the healthy freshness of youth; Aouicha has a grey, worn-out mask for a face and a gaunt body,

> Elle avait un masque fripé et gris, des traits ravagés qui avaient perdu la saine fraîcheur de la jeunesse. Mais on ne savait quel autre charme, triste et inquiétant, remplacait celui de la santé. Cette expression venait sans doute de son jeune âge et de sa précoce flétrissure réunis.[36]

Like Feraoun, Dib shows compassion towards his countrywomen. In language that reflects his sorrow, he says of Aouicha, "Pauvre visage qui devait répondre à tant de questions angoissantes! Aouicha n'avait que ce visage; elle n'en avait pas de rechange. Elle présentait toujours le même, avec les petits plis pitoyables qu'y formait le sourire".[37] Throughout her life, Aouicha has only known deprivation and hardship, the consequences of which are reflected on her face.

Would Aouicha's married life hold out any future hope of happiness after her sad childhood and adolescence? Dib appears to think not, arguing that married life only worsens a woman's lot. Through the case of Mama, Kara Ali's wife, he depicts the sad existence of a woman married to a man twice her age. Kara Ali shares nothing with his wife but some sexual encounters, which are purely to satisfy his

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35. *La Grande maison,* p.113.

36. *L'Incendie,* p.148.

37. *L'Incendie,* p.148.

instincts, as he has no feeling of love for his wife. For her part Mama knows that, as Kara Ali's wife, it is her duty to satisfy his desires and to be his faithful servant. She also knows that Kara Ali does not respect her, considering her as an inferior, who was not supposed to know anything beyond her home duties, and whose words count for nothing. Kara tells his wife, "Tes paroles n'ajoutent ni ne retranchent rien à rien".[38]

Dib clearly stands on Mama's side, and shows that, unlike her partner, she is goodhearted, more reasonable than he is. She is loyal to her people, and when she discovers that Kara Ali is collaborating with the French against the peasants, she hates him more than ever before.[39] Later on, Mama also discovers that her husband was the one who had set fire to the peasants' huts. Moreover, at over fifty, he wants to take the fourteen year old Zhor as his second wife. Horrified by her discoveries Mama decides to face Kara Ali, whose only response is to beat the woman who has dared to challenge him:

> Kara l'étouffait, nouant le bras autour de son cou. Il lui avait d'abord tordu le poignet ... Elle recevait des gifles sur le visage avec indifférence. Kara lui saisit encore le poignet et le lui tordit: Elle tomba à genoux, le poing de l'homme s' abattit plusieurs fois sur sa figure. Alors Mama put respirer très, très lentement; sa lèvre inférieure, fendue, pendait en saignant.[40]

Through Mama, Dib depicts the condition of a woman married to a man whom she had never previously met or loved. On her wedding day, Mama cries for fear.[41] In fact, fear has never left her after her marriage, for Kara Ali never shows her

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38. Ibid., p.102.

39. Ibid., p.143.

40. L'Incendie, pp.184-185.

41. Ibid., p.181.

any tenderness or affection, but frightens her all the time. Mama tells her sister Zhor, "j'aimerais que tu restes tout le temps auprès de moi, ma petite soeur. Il me fait peur, cet homme ..."[42] In conclusion, the image of Mama beaten to death by the bestial Kara Ali, reflects Dib's view about his countrywomen, who although clever, sensitive' and noble were considered second class citizens who counted for nothing with their husbands, who give them no consideration. Dib protests against this terri ble state of affairs, through his description of female characters like Aini, who could manage by herself in a way no man could without his wife. Aini is both mother and father to her children. She proves to be capable of bringing up her children, as well as providing their daily bread.

Mohammed Dib, *Un Eté Africain*[43]

In his novel, *Un Eté africain,* Dib gives his reader an overview of a different type of woman. He introduces an educated female character at a critical stage of her life, in an urban bourgeois milieu. Zakya Rai, a young well-educated girl, who has passed her *baccalauréat, endures* a hard summer holiday during which her future is to be decided.

Whereas Zakya's aim was to go to university, her father, Mokhtar Rai, prefers her to become a school teacher. Although she does not really like the idea at first, the girl decides to fall in with her father's wishes. However, her grandmother rejects her son's plan fiercely and advises him to marry off his daughter as soon as possible:

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42. Ibid.

43. M. Dib, *Un Eté africain* (Paris: Le Seuil, 1959).

> PFF! Institutrice! Cherche-lui un mari, ça fera davantage son affaire. Une Rai, travailler? Tu veux sans doute que la ville daube sur toi et ta fille!w

Convinced by his mother, Mokhtar Rai changes his mind, and tells his daughter to stay at home and fellow in her mother's footsteps. In a frenzy, Zakya questions why she has studied for so many years:

> A quoi me sert mon Baccalauréat, à présent? ... Pourquoi avoir fait de si nombreuses années d'études? Est-ce pour en arriver là, pour faire comme si tout ça n'avait pas eu lieu? Je ne comprends pas. **as**

Indeed, Zakya understands nothing of what is happening to her. She discovers that there is a yawning gap between her ideas and those of her parents, particularly when they propose that she marries her frivolous cousin Sabri, whom she dislikes. In their turn, her parents discover that their daughter is very far from their own concepts. Surprised that her daughter is rather scandalized by the idea of being married off by her parents, Yemna told Zakya:

> Je ne comprends plus ceux de ton âge ... Avant, il ne venait même pas à l'idée d'une femme de faire des objections contre le mariage, ça n'arrivait jamais de la vie! Et qui d' ailleurs lui demandait son avis? Quant à travailler hors de chez elle, à s'occuper d'autre chose que son ménage, son mari, ses enfants ... la question ne se posait pas.[46]

Therefore, Zakya is in conflict, not only with her father, but also with her mother and grandmother. Unable to find support from either side, Zakya's revolt is a pacific one.

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44. Ibid., p.8.

45. Ibid., p.44.

46. *Un Eté africain,* p.120.

She suffers in silence, for she finds that any reaction on her part would be in vain, as she stands alone in her dilemma, and is understood by no one. In the end, although she knows she is being condemned to a sad life, Zakya decides to obey her father:

> Je me soumets. Comme il se doit. Tel est notre sort à nous ... Je ne veux pas aller à l'encontre de sa volonté, pour qu' on ne parle pas en mal de moi, pour qu'on ne me blâme pas. Il m'a donné la vie, il peut faire de moi ce qu'il voudra, je lui obéirai. Mon coeur en sera déchiré? ... Qu' importe. On saura au moins que je vis selon la règle, et nul n'osera me railler.[47]

Nevertheless, it is worth mentioning that unlike Zakya, the female characters depicted by female Algerian novelists in the fifties, such as Djamila Débêche and Assia Djebar, do revolt without caring what society thinks of them. Unlike Zakya, they re fuse to be victims; they rebel with a great will, and defeat both society and its outdated customs. They believe their right to lead a decent life, and to be equal to men, surpasses any other concept or prejudice.

47. Ibid., p.128.

Section Two
Algerian Women Speak for Themselves

1. Djamila Débêche, *Aziza*[48]

Aziza is Djamila Débêche's second novel about the condition of women in Algeria. It is worth recalling that with her first novel, *Leila,* Débêche was the first female Algerian novelist to expose and discuss the cause of her peers in a society which favoured its men. Educated and emancipated, she led the fight for the right of Algerian women to education. She stood side by side with the Algerian intellectuals who, at a time when they vindicated their right to equality with the French, she vindicated the right of Algerian women to equality with Algerian men. She published several articles on these lines in various periodicals such as *Dialogues, Méditerranée* and *L' Action,* this last was, a feminist journal started by the author herself in September 1947.[49] Although Taos Amrouche's *Jacinthe noire* was published in the same year as *Leila,* and both novels had women for their main characters, the former dealt with Algerian women in conflict with colonial society while the latter had the conflict of Algerian women with their own people as its main focus. Thus, while *Jacinthe noire* was the first of its kind to deal with the alienation of the colonized by the colonizers, *Leila* was based on the alienation of the Algerian woman from her

48. D. Débêche, *Aziza* (Alger: Imbert, 1955).

49. Examples of her publications: 1) *L'enseignement de la langue arabe en Algérie et le droit de vote aux femmes algériennes* (Alger: Charras, 1951); 2) "La Femme Musulmane dans la Société", *Terres d'Afrique* (Meknès: été 1946), pp. 141-161.

own people. Therefore, with *Leila,* Débêche was dubbed the forerunner of feminist writing in the Algerian novel. In this vein Yétiv Isaac wrote:

> Cette thèse plaça Djamila. Débêche à l'avant-garde de la croisade féministe de sa génération et en fit le porte-drapeau de la lutte pour la promotion de la femme musulmane en Afrique du nord, pour sa libération des carcans qui la contraignaient *à* un statut de mineur et la réduisaient à un objet dont pouvaient disposer à leur gré le père ou le mari.[50]

With *Aziza,* Débêche portrays a protagonist whose sense of alienation runs even deeper than Leila's. Aziza feels an alien both among her own people and among the French, "Ni dans un groupe, ni dans l'autre, je n'étais à ma place".[51] Being a woman, she is, in fact, doubly alienated. Aziza, is an Algerian newsagent enjoying a certain amount of freedom, which causes her countrymen to describe her as being too westernized. At work, several of her Algerian co-workers complain of emancipated and unveiled Algerian women, whom they condemn for their fascinati on with the European way of life. Aziza states:

> A l'agence parmi mes confrères, figuraient plusieurs compat riots. En général, ils ne me témoignaient aucune sympathie et me créaient de nombreux soucis. J'entendais leurs sarcasmes à propos de l'évolution de la femme musulmane attirée par le monde occidental; on ne se gênait plus pour faire devant moi des réflexions sur les filles dévoilées qu'il faudrait "renvoyer à leurs fourneaux".[52]

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50. Y. Isaac, *Le Thème de l'alienation dans le roman maghrébin d'expression française,* p.181.

51. *Aziza,* p.9.

52. *Aziza,* p.38.

She concludes that her compatriots are too selfish; they neither want the women to be as well- educated as they are, nor to enter the 'European' world as they can. Although they themselves have thrown away their traditional 'costumes', they still argue that their countrywomen should remain veiled and secluded. Well aware of this critical state of affairs, Aziza believes that she has found an exeption in Ali Kemal, a young lawyer, whom she meets at a French party. In Ali, she finds not only a similarly emancipated Algerian intellectual, but also an old friend and fellow villager. Although they like one another, many of Ali's close friends and relatives decide that Aziza is too 'westernized' to become his wife. Ali's elder brother tells Aziza, "Je sais qu'Ali a un sentiment pour toi ... Mais nous vivons à la mode arabe. Et toi, it vaut mieux que to épouses un européen".[53] In fact, Ali himself is caught between his feelings for Aziza, and the unfavourable opinion of his friends. He can only think of one solution: to take Aziza back to their original tribe, where they will marry according to their ancestral customs. Surprisingly, Aziza leaves her job and agrees to accompany Ali on his pilgrimage to their ancestral land. However, the unexpected awaits her at the Beni Ahmed. She is first deceived on the day of her arrival, when, with no previous notice, Ali leaves her alone with a group of women from the tribe, with whom she is to spend the night. The next morning she is informed that Ali has left the tribe for the day; she is furious and can no longer contain her anger, screaming at the women, and telling them that she hates their outdated customs. Deceived and disappointed, Aziza discovers that Ali has put her in the hands of the women of Beni Ahmed to mould her to their likeness; they veil her from head to foot, and make her go through some rituals as part of the wedding ceremony. What strikes Aziza most, is that each time she complained of something, they tell her that she will soon get used to it.

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53. Ibid., p.20.

After the wedding ceremony, Aziza spends three whole months in the tribe, during which time Ali is absent most of the time. Although she begs him on several occasions to take her with him to Sétif, the city where he worked, or to Algiers, Ali's answer is simply that she must stay in the tribe. Finally, when his work calls him back to Algiers, he decides that she too should leave the tribe and join her old nanny, Chama, in Algiers, and promises to visit her whenever he can. He argues that because she is 'too westernized', it is in his interest to keep their marriage secret: "Tu sais bien ... que ma carrière serait entravée si l'on connaissait notre mariage. Tu es devenue trop occidentale. C'est la raison pour laquelle je voulais to voir rester aux Beni Ahmed".[54] In her disappointment, Aziza decides to end their relationship, and begin her life before she met Ali all over again. Her first task is to find employment. However, she finds that the doors which were open to her before her marriage, are now closed, and all the European friends whose help she was relying on, have now rejected her for having followed Ali back to his tribe. They argue that with her education, she should not have made such a grave error. Moreover, they tell her that she has betrayed them: "Comment voulez-vous que l'on vous fasse confiance, désormais? Votre conduite est sans éxcuse".[55] Yet, Aziza is also rejected by her own people who believe that she is too westernized. Her old friend, Arezki, explains to her that if Ali has not openly declared their marriage, it is because she does not accept the lifestyle of her female compatriots,

> Tu ne vis pas comme les femmes de chez nous et tout ce que tu fais est en contradiction avec nos doctrines ... Tu sais bien que tu ne peux plus te plier à nos coutumes et vivre comme les nôtres. C'est toi qui as voulu revenir des Beni-Ahmed. Tu vois que tu n'es plus une musulmane, que tu

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54. *Aziza,* p.113.

55. *Aziza,* p.135. ,

> veux vivre comme les femmes d'Europe.[56]

Aziza is deeply disillusioned as she is humiliated and rejected by both sides. After many vain attempts to find a job or an understanding friend, she finds herself in a situation even worse than that she has endured at the Beni Ahmed. She claims:

> Pour les musulmans, j'étais bien devenue une occidentale. Je pensais à ce paradoxe: c'était les traditionnalistes qui me condamnaient le plus, alors que je m'étais conformée à une ancienne coutume. Quant aux européens, je m'étais placée dans une situation sans excuse.[57]

In the end, Aziza decides to escape the society which has turned against her. As a way out of her dilemma, she plans to go to France. However, she meets Ali who, in his sadness, asks her to make a new start. Her subsequent refusal, allows her to discover her newly acquired strength and self-confidence. Thus she decides not to escape after all, but to face her society and impose herself on it as an example of the educated and emancipated Algerian woman.

Although this novel suffers from didacticism, as well as from its straightforward reportage style, both reminiscent of Débêche's scholarly. works, its merits still lie in its truth. *Aziza* reflects the difficult situation of the Algerian man, who in his struggle against racial segregation, opposed his countrywoman's struggle against sexual segregation. In this Débêche clearly proves the double alienation of the Algerian woman; she faced both colonial and sexual alienation.

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56. Ibid., pp.123-124.

57. Ibid„ p.140.

2. Assia Djebar, *La Soif*[58]

Another Algerian female writer to emerge in the fifties, is Assia Djebar with her two novels *La Soif* and *Les Impatients*[59]. In *La Soif,* the central figure is Nadia, who, at twenty, is a girl seeking pleasure in sharing the lifestyle of the European girls in her city. As the child of an Algerian father and a French mother, Nadia looks more French than Algerian. She claims, "Mon teint de blonde et mon allure émancipée trompaient la plupart; et ceux qui me connaissaient n'oubliaient pas de rappeler ma mère française ... mon père m'avait élevée, comme ils disaient, à l'européenne".[60] We cannot, thus, expect Nadia to share Aziza's sense of humiliation, and her struggle to compel recognition in a society that did not favour the emancipation of women. Nadia's life is filled with jazz, the sea side, cafés and terraces and fast rides in her sports car. Although she can do anything she likes, Nadia's search for pleasure only expresses her feeling of emptiness, which makes her leave her fiancé for no apparent reason, and to make another man, Hassein, dance. At the same time she envies a couple, Jedla and Ali, since she believes that they make the ideal couple and live in harmony. Even though she discovers that Jedla is an unhappy woman, who tries in vain to commit suicide, Nadia does not try to understand her or to help her out of her dilemma. Instead, she condemns her for being 'selfish' and feels compassion for Ali, in whose looks and calm personality she finds something to love and admire.

Nadia reveals with a certain pride that, unlike other women, she is not weak. She enjoys attracting men, but only to when they suffer. On the other hand, she also mocks those women who, like her sister Myriem, find joy in sex, which she believes

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58. Assia Djebar, *La Soif* (Paris: Julliard, 1957).

59. Idem, *Les Impatients* (Paris: Julliard, 1958).

60. La Soif, p.17.

is at the root of their weakness before men. She avows, "J'ai eu envie ... de crier à toutes les femmes que la jouissance n'avait ni éclat ni lumière, et qu'elles feraient mieux toutes d'écraser sur leur visage les râles de leurs tristes plaisirs" 6[1] Hassein understands her game and reveals her secret, even while he is driven mad with jealousy. He tells her: "Je to connais: it to faut des hommes à tes pieds, même s'ils ne to plaisent pas; ce sont quand même des hommes. Tu n'as soif que d'hommes".[62] In fact, he is not far from the truth; Nadia cannot deny his statement. Even so, she is not sure what she really wants; so she thirsts not only for men, but also for self-discovery. What is more, she does not know whether she really loves Ali, or perhaps Hassein. Her uncertainty regarding her own feelings makes her agree with Jedla that she is in love with her husband. Unlike Nadia, Jedla is portrayed as being ugly, which makes her unhappy and insecure beside her handsome husband, whom she believes is too elegant for her. Her depression is stimulated by her belief that she will never be able to bear any children, after the miscarriage of her first baby. These are the two reasons behind Jedla's suicide attempt, which is doomed to failure.

The second tool Jedla wanted to use was Nadia to whom she had offered the husband she did not want any more. Greatly surprised, Nadia feels humiliated and unhappy at being used by Jedla in such an indecent manner. Although she tells Jedla that she might accept her suggestion, the following day she goes to find Hassein and tell him of her love for him; yet she tires of him after a few days.

To conclude, Nadia does not understand herself. Her thirst is altogether one for self-discovery, freedom, the meaning of love and is also thirst for pleasure. She is never satisfied, but follows her constant search for satisfaction until it comes to a standstill with Jedla's sudden death after her abortion. Thus, like Nadia, Jedla also thirsts for 'something else'; her dilemma ends in a tendency to destroy her married

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61. *La Soif,* p.66.

62. Ibid., pp.84-85.

life, epitomised by the destruction of the foetus who could have rescued her from the inner despair which followed the miscarriage of her first baby. In the end she escapes from life, resulting in her husband's unhappiness and Nadia's deep feeling of remorse, partly because she has helped Jedla to have an abortion, and partly because Jedla has used her as a means of escaping from life, "... s'était servie de moi pour plonger dans la mort, pour fuir".[63] However, Nadia emerges from her crisis as a stronger person. Her friend's death forces her to have a different outlook on life; she changes most of her former ideas, and decides to turn into a married woman whose main aim is to make her partner happy. However, given that Nadia has criticized the position of married women throughout, the reader is left to question whether or not she has in fact satisfied her thirst.

3. Assia Djebar, *Les Impatients*

Djebar's second novel *Les Impatients* is more involved in the problems of Algerian society just before the 1954 uprising. The authoress specifies:

> Ce que j'ai voulu montrer ici, c'est la prise de conscience de Dalila, une jeune algérienne en révolte contre la tradition, son milieu, sa famille. J'ai voulu montrer comment dans un monde calme où rien objectivement n' avait encore changé se developpait un processus qui laissait deviner les bouleversements futurs.[64]

Unlike Nadia, Dalila belongs to a conservative family whose main concern is to keep the prestige of their name. In fact, the name is the sole reminder of the heritage of a

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63. *La Soif,* p.164.

64. Christiane Achour, *Anthologie de la littérature algérienne de langue française* (Alger: E.N.A.P., 1990), p.235.

bourgeois family which,has lost its wealth over the years, particularly after the death of Dalila's father, whose threats she remembers:

> Prends garde à toi! Je veux bien te laisser aller au lycée quelques années encore, avant de te marier ... Mais, je t' avertis, si je te vois trainer dans la rue, te conduire incorrectement, tu sais bien jusqu'où j'irai ... Mieux vaudrait te laisser enfermée ... si un jour une de mes filles salissait l' honneur de la famille, je prendrai mon fusil et je le déchargerai sur elle, sans hésiter.[65]

After her father's death, Dalila as a young girl of eighteen, is watched by her brother, Farid, and her stepmother Lella Melika. She was only allowed to go out to school or to her friend's house. She states: "J'avais passé la plus grande partie de ma vie dans des maisons fermées, ou dans des internats gris".[66] Under these conditions, Dalila yearns for more freedom, especially after meeting Salim and falling in love with him. At this point her constant struggle for freedom, and her envy of European girls who take their liberty for granted, begin. In front of them Dalila feels so embarrassed about herself, and of her fear at meeting the man she loves:

> Je tournai la tête pour fuir. Sur l'autre trottoir un groupe d' Européennes à la peau bronzée, aux larges décolletés, attendaient la sortie. Je me sentis mal à l'aise comme si mon affolement leur était visible ... Je me surpris à envier leur aisance: elles coquetaient, riaient en tendant leur gorge; et moi parce que j'allais à un rendez-vous secret, je me sentais écrasée par la gravité d'un tel acte.[67]

Each time Dalila wants to meet Salim, she has to pretend she is going either to the library, or to visit her friend Mina. However, her stepmother soon discovers

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65. *Les Impatients*, p.172.

66. Ibid., p.40.

67. Ibid., p.41.

her lies, and warns her not to meet him again. From this point on, Dalila decides to use Salim as a means of rebellion: "J'avais besoin de lui pour ma révolte".[68] She defies her stepmother, and continues to meet Salim, discovering, for the first time, both the other sex and the meaning of love. Determined to succeed in her rebellion, Dalila extends her defiance to society, and cares less than before about how others would see her behaviour. However, to her disappointment, Salim does not share her views, caring greatly what his people would think; he then decides to ask for Dalila's hand and afterwards to leave the country. Dalila is also disappointed in her stepmother, who opposes her marriage with Salim: She suspects her of having a relationship with him. Even so, she prefers to keep silent over her doubts and carry on her quest for freedom and self-discovery, "Cette curiosité de moi-même, qui me glaçait, au coeur même du feu que j'avais allumé ..."[69] To this end, she decides not only to defy received custom by defying her brother and stepmother, but also to raise a scandal, by revealing that she had lied to her brother when she had asked him to spend the night at Mina's house, and that her stepmother knew she was with Salim. Dalila explains that her attempt to cause trouble for the people around her is due to her "impatience à me connaître".[70] Like Nadia, she also thirsts for freedom and self-discovery, and, in doing so, acts in a selfish manner, challenging everything which stands between her and her goal. Although Farid allows her to marry Salim as soon as possible, she refuses his offer and claims her freedom to go to university. She insists she will obtain her freedom at whatever price: "Je prenais moi-même cette liberté, au prix de n'importe quel scandale".[71] Therefore, she decides to escape to Paris not just to meet Salim, but primarily to go to university. Salim, however, can

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68. *Les Impatients,* p.54.

69. Ibid., p.175.

70. Ibid., p.175.

71. *Les Impatients,* p.194.

only see that she has escaped to be with him, disappointing Dalila, who claims: "Alors que j'avais été impatiente d'amour, de haine, de vie enfin, it me croyait seulement trop pressée de le rejoindre. C'était déjà notre premier malentendu".[72]

This misunderstanding results both in her disillusion, and in confusion and doubt over what she really wants. Therefore, once more she finds that she is in conflict with herself: sometimes she shows her resolution not to let any man master her; other times she enjoys being playing the role of an obedient woman. Although she defies her brother Farid, who tries to prevent her from going to university, she obeys Salim who claims that she should never leave her bedsit apartment without his permission. In his suspicion and jealousy he secludes her, and considers her an ignorant little girl out of whom he would make a woman: "Tu es une toute petite fille dont je ferai un jour une femme".[73] Dalila is greatly offended, which once more feeds her sense of revolt. She tells Salim that she hates his attitude towards her: "Ce que je ne supporte pas, ce sont tes airs de maître"[74], and decides to defy him and leave her flat. Furious, and at the same time, remembering his previous relationship with Lella Melika, Salim decides to return to Algeria and meet his previous mistress again. During Dalila's absence Lella Melika has married another man, who discovers her with Salim, and kills them both. After Salim's death, Dalila returns home to find her brother in jail, her sister-in-law pregnant, and all the other people in the house in need of her help and support. They asked her to finish her education and look after them while Farid is away. Accordingly, Dalila's education makes her equal to men; unlike the illiterate women of the household, she is elected to replace Farid. This same view is expressed in Débêche's *Leila,* when the heroine is told by her uncle,

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72. Ibid.

73. Ibid., p.205.

74. *Les Impatients,* p.216.

"l'avenir est de ton côté".[75]

Therefore, education is considered a means to emancipation. One also notices that the female writers make their protagonists educated women who, thanks to their education, become aware of their condition, and lead the fight for emancipation and women's liberation. Unlike the women shown by the male novelists, those portrayed by Débêche and Djebar thirst for freedom, and are impatient for self-discovery. Their quest is comparable to that of the alienated male heroes who undertake a lengthy quest for self-discovery and national identity.

Therefore the novels of the fifties all portrayed alienated heroes, ill at ease both among their own people and the colonizers. This alienation led the hero to undertake a long search which ended either in his suicide, like Amer in *Les Chemins qui montent;* or in political activity to escape alienation, to merge with the people, and lead them in the long and painful struggle for national independence. Such heroes are portrayed in the novels of the sixties, in which men and women took part in the shattering events of the 1954 revolution. These heroes are called by Assia Djebar *Les Enfants du nouveau monde.*[76]

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75. D. Débêche, *Leila,* P.191.

76. Assia Djebar, *Les Enfants du nouveau monde* (Paris: Julliard, 1962).

CHAPTER SEVEN

A Literature of Combat

Introduction

Published in 1957, Djebar's *La Soif* provoked bitter criticism from the nationalist intelligentsia, who criticized the author for writing about a reality which was completely alien to Algerian society. Whereas the Algerian people lived through the shattering events of the 1954 revolution, Djebar seemed to be shut up in an ivory tower, in writing of the pleasures of a young girl, whose experiences and worries could in no way be those of Algerian women. Like Mammeri after the publication of *La Colline oubliée,* Djebar was accused of serving the colonists who praised her for her novel *La Soif,* as a blind imitation of Françoise Sagan's *Bonjour tristesse,* whose concerns are those of French youth. However, the nationalist intelligentsia pointed out that the concerns of Algerian youth were different from those of the French, and it was therefore indecent for Djebar to write about sexual problems, while her Algerian compatriots were fighting for the liberation of her country.' However, the nationalist intelligentsia did not understand that, like their male compatriots who fought to liberate their country, the female characters of *La Soif* in their quest to discover the feminity of their bodies, were also leading a revolution. A. Khatibi questions: "A-t-on vraiment compris que la découverte du corps pour le personnage de *La Soif* est aussi une révolution importante?"[2] However, under the pressure of nationalist criticism, Assia Djebar did not only admit that "s'il existait dix familles algéroises menant la vie des personnages de *La Soif,* c'est bien un maximum"[3], but also disclaimed her novel:

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1. See, *Démocratie, 11* March 1957, and, *Présence Africaine,* XXII, Oct.-Nov. 1958, p.120.

2. A. Khatibi, *Le Roman maghrébin,* p.62.

3. Interview in *Témoignage Chrétien,* July 26th, 1957.

> J'ai effectivement voulu dans ce roman présenter la caricature de la jeune fille algérienne occidentalisée et qui s' identifie dans tout son comportement à la jeune fille française. En fait, je n'ai pas pris ce roman au sérieux et je ne me. suis pas prise au sérieux moi-même.[4]

Therefore, in her second novel *Les Impatients*, which she set in the summer before the 1954 revolution, Djebar describes the awakening of her heroine Dalila, and her struggle against her people's outdated customs. This corresponds to the heroes of the male novelists in the early fifties, as shown in Mammeri's *La Colline oubliée* and Feraoun's *La Terre et le sang.* Unlike Débêche's heroine, *Aziza,* who experiences a dual sense of alienation, both as a female and as a colonized Algerian, Djebar's heroine Dalila is only at war with the outdated customs of her people. Nevertheless, this rebellion takes on a nationalist dimension in Djebar's third novel *Les Enfants du nouveau monde,* in which the female characters join the Algerian revolution to fight not only for their own liberation as women, but also to take part in the liberation of their country. This shift in Djebar's career as a writer proves her concern to clarify her political commitment: "Elle se montre très soucieuse d' expliciter son engagement politique. Elle rejoint ainsi la préoccupation fondamentale de la plupart des romans algériens pendant la guerre de libération, celle de montrer la prise de conscience d'une nation et d'un peuple".[5]

Unlike Assia Djebar, Mammeri did not disclaim his novel *La Colline oubliée*[6] *;* on the contrary he considered it as the first stage in the long quest of his hero for national identity. It was a stage when Algerian intellectuals were generally fascinated by the principles of the French "civilizing mission", rejecting their own

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4. Interview in *L'Action,* September 8th, 1958.

5. A. Khatibi, *Le Roman maghrébin,* p.64.

6. See *Supra,* Chap. 4.

ancestral heritage. This stage corresponds also to the first part of Ferhat Abbas's development as a political leader, when he denied the existence of the Algerian nation, and considered Algeria as a French province. In his book *La Nuit coloniale,* he calls this period "La phase de l'égalité des droits, ou politique d'assimilation".[7] He claims that, "En 1920, des hommes de ma génération avaient vingt ans. La première guerre mondiale venait de finir".[8] In fact Abbas's thought during this period is similar to that of Mammeri's heroes in *La Colline oubliée* and also, obviously, to that of their contemporaries, such as Mouloud Feraoun and Mohammed Dib. If these writers depicted the misery of their people, as with Ferhat Abbas in *Le jeune algérien,* where he expressed his compassion towards the poor Algerian peasants: "Ah! cette misère du pauvre fellah! Personne ne la soupçonne! Elle est grande, elle est infinie. Elle est telle que le paysan se confond parfois avec la bête. Te voila mon frère, hébété, fièvreux, malade. Il pleut, il neige, tu as froid, tu as faim ..."[9] , the aim was to demonstrate the terrible condition of their people to the French humanists, asking for their help to rescue these depraved people from their state of misery.

However, in *Le Sommeil du juste,* Mammeri's hero steps up to the next stage in waking up to the hypocrisy of the principles behind the French colonial mission, especially after the Second World War, when he discovers that France cannot be his *mère patrie.* In fact, the crisis experienced by Mammeri's hero Arezki, is similar to Ferhat Abbas's. The same applies to the novelists, whose tone in condemning the colonists is more explicit. Nevertheless, such literature was only published in the second half of the 1950s which, according to the nationalist critics, was too late. We

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7. F. Abbas, *La.Nuit coloniale,* p.113.

8. Ibid.

9. F. Abbas, "L'éxode des ouvriers algériens en France", *Le Trait d'union,* April 1924. This article is also published in *Le jeune algérien,1931.*

can only conclude that these critics did not understand that a novel is not like a newspaper article, in which a writer can express his opinion about events immediately after they happen. In this vein Assia Djebar states, "Un écrivain n'est pas un journaliste, it est plutôt à mes yeux un témoin de la profondeur".[10] However, this demand for the authors' total commitment to their national cause became increasingly important with the outbreak of the Algerian war of independence. At its congress held in Algeria on 20th August 1956, the FLN insisted that Algerian literature should praise the heroic struggle for national independence:

> Nous devons faire une littérature spéciale que nous appellerons littérature de résistance; littérature qui contiendra l'exposé analytique, le roman, la déduction, par suggestion ou direction; et ainsi nous pousserons tout le monde à lire ce que nous écrivons et l'effet s'en laissera tracer dans l'âme de nos lecteurs.[11]

Before this declaration, nationalist critics had stressed that, "Une oeuvre signée d'un Algérien ne peut nous intéresser que d'un seul point de vue: quelle cause sert-elle? Quelle est sa position dans la lutte qui oppose le mouvement national au colonialism?" [12] On this basis Mouloud Feraoun was criticized for his novel *Les Chemins qui montent*, in which he focused on the problems of particular individuals such as Dehbia and Amer, at a time when their country was concerned with leading a collective war of independence. Unlike Djebar, Feraoun refused to respond to the call of the nationalist critics for a literature of propaganda. He believed that *Les Chemins qui montent* was already a 'committed' novel, bringing him criticism from

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10. Raymond Francis, "Rencontre avec Assia Djebar", *Dialogues*, no.39, Sept. Oct. 1967, p.19.

11. Si Allal El Fassi, *Mouvements d'indépendance au Moyen Orient "arabe"*, p.524. Quoted in Jean Dejeux, "La Littérature algérienne d'expression française", p.22.

12. Quoted in Yetiv Isaac, *Le Thème de l'aliénation*, p.99.

the French for his bitter tone in accusing them as the cause of the suffering experienced by alienated individuals like Dehbia and Amer. Mouloud Feraoun testifies that, "Ni les français, ni les musulmans ne trouveraient leur compte dans cet ouvrage. Du moins j'aurais témoigné en toute sincérité et j'aurais réglé mes comptes avec moi-même"i[3]. He adds that, his compatriots were wrong to accuse him of ignoring the events of the war of independence: "Et puis alors, mon Dieu, n'est-ce pas une lâcheté supplémentaire que de vouloir ainsi ignorer les contingences, ne pas entendre les balles qui sifflent, ne pas voir le sang qui coule, la chair meurtrie, les corps mutilés".[14] Mouloud Feraoun proves that, like any other Algerian, he suffered the attrocities of the war, which he described in his *Journal 1955-1962*[15]. Regardless of the risks involved in the publication of such an eye-witness account, he wanted to go ahead in 1961. He told his editor, "si l'affaire est bonne littérairement, utile humainement - les risques je m'en fous,"i[6] and to his friend Emmanuel Roblès, who advised him to postpone the project of publishing his journal until after the war, Feraoun replied:

> Et pour quoi ai-je ainsi écrit au fur et à mesure si ce n'est pour témoigner pour clamer à la face du monde la. souffrance et le malheur qui ont rôdé autour de moi? Certes, j'ai été bien maladroit, bien téméraire, le jour où j'ai décidé d'écrire, mais autour de moi qui eût voulu le faire à ma place et aurais-je pu rester aveugle et sourd pour me taire et ne pas risquer d'étouffer à force de rentrer mon désespoir et ma colère?[17]

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13. M. Feraoun, *Lettres a ses amis*, p.123.

14. M. Feraoun, *Lettres a ses amis*, p.123.

15. M. Feraoun, *Journal 1955-1962*, (Paris: Le Seuil, 1962).

16. E. Roblès, "Mouloud Feraoun et les anneés de formation", *Mouloud Feraoun: Actes des journées d'étude organisées par l'ILVE du 2 au 5 mai 1982.* Publication réalisée par I.L.V.E. - C.R.I.D.S.S.H. - C.E.R.D.R.O., p.36.

17. E. Roblès, "Mouloud Feraoun et les années de formation", p.36.

Therefore, in contrast to the nationalist critics who did not understand the difference between a novel and a *'témoignage',* Feraoun was a 'committed' writer, whose writings resulted in his assassination by the OAS in March 1962. In 1956, Feraoun had stated that the effect of the events of the war on him was so deep, that he could write no work of•fiction after *Les Chemins qui montent,* "Que puis-je écrire à présent, alors que l'angoisse me noue la gorge?"t[8]

This anguish was also experienced by Mammeri who, similarly, believed he could not write a work of fiction about the Algerian war while it was on. In a letter to a French friend, Mammeri wrote, "Voici plus d'un an que je n'écris plus rien parce que plus rien ne me paraît valoir la peine d'être écrit, plus rien que la grande tragédie, les larmes, le sang des innocents".[19] To conclude, without turning their works into propaganda pamphlets, the novelists of the fifties succeeded in transmitting the political mood resulting from the events of May 1945, and clearly suggested that the 1954 revolution was the culmination of the deep sense of alienation experienced by the heroes of their novels. Therefore, these novelists prepared their readers for a literature of combat as a natural result of alienation. Yetiv Isaac states: "Cette phase de recherche de soi n'ait pas duré plus de cinq ans (1952-1956). Elle fut bientôt suivie de la phase militante, de la littérature 'engagée', de la littérature de combat".[20]

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18. E. Roblès, "Mouloud Feraoun et les années de formation", p.37.

19. M. Mammeri, "Lettre à un français", *Entretiens sur les lettres et les Arts,* Fev. 1957, pp.34-38.

20. Yetiv Isaac, *Le Thème de l'aliénation,* p.95.

1. Assia **Djebar,** ***Les Enfants du nouveau monde.***

Djebar's *Les Enfants du nouveau monde* opens with a description of a small city plunged into the events of the war, which made its inhabitants prisoners in their small and squalid houses. The children are frightened, and their mothers though wholeheartedly supporting the revolution, live with the anguish of waiting for their husbands who might not return in the evening. They knew their partners were exposed to all sorts of dangers and humiliations. However, the author states that, too proud to complain to their wives, they preferred to suffer in silence: "Il arrive aux femmes ... d'imaginer leur mari debout contre un mur, au soleil de midi, secoué sans doute d'une peur qu'il doit s'efforcer de ne point révéler, mais que l'épouse retrouve en lui, le soir ...".[21] In fact, Djebar questions the kind of relationship existing between these couples, when the man's only contact with his wife is physical:

> Il lui parle ... sans s'adresser directement à elle, selon les convenances - et c'est pourquoi, juge-t-il, elle est sa femme, non pas seulement un corps qu'il étreint dans l' ombre, sans mots, sans caresses, sans qu'il ose suivre le temps qui coule, sa vie qui glisse, dans la nudité vulnérable de ses formes, corps qui se donne sans frémir puisqu'il ne rencontre pas le dialogue du regard.[22]

Thus, once more Djebar tells the reader about the relationship between men and women and centres on the condition of her countrywomen. Unlike her previous two novels, in *Les Enfants du nouveau monde,* Djebar's concern is not an individual heroine like Nadia or Dalila, but a group of women in relation to their husbands. This resulted in a change in the novel's viewpoint; from the first person in the first novels, to the third person in *Les Enfants du nouveau monde,* which can be described as a

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21. *Les Enfants du nouveau monde,* p.16.

22. Ibid., p.18.

study of several couples, depicting not only the relationships existing within each partnership, but also their position vis-à-vis the war of independence. Thus, Djebar confronts the reader with positive characters, who were wholeheartedly committed to their national cause, and negative characters who betrayed their people.

The first female figure to emerge in this novel, is Cherifa who, aged twenty-nine, is introduced to the reader as Youssef's wife. Before becoming Youssef's wife, she has divorced her previous husband, a rich man, whose wealth could not earn him the love of the pretty Cherifa whom Djebar describes using most exotic imagery, " Une gazelle qui court sur le sable,"[23] "une caille qui frémit de pudeur sur une branche."[24] She is the stereotype of a happily secluded wife, who loves her husband and awaits his return every night. Nevertheless, she emerges from behind her shutters once she knows her husband was in danger. For the first time ever, Cherifa traverses the city to find Youssef in his shop, and inform him that the authorities know of his involvement with the liberation army and to beg him to join the rebels in the mountains as soon as possible. Although Cherifa would like to go with her husband, she does not know how to express herself. She feels that she has already committed a great offence in crossing the city alone: "J'aurais voulu dire: 'Emmênemoi aussi puisqu'il y a d'autres femmes là-bas', je n'ai pas osé".[25] Therefore, Cherifa stays on alone waiting for the return of her husband. However, having Hakim, an Algerian police officer as a neighbour, makes his return well-high impossible. Hakim had started his job as a policeman before the revolution, making his position, as a native working for the French, a difficult one. He is not only asked to watch his neighbours and ensure they do not get involved in the revolution, but also at the police station he is appointed to question and torture those of his

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23. Les Enfants du nouveau monde, p.25.

24. Ibid., p.26.

25. Ibid., p.231.

compatriots suspected by the authorities of having a hand in the rebellion: "Pour mieux lutter contre les fellaghas, autant utiliser leurs frères".[26] Acknowledging the difficulty of his situation, Hakim curses his job especially when he finds himself questioning Amna, his own wife: ."Me voici -donc policier avec ma femme, ma prop re femme! Sale métier".[27] Although Amna sympathizes with her husband's dilemma and understands that he cannot give up a job he started before the revolution[28], she does not co-operate with him. When he asks her whether Youssef came home every night, she lies to him, and warns her friend Cherifa of the danger lying in wait for her husband. Therefore, while Hakim collaborates with the French, she stands by her people.

Another couple to come under Djebar's scrutiny are Lila and Ali. Lila is first seen when moving to a new flat on her own. She is unhappy, and bitter about her past, largely because she has lost her six-months-old baby, and her husband Ali has left her to join the rebels in the mountains. Through a long flash-back Djebar tells us of Lila's experiences married with Ali. At the time they were married they were both students living in a university residence. Ali is portrayed as losing interest in his studies as the events of the war duly worsened. In the end, he gave up his studies and left his depressed wife to take part in a revolution in which she also wanted to participate. However, like Ali's sister Cherifa, Lila did not know how to express her wishes to her husband:

> Il lui semblait que sitôt ses forces reprises, et le souvenir de ce cauchemar évanoui ... Elle pourrait, comme Ali, partir, s' ouvrir au nouveau monde qui ne serait plus seulement

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26. *Les Enfants du nouveau monde,* p.186.

27. Ibid., p.87.

28. Ibid., p.78. ,

> celui des autres. Elle lui dirait: "Nous avons tout fait ensemble. Je viens avec toi.[29]

Nevertheless, she cannot overcome her depression and solitude in her flat situated in a deserted building next to the city cemetery. In fact, the gloomy atmosphere of the flat only adds to her sadness. However, each day Lila discovers something of herself and concludes that she is too attached to Ali, to be able to live without him: "Puisqu' il m'a laissée, je me suis dit: j'oublierai, je détruirai tout du passé. Car il m'est facile, de savoir oublier. Mais après, je n'ai pu vivre ..., une plante coupée ... j'étais nouée à lui et lui m'a abandonnée!"[30] In the end Lila decides to meet other people and escape her self-inflicted imprisonment. She turns first to Cherifa who, like her, was left alone after her husband's departure. However, unlike Lila, Cherifa believes that her husband has not abandoned her, nor has Ali abandoned his wife. She explains to Lila: "Et moi, ne suis-je pas seule? Mais je ne penserai jamais qu'il m'a quitté. Oh non! ... Maintenant les séparations ne comptent plus: où qu'on soit, on est encore ensemble".[31] Lila meets another old friend, Bachir, a young student, whose father wanted him to become a doctor. Nevertheless, like his friend Ali, Bachir's ambitions are geared towards the revolution. He tells Lila, "Je monterai au maquis ... Pour certains, aller à la guerre est un devoir, et pour d'autres, un départ héroique. Pour moi, c'est un besoin ... une chance".[32] Moreover, he reveals to her that he has set fire to the *colon's* farm,[33] as proof of his loyalty to the revolution. However, even as he reveals this secret, the cleaner of the building who is spying on

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29. *Les Enfants du nouveau monde*, p.73.

30. Ibid., p.234.

31. *Les Enfants du nouveau monde*, pp.237-238.

32. Ibid., p.292.

33. Ibid., p.220.

Lila, reports the two friends to the police. In this way, not long after her attempt to escape the imprisonment of her flat, Lila is arrested, and Bachir shot dead by the police.

Lila is questioned at the police station, but determines to keep silence, in fact, she believes that the police have not imprisoned her, but instead freed her from her previous solitude and torments: "Enfin délivrée d'elle même, des noeuds de sa jeunesse, des plaines de sa solitude; non, rien ne sera pareil aux vertiges qui l'ont autrefois possédée".[34] Djebar insists that to be arrested by the police was in fact more of an opportunity for those who were lucky enough to be given a role in the revolution as well as to be reborn again in a new world: "Il s'agit désormais de sa naissance, - ou d'un véritable réveil ... Quelle merveilleuse chance d'être enfin quelconque sur une terre, à une époque qui ne le sont plus!"[35] Lila is even more delighted as she shares her prison cell with Salima, a school teacher who has been tortured and questioned in vain for two weeks[36] for belonging to the National Liberation Front as a co-ordinator between the rebels and their families. In this way, after a long interrogation, Lila and Salima emerge as heroines of the revolution.

Another type of heroine is portrayed through Hassiba, a sixteen year old girl determined to take an active part in warfare alongside the men, not only to free her country from the webs of colonialism, but also to free herself as a woman and emerge into a new world. Against these heroines, Djebar shows Touma, a young woman betraying her people by working for the French police in action. Tourna is detested by her people not only for conspiring against them, but also for her ' shameless' behaviour. She smokes in public, dresses indecently, and goes out with

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34. Ibid., p.310.

35. *Les Enfants du nouveau monde,* p.310.

36. Ibid., pp.93-114.

the French soldiers. She is described as "Chienne, fille de chienne!",[37]and "Tu es la honte de cette ville!"[38], and wherever she goes, people spit in her direction. In the end, her brother Tawfiq, whose rejection by his friends and the National Liberation Front she has caused, decides to kill her. He claims: "J'avais une tache sur moi, et je l'ai effacée ... Je portais une souillure sur moi, je m'en suis purifié".[39]

The end of this novel depicts a population, aware of their situation, who do not need to be shown their national duties, but only needed to be given arms and join the rebellion; "Ne nous dites pas pourquoi nous devons lutter, mais avec quoi! Nous, on sait qu'on est exploité; on le vit ... on veut seulement des armes".[40]

2. **Mohammed Dib,** *Qui se souvient de la mer*.

Dib first wrote about the Algerian war for independence in his novel *Un Eté africain.* At this early stage of the revolution Dib could only inform the reader about the position of various people with regard to the war. Whereas some of the novel's characters are totally ignoring the revolution, others are becoming more involved, as their sons have joined the rebellion. However, there is no description of the events of the war as seen in Djebar's *Les Enfants du nouveau monde,* but rather a description of the condition of the Algerian people in the early years of the war, the horrors of which were to be portrayed in Dib's later novel *Qui se souvient de la mer.* Readers who were quite used to Dib's naturalistic portrayal of social and political conditions, as in his trilogy *Algérie,* were rather surprised by the author's bewildering vision of life in his new novel. Aware of the effect that such a novel would have on its readers,

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37. Ibid., p.151.

38. Ibid., p.152.

39. *Les Enfants du nouveau monde,* p.298.

40. Ibid., p.295.

Dib wrote an explanation which he wanted the reader to read only after having read the novel.

Qui se souvient de la mer opens with a description of a small restaurant, Metabkha, where people gather to eat and talk. In the meantime a mole walks below the streets of the foreign city inhabited by these people, making a dreadful noise like thunder, and making the city shake. This results in the emergence of a grey flame-thrower, *Minotaur,* followed by two more. however, the people at the Metabkha are not at all disturbed; they appear to be used to such noises. The narrator/protagonist, whose name is not revealed, continues describing the atmosphere at the Metabkha, reporting the discussion between the customers, and from time to time telling the reader of the violence taking place outside. There, warrior birds, called *Iriace,* beat in raucous waves against the cliffs of Lalla Seti, and spit out sarcasms at the city where blood is flowing freely. At the end, the narrator leaves the Metabkha to find a crowd of women weeping over their husbands who have been arrested and taken away. Along with their children, these women traverse the tormented city, knocking on every door, asking about their partners: "Les épouses, les enfants allèrent quémander la vérité sur le sort des leurs à toutes les portes".[41] At the same time the wind sings a little song, which the women accompany with their weeping, begging the *minotaures* who push them away, to release their husbands. Determined to find an explanation for what is happening around them, they also interrogate the narrator whose throat can form not words but stones. In fact, all the men are in the same situation; if they must speak they can only vomit a torrent of stones. At this point Nafissa, the narrator's wife, emerges to comfort and console her tormented husband. At the same time the sea, *La mer,* emerges as a symbol of the Algerian motherland. The narrator speaks of his wife Nafissa as *La mer,* the sea, while she is actually the mother of his children, *La mère.* The word play on these homonyms *mère/mer,* creates an

41. *Qui se souvient de la mer,* p.16.

undeniable link: to both the sea and the mother is attributed the role of tending, healing an d comforting:

> Nafissa, elle, se gardait de dire quoi que ce fût. Gagnée par la douleur de l'homme? Non, patiente, attendant. Persuadée que son moment viendrait tôt ou tard, qu'il lui faudrait soigner, guérir, bercer. La mer n'est pas triste lorsqu'elle attend la nuit, comme on le croit: déjà, des étoiles bougent en elle.[42]

In fact, the narrator does not hesitate to pay tribute to the women for their great help to the men: "Sans la mer, sans les femmes, nous serions restés définitivement des orphelins; elle nous couvrirent du sel de leur langue et cela heureusement, préserva maints d'entre nous! Il faudra le proclamer un jour publiquement".[43] Indeed, without Nafissa, the narrator is totally lost in a world where two enemy cities were fighting one another by means of every form of terror and destruction. From time to time, the mole emerges from the underground city to launch an attack on the foreign city, whose new buildings move up and down, and sometimes collapse. This attack is usually followed by a campaign of repression, led by the *spyrovirs* and the *iriace* birds who take their revenge on the civilians, spreading death and spilling their blood. Although the narrator loses his senses at the sight of such horrors, his wife Nafissa keeps soothing him, and, like a loving mother, she asks him: "Pourquoi es-tu si farouche: ne nous aimes-tu pas? ... N'aimes-tu pas ta mère?"[44] Too attached to, and entirely dependent on, his maternal wife, the narrator finds himself totally lost when Nafissa disappears for several days, and only returns to free him when he is trapped in the foreign city and turned into a stone statue:

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42. *Qui se souvient de la mer*, p.19.

43. Ibid.

44. *Qui se souvient de la mer*, pp.68-69.

> Elle se rapprocha et m'enveloppa dans une sorte de vibration diffuse et légère à la fois. Toutes les serres qui étaient plantées en moi me lâchèrent. On est toujours seul au plus fort de l'intimité: là, ce fut autre chose, un sang chaud, électrisé, irrigua mes veines ... cette transfusion d' énergie continua jusqu'à l'instant où je repris ma marche.[45]

Thus Nafissa is also a source of life and energy. However, her absences increase in frequency, as she leaves her two children in the care of their father, whose loneliness also increases every day. Even so, he can neither prevent her from leaving, nor go with her, but instead keep constant watch for her. He claims the hours of waiting are hours of agony,[46] especialy when together with the sea,La *mer,* Nafissa the mother, *La mère,* seems to have disappeared for ever. An atmosphere of panic reigns among the inhabitants of the city who suffer from a drought fed by the buildings on fire, smoking and whistling at their doors, and over their heads, making breathing impossible. Despite all the suffering inflicted upon them, they keep hoping the sea will return. Like them, the narrator hopes that Nafissa will also return, and searches for her every night throughout the streets.

In the end, Nafissa returns to her husband, handing him a magic red rose. Her return is soon followed by an explosion, as the buildings of the foreign city are blown up, and the return of people to the deserted streets. Many more buildings collapse making a noise as if the world is about to end. Suddenly, the sea returns in a burst of laughter, and the *spirovirs* give way to shining stars.

Although the foreign city is completely destroyed, and the people came back to life, the narrator's quest has not yet ended. He claims, that now he must study the structure of the underground city carefully in order to adapt himself to it. In his

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45. Ibid., pp.102-103.

46. *Qui se souvient de la mer,* p.155.

quest, he faces a major problem, that of identity. He concludes that he should not waste his energy in quest of such a complicated issue, and ends his search with a report given to him by certain persons recently assigned to liaise with his former city. This report reads like:

> Explosant l'une après l'autre, les nouvelles constructions sautèrent jusqu'à la dernière, et aussitôt après les murs se disloquèrent, tombèrent: la ville était morte, des habitants restant dressés au milieu des ruines tels des arbres désséchés, dans l'attitude où le cataclysme les avait surpris, jusqu'à l' arrivée de la mer dont le tumulte s'entendait depuis longemps, qui les couvrit rapidement du bercement inépuisable de ses vagues.[47]

The narrator's quest after the destruction of the foreign city is symbolic of the position of the Algerian people after independence. Because colonialism had lasted for 132 years, in 1962 there was no Algerian who knew any thing of life before the French conquest. More than an occasion for joy, Algerian independence was also a kind of shock, heralding a new quest, to find out who the Algerians were before the French conquest, and what it is like to be independent. Having said that, this is only one way of interpreting the final section of this novel, which has many layers of meaning. To the question," why did he adopt such a tone to present those years of misfortune within such a terrible and legendary framework?", Dib answered with another question: "Why did Picasso paint *Guernica* as he did, and not as a historical reconstruction?"[48] He added, "Let us return to *Guernica:* not a single realistic element in the whole painting - neither blood nor dead bodies - and yet there is nothing that expresses so strongly the horror."[49] Thus, Dib's aim was to portray the

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47. *Qui se souvient de la mer,* p.185.

48. Mohammed Dib, *Who Remembers the Sea?* Trans. Louis Tremaine (Washington: Three Continents Press, 1985), p.121.

49. Ibid., p.122.

war for independence with all its horror in a symbolic manner, increasing its impact on the reader. He realized, if he were to portray the war in the same realistic fashion as his trilogy, the outcome would be a simple documentary account of the events of the war. In fact, "How can one speak of Algeria after Auschwitz, the Warsaw ghetto and Hiroshima?"[50] The cruelties experienced by men in the twentieth century are greater than any realistic description; so that only a revolutionary manner of expression could convey the apocalyptic horror of the Algerian war. In this fashion, Dib revolutionized the style of his novel to express the new order. Although the novel is very difficult to decipher, the reader can easily detect the story of the Algerian people, and their struggle to win independence from one of the strongest military powers in the fifties, through its pages. As such, Dib's novel is not only a pioneer in style but also a hymn to the Algerian people whom the author described throughout his work, depicting their evolution and political awakening, from the stage of pleading for social reforms with Dib's hero Djamal Terraz in the trilogy *Algérie,* to the stage when only the armed revolution was believed to have the power to change the condition of the alienated Algerian people.

3. **Mouloud Mammeri,** *L'Opium et le bâton.*[51]

Mammeri's *Le sommeil du juste* is described as a novel that "warns against the false promises of liberty and equality, of pledges made but not honoured. **It** admonishes the colonized who would too eagerly place their trust in western civilization, whose assurances are not to be counted on and whose interests are suspect. It demonstrates that the colonizer's avowals of friendship and guarantees of

50. Dib, *Who Remembers the Sea,* p.121.

51. M. Mammeri, *L'Opium et le bâton* (Paris: Plon, 1965).

progress are false. In sum, it prepares the way for rebellion".[52] In other words, it prepares the reader for a novel like *L'Opium et le bâton* which Mammeri wrote in homage to the Algerian people for their heroic struggle for independence. In the first pages of his novel, Mammeri attempts to explain the colonial situation in Algeria, and concludes that the policy of the colonist is the same throughout history and all over the word. It is the policy of opium and the rod, "Séduire ou réduire, mystifier ou punir, depuis que le monde est monde, aucun pouvoir n'a jamais su sortir de la glu de ce dilemme; tous n'ont jamais eu à choisir qu'entre ces deux pauvres termes: l'opium et le bâton".[53] It is worth mentioning, however, that this novel was only published in 1965, three years after independence. Questioned on the reasons for this delay, Mammeri answered, "Pour écrire une chose telle que *l'Opium et le bâton,* j'avais besoin d'un certain recul personnellement".[54] Like *Qui se souvient de la mer, L' Opium et le bâton* is set in the year 1956. Yet unlike the former novel, the latter is a realistic account of the war events. Unlike Dib, Mammeri believed that a faithful account of the war was enough to depict its horrors; an example of this is the tragic way Omar is executed by being thrown out of a helicopter, [55] or the event when Akli gets rid of his wounded arm as it stops him from running:

> Le bras d'Akli pendait. Il le gênait beaucoup pour courir ... l' os était brisé, le bras ne tenait plus que par des lambeaux de peau sur des chairs en sang. Akli prit son couteau à large lame courte et d'un coup sec trancha le bras. Puis il ramassa le moignon, ferma les yeux et le jeta sur la haie ... il avait envie de vomir.[56]

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52. J.P. Monego, *Maghrebian Literature in French,* p.39.

53. *L'Opium et le bâton,* p.13.

54. M. Mammeri, "De *la Colline oubliée à l'Opium et le bâton,* un seul fil conducteur", p.7.

55. *L'Opium et le bâton,* p.180.

56. *L'Opium et le bâton,* p.138.

The novel opens on a dialogue between Bachir, a doctor of medicine, who enjoys a comfortable life in his apartment situated in the European quarter of Algiers, and his friend. Ramdane, a teacher of philosophy who, like Arezki in *Le Sommeil du juste;* wakes up to the hypocrisy of western thought, and attempts to convince his friend of the new order brought about by the revolution. He tells Bachir, who quotes Victor Hugo, "Ils t'ont eu, mon vieux, jusqu'à la moelle ... Ils t' ont écervelé, vidé, gangrené ... Pourtant ce qui se passe dans ce pays depuis trois ans aurait dû te guérir de la comédie. Il y a tant de sang, tant de souffrance, tant de morts ".[57] In fact, in his violent speech and the bitterness of his rejection of Western ideas, Ramdane is a continuation of Arezki, in particular when he tells Bachir: "Ils t'ont fait le coup du ciel d'azur, de la mer d'émeraude ... Admirez, mesdames et messieurs notre longanimité, notre humanisme ... ah! l'humanisme".[58] Moreover, he condemns him for ignoring the shattering events in which his people are involved, and invites him to take part in the great tragedy which is happening all over the country. As Bachir hesitates at leaving his luxurious life with his French girlfriend, Ramdane pushes him into the course of events, particularly after the ALN[59] messenger who contacts him is arrested by the police after leaving. Thus, before the messenger can denounce him under torture, Bachir has to flee Algiers and return to his home village, Tala, to find his mother suffering, like all the villagers, from hunger. However, she has an extra burden to bear, she is tormented for her children: her widowed daughter Farroudja, who is left with her orphan children; the absence of her three sons, Ali who joined the rebels, Bachir whom she has not seen for ten years, and Belaid, who has betrayed his people and is working for the French

57. Ibid., p.7.

58. Ibid., p.8.

59. *AIN* - Armée de Libération Nationale.

Capitaine Delecluze. In Tala, Bachir is surprised by how the people were involved in one way or another in the revolution; they either support the rebels or stand on the F rench side. Capitaine Delecluze explains this fact to Bachir: "Tout le monde joue à visage découvert: il n'y a que deux équipes et pas de spectateurs. Ainsi chez vous, Belaid est dans une équipe, et Ali dans l'autre. Pour Belaid, Ali est un égaré, mais pour Ali, Belaid est un traître".[60] Therefore, as no one can play the role of the spectator, Delecluze's statement suggests that Bachir must belong to one or the other of the two groups. After spending a few days in his village Bachir was shocked by the changes which have occurred in his long absence. Everything seems strange to him, and he cannot understand the injustice inflicted on the villagers, who live in misery and fear. This is mostly because they had the French army right in the middle of their village, making their contact with the rebels whom they support wholeheartedly, extremely difficult,

> Le jour avec les français il fallait jouer la victime: 'Les fellagha sont armés, et nous n'avous rien pour nous défendre. Si nous ne faisons pas ce qu'ils disent, ils nous coupent la gorge'. La nuit avec les maquisards nous étions des frères, obligés seulement de pactiser avec l'ennemi pour rendre plus facile l'oeuvre de l'armée de libération.[61]

Deeply affected by the condition of his fellow villagers, Bachir's anger builds **up.** His brother Belaid advises him to return to Algiers before he gets into trouble, an d explains that he cannot remain neutral if he wants to stay in Tala. However, just as he learns of the arrest of Bachir's friend Ramdane, Belaid orders his brother to leave Tala before dawn, and arranges for him to join the rebels. At this stage the

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60. *L'Opium et le bâton,* p.67.

61. *L'Opium et le bâton,* p.117.

reader discovers that Belaid is not a real traitor, but plays a traitor's role in order to infiltrate the enemy.

Together with his hero Bachir, who is attributed the role of organizing the health sector of the Kabyle region, Mammeri takes his reader into the heart of the struggle for independence, portraying the' heroism of rebels like Ali, Akli and Omar, showing the difficult conditions under which they operate, while lacking arms, food and medicines. The author also tells us of the well-known Colonel Amirouche, and his famous battle, *l'opération jumelle,* in which Bachir is wounded and sent to recover in Morocco, where he also organizes the health sector in the region. Through Bachir, Mammeri makes the reader witness the political activities of the FLN in Morocco, where Bachir meets a Berber girl called Itto. With this event, the author introduces a romance in the middle of the war. However, as soon as he recovers, Bachir is ordered to return to Algiers, where he finds the people at the head of a massive demonstration challenging the armed forces of repression. Bachir is very surprised by the changes which have occurred in Algiers, which becomes a very dangerous place to live in, not only because the armed troops are at every corner of the city, but also because of the traitors used by the authorities to spy on everyone's movements. In fact, Mammeri demonstrates that the traitors are more. dangerous than the armed soldiers, and that without their help the French army would never have succeeded in overwhelming the rebels.

To clarify this point further, Mammeri brings in another character, Tayeb, who conspires against his people, enabling the French army to detect the secret agents of the revolution in Tala. The author shows that Tayeb is more cruel than the French officers; chiefly through the way he tortures Omar's widow Tasadit, and Ali's sister, Farroudja, whom he suspects of aiding the revolution.[62] In fact, because of the conspiracy of traitors like Tayeb, the great hero Amirouche was martyred on

62. ***L**'Opium et le bâton,* pp.292-303 and pp.316-325.

his way to Tunisia. On hearing the news of his martyrdom, Ramdane, who is being held in a concentration camp, concludes that Amirouche has been betrayed. Although he himself is greatly affected by this event, he tells his compatriots in the camp that they should - never despair: "Mes frères, ... les hommes passent, la révolution demeure! Amirouche est mort, mais dans nos montagnes, dans nos déserts, nos vallées, dans nos larmes et notre détermination il y a des millions d'Amirouche".[63] Again, due to the traitors' conspiracy Amirouche's martyrdom is followed by the arrest of Bachir's brother, Ali, and his friend Akli. The two heroes are brought to Tala where the terrified inhabitants gather in the public square. The French officer at first expresses his anger towards them, since they have betrayed him, and collaborated with his enemies, next he shows them the two rebels who have just been arrested. The villagers are overwhelmed by fear and confusion, especially Ali's mother and sister, Farroudja, who witness his martyrdom as he is shot in front of them. Adding to their sorrow over the loss of their hero, the inhabitants of Tala are ordered not to bury Ali, and to evacuate their village in a single hour after which the army will blow up the whole village: "Primo: j'interdis qu'on enterre le cadavre ... vos chiens doivent avoir faim, non? Secundo, je vous donne une heure pour évacuer Tala. Dans une heure le village sera détruit ... au canon!"6[4]. At this point, the traitor Tayeb, knowing that guns would not spare his own house, feels remorse for his betrayal since the French officers, who have used him against his own people, have rejected him. In these last moments Tayeb attempts, in vain, to return to his people, namely Tasadit and Ramdane's father, Mohand, whom he has previously tortured.

A few pages before the novel ends, the narrator, one of the inhabitants of Tala, who has used the article *nous*, we, in speaking of his fellow villagers, seems to have fled Tala together with the others before its destruction under the heavy

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63. *L'Opium et le bâton,* p.356.

64. Ibid., p.367.

artillery of the French. He leaves the narrative for Bachir to continue; he concludes the story as follows:

> ... loin de .cet enfer où nous vivons tous ici, des hommes vont au bois, au bal, à l'usine ou chez l'épicier du coin. Peine perdue! A chaque page de mon journal, sous chaque ciel du monde, la tragedie éclosait d'elle-même. Il n'y avait même pas besoin de forcer avec des mots: la réalité passait les phrases de si loin.[65]

With *L'Opium et le bâton,* Mammeri's hero completes his journey for self-enlightenment and his search for identity. After he has discovered the true colours of his 'civilizer', and experienced a long crisis through his humiliation and alienation within his own country, the hero comes to the conclusion that his struggle as an individual against the colonial order is in vain. After he returns to the people he has rejected when he was fascinated by his 'civilizer', he becomes the leader of that people in their long and bloody struggle, using all the means that came to hand to face an enemy who could only understand the language of arms. Thus, Mammeri's work, from his first novel *La Colline oubliée,* to his third, *L'Opium et le bâton,* which represents the culmination of the hero's quest, form a trilogy, whose backgroud is the political situation in Algeria and its evolution from the period prior to the Second World War to the outbreak of the revolution of November 1954. Questioned on the nature of this trilogy, Mammeri revealed that he had never planned it, in fact, as such. All he created was a realistic portrayal of the Algerians' situation under colonial domination, as he himself had witnessed: "Je n'ai jamais voulu cette trilogie, elle s'est imposée à moi et quand je l'avais écrite, je me suis aperçu que cela représentait trois stades de la vie du peuple algérien".[66] These three

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65. *L'Opium et le bâton,* p.381.

66. L. El-Hassar, L. Zeghari and D. Louanchi, *Mouloud Mammeri* (Alger-Paris: SNED - Fernand Nathan, 1982), p.23.

stages in the life of the Algerian people, were also those of, the Algerian intellectuals in general, particularly the political leader Ferhat Abbas as already mentioned. Abbas's political work also forms a trilogy which faithfully reflects these same three stages as follows: in his *Le jeune algérien,* Abbas resembles the heroes of Mammeri's *La Colline oubliée.* In his *Manifest du peuple algérien,* Abbas is comparable to Arezki in *Le Sommeil du juste,* and finally Abbas's *La Nuit coloniale* is the political version of the novel *L'Opium et le bâton* whose hero Bachir is not very different from Abbas himself, as he also became a hero in the Algerian war of independence. Like Bachir in his conclusion of *L'Opium et le bâton,* Ferhat Abbas ended *La Nuit coloniale* as follows:

> Meurtri, torturé, affamé, notre peuple a résisté pendant plus de sept ans. Aux prises avec l'une des plus grandes armées d' Europe, il a accepté, une fois de plus, de mourir pour avoir le droit de vivre ...
> Farouche et indomptable, l'Algérien tient d'une main ferme son arme. Il sait que sa cause est juste. Il est déterminé à combattre jusqu'à ce que l'injustice et l'humiliation dont il a souffert soient définitivement éffacées.[67]

Furthermore, just as *L'Opium et le bâton* conveys a message to the colonized countries and incites them to fight with all their might against colonialism, *La Nuit coloniale* also portrays the heroic struggle of the Algerian people as an example to follow:

> Son combat a éléctrisé l'Afrique et fait s'écrouler l'ordre colonial. Il a soulevé l'enthousiasme des peuples libres. Il a provoqué l'admiration de ses ennemis mêmes. Son combat est de ceux qu'un peuple opprimé ne peut plus perdre.[68]

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67. *La Nuit coloniale,* p.232.

68. *La Nuit coloniale,* p.232.

CONCLUSION

Conclusion and Epilogue: Post- Independence Concerns

Francophone Algerian novels display various types of heroes, whose dilemmas vary according to the historical periods they belong to. In the period of imitation, the heroes. were fascinated. by the principles of French civilization. They expressed their gratitude to their 'civilizers', who taught them various important things, and therefore wanted their people to follow their lead in emancipation. Examples of this type of character are Leila in Débêche's *Leila, jeune fille d'Algérie*, Nacih in *Hind,* and Said Guennoun in *La Voix des monts.* It is worth noting that although deeply influenced by French civilization, and determined to imitate their ' civilizers' both in clothes and manners, these characters are also determined to remain Muslim. In this, they resemble the national leader Ferhat Abbas in his plea for equal status for his people with the French. On the technical side, the Algerian novel of this period was, as yet, in its immaturity. The writers were so concerned with writing good French, a language they did not master very well, that they neglected the technical side of their novels, which were also intended to express their gratitude, and show their goodwill, to their French 'teachers', as well as telling their people of the benefits of 'civilization'. Thus, didacticism is a common feature in the novels of this period.

In the fifties, a new generation of Francophone writers emerged. Their novels were more mature and more successful. However, they all seemed to ignore or deny the existence of any Algerian novel prior to Feraoun's *Le Fils du pauvre,* and considered themselves pioneers in the field of Francophone Algerian fiction. Hence they expressed their gratitude to the writers of the *École d'Alger,* who did not only introduce them to the genre of the novel, but also opened their numerous reviews and journals to them to express their thoughts.

However, between these two periods, there was a transitional period, during which two novels had been published; that is, El-Hammamy's *Idris,* and Taos's

Jacinthe noire. The protagonists of these two novels contradicted the images shown in the earlier period. Both novelists told their readers that in reality the French were not as kind as they had previously been portrayed. In other words, El-Hammamy and Taos introduced heroes who endured an identity crisis, especially in the case of Taos's main character, whose alienation was mostly due to her conversion. Other heroes who endured alienation were portrayed in the fifties by Mammeri, Feraoun, Dib, Kateb and Djebar. Although these writers confronted their readers with different types of heroes, yet each of these suffered from a sense of alienation in his own way. This feeling of alienation, however, is not only due to colonization, which caused them to be considered as second class citizens in their homeland, but also to various other factors as follows: in the case of Amer and Dehbia in Feraoun's *Les Chemins qui montent,* and Nedjma in Kateb's *Nedjma,* the protagonists are alienated by their mixed ancestry, which does not prevent them from being treated as indigenous. However, unlike Amer, Dehbia and Nedjma, like those heroines portrayed in Djebar's novels, *La Soif* and *Les Impatients,* and Débêche's *Aziza,* suffered a double sense of alienation, both as women in a society that favoured men, and as colonized individuals. Other heroes are portrayed as undertaking a long quest for a job which is either never suitable or not available. On their long quests, these heroes discover their colonized country and become increasingly embittered as they notice that they are ruthlessly exploited with no protection from the injustice of the *colons,* who were obviously backed by the authorities. This results in a deep-rooted feeling of frustration and anger in these heroes who, each in his own way, reacts violently against figures of colonialism, such as the *colon* and the *gendarme.*

Such heroes are portrayed in Kateb's *Nedjma,* where the four friends, in their eternal quest for the elusive Nedjma, are actually searching for their national identity; similarly, in Mammeri's *Le Sommeil du juste,* where Sliman and Lounes not only look for work on a long journey across their country, but also discover the

country itself, their homeland, with its people exploited by the *colon.* In this novel Mammeri depicts Algeria as a wealthy country, proving that if his characters, like those of Feraoun and Dib, struggle against the threat of starvation, it is not because no food was available, but merely because the *colons* have not only deprived the natives of their land, but also export most of the harvest, it being in their own interest to keep the natives hungry and poor for easy exploitation.

In the late fifties, the writers depicted a general sense of anger among Algerians, who whether they belonged to a rural or urban setting, whether learned or illiterate, men or women, were all yearning for change, not only to break out of the trap of alienation, but also to free their country from the shackles of colonization. Thus men, women, intellectuals and peasants alike, all responded to the call for the liberation of their country. This state of affairs was shown in the sixties by novelists such as Mammeri in *L' Opium et le bâton,* Djebar in *Les Enfants du nouveau monde,* and Dib in *Qui se souvient de la mer;* it is worth noting that these three novels are only the first in a long list of novels about the war of independence.

In the sixties, a generation of new Francophone writers emerged. Like their predecessors they wanted to describe the reality they had witnessed. Among this new generation, we may include Mourad Bourboune for his novel *Le Mont des genêts,'* and Kaddour M'Hamsadji for his novel *Le Silence des cendres.*[2] As for the older generation of writers, many changes occurred as follows.

Feraoun was assassinated on 11th March 1962, leaving an unfinished novel. Ten years after his death, his friend Roblès published the three chapters of the unfinished novel, together with the part which had previously been omitted from *Le Fils du pauvre,* in a book entitled *L'Anniversaire.*

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1. Mourad Bourboune, *Le Mont des genêts* (Paris: Julliard, 1962).

2. Kaddour M'Hamsadji, *Le Silence des cendres,(Rodez-Subervie,* 1963).

Kateb Yacine, after the publication of *Le Polygone étoilé*,[3] a sequel to *Nedjma,* decided to abandon his function as a Francophone novelist, and devoted himself to the promotion of a theatre in the everyday language of the people as a means of reaching a wider audience in a shorter space of time.

Dib, whose readers were accustomed to his naturalistic style in his well-known trilogy *Algérie,* decided to write in a surrealistic style in his novel *Qui se souvient de la mer,* and to devote more effort to style and to personal (psychological) problems, which he had neglected before independence. He declared:

> Mon souci, lors de mes premiers romans, était de fondre ma voix dans la voix collective. Cette grande voix, aujourd' hui, s'est tue ... Il fallait témoigner pour un pays nouveau et des réalités nouvelles. Dans la mesure où ces réalités se sont concrétisées, j'ai repris mon attitude d'écrivain qui s' intéresse à des problèmes d'ordre psychologique, romanesque ou de style ... Le temps de l'engagement est terminé ... ou il n'est plus indispensable. J'ai été africain quand il fallait l'être. Je n'aurais pas pu continuer indéfiniment avec les mêmes personnages, les mêmes sentiments, sans courir le risque de me répéter. Les littératures, elle aussi, font leur temps.[4]

Thus Dib's novels in the post-war period were based on universal rather than specifically Algerian concerns. The characters were also portrayed as universal, as Everyman. This becomes more obvious in the novels following the publication of *La **Danse** du roi,*[5] in which he described the failure of the Algerian revolution, pointing out both the unfulfilled promises of this revolution, and the shortcomings of the regime.

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3. Kateb Yacine, *Le Polygone étoilé,* (Paris: Le Seuil, 1966).

4. Jean Chalon, "Pour Mohammed Dib, romancier algérien: Le temps de l' engagement est passé, l'heure est à la littérature", *Le Figaro Littéraire* (Semaine du 4 au 10 Juin 1964).

5. Mohammed Dib, *La Danse du roi* (Paris: Le Seuil, 1968).

Mammeri, unlike Dib, who chose to live in France after independence, decided to remain in Algeria and commit himself to the progress of his people. However, after the publication of *L'Opium et le bâton* in 1965, he increasingly turned his efforts more to the revival of the language (i.e. Berber) and the culture of his ancestors, than to the art of novel writing. He believed that his efforts were needed more in the field of research than in fiction. Having said that, Mammeri did not entirely repudiate the novel, but decided to set his hero in the post-war period, and let him tell the reader whether the painful quest for national identity came to an end together with the colonization of Algeria. In other words, did Algerian independence solve the problems of Mammeri's hero? In his last novel, *La Traversée*,[6] he presented a journalist, Mourad, who took part in the struggle for liberation, and twenty years after independence he is disillusioned, mainly because he faces severe censorship every time he publishes an article. Therefore, he loses faith in his job and starts a desperate quest for a new meaning in life. Thus we can conclude that independence does not solve Mourad's dilemma; his quest appears to be endless. Kateb Yacine similarly claimed, Algeria is a country which is still in the process of being born. In short, Mammeri's novel is a bitter expression of the disenchantment felt by many Algerians, whose great hopes in the revolution were betrayed.

This betrayal is also shown by Assia Djebar, who after a second novel about the war, *Les Allouettes naives*,[7] lets out a lengthy complaint about the condition of women in the post-war period. Her novels suggest that Algerian women who took part, along with their male compatriots, in the revolution, have been betrayed as they were sent back to their previous status as second class citizens.

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6. Mouloud Mammeri, *La Traversée*, (Paris: Plon, 1982).

7. Assia,Djebar, *Les Allouettes naives* (Paris: Julliard, 1967).

In short, these writers, though with different voices, all conveyed a colnmon message: "the revolution has failed". This issue is also the central theme of many writers to emerge in the seventies, namely Rachid Boudjedra and Nabile Farès. The seventies also witnessed the emergence of a generation of Arabic novelists, namely Abdelhamid Benhadouga and Tahar Ouattar, and a conflict which started immediately after independence reached its zenith. It was a conflict between those who believed Algeria should use the French language as a means of progress and development, and those who urged the full Arabisation of the country, as French language was a remnant of the colonists. The most famous figure in the field of this polemic is Malek Haddad,[8] who in the late fifties and early sixties, wrote four novelettes in as many years, and in 1962 decided to reject French, a medium in which he had expressed himself prior to independence, and withdrew to silence, as he believed the use of French was by no means justified in a free Algeria. In his long essay *Les Zéros tournent en rond*[9] which opens as follows, "Je suis moins séparé de ma patrie par la Méditerranée que par la langue française",[10] Haddad tries to explain his silence and justify his sudden rejection of the French language. Moreover, he ' sadly' calls Francophone Algerian novelists "Orphelins de lecteurs authentiques"n as 95 per cent[12] of the Algerian population was illiterate. However, even if he had written his novels in Arabic, this illiterate majority would obviously still have been unable to read them. Thus the problem did not lay in the medium used by these

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8. Malek Haddad (1927-1978), *La Dernière Impression* (Paris: Julliard, 1958); *Je t'offrirai une gazelle* (Paris: Julliard, 1959); *L'Élève et la leçon* (Paris: Julliard, 1960); *Le Quai aux fleurs ne répond plus* (Paris: Julliard, 1961).

9. Idem, *Écoute et je t' appelle* - poemes, précédé de *Les Zéros tournent en rond* - Essai (Paris: Maspéro, 1961).

10. Ibid., p.9.

11. Haddad, *Les Zéros,* p.9.

12. Ibid., p.13.

writers, but in the illiteracy of his people. Therefore, Haddad's problems were not caused by the use of French, but by other factors unknown to his readers.

In his novel *L'Opium et le bâton,* Mammeri demonstrates that the French language is no more than a tool to express himself, "Un médecin algérien qui avait appris le français parce que, n'est-ce pas, il faut bien vivre. Appris? Non, qui l' avait conquis de haute lutte, mais pour qui les mots étaient comme le stétoscope ou le scalpel, de simples instruments".[13] Moreover, the ability to speak a language is a gain and not something to be ashamed of, and it seems to me that to write in Arabic or not to write at all, as suggested by Haddad, is wrong, for Algerian Francophone literature is one of great value, and which can by no means be considered as merely French. Although it is undeniable that this literature is written in French, it is also undeniable that a novel by a Francophone Algerian writer cannot be mistaken for a novel written by a French writer. This was not only because the Algerian writers have peppered their narratives with Berber and Arabic words, as I have mentioned earlier, but also because these writers drew upon a reservoir of imagery different from that of any French writer. In their novels the reader finds a widespread use of polite words and phrases, which they translated literally from Arabic or Berber, such as the following, "Que Dieu t'accorde toutes sortes de biens! Qu'il te conduise sur le tombeau du prophète! Que ton âme aille au paradis, après ta mort",[14] as well as the use of descriptions typical of the Algerian culture, which a non-Algerian reader may find rather odd. An example is Feraoun's description of Fouroulou's aunt Khalti, whom he compared to a goat, " Une chèvre capricieuse".[15] Another feature distinguishing these novels is the widespread use of local proverbs, songs and popular tales.

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13. Mammeri, *L' Opium et le bâton*, p.15.

14. Dib, *La Grande maison,* p.179.

15. Feraoun, *Le Fils du pauvre,* p.39.

It is worth mentioning that Haddad's questions were not shared by any other Francophone Algerian writer. On the contrary, they used the colonists' language as a means of expressing the malaise of their people. In other words they fought French colonialism with its own weapon. Mammeri testifies:

> Je me demande si l'argument que l'on oppose souvent, à savoir qu'on s'aliène dans une langue qui n'est pas la sienne, n'est pas un très mauvais argument, car il traduit quelque chose de superficiel: à un certain degré de profondeur, on ne peut se sentir aliéné dans une langue. C' est même l'inverse, parce qu'on dispose alors d'un moyen de sortir de soi. Chacun, bien sûr, à une langue maternelle, mais accéder à une langue comme le Français est un enrichissement considérable et je ne suis pas prêt à renoncer à tout ce que cette langue m'a apporté et continue de m'apporter. Je m'y sens tout à fait à l'aise.[16]

Moreover, one must distinguish between the French language and French colonialism, which are not necessarily two linked factors. The Algerian people are not inimical to 'French' as a language, or to the French people, but towards French colonialism, which they had courageously defeated. In this vein, Ferhat Abbas wrote at the end of his *La Nuit coloniale :*

> Le peuple algérien n'est pas un ennemi-né du peuple français. Le colonialism aboli, rien n'empêchera plus les deux peuples de coopérer, de s'entraider et d'harmoniser leurs intérêts.
>
> Il n'est pas interdit de penser que Marseille restera un grand port pour la production algérienne et Paris une grande université pour notre jeunesse.
>
> Ce qui compte pour nous, dans ce domaine, c'est de conserver les mains libres pour planifier et sortir notre peuple de la misère, de l'analphabétisme et du taudis.'?

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16. Jean-Jacque Abadie, "Entretiens avec Mouloud Mammeri", *La Découverte - Le Monde* (Paris, 1984), p.177.

17. Ferhat Abbas, *La Nuit coloniale,* p.233.

However, Abbas's opinion has not been shared by many. The leaders of independent Algeria held the project of Arabizing the country as a priority. Arabisation would appear to suggest that Francophone literature would disappear soon after independence as prophesied by many, such as Albert Memmi in his book *Portrait du colonisé.*[18] However, contrary to such prophecies, the Algerian Francophone novel is still in existence and the number of published Francophone novels increase every year.[19]

Finally, we should note that the Algerian Francophone novel is today produced not just by Algerian novelists in Algeria, but also by immigrant Algerians in France.

18. Albert Memmi, *Portrait du colonisé précédé du portrait du colonisateur* (Paris: Buchet-Chastel, 1957).

19. See Appendix 3. *Bibliography of the Francophone Algerian novel.*

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APPENDIX 1

Plot Summaries

1. Chukri Khodja, *El-Euldj - captif des barbaresques*

A Turkish corsair called Catchadiablo returns from a successful raid. To reward him, the ***pacha*** Khaireddine names him *Emir El Bahr* and offers a dinner in his honour. However, Catchadiablo does not rise to the dignity of the occasion; he drinks until he is reeling drunk, which rouses the *pacha's* anger against Catchadiablo, whom he insults. These do not go down well with Catchadiablo and he treats the *pacha* as a cruel criminal that he did not fear. This brings a death sentence on his head which forms the subject of a rumour among the people, who conclude that the insults are a mere pretext to get rid of him.

Ismail Hadji, one of Algiers' leading citizens, chooses Bernard Ledieux from among the captives of Catchadiablo's raid to be his servant, and offers him shelter in his own house, to escape the cold and filthy place where the other captives were put. Ismail Hadji treats his servant well, and asks him to turn to his religion so that he can be free once more. At first Ledieux answers: "On n'abandonne pas sa propre religion comme cela, Baba Hadji, on ne rompt pas les liens de tout un passé sans un certain serrement de coeur ..."(p.45). However, he reveals to his friend Cuisinier that he loves his master's daughter, and feels like 'turning over a new leaf'. Thus Cuisinier accuses him of cruelty to his foresaken family. On the other hand, Ismail and his wife, endure a similar conflict as they know of their daughter's love for Ledieux. Ismail's anger, however, knows no bounds. To his friend Latif Effendi he reveals: "Si j'étais un homme faible j'en pleurerai de rage, si j'étais un infidèle je me donnerai la mort"(p. 53). The best solution he can come up with is to convert Ledieux and make him marry Zineb. As a way out of his misery and humiliation, Ledieux accepts. His friend Cuisinier reproaches him for a great error which would lead to his rejection by his Christian compatriots: "On t'appelra [sic] "Euldj" pour marquer ton

origine, pour la stigmatiser même. Nous autres, captifs, nous te désignerons sous le nom de renégat"(p.58). In his loneliness, and not knowing what to do, Ledieux goes wandering through the forest for four days, after which: "il se dirigea vers la mosquée ketchaoua et là, avec une ostentation volontaire, il prit place dans les rangs nombreux des fidèles et leva comme eux les mains vers le ciel, à l'appel du Dieu Musulman".(p. 70). As a result, Lediousse marries Zineb and becomes a free man. However, he lived in an endless psychological conflict; even in convertion, his feelings towards Islam do not change. Whereas Ismail Hadji wants his grandson Youssef to become "Un Alem accompli, un mouderrés érudit ou encore un Cheikh El Islam vénéré",(p.79), Lediousse, who hates the *Tolba*, wants him to leave school and learn a manual job. Moreover, he confesses to Cuisinier that he regrets his conversion, and tells his wife, " J'ai assassiné une religion, ma religion. Cette religion si belle et si enchanterresse", (p. 95).

Against his father's will, Youssef becomes a teacher of divinity, who teaches at the great Ketchaoua mosque. The novel is set at the time of Charles Quint's military attack on Algiers, "Charles-Quint organise en 1541 la fameuse expédition d'Alger",(p.118) spreading fear and anguish amongst the inhabitants, who meet at Ketchaoua, where Youssef leeds the prayers, which are interrupted by Lediousse's Christian prayers. In his great disappointment, Youssef reproaches his father for his shoking behaviour, "Tu m'as couvert d'opprobre",(p.131) and rejects the Christian name which Lediousse has given him, "Je ne suis ni Jean, ni Jacques",(p.131). However, he is still aware of his mixed origins, and has learned his father's language, and read about French culture and civilisation: "J'ai appris cette langue, qui est ta langue mais ne sera, hélas, jamais la mienne"(p.133).

In the end, Lediousse becomes insane and talks of many mysterious things in a state of delirium. He speakes as if he is the father of humanity: "J'ai beaucoup d' enfants, les uns sont juifs, d'autre sont Chrétiens, quelques uns ont passés dans les

ténèbres d'une religion sans nom, et enfin mon dernier est devenu Musulman"(p.135). To his great sorrow, Youssef rejects him and refuses to be a Frenchman. Mad with grief, Lediousse takes on the tone of a God and declares himself, "le Maitre de la mer et de la terre"(p.136). Regretting that he cannot end his life "dans les bras de la piété Chrétienne"(p.137), Lediousse dies of a broken heart.

2. René Pottier and Saad ben Ali, *La Tente noire, roman saharien.*

On a thorough bred Arab horse, Jeanne d'Albanès, guided only by an uncomplete map, travells across the Algerian desert. Tired and lost, she falls asleep until sunset. When she arises, she remembers the European life she has escaped, and the fiancé she has forsaken, who has refused to marry a woman whose main ambition is to travel and explore the natural beauty of the Algerian desert. However, she reaches a crisis of fear and anxiety as she has run out of water and lost her horse. Unable to bear the Saharan heat which beats down upon her head, Jeanne goes into a long fint, until she is discovered by the Caid of the Ouled Saiah tribe, who offers her the hospitality of his tribe, who prepare a welcoming reception for their *Caid* and his guest.

Jeanne loves the ceremonies, the customs and the beauty of nature, found in this saharan tribe. However, she is more attracted by Slimane, the caid, whom she loves and wants to be loved in return, "être aimée sous un ciel exotique par un chef à la vie aventureuse de nomade", (p.39). Jeanne does her best to look like the women of the sahara, both in clothes and manners. She learns Arabic and changes her name from Jeanne to Nedjma. Later on she marries the *Caid* and becomes one of the most distinguished ladies of the tribe, and is frequently visited by the women of similar rank. However, feeling it a duty to uphold European customs and habits, Jeanne keeps telling her friends about the European lifestyle which increases their suspicions of her, making them accuse her of being a prostitute, who prevents her husband from having children. To save her reputation, Jeanne makes Slimane take her friend Aicha as his second wife. Soon after marriage she gives him a son. However, as things are 'settling down again, Jeanne is told that her husband's origins are unclear. Although she does not pay a great deal of attention at first, she later

discovers that her husband is a Frenchman, called George Boyer, who has disguised himself under the personality of Slimane. In her disappointment, she decides to flee a country where all that looked magic and attractive at first, is now odd and repulsive to her, especially after Slimane, whom she loves deeply, refuses to go with her to France, where she has bought a large property. Although she attempts to start a new life without Slimane, Jeanne finds it very hard to forget him. In the end, she sees in him a symbol of the possible assimilation of the Algerian people who will one day forget their origins and become French, just as Sliman has forgotten his, and became Algerian.

On the outbreak of the First World War, many Algerians joined the French ranks to fight against the enemies of their *mère patrie.* Following their example, Jeanne turns her house into a hospital where war casualties are treated. Among her patients is a soldier from the Ouled Saiah tribe who tells her about Slimane, and Aicha's death. However, to Jeanne's disappointment, the soldier dies. Deeply moved, she decides to meet his family at the Ouled Saiah tribe and also see Slimane. Nevertheless, half way to the tribe, Jeanne turns back and decides to return to France.

3. Said Guennoun, *La Voix des monts - moeurs de guerre berbères.*

La Voix des monts focuses on two groups of people; those who have been subdued and who live in peace and prosperity, and the 'unsubdued' who live in poverty and turmoil-After a cold winter during which the unsubjugated population suffer great losses in both lives and goods, they restart their war plans against the invaders. They all claim that: "Si la montagne voulait s'unir, les postes français seraient 'mangés' en une journée"(p.31). The head of the village urges his people on to fight the weakened invaders. However, a traitor called Taibi reports his people's plans to Capitaine Alain, insisting that his kindness and passivity encourages the rebels to rise up against him, and arguing that the Berbers can never be held in by st rict rules unless they suffer a huge defeat:

> Jamais un berbère qui se respecte ne se soumettra à toi sans combat à moins de se résigner à l'avance au déshonneur ... Chez nous, nous ne pouvons nous incliner sincèrement que devant l'homme qui se fait craindre. p.49.

At first, Alain hesitates to fight the Berbers; he prefers to bribe a notable of the tribe to stop the war before it starts, "Il me faut un allié capable de leur faire entendre raison"(p.51). However, later on he decides to use violence: "Puisque la manière douce se révèle encore une fois inopérante, je vais frapper"(p.56). Consequently, both groups prepare to go into battle. Meanwhile, the rebels who have already begun acts of sabotage, such as cutting the phone lines, catch another traitor, Raho, and punish him for his betrayal. Raho is about to die in agony, when Haoussa Ou Mhend, one of the notables of the village, creates a strategem to save him. This happens at the time when the people are gathering at the mosque to discuss several points, among them, Raho's case. Thus, Haoussa emerges as another traitor when

Raho, following the advice of his rescuer, points at him, "O berbère, mon frère ... je me mets sous ta protection. Si tu m'abandonnes que ton nom et ta descendance soient à jamais maudits"(p.71): Thus Haoussa takes Raho to his house and sends his aunt, Rqia, to discuss Raho's freedom in exchange for a large sum of money to be decided by the villagers, with Capitaine Alain. However, following her nephew's advice, she tells Alain to give the villagers much less than they ask, and informs him of her people's war plans. A great confusion reigns among the different tribes of the Dir concerning Raho's case. Yet, in the end, Haoussa's trick succeeds, giving his village a bad reputation among the Dir tribes. On the other hand, Capitaine Alain invites the rebels to acknowledge their folly in fighting him, trying to bring them to submission. However, the rebels answer very frankly:

> Personne ne nous as déshonorés plus que toi. Ta seule présence sur le Tourguilal est une insulte grave et permanente ... Elle blesse jusqu'aux Ossements de nos ancêtres ... chaque jour, la voix de nos consciences nous reproche de n'avoir pas su mourir pour t'empêcher de franchir le Serou ... le pain que nous mangeons est amer(p. 88).

Meanwhile, Taibi meets El Hadj, the head of the Ait Ishaq tribe, and tries to convince him that co-operation with Capitaine Alain would mean huge financial rewards, and nomination for the title of the Caid of the Dir. Furthermore, to create a division between the different tribes, he stimulates hostility between El-Hadj's tribe, and the Ait Yakoub Ou Aissa who free their prisoner for an unconsiderable sum of money. Taibi's efforts succeed, and all the other Dir tribes isolate the Ait Yakoub Ou Aissa, who are forced to face Alain's army with no help from the neighbouring tribes. The ultimate result was a great defeat which makes them flee their tribe, seeking for shelter far from the French fortress. However, as soon as they have put up their tents, Ali ou Haoussa, another traitor, joins them to share their agony, as he

pretends: "Je viens vers vous en frère repenti. J'ai quitté les rangs du chrétien pour venir reprendre ma place parmi vous. "(p.131).

As good a trickster as his father, Haoussa Ou M'hend, Ali convinces his tribesmen of his sincerity. After all, he claimed, he has returned with a horse, arms, and a knowledge of the invaders' war plans. Hence, without great difficulty, Ali' starts his mission by advising his people to remain in their tribe, without which they can only prove their fear and weakness. On the other hand, with Taibi's help, Alain meets two tribal leaders, the first of whom is El-Hadj who, in return for the same rewards Taibi has mentioned, provides the *Capitaine* with valuable information about the different tribes of the Dir and their capacities for war. The second leader is Hammou Ou Mellouk who, also wants to become the Caid of the Dir. However, just before he could join the fortress together with his vanquished people, Sidi Abdelmalek Bentaibi's tribe launch an attack on them to arrest him. Therefore, Alain's interest is concentrated on El-Hadj. Meanwhile, having discovered and executed their traitors, among them Ali Ou Haoussa, the Dir tribes unite and agree to fight their common enemy, as well as to punish El-Hadj. Therefore, they prepare themselves for the sacred battle in the midst of which, they believe, a white rider on a light grey horse would emerge from a tomb and destroy their enemy.

The day of the battle comes and, both sides fight with a honourable courage when all of a sudden the white rider appears, provoking panic among the vanquished tribes who all down arms and wait for the miracle. However, the white rider is shot by the invaders whose machine guns force him to drop his flag and disappear behind a dome with green tiles. The natives are deeply disappointed, especially after the whole tribe is occupied and surrounded by the French. In their defeat, the rebel tribes live in an atmosphere of grief and mourning which encompasses the fear of their children and the despair of the adults, who cannot decide their future. In the end, some choose submission, and others flee their tribes. Meanwhile, El-Hadj declares his submission and invites his people to follow him.

In the end, the rebels are brought to submission by hunger, cold, and lack of shelter, and join Alain's camp.

4. **Aissa Zehar,** *Hind a l'âme pûre, ou histoire d'une mère*

In a nomadic tribe called Ouled Adjil lives a woman called Hind, who leads a happy life, made even happier after the birth of her son Salim, her daughter Bahra and a second son who dies a few months after his birth. Next Bahra becomes blind after an outbreak of smallpox, followed by the deaths of Hind's father and husband.

Seif-Eddine, a notable from a neighbouring tribe, marries Hind and adopts her children whom he treats as his own. The life of the new family increases in happiness after the birth of Seif-Eddine's first son, El-Hadi, especially as SeifEddine could not have any children by his previous wives. He is even more pleased by the birth of a second son, called Faouzi. However, working in a far-away city as a teacher of divinity, he must spend most of his time away from his family, whom he leaves under Salim's care.

The death of her son El-Hadi, makes Hind very unhappy and she can only stop crying after she hears a strange voice telling her:

> O femme! Pourquoi tant de larmes? Ton petit El-Hadi est entouré d'anges au paradis. Ne t'use donc plus la vue à faire couler des larmes. Dieu te remplacera ton petit disparu par un autre petit que tu vas avoir sous peu. Tu l'appelleras de ces deux prénoms "Nacih et Nacir."(pp.37-38).

Indeed, Hind gave birth to Nacih-Nacir who brings happiness back into her life. However, this makes her in-laws more and more jealous of her. All her kindness and help for them only turns them more against her every day. Consequently, Seif-Eddine decides to move, with his family, to his place of work where he gives his two sons an Arabic education after which he sends them to a French school, refuting the current opinion which said: "envoyer ses enfants à l'école française était les exposer

au pire des dangers: la perte de la foi Islamique et l'adoption soit de l'athéisme, soit d'une autre religion qui ne repose sur rien de divin."(p.71). However, the behaviour of Seif-Eddine's sons proves the fâlacy of this opinion. After they leave school, Faouzi begins an administrative job, while Nacih starts his Arabic studies, once more, before he is given a teaching vocation in a village school. However, all his enthusiasm for transmitting his knowledge to his young compatriots is faced with indifference.

Deeply disappointed, he leaves his teaching job and starts again with different small jobs in his city, where he does well, and brings more ease to his family. Hence, Hind decides to convince him of the need to get married. After a lot of hesitation, Nacih acquiesces to his mother's will. Yet after a few months of marriage, he repudiates the wife he does not want and joins the military service, causing Hind much unhappiness. For Nacih, military service is a good opportunity to deepen his knowledge of French language, which he loves just as much as he loved that of his ancestors, "étudier la lange française qu'il ignorait pour ainsi dire totalement n'ayant connu ni les classiques, ni même la grammaire française qui, de son temps, n'était pas enseignée à l'école indigène."(p.95). Just as he loves the French language, so he respects his French officers and admires their civilization. Moreover, he decides to dress in the European manner which he finds more convenient; he wants to prove "qu' un jeune musulman savait se libèrer des idées et des coutumes lorsqu'elles lui paraissaient surannées."(pp.98-99). Furthermore, he passes an important exam, which opens up a new horizon to him, and improves his material situation. Thus, Nacih's family finds some comfort again, but the death of Zohor, Hind's only daughter by Seif Eddine, brings misery to Hind once more , especially after Nacih decides to leave her and join a new vocation in a far away city. Lonely, Hind and Seif-Eddine adopt a rickety little girl, Leila, whom Seif-Eddine cures with the use of some popular prescri ptions. At the age of fifteen, Leila is

married to an old man who only causes her sadness and despair, until finally she is rescued by Nacih who forces the old husband to divorce her. On the other hand, Hind's health degenerates to the point where she is unable to do any housework. Thus Seif-Eddine takes another wife and neglects Hind, who is depressed and lonely during Nacih's absence. Before he can come back to take her with him, Hind dies, causing him much grief.

5. Djamila Dèbêche, *Leila, Jeune fille d'Algérie.*

Having suffered himself from illiteracy, Sheikh Ibrahim decides to have his children educated, girls as well as boys, and is convinced that "la fille doit avoir autant d'instruction que le garçon car une fois marnée c'est elle qui dirige ses enfants, et l'instruction des filles est une nécessité et une garantie pour un meilleur avenir."(p. 18) He shows total indifference to his tribesmen, who do not favour educating the girls of the tribe, and encourages his daughter to get good results in her exams on condition that she respects her Islamic principles and returns to her tribe after her studies. Glad of her father's decision, Leila does very well in her college. However, together with the results of her final exams, Leila is informed of the death of her father. Her uncle, Sheikh Ali, who becomes her tutor, takes her back to the tribe where she finds her cruel stepmother, who forces her to get rid of her European dress, a point on which her uncle insists: "Le voile et le *haik* remplaceront les costumes que tu portais à Alger et il faudra t'habituer à vivre comme tes parents. Nous n'avons jamais approuvé cette éducation."(p.29) Moreover, he chooses his son Hamza as a husband for her.

However, Leila's refusal to marry her cousin and insistence on her right to direct her family's property, causes Sheikh Ali to lose his temper: "Il n'est pas dans nos coutumes de voir une fille s'occuper d'affaires d'hommes."(p.32). At this point the conflict between Leila and her illiterate milieu starts. The only person who shares her suffering is her French friend, Madeleine Lormont, who, as soon as she receives Leila's letter telling her of her dilemma, asks her father to rescue her unfortunate friend. Although it is not easy for him to get involved in such a situation, M. Lormont promises, "de trouver une solution pour venir en aide à ta jeune amie. Je ferai auprès de son oncle une démarche et connaitrai ses intentions exactes."(p.67)

Indeed, M. Lormont meets Sheikh Ali and tries to explain to him that, "la jeune fille est instruite, qu'elle est consciente de sa valeur, qu'elle peut se rendre utile dans la grande tâche qui se prépare ici au point de vue social. "(p.96). Far from understanding such concepts, Sheikh Ali refuses to let anyone get involved in his personal affairs. All of a sudden, Leila shows up, welcoming her rescuer, with whom she wants to leave. After a very lengthy argument with M. Lormont, Sheikh Ali treats his niece as a renegade, renounces her and forces her to give up her inheritance: "Je la renie ... elle est morte pour nous! Renégate! ... Fille de rien!."(p.119) Leila is deeply grieved, but follows M. Lormont to start a new life among the Lormont family, who welcomes her as a second daughter. Later on, Leila is employed in the Lormont factory to which, on her suggestion and that of Madeleine, a dispensary is added. This is directed by an Algerian doctor, called Yahia Bendriss who loves Leila and wants to marry her. On the *Mouloudl* festival, he introduces her to his family in Algiers. On the same occasion Leila visits some of her relatives in the Casbah, who praise her for her emancipation, and tell her of Sheikh Ali's disease, and his son's bad reputation, and ask her to safeguard the honour of their name. In the end, Leila wins the battle; before he dies, Sheikh Ali recognizes her and affirms that:"l'avenir est de ton côté ... Mohamed et toi saurez être digne de notre .nom."(p.191) Leila returns to her tribe where "une belle oeuvre" begins for her.

Mouloud, Mawlid, the birth of the prophet Mohammad.

APPENDIX 2

Bibliographical Notes

1. Abbas, Ferhat

Born in Algeria (Taher in Kabylia), on 24th October 1899. He is known as one of the first 'Young Algerians' to study at, and graduate from, a French University in Algiers. Although a doctor of pharmacy, he is more famous as a political leader, whose career started with his plea for French citizenship, retaining his personal status as a Muslim, to his participation in the Second World War as a soldier under the Fre nch banner. However, being subject to the discrimination of his French officers while he was fighting for *their* independence, opened up new horizons to Abbas, whose political demands shifted to the abolition of colonization, the rejection of ' assimilation' as a lie, and the request for the political autonomy of Algeria. These demands, together with his participation in the May 1945 uprising, caused him to be arrested and indicted for jeopardizing French sovereignty. After a one-year prison sentence, Abbas founded a new political party called *Union Démocratique du Manifeste Algérien* (UDMA). In 1955, he joined the FLN, and left the country for Cairo as a member of the Coordination Committee. In 1958, he settled in Rabat (Morocco) and wrote *La Nuit coloniale.* In 1962, he was elected the president of the Algerian National Assembly. In 1963 he retired from politics.

Works:

1. *Le Jeune Algérien. De la colonie vers la province.* Paris: La Jeune Parque, 1931; reprint ed., Paris: Garnier, 1981.

2. *Pourquoi nous créons l'union populaire algérienne.* Alger: 1938.

3. *Manifeste du peuple algérien.* Alger: Éd. Libération, 1943.

4. *J'accuse l'Europe.* Alger: Éd. Libération, 1944.

5. *Appel* d *la jeunesse française et musulmane, face au crime colonialiste et* d *la forfaiture de l' administration.* Alger: 1946.

6. *Du Manifeste* d *la République algérienne.* Alger: Imp. Générale, 1948.

7. *Regards sur le présent et l'avenir de l'Algérie.* Alger: Éd. Libération, 1949.

8. *'Le Régime colonial est la négation de la justice et de la civilisation.* Alger: Éd. Libération, 1949.

9. *Réponses de l' UDMA au Gouv. M.E. Naegelen.* Alger: Éd. Libération, 1950.

10. *Guerre et révolution d'Algérie, vol.I, La Nuit Coloniale.* Paris: Julliard, 1962.

11. *Autopsie d'une guerre. L'Aurore.* Paris: Garnier, 1980.

2. Amrouche, Taos.

Also known by her Christian name Marie-Louise. She was born in Tunisia on 4th March 1913 to a converted Berber family who emigrated to Tunisia and then to France. Taos completed her education in the country of her birth, and joined Paris to study further. However, due to several problems she gave up her project and endeavoured to research in the field of Berber popular culture. In 1939 she was awarded a grant to study in Madrid where she stayed for two years. In 1942 she started a series of radio broadcasts in both Tunis and Algiers. In 1945 she married the French artist Bourdil and settled in Paris. After she divorced Bourdil, she devoted herself to the recital of Berber folk songs, for which she became very well known. Taos died in Paris on 2nd April, 1976.

Works:

1. *Jacinthe noire.* Paris: Charlot, 1947; reprint ed., Paris: Maspéro, 1972, novel.

2. *Rue des tambourins.* Paris: La Table Ronde, 1960, novel.

3. *Le Grain magique, contes, poèmes et proverbes berbères de Kabylie.* Paris: Maspéro, 1966.

4. *L'Amant imaginaire.* Paris: Nouvelle Société Morel, 1975, novel.

Records:

1. *Chants berbères de Kabylie.* BAM-D 101 (Grand prix du disque 1967).

2. *Chants de processions, méditations et danses sacrées berbères.* SM30 2-280.

Chants de l'Atlas. Traditions millénaires des Berbères d'Algérie and *Chants berbères de la meule et du berceau,* ARN 34 278 and ARN 34 233, Arion.

3. Ben Ali, Saad (dates unknown)

Most known for his literary collaboration with the French writer René Pottier with whom he wrote all of his works.

Works:

1. *Aichouch la Djellabya, princesse saharienne.* Paris: Les Oeuvres Représentatives, 1933, novel.

2. *La Tente noire, roman saharien.* Paris: Les Oeuvres Représentatives, 1933, novel.

The two authors also wrote *La Bakhnouz brodé* (an unpublished novel), and an essay on *Les coutumes*

antéislamiques et le folklore dans la région de l'Oued Righ.

4.. Débêche, Djamila (dates unknown)

Born in Setif (Algeria). She was, together, with Taos Amrouche, one of the first Algerian women to write novels in French. Also known for her writings on emancipation and feminism, especially through the pages of *L'Action,* a feminist review launched by the authoress on 25th September 1947.

Works:

1. *Les Musulmans algériens et la scolarisation.* Alger: Charras, 1950, essay.

2. *Leila, jeune fille d'Algérie.* Alger: Charras, 1947, novel.

3. *L'Enseignement de la langue arabe en Algérie et le droit de vote aux femmes algériennes.* Alger: Charras, 1951, essay.

4. *Aziza.* Alger: Imbert, 1955, novel.

5.Dib, Mohammed.

Born in Tlemcen (Algeria), on 21st July 1920. He started his literary career at the age of fourteen, as a poet. He took on several jobs; as a school teacher at Zoudj-Beghal, near the Moroccan border for one year (1939-1940). He served as an accountant in Oujda for another year (1940-1941), and from 1943 to 1944 he became a French-English interpreter for the Allied forces in Algiers. From 1945-1947 he stayed in Tlemcen where he worked as a carpet designer, then became a journalist from 1950 to 1951.

In 1959, he was expelled from Algeria, and settled in France. Dib travelled a lot, visiting Eastern European countries, Arab countries and North European countries, such as Finland.

In 1974 he was the Regent Professor at the University of California (Los Angeles), and from 1982-1984 he was appointed *Professeur associé* at the Sorbonne-Paris IV University.

Dib is one of the most well-known and prolific Algerian Francophone writers. His work includes a great variety of poetry, short stories, novels and plays.

Works:

1. *La Grande maison.* Paris: Le Seuil, 1952, novel.

2. *L'Incendie.* Paris: Le Seuil, 1954, novel.

3. *Au Café.* Paris: Gallimard, 1956, short stories.

4. *Le Métier d tisser.* Paris: Le Seuil, 1957, novel.

5. *Baba Fekrane.* Paris: La Farandole, 1959, tales for children.

6. *Un été africain.* Paris: Le Seuil, 1959, novel.

7. *Ombre gardienne.* Paris: Gallimard, 1961, poems.

8. *Qui se souvient de la mer.* Paris: Le Seuil, 1962, novel.

9. *Cours sur la rive sauvage.* Paris: Le Seuil, 1964, novel

10. *Le Talisman.* Paris: Le Seuil, 1966, short stories.

11. *La Danse du roi.* Paris: Le Seuil, 1968, novel.

12. *Dieu en barbarie.* Paris: Le Seuil, 1970, novel.

13. *Formulaires.* Paris: Le Seuil, 1970, poems.

14. *Le Maître de chasse.* Paris: Le Seuil, 1973, novel.

15. *L'Histoire du chat qui boude.* Paris: La Farandole, 1974, tales for children.

16. *Omnéros.* Paris: Le Seuil, 1975, poems.

17. *Habel.* Paris: Le Seuil, 1977, novel.

18. *Feu beau feu.* Paris: Le Seuil, 1979, poems.

19. *Mille houras pour une gueuse.* Paris: Le Seuil, 1980, play.

20. *Les Terrasses d'Orsol.* Paris: Le Seuil, 1985, novel.

6. Djebar, Assia_[Fatima Zohra Imalayen]

Born in Cherchell (Algeria) on 4th August 1936. Like her heroine Dalila, in *Les Impatients,* she belongs to a middle class family known for its conservatism. Also, like Dalila, she studied at a boarding school. Assia Djebar was known as a brilliant an d successful student, and as a gifted and prolific writer, whose first novel *La Soif* was completed in two months, at the age of twenty.

From 1959-1962 she lectured at Rabat University (Morocco), and in 1962 she returned to her country to lecture in Algiers University for a period of three years. In 1965 she settled in Paris and started various activities in the fields of literary criticism, cinematography and theatre.

Works:

1. *La Soif* Paris: Julliard, 1957, novel.

2. *Les Impatients.* Paris: Julliard, 1958, novel.

3. *Women of Islam*. London: A. Deutsch Ltd., 1961, essay.

4. *Les enfants du nouveau monde.* Paris: Julliard, 1962, novel.

5. *Les Allouettes naives.* Paris: Julliard, 1967, novel.

6. *Poèms pour l'Algérie heureuse.* Alger: SNED, 1969, poems.

7. *Rouge l'aube.* Alger: SNED, 1969, play in collaboration with Walid Carn.

8. *Nouba des femmes du Mont Chenoua.* 1979, film.

9. *Femmes d'Alger dans leurs appartement.* Paris: Des Femmes, 1980, short stories.

10. Preface to and translation of Nawal El Saadawi's novel, *Ferdaous, une voix en enfer.* Paris: Des Femmes, 1981.

11. *La Zerda et les chants de l'oubli,* film shown on Algerian TV in July 1982.

12. *L'Amour, la fantasia.* Paris: Latés-ENAL, 1985, novel.
13. *Ombre Sultane.* Paris: Latés, 1987,

novel. 7. El-Hammamy, Aly

Born in Tiaret (Algeria) in 1902. His parents fled the country and settled in Alexandria when Ali was twenty years old.

Like his hero Hadj-Allal, El-Hammamy travelled a lot and lived in various parts of the Arab world. He met and befriended the Emir cAbd El kader's two grandsons, cAbd El Malik and Khaled, and collaborated in the political activities undertaken by the Emir Khaled in Paris in 1923. He also took part in the Rif (Morocco) uprising

along with the Moroccan leader cAbd El-kerim El-Khattaby. Although he visited many European capital cities such as Berlin, Moscow and Geneva, he settled in Baghdad from 1935-1945 and in Cairo from 1946 until his death in 1949, in a plane crash in Pakistan.

. Works:

1. *Idris.* Le Caire: Imp. Sociale, 1948, novel.

8.Feraoun, Mouloud.

Born on 8th March 1913 in Kabylia (Algeria). Like Fouroulou Menrad, the hero of *Le Fils du Pauvre*, Feraoun was also the son of poor people, who despite their misery and hard life, devoted great efforts to educating their son and giving him the opportunity to escape poverty. Well aware of his parents' sacrifices, Feraoun studied hard and won himself the position of a school teacher, first in his home village in 1935 and later on in a neighbouring village called Taourirt - Moussa, in 1946. In 1952, Feraoun became the headmaster of a school, and devoted himself to education both as a teacher and writer. On 13th March 1962 he was assassinated by the OAS terrorists in El-Biar (Algiers).

Works:

1. *Le Fils du pauvre.* Paris: Le Puy, 1950, novel.

2. *La Terre et le sang.* Paris: Le Seuil, 1953, novel.

3. *Jours de Kabylie.* Alger: Baconnier, 1954, essay.

4. *Les Chemins qui montent.* Paris: Le Seuil, 1957, novel.

5. *Les Poèmes de si Mohand.* Paris: Éd. de Minuit, 1960. In this book Feraoun brought together the poems of Si Mohand for the first time and saved them from oblivion. He also wrote an important introduction to the poet and his work.

6. *Journal 1955-1962.* Paris: Le Seuil, 1962.

7. *Textes sur l'Algérie.* A supplement to the review *Preuves,* September 1962.

8. *Lettres d des amis.* Paris: Le Seuil, 1962. This book contains various letters which Feraoun wrote to his friends, namely the French writers, Emmanuel Roblès and Albert Camus. These letters stand as very import ant documents on the writer's career and the difficulties he faced as an Algerian writer in the early fifties.

9. *L'Anniversaire.* Paris: Le Seuil, 1972. This book was published after Feraoun's death under the care of his best friend Emmanuel Roblès, who put together in this book, the first part of a novel started by Feraoun prior to his death, the part which had been omitted from the first version of *Le Fils du pauvre,* and which the author had intended to include in another novel, and several art icles on literature which Feraoun had published in various periodicals.

9. Guennoun, Said.

Born in Kabylia (Algeria) in 1884. He entered the French army in 1902 and rose to the rank of Lieutenant in 1912. In 1914 he became a French citizen, and became Captain in 1916. He joined Morocco on a military mission as described in his novel, *La voix des monts.*

Works:

1. *La Montagne berbère.* Paris: Comité de l'Afrique Française, 1929, essay.

2. *La voix des monts.* Rabat: Omnia, 1934, novel.

10. Hadj Hamou, Abdelkader.

Also known as Abdelkader Fikri. He was born in Miliana (Algeria) in 1891, to a family well-known for its learning. He was among the first Algerians to plead for the right of his people to French citizenship, as well as their right to remain Moslems. His dream was to see his country becoming wholly French. Hadj Hamou died the year before the Algerian revolution (1953).

Works:

1 *Zohra, la femme du mineur.* Paris: Éds. du Monde Moderne, 1965, novel.

2. *Les Campagnons du jardin.* Paris: Donat - Montchrestien, 1933, essay; in collaboration with Robert Randau.

11. Kateb Yacine.

Born in Constantine (East Algeria) on 6th August 1929. His primary education was both in a *Qur'anic* school and a French school. For his secondary education he joined Sétif *Lycée* from which he was expelled at the age of sixteen, for his part icipation in the May 1945 demonstrations. Thereafter, like the heroes of his novel *Nedjma*, he went to Bône and Constantine with his heart broken, not only by his expulsion, but also because his beloved, Nedjma, was married to someone else. His chagrin took form in his first collection of poems, *Soliloques,* in 1946. In the same year Kateb left his country to live in France where he was a member of the Algerian Communist party, and practiced several unskilled jobs. In 1954, he met Brecht in Pari s, and during the Algerian war for independence he visited several European countries. After independence, Kateb returned to his country where he devoted himself to writing plays in vernacular Arabic as a better means of reaching a wide audience than the novel. He was later nominated the director of Sidi Bel Abbes (West Algeria) Regional Theatre. Kateb Yacine died in October 1989.

Works:

1. *Soliloques.* Bône: Imp. du "Réveil bônois", 1946, poems.

2. *Abdelkader et l'indépendance algérienne.* Alger: En, Nandha, 1948, talk given in Paris on 24th May 1947.

3. *Nedjma.* Paris: Le Seuil, 1956, novel.

4. *Le Cercle des représailles.* Paris: Le Seuil, 1959. This book is a collection of four plays as follows:Le *Cercle des représailles, Le Cadavre encerclé, La Poudre d' intelligence* and *Les Ancêtres redoublent de férocité.* The book also contains a poem, *"Le vautour"*, and an essay, *"Chant profond de Kateb Yacine"*, this latter by Édouard Glissant.

5. *Le Polygone étoilé.* Paris: Le Seuil, 1966, novel.

6. *L'Homme aux sandales de caoutchouc.* Paris: Le Seuil, 1970, play.

7. Performed but unpublished plays in colloquial Arabic:

Mohammed, prend ta valise. 1971.

Saout Ennisa[sic] (Women's Voices). 1972.

La Guerre de 2000 ans. 1974.

Le Roi de l'Ouest. 1975.

La Palestine trahie. 1976 and 1982.

8. *L' Oeuvre en fragments* (Inédits littéraires et textes retrouvés, rassemblés et présentés par Jacqueline Arnaud). Paris: Sindbad, 1986.

12. Khodja, Chukri.

Born in Algiers, on 21st February 1891. He is known as one of the first Algerians who welcomed the benefits of the French *"mission civilisatrice",* but he expressed his love for and attachment to the religion of his ancestors, which he wished to keep. In this the author may be compared to his heio Youssef in *El-Euldj.*

Works:

1. *Mamoun, l' ébauche d'un idéal.* Paris: Radot 1928, novel.

2. *EI-Euldj, captif des Barbaresques.* Arras: INSAF, 1929, novel.

13. Mammeri, Mouloud.

Born in Kabylia, on 28th December 1917. Like his hero Mokrane in *La Colline oubliée,* he belonged to a wealthy family. Thus he did not suffer the hardship undergone by his friend Feraoun. After a primary education in his home village, his uncle took him to Rabat (Morocco) to study at the Lycée Gouraud. After a period of four years, he returned to Algeria, and joined the Lycée Bugeaud, after which he went to France to study at Louis-Le-Grand Lycée. Like most of his characters, he was mobilized in 1939 to fight for the French. After the Second World War, he was employed as a teacher of literature. In 1957, like Bachir in ***L'Opium et le bâton,*** Mammeri went to Morocco, and returned in his country in 1962 to lecture at Algiers University. Mammeri died in a tragic car accident in 1989, in Algeria.

Works:

1. *La Colline oubliée.* Paris: Plon, 1952, novel.

2. *Le Sommeil du juste.* Paris: Plon, 1955, novel.

3. *Les Isefra, poèmes de Si Mohand ou Mohand.* Paris: Maspéro, 1969, a collection of Si Mohand's poetry translated into French by the author.

4. *L'Opium et le bâton.* Paris: Plon, 1965, novel.

5. *Le Banquet,* précédé de *La Mort absurde des Aztèques.* Paris: Librairie Academique Perrin, 1973, a play and . an essay.

6. *Tajerroumt/N'Tamazirt* (Tantala Taqbaylit), *Grammaire berbère* (Kabyle). Paris: Maspéro, 1976, a manual on Berber grammar.

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8. *Machaho!* Paris: Bordas, 1980, Berber tales for children from the age of eight.

9. *Tellem chaho!* Paris: Bordas, 1980, berber tales for children from the age of eight.

10. *La Traversée.* Paris: Plon, 1982, novel.

11. *Le Foehn.* Paris: Publisud, 1982, play.

14. Zehar, Aissa.(dates unknown)

Born in South Algeria (Bordj Bou Arreridj). Son of a wealthy family. Like most of his contemporary Francophone writers, he praised France for her 'humanistic' mission in offering the 'uncivilized' Algerians the fruit of her civilization.

Works:

1. *Hind d l' âme pure, ou l' histoire d' une mère.* Alger: Baconnier, 1942, novel.

APPENDIX 3

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. ass iA *Hind d l'âme pure, ou l'histoire d'une mère*. Alger: Baconnier, 1942.

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