

**Masculine Domination, Female Resistance and Negotiation in
Assia Djébar's *L'Amour, La Fantasia*
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Abstract

The re-writing of Algerian history from the female perspective comes as a response to masculine domination and the occultation of women's participation in the resistance to colonialism in Algerian official history. Djébar's re-writing of Algerian history sets upside down the social hierarchy in order to allow the "subaltern" females to have their say and to dismantle the neo-patriarchal system hindering the redefinition of selfhood and the place and role of women.

Keywords: Assia Djébar, Amour, fantasia, history, memory, postcolonialism, selfhood.

هيمنة الذكور، ومقاومة النساء والتفاوض في
آسيا جبار "الحب والفتازيا"

ملخص

تأتي إعادة كتابة التاريخ من وجهة نظر نسوية بمثابة رد للسلطة الذكورية التي طمست مساهمة المرأة في مقاومة الاستعمار من التاريخ الجزائري الرسمي. على مستوى الشكل، أدت إعادة كتابة آسيا جبار للتاريخ الجزائري إلى قلب التسلسل الهرمي للمجتمع رأساً على عقب من أجل السماح للمرأة "الثانوية" أن يكون لها رأي ومن أجل أن تتمكن هذه الأخيرة من تفكيك النظام الأبوي الحديث الذي يمنع إعادة تعريف فردانية المرأة وتحديد مكانتها ودورها.

الكلمات المفتاحية: آسيا جبار، "الحب والفتازيا"، تاريخ، ذاكرة، ما بعد الاستعمار، الذات.

**Domination Masculine, Résistance Féminine et Négociation dans
«L'Amour La Fantasia» d'Assia Djébar**

Résumé

La réécriture de l'histoire de l'Algérie d'un point de vue féminin vient en réponse à la domination masculine et à l'occultation de la participation des femmes dans la résistance au colonialisme Français. La réécriture de l'histoire sous la plume de Djébar a déstabilisé la hiérarchie sociale pour permettre aux femmes «subalternes» d'avoir une opinion et de démanteler le système néo-patriarcal qui empêche la femme de redéfinir son soi et la réappropriation de son statut et de son rôle.

Mots-clés: Assia Djébar, L'Amour, La fantasia, histoire, mémoire, postcolonialisme, le Soi.

Introduction:

Early twentieth-century women were perhaps most active and influential as writers and artists. The advent of the new century did witness a change in the style and content of women's writings, as well as an increase in the deployment of feminine images and representations in literature. Just like her contemporary fellow female writers, the Algerian author Assia Djébar focused on topics pertinent to women, bringing attention to the innumerable difficulties they faced in redefining their identities in a fast changing world. Djébar was the first Maghrebien female writer to be elected to the *Académie Française*, in 2005. She is recognized as an established writer on the international scene and has to her credit a number of national prizes and international awards. The author blends the history of Algerian women with her own experiences. Inspired by private experiences as a female in a patriarchal system, her fiction exposes the modalities of women's life conditions in the post-colonial practices and nationalist regimes of her country. For Djébar, writing is synonymous with the right to speak and live.

This paper addresses the issue of gender discrimination in Assia Djébar's novel *L'Amour, la Fantasia* (1985)⁽¹⁾, with a specific focus on the relationship between the Self and the Other in the process of individuation and identity formation. I would argue that Djébar's novel sets out in some sort of a "decolonising project" from masculine domination, by proposing new ways of negotiating an image of the Self, a female identity cleared of the scoriae of a male-imposed habitus. Until we understand this process of gender negotiation, turning sometimes into open resistance to alienating and alienated forms of female selfhood, the subversive dimension of the discursive unveiling and self-revelation of Djébar's fiction will escape our attention.

Statement of issue and approach

Djébar's semi-autobiographical and historical novel *Fantasia* is generated from different texts, wherein different people's stories weave in and out of one another, stretching from the beginning of the French occupation of Algeria in 1830 to the national war for independence in 1954. Most of the voices heard in this novel are those of Algerian women who were reduced to silence by males both in the colonial and post-colonial periods. Elderly war widows, young brides, outspoken women held in French prisons, silent watchers in the prison-house of the veil are given the floor to express their outrage at gender discrimination.

Djébar's fiction writes the experiences of women as a spatially and socio-politically marginalized gender group. We would contend that this gender marginalization imposed by the patriarchal system through coercive and hegemonic norms is disclosed by a subtle interplay of fiction and history. In doing so, Djébar's *Fantasia* invests its female characters with a sense of agency that official history has denied to them. As agents pitted against male oppression of women, female characters are portrayed as embarked in a quest for an unalienated selfhood to free themselves of prevalent gender stereotypes and from the prison-house of masculine language. Until we understand how women's "narrative or narratological identity"⁽²⁾, is constructed and deconstructed by Djébar in the *Fantasia*, we will not be able to fully appreciate the way the author stands up for the rights of woman in the exclusively male conception of the world and the nation in the colonial and postcolonial periods of Algerian history. In other terms, this paper seeks to demonstrate how narration and nation in the *Fantasia* are contrapuntally juxtaposed and the aim of which is to re-instate women as heroic agents in an official history monopolized by males. The empowerment of women as agents alongside their male counterparts endows Djébar's fiction with a plurality of perspectives, addressing the issue of gender not in essentialist but performative terms.

While essentialist definitions repose on polarities and oppositions based on gendered, racial, or ethnic denominators, Djébar creates a "positive space of production promoting new becomings and places of identity that are constantly moving, making connections, and supporting the active agency of women"⁽³⁾. 'Who am I' solicits the reader to think beyond the limitations of an essentialist definition of a "self" and to follow instead the constant

movement of a “self” that defies a fixed interpretation. A fragmented “self” cannot be recovered by an essentialist definition of identity. In this sense, the fragmented identity is a reflection of a fragmented view of the world. Therefore, the narrative refuses to provide a coherent interpretation of the self and of the world. It is a negotiation between a colonial past and a postcolonial present. A space of “in-betweenness” that characterises identity negotiation. As such, a sense of an origin that can define the “self” is lost and renegotiated in the temporal and spatial boundaries between the coloniser and the colonised. In terms of *Fantasia* as performance, we can interestingly analyse the construction (or deconstruction) of the French, Algerian, Female identity of the protagonist and may be the author. The use of the French language, to refer to Djebbar’s “hybridity” asserts the author’s willingness to engage the Other and her willingness to be read more widely, and perhaps more significantly. A contribution to the demystification of language as something essential, inextricably bound to “race” or “nation”.

The exploration of the issue of gender power relationships in Djebbar’s *Fantasia* and the deconstruction of female selfhood will be approached from multiple perspectives, encompassing historicism, postcolonialism and deconstruction, as well as postcolonial feminism and the recent gender theories. This eclectic approach is called for by the formal complexity and the thematic profundity of Djebbar’s fiction. No single approach, to my mind, can grasp all the subtleties of a work situated in the contact zone of a complex and traumatic history and fiction wherein a huge number of themes are played out diachronically and synchronically. So, for example, the historicist approach will be employed in the form of hints to historical context, the purpose of which is to illustrate the women’s life condition in Algeria during the French colonialism since of the main issue under analysis is that of reconstruction of the self through decolonization, or disengagement from the colonial trauma. It is also justified by the fact that Djebbar’s *Fantasia* examines the relation of women to history in the postcolonial setting as well as the problem of inscribing women into history, and the double oppression women experienced during colonial times as colonized subjects as well as gendered subjects.

The postcolonial feminist ideological framework of the novel naturally calls for the deployment of a postcolonial approach for the analysis of the masculine domination during both the colonial and independence periods. Djebbar’s *Fantasia* functions as means of postcolonial resistance and gender negotiation with an emphasis on the importance of access to personal and collective history that is likely to lead to the self re-construction of the protagonist. In other words, postcolonial theory will enable us to see how the novel is politically engaged in the inscription of the female subject into discussions on the legacy of all other forms of exploitation and oppression by drawing attention to the particularity of women’s experiences. This postcolonial perspective has its inspiration in Ania Loomba’s works that point out the “gender blindness” of such researchers as Frantz Fanon and Homi Bhabha⁽⁴⁾ in their focus on male identity. Unlike Fanon and Bhabha who followed the long-standing ontological tradition of associating the male with the universally human, works produced such feminist scholars as Loomba offers a new, enriched perspective focusing on female experience in the colonial and postcolonial times.

Discussion and Results

French colonization of Algeria started in 1830 and ended 130 years later, after much bloodshed in the war between the French and the Algerians. Characterized by the subjugation of nations that differed culturally and racially from Europeans, the French colonialism, relied heavily on the discourse of Orientalism, defined by Edward Said as “a political vision of reality whose structure promoted a binary opposition between the familiar (Europe, the West, “us”) and the strange (the Orient, the East, “them”)⁽⁵⁾. The colonial discourse often made the connections between the “bestial” state of the colonized and their need for the Europeans to civilize them, to give order to their “irresponsible,” “childish,” “primal world.” The process of colonization was held as a “civilizing mission,” the purpose of which is to “assimilate” the Algerians in the French way of life. Algeria had to become part of France, its “natural

complement”⁽⁶⁾, with a separate Algeria “impossible to imagine”⁽⁷⁾. Yaël Simpson Fletcher stresses that “as the largest settler colony in the French Empire and the closest to France, Algeria was particularly significant”⁽⁸⁾. Another reason for this significance was the fact that Algeria became “the Other” on which the French constructed their own identity as the “civilized” nation. In fact, race played an important role in “Othering” the Algerians.

Djebar’s *Fantasia* is positioned at the intersection of race, culture, and language. The author is permanently engaged in historical dialogue with the colonial, basically in the form of French military accounts. The novel’s intertextual bound with those genuine war reports allow the narrator (and Djebar) to position herself intermediately between the two narrations heavily suggesting the reliance upon the Other’s account, as well as an incontestable exercise of Djebar to narrate historical events. In this way, the reconstructed self is the result of this complex Djebarian manoeuvre. The author investigates doubly colonizing texts where she exposes the textual practices through which women’s voices are buried and women’s bodies fragmented, and seek to restore life and wholeness to the mutilated corpses they have unearthed.

Though the French claimed that they were attempting to bring the Algerians to a higher level of development, socially and economically, in reality the Algerians were always discriminated. As Fletcher argues, “...The colony and the metropole were presented as “almost the same but not quite,” one a slightly distorted reflection (rather than imitation) of the other. Since colonial domination required the clearly demarcated difference between “them” and “us,” any merger of identities threatened the status quo”⁽⁹⁾. “The Other” had to remain “the Other”: savagery was constructed by the racial theories of the 19th century as a biological condition that could not be socially improved, and “the imperial claim of civilizing the natives”⁽¹⁰⁾ was but an example of colonial discourse and its striving for power and domination.

The intellectual movements of the 20th Century, including Derridean deconstruction and even Lacanian psychoanalytic theory, have continued the move away from the 18th and 19th century notions of the universal subject, contesting the unified “I” and replacing it with fractured, multiple subject positions. Feminist theorists like Helene Cixous, Gayatri Spivak and others are interested in theorizing female subjectivity in all its diversity and multiplicity in answering to phallogocentric constructions that continue to figure subjectivity as masculine and female consciousness as lack. In “*Can the Subaltern Speak?*” Spivak summarizes her project of constructing a new model of female subjectivity. A gesture Djebar takes up in *Fantasia*: “My readings are, rather, an interested and inexpert examination, by a postcolonial woman, of the fabric of repression, a constructed counter-narrative of woman’s consciousness, thus woman’s being, thus woman’s being good, thus the good woman’s desire, thus woman’s desire”⁽¹¹⁾.

The Djebarian text displays a larger complexity in the depictions of the self and otherness and suggests a reformed understanding of the nation’s history. Djebar offers an extensive portrayal of the Algerian struggle for independence, as well as the cloistered domestic scenes of women oppressed by Algerian patriarchy. In her discourses, the female body emerges as an important entity that helps inscribing a wide variety of female experiences, contributing in constructing the heroines’ process of liberation and self-affirmation.

The case of Assia Djebar, speaking the self is linked in significant ways to speaking the experience of female embodiment. Sidonie Smith articulates the intersection of subjectivity and body that occurs in autobiographical projects:

“When a specific woman approaches the scene of writing and the autobiographical ‘I,’ she not only engages the discourses of subjectivity through which the universal human subject has been culturally secured; she also engages the complexities of her cultural assignment to an absorbing embodiment. And so the autobiographical subject carries a history of the body with her as she negotiates the autobiographical ‘I,’ for autobiographical practice is one of those cultural occasions when the history of the body intersects the deployment of subjectivity”⁽¹²⁾.

In *Fantasia*, Djebbar joins her own voice and life story with the stories and voices of Algerian women revolutionaries, replacing silence and the colonizer's version of history with a celebration of female experience and expression. Djebbar does not speak for her subaltern sisters; Djebbar speaks with them, emphasizing the collective nature of female expression. The author realizes the ways in which her own story is intimately, linked to the forgotten and silenced testimonies of other women: "Can I, twenty years later, claim to revive these stifled voices? And speak for them? Shall I not at best find dried-up streams? What ghosts will be conjured up when in this absence of expressions of love (love received, 'love' imposed), I see the reflection of my own barrenness, my own aphasia"⁽¹³⁾. In telling their stories, Djebbar and the women revolutionaries she rewrites reclaim not only their individual and collective voices, but their selves as well.

Born on June 30, 1936 as Fatima-Zohra Imalayen in Cherchell, a small coastal town near Algiers. Assia Djebbar grew up in a chapter of Algerian colonial history marked by social and political tensions, which ultimately led to the war of independence in 1954. Her experience of living in a divided world, in between-languages, became the inspiration for her literary works and even films. Djebbar published her first novel *La Soif* in 1957 whilst living in Paris. It was followed up by several other novels, before taking the decision in the late 1960s to stop writing fiction and committing herself to the cinema in order to reach a popular audience⁽¹⁴⁾. During this 'silent decade', in which Djebbar did not write, she collected oral testimonies of Algerian women while travelling through the country. These testimonies would become material not only for her film projects but for her later literary works as well. About her return to writing, she says: "I was in charge again. This time I positioned myself neither as an outside observer, nor as an Algerian woman, nor as a colonized being. I defined myself as a gaze, a way of looking upon my very own space"⁽¹⁵⁾.

In fact, in *Fantasia*, Djebbar intertwines the history of her native Algeria with episodes from the life of a young girl in a story stretching from the beginning of the French conquest to the War of Liberation. Growing up in the old coastal town of Cherchell, the girl sees her life in contrast to that of a neighbouring French family and yearns for more than what law and social tradition allow her to experience. Yet, the girl is determined; she escapes from the cloistered life of her family to join her brother in the fight against French domination. Djebbar's exceptional descriptive power brings to life the experiences of girls and women caught up in the dual struggle for independence, that is to say their own independence and that of Algeria. Within that perspective, the author unites, in her narrative, the discourses of history, pain and the female body. Those females' bodies, "unseen" by both the French and the Algerian, are inscribed into the historic process through pain. The experience unacknowledged before is expressed through details of violence and cruelty that Algerian women endured during colonialism, contrary to the discourse of postcolonial nationalism assigned to women the roles of chaste patriotic icons. The female body then is a site of colonial violence, as well as a site of resistance to patriarchal values.

In the accounts of the French observers, Algerian women appear not only objectified but mutilated and fragmented in a quite literal way. They are shown being chopped to pieces by French bayonets or and stripped of their jewellery. Like the instance of the Algerian woman who has cut out the heart of an invading soldier, Djebbar as narrator is capable to reverse the situation at her advantage and constructed a narrative where the texts of the colonizers themselves appear only in fragmented citations, interwoven with her own words. The image of the dismembered hand by the novel's close epitomises the connection between body and voice, subjectivity and embodied experience: "Later, I seize this living hand, hand of mutilation and of memory, and I attempt to bring it the qalam"⁽¹⁶⁾. Djebbar's own escape from cloistering and her access to academia and writing suggests that the female body is a locus of potential power, rebellion and knowledge that threatens the status quo of male privilege:

"The fourth language, for all females, young or old, cloistered or half-emancipated, remains that of the body: The body which male neighbours' and cousins' eyes require to be

deaf and blind, since they cannot completely incarcerate it, the body which, in trances, dances, or vociferations, in fits of hope and despair, rebels, and unable to read or write, seeks some unknown shore as destination for its message of love"⁽¹⁷⁾.

Consequently, in *Fantasia* the text itself creates a possibility of dialogue absent from the historical record.

By her oppositional narrative to both colonial and patriarchal discourses, Djébar searches for empowering positions for her marginalised characters. *Fantasia*, hence, addresses the issue of violence done to the woman's body and the experience of Algerian women unacknowledged before is expressed through details of violence and other types of oppression that the colonized women had endured. Therefore, in *Fantasia*, Djébar re(writes) her national history through de(construction) of women's corporality. Women's body were the very means through which the author speaks and re(constructs) her history. She reclaims women's history and gives voice to the dissident war narratives. *Fantasia* is transformed into a site where Djébar reveals colonial violence done to women, as well as it offers a site of resistance to patriarchal subjugation. Though, the re-writing of history is a common step in the project of nationalism, most often the revised history of a colonized nation continues to be a male-centred history. By her re-writing process, Djébar moves women from the margin to the front of her recreated history. Women recover their historic roles as revolutionaries and make the case that they deserve status as full citizens in the new nation they have helped to build. Djébar's project seeks to "resurrect" so many vanished women, to restore them to their due place within the new nation, to allow their voices to speak and be heard as full participants in the project of decolonization and nation-building.

Djébar points up the way in which the European accounts reduce the Algerians and more precisely, women, to objects of a dominant gaze. These accounts, of course, participate in what Edward Said has identified as Orientalist discourse. Yet, Djébar is also able to find in the accounts of this campaign an inscription of a resisting look. As the French soldiers surround a group of captured women, the sole survivors of their tribe, one of them unyieldingly returns the look of the observer, refusing the objectification contained in his gaze. Often, however, it is only in Djébar's own text that the reciprocity of the gaze is restored. The historical documents begin by describing the city of Algiers as it appears to the arriving French fleet, but Djébar herself must imagine the residents of the city who gather on the rooftops to return the look. Only in her text does the French army "regarde la ville qui regarde"⁽¹⁸⁾: this reciprocal gaze has never before been written.

Though heavily relying on historical facts, Djébar's writing in *Fantasia* is different from history writing. It is, essentially, a text where Djébar rediscovers the trajectory of her nation's history. Therefore, the author takes up the task to imagine what may happen besides the official narrative of Algerian history. This official narrative of history is male dominated. Postcolonial theorist Jane Hiddleston writes: "Djébar's work is experimental, many-layered, ambivalent and reflexive, and sets out to problematize the representation of postcolonial Algeria"⁽¹⁹⁾. *Fantasia* examined moments during which the colonizers were forced to confront the existence of female revolutionaries. By presenting colonial history in the form of letters, diaries and published accounts of French soldiers and officials, the author tears out all those collected documents letting place for the voices of women to bubble up to the surface and allowing her to record all those testimonies despite history's determination to erase their existence and contribution.

In *Fantasia*, Djébar reproduces the words of women freedom fighters themselves, translating them from Arabic to French. Recording then all those women's stories in sections of the novel entitled "Voices," Djébar blurs the divide between the spoken and the written word, fusing histories of the French invasion, the Algerian Independence war, as well as pieces of her own autobiography. Using such techniques Djébar's *Fantasia* complicates the notion of linear history, presenting an alternative view of the interdependence of the personal and the national, the past, the present and the future. The novel revises Algerian national

history and successfully decenters the colonizer's version of history and makes space for the participation of women in the struggle for national independence to emerge.

Nevertheless, having to use French as a language of expression is exactly what constitutes Djébar's agony that paradoxically gives rise to a rich text's poetic. Consequently, Gayatri Spivak notes the author's 'Staging' of 'herself as an Algerian Muslim woman', we see precisely this *resilience* to use the "French" language as it is rhetorically inscribed in Djébar's metaphor of 'Identity as wound':

The overlay of oral culture wearing dangerously thin... writing of the most anodyne of my childhood memories leads back to a body bereft of voice. To attempt an autobiography in French words alone is to show more than its skin under the slow scalpel of a live autopsy. Its flesh peels off and with it, seemingly, the speaking of childhood which can no longer be written is torn to shreds. Wounds are reopened, veins weep, the blood of the self flows and that of others, a blood which has never dried⁽²⁰⁾.

Referring to the so-called "wounds" through the use of a hegemonic language, Djébar enters, as expressed by Spivak into a 'double-binding' practice of writing'. As it could be part of Djébar's self-conscious manoeuvre of an assumed cultural and linguistic hybridity that prohibits precisely a strict definition of either "Algerian" or "French".

Thus, the ambiguity of Djébar's relationship with the French language is emphasized. *Fantasia*, recalls that Djébar's "bilingual, bicultural, indeed an ambiguous journey that freed her from the female enclosure sent her into a form of exile away from the majority of her sisters"⁽²¹⁾. Even the narrator in *Fantasia* is unable to decide whether her father offers her a loving gift or an inexorable condemnation since "The language of the Other [French] [was but] at once a gift and a burden ... It is both a source of liberation ... and alienation"⁽²²⁾. *Fantasia* even evokes that she feels that she herself is a "gift" offered by her father to the enemy: "deliver[ed] [her] ... to the enemy camp"⁽²³⁾. Consequently, it remains "the enemy's language"⁽²⁴⁾. Therefore, Spivak argues that the narrator positions herself rather in a 'divided field of identity', of a feminist-in-decolonization. Consequently, Assia Djébar's text exists in a space "between discourses," confirming incontestably that "Postcolonial autobiography can accept the tension between the two cultures, and this is the only way not to lose any of them"⁽²⁵⁾. It is the only way for Djébar to "speak the unspeakable," and to articulate women's voices and experiences.

For her, the colonial history has to be integrated into people's consciousness, and the French language, the language of the colonizer, has a potential to capture and to preserve it. One can say that the language strategy chosen by Assia Djébar, a woman novelist of Berber origin, whose Arabic name signifies healing and who writes in French, contributes to the practice of decolonizing the consciousness of both the former colonized and colonizers. Decolonization, this "profound transformation of self...[and] community"⁽²⁶⁾, defines the "centrality of self-reflective collective practice in the transformation of self, reconceptualization of identity, and political mobilization as necessary elements of [its] practice ...History, memory, emotion, and affectional ties are significant cognitive elements of the construction of critical, self-reflective, feminist selves..."⁽²⁷⁾. Djébar seeks to exist in the space of "extra-territorial and cross-cultural initiations"⁽²⁸⁾, and thus to come to terms with the colonial past and to incorporate the colonial trauma into consciousness.

Fantasia captures many women's voices intertwined with that of the narrator. Djébar emphasizes that this plurality of voices gave her the opportunity to speak (about her) intimately⁽²⁹⁾. As Katherine Gracki contends in her article "Writing Violence and the Violence of Writing in Assia Djébar's Algerian Quartet," in her *Fantasia, an Algerian Cavalcade* Djébar is "rewriting history from a feminist stance... so that collective oral history transmitted by women may also be inscribed into the fabric of Algeria's past"⁽³⁰⁾. Although, the self-reconstruction is a psychologically burdening process. The enclosure of the traumatic subtexts sets Djébar's contemporary preoccupations, informs the notion of selfhood and attest to the reproduction of past violence in the present. The process of self re-construction

generates defamiliarization in the perception of the self through rewriting history and reconstructing the self beyond the traumatic experience. Djébar's text succeeded in the instauration of communal healing by subverting trauma and transforming women into agents of change.

Djébar's novel reconstructs Algerian history and engages with trauma of being a colonial subject who is dispossessed of land, culture, and past. Decolonization, this disengagement from the colonial trauma, involves a deep transformation of self and coming to terms with individual and collective pain. Several examples of female voices are reported and with them stories of courage, heroism and patriotism: the story of Cherifa, the girl of thirteen who joined the maquisards, was caught and tortured in prison; that of the widow who succumbed to sexual abuses while her husband was fighting in the mountain, to mention but few examples. An understanding of trauma and healing through testimony reveals Djébar's own ambition to create a community of testimony amongst Algerian woman, both for individual healing and for a collective restoration to Algerian history. The female stories, then blended, shape a women's collective narrative, forming an amalgam of voices and experiences. Each individual memory presents a woman in a state of fulfilment, as aggressive, fearless, actively engaged with resistance.

Conclusion

It follows from the above discussion that Djébar's *Fantasia* is involved principally in the deconstruction and reconstruction of the image of the female self. This redefinition of female selfhood is undertaken from a postcolonial perspective in the sense that female emancipation is looked as part and parcel of gender decolonization following up the classic decolonization period during which women's struggle in Algeria was principally geared toward the realization of political independence. This second moment of decolonization for women, as it is portrayed in *Fantasia*, is marked by an emphasis on the place of women in the history of the new political kingdom. With an unheard voice and an invisible history, women have traditionally been constructed as subjects that exist outside of history. Just as colonial history written by the colonizers never acknowledged the colonized, women's history has similarly remained invisible because of its deliberate occultation by the neo-patriarchal regime that came to power at independence in 1962. Assia Djébar succeeded in transforming the silence into language and action, de-constructing the issue of gender discriminating binaries. In her narrative, which is full of multiple, fragmented voices, the writer de-constructs the Orientalist images of women as passive, exotic, sexualized Others. Finally, the double-accented discourse of Djébar's fiction participates in a process of healing the wounds of the traumatic colonial experience by re/membering that is fixing a dismembered social body from which women as historical agents are excluded by official history.

References and endnotes:

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- 7- Ibid, 198.
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- 9- Ibid, 199.
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- 12- Smith, Sidone. *Subjectivity, Identity, and the Body: Women's Autobiographical Practices in the Twentieth Century*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1993, 22-23.

- 13- Djebbar, Assia. *Fantasia, an Algerian Cavalcade*. Trans. Dorothy S. Blair. Portsmouth: Heinemann, 1993, 202.
- 14- With her film *La Nouba des femmes du Mont Chenoua* (The Nouba or 'ritual' festival of the Women of Mt. Chenoua) she won the Biennale prize at the 1979 Venice Film Festival.
- 15- Zimra, Clarisse. Afterword. *Women of Algiers in Their Apartment*. By Assia Djebbar. Charlottesville: Virginia UP, 1992, 173.
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- 17- Ibid, 180.
- 18- Ibid, 15.
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- 20- Djebbar, 156, 178.
- 21- Mortimer, quoted in Gale, Rubin. "The Traffic in Women: Notes on the "Political Economy" of Sex." Special Topics: Queer Theory and LGBT Lives. Course Packet for Queer Theory. Prof. Sara Crawley, 527.
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- 23- Djebbar, 213.
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