

**Deterritorializing the colonial discourse in british india and french algeria: r. k. narayan's *swami and friends* (1935) and mouloud feraoun's *le fils du pauvre* (1952)**

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**Abstract**

*This article reexamines two early examples of postcolonial literature from India and Algeria, namely, R. K. Narayan's *Swami and Friends* (1935) and Mouloud Feraoun's *Le fils du pauvre* (1952) in the light of Gilles Deleuze's and Felix Guattari's work on minor literature. Narayan's and Feraoun's novels which count among the founding works of Indian literature written in English, and Algerian literature written in French, respectively, have been regarded by most critics as simple, benign, documentary or ethnographic in their intent. Relying on Deleuze's and Guattari's theory of minor literature and their concept of deterritorialization, the paper aims at showing that the two works, far from being the simple ethnographic novels they are often reduced to, are in fact politically committed.*

**Keywords:** Minor literature, Deleuze and Guattari, Feraoun, *Le fils du pauvre*, Narayan, *Swami and Friends*, deterritorialization, ethnographic novel

## ملخص

يقترح هذا المقال إعادة النظر في روايتين تعد من بين الأوائل في أدب ما بعد الاستعمار في كلا من الهند والجزائر، هما سوامي و اصدقائه (1935) للراوئي الهندي ر. ك. نارايك و ابن الفقير (1952) للراوي الجزائري مولود فرعون و ذلك في ضوء عمل جيل دولوز وفيليكس قاطاري على الأدب القاصر (Minor Literature). لقد اعتبرت هاتان الروايتان الرائدتان عمليين ساذجين بسيطين من طرف معظم النقاد في الأدب الهندي المكتوب بالإنجليزية و الأدب الجزائري المكتوب بالفرنسية و يغلب عليهما الطابع وثائقي أو إثنوغرافي . إستنادا على نظرية "الأدب القاصر" لدولوز و قاطاري ومصطلحاهما «تفكيك الإقليم» (Deterritorialization)، يحاول هذا المقال أن يظهر أن هاتين الروايتين ليست مجرد أعمال إثنوغرافية كما إعتبرها البعض، بل أعمال ملتزمة سياسيا.

## Résumé

*Cet article réexamine deux des premiers exemples des littératures postcoloniales d'Inde et d'Algérie, à savoir Swami and Friends (1935) de R. K. Narayan et Le fils du pauvre (1952) de Mouloud Feraoun, à la lumière des travaux de Gilles Deleuze et Felix Guattari sur la littérature mineure. Les romans de Narayan et de Feraoun qui tous deux comptent parmi les œuvres fondatrices de la littérature indienne écrite en anglais et littérature algérienne écrite en français respectivement, ont été vus par les critiques comme des œuvres naïves, bénignes, documentaires ou ethnographiques. S'appuyant sur la théorie de littérature mineure de Deleuze et Guattari et sur leur concept de déterritorialisation, cet article vise à montrer que loin d'être les simples romans ethnographiques auxquels ils ont été réduits, les deux œuvres sont en réalité politiquement engagées.*

**Mots clés:** littérature mineure, Deleuze et Guattari, Feraoun, Le fils du pauvre, Narayan, Swami and Friends, déterritorialisation, roman ethnographique

"A man lives not only his personal life, as an individual, but also, consciously or unconsciously, the life of his epoch and his contemporaries." Thomas Mann, *The Magic Mountain*.

This paper examines two early instances of the counter-discourse developed by the colonized in British India and French Algeria: Rasipuram Krishnaswami Narayan's *Swami and Friends* (1935) and Mouloud Feraoun's *Le Fils du pauvre* (1952) in the light of Deleuze's and Guattari's theory of minor literature. It aims at showing that both works are precursors in the process of deterritorialization of the colonizer's discourse about India and Algeria respectively, and as such, are necessarily politically committed in spite of affirmations to the contrary. The two novels and the contexts in which they appeared bear indeed many similarities notwithstanding the difference in the nature of the domination imposed on the two nations (indirect rule in India and direct rule in Algeria), and in the trajectory of the nationalist movements in the two countries.

*Swami and Friends* is the first novel written by R.K. Narayan, who forms with Mulk Raj Anand and Raja Rao "The Big Three" as William Walsh termed the three pioneers of Indian literature written in English. It is the first of a trilogy comprising also *The Bachelor of Arts* and *The English Teacher* describing the three stages of life- childhood, adolescence and adulthood. Largely autobiographical, the novel, set in the pre-independence era, tells in an episodic form the adventures of a ten-year-old boy, Swaminathan, living in Malgudi, a fictional village imagined by the author. Similarly, Mouloud Feraoun's *Le Fils du pauvre*, composed between 1939 and 1948, and first published in 1952 is considered as the founding text of Algerian literature written in French. Mostly autobiographical, it tells the story of a Kabyle child, Fouroulou, in a fictional village of Kabylia in colonial Algeria. It is Feraoun's first novel and also a first of a series of works by native Algerian authors that will be labelled "ethnographic" novels. Among these series we can mention Feraoun's *La Terre et le sang* (1953), *Les Chemins qui*

*montent* (1957); Mouloud Mammeri's *La Colline oubliée* (1952), *Le Sommeil du juste* (1955) and *l'Opium et le bâton* (1965); and Mohammed Dib's *La Grande maison* (1952), *L'Incendie* (1954) and *Le Métier à tisser* (1957).

#### **CRITICAL RECEPTION OF SWAMI AND FRIENDS AND LE FILS DU PAUVRE**

Narayan's work was well received by his contemporary Western writers. Graham Green was his mentor, and instrumental in finding publishers for him in England. E. M. Forster and Somerset Maugham were other admirers of his work. In the United States, he was praised by John Updike who compared him to Charles Dickens. This comparison is extended to include Forster and Jane Austen. William Walsh lists him among the "Big Three" Indian writers, with Mulk Raj Anand, and Raja Rao, who set the foundations of Indian literature in English, and defined the area in which the Indian novel was to operate:

*It is these three writers who defined the area in which the Indian novel was to operate. They established its assumptions; they sketched its main themes, freed the first models of its characters and elaborated its particular logic. Each of them used an easy, natural idiom which was unaffected by the opacity of a British inheritance. Their language has been freed of the foggy taste of Britain and transferred to a wholly new setting of brutal heat and brilliant light (Walsh, 1990: 27).*

But for him, "*If Anand is the novelist as reformer, Raja Rao the novelist as metaphysical poet, Narayan is simply the novelist as novelist.*" (Walsh, 1982: 6) Harsher criticism came rather from his fellow Indian critics who at best considered his writings as pedestrian and benign and at worst as having not involved himself with politics and Indian problems. Srinivasa Iyengar, author of *Indian Writing in English*, asserts that Narayan wrote about political topics only in the context of his subjects, quite unlike his compatriot Mulk Raj Anand who dealt with the political structures and problems of the time.

It is only recently that some critics have begun to reassess Narayan's work and specifically *Swami and Friends*. Paul Brians, the author of *Modern South Asian Literature in English* (2003), sees the fact that Narayan did not write on British rule as a political statement on its own, declaring his independence from the influence of colonialism. Momin Uddin, in an article titled "R. K. Narayan's Political Attitude in *Swami and Friends*: A Postcolonial Critique", considers that Narayan's showing in the novel of the incorporation of some aspects of the colonizer's culture into the lives of the natives is not a rejection of the nationalist movement, or a way of displaying acceptance of the colonial power, but an objective way of showing how the native culture had inevitably absorbed certain facets of the English because of their long presence in the country.

The reception of *Le fils du pauvre* was more mitigated. Although French critics gave it generous praise describing it, in a rather paternalistic way, as "a beautiful novel", "touching" and "simple", it went almost unnoticed in Algeria. It is only after the publication of Mammeri's *La Colline oubliée* and Dib's *La Grande maison* in 1952 that it attracted the interest of Algerian critics. While Dib's *La Grande maison* was hailed as a clear denunciation of the French colonialism, *La Colline oubliée* and *Le Fils du pauvre* were almost unanimously condemned as folkloric, regionalist, and thus playing into the hands of the enemy (Aoudjit: 2010). This etiquette had followed it for decades. The novel has, however, been the object of several attempts to a reappraisal during these recent years.

In an article titled "Présence de Feraoun", Tahar Djaout, dismissing the label of regionalism attached to the author, writes: "*The relation of Jean Giono to the Haute Provence, that of William Faulkner to Mississippi, of James Joyce to Dublin or of John Steinbeck to Salinas does not make of them regionalist writers.*" (Djaout, 1992)

For Mohamed Lakhdar Maougal (Maougal: 2006), Feraoun was the victim of a double murder: first of a physical one orchestrated

by the OAS<sup>1</sup> and then of an intellectual one by the academy. For him, the fierce determination of a population viscerally attached to the ancestral home brings a stinging denial to the assertions and conclusions of Camus on the resignation of Kabyle to massively immigrate to the centre of France in his newspaper report “Misère de la Kabylie” published in *Alger Républicain* in June 1939.

Maria Adelaida Porras Medrano in a recent paper titled “Le roman ethnographique maghrébin : *Le fils du pauvre* de Mouloud Feraoun” (The Maghrebine Ethnographic Novel : Mouloud Feraoun’s *Le fils du pauvre*), considers the appellation “ethnographic”, although she does not discard it all at once, as an attempt to reduce the scope of the works it is applied to. For her, these works, including Feraoun’s, proceed from a conscious effort to reject the image of North African societies offered by the French colonist and travel writers. She sees the work as reflecting the anguish of a backward community torn between local traditions no longer adequate, and progress represented by education.

Farida Boualit argues in a paper titled “L’écriture de l’insinuation et du trompe-l’œil de Feraoun” that the author had been mostly misunderstood and that he “is trying to challenge the colonial model in his own way by insinuating himself into the French cultural system to inscribe the saying of the Other”.

#### **ETHNOGRAPHIC NOVELS OR POLITICALLY COMMITTED WORKS**

Although the two works as we have seen bear more than one similarity in terms of the context in which they appeared, their ‘local colour’, their critical reception, they have to date never been drawn together or compared. This, in our opinion, is largely due to the unavailability of translated editions of the two novels. For while *Swami and Friends* was available in French since 1983; *Le fils du pauvre* was not translated into English until

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<sup>1</sup>Organisation Armée Secrète: an armed secret organization set by those French opposed to the independence of Algeria.

2010. Based on a re-reading of the two works from a Deleuzian-Guattarian perspective, our premise in the following is that the indictment the two works were subject to, namely their regionalism and their lack of political commitment is largely undeserved.

For Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, a minor literature "*doesn't come from a minor language; it is rather that which a minority constructs within a major language.*" (Deleuze and Guattari: 1975, 16) This definition can be applied to both the Indian literature written in English in British India and the Algerian literature written in French in French Algeria.

Throughout this paper we will try to show that as representatives of minor literatures, the two works are necessarily politically committed. Deleuze and Guattari's definition of minor literature and their concept of deterritorialization offer here indeed interesting theoretical tools for a critical reinterpretation that espouses the recent reassessment of the work of the two authors but in the same time goes beyond the passionate debate about their commitment (or not) to national politics which is more often than not entrapped in the subjectivity of the participants.

#### OF MINOR LITERATURE AND DETERRITORIALIZATION

In "What is a Minor Literature", the third chapter in *Kafka: Towards a Minor Literature* (1975), Deleuze and Guattari, start by giving a definition of a minor literature that clearly disambiguate between a literature produced by a minority in a major language, which sense they adopt, and a literature written in a minor language, as it is sometimes understood. They then go on to list its characteristics. Minor literature has, according to them, three characteristics:

1. In it, language is effected with a high coefficient of deterritorialization;
2. Everything in it is political. Its cramped space forces each individual intrigue to connect immediately to politics. The individual concern thus becomes all the more necessary,

indispensable, magnified because a whole other story is vibrating in it.

3. Everything in it takes on a collective value. Indeed, because talent is not abundant in a minor literature, there are no possibilities for an individuated enunciation that will belong to this or that “master” and that could be separated from a collective enunciation: “what each author says individually already constitutes a common action and what he or she says or does is necessarily political, even if others aren’t in agreement” (ibid, 17)

The concept of deterritorialization (along with territorialization and reterritorialization) is not easy to define since Deleuze and Guattari do not give at once one definite definition of it. It was developed in the two volumes of *Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, first in *Anti-Oedipus* [1972], and then in *A Thousand Plateaus* [1980], in addition to its use in *Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature* and a number of other essays and individual works. With this concept, the two authors revise the traditional view of territories as fixed entities. For them, a territory, which can be a system of any kind, geographic, linguistic, political, conceptual, social or affective, is continuously changing because of the “vectors of deterritorializations” that inhabit it. This change takes place through a process of deterritorialization and reterritorialization. Through this process, an existing territory (the configuration of various interrelated “assemblages” of objects, enunciations, and affects, corresponding to given historical conditions) is dismantled; or rather departed from, through “lines of flight” that escape from it (deterritorialization) to form a new configuration of assemblages which is then stabilized (reterritorialization) before a new deterritorialization takes place. Paul Patton, in his *Deleuzian Concepts: Philosophy, Colonization, Politics*, offers a handy definition of the concept:

*deterritorialization is defined as the complex movement or process by which something escapes or departs from a given territory (634,509), where a territory can be a system of any kind, conceptual, linguistic, social or*

*affective. On their account, such systems are always inhabited by "vectors of deterritorializations" and deterritorialization is always "inseparable from correlative reterritorializations" (MP 635, 509)<sup>1</sup>. Reterritorialization does not mean returning to the original territory but rather refers to the ways in which deterritorialized elements recombine and enter into new relations in the constitution of a new assemblage or the modification of the old (Patton, 2010:52)*

The concept has been since adopted by many authors in many disciplines with meanings that do not always converge. We will stick here to the sense in which Deleuze and Guattari used in *Kafka: Toward a Minor Literature*, which is the territory as cultural space. Territorialization, deterritorialization and reterritorialization are then hereafter meant as the creation and perpetuation of a cultural space, the dissolution of that space and its recreation.

#### **A WRITING THAT DETERRITORIALIZES**

For Deleuze and Guattari, the first characteristic of a minor literature is a language affected by a high coefficient of deterritorialization in the sense that the dominant language in which it is written is deterritorialized with the incorporation of elements from the minor language/culture the author belongs to. This indeed is the case in both R. K. Narayan's *Swami and Friends* (1935) and Mouloud Feraoun's *Le Fils du pauvre* (1952) whose mother tongues are not those in which they write, and whose native cultures are not those of the respective colonizers. The two authors are engaged in the process of dismantling the cultural space imposed upon them and their countrymen by the colonizer. By the mere fact of adopting/adapting or appropriating the colonizer's language to write about indigenous subjects, and from the latter's point of view, they are displacing the boundaries of that very cultural space. Deleuze and Guattari illustrate this

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<sup>1</sup>MP for *Mille Plateaux*. The two numbers are the page numbers in the French original and the English translation.

process with the example of the young Jews of Prague writing in German, mentioned by Kafka in a letter he sent to his editor:

*Most young Jews who began to write German wanted to leave Jewishness behind them, and their fathers approved of this, but vaguely (this vagueness was what was outrageous to them). But with their posterior legs they were still glued to their father's Jewishness and with their waving anterior legs they found no new ground. The ensuing despair became their inspiration. An inspiration as honorable as any other, but on closer examination showing certain sad peculiarities. First of all, the product of their despair could not be German literature, though outwardly it seemed to be so. They existed among three impossibilities, which I just happen to call linguistic impossibilities... these are: the impossibility of not writing, the impossibility of writing German, the impossibility of writing differently. [Emphasis mine] (Deleuze, Guattari, and Brinkley, 1983:28)*

They explain the impossibility of not writing with the fact that national consciousness passes necessarily through literature, the impossibility of writing other than in German with the distance separating Prague's Jews from their primitive Czech territoriality, and the impossibility of writing in German with the deterritorialization of the German population in Prague which constitutes “an oppressive minority that speaks a language cut off from the masses, a “language of paper” or artifice, and so much the more so for Jews who are at once a part of this minority and excluded from it” (Deleuze, Guattari, and Brinkley, 1983:16-17)

These words perfectly apply to R. K. Narayan and Mouloud Feraoun were we to replace Jews by Indians/Algerians, German by English/French and Jewishness by Indianness/Algerianness Like these young Jewish writers writing in German, in the early twentieth-century Prague, Narayan and Feraoun faced the same three impossibilities. Narayan and Feraoun who both count among the first generations of literate natives could not avoid writing since literature is the only means

through which they could reach their countrymen and participate in the (re/formation of national consciousness. They could not write other than in the colonizer's language because it has become the only language through which they could reach their countrymen. The third impossibility confronting them is writing in the colonizer's language which was the language of the British and French minorities respectively of which they were part of, at least linguistically, and excluded from at the same time.

Writing from this uncomfortable liminal position, Narayan and Feraoun could not produce completely British or French literatures, though outwardly they seemed to be so. *Swami and Friends*, though written in English is deeply Indian in setting, theme, and perspective. So is *Le Fils du pauvre*, in which everything, except language, is Algerian.

What the two authors are involved in through their writing is a process of dismantling of the boundaries, or rather dissolution, of the cultural spaces, created by the colonizers in order to recreate them anew, on different terms. The two authors appropriate the language and culture of the colonizer in order to instill in them indigenous elements, and by so doing redefine the boundaries of those imposed cultural spaces. The language and culture of the colonizer become then the Trojan Horse that allows admittance in that territory without which no deterritorialization, nor reterritorialization is possible.

#### **A WRITING POLITICALLY CHARGED**

It has become a commonplace to say that the two works are autobiographical, and as such, seem far from being concerned with the plight of colonialism and the fate of their nations. Yet we cannot separate the lot of the two protagonists Swaminathan and Fouroulou from that of their respective nations. In Feraoun's *Le Fils du pauvre*, Fouroulou often forgets being only Fouroulou to adopt the attitude of a spokesman for a whole community. For example at the end of chapter 5, where he narrates the fight that opposed his and another family from the village, a fight he is largely responsible for, Fouroulou concludes his account with a statement about the settlement of conflicts in Kabylia without

resorting to the colonial administration. This defiance of the colonial justice is not Fouroulou's but that of the whole community to which he belongs:

*Il est inutile d'aller à la justice française qui compliquerait tout. Mais comme il y a eu du sang versé, le Caïd voudra savoir ce qui s'est passé. L'amin se charge de le calmer moyennant cent francs qu'il donnera de sa poche jusqu'à ce que nous le remboursions les Ait Amer et nous.(1952:56)*

*Needless go to the French courts which will only worsen the situation. However, since blood has been shed, the caid would want to know what happened. The Amin will quiet him with a hundred franks that he will pay from his pocket until we and the Ait Amer pay him back.(trans. ours)*

This defiance does not concern solely the justice of the colonizer but its religion as well. This is illustrated by Fouroulou's and the villagers' attitude towards the Christian faith. Although Fouroulou owes much to, and depends on, "la Mission Lambert", the protestant mission, without whose charity he would have been unable to attend junior high school, he is at no moment lured by the Christian faith. He and his friend Azir attend regularly the catechism of Mr. Lambert as an obligation that must be fulfilled, but they never ask questions that would have shown an interest in the new faith. (ibid.p.179)

This invisible line, separating the colonized (us) from the colonizer (THEM), runs throughout the whole novel. For example when Fouroulou's mother tells his father to wait one more day before sending him to school, Ramdane, his father retorts: "*-Tomorrow, all the places will be taken. Moreover, better not start school with absences. They say the 'roumis (French) are severe and he's our only boy...*"

The same thing can be said of Swaminathan in R. K. Narayan's *Swami and Friends*. He is so rooted in his native culture that he is unable to bear hearing Hinduism denigrated in class by the fanatic teacher of scriptures without reaction.

Retorting to the teacher he says: 'If [Jesus] was a God, why did he eat flesh and fish and drink wine?' because it was inconceivable to him that a God should be a non-vegetarian. Not satisfied with his reaction, he goes the next morning to school with a letter to the Head Master by his father complaining about the "unchristian" attitude of the teacher and threatening to withdraw the boy from that school. (Narayan, 1935: 5)

The concern with the nationalist question is more overtly stated in chapter 12 'Broken Panes' where a man addressing a gathering of about 2,000 people, among which is Swami, says:

*'Just think for a while. We are three hundred and thirty-six millions, and our land is as big as Europe minus Russia, England is no bigger than our Madras Presidency and is inhabited by a handful of white rogues and is thousands of miles away. Yet we bow in homage before the Englishmen!*

*Why are we become, though no fault of our own, docile and timid? It is the bureaucracy that has made us so by intimidation and starvation. You need not do more. Let every Indian spit on England, and the quantity of saliva will be enough to drown England...' (ibid. p. 95)*

Swami is so moved by the speech that he cannot refrain from shouting 'Gandhi ki Jai!' (Victory to Gandhi!). He and Mani spend the rest of the evening seized by the nationalist fever:

*For the rest of the evening Swaminathan was caught in the lecturer's eloquence; so was Mani. With the lecturer they wept over the plight of the Indian peasant; resolved to boycott English goods, especially Lancashire and Manchester cloth, as the owners of those mills had cut off the thumbs of the weavers of Dacca muslin, for which India was famous at one time. (Ibid.p.96)*

Of course, the reader cannot but smile at the boy's enthusiasm for the idea of 'Spitting and drowning the Europeans', but the agenda of the nationalist agitator's speech that fascinates the assistance is exactly the agenda on the Indian political scene of the 1930s.

### A WRITING INHABITED BY THE COMMUNITY

When *Le Fils du pauvre* was published in 1952, indigenous voices were yet inexistent. Therefore, what Feraoun writes about in individual terms cannot be separated from a collective enunciation. The “I” of the conventional autobiography becomes the “we” of a collective autobiography. It already constitutes a common action even if others do not agree, to paraphrase Deleuze and Guattari. Moreover, not only does the novel swarm with examples where the “I” takes a collective value, but the collective “we” more than once burst to the surface. It is the case in the beginning of chapter 2 which may well have been meant as a native’s response to Albert Camus’s “Misère de la Kabylie” as suggested by Maougal:

*Nous kabyles, nous comprenons qu'on loue notre pays. Nous aimons même qu'on nous cache sa vulgarité sous des qualificatifs flatteurs. Cependant nous imaginons très bien l'impression insignifiante que laisse sur le visiteur le plus complaisant la vue de nos pauvres villages. (Feraoun, 1952: 13).*

*We, Kabyles, understand that we praise our country. We even like when one hides its vulgarity under flattering adjectives. Yet, we imagine very well the insignificant impression that the sight of our poor villages leaves on the most obliging visitor. (Trans. ours)*

In chapter 4, describing the return of his father from France after his accident in the foundry where he was working, Fouroulou again lends his voice to his community:

*Les médecins lui avaient conseillé un an d'inactivité absolue avec une nourriture saine et abondante. Ils ignoraient, sans doute, qu'un Kabyle a la peau dure et ne se conforme à leurs prescriptions que lorsqu'il n'a plus la force de leur désobéir (Feraoun, 1952: 163).*

*The doctors have advised him to take one year of absolute rest with a healthy and abundant food. They were certainly ignoring that a Kabyle is thick-skinned and conforms to their prescriptions only when he no longer has the force to disobey them. [Trans. ours]*

In the above examples, Fouroulou clearly endorses the position of a spokesperson for his community, the Kabyles and, by extension, of all the Algerians.

The same thing can be said of *Swami and Friends*. As autobiographical as it might be, it takes a collective value by the sheer fact of being one of the first Indian novels written in English. In R. K. Narayan's work, it is the third person singular "He/Swaminathan" that takes a collective value and like in Feraoun's *The Poor Man's Son*, the collective "we" often emerges to the surface unveiled to make a collective, inclusive enunciation as shown in the following passage:

*Rajam sat down on the door-step and asked, 'And who is this Akbar Ali?'*

*'He is a nice Mohammedan, belongs to our class.'*

*'In the Board High School?' There was just a suspicion of a sneer in his tone. Swaminathan preferred to ignore this question and continued, 'He has a bicycle. He is a very fine Mohammedan, calls Mohammed of Gazni and Aurangazeb rascals.'*

*'What makes you think that they were that?'*

*'Didn't they destroy our [emphasis. ours] temples and torture the Hindus? Have you forgotten the Somnathpur God? . . .'*

*'We [emphasis. ours] brahmins deserve that and more,' said Rajam. 'In our house my father does not care for New-Moon days and there are no Annual Ceremonies for the dead.' He was in a debating mood, and Swaminathan realized it and remained silent. Rajam said, 'I tell you*

*what, it is your Board High School that has given you this mentality.'* (Narayan, 1935:110)

Swaminathan's and Rajam's nationalist commitments are not the same. As the quote above illustrates Swaminathan protests when the scripture teacher downgrades Hinduism, takes part in the strike and the demonstration that ensued, before finally dropping out when the headmaster punishes him. By contrast, Rajam as the son of a policeman refuses to partake in any of these activities. However, the collective inclusive voice indicated the first plural "we" in the above mentioned passage refers not only for the two characters but for all the Indians.

This finds an explanation in the context the two works were produced in, a context where collective consciousness is either inactive or in the process of breakdown. In such a situation, according to Deleuze and Guattari, "literature finds itself positively charged with the role and function of collective, and even revolutionary, enunciation" and to it falls the task of "produc[ing] an active solidarity in spite of skepticism" (Deleuze and Guattari, 1975:17).

It is precisely because the expectations of their countrymen were high that the two authors were subjects of attacks from some nationalists, as lacking commitment. Their respective peoples were silenced for so long a time by the colonizer that the first to have the opportunity to speak were expected to do so only through revolutionary enunciation and on behalf of the whole community.

In conclusion, it is doing justice to Feraoun and R. K. Narayan to say that *Le Fils du pauvre* and *Swami and Friends* are politically committed. As precursors of minor literatures born in similar colonial contexts, they could not but be committed. Interestingly enough, it is in the characteristics of minor literature that we can find an explanation to these accusations. In fact, because talent is rare in situations where a minor literature comes into existence, there cannot be an individuated enunciation that could be separated from a collective one. In short, an author of

minor literature cannot speak for himself. So, it is because expectations are so great that the community is so severe in its judgment of those who decide to write.

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