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Intersectional Algerian Women's Identities and The Embodiment of Violence in Assia Djebar's Fantasia, An Algerian Cavalcade and Fadhila Al-Farouk's Taa' El-Khajal

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Abstract

The turbulent history of Algeria, from colonial brutality to the eruption of The Black Decade, has witnessed the widespread of extreme violence against Algerian women which, in turn, contributed to Algerian women writers' exploration of such theme in their writings, namely; Assia Djebar in Fantasia, An Algerian Cavalcade (1993) and Fadhila Al-Farouk in Taa' El-Khajal (2003). This paper explores the embodied violence perpetuated against Algerian women during two distinct and devastating periods of Algerian history, colonial rule and the Black Decade, through a comparative lens by employing intersectional theory based upon postcolonial feminist views. This paper found that although there were clear differences in the delivery of certain notions from the authors, there appears to be a set of remarkable similarities between the circumstances and resulting consequences of what Algerian women were subjected to. This leads to the belief that unless women writers, such as Djebar and Al-Farouk, bravely report on such issues, violence will not be identified as a continuous assailant in intersectional Algerian women's lives.

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1. *Introduction*

Throughout Algerian history, women have moved from one war to another where they were, both, victims and freedom fighters, thus subject to various degrees of violence under different destructive power structures. Consequently, many Algerian women writers seek to record the persistent violence affecting postcolonial Algerian women at different points in history. This paper will focus specifically on Assia Djebar and Fadhila Al-Farouk who wrote *Fantasia, An Algerian Cavalcade(1993) and Taa' El Khajal(2003),* respectively.

As a renowned Algerian writer, Assia Djebar explores in *Fantasia, An Algerian Cavalcade* (1993), the first of a quartet, the history of Algerian women in a written form. Her stance leans towards criticism of patriarchal and colonial violence toward the land and its people. In this novel, Djebar sings along a cacophony of women's voices telling their pain, abuse, and erasure from history. The significance of such endeavors culminates in the rediscovery of the, otherwise, disembodied, confined and nameless voices of Algerian women.

Likewise, Fadhila Al-Farouk is another equally celebrated Algerian author. When pursuing writing, she chose to bring to light the violence that tormented Algerian women during the Algerian Civil War, or the Black Decade, creating a desensitized literature where their suffering is recognized. In her ingenious book *Taa' El Khajal* (2003), Al-Farouk uncovers the fictionalized stories of several Algerian women navigating postcolonial and civil war-ridden Algeria. She braves the silent history with an intention to unmask and criticize the infamous 1990s sexual violence against Algerian women.

Djebar and Al-Farouk approach their representations by looking at areas of discrimination and repression, regarding gender and context. Removing the context does not gravely alter the overall gendered experience; however, it does give an improved, substantial, and exhaustive perspective. In addition to that, a critical eye can locate several angles open for the exploration of a comprehensive critical analysis because "literature can provide a reliable window on the past. Used carefully… literature and the arts can bring fresh light to our perception of history" (Pasco, 2004, p. 374). To further elaborate, this paper is written under the framework of comparative literature and pushed forward under comparative analysis. Comparing, in this case, is performed also to explain the importance of recognizing several truths and discourses together with de-stigmatizing the notion of being a woman, historicized and violated. In this sense, Djebar and Al-Farouk's works call for a postcolonial feminist outlook to further understand their depiction of Algerian women's grievances. In a study that groups Djebar and Al-Farouk, Algerian women's oppression is traced affirming the continuity of abuse under different perpetrators, Algerian men and French soldiers in *Fantasia, An Algerian Cavalcade* and Algerian Islamist revolutionaries in *Taa' El-Khajal*.

Both novels treat two of the bloodiest periods of Algerian history. In 1830, France entered Algerian lands with the malicious intent of annexing the country and its riches and assimilating or rather erasing its people's identities. This action of colonialism was executed through force and bloodshed. Many lives were lost, exploited, or acculturated. After the commencement of liberating efforts in 1954 and the attainment of independence in 1962, peace proved to be, as of yet, inaccessible. Disorder and instability raked the country, and along with that, rebellions emerged following the military's acquisition of power. Once the country accumulated debt and religious fundamentalists were excluded from an opportunity to rule and reform, civil war, otherwise known as the Black Decade, arose between the Algerian government and several insurgent Islamist armed bands. Islamist fundamentalists allowed those with a desire for war and blind revolution to start committing atrocities turning the Algerian land as a result into an unrecorded massive cemetery. Writers such as Djebar and Al-Farouk comb through the blood-soaked history of Algeria to shed light on the harmful practices that afflicted Algerian women during these times.

In this paper, intersectional theory and its interest in dismantling homogeneity and violence against intersectional women is used to garner an encompassing understanding of the experiences of Algerian women in Djebar's and Al-Farouk's narratives.

2. Postcolonial Intersectional Algerian Women Literature

2.1 Postcolonial feminism

Postcolonial feminism opens previously locked spaces in feminist and postcolonial studies. Women emerge as subjects of their color, ethnicity, and history. Postcolonial feminism developed organically to blanket the representations and discriminations of women in a postcolonial space. It is about gendering the postcolonial and opening more spaces in feminist studies for postcolonial women subjects (women of color/ethnicized/third world women).

The history, experience, culture, and issues of other ethnic or racial groups are key factors in their identification. One soon realizes that a colonial/postcolonial subject is not only male, and a woman is not one encompassing singular representation for all women. A woman is her gender but she is also her ethnicity, class, culture, religion, oppressions, decisions…etc. leading to the belief that various forms of oppression and marginalization are addressed on a wider scale, which constructs a primary route for resolving and better understanding the systems behind it all. Mehta (2014) describes postcolonial feminism in an Algerian context as follows:

> The postcolonial feminist framework demonstrates how historical distortions and gendered seclusions have created ontological impasses in women's lives on the one hand, and provided the

> necessary impetus to confront interdictions and social taboos on the other. This discursive strategy disrupts patriarchal narrative dominance in Algeria and France by filling in the blank spaces – the fissures, erasures, and omissions that have obscured Algeria's feminine face through the violence of exclusion and patriarchal collusions (p. 28).

Mehta (2014) acknowledges the need for examining women through postcolonial feminism for the encompassing view it provides. She deliberates misrepresentations and gender restrictions and how they appear to create dead-ends in Algerian women's lives where identities become dimmed. She adds "Algerian authors dispel monolithic representations of women as passive victims of colonial history or nationalist and religious ideology" (p. 27) meaning that breaking free from these dead-ends is possible when writers push the limits and challenge vacant spaces beyond a gendered view.

In this case, Assia Djebar and Fadhila Al-Farouk write to recover the subjectivity of Algerian women's history by confronting white mainstream feminism for its exclusivity and failure to represent gender inclusivity (Crenshaw, 1989), and postcolonialism for the obscuring of the suffering of women (Mohanty, 1984) and the amnesiac treatment of their history (Donadey, 2008). In addition, women writers pursue national discourses to resist patriarchal thought, religious boxes of ideology, stereotyping, and classification in general, or as Mehta (2014) succinctly puts it, "these women decry the historical, national and religious mutilations that have scarred Algeria's landscape" (p. 28).

When women writers revisit history and discuss oppressed subjectivities, they tend to create a space in their texts where power is discussed in terms of creation, usurpation, limitation, and distribution. In a sense, those with power make or break the formulation of history and the representation of women in it, nonetheless, Newton (1989) expresses that "'history' is a tale of many voices and forms of power, of power exercised by the weak and the marginal as well as by the dominant and strong" (p. 152 qtd. in Goodwin, 1994, p. 250) which brings the discussion back to writers such as Djebar and Al-Farouk and their redistribution of power where women become "… more multifaceted, complex, or self-contradictory" (Goodwin, 1994, p. 249-50).

2.2 Post-Colonial Algerian Women Intersecting

Representation has always been a complicated process of designating who does what in which way? (Hall, 1997) Viewed this way, when representation is done accordingly, political and social patterns are to be changed for power to be delegated to women, only then emancipation could be attained. Be that as it may, The Algerian woman is a presence defined by her race, class, gender, religion, nationality…etc. which prompts feminist writers to attempt to create a space for her where they can better represent her. Moreover, Algerian women have been forgotten for a great portion of their history, revitalized only through the

writings of women who share their history in a solidarity act.

More often than not, post-colonial women are intersectional regarding their experiences in their respective spaces. Mohanty (1984) argued against generalizing women and reducing them to oppressions in a collective manner that, above all, disregards their respective historical and personal struggles. Intersectionality or intersectional analysis, coined by Kimberly Crenshaw in 1989, is an important part of Postcolonial feminists' campaigns. Women, in general, are found to be circling an area bordered by power assertion, consistency-craving identity politics, and sociopolitical realities guided by ideological assumptions. Black, postcolonial, and generally antiracist feminists view that the area defined above intersects or rather marbles different points to cultivate and nurture discriminations and oppressions that arrange and rearrange women of different ethnic backgrounds' lives. Crenshaw (1989; 1991) discusses in her different essays the oppression of and violence against black women. Crenshaw (1989) analogizes intersectionality to traffic lights by arguing:

> Discrimination, like traffic through an intersection, may flow in one direction, and it may flow in another. If an accident happens in an intersection, it can be caused by cars traveling from any number of directions and, sometimes, from all of them. Similarly, if a Black woman is harmed because she is in the intersection, her injury could result from sex discrimination or race discrimination (p. 149)

In other words, a black woman is oppressed because of her race, sex, and class, simultaneously and not one at a time.

Collins (2015) criticizes this theory claiming that it "constitutes starting points of investigations rather than endpoints of analysis" (p. 3); however, one must realize that this theory was fostered in a legal area and has traveled thus making it a traveling theory (Said, 1983 as cited in Collins, 2015, p.6) that might lose its origin form during its journey. Without a doubt, that is exactly the point; efforts were made in an attempt to adapt a theory outside its foster environment where it would thrive and prove to be applicable. Collins (2015), herself, reaches the same conclusion that intersectional analysis or thinking is necessary to debunk uniformity and diversity to those who decree it.

The usage of intersectional theory as an analytical lens in literature has been cautiously, if not evasively, employed. No direct application has been executed on a literary text, only alluded to as an addition against other matters of oppression. Hence, this is an attempt at appropriating what Crenshaw shared with the academic world concerning intersectionality and its relation with violence, as well as the other theorists that came after her such as Mohanty, Tejero … etc. In this case, such theory is to be combined with other theoretical frames such as Postcolonial Feminism for the sake of uprooting power systems and the violence they ensue in favor of focusing on the subaltern's voices and their inscription in history or as

Chadwick (2017) summarizes "intersectionality is more than an abstract theory; it is rooted in a particular trajectory of social justice activism and efforts to focus on the voices and experiences of the marginalized." (p. 9)

Intersectionality in people, or in this case, characters, surfaces to identify them in a way that facilitates the grasp of the multiplicity of their identity. The latter becomes an inextricable marble of aspects. In such a case, intersectionality in women, both, envelops and complicates them. It also prevaricates the chase of a meaningless cycle of grouping oppressions and listing them without any location of origin or motivation, wherein a locus is needed for a process of rectification. While solutions have not been found yet in addressing the problems faced by Algerian women, nomenclature is important in pushing forward an ultimatum disguised as a concept in a theory (feminism) that happens to be saturated nowadays.

Collectivity does not serve these women. Their experiences differ in their intersectional identities and systematic oppressions, i.e. racism, patriarchy, social class…etc. Crenshaw specifically spoke of social constructs as they add to the violence practiced against women. A study of hierarchies working together and creating a divergent complication of women's experiences with violence and rape (Crenshaw, 1989; 1991) is in order. Alternatively, an observation of power structures convening to oppress women and shape their experiences in different spaces such as nation, home, foreign land…etc. is highly needed.

In a literary context, the cultural and historical distinctiveness of the discrimination that Algerian women writers stress is important, as it inhibits the different corridors intersectionality creates in one's identity. This in turn upturns mainstream feminist analysis which has proven to be shortsighted, as Judith Butler (1990) states in *Gender Trouble* "the insistence upon the coherence and unity of the category of women has effectively refused the multiplicity of cultural, social, and political intersections in which the concrete array of 'women' are constructed" (p. 14).

Assia Djebar and Fadhila Al-Farouk, henceforth, observe that the spheres that enclose the Algerian woman, punishing and banishing her for her skin color, ethnicity, and gender make her doubly jeopardized, doubly marginalized, and doubly colonized. Her subjectivity evolves in an ironic and damaged way as she becomes a subject of less. Making efforts to transcribe such in an unafraid manner has become Djebar's and Al-Farouk's unspoken mission. So, again, approaching their literary texts with an intersectional lens would suggest a close investigation of race, class, gender, nationality…etc., and how that intersection manifests in different characters, and what it entails in terms of livelihood, identity, and representation.

Djebar journeys through Colonialism and Postcolonialism in *Fantasia*[1] (re)inscribing women in Algerian history through recounting their plight of abuse, degradation, erasure…etc., whereas Al-

[1] For the sake of brevity, the title is going to be shortened to *Fantasia* from now on forward

Farouk, in *Taa' El-Khajal*[2], pursues the documentation and re-insertion of Algerian women in the Black Decade emphasizing their violated, degraded and abused bodies.

3. Intersectional Algerian Women's Voices and the Embodiment of Violence

The context for both writers converges and then diverges in some details that make them distinct enough from one another, but still similar enough to incite comparison. Now, what groups both writers together is their interest in Algerian women's issues on both ends. Assia Djebar tried to give insights and testimonies to foreground women's troubles and their necessity to defy the colonial and patriarchal world. Likewise, Fadhila Al-Farouk showed vividly the horrors of the Algerian civil war on Algerian women. Both authors lean toward that intersectional outlook as they discuss Algerian women from close periods of Algerian history. The representation they offer is reliant on what it means to be a woman under patriarchal, colonial, postcolonial, and divisive climates. Thus, by looking at their perception of the antics of colonialism and its aftermaths, one can better gauge how they redirect the narrative to women by creating a space for them in postcolonial studies.

These authors use literature to bend rules, challenge beliefs, and portray women as agents of their sociopolitical change. Assia Djebar seizes the opportunity to look for ways to un-silence the subaltern Algerian woman in a polyphonic chorus that adds a different 'her's to the narrative/history. Likewise, Fadhila Al-Farouk reconstructs the same narrative of a different time to accommodate Algerian women, to tell their stories, and allow them to tell their own stories with their plentiful hoarse voices. This revision and (re)writing of history reinstitutes women and their experiences in a way that is unafraid of sensitized historiography, forced nationalism/imperialism, and religious fundamentalist and divisive ideations.

Throughout the study of *Fantasia* and *Taa' El-Khajal*, the blur between fiction and history is soon noticed. The choices made by the authors, in order to show embodied violence and how the gendered subaltern was oppressed by choices made by men, are also witnessed.

Both authors allow the women to narrate their breaking, with some inferences from the men around them, as "allowing another voice to articulate body/text/history from outside the position of power [and] allowing [though not without risk] knowledge-without-mastery to show through the cracks," (Waterman, 1998, p. 331) empowers the authors and the women they write about. Djebar and Al-Farouk also manage to communicate the choices of violence made by Algerian men/French colonizers on female characters while exploring their own perspectives.

The idea of giving them a voice is quite important as women's judgment of what is

[2] In Arabic the closed (ة) is an indicator of the feminine gender. Then, the title could be translated to "The Feminine Shame"

plaguing them is often disregarded. On this matter Crenshaw (1989) discussed that discrimination against black women is not validated because their claims are so distinct to black men or white women that they do not hold a space of representation, which is further linked to what Spivak (1988) debated in her famous essay *Can the Subaltern Speak?* A subaltern is an inferior/a subordinate, in general, and when gendered it is reduced to an object with no subjectivity. To further illustrate, if the white woman speaks for women and the Algerian man speaks for their female counterparts then there is no space where the ethnicized woman can speak (Spivak, 1988). Crenshaw labels this as obscuring the experiences of women, which is seen also as treating the gendered subaltern as a unit (Crenshaw, 1988; Spivak, 1988).In this sense, Assia Djebar and Fadhila Al-Farouk come to voice the pain and everlasting violence markers. In *Fantasia* and *Taa' El-Khajal*, women are violated by the wreckage of their bodies, and the tainting of their womanhood by their gender, class, race, nationality, religion, marital status, and age. They are objectified for the reassurance of masculinity in its different forms.

3.1 The Violence of Rape

Djebar and Al-Farouk, while writing these stories, do not only defend and speak with these women but the communities as a whole, however diverse they are, they attempt to present as many women as the narrative can fit. In Fantasia, the French army captures Cherifa, a young Algerian girl, and proceeds to torture and rape her in order to acquire information about her, active in the Revolution, brothers. She endures trying to fight back, but her position or her status in society adds to her abuse. She is not a man; a man who would assert dominance on the female body, the perfect site of subordination. Because of her intersectional identity of being a woman, Algerian, and young, she is marginalized within all (Crenshaw, 1991, p. 1241). Her being an Algerian woman from a rural area and a lower class transforms her into a target; a breakable and perishable leverage.

Similarly, in Taa' El-Khajal, the severely traumatized Algerian woman is uncovered. Yamina, a survivor of Islamist kidnappers, undergoes immense trauma while she is kidnapped. She is brought to a hospital in a severe state of ravaging. She was raped, she gave birth and her baby was taken away from her and killed by her aggressors. She recalls, when interviewed by Khalida, the protagonist of the book, that she, along with other seven kidnapped young girlswas forced to live with those men, "we cook for them and wash their clothes, and at night…" (p.48 *my translation*). Choked by tears of shame, she does not finish her sentence. However, her companion, Rawiya another survivor who came with her, did not shy away from the quality and description of degradation they have gone through. She emotionally recounts "Do you know what they do to us? They come every night and force us to do [El-'Eeb][3], and when we give birth they kill the babies. We scream and weep and hurt and they still force us to perform [El-'Eeb]. We call for help, we kiss their feet begging them to not do it and they

[3] Perform the shameful act. A euphemism for having sex or being raped

still do not care" (p. 45 my translation). She cries about the brutality of being tied up with wire while being raped (p. 45), by the "monsters of the forest" (p. 45 *my translation*). These men were Islamists who engaged in terror-inducing behaviors under the leading ideations of FIS[4]. Being the disciples of fundamentalist Islam scholars did not prevent them from committing atrocities against their opposite sex, their fellow compatriots, and their sisters in religion evidencing them as Islamists warmongering violators. They saw Algerian women, Yamina and Rawiya, and many more, at the time, as a body that could be used without any repercussions. These women's intersectional identity of being women, seemingly less religious and young motivated their ruin. They are regarded as worthless even with the plentitude of their identities. More than that, because they are their complex identities their breaking gained a different dimension. In this respect, Khalida looks back on the time when Islamists were praying against those who were not as fundamentally religious as them as well as those with connections to the military. They brazenly ask the Almighty to have their daughters become whores and their wives to become widows (p. 59). Fanon observes that "the woman constituted the pivot of Algerian society, all efforts were made to obtain control over her" (p. 38). The Algerian woman, then, during this period, was a victim of standards set by men seeking to control her and her surroundings. Men who took their religious identity and mutated it into aggression and sought others' religious identities, not to better them, but to attach gender to them and use violence as an excuse for their twisted agendas.

Cherifa, Yamina, and Rawiya converge in the idea that their bodies were sites of wreckage, in them they were themselves and in them, their identities were tainted as well. Djebar herself, or her writer-character alter ego, Isma, interjects by agonizing over the brutality of the pain she heard from women such as Cherifa; "I remain silent as I drink their words and every inflection of their voices I could feel myself to be… mummified" (p. 201). She is tortured by these women about whether she can ask them if they were raped or not. A sense of solidarity that could have existed and solidified women together is broken because of the violence men committed. In contrast, Al-Farouk straightforwardly presents rape, as it is flung at the reader in the form of graphic descriptions as well as statistics. While Djebar struggles with replacing the word "raped" with "damaged", and recounts the shame and passiveness of such women, Al-Farouk, through her protagonist, does not shy away from saying that these women were raped in her writing. However, she too ensures to portray the same shame that looms around these women. By featuring Khalida, Al-Farouk depicts the struggle of writing about the raped, "how does one write about a female whose virginity was stolen from her by force?"(p. 54 *my translation*). There is a fear in Khalida that stems from being seen as complicit in the violence against women, from becoming another part of

[4]The Islamic Salvation Front. An Islamists political party that sold fundamentalists ideas of reform.

Yamina that is corrupted. Khalida has bonded with Yamina. She became her friend and family, a woman, from her country and specifically her culture, a speaker of the same language/dialect as her, and a practitioner of the same religion. Khalida does not want to betray her nor aggravate the violence against her, only to help her resist by surviving longer.

Along these lines, Djebar narrates the shame and fear that comes with being "damaged" in Cherifa's case not only by the French soldiers but by France as a whole showing how detrimental that is to Cherifa's nationality and cultural belonging. Waterman (1998) asserts that "the female body and occupied Algeria become as one, and because both are determined not only by nature but by culture as well, both are related to history; the body/country becomes a text which carries the historical record." (p. 319). In this sense, Djebar infiltrates the masculine and colonial making of history to unveil the attempt at "de-marbling" the forever marbled. Al-Farouk also lends voices to the battered to speak their shame. They use the word "El-'Eeb" to show that they could never ignore or heal from the disgrace that was forced on them. Particularly Yamina and Rawiya who use this word with a knowledge of the tearing of their identities including their cultural one. Now that they have returned, they cannot go back to their families and cultures as they have been disgraced placing them in a disfigured intersectional space where society, politics, and religion meet the gendered Algerian woman (Boualag, 2017, p. 168).

While Yamina's and Rawiya's female identity, culture nationality, and faith are broken, Cherifa's nationality, belonging, and female selfhood are in tethers. That is quite reflective for both characters as Khalida lies to Yamina about her family coming to see her if they know she is in the hospital. Khalida does not want to break Yamina's heart by revealing that they would not want to have any relationship with a sullied daughter, a daughter they do not recognize anymore while Cherifa, who is portrayed as a ferocious soul, already knows that cracks have formed in her sense of belonging to her country and family and is not disillusioned by possibilities despite her young age. This means these intersectional women are not only targeted because of their marbling intersectionality, but they are also victims of the gradual destruction of such complexity. This is practiced to create a "dirty" daughter/sister and a forever "damaged" young girl.

Yamina, Rawiya, and Cherifa are victims and survivors of multiple discriminations on top of their intersectionality, colonialism, racism, sexism, Islamist teachings, rape…etc. As much as they are intersectional in their identities, they are also a site for the interaction of monstrosities, visible and not so visible even. Some might feel a sense of complicity and shame, but they still stand their ground, attempt to resist, and do not retire on their lives. (Waterman, 1998, p. 327-328).

3.2 The Violence of Absence and Betrayal

On a slightly different note, violence is oftentimes also fostered in that space of absence of support making the abandonment extremely damaging. The women in *Fantasia* are more or less battered shields for Algerian men to demean and assert dominance on, namely, the naked bride of Mazuna, Badra, who is at the center of a high-and-mighty male fight. This young girl is negated in favor of her father's status. Her being clad in jewelry does not help her situation as she is stripped of them and reduced back to being purely an Algerian woman who, in turn, is minimized by the male gaze. Seeing that an Algerian woman occupies the position of least importance in the social hierarchy, attacks on her existence serve as freedom for others. Reddock (2007) highlighted the idea that "post-colonial masculinities often expressed their subordination to European masculinities by hyper-masculinity represented in violence and domination over women, as well as against less powerful men" (p. 256, qtd. in Choksey, 2020, p. 217). Besides, from a different angle Badra is robbed out of her history and dignity. This was acted on her for being her different identities. The partisans would never know what it meant for her to be stripped out of her traditional clothes in front of everyone. An Algerian man under the same subjugation would be humiliated for the sole purpose of being Algerian, his manhood would never be implicated, especially in a postcolonial setting, however; Badra was targeted and caught in a crossfire between men and colonialism and treachery. She was pulled upfront to substitute for her father because she is his "honor", then, she was stripped off of her clothes and jewelry as a woman and stood there as Algeria/n. This, Crenshaw (1991) calls intracommunity violence (p. 1256), small terrors experienced by women in their supposedly safe communities. These terrors are concealed, and unnoticed, and help reinforce all types of stereotyping and might even trigger the white savior on his mission to civilize (Spivak, 1988).In this case, it is how the Arab/Berber men appear to mistreat their women out of tradition, religion, a false sense of masculinity, and colonial pressure. What is harrowing here is that women would still be at the bottom of it all. "She" is an object of others' opinions.

Yamina, in a similar fashion, could not rely on her family (precisely her father to recognize her as a member of their family after her release, she shares with Khalida, "My family refused to have me back," (p. 74 *my translation*) and that when contacted about her existence, her father "denied having a daughter to begin with" (p. 74 *my translation*). Her father refuses to acknowledge a daughter who has a new disgraceful tag marbled to her identity, a tag that will not identify her, so he inflicts more violence on her, the violence of spurning. Even prior to that, she couldn't rely on him to defend her when she was first kidnapped. She was a scapegoat to be slaughtered instead of her brother who joined the military. When those Islamists first came to their house to take her, they

declared, "Your son joined the Taghut[5] and this is your punishment for letting him" (p. 76 *my translation*), in that situation, her father stayed still. Verily, there are several interpretations to be gleaned from this sequence. First, Yamina was seen as a young Algerian woman who is less religious, and, now, fornicates with the military regime because her brother enlisted. As a result, her abuse escalated with every portion of her stacking of identity. Second, unlike Badra who was bounced back and forth between Algerian men and French colonizers, Yamina became caught between the men of her country, the religious and the military. A different era with different political conflicts still dragging women in the midst of it all. In effect, it is as if she and other women became the remnants of colonialism that needed to be purged by misguided and tradition-leaning fatwas[6]. This again suggests how unfortunate Yamina's multiplicity is and how some Algerian men are still in the process of proving themselves to their former oppressors and whom they believe to be the remains of them, leaving the young Algerian religious woman to be scared further of what the future might hold for her, and her kin, if these men continued to assert their masculinity on her because of their own changing misshapen inferiorities.

In the case of Yamina, Badra, and Cherifa, they are dominated by power structures represented in the forms of oppressive systems and men. The latter do not recognize how powerful women can be in their respective intersecting identities. Yamina is a loving daughter and a diligent sister to her mentally ill brother, Cherifa is a fighter and Badra is a symbol of the authentic Algerian woman. Friedan (1963) states, "Who knows what women can be when they are finally free to become themselves? Who knows what women's intelligence will contribute when it can be nourished without denying love?" (259), none of the aforementioned women are weak and dependent. They are humans with different identity markers that strengthen them and place them as targets for oppressive fury. Crenshaw (1991) exclaims, "The most one could expect is that we will dare to speak against internal exclusions and marginalizations" (p. 1299), for intersectional identities, oppressed or not, are a bigger blanket of diversity with multicolored voices that mustn't be muffled.

4. *CONCLUSION*

Throughout this paper, the embodiment of masculine violence on Algerian women has been examined in the works of two prominent Algerian authors, Assia Djebar and Fadhila Al-Farouk. This comparative study utilized a postcolonial feminist perspective with a focus on intersectionality theory and the relevance of intersectional identities in the oppression of Algerian women.

The analysis of the novels, *Fantasia* and *Taa' El-Khajal*, which are set during two difficult periods of Algerian history and written in two different languages, French and Arabic, found that, first, intersectional theory is fairly new to literary analysis,

[5]Taghut, Tawagheet or Tyrants is the label Islamists called the military regime in Algeria at the time.

[6]"A legal opinion or decree handed down by an Islamic religious leader" retrieved from Merriam-Webster Dictionary

however, if applied under a comparative framework with the preconceived notions of postcolonial feminism, the theory seemed to thrive in voicing women and depicting their embodied violence. Second, the role of women authors in writing about such subjects becomes palpable as they try to breach silence and present brutality in its raw form. Both authors struggled, in fact, with the violence of rape and its culpability when it comes to deconstructing Algerian women's intersectional identities. While Djebar grappled with presenting rape, Al-Farouk was not afraid of providing graphic and explicit details of the act. Nonetheless, both authors focused on conveying the shame that is felt and projected on Algerian women concerning rape and its consequences on their identities and belonging. Third, both authors discuss how such deconstruction of identity is further met at the hands of these women's compatriot which suggests that Algerian men held no solidarity for their opposite sex. For Djebar, there were no nuances offered for the actions of men. She rather opted for showing their complete nonchalance towards the brutality against women, but when it came to Al-Farouk, her writing had an interpretative aura that spoke of Algerian men being almost vindictive in their betrayal of Algerian women.

In essence, both authors attempted to defend and speak the women in their narratives. Their approach was different as one tiptoed around the topic while the other addressed it candidly. One decided to be in the midst of the narrative while the other chose one compassionate fictional narrator. In addition to that, the difference between the characters and their experiences was not immensely drastic since they still had that same looming pain, oppression, and violence affecting their life events. All of the above leads us to the conclusion that violence has been a constant in Algerian women's lives regardless of the violators and that the more intersectional the woman the more aggravated violence is going to be against her. Therefore, the complexity of Algerian women and all that surrounds them from history to experience to identity to representation is both a blessing and a curse.

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