
Language and Identity Construction for the Creation of a Coherent Self in Mouloud Feraoun's *La terre et le sang* (1953).

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Abstract: The present paper revisits Mouloud Feraoun's second novel, *La terre et le sang* (1953) to examine how the author rehabilitates his Berber cultural heritage, which is manifest at the level of form and content. In the first place, the author uses the French language within cultural oral markers, which are highly localised within his Kabyle culture. Secondly, there is also the embodiment of the storytelling mode in the text. The way Feraoun fuses the Berber cultural elements exemplifies the preponderance of his culture as a provider of content and a source of dialogical connections with the French imposed one. His text has, in my view, an enduring value as it contains what can be regarded as an expression of a "Narrative as Social Practice". Hence, our analysis of his second novel will be undertaken in the light of Vansina's thoughtful and provocative insights provided in her book entitled,

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Narrative as Social Practice where she explores the complex and interrelatedness of narrative and culture. What makes her approach particularly interesting and relevant lies in its focus on the exploration of interrelatedness of a text to the cultural environment in which it is produced. Her book is fundamentally informing our understanding of the ways Feraoun transcribes shapes and translates oral narratives elements in a presentable written form. It is not only enlightening the ways in which Feraoun celebrates a cultural diversity and the valuable richness of experience his text offers, but also contributes to “deconstruct” the previous criticism.

Key Words: Rehabilitation- Identity construction- Storytelling- Cultural oral forms

Introduction: The present paper is concerned with the transmission and potential uses of oral material within Mouloud Feraoun’s second novel, *La terre et le sang* (1953), which is characterized by the blending of the oral storytelling tradition of his Kabyle culture with the French culture he is acquainted with through his colonial education. To explore the relatedness of the narrative and the Kabyle culture, I shall try to provide answers to the following questions: how does Feraoun use some discursive strategies that are expressive of Berber orality-based culture, which neither hypothesize an ‘Otherness’ through a simple negation of European definitions of his culture nor articulate merely the forms imported from the West? How does he preserve his culture without becoming ossified? And how does he find a way to assert and impose subtly his identity and his own culture to reject the colonialist appellation of his country as a “static empty cultural space”, without at

the same time, rejecting everything that might be of value that comes from his colonial education and his readings of Western master texts?

What will be mainly emphasized in the course of this textual analysis of Feraoun's *La terre et le sang* is how Berber cultural identity is being constituted through the narrative and the importance in terms of the cultural context in which the novelist preserves, celebrates, and translates his Kabyle values and cultural practices, and the extent to which he is able to present a subtle and skilful implied criticism of French cultural imposed order within the text. Specifically, the novel addresses the ramifications of rapid cultural change and how it affected the conservative elements within the Kabyle culture. In sum, my overall intention is to refer to intratextual and intervocal concerns in order show how the syncretic vision of the author functions, which confronts and dismantles the chains of authority, reject the very concept of fixed oppositions and hierarchies, and prefer laying claim to a double inheritance expressing a mixture of cultural interchanges and interactions through time rather than affirming a fixed identity. "Culture is, according to Jane.E. Goodman, one possible rubric through which a social group can achieve visibility (Goodman.2005:4).

Feraoun's novels have been attacked for their lack of Algerian values and for their 'simplicity', neglecting the author's implication in the ethnographic discourse of his time. Although authenticity has been the ideology of colonialism by which it sought to dehistoricize the Algerian cultures in indicting it with backwardness. The author invents a tradition in historicizing the pressures that impelled an identity crisis and prevent the invention of tradition. Unfortunately, his work has not been scrutinized with attention that it

merits. Some critics have been quick to identify the European sources rather than the Berber cultural material. Others refer to the points where identification of Western sources occurs before that of Berber poetics while, in my view, they are bound together. Louis Julia, for instance, considers Feraoun's *La terre et le sang* as a novel written in a flat and cowardly language woven especially in descriptions and pictures of improprieties and clichés. For the French critic, Feraoun had not made the nationalist struggle in Algeria his priority. The critic neither single out the novelist's creative inspiration nor identify the writing process through which the author rehabilitates his culture and oral heritage. For him, expectedly then, Feraoun remains, "[Le] misérabiliste, décliné, non engagé, peu révolutionnaire, ne sachant pour qui opter, racontant et poignant avec une écriture sans recherches sophistiquées, s'arrêtant à des réalités non exaltantes». In addition, Feraoun has also been accused of political naivety and inaptitude because he did not conform to the established formula of political writing. The critic assumes that Feraoun has little or no political commitment; he even seems politically ignorant (Sayeh.2010: 68).

More contentious and discordant is Fawzia Ahmad's analysis of Feraoun's literary works. She contends that the central problem in discussing Feraoun's novels is to decide what kind of literary works they are because the writer has been unable to articulate his identity. She criticizes Feraoun's zeal to project an acceptable image to please a French audience, which leaves no space for his Algerianness in his text. According to her, Feraoun fails to present his identity and concludes that his depiction of the land appears alienated from his identity as an Algerian writer (Ahmed. 2005:88).

What the critic is not alert to Feraoun's way of using the French language to establish his "double" identity because the more we read Feraoun's literary texts, the more they reveal and even certify the way the author verbalizes some situations in order to bring to the fore his Kabyle/Berber identity. Moreover, the reviewer's investigation into the way Feraoun presents his own identity has not explored in order to account the way the author manipulates the French language, uses socio-historical terms, and creates particular strategies to revalorize his Berber culture. Ahmad's lack of knowledge about what Paul Zumthor calls the "auditory mode of articulation" let her ignore the orality of the text, its remnant vocality as well as "the poetics of the voice" in Feraoun's narrative. The reviewer skips also the figurative representations, which can allow her to perceive, in Zumthor's words, "the signals emitted by history" , a poetic discourse as opposed to an approved master language that is external and reductionist: "the human voice" (Zumthor. 1984:74).

By presenting a more nuanced analysis, Abdelhamid Zoubir and Jacqueline Kaye note that the predicament of Feraoun's texts neither rests on his use of French language nor in his choice of religion. The two reviewers argue that Feraoun is as familiar with Christianity as he was with Islam that has nothing to do with his national identity. The two critics maintain, however, that the problem is that his novels are "singular receptacles of an alien language where the antinomies of Algerian perceptibility are objectified" (Kaye. Zoubir.1990:82). What the two critics did not pay attention to is without doubt Feraoun's use of that "alien language" to suit his purposes. Unlike Zoubir and Kaye's criticism, Feraoun's second novel is deeply permeated by moral

sensibility and is strongly committed to the preservation and celebration of Berber culture, to foregrounding his identity, and the denunciation of colonial oppression and injustice and it is through language that they are mostly displayed.

More importantly, Feraoun's engagement and resistance are not only steeped in local color that is far from the French exoticism, but in the complexities which are seen as reflecting a Kabyle cultural and visionary experience. Resistance, as Denise Brahimi states, "Ne s'agit pas forcement de combats armés, mais plutôt d'une affirmation de soi, obstinée en dépit des obstacles et de l'adversité" (Brahimi.2001: 85). What most of Feraoun's detractors ignore is the fact that although deeply and unmistakably imbued with all French culture, Western humanism and his readings of the French classics, Feraoun's novels oppose all colonialist fancies, alluring images, warmth and softness that give body to the "exotic literature" of Alphonse Daudet's *Tartarin de Tarascon*, Victor Hugo's *Les Orientales*, and Louis Bertrand's *La Barbarie*. Feraoun's literary works are set against the exciting and voluptuous atmosphere, the oriental phantasmagoria and any excess of emotions and fascination for the exotic customs of his country. The following passage from the author's posthumous book, *L'universaire* (1972) proves the point:

La voix a été tracée par ceux qui ont rompu avec un Orient de
pacotille pour

décrire une humanité moins belle mais plus vraie, une terre
moins chatoyante

mais riche de sève nourricière, des hommes qui luttent et
souffrent, et sont les

répliques exactes de ce que nous voyons autour de nous (Feraoun.1972 : 54).

The passage indicates that Feraoun's texts can, then, be distinguished from the French writings in many ways: most importantly his *La terre et sang* illustrates its author's willingness to balance positive and negative; the beautiful and ugly aspects of the world he depicts. He replaces the exoticism of French colonialist literature by a richer life, less beautiful but true and free of any moral restraint. His reviewers have never gone further than pinpointing some superficial aspects of the novel and did not seem to have worked in-depth. They either expressed their disagreement with Feraoun's choice of language or religion. It is important to point out that he inconsistency of some arguments in the above criticisms stem from an ideological orientation and their authors over emphasize the either the colonialist or the Arabo-Islamic dimensions of Algerian literature instead of working the texts methodically. The original sensitivity of Feraoun brings with it a new modern thought, almost avant-gardist, which is far from alienating his identity as our analysis will illustrate.

The Use of Elements for the Berber Folk Culture

The power, strength and originality of his second novel, thus, born of a mixture of his inspirations, cultural fragments, and personal memories are all of them are parts of his way of articulating his identity, which rests on his skilful manipulation of French language to enable it to convey essential and intricate traditional Kabyle speech patterns, sensibilities, and worldview. So, arguments, explanations, or

justifications as to why Feraoun uses the French language are not so much of concern as is the question of how he uses it. He writes in French using metaphors and images that may not be those of a French person and language becomes a communicative tool with which to express and depict his perception of the world around him. Consequently, Feraoun's novels deserve more intensive attention by scholars, and different critical discourse by critics than it has received so far. Feraoun has been charged with relying too heavily on European models in his writings. Although I cannot deny his various sources of inspiration, the author has consistently argued for a Berber cultural basis of his writings. Therefore, Feraoun should be situated in a new trend of "interrelatedness" that enables readers to acknowledge the significance of blending European and Berber literary forms and helps to position the author at the confluence of two cultures.

It is important to point out that much of the above reviews are flawed by not sufficiently considering the socio-cultural context of the narrative discourse practices. To remedy such weaknesses, we aim to examine the novel on the basis of the close and detailed analysis from two cultural traditions. Among the key ideas on which my hypothesis lies are his construction of reality, the role of language, his narrative discourse and its role in the process of shaping reality, and the ways in which Feraoun recasts oral features into new forms to create a text that is "contrapuntal" in nature. The correlations of the textual new forms also function as a weapon against political oppression and create a revolutionary discourse of cultural revalorization. The recasting of the existing European and Berber literary forms into new dimensions is displayed, first and foremost, in his use of the colonizer's language. The

writers inserts in his novel some literary strategies including an “intervocality” of the French language to create something new, a kind of “third space” to paraphrase Homi Bhabha.

In *La terre et le sang*, the author’s use of the French language can be understood as an act of re-establishing his own identity by situating himself in the vast and intricate landscape of his Kabyle/Berber culture. By so doing, Feraoun makes the French language, in Achebe’s words; bear his Kabyle experience revealing, thus, the complex nature of combining oral performance with written narrative forms, which many of his reviewers had misrepresented or totally ignored. He makes this process apparent through expressive deviations from the standard French, as Robert Elbaz and Martine Mathieu-Job rightly point out:

L’insertion d’un mot Kabyle qui trône la langue Française ou l’aplatissement du

Français [...] l’essentiel pour Feraoun, c’est bien de donner l’illusion que l’objet

Kabyle transparait, de lui-même en quelque sorte, et pour cela, de lui assujettir la

langue de l’autre, d’aplatir celle-ci faute de mieux, aux fins de sa propre

representation (Elbaz. Mathieu-Job. 2001: 89).

Feraoun, then, intentionally reconstitutes in French the Kabyle speech patterns, which are less latent in French literary texts, making good use of the inheritance of Kabyle terms and expressions by making of the borrowed language his own. The language “intervocality” appears in the

very beginning of the novel through the narrative voice. The narrator creates a space between himself and the reader and announces the coming discursive difficulties to get access to that space. In so doing, he produces sentences which are not thought initially in French and announces from that the language of the 'other' will be transformed to achieve the link with the reader. In the course of the novel, Feraoun inserts more than forty untranslated Kabyle words and all of them are not cushioned. For instance, Feraoun uses words like tharoumith, French woman(P.4); toub, red earth(P.10); Mechmel, bare land(P.17); Ouada, offering (P.76) Achou, what do you mean?; Achhal, how much?(P.110); Ilha, nice; and thakhaounith, religious woman(P.200).

Furthermore, the writer appeals to the technique of 'relexification' in making some characters speak in their own manner and say things which are expected of people in their situation of life, in the way they naturally would by using some Kabyle expressions which he renders directly to French. Cases of direct rendering are: « ils mangent Tamazirt » (P.17); "Ce sont vraiment des têtes"(P.97); «Il ne faut pas chanter qu'on a de l'argent"; « Les rêves sortent» (P.166); «Madame s'est pas lavée ce mois »(P.167) « Les cheveux d'enfer»(P.211) "Dieu lui donne sa part"(P.133); and « Dieu lui garde ses péchés» (P.126). These expressions do not mean something when they are translated directly word by word into the French language. They are meaningful only for the reader who is aware of and takes into consideration the socio-cultural context in which these expressions are uttered.

Feraoun also applies the technique of "contextualisation" in showing his people's spirit through language. Some of the uttered phrases have no meaning in French without knowledge of the Berber culture. For

instance, Chabha to show her temperance says: «Je suis large comme une pleine”. Other sentences of the same paradigm follow; “Elle veut salir une femme d’honneur”; “Voiler le soleil d’un tamis” (P. 208). All of them are double voiced; they are meaningful only for those who are familiar with the socio-cultural milieu in which they are used as well as the message conveyed. The free indirect speech of Chabha’s thoughts becomes more and more inflected by her speech patterns. It is in the range of forms of double-voiced discourse that Feraoun speaks from within his people and his different characters speak from with him. The language is sometimes as crude as its user: "Son ventre est plein de bile", exclaims Slimane; "Dieu a bien fait d’avoir privé l’âne de cornes", says then angrily the same character (P.83).

All these expressions show that the author does not spare French language. He rather shows its limits, transforms and deconstructs it to rebuild it differently, not for its shape, but for the ideas it conveys. The author kills the sense to make it reborn. Such a technique appears through his use of “periphrasis” to show the wisdom of the ancestors. Some of the remembrances are uttered by the wise voice of Ramdane and others by the Marabout diviner Si Mahfoud (P.78). So, the French language becomes merely an envelope which contains the form of ideas and the moving speech of the author who sacrifices its form in favor of the meaning and knowledge it conveys to the reader. Denise Brahimi writes that Feraoun’s use of the French language resembles the way Abdelkebir Khatibi uses the same language. The Moroccan writer sees that : «Une langue aussi forte que le français ne se laisse pas facilement détruire ni même modifier. Personnellement, il préfère la considérer comme «une belle étrangère» séduisante, peut-être à jamais

insaisissable, mais avec laquelle peuvent s'établir des rapports d'amour» (Brahimi.2001: 52).

However, what Denise Brahimi fails to pay attention to is that Feraoun in his *La terre et le sang* did not content himself to admire the French language, but succeeds in modifying it. His appeal to a non-standard usage of the French can be viewed as a process of linguistic decolonization, a questioning not only of the usage of the established language but also of western-ways of perceiving and interpreting reality. Feraoun re-examines the official historical, colonial discourse and then breaks through it with voices from his culture so long silenced. He re-inserts the previously silenced voices of the Algerians through a reconstruction of French syntax that gives the language of his novel a kabylian ring. Moreover, Feraoun re-produces the rythmes and sentence patterns of the Kabyle speech; rural images, analogies and proverbs, which come directly from Berber oral traditions, as Christiane Achour points out, “ La langue du romancier, comme celle de Taos Amrouche, mais avec plus de bonhomie rustique, se nourrit de la vieille sagesse des dictons, des proverbes, des images recherchées (Achour. 1984:14).

By infusing the Kabyle material into the French language, Feraoun 'deterritorialises' the French language. Therefore, a Frenchman who reads the above selected expressions may find them unfamiliar and difficult to understand. But Feraoun uses them in a way that does not hinder or change his comprehension of the novel. The reader needs to know what is said in the original Kabyle language as J.Dejeux rightly observes: “Feraoun laisse parler sa langue première à travers le Français et réalise une œuvre d'art, non parce qu'il aura forcément cassé la langue

française, mais parce qu'il aura su créer dans une 'différence' intraitable" (Dejeux.1993 : 20).

Feraoun imposes a Kabyle thinking on the French language in his novel, *La terre et le sang*. The linguistic hybridity of the novel with its heavy dependence on tones of the voice, suggest that the reader ought to pay greater attention to words in audible motion rather than to their frozen written form on the page. The words on the page are recognizable nuances of the Kabyle sounds, even when the spelling is standard French, the words in print are fully available only when the reader is in touch with the oral and Kabyle cultural context the words imply. The language, then is used, according to Jane Goodman, continually in verbal interaction to recreate and negotiate the coherence of the oral and written structures (Goodman, 2005:7).

Feraoun gives importance to a kind of "phonetic reading", which emphasizes aural reading and invite the reader to "hear" the rich texture of the covert as well as overt orality. In so doing, he captures and refashions the colonizer's language to new usages to mark a separation from the site of colonial privilege. The hybrid style of the novel in blending oral and French written techniques produces a substantial possibility for readers to fathom the cultural difference and nuances. For this, the author succeeds in creating what Bhabha calls "a third space" and achieves a kind of the 'possibility of reversal' and to liberate the very things which dominant systems of discursive practices would like to suppress and have proven what Bhabha calls "the supplementary and hybridity of cultural translation and any linguistic filiations" (Bhabha.1994: 193).

More significantly, Feraoun contributes to create, and construct his identity by reworking the French language through (Kabyle) to mobilize all the language of everyday life and to provide the means to experience, the moods, and representation of his people. In my view, Feraoun wants to signify a poetics of identity that reflects the Kabyle use of language, which expresses a double symbolic marriage between Berber and Western discursive practices. The second “discursive strategy” with which Feraoun foregrounds the dynamic connection of the narrative to the oral tradition is displayed through his novels’ mode of storytelling.

The Quest for Identity Through Amer Oukaci’s Journey

Three phases describe the spatial and chronological progression of the protagonist in the narrative: Amer Oukaci spent his childhood in his village, Ighil Nzmen, a well-structured universe with its norms and social values. As already mentioned, Feraoun’s second novel mirrors the Kabyle life, reflects on what people do, what they think, how they live and have lived, their values, their joys and sorrows. Then follows a difficult period, because of poverty, Amer travels to France, an alien environment, which neither help him neither to make any choice nor to improve his social life. The third and final stage corresponds to his return, his attempt to regain his place among the villagers, and his failure because of his transgression of the village norms. *La terre et le sang* is then built in a tripartite structure. The first part is the longest because it revolves around Amer’s return from fifteen years exile. It starts with the main character’s coming back to his homeland, his attempt to reintegrate himself into the Kabyle community. But his disappointment due to the changing situation and his contact with

another culture makes his re-insertion impossible. Amer represents in many ways the difficult situation of cultural co-existence for a colonized person, who suffers from an identity conflict. The second part covers the period spent by Amer in France. As the second part, the last one ends by his mysterious death. Thus, the narrative structure and temporal arrangement of the first section of the novel is not linear because it moves backward and forward in time while, in the second and the last parts, the plot follows a linear line.

Storytelling technique appears right at the beginning of the novel. Feraoun invites his readers to Ighil Nzmen, a traditional setting remote time and space. So, the opening pages are reminiscent of the convention used at the beginning of many oral tales: 'Once upon a time'. The other formal feature of the oral narrative is the episodic nature of the action. The first part of the novel is a good example of the case because its content is composed of many short stories or sub-tales, which can be read as self-contained stories: the first one tells the story of the main protagonist; it starts with his return from France with a French woman, Marie, called tharoumith by Amer's relatives. Meanwhile, the author relates his story to that of his old parents, Kaci and Kamouma, who after experiencing various troubles because of their acute poverty, they sold all the land to survive. The reader is told about how many years earlier Kaci struggled for keeping his land and how he sold all of it to feed his family. It is followed by another story; that of the curse of fertility; it revolves around Slimane and Chabha and their unhappy marriage because of the woman's bareness, which can be added to the story of Hocine and Hamma, suffering from the same problem. Feraoun knits also the drama of Rabah Ouhamouche's long exile and his tragic

death in the mine. Feraoun also inserts other short folk stories like the one of Si Mahfoud, which is told by Ramdane. Their insertion is meant to illustrate the wisdom of his Berber ancestors. As an illustration, the story of a Cheikh and the Sultan, told by Si Mahfoud to his visitors (P.79) implies cultural knowledge and it is expressed as a piece of advice to Slimane.

Moreover, the whole narrative structure of the novel is framed on folkloric procedures of 'exile and return', which formula offers the basic tripartite structure of the novel. The beginning of the narrative revolves around Amer's return from fifteen years exile. It is followed by the period of reintegration, and finishes with Amer's death after he offends one of the pillars of his society's codes of honor and his life ends in disaster. By the structuring of the narration along lines that parallel those of a folktale, Feraoun judiciously uses oral features and makes his work distinctly Berber in flavor though the material that the author inserts from oral tradition is expressed in a French language. Thus, Feraoun like many African authors, as Kalu Ogbao rightly observes, writes with two hands: the right hand representing the African story-telling skill [he] acquired while growing up, and the left hand the formal western creative writing skills [he] developed while studying at the colonial French school. The successful combination of the two apparently divergent but necessary skills resulted in the narrative techniques and craftsmanship that characterize most of the African novels (Ogbao.1999:74).

Furthermore, Feraoun uses many forms of verbal art from his oral traditions as core elements. He was brought up by his aunts, who early in life, inspired his interest in Kabyle mythology and folklore, a

fact which apparently accounts for the predominance of Kabyle lore in his literary works. The author is significantly influenced by Berber oral traditions, which he borrowed from the rich Kabyle verbal art forms to create a new vision of life and new poetic idioms with remarkable originality. These Berber cultural oral elements such as storytelling are combined with his imaginative use of Western narrative form. The oral narrative device constitutes the vehicle of the plot and the dramatic action in *La terre et le sang*. As we have indicated earlier, Feraoun's novel structure includes three parts. The author exposes the traumas of an Algerian idealist young man, Amer, coming back from France; he attempts to reintegrate himself into his native village life. The tragic consequences of Amer's emigration and his encounter with the French culture reveal certain problems of French colonialism. The time of the narrative spans over twenty years. The story begins with Amer's departure to France and ends with his death. In France, Amer stays fifteen years. *La terre et le sang* contains retrospective movements, described by Gennette in his *Narrative Discourse* (1980), as analepses that differ from conventional flashbacks, referring to related incidents, which have occurred before the time of their narration. Through these analepses, the narrator departs from the present story of Amer in his village to inform the reader of some earlier events. Feraoun uses ellipses to depict, for example, the origins of Amer's alienation, the various hard conditions of emigrants in France, and Amer's involvement in Rabah's murder. The structure of Feraoun's second novel is grounded in the paradigm of storytelling and oral folktales, which appear in the circular passage of Amer through a series of adventures which start, with his departure from his native village, Ighil-Nzman, through his wandering

life in Europe, and his decision to return to his fatherland. The quest for a return to his origins, and his efforts to reintegrate himself in his native village, all correspond to the pattern of the Kabyle storytelling.

Amer resembles the hero of Kabyle oral folk tales since he makes a circular journey in crossing the sea to France then returning to his village of birth. The second stage is represented by the departure from home by Amer to France where he loses all sense of identity. His inner conflict is further intensified by the hardships he faced in a completely alien environment. As folktale heroes, Amer views life outside his village as chaotic; he discovers that people he has come across during his journey to France tend to behave contrary to the villagers of Ighil-Nzman.

However, unlike, the heroes of folk tales, though Amer gains lucidity as a result of his journey, he remains unable to integrate himself into his community. His quest results in rupture, not in reintegration. Amer fails to adapt himself to his time and regain his place because he is not in tune with his culture and does not possess the moral means to meet the eventualities of the story. He neither respects the values of his community nor collaborates in their preservations. His love affair with his uncle's wife, Chabha is a transgression of the village's 'the code of honor'. His act makes him become socially maladjusted, out of tune with his traditional Kabyle community. His love affair with Chabha does not conform to the conventions and norms of the village. Therefore, his clansmen stigmatize him because he breaks one of the most sacred rules and one of the customs his countrymen value most. Amer's conflict is caused by social circumstances, which change his intentions and prevents him from reaching his objectives.

So far, it may be clear that storytelling is another key way Feraoun demonstrates his own rootedness in his Kabyle/Berber culture. Storytelling provides an important material in, which has a significant place in his Berber community. He uses it as a way to enrich his narrative, to give it form and structure, and from there, to imbue it with meaning. His use of material from oral tradition also ranges from his use of familiar images and symbols, myth, proverbs, and folktales including the morality they preach, and vision they express. All of them are assigned a function in the narrative. So, we can deduce that the hold that Kabyle/Berber oral tradition exerted on Feraoun is so strong that we can say that, although he is greatly influenced by his readings of Western writers, there is sufficient evidence of his use of Berber oral cultural material with which he articulates his identity in relation to the world. Feraoun shapes the narrative structure of his second novel by creating an interactive space to negotiate his sense of the 'self', and with which he shares moments of experience in an interaction with the 'other' with whom. In so doing, he contributes in the transmission of the Kabyle/Berber cultural tradition by engaging with the narrative as a "social practice", which is shaping while being shaped by the cultural milieu within which the author lived and operate.

Conclusion

By appropriating Daniele M. Klapproth's methodological approach and key ideas, we have analyzed Feraoun's selected narrative in order to illustrate how the novelist uses cultural oral elements and storytelling, which lies at the heart of Kabyle socio-cultural life. On the basis of the above textual analysis of Feraoun's second novel, it should be clear by now that the author successfully combines literary

techniques of “narrative forms” and “oral cultural features” to shape his narrative. The foregoing analysis of the novel implies that, though written in French, the narrative carries a Berber sensibility, worldview, as well as the rhythms, structures and techniques of the Berber oral tradition. The subversion of the French language, which can be added to Feraoun’s reliance on Kabyle speech patterns in the form of proverbs and other cultural elements prove the point. Moreover, the author adopts rhetorical tropes, and conversational style from traditional Berber orality, which are expressed in the traits of an apt imagery, and clarity of language rather than “classical simplicity” that is rooted in communal communication.

Hence, *La terre et le sang* becomes a testimony to the cultural fusions during the period of the French colonization of Algeria. It is a historical novel, morality tale, and above all great literary work that rehabilitate the author’s Berber cultural heritage and moral values and make them familiar to the world. Although written in French Feraoun’s novel is definitely storyteller’s story making greater use of Berber folktale elements than of Western conventions. In other terms, by drawing on a double heritage, Feraoun creates therefore an encounter between two traditions, which come together to form his own written story. In so doing, he combines the context in which these traditions develop the identity of the storyteller and the traces of the European literary tradition. All these elements illustrate the argument provided by Walter Benjamin concerning the role of the storyteller. In his *Illuminations. Essays and Reflections* (1968), the German theorist discusses function of the storyteller who takes what he tells from his own experience or that reported by others.

And in turn, makes it the experience of those who are listening to his tale (Benjamin (1968) Trans.H.Zohn.2007:87).

Feraoun can be linked to Benjamin's idea through the manner his novel makes clear that oral literature is not exclusively verbal art as it is inevitably intermixed with ritual and craft. It is not produced in the community for aesthetic pleasure only. Instead, it can be regarded as an integral part of the author's community and daily life because it carries with it the imprints of his culture that is reflected by the fears, anxieties, and aspirations of the community's collective consciousness. Feraoun's contribution to preserve and revalue his Berber culture can be summed up as follows: firstly, his novel is an important text in the re-evaluation of national, ethnic and other identities. As a result of colonial chaos, the issue of identity is re-negotiated and border spaces are re-crossed determined by the necessity of certain socio-cultural conditions and contexts. It can be, therefore, argued that Feraoun, as bearer of flexible identity, remains faithful to his traditional Berber culture with its values. He also crosses cultural boundaries for a fruitful exchange. He consciously experiments with traditional oral forms and his efforts suggest a concern for affirming links with his oral Berber traditions. But more significant is the unique and original manner in which he fuses oral forms with Western literary genre. He drew on folk forms such as folktales, proverbs, and myths and synthesizes them with the novel form to achieve his artistic ends. Feraoun's attitude to his culture is that of preservation. He celebrates it while, at the same time, acts as a cultural critic.

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