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FEMALE SELF-REALIZATION AND IDENTITY BECOMING IN ASSIA DJEBAR'S *FANTASIA: AN ALGERIAN* CAVALCADE (1985) AND TSITSIDANGAREMBGA'S *NERVOUS CONDITIONS* (1988).

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FEMALE SELF-REALIZATION AND IDENTITY BECOMING IN ASSIA DJEBAR'S *FANTASIA: AN ALGERIAN* CAVALCADE (1985) AND TSITSIDANGAREMBGA'S *NERVOUS CONDITIONS* (1988).

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Declaration of authorship

I hereby declare that the substance of this dissertation is entirely the result of my investigation and that due reference or acknowledgement is made, whenever necessary, to the work of other researchers.

I am duly informed that any person practising plagiarism will be subject to disciplinary sanctions issued by university authorities under the rules and regulations in force.

Date: June 24th , 2018.

Signed:……..

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Abstract

This dissertation is concerned with the Feminist enunciation in Assia Djebar's *Fantasia: An Algerian Cavalcade* (1985) and Tsitsi Dangarembga's *Nervous Conditions* (1988) produced in the postcolonial era. It is an inquiry into the two writers' common concern for the construction of a new vision of female subjectivity that challenges women's stereotypical representation in male-written patriarchal and Western colonial narratives. Following from this, this research sheds light on the two African women writers' introduction of a fresh and dynamic vision of female identity that goes at odds with the passive and submissive female characters of male-written accounts.

Since according to the Indian Postcolonial Feminist theorist Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, female subjectivity's representation in the nationalist and colonialist discourses keeps the male dominant, instances of female agency could only be retrieved through a critique of the dominant historical representation. Hence, through a comparative approach and borrowing some principles from Spivak's essay ''Can the Subaltern Speak?'' (1988), this dissertation aims at discussing the two women writers' regaining of female agency within the dominant patriarchal and colonial discourses on female subjectivity.

The first chapter looks into the forces that impacted the development of female subjectivity throughout Djebar's and Dangarembga's motherlands histories. In there, our historical retrospective seeks to show the implication of the monolithic vision of female identity of the patriarchal and colonial discourses in the dominant historical

representation of female subjectivity. Though the historical dimension is not as explicitly addressed as it is with the immediacy of the Algerian Liberation War's context in *Fantasia: An Algerian Cavalcade*, *Nervous Conditions'* treatment of Zimbabwe's colonial past stands more in terms of the contestation of the alienating effects of the colonial enterprise on natives and in particular on the female subject.

The second chapter aims at discussing the strategies deployed by the two women writers in deconstructing this monolithic vision of female subjectivity imposed by patriarchy and colonialism. In this regard, we are going to shed light on the two women writers' centeredness on the female figure as agent of change in challenging these traditional perceptions of female subjectivity. In there, both Djebar and Dangarembga introduce the notion of becoming that envisions a female identity that transcends the exclusionary boundaries between the domestic and the public sphere.

The third chapter sheds light on the two women writers' engagement with female individual development through the mediating structure of the female collective as introduced by Rita Felski in her female variant of the ''Bildungsroman''. Dealing with aspects of sisterhood, both writers prove the implication of women as a group in the woman individual's self-realization. In fact, the non-linear move from the colonial to the postcolonial context in Djebar's narrative is reflected in her female protagonist's complex becoming in which both the war and post-war of Independence generations are involved. As for *Nervous Conditions*, though to different intensities, women hold significant roles in Dangarembga's protagonist development into an educated subject. Hence, the depiction of women as becoming female characters in Djebar's and Dangarembga's novels rehabilitates them as worthy subjects of literature.

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Introduction

The representation of female subjectivity stands as a key issue in the African women's literature of the postcolonial era. Starting from the 20th century, a handful of women writers started challenging their societies' placement of women in a subordinate position. Still, with the inception of colonialism, the privileging of the male subaltern[1] as agent of change in the Western discourse exacerbated the status of women as second-class citizens. Forging from this ground, the Algerian Francophone woman writer, Assia Djebar and the Zimbabwean Anglophone woman writer, Tsitsi Dangarembga challenge the biased representation of female subjectivity in the dominant patriarchal and Western colonialist discourses. In this regard, they project a dynamic representation of female subjectivity through the introduction of female identities of an assertive woman war activist in *Fantasia: An Algerian Cavalcade* and an educated woman in *Nervous Conditions*. Fresh representations of female identity in literature that break the traditional perceptions of male- produced narratives.

Jennifer Bernhardt highlights the struggle against the traditional representation of female subjectivity that fueled discussions within the feminist literary and theoretical studies in former colonized areas. She sustains that ‘‘ Theorists like Luce Iragaray, Hélène Cixous, Gayatri Spivak and others are interested in theorizing female subjectivity in all its diversity and multiplicity in answer to phallocentric constructions

[1].The term subaltern conventionally denotes a junior ranking officer in the British army. One of the most significant intellectual sources for Spivak's definition of the subaltern is the early twenty-century Italian Marxist thinker Antonio Gramsci and the works of the mainly Indian-based Subaltern Studies Collective. Gramsci used the term to refer in particular to the unorganized groups of rural peasants based in Southern Italy and who had no social or political consciousness as a group, and were therefore susceptible to the ruling ideas, culture and leadership of the state. Though Spivak agrees with the Subaltern Studies Collective review of Gramsci's definition, she adds that their linger classic Marxist approach to social and historical change effectively privileges the male subaltern subject as the primary agent of change. Hence, she proposes a more nuanced, flexible, post-Marxist definition, informed by deconstruction, which takes women's lives and histories into account. In this regard, I use the term 'subaltern' as it is theorized by Gayatri Spivak. I discuss Spivak's understanding of the term as it is relevant in the reading of Djebar's and Dangarembga's novels, later in the discussion. see: Stephen Morton, *Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak* (London and New York Routledge, 2003)48

that continue to figure subjectivity as masculine and female consciousness as lack.''[2] In light of their status of colonized and gendered subjects, common concerns stood out between the works of many African women writers. In fact, though speaking different languages and belonging to different cultural traditions, some African women writers led the same struggle against the double burden of patriarchal and colonial ''effacement''[3] of female subjectivity in their narratives.

Considered as one of the outstanding figures of Maghrebian literature and spokeswoman of Algerian women behind their veils, Assia Djebar committed herself to giving back to her marginalized and silenced Algerian sisters, identities of independent subjects and active agents within the public sphere. Taking the post-independence era in Algeria which was characterized by the resurfacing of rigid social codes, Djebar undertakes to rehabilitate instances of women's activism in the Algerian resistance against French colonialism. Still, as much as the woman writer from Northern Africa expresses her engagement with questioning the politics of female subjectivity's representation, another woman writer from Sub-Saharan Africa

[2]. Jennifer Bernhardt. *Fantasia, An Algerian Cavalcade: Expressing ''Third World'' Feminist Issues*. (June2012) Postcolonial Studies@.Emory 7octobre 2015. Available: http://scholarblogs.emory.edu/postcolonial/files/2014/06/djebar-assia/

[3]. Discussing the ''effacement'' of female agency in the Algerian elite nationalist narratives following independence, Beida Chikhi highlights that the third part of Djebar's *Fantasia: An Algerian Cavalcade* digs deep into the layers of history of the War of Independence to bring out forgotten female testimonies and buried women's voices. Mireille Calle Gruber draws attention on the marginalization that Algerian women freedom fighters have suffered from in the aftermath of the Liberation War. In there, she refers to these war veterans that Djebar endeavors to rehabilitate through her writings as ''rayés de l'histoire''. In this perspective, Belinda Jack stresses Djebar's questioning of Western representation of Algerian women in French colonial narratives. She notes that Djebar's novel *Women of Algiers in Their Apartment* (1999) invites the reader to reconsider the 19th century Famous painter Eugène Delacroix ''Regard volé'' of Algerian women in the harem. She sustains that her novel challenges the colonial assumption that the knowledge of other cultures and colonized peoples could be surreptiously stolen, like the glance stolen by Delacroix.: (see Beida Chikhi, *Histoires et fantaisies* (Paris: PUPS, 2007) 31. Print; (see Mireille Calle Gruber, *Assia Djebar ou la résistance de l'écriture* (Paris: Maisonneuve et Larose, 2001)10. Print; (see Belinda Jack, ''Strategies of Transgression in the Writings of Assia Djebar''in *Essays on African Writing: 2 Contemporary Literature*. ed. Abdulrazak Gurnah. (Nigeria: Heinemann Educational Publishers Ltd, 1995) 29. Print.

embraced Djebar's project of introducing a new vision of female subjectivity. Thus, just like Djebar, Tsitsi Dangarembga challenges the misrepresentation that the female subject suffered from in male-written patriarchal and Western colonial literatures.

A study of two selected works by these two African women writers, notably from these former French and English colonies that are Algeria and Zimbabwe, respectively, would allow us to notice the shared concern they express for building a new subjectivity for African women in the postcolonial context. Though they belong to two different cultures, their writings display a concern for rehabilitating instances of their African sisters' agency. A dynamic definition of postcolonial female subjectivity in which the female figure may evolve other than in the shadow of the male figure, be it a father, a brother or a husband. In fact, instead of introducing female characters who, as in male-written narratives, give up on prospects of social ascent, Djebar and Dangarembga introduce female characters that reconsider the patriarchal expectations by promoting their personal interests. In problematizing the question of colonized identities and female subaltern identity in particular, the two postcolonial African women writers bring to the fore the interrogation of both the patriarchal and colonial stereotypical representation of the female subject.

In this regard, both Djebar and Dangarembga negotiate a new representation of subjectivity for their marginalized Algerian and Zimbabwean ''sisters'' by introducing female characters whose identities are in becoming.[4] Through a growth process, Djebar

[4]. 'Julian Wolfreys defines becoming as an event implying relationship to others and a process of continuity that engages the subject at the limits of corporeal and conceptual logics already formed. It brings on destabilization of conscious awareness that forces the subject to a genuinely creative response. Bilgen Akman highlights the move from female apprenticeship to maturity which is developed in *Djebar's Fantasia: An Algerian Cavalcade*. Similarly, Susan Z. Andrade notes that, in both Dangarembga's plays and novel, the female characters undergo some struggle and emerge as different persons at the end. : (see: Julian Wolfreys, Ruth Robbins and Kenneth

and Dangarembga challenge the traditional roles that women were granted in their patriarchal societies, but not only. In fact, parallel to the interrogation of patriarchal limited definition of female subjectivity, the two writers reconsider the Western colonial stereotypical vision of the female subaltern's identity. Finally, the two women writers' introduction of a new female subjectivity is related to women's community and involves aspects of sisterhood.

While many critics have examined the works of Djebar and Dangarembga individually or compared them with other writers, to our knowledge, they have never been put into perspective together with reference to their novels, *Fantasia: An Algerian Cavalcade* and *Nervous Conditions*, respectively.

Despite the different socio-historical contexts from which the two women writers derive their two works, we undertake to bring them under a comparative study on the ground that both of their countries were subject to the dynamics of female subjectivity's marginalization within the mainstream historical representation. Indeed, the two writers challenge the dominant female subjectivity's stereotypical representation by articulating becoming identities for women that break with the traditional vision of female identity within the patriarchal and colonial discourses. Finally, we endeavor to compare the two novels in light of the significant place they give to women as a group in the dynamics of female individual development.

Womack *Key Concepts in Literary Theory*. London and New York: Routledge, 2014)12. Print; (see: Bilgen Akman Female Lead Characters as Examples of Bildungsroman Heroine in *L'Amour, la fantasia* by Assia Djebar and *Les yeux baissés* by Tahar Ben Jelloun. unpublished Master Dissertation Chapel Hill: University of Carolina, 2009)18. Print; (see Susan Z. Andrade''Tradition, Modernity and the Family as a Nation: Reading the Chimurenga Struggle into and out of *Nervous Conditions*'' in *Negotiating the Postcolonial: Emerging Perspectives on Tsitsi Dangarembga*.Ed Ann Elizabeth, Wiley Jeannette and Treiber. Trenton: Africa World Press, 2002) 25-26. Print.

In this regard, both Djebar and Dangarembga emphasize the inter-connectedness between the female subject and the female collective in their novels. In there, the two writers shed light on the relationship of mutual influence between the female individual and the community of women which stands as part and parcel in the success of the female subject's identity becoming. Thus, we have deduced so far that our research is to compare female identity's becoming process that the two African women writers use to promote a dynamic representation of female subjectivity in the postcolonial era. Yet, before introducing the areas of comparison between the two novels, we shall discuss briefly the perspectives from which we have approached the two women writers' challenging of the dominant historical representation of female subjectivity.

As for the methodology, we think relevant to approach Djebar's and Dangarembga's two works in the first instance from a postcolonial feminist perspective. The postcolonial feminist approach will allow us to examine the marginalization of female subjectivity in the historical representation within the dominant discourses on gender and history. Postcolonialism's politics of negotiation of female subjectivity in the postcolonial context will provide us with the appropriate tools to examine the way the two women writers build a dynamic female identity that challenges the traditional representation of female identity in both the patriarchal and colonial discourses. Moreover, Postcolonialism's potential in negotiating a new female subjectivity, which operates change at the level of the female subject, serves as insightful tool into understanding Djebar's and Dangarembga's female protagonists challenging of the exclusionary boundaries between the domestic and public sphere.

Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak discusses the terms constituting 'Postcolonial Feminism'. She indicates that it is a combination of 'Postcolonialism' and 'Feminism'. In this regard, she notes that there is a sense that '' this particular brand of Feminism is separated from the vicissitudes of local Feminisms.''[5] As a new branch of 'Western Feminism'[6], ''Postcolonial Feminism'' seeks to bring into light the typicality of problems of women from former colonized nations.''[7] In fact, postcolonial feminist theorists sustain that 'Western Feminism' has never been heedful to the differences pertaining to class, race, feelings and settings of the women of once colonized territories.[8] Thus, since the lives, experiences and circumstances of postcolonial women differ utterly from those of 'White Western' women, 'Postcolonial Feminism' or what we identify as ' Third World Feminism'[9] came forward in the postcolonial era and made these differences visible and acceptable across cultures.[10]

[5]. Gayatri Spivak, ''Foreword: Upon Reading the Companion to Postcolonial studies''in *A Companion to Postcolonial Studies,* Ed. Henry Schwarz and Sangeeta Ray (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing Ltd, 2005) XV.

[6]. Western Feminism started to refer to Feminists from European descent when they started to reproduce women who went through the colonial experience as a singular and monolithic group with identical interests, experiences and goals prior to their entry in the socio-political and historical field. This led to the emergence of the dichotomy 'First World Woman' being the White Western feminist and the 'Third World Woman' being the African, Afro-American and Latin American woman. It is worth noting that Western Feminists' writings imply namely the classical notion of men as being the oppressors and women as being the oppressed. (see: Ritu Tyagi. '' Understanding Postcolonial Feminism in relation with Postcolonial and Feminist Theories.'' *International Journal of Languages and Linguistics* 1.2: 2014) 48-49. Print

[7]. Raj Kumar Mishra, ''Postcolonial Feminism: Looking Into Within - Beyond- to Difference'' *International Journal of English and Literature* Vol.4, No. 4(India: MITS Deemed University, 2013)129.

[8]. Mishra.op.cit, 129

[9]. Nationalism has historically functioned as one of the most powerful weapons for resisting colonialism, and for establishing the space for a postcolonial identity. Although nationalism has nurtured much of the movement for women's emancipation in Asia, Africa and South America, Feminism in 'the Third World' was acted out against a background of nationalist struggle. Indeed, Feminism and Nationalism developed an easy, if not antagonist relationship because of the often conflicting nature of their social and political goals. In fact, Nationalist discourses proved to be largely male-centric controlled women by capturing them in traditional stereotypes. However, they are not the only instruments of oppression of the colonized female body. (see: Tyagi. op.cit, 46).

[10]. Mishra. op.cit, 129.

One of the most outstanding and consistent works of Postcolonial Feminism has been developed in Spivak's essay '' Can the Subaltern Speak ?''[11] In this essay, Spivak articulates a critique of the Western model of class-consciousness and subjectivity.[12] It is significant to say that postcolonial feminists pointed out that postcolonial theory is a male-centered field that has not only excluded the concerns of women, but also exploited them.[13] Thus, departing from the context of her motherland marked by the British colonial experience, Spivak juxtaposes the radical claims of twentieth century French intellectuals such as Michel Foucault and Gilles Deleuze to examine the disenfranchised and the self-righteous claims of British colonialism in rescuing native women from the practice of Hindu 'Widow Sacrifice' in nineteenth century India.[14]

While the practice of 'widow self-immolation' is not prescribed or enforced by Hindu religious codes, it is an exceptional signifier of the woman's conduct as good wife in the Indian tradition.[15] Yet, Spivak considers this traditional practice as a controversial tradition as far as it generates a patriarchal structure of dominance and signifies an abdication of woman's free will.[16] Dr. Tyagi highlights in the1920s and 1930s, a gendered vision of India was used to serve Indian Nationalism. Yet, for many British administrators, the practice of 'Sati' epitomized the inhuman characteristics of the traditional Hindu Society.[17] Spivak notes, then, that just like Indian nationalism, the British colonial representation of the 'widow self-immolation' practice overlooked the

[11]. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, ''Can the Subaltern Speak?'', in Cary Nelson and Lawrence Grossberg. *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture* (London: Macmillan, 1988).
[12]. Morton.op.cit, 56.
[13]. Tyagi.op.cit, 46.
[14]. Morton, op.cit, 56.
[15]. Ibid, 63.
[16]. Ibid, 62
[17]. Ibid, 63.

voice and agency of Hindu women.[18] In fact, rather than denouncing the threatening aspect of this practice on woman's free will, the British colonial administration used the body of the widow as an ideological battle-ground for colonial power.

It must be noted that although they question gender-based inequalities and advocate for the development of women into free, active and assertive individuals, Djebar's and Dangarembga's novels bear some complexity as they display a consistent consideration for the implication of colonialism as an antagonistic force in the female subject's development. Thus, the two women writers' concern with re-articulating the female subject's representation through the interrogation of the patriarchal enterprise goes along with the reconsideration of dominant Western colonial discourse on female subjectivity. Hence, Djebar's and Dangarembga's challenging of the dominant representation of female subjectivity within patriarchal and colonial discourses applies much to the criticism of female subjectivity's historical representation as discussed by the Postcolonial Feminist theory. Moreover, since according to Spivak's Postcolonial Feminist theory, the ideological construction of gender in both the nationalist and colonialist discourses privileges the male figure, the agency of change is located at the level of the rebellious female figure. Following from this, Djebar's and Dangarembga's novels envision a new representation of female subjectivity through the introduction of a female identity that transgresses the parameters that exclude women from the public sphere.

It is worth noting that postcolonialists highlight the different strategies of content and form subversion deployed by women subalternized by social, cultural or economic

[18]. Morton.op.cit, 63.

colonial structures across the world.[19] Houda Hamdi draws attention on Djebar's need in her works to appropriate the colonizer's language (French language) that was once used to subordinate her people in order to free the female community.[20] Similarly, it is notable that Dangarembga's dealing with women's inner resistances against the sexism of their patriarchal society's stereotypical definition of female identity has raised a rich debate about the feminist aspects of Dangarembga's novel. Yet, Dangarembga's female protagonist attempt to preserve herself from the alienating effects of colonial education, as she moves to the city for a secondary education, denotes of Dangarembga's protagonist denunciation and self-preservation from colonialism. [21]

As the postcolonial feminist theory endowed us with tools to have a better understanding of Djebar's and Dangarembga's centeredness on the female figure's development in the negotiation of a new representation of female subjectivity, we think, also, relevant to draw on Rita Felski's reflections on the contemporary variant of the female '' Bildungsroman''.

In fact, we consider appropriate to rely on some basic principles of Rita Felski's reworking of the female variant of the Bildungsroman genre known, also, as the novel of Discovery[22] to discuss aspects of female identity becoming in Djebar's and Dangarembga's novels. Actually, the Bildungsroman's potential in building a new female self-knowledge and new basis for negotiation between the female subject and

[19]. Mishra.op.cit, 133.
[20]. Houda Hamdi, Strategies of Subversion and Transgression in the Novels of Assia Djebar and Gloria Naylor, diss, University of Benyoucef Ben Khedda, (Algiers 2, 2012-2013)55.
[21]. Rosemary Marangoly, Helen Scott and Tsitsi Dangarembga'' An Interview with Tsitsi Dangarembga'' *NOVEL: A Forum on Fiction*, vol.26, No.3, African Literature Issue (Brown University: 1993)313.
[22]. Rita Felski, *Beyond Feminist Aesthetics: Feminist Literature and Social Change.* (United States: Library of Congress in Cataloging-in- Publication Data) 133.

her society[23] serves as an insightful tool in the understanding of Djebar's and Dangarembga's female protagonists growing sense of assertion as they gain visibility within the public sphere. This assertion of Djebar's and Dangarembga's female protagonists identities of a war activist and an educated urban woman within the public space, respectively, goes parallel with Felski's assumption on the female Bildungsroman's potential of accompanying the female subject into the public sphere.

It is noteworthy that gender and its exclusionary potential for the female subject is deeply rooted in the fabric of traditional and modern African societies. Gender determines women's roles as well as their level of participation in the public sphere.[24] Thus, it is no historical accident that in most of the male-produced African Bildungsromans prior to the second half of the 20th century, little visibility was given to the female figure. Indeed, the female subject was disadvantaged by the fact of her gender and her role confined to domesticity and, hence, excluded from more lofty pursuits such as education.

Hence, it is no surprise that '' the early African Bildungsroman portrayed gender constructions where maleness was socially esteemed and femaleness valued only as an ideal of continuity.'' [25] In fact, women were portrayed as guardians of traditions that ensure their continuity through the different generations with no prospects of self-fulfilment of their own. Taking this departure, Djebar's and Dangarembga's novels envision a female identity in the making which works to challenge the restrictive

[23]. Felski.op.cit, 133.
[24]. Pauline Ada Uwakweh, '' Carving a Niche : Visions of Gendered Childhood in Buchi Emecheta's *The Bride Price* and Tsitsi Dangarembga's *Nervous Conditions*'', *Childhood in African Literature*, ed. Eldred Durosimi Jones and Marjorie Jones (Oxford: Africa World Press James Currey, 1998)9.
[25]. Uwakweh. op.cit, 10.

nature of women's socialization in their African societies. In fact, they introduce female protagonists whose identities of war activist and educated woman, respectively, break with their patriarchal societies' traditional gender roles socialization.

Djebar's and Dangarembga's portraits of a female identity in becoming in their two novels reproduce many aspects of the female variant of the Bildungsroman. Bilgen Akman notes that themes such as pluralism, interculturality, orality and alterity of the Maghrebian Francophone novel which shed light on a quest for identity within a changing society apply to the structure of the Bildungsroman genre.[26]

Susan Z. Andrade examines Dangarembga's revision of generic conventions of the Bildungsroman genre in *Nervous Conditions*. The critic sustains that in many aspects, Dangarembga's novel draws on the contemporary female variant of the Bildungsroman genre starting with the depiction of a Black Rhodesian woman's quest for education that takes her from a small rural village to an elite convent boarding school.[27] Furthermore, she highlights that beyond re-working the making of Bourgeois male individualism through the depiction of female identity in the making, Dangarembga unsettles the traditional Bildungsroman's celebration of individualism. Following from this perspective, Ann Smith notes that'' the awakening into consciousness of the male hero, which is traditionally materialized through the romanticized rites of the traditional Bildungsroman, is replaced by Tambu's growing realization of the seductiveness of the colonizer's Western culture.''[28]

[26]. Akman, op. cit, 12.
[27]. Andrade.op.cit, 27.
[28]. Ann Smith. '' Girl Power in *Nervous Conditions*: Fictional Practice as a Research Site'', in MGILL Journal of Education, vol.35, N° 3(Zimbabwe: University of Witswatersrand, 2000)248.

In addition to analyzing Djebar's and Dangarembga's works from a postcolonial feminist perspective and borrowing from Felski's principles on the contemporary female Bildungsroman in discussing postcolonial female subjectivity's development, we intend to approach the two novels under study comparatively. The comparative perspective will help us to discuss the similarities as well as the differences and, hence, build bridges between these two postcolonial African women's literatures.

Comparative Literature according to Steven Totosy De Zepetnek refers to a literary tradition introduced by series of writings going back to the beginning of the nineteenth century, opening the perspective of a vast, unexplored area. Essentially to compare is '' the act of putting together two or more subjects and revealing their resemblances as well as their differences.''[29]

Djebar's and Dangarembga's novels gather many areas of similarities as well as differences. One obvious connection between their two novels is their narration of women's identities in the making which challenge the traditional perceptions of female identity in their societies. However, the different socio-historical contexts from which they derive their narratives, which for Djebar explores the immediacy of the war context and more its aftermath as far as Dangarembga is concerned, result in two different ways of articulating the becoming process. While for the Algerian woman writer the shift from traditional role is materialized through Djebar's female protagonist assertion of an identity of war activist, Dangarembga's protagonist move

[29]. Quoted in Boldor, Alexandru '' Perspectives on Comparative Literature'', (Louisina: LSU Master's Theses, 2003) 2. Available at : http://digitalcommons.Lsu.edu/gradschool theses/3867.

from traditional role is reflected in her assumption of the role of an independent, autonomous and educated urban woman.

Though each scholar has a proper understanding of the two terms covering the discipline, some commonly accepted definitions stood out and evolved through time in function of the period's norms and practices. Henry Remak notes that '' ' comparative literature' is the study of literature beyond the confines of one particular country.''[30] Though speaking different languages and having been colonized by different colonial forces, our comparative study undertakes to build bridges between two literatures from the Maghreb and Sub-Saharan Africa, respectively, across the boundaries of culture, history and language.

Though the two African women writers originate from different cultural backgrounds and have been colonized by two different colonial forces, French and English, respectively, a continuous dialogue between issues of patriarchal and colonial oppressions stands out between their two novels. It is worth saying that discrimination against women is at present a characteristic of almost all cultures, although to various intensities. Nonetheless, the common traumatic experience of oppression and marginalization that the African societies went through under powerful colonial nations made of the issue of colonialism, the source of an uninterrupted and rich debate between the different world literatures and in particular those from Africa. Indeed, both Djebar and Dangarembga provide through their two novels a cohesive discussion on the complexity of dichotomies of the male- female and colonizer-colonized. Thus, to approach the two novels under study from these different

[30]. Quoted in Boldor.op.cit, 17.

theoretical frameworks, we shall rely on the following methodological outline. Our dissertation will be divided into three chapters, each one dealing with the areas of comparison between Djebar's *Fantasia: An Algerian Cavalcade* and Dangarembga's *Nervous Conditions.*

The first chapter will examine the historical similarity between Djebar's *Fantasia: An Algerian Cavalcade* Dangarembga's *Nervous Conditions*. This investigation functions as a point of reference in locating female subjectivity within the dominant patriarchal and Western colonial discourses and paves the way for further discussion on the two selected works. Indeed, our purpose is not to evoke the histories of Algeria and Zimbabwe as such but to analyze some historical events referred to by the two authors and to discuss the way they affect their female characters' developments.

In the second chapter of our study, we intend to discuss Djebar's and Dangarembga's repositioning of female subjectivity within the discourses on gender and history through their introduction of female protagonists' struggles to reconsider stereotypical patriarchal and colonial representations of female identity. The first part of the second chapter sheds light on the female protagonists' grapple with gender-based prejudice through the challenging of the female subject's exclusion from the public sphere. In there, the issue of education, being one of the most outstanding social injustices, stands as a major site of contestation as far as Dangarembga's female protagonist is concerned. Though not the case with Djebar's female protagonist, who rather reconsiders her society's gender roles' distribution in time of a raging War of

Independence, both protagonists seek to question the gender-based marginalization of women from the public life.

Yet, the regaining of female visibility that Djebar and Dangarembga seek to achieve through their female protagonists is not only materialized by their reconsideration of their patriarchal societies' exclusionary politics on the basis of gender, but also through their increasing activism in the contestation of the colonial enterprise's prejudices. Besides challenging the patriarchal marginalization of women, both Djebar and Dangarembga endeavor to reconsider the colonizer's misrepresentation of the female 'subaltern'. In this perspective, Djebar introduces a young war activist, Cherifa Amroune, that asserts her subjectivity within the male-centered colonizer's sphere. Similarly, Dangarembga challenges the biased colonial representation of female subjects by making of her female protagonist, Tambudzai, a major critical agent of British colonialism and of its alienating effects.

Finally, in the third chapter, we endeavor to discuss the way Djebar's and Dangarembga's novels address the assertion of their female protagonists' becoming identities within the public sphere through the mediating structure of women's community. In there, both Djebar and Dangarembga relate the development of female subject to the dimension of the collective**.** In there, the narrative of Djebar's protagonist development is unravelled in fragmented forms and among the network of other women's life experiences. Hence, a collective story begins to emerge as the identity of individual speakers is deemphasized and aspects of female solidarity are drawn among the female characters. Hence, we will emphasize both the way the

female community affects Cherifa's and Tambu's becoming and the way the building of a collective female awareness and notions of group resistance stands as a condition in their self-realizations as individuals.

Chapter one:

The socio-historical background

In this part of our research, we refer to the background of Algeria and Zimbabwe, respectively because it has a link with women's development in Djebar's and Dangarembga's novels. Our investigation of history in this chapter is justified by the fact that Algeria's and Zimbabwe's patriarchal and colonial policies, with regard female subjectivity, is full of disruptive moments. Hence, investigating the past stands as a common contesting ground for Djebar and Dangarembga in their circumscription of a new representation of female subjectivity in the postcolonial area.

In there, we undertake to examine some historical facts about Algeria's and Zimbabwe's patriarchal and colonial politics of female subjectivity visibility. In this regard, we shall discuss some key episodes that the two women writers' motherlands went through; emphasizing their impacts on the female subject's development as reflected through their novels. Through the investigation of the patriarchal and colonial dynamics of female subjectivity's representation, we will shed light on their challenging effects which at moments proved to be impeding and at others stimulating for female identity's becoming.

It is worth saying that the examination of the histories of Algeria and Zimbabwe as such is not our primary concern. Instead, our purpose is to discuss the extent to which women's patriarchal and colonial stereotypical and traditional definitions of female identity are implicated in the dominant female subjectivity's historical representation. As far as Algeria is concerned, we will briefly refer to the post-independence era and discuss the elite nationalist conservative policy with regard to female subject's social visibility following independence.

I.1. The historical dimension in Djebar's novel:

The experiences of African women have been inscribed in what traditional Scholars, such as the Indian Postcolonial Feminist Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, consider as worthless fine details of life. Accordingly, in order to claim the subject position for African women in both the past and present, and in order to challenge what Spivak calls 'imperialist narrativization of history'[1], it becomes necessary for postcolonial women writers not only to interpolate the past, but also to invest it with new experiences. Bill Ashcroft sustains in this regard that

> The postcolonial task, therefore, is not simply to contest the message of history, which has so often relegated the postcolonial world to a footnote to the march of progress, but also to engage the medium of narrativity itself, to re-inscribe the ' rhetoric ', the heterogeneity of historical representation as whites describe it.[2]

Such claim makes sense if we consider the significant place that some African women writers such as the Algerian writer Assia Djebar give to history in their writings. In fact, Djebar's *Fantasia: An Algerian Cavalcade* draws a clear connection between women's narratives of experiences and her motherland's near and far past. In this perspective, Beida Chikhi sustains that Djebar's writings are inscribed within a project of rewriting the colonial and elite nationalist historical accounts. She asserts: '' The Algerian novel including that of Assia Djebar is a model that would engage in a history of misappropriation of the meaning institutionalized by the official history by stimulating what we could name 'conflict of interpretation'.''[3] In there, the problem of re-inscribing women's experiences marked by the double oppression they suffered

[1]. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, *A critique of Postcolonial Reason: Toward a History of the Vanishing Present* (Massachussets: Harvard University Press, 1999) 116.
[2]. Bill Ashcroft, *Post-Colonial Transformation* (London and New York: Routledge, 2001) 92.
[3]. « Le roman Algérien dont celui d'Assia Djebar est un modèle qui s'engagerait alors dans une histoire de détournement du sens institutionnalisé par l'histoire officielle, en stimulant ce qu'on pourrait nommer ' conflit d'interprétation »: Subsequently all the translations are my translations: Chikhi.op.cit, 46.

from during the colonial and postcolonial times both as colonized and gendered subjects, stands as one of the main concerns of Djebar.

It is worth saying that the historical dimension holds a central place in Djebar's works as the author simultaneously challenges the historiographies, which were and still are predominantly western[4] and male centered. In there, Djebar's academic profile as a historian[5] certainly contributed in increasing her concern with history and concurrently provided her with the necessary tools to investigate, subvert and reconstruct the past from women's stand point in her writings.

According to Bill Ashcroft, the sense of individual and collective identity is strongly connected to the way individuals and communities relate to their past. In fact, by highlighting the central place that history holds in the politics of individual and group's identity's building, Ashcroft justifies much of the importance provided to history in the feminist and postcolonial strands. Such assertion makes sense if we consider the delving into the colonial and national archives and women war veterans' oral testimonies that Djebar relies on to rebuild both her country's national identity and her own identity as a postcolonial female subject. [6]

[4]. Commenting on the supremacy of Western historiography, one can read in *New Dictionary of the History of Ideas*'' The Western form has predominated for a century or more in most of the world, but it would be a mistake to see that as either inevitable or as based on an innate intellectual superiority of method. Its hegemony springs much more from the great influence of Western colonial powers in various parts of the world during the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. '' (P.XXXV)

[5]. From 1955 to 1956, Djebar studies history at l'Ecole Normale Supérieure de Sévres. Out of political commitment to the nascent Algerian War of Independence, she decides to protest by refusing to take her exams, and gets involved in the strike conducted by Algerian students. From 1959 to 1962, she teaches 'The Modern History of the Maghreb' at the University of Rabat. With Algerian National Independence, she leaves Morocco and goes back to her mother country where she becomes a lecturer of 'Modern and Contemporary Algerian History' at the University of Algiers. She occupied this function for three years i.e till 1965. : Calle-Gruber, op.cit, 12.

[6]. Erin Peters, ''Assia Djebar and Algerian Cultural Memory: Reimagining, Repositioning and Rewriting in *Fantasia: An Algerian Cavalcade"*, in *Bristol Journal of English Studies*, Issue 1(Bristol, 2012)1.

It is noteworthy that Djebar's interest in history already appears in her earlier works. Yet, the emphasis on the recent and distant past of Algeria in *Fantasia: An Algerian Cavalcade* in parallel with autobiographical references makes of it, according to many critics, one of the woman writer's most complex[7] works. Indeed, in her novel, Djebar refers to episodes of the French colonization of Algeria from 1830 to the second half of the 20th century, hence covering more than a century of Algerian resistance. Beida Chikhi stresses, in this regard, the central place that history holds in Djebar's novel. She asserts: ''*Fantasia: An Algerian Cavalcade* is referential. Written by historians on the super-structures, the great moments of the evolution of a population, a nation, about the colonial invasion, the war of liberation, about all that concerns the group.''[8]

Djebar opens up her novel with a reference to the French invasion of Algiers on June 13th, 1830. The narrator introduces a historical journey into the far past by giving us an account on the French colonial conquest of Algeria. In fact, the female narrator recounts with details an inaugural moment on the capture of the city of Algiers, mapping, mainly, the position and contribution of women in light of the disruption of the French conquest of Algeria. Though discussion focuses on some key episodes of the second half of the 20th century Algerian armed resistance and how they impact female subject's development, we think relevant to briefly refer to instances of women's activism against French colonialism that go far back to 1830. Indeed, by

[7]. See: Robert, Elbaz '' Du corps et de la parole dans *L'Amour, la fantasia* d'Assia Djebar.'' in *Assia Djebar*. Ed Najib Redouane, and Yvette Bénayoun- Szmidt. (Paris, L'Harmattan: 2008)173. Print; see: Calle- Gruber, op.cit, 37.

[8]. « *L'amour, la fantasia*, est référentielle, écrite par des historiens sur les super-structures, les grands moments de l'évolution d'un peuple, d'une nation, sur l'invasion coloniale, la guerre de libération, sur tout ce qui concerne la collectivité. »: Chikhi, op.cit: 17-18.

reporting these women war activists' testimonies, we intend to prove women's participation in the Algerian uprising that goes back to the inception of French colonialism in Algeria. Beida Chikhi sustains in this perspective that

> The historical inscription of the dawn of June 13th, 1830 opens up a narrative that covers the essential moments of French colonization and the first two parts of the novel, the third part, brings us back to the War of Liberation, the gap time is filled by the comings and goings of the narrator gathering moments, testimonies, correcting, transforming, enriching the documents by her highly controlled technique of the historical challenge. The novelist tries at the same time to give an account of the scriptural frenzy which took hold of the witnesses and that involved them, and in particular the senior officers of the French army.[9]

Traditionally professional researchers have based their findings on strictly quantifiable data, generally obtained through the use of standardised tests, interview schedules or surveys that have been designed by scholars.[10] Moreover, there is an assumption that to be valid, an investigation of history should be based on written documents and texts. However, it is significant to say that the cultural expressions and manifestations are strongly internalized by modern societies that the postcolonial writer bring to the fore the importance of referring to collective memories in the study of the past as well as the present.

Tana Showren acknowledges that the written word has often been elevated above the oral, the written documents generally much preferred as evidences than the oral ones.[11] Yet, while most of the critics have kept faithful to the written sources, an

[9]. « L'inscription historique de l'aube du 13 juin 1830 entame un récit qui couvre les moments essentiels de l'occupation française et les deux premières parties du roman, la troisième partie nous ramène à la Guerre de Libération, l'écart temporel est comblé par les va et-vient de la narratrice collectant les moments mettant bout à témoignages, corrigeant, transformant, enrichissant les documents par sa technique hautement maitrisée, de l'épreuve. La romancière tente en même temps de rendre compte de la fièvre scripturaire qui a saisi les témoins et les ''ayant pris part'', et en particulier les officiers supérieurs de l'armée française. »: Chikhi.op.cit, 28.

[10]. Tana Showren, ''Oral Traditions: Method to Adoptation of Construction of the History of Non-Literate tribes'', *International Journal of Social Science and Humanity* vol.4, n°6(India: Rajiv Ghandi University, 2014)478.

[11]. Showren op.cit, 478.

interest in the oral tradition and an increasing reliance on the oral heritage started to gain ground mainly within the contemporary African women's literature. Among these women writers who gave credit to the oral female heritage and expressed interest in studying women's testimonies is the Algerian postcolonial woman writer Assia Djebar. Beida Chikhi asserts in this perspective:

> In her earlier works and until *Fantasia: An Algerian Cavalcade,* she (Djebar) wanted to reactivate the threatened memory and for that she raised the oral tradition to the status of historical document, concentrating on the relation to time and consciousness, as in written documents. The oral transmission in the moments of historical convulsions aims at ingraining in the minds as on the earth, the essential of what is part of identity preservation.[12]

It is significant to say that many critics sustained that it is Djebar's status of historian that fueled her interest in investigating the complex colonial past of her motherland. Yet, in light of the 'effacement' that women's agency has been subject to in the official war narratives, examining women war veterans' oral testimonies, stood for Djebar as the most valid historical source in her project of rehabilitating women's voices.

It is worth noting that the first part of Djebar's novel opens up with a scene in which the capture of the city is considered as a violent encounter directed against Algerian women. Djebar recounts the inception of French colonialism in Algeria and tracks the development of the French invasion with detailed descriptions of the acts of barbarism and annihilation of Algerian tribes by the French colonial forces. In there, instead of making of the figure of the 'Emir Abdelkader', the only hero framing these

[12]. « Dans ses premières œuvres et jusqu'à *L'Amour, la fantasia*, elle a voulu réactiver la mémoire menacée, pour cela elle a élevé la tradition orale au statut de document historique, se concentrant sur le rapport au temps et à la conscience, comme dans les documents écrits. La transmission orale, dans les moments de convulsions historiques donne pour objectif de fixer dans la mémoire comme sur la terre l'essentiel de ce qui entre dans la préservation identitaire. »: Chikhi. op.cit, 128-129.

chapters, Djebar makes references to war heroines who, in the years and decades following the capture of the city of Algiers, asserted themselves and proved their active presence in fighting the French enemy.

These female characters are introduced as heroines who dare to confront the French colonizer. In fact, they are depicted as courageous rebels in the ' Dahra Caves' where fifteen hundred corpses were buried beneath 'El- Kantara', with their flocks unceasingly bleeding to death. Djebar refers to other female heroines like the bride of 'Mazuna' who, though deprived from her jewels, remains proud and dignified. Despite the attempts to humiliate her and mock her noble birth by taking her jewels from her, she remains fearless and does not surrender. Other instances of women's resilience and courage are visible in the character of the daughter of the 'Agha Ouarsenis'. In fact, after being captured in an ambush with the bride of Mazuna, the daughter of the Agha fights her enemies' attempts to abuse her. Moreover, she fights like a lioness and, even, succeeds to flee from her captivity. Hence, by referring to these heroines of the past, who succeeded to assert themselves amidst colonial and patriarchal pressures, Djebar gives back women visibility alongside men and sets this long line of women war veterans.

After referring to testimonies of women's activism in the first years of French colonization, Djebar examines stories of women veterans of the Liberation War. In there, Djebar relies on the witnesses of women who took part in the Algerian colonized people's uprising. It is worthy to note that before the outbreak of the War of Independence, women were barely visible within public life and did not have access to education. According to Danièle Djamila Amrane Minne: '' 4.5 percent among them

were able to read and write. They did not have access to the world of work except in the sectors that did not demand professional qualities.''[13]

Nevertheless, the outbreak of the War of Independence in the 1950s premised of major changes for the Algerian woman's status. Indeed, the outbreak of the Liberation War on November, 1954 had a significant impact in shaping a progressive vision of female visibility in the Algerian patriarchal society. In fact, with the establishment 'Soummam Summit'[14] in 1956, the Algerian colonized population expressed its readiness and determination to overthrow the French colonial system in Algeria. Indeed, the Summit's Platform proclaimed a set of guiding principles for the years of popular revolt to come and for the first time introduced a female component in the War of Independence. The Algerian Historian Mohamed Harbi discusses some of the tasks attributed to women in the FLN's war strategy. He sustains: '' the domains in which the woman could intervene are enumerated: moral support of the freedom fighters, information, liaisons, food supplies, safe shelters, support to the families and children of the 'maquisards', prisoners and interned.''[15]

[13]. Danièle Djamila Amrane Minne and Farida Abu- Haidar, '' Women and Politics in Algeria from the *War of Independence* to our day'' in *Research in African Literatures*, vol.30, N 3, online, p62 PROJECT MUSE-Area and Ethnic studies- African Studies. Available: https://muse.jhu.edu/article/29382.

[14]. The Soummam's Congress platform discusses the years of Algerian War of Independence against French colonialism and sets an organization able to take till the end the Algerian liberation War. The Soummam Platform reconsiders Tripoli's program and after a global vision of the Algerian situation sets its departures. The rejection of women at the end as an undefined group, belonging neither to the peasants, workers, intellectuals, tradesmen and craftsmen nor even the youth is soon considered. Though women's participation does not hold centrality in the FLN war discourse, it holds to a certain extent visibility in the Soummam platform's texts. : Danièle Djamila Amrane Minne, *La guerre d'Algérie (1954-1962). Femmes au combat* (Algiers: Editions Rahma, 1993) 252.

[15]. « Les domaines dans lesquels la femme pourrait intervenir sont énumérés: soutien moral des combattants et des résistants, renseignements, liaisons, ravitaillement, refuge, aide aux familles et enfants de maquisards, de prisonniers ou d'internés. »: Quoted in Christiane Dufrancatel '' Entretien avec Mohamed Harbi'' in *Les révoltes logiques* N°11 25f. , ed. Solin(Paris: Arthur Rimbaud Illuminations, 1979-1980) 83.

Though in the FLN's (Front de Libération National) war discourse and official war documents, women were seemingly given visibility, Harbi denounces the minor roles and domestic tasks they were granted like nursing, cooking etc … He asserts:

> The women who have had less problems in the maquis are the traditional women to whom it was devolved to prepare the meals, to sew the clothes, to do definitely tasks of the household type. In other words, they were there at the disposal of men to assume the roles that they had previously in their homes.[16]

Harbi goes further in his questioning of the revolutionary dimension that the FLN sought to give to women's participation in the Algerian resistance. He assumes that the women who proved to have political leanings during the War of Independence were often isolated and confronted to difficulties in comparison with women who had less political involvement.[17] In his essay, '' L'An V de la Révolution'', the postcolonial thinker Frantz Fanon deconstructs the FLN's propagandist discourse about women's participation in the resistance by highlighting that it is part of a war strategy of adjustment to the French colonizer's attacks.

While some scholars have highlighted the central role that the 'Soummam Summit' platform held in the reconsideration of women's visibility within the FLN's war discourse, other scholars in contrast denounced the FLN's 'effacement' of women war activists' agency in the post-independence days. It is this erasing of women's contribution within FLN's elite nationalist war narratives that Djebar seeks to

[16]. « Celles qui ont eu le moins de problèmes au maquis sont les femmes traditionnelles auxquelles il était dévolu de faire la popote, de coudre les habits, de faire en définitif un travail de type ménager. Elles étaient là, à la disposition des hommes pour assumer le rôle qu'elles avaient auparavant dans les foyers. »: in Dufrancatel. op. cit, 79.

[17]. « Les filles qui avaient des aspirations politiques ou qui désiraient l'égalité avec les hommes avaient beaucoup de difficultés, elles étaient assez isolées. On considérait leurs comportements, leur volonté d'égalité comme une manifestation de mœurs légères. C'est pour cette raison que fin 1957 début 1958 la majorité des filles ont été acheminées à l'extérieur, ou plus simplement placées dans les douars pour servir d'assistantes sociales. »: Ibid.

re- consider in *Fantasia: An Algerian Cavalcade*. Indeed, the involvement of women in the Algerian War of Independence is rendered visible through the narrative of the experience of a young woman war activist, Cherifa Amroune. Though Mohamed Harbi assumes that women's participation was minor in comparison with that of men, a handful of women war activists like Djebar's female protagonist succeeded to assert their status of agents of the Algerian War of Independence. By presenting women as active agents, asserting their subjectivities within the male-centered sphere of the maquis[18], the Algerian woman writer contributes in liberating the past from distortive Algerian patriarchal and French colonial prisms.

In fact, Djebar's female protagonist, Cherifa, is presented as a new recruit in the FLN-ALN[19] ranks. After the enrollment of her elder brothers Abdelkader and Ahmed, she is sent a message by the partisans asking her to join the Liberation War. Despite the fact that the young adolescent witnesses her brother's death as soon as she joins the maquis, she remains determined to carry on resisting side by side with the 'brothers'. [20] After her capture by the French soldiers, she is interrogated and tortured hours along. But all in vain because the young woman war activist doesn't submit to the French

[18]. A place where the resistants to the German occupation during the Second World War used to gather. The Term is extrapolated and adapted to the Algerian War of Independence context to refer to the place where the Algerian opponents to French colonialism used to gather and prepare their attacks. Available at: https://www.larousse.fr.

[19]. FLN is the acronym of (Front de libération nationale) which is a political party founded by Mohamed Boudiaf and five of his companions namely; Ben Boulaid, Didouche Mourad, Larbi Ben M'Hidi, Krim Belkacem and Rabah Bitat. The creation of the FLN sets the beginning of the Liberation War in Algeria. Militants started growingly to join the party till the creation of the FLN's military branch known as the ALN (Armée de libération nationale) to implement the war strategy against the French colonizer on the field. See:
'' En Algérie, il y a soixante ans, naissait le Front de libération national (FLN)'' in *RUBRIQUES L'Humanité,* (2014). Available at: https:// www.google.dz/amp/s/www. humanite.fr/en-algerie-il-y-soixante-ans-naissant-le-front-de-liberation-national-fln-554229% 3famp.

[20]. The French translation of the term in dialectal Arabic''el-khawa''. This term was used during the Algerian War of Independence to designate the Algerian freedom fighters. The term has been given a symbolic connotation as it emphasizes the sense of brotherhood which ties the Algerian war activists against French colonialism. Available at : http://www.larousse.fr.

colonizer's pressures. Furthermore, she proves to be active in the camp where she was held captive by bringing food and water to prisoners. Hence, colonialism impacts considerably the development of the war activist. In fact, the oppressive French colonial administration challenges the young Cherifa's development into a true war activist.

In addition to the French colonial disruption and state of war, Djebar widens her perspectives and indicates, in her novel, the state of dissolution that characterized post-independence era in Algeria. Indeed, Djebar denounces the patriarchal institution and its abuses as reflected through the FLN's conservative policy with regard women's emancipation. Beida Chikhi sustains in this regard that'' those who thought that the national liberation would bring about the liberation of women have been disillusioned since the independence of Algeria, the contradictions of history being not as simple as we think.''[21] It is worthy to say that in light of the growing dissatisfaction amidst the Algerian civil population in the 1950s, the French regime attempted to introduce a set of reforms that targeted different areas like marriage, family law and education. However, as the revolution gained momentum, so did the rise of conservatism within the Algerian patriarchal society against what they considered as the violation by the French colonial power of their culture and Muslim identity. Consequently, the traditional representation of women's identity in the Algerian society came to symbolize the national identity the FLN was fighting for.

[21]. « Ceux qui pensaient que la libération nationale entrainerait la libération de la femme ont déchanté depuis l'indépendance de l'Algérie, les contradictions de l'histoire n'étant pas si simples qu'on le pense. »: Chikhi. op.cit, 35.

Yet, Mohamed Harbi emphasizes the use of this motive by the FLN's conservative discourse to impede the implementation of concrete emancipatory reforms for Algerian women. He assumes: '' It is always the same thing. We use religion to impede women's emancipation. Confronted to a concrete problem, the discourse on women's emancipation breaks down and makes use of religion and 'personal religious status' to prevent any reforming.''[22] Indeed, following the French colonizer's attempts to emancipate Algerian women by unveiling them, the veil became a key issue not only in the social debates on women's emancipation, but also in the FLN's war strategy against French imposed liberalism. Frantz Fanon sheds light on the revolutionary changes that the colonizer - colonized dispute over the veil introduced in women's status during the Algerian War of Independence period. He claims: ''We have seen the revolutionary commitment and the use of the veil to take shape, the gradual change of the Algerian woman. We understand that this profound change could not be achieved by leaving the other sectors of the Algerian private life unchanged.[23] Hence, though the involvement of the female agent was minor at the inception of resistance,the French colonial administration's strategies for emancipation and forced unveiling paved the way for further changes in women's status-quo.

Hence, in spite of her patriarchal society's conservatism and the neighbours' harsh criticism, Djebar's female protagonist involves herself in the male- dominated Algerian uprising of the second half of the 20th century. By assuming her engagement

[22]. « C'est toujours la même chose, on se sert de la religion pour bloquer l'émancipation de la femme. Devant un problème concret, le discours sur la libération de la femme se brise net et fait appel à la religion et au statut personnel religieux pour empêcher toute réforme.»: in Dufrancatel. op.cit, 83.

[23]. « Nous avons vu l'engagement révolutionnaire et l'instrumentalisation du voile se dessiner, la mutation de la femme. On comprend que le bouleversement n'ait pu se réaliser en laissant intact les autres secteurs de la vie privée Algérienne. »: François Maspero, *Frantz Fanon Œuvres* (Paris: La Découverte, 2011) 333.

in the growing Algerian social unrest, Cherifa does not only challenge the stereotypical representation of Muslim women as passive creatures confined under the severe thumb of Islamic patriarchy but also reconsiders the patriarchal gender-biased roles' distribution in a war context. A challenging of her society's patriarchal tradition and its stereotypical vision of female subjectivity that Djebar's protagonist undertakes to assert her identity of war activist and which will be dealt with in detail in further sections of our study.

After her enrollment in the ranks of the FLN's army wing, Djebar's female protagonist gets confronted with her patriarchal society's standards with regard different issues among which the question of marriage. Indeed, after a period spent in the maquis, the male war activists undertook to organize a marriage for Cherifa with one of the 'brothers'. Frantz Fanon provides some valuable insights into the way the FLN regulated the male- female relationships in the maquis. He assumes: '' the FLN became in a significant sense a surrogate patriarchal authority. The army officer administered the FLN's instructions governing marriages like the traditional father, uncle, elder brother who arranged the marriage of his daughters in accordance with traditional Arabo- Islamic- Berber practices.''[24] Moreover, he sustains that '' marriage became, therefore, the monopoly of males within the revolutionary army, as was the case in the traditional patriarchal extended family.''[25] However, Cherifa refuses to marry the man chosen by the partisans. Thus, by deciding to arrange a marriage for the

[24]. Quoted in Peter R. Knauss, *The Persistence of Patriarchy: Class, Gender, and Ideology in Twentieth Century Algeria*(New York: Praeger, 1987)78.
[25]. Quoted in Knauss.op.cit, 79.

young war activist, the FLN operates its patriarchal authority and challenges her development as an individual.

Djebar takes further her project of rehabilitating Algerian women's place by discussing their visibility following independence. In fact, while women war veterans expected to receive the same treatment as male veterans in the aftermath of independence, the FLN became restrictive with regard their rights. Mohamed Harbi discusses the disillusionment that women war activists were confronted to in the post-independence era. He writes:

> On women's side, there was a huge misunderstanding. Undeniably women believed that they secured equality the day after independence. The war context was unlikely to achieve it. Those who joined the 'maquis' considered common that in this male-dominated society where there were a handful of women, people to be puritan and conservative.[26]

Thus, far from being marked by a radical break with the Algerian society's Muslim values of the colonial era, there existed deep continuities between the colonial and postcolonial epochs in the rigidity of the ideological structures of the Algerian patriarchy.

In fact, women's defective transition in the post-independence era is observable in many chapters of Djebar's novel. In one of her chapters, entitled ''embraces'', the Algerian woman writer introduces an ageing and in poor health Cherifa Amroune. The narrator explains that Cherifa is married to a widower, a workman who is in charge of the equipment of an agricultural co-operative and she takes care of his five children. Twenty years after the end of the War of Independence which were characterized by

[26]. « Du coté des femmes, il y a eu un immense malentendu. Indéniablement les femmes croyaient avoir l'égalité le lendemain de l'indépendance. Le contexte s'y prêtait. Celles qui avaient été dans le maquis avaient trouvé normal que dans cette société d'hommes où il y avait si peu de femmes, les gens soient rigoureux et puritains. »: in Dufrancatel.op.cit, 85.

instability, Cherifa Amroune shares her narrative of experience with women from her maternal tribe from both the pre and post-War of Independence generations.

Moreover, in another chapter of her novel entitled ‘‘A widow’s voice’’, Djebar draws a fairly comprehensive picture of women’s dissatisfaction in the aftermath of independence through the story of a woman war veteran, ‘Lla Zohra from Bou Semmam’. In fact, after being arrested and tortured by the French colonizer during the war period, Lla Zohra’s misfortunes did not come to an end with the advent of the Algerian independence.

Indeed, after having lost her husband, sons and brother in the armed uprising, Lla Zohra became homeless. As her house has been destroyed by the colonizer’s reprisals, Lla Zohra is left with no shelter. Hence, she found herself obliged to go down to town with other homeless people. However, out of legitimacy, she undertook to go to claim her rights, the right to have dignity and recognition for her status of woman war veteran and the heavy cost she paid during the Liberation War. Thinking unfair the fact that she had to pay for a hut that she occupied, Lla Zohra went to Hellal, a man she once sheltered during the Algerian resistance and who was in charge of the distribution of houses, to claim her rights. Unfortunately, she was completely disappointed by his answer. In fact, Hellal did not acknowledge Lla Zohra’s war contribution. He harshly answered her: ‘‘ you pay or you don’t put a foot inside.’’[27] (FAC: 170). Thus, Lla Zohra’s testimony illustrates well women’s defective transition from the colonial period to the postcolonial period mainly with the advent of the Algerian independence. Indeed, this testimony offers an undeniable evidence of the

[27]. Subsequently, we will refer in our dissertation to Djebar’s *Fantasia: An Algerian Cavalcade* as (FAC).

FLN ruling party's failure to make legitimate the Algerian women's war veteran status and to acknowledge their contributions during the Algerian War of Independence.

From our journey into Algeria's past, we have thrown light on the implication of the patriarchal and colonial discourses in the dominant stereotypical representation of female subjectivity. In fact, whether in the colonial or in the postcolonial eras, the patriarchal and colonial enterprises operated challenging forces on Djebar's female protagonist development as both an agent of resistance or an assertive female subject in the aftermath of independence. Different from the immediacy of the war context in Djebar's novel, Dangarembga's novel setting is characterized by a well-seated patriarchal tradition and an expanding British colonialism. In this perspective, we shall go through a historical investigation of the patriarchal and colonial institutions in Zimbabwe in relation to Dangarembga's protagonist's becoming within the public sphere.

I.2.The historical dimension in Dangarembga's novel:

In her attempt to articulate an independent and dynamic representation of female subjectivity in the postcolonial context, Dangarembga draws equally attention on dominant historical representation of female subjectivity within the Zimbabwean patriarchal and British colonial discourses. In this regard, we are interested in delving into Dangarembga's motherland's past to shed light on the stereotypical patriarchal and colonial visions of female identity. In fact, Dangarembga sheds light on the formation and development of female identities within the restrictive confines of the colonized terrain with a particular emphasis on the dynamics operating in the

construction of female subaltern subjectivity. Though history is not as powerfully tackled as in Cherifa Amroune's struggle for assertion during the Algerian Liberation War, Dangarembga's reference to history is implicitly unfolded through an examination of the consequences of the Western colonial bias on female subjectivity's development.

Hence, we will introduce a historical retrospective on the institutions of patriarchy and colonialism in Zimbabwe to locate female historical visibility within the mainstream representation of female subjectivity. In there, we will draw attention on the challenging effects of the patriarchal and colonial institutions on Dangarembga's female protagonist becoming within the public sphere.

Our purpose is to shed light on the challenging mechanisms deriving from patriarchy and colonialism that at moments resonated positively and at others negatively as far as the female subject's becoming is concerned. Following from this, we will focus on the British colonial enterprise in Zimbabwe and the way its policy affected the life of the female subaltern. However, before digging deep into the effects of the British colonizer's politics of female visibility, it is worth saying a few words about the inception of British colonialism in Zimbabwe and its policy of assimilation and alienation of the native population.

Zimbabwe was colonized in the late 1890s by the BASC, the British South African Company.[28] Eliakim M. Sibanda discusses inception of British colonialism in

[28]. After the European partition of Africa, the Shona and Ndebele native groups in Zimbabwe were subjugated by the British colonizer in the late 1890s through the British South African company known as the BASC. Popular revolt was defeated in1893, during the First Chimurenga War, the first unified Shona- Ndebele resistance against British colonialism. Subsequently, British settlers named the country Southern Rhodesia after its founder Cecil

Dangarembga's motherland. He explains that Zimbabwe as Rhodesia began as a historical anachronism and it was the last colony in history to be established by a private company through the use of a private army.[29] In the years following the first British explorations of the Zimbabwean lands, the BASC took notice that the climate and the soils were suitable for agricultural production. Moreover, Sibanda stresses that the British colonizer's aspirations in Zimbabwe were fueled by the motive of expanding its territories in Africa and building an empire that would stretch from the Cape to Cairo.[30] This resulted in the agricultural exploitation of the Zimbabwean lands and the arrival of the white people to settle in the region. However, in the late 1980s, the Black indigenous people who represented 80 percent of the population rebelled against the White settlers who occupied their lands.

Unfortunately, the defeat of the Zimbabwean local population's uprising against the new landowners marked the beginning of extensive expropriation, massive displacement of the indigenous people from their lands, confiscation of their cattle and exploitation of their labor.[31] Departing from the fact that land was a portmanteau issue related to different aspects of the indigenous people's lives in Zimbabwe, it became the primary root cause that pushed paramount chiefs to rise against White British settlers. Hence, we clearly see that the usurpation of the Zimbabwean lands by the British colonial authorities proves to be one of the major reasons that resulted in the natives' destitution in general and of the female subaltern in particular.

John Rhodes.: Milena Bubenechik, '' The Trauma of Colonial Conditions in *Nervous Conditions* and *Kiss the Fur*.''(Hamburg, Anchor Academic Publishing: 2014)8.

[29]. Eliakim Sibanda, '' The Zimbabwe African People's Union, 1961-87: a Political History of Insurgency in Zimbabwe*''in Africa World Press, Inc*(2005)19.

[30]. Sibanda.op.cit, 19.

[31]. Mpofu Busani, *No place for 'Undesirables': The Urban Poor's Struggle for Survival in Bulawayo Zimbabwe, 1960-2005*, doctorate diss. , University of Edinburgh, June 2010, (University of Edinburgh, 2010) 322.

Tsitsi Dangarembga sets her novel during the period of British colonization and narrates her female characters' quest for independent subjectivities amidst Zimbabwean patriarchal and British colonial pressures. Dangarembga introduces the theme of colonialism by providing at the outset of the novel a general overview of the pre and post-British colonialism period in Zimbabwe. She sheds light on the major changes brought up in the Zimbabwean lands in the aftermath of British colonization. Dangarembga's female protagonist draws attention on the prompt British colonial expansion in Zimbabwe as reflected in the increasing Westernization of her rural village and the mushrooming of British companies. Tambu reports in the following passage some of the major changes in her village in the years of British colonization. She asserts:

> The rivers, the trees, the fruit in the fields. This is how it was in the beginning. This is how I remember it in my earliest memories, but it did not stay like that. While I was still young, to enable administration of our area, the government built its district council houses less than a mile away from the places where we washed. Thus, it became necessary for all the inhabitants of the dozen or so homesteads that made up our village to cross Nyamiria as our river is called, whenever we went on business to the council houses. (NC: 3-4)[32]

It is significant to say that throughout the history of British colonization in Zimbabwe, White settlers expressed explicitly their unwillingness to share the lands equally with the Blacks.[33] To this end, racist policies were undertaken and implemented in the years following British colonization to ensure the total subjugation of the Black native population and to secure its lands. A situation that resulted in the gradual impoverishment of the Zimbabwean indigenous people. Unfortunately, the precariousness of the natives' standards of living exacerbated in the years following

[32]. Subsequently, we will refer in our dissertation to Dangarembga's *Nervous Conditions* as (NC).
[33] Busani. op.cit, 323.

the inception of British colonialism in Zimbabwe. Besides the confiscation of the indigenous population's lands by the White minority, the local population was confronted to unequal social opportunities between the colonizers and the colonized.

Dangarembga emphasizes poverty as one of the major negative effects brought by British colonialism. In her criticism of the British colonialism, Dangarembga emphasizes poverty as one of the major pressuring aspects of the colonial enterprise on the female subject's development in colonized Zimbabwe. Nevertheless, we won't only point, later in our study, to the negative effect of poverty on Dangarembga's female protagonist becoming, but address the issue as a driving force in Tambudzai's quest for self-realization.

The difficult living conditions of the Zimbabwean natives during the period of British colonization are clearly observable in Dangarembga's novel. In point of fact, the precariousness of the Zimbabwean indigenous people is made visible at different levels in *Nervous Conditions* starting with the poor living conditions of Tambu's family as opposed to her uncle's family high standards of living. Indeed, while Tambu's father was illiterate, penniless and assimilated to failure, her uncle, Babamukuru went to the British colonizer's schools, completed a Master degree and succeeded to secure a prosperous life for his family. Moreover, contrarily to Tambu's family who lived in a small village and subsisted with the little money that Tambu's father earned from maize selling, her uncle's family dwelled in the city and relied on the comfortable incomes of the headmaster and of his educated wife.

Furthermore, Tambu's father was barely able to finance his children's schooling. As a matter of fact, Jeremiah was regularly confronted to problems in paying Tambu's

and her brother's school fees. Thus, he regularly asked for help from his brother who was portrayed as the family's benefactor and money provider. Rosemary Moyana highlights that Babamukuru's financial emancipation in the novel is an emasculating factor for other male characters among them Tambu's father. She sustains, in this perspective that'' one symptom of this emasculation is, for instance, Jeremiah's improvidence. He does not work hard to fend for this family, so that a year when all people around have a bumper harvest, his family is poor.''[34] Indeed, the dependence that Tambu's father grow towards his elder brother, mainly, with regard financial matters was not only an evidence of the poverty that the British colonizer has spread amidst the underprivileged indigenous population, but also an undeniable proof of the disparities in terms of living standards between the White ruling class and the Black native population.

Other instances of the precarious living conditions of the natives are, also, visible in the difficulties faced by Dangarembga's central female character in getting an education. Indeed, when problems in paying the children's school fees were met by Jeremiah, Tambu was the first person to suffer from her family's financial precariousness. Therefore, after having done well in her studies, Tambu was told that she perhaps could no longer go to school because her father can not pay for both her and her brother's education.

As a result, the poor living standards of Tambu's family, dwelling in a rural setting, end up convincing Babamukuru of the need to offer his brother's family new

[34]. Rosemary Moyana, '' Tsitsi Dangarembga's *Nervous Conditions* : An Attempt in the Feminist Tradition'' in *Zambezia*, vol XXI, N°1(Department of Curriculum and Arts Education: University of Zimbabwe, 1994) 39.

opportunities to get out of poverty**.** He decides, then, to take Tambu's brother, Nhamo, to follow a course of education at the mission school. However, in a November afternoon of the year 1968, Tambu's brother falls terribly ill and dies. Though Tambu is diligent and sharp in her studies, her father believes that offering an education to a woman is of no use and will mainly benefit strangers**.** He says '' ' Have you ever heard of a woman who remains in her father's house?' growled my father. 'She will meet a young man and I will have lost everything.' '' (NC: 30)

Notwithstanding her father's strong objection, the pressing need to find a person to take Nhamo's place at the mission school urges Babamukuru to give to the female child, Tambudzai, a chance of ensuring her family's financial emancipation. He asserts in this perspective: '' I will not feel that I have done my duty if I neglect the family for that reason. Er- this Girl- Heyo, Tambudzai must be given of the opportunity to do what she can for the Family before she goes into her husband's home.'' (NC: 56) Thus, after having been confronted to the dilemma of dropping from school because of her father's inability to pay her school fees, Tambu's entrance to the mission school, thanks to her uncle, brings the prospects of a better life for her and her family.

Along these lines, we notice that Dangarembga puts emphasis on the issue of poverty in her novel and makes of it one of the major challenging forces in her female protagonist's self-realization. Indeed, the meager living standards of the rural peasant girl deprive her from the privileges of an abundant life that her cousins dwelling in the city enjoy. Yet, the young adolescent proves her determination to overcome her family's unprosperous financial conditions and its impeding force on her development as a female subject as she moves to the mission school to get a secondary education.

While the reader clearly identifies the precarious financial situation of Tambu's family as one of the major impediments in Dangarembga's female protagonist self-fulfilment, other challenging factors in Zimbabwe's socio-cultural background are to be highlighted. Eliakim M. Sibanda highlights that in addition to forced labor, taxation, population relocations to squalid land, discrimination on the basis of color became, also, the daily lot of the African population.[35] Indeed, the race prejudice, which holds a particular significance in the impoverishment of the local population in Zimbabwe during the period of British colonization, has a particular resonance in Dangarembga's novel. In fact, racial discrimination in Zimbabwe did not result in the impoverishment of the local population only, but also in the unequal division of opportunities between the colonizers and colonized. Thus, the race prejudice became a dominant aspect of the daily life of Zimbabwean natives during the period of British colonization bringing about glaring inequalities between the Whites and the Blacks.

Dangarembga provides an insight into the racial divide that the Zimbabwean natives suffered from during the period of British colonization in Zimbabwe. In this regard, instances of the Whites' racism toward the Black indigenous people are visible at different levels in *Nervous Conditions*. A first instance of racism is evidenced the day Tambudzai goes to the city to earn some money to finance her schooling. Indeed, when Tambudzai goes with her teacher to sell her mealies, she is confronted to the demeaning and racist gaze of the White city dwellers. In fact, an old lady who proves to be interested in buying her harvest, stares at her like a mere object.

[35]. Sibanda. op.cit, 26.

Other instances of racism are observable, mainly, in the unequal educational opportunities attributed to Black indigenous people and White settlers. In there, striking differences are noticeable between the educational institutions where the characters are provided with schooling. Indeed, the White people's school where Nyazardo and his brother follow a course of education is presented as a school in which only Black people who could afford to pay high fees were allowed to study. (NC: 107) In their article, Edward Shizha and Michael T. Kariwo discuss the racial divide that has been introduced by the British colonizer through its educational system and its different educational institutions. They stress, in there, the limited access to Western colonial schools that the Zimbabwean indigenous people have suffered from. They assume in this regard that

> Racial discrimination in colonial Zimbabwe was so ubiquitous that no African was allowed to enroll in whites-only-schools. A handful of private schools owned by the church to enroll one of the two token Blacks each year, if they showed outstanding academic performance, had influential and wealthy parents or if they belonged to the same religious domination. (e.g the catholic church) as the educational institution.[36]

Other examples of racism are apparent in the unfair division of the public space between White Westerners and Black natives as reflected through the limited visibility of the natives in colonial schools. Yet, even the few Zimbabwean natives who had the opportunity of joining colonial mission schools were still subject to race prejudice. In fact, after following a course of education at the mission school, Tambu goes further in her educational ascent with her success at the nun's school entrance examination. Just like her uncle, Tambu is presented as one among the handful of Zimbabwean natives who had access to colonial education. It is significant to say that when Tambu was

[36]. Edouard Shizha and Michael T. Kariwo, *Education and Development in Zimbabwe: A social, Political and Economic Analysis*. (Canada: Wilfrid Laurier University and University of Alberta, 2011) 13.

driven the first day to the Sacred Heart Convent School, Babamukuru notices that instead of four in a room, the natives were gathered in groups of six in rooms with only four wardrobes. Noticing this unfair treatment, Babamukuru asks for explanation from one of the nuns. She answers:

> 'Ah yes,' agreed the sister, proud of the fact. We have more Africans, here than usual this year and so we had to put them all in here.' 'There are only four wardrobes,' objected my uncle. 'It is inconvenient, isn't it?' sympathised sister. 'The youngest will have to share. We' ve got a sixth-former in here and fourth- former as well. They have to have their own. (NC: 202)

Hence, one may clearly notice the white colonizer's discriminatory treatment of the indigenous people in different spheres of life and the sphere of education stands as an epitome. This racial discrimination maintained by the British colonial enterprise in Zimbabwe is identified at different levels in Dangarembga's novel. Though the sphere of education has proved to be a place in which the racial clichés were the most visible, it remains that a major discrepancy of the British colonial policy in terms of education is grounded on the privileging of the White settlers over the Black local population. Dangarembga gives us a clear insight in her novel on the inconsistencies of the British colonial educational policy in Zimbabwe. Likewise, we think relevant to inquire about the British colonial educational policy in Zimbabwe in light of its particular resonance in Dangarembga's female protagonist development throughout the novel and which will be discussed in the second chapter of our dissertation.

It is significant to say that through her novel Dangarembga sheds light on a British educational system which is embedded in a colonial tradition**.** It is worth noting that the mission schools were the source of formal education for Africans with the

government providing it primarily to White children.[37] Douglas Killam and Ruth Rowe emphasize the direct link between the field of education and economy in time of colonization. They stress, in this regard, the use of the mission schools during the colonial era to serve economical ends. They sustain that‘ The European powers used missionary educational policy and cultural influences to further their economic and political interests in the name of progress.’’[38] Yet, just like in most of the colonized territories, the Zimbabwean location population, whether men or women, were deliberately denied access to education by successive colonial governments that ruled the country through a policy of racial segregation.[39]

Though education was denied to the Zimbabwean Indigenous people, some natives followed a course of education in colonial schools. This Western education which was offered to a minority of Zimbabweans is visible at the level of different characters in Dangarembga's work starting with the Sigauke's family benefactor; Babamukuru. Tambu's uncle is introduced in Dangarembga's novel as one of the few natives who had been enrolled for an education in a missionary school.

While it was already difficult for the colonized male subjects to have access to education, it proved to be far more difficult for female subjects. As a matter of fact, education was a major area where Zimbabwean women faced inequality during the colonial period. Dangarembga sheds light through her female protagonist's troubles to get an education on the double prejudice of gender and race to which indigenous

[37]. Y. Kanyongo Gibbs, ‘‘ Zimbabwe's Public Education System Reforms: Successes and Challenges’’ in *International Education Journal*, vol 6, N°1(Paris: Duquesne University, 2005)65.
[38]. Douglas Killam, Ruth Rowe. *The Companion to African Literatures* (Oxford: Indiana University Press, 2000)3.
[39]. Pharaoh Joseph Mavhunga and Beatrice Bondai, ‘‘Gender Mainstreaming in Education in Zimbabwe: Mirth?’’, in Educational Research International, vol.4, N°4(Harare : University of Zimbabwe, 2015)9.

women were confronted during the period of British colonization. Ann Smith postulates in this perspective that‘‘ Dangarembga’s *Nervous Conditions* investigates the colonial option for Zimbabwean women, within the educational system of the local community patriarchy.’’[40]

In fact, when Jeremiah was confronted again to financial problems and doubts about Tambu’s schooling started to be raised Tambu decides to express her concern to her father about her strong will to pursue her education. He harshly answers her: ‘‘ Can you cook books and feed them to your husband ? Stay home with your mother. Learn to cook and clean. Grow vegetables.’’(NC: 15) Jeremiah’s sentence illustrates well the sexist patriarchal inclinations toward women that relegate female personal ambitions to the margin. Pharaoh Joseph Mavhunga and Beatrice Bondai highlight that in most of the African patriarchal societies, men have enjoyed privileges in different spheres of life that were even extended to the educational sphere. They point out that

> Where Blacks were somehow able to sneak into the education system, it was the boy child who benefitted largely because of the African belief that the boy child was superior to the girl child. Educating the girl child was simply perceived as a waste of resources.[41]

Hence, through our discussion of the historical evolution of colonial education, we have deduced the privileging of the male subject’s access to education over the female subject. While according to Ann Smith, Dangarembga provides a way into reaching the implications and mainly the difficulties in getting an education for women, she introduces, nevertheless, female characters who, with different degrees of

[40]. Smith. op. cit, 246.
[41]. Mavhunga and Bondai.op.cit, 9.

success, try to counter the oppression to which they are subjected.[42] Hence, we will examine later how instead of impacting negatively, Tambu's family poor standards of living as well as her society's unfair treatment of men and women in different social areas like education sets for her an imperative for self-fulfilment.

Despite the privileging of males' education over females' education in both the colonial and patriarchal institutions, Tambu decides not to give up on her education. Yet, Tambu's struggle to get an education despite her society's obstacles takes a new dimension when her brother, Nhamo, is carried away by disease. Because she had no other brother, education into Western modernity is suddenly available to Tambu. However, despite the fact that colonial education makes the way for Tambu's assertion as an individual, it stands as a saving paradox as far as Dangarembga's other characters are concerned. In fact, education in colonial schools proved to be alienating and uprooting for native population. Edward Shizha highlights that colonial education led to psycho-cultural alienation and cultural domination.[43] In this regard, we will discuss the issue of alienation as it holds as a significant impact on Dangarembga's female protagonist becoming. It is worth noting that this alienation, which is vehicled in the first instance by the British colonial educational system, is observable at the level of different characters.

For instance, Tambu's uncle gathers quite clearly the characteristics of the educated alienated colonized subject. He has studied in the colonizer's mission school and has been raised under the constant influence of British Western culture. Furthermore, Babamukuru has been taken under the wings of the missionaries all

[42]. Smith.op.cit, 246.
[43]. Shizha and Kariwo, op.cit, 14.

along his schooling. He has obtained a Bachelor degree in South Africa and has been offered a scholarship to study in England.

Babamukuru is presented in the novel as the headmaster of the mission school where Tambu, Nyasha and Chido study. He and his family live in an urban setting which is inhabited by the White British settlers. Moreover, Babamukuru, his wife and their children prove to be fervent church goers. Thus, we see in the character of Babamukuru, striking evidences of his assimilation and acculturation. While in some instances, he is introduced as a member of the colonial elite, in other instances Babamukuru gathers many aspects of the African patriarch. Indeed, Babamukuru's ambivalence is mainly observable in his attitude towards his female relatives.

Just like the Zimbabwean patriarchal figure, Babamukuru seeks to socialize his daughter into traditional roles of the wife and mother and allows her no other prospects than what is prescribed by the patriarchal tradition. He tries to control his daughter's readings and acquaintances. He even criticizes Nyasha's way of dressing. Tambu reports Babamukuru's reaction the day when Nyasha wanted to hang out with her friends dressed in Western-like clothing. Tambu says: '' He wanted to know where his daughter thought she was going dressed up in such an ungodly manner and told her that, whatever she thought, she was in fact going nowhere.''(NC: 111) Moreover, he beats her harshly when hanging out and getting home late at night. He even goes to the extent of calling her 'whore' (NC: 116). Caroline Rooney explains in this regard that Tambu's female cousin is called a 'whore' by her father, not because she is one, but because she stands up to male authority. She concludes that '' such women are

'prostitutes' in that they will not give up to their desires, which are not subject to the desires of men.''[44]

Still, we clearly see the character of Babamukuru caught in between his leaning to the British colonizer's culture and with all it encompasses on the one hand and his rootedness in a purely traditional Zimbabwean culture which imprisons women's roles in stereotypical representations. Hence, a strong sense of alienation is clearly deducible from the character of Babamukuru mainly in his ambivalent attitude and antagonist expectations from his daughter both as an assimilated colonized subject on the one hand and as an African patriarch on the other hand. Actually, while on the one hand Babamukuru supports Nyasha's emancipation through education in a Western-like setting, on the other hand he blames Nyasha for enjoying the freedom of behaving like White Westerners.

Another proof of Babamukuru's alienation is evidenced in his will to organize a church wedding to his brother Jeremiah and his wife. In fact, Babamukuru thinks that the traditional wedding that his brother and his wife have had is not enough. Instead, he believes that Tambu's parents are living in sin as they did not have a Christian wedding. Babamukuru says to his brother:

> So I have been thinking about what these things could be for a long time. And then, after much thought, I remembered that our mother always insisted that Jeremiah must have a church wedding. Yes, Jeremiah even now, so many years after, our mother passed away, you are still living in sin. (NC: 149)

[44]. Caroline Rooney, ''Re-possessions: Inheritance and Independence in Chenjerai Hove's *Bones* and Tsitsi Dangarembga's *Nervous Conditions''* in *Essays on African Writing,* ed. Abdulrazak Gurnah (USA: Heinemann, 1995)136.

Hence, Babamukuru's belief that his brother must have a Christian wedding means that he is at odds with the traditional marriages celebrated in his native Zimbabwean culture. Edward Shizha and Mickael T. Kariwo discuss the situation where the native when confronted with the representation of his traditions and customs as inferior and the colonizer's culture as superior is pressured to give up on his origins and emulate the colonizer's personality. He postulates: '' based on cultural imperialisms, indigenous Zimbabweans were defined and portrayed as inferior to Europeans and were deliberately taught to despise their cultural identities and to internalise the racial stereotypes of the coloniser.''[45] Indeed, Babamukuru's belief that his brother and his wife should have a Christian ceremony denotes of his alienation and assimilation as a colonized subject. Thus, we notice that Babamukuru's conviction that Black indigenous people's traditions are tied to sin, backwardness and inferiority indicates that he is uprooted from his native culture and alienated from his people's traditions and customs.

Nyasha and Chido are, also, presented as alienated colonized subjects. Both brother and sister have been raised in a Western way and have been considerably influenced by the colonizer's culture. In fact, the character of Nyasha gathers many characteristics of the White colonial elite. Indeed, she has received a Western education and is interested in reading Western classics like D.H. Lawrence's *Lady Chatterley's Lover*. She dresses like White city dwellers and even hangs out till late hours like Westerners would do. Nyasha does not even speak the native Shona language. Yet, despite the strong impact of the British colonizer's culture and Western

[45]. Shizha and Kariwo. op.cit, 14.

ideals of emancipation on Nyasha's parents, they find it difficult to accept her thirst for equality and freedom. This reinforces Nyasha's sense of alienation and her gradual slide in a nervous breakdown. As a matter of fact, Nyasha is torn between the Western culture and beliefs that forged her and the expectations of her father's patriarchal society. Tambu reports what had been told to her by Nyasha. She asserts:

> We shouldn't have gone', Nyasha was saying, looking disheartened. 'The parents ought to have packed us off home. They should have, you know. Lots of people, did that. May be that would have been best. For them at least, because now they're stuck with hybrids for children. And they don't like it. They don't like it it at all. It offends them. They think we do it on purpose, so it offends them. And I don't know what to do about it, Tambu I really don't. I can't help having been there and grown into the me that had been there. But it offends them.-I offend them. Really, it's difficult. (NC: 79)

Thus, Nyasha finds herself helpless and defenseless with regard to the flood of Western cultural influences which, day after day, take her away from her native culture. She claims: '' you know it is easy when you're that young. We had forgotten what home was like, all the things to do and say not to do and say. It was all strange and new. Not anything we were used to. It was a real shock.'' (NC: 79)

Another instance of Nyasha's and Chido's growing alienation is visible in their gradual loss of their native language. In fact, Nyasha and her brother have been speaking nothing, but English for so long that most of their shona has gone. Nyasha attracts once again the attention of Tambu on the colonial institution that succeeded to alienate the mind of the native with false pretenses like the 'Christian Evangelizing Mission' and ideals of progress. She explains to her rural female cousin that giving up to this kind of ideas leads to self-destruction and to the alienation that she is herself suffering from. (NC: 150)

In one of their articles, Edward Shizha and Mickael T. Kariwo draw a parallel between Nyasha's alienation as a colonized subject under the influence of the Western culture and Frantz Fanon's discussion on the colonial implication in the natives' alienation and cultural annihilation. They claim in this regard that '' The character of Nyasha in *Nervous Conditions* is the exemplary agonising character that validates Fanon's argument that colonialism was the cause which engendered psychic differences along racial lines and annihilated the Blacks into nothingness.''[46] Hence, throughout Dangarembga's novel, we clearly see characters that are subject to cultural alienation. In there, we highlight the role of the colonial educational system in uprooting the colonized subjects and infusing in them the sense of rejection toward their native culture. While many literary critics have put the blame on Nyasha and denounced her uncompromising and self-destructive behaviour as compared with Tambudzai, Rosemary Marongly George, Helen Scott and Tsitsi Dangarembga explain that Nyasha's disturbing state stems from the cyclical process between the construction of oneself and what's out there. They highlight the sympathy that the Black local readership expressed toward the character of Nyasha. They stress the fact that the Zimbabwean readership is much more conscious of the question of Nyasha's alienation. In there, they bring to the fore the critical view of a '' young Zimbabwean reader, who emphasizes the complexity of coming back home with another frame of mind and feeling completely estranged from her motherland and native culture.''[47]

In fact, while Nyasha and Babamukuru have seemingly strong leanings towards the White colonizer's culture and have difficulty resisting them, Tambu resists the

[46]. Shizha and T. Karino. op.cit, 24.
[47]. Marangoly George, Scott and and Dangarembga. op.cit, 314.

White colonizer's temptations and cultural influences and it is an aspect which we will discuss later as a primary root in Dangarembga's female protagonist successful development as compared with other female characters. In one of her interviews, Dangarembga acknowledged that one of the reasons that enabled Tambu to appreciate some of the chaotic aspects of her female cousin's development without being drawn into it is her solid background. She asserts: '' Tambu knows exactly where she comes from. She may be leaving it, but it's there for her.''[48] Hence, Tambu avoids somehow to take the same self-destructive path as Nyasha whose lack of direct connection with the native culture and to some extent the inability to adapt to the colonizer's expectations result in her alienation. As opposed to her urban female cousin, Tambu tries to handle the complexities of the colonial situation for the natives by balancing between both the need to adjust to the demands of the British colonizer's culture and the exigency of self-preservation from cultural uprooting.

Hence, by depicting female development in her novel in relation to the dominant patriarchal and British colonial discourses in Zimbabwe, Dangarembga enacts her female protagonist's becoming under the double bind of the stereotypical visions of colonialism and patriarchy**.**

From our analysis of Algeria's and Zimbabwe's pasts, we have deduced that the colonial and postcolonial eras' moods in both countries impact considerably the female subjectivity's development. In there, in this chapter, we have shed light on the

[48]. Tsitsi Dangarembga, '' Tsitsi Dangarembga'', in Jane Wilkinson *Talking with African Writers* (Oxford : James Currey Ltd, 1992)193.

implication of the traditional patriarchal and colonial discourses in the female subject's visibility within the public space.

Through our examination of some historical facts, we have tried to bring to the fore the biased visibility given to the female subject within the dominant patriarchal and colonial discourses. We have identified that there is a deep concern with discussing female subjectivity's development within complex socio-historical contexts marked by patriarchy and colonialism in both novels. In fact, both Djebar and Dangarembga deal with the gendered nature of the patriarchal discourse which, as in the case of Algeria, turned to extreme conservatism with the advent of the Algerian Independence that, to a certain extent, reconsidered women's war gains.

Hence, with regard to our discussion of Djebar's and Dangarembga's project of offering a fresh and new representation of female subjectivity, it is significant to highlight the extent to which the traditional and stereotypical visions of female subjectivity affect female identity's becoming. The investigation of key historical events revealed the challenging impact that the stereotypical patriarchal and colonial representation of female identity has on female subjectivity's development.

While, both women writers acknowledge the silencing mechanisms within the patriarchal and colonial discourses, the two writers address differently their challenging effects on the development of a proper female subjectivity and a dynamic identity. Indeed, in their investigation of the politics of marginalization in the dominant colonial discourse, Djebar and Dangarembga take different departures. Whereas the war context in Djebar's novel is directly linked to the politics of

exclusion of the female subject during the Algerian Liberation War era, for Dangarembga the complex dynamics with the dominant colonial discourse is engaged more in terms of its negative side effects on the lives of the colonized subjects and in particular on the female subject. Indeed, issues of poverty, racism and alienation resulting from the British colonizer's policy in Zimbabwe are treated as challenging historical facts in Dangarembga's female protagonist becoming.

While the stereotypical representation of female subjectivity within the patriarchal and colonial discourses has established its implication in the dominant confinement of female characters in traditional roles. In this regard, Djebar and Dangarembga work to reconsider these monolithic perceptions of female subjectivity in literature by introducing dynamic female identities. Indeed, through their novels, both Djebar and Dangarembga make room to female characters whose identities are in becoming. In there, from the traditional roles of ''wife'' and ''mother'' that women were hitherto granted in male patriarchal and colonial narratives, Djebar and Dangarembga move to roles of a war activist and an educated woman, respectively.

Chapter two:

Becoming process, challenging patriarchy and colonialism.

As the first chapter has revealed that the development of the female subject in Djebar's and Dangarembga's novels is strongly connected to the socio-historical backgrounds of their motherlands, the present chapter discusses the two women writers' challenging of the reductive historical appropriation of female subjectivity in the dominant patriarchal and colonial discourses. We argue that it is through the introduction of becoming female identities that the Algerian and Zimbabwean writers are able to reconsider the limitations of female subjectivity's representation in male-produced patriarchal and colonial narratives.

In what follows, it is this shift from traditional roles granted to women in male-written accounts to roles of an assertive war activist and an educated urban woman in Djebar's and Dangarembga's novels, respectively, that we will bring forward from the two women writers' challenging of the patriarchal and colonial biased female subjectivity's representation. In there, we seek to demonstrate that Djebar and Dangarembga are both concerned with reconfiguring their patriarchal societies' stereotypical vision of female identity as well as with reconsidering the silencing of female agency within Western colonial narratives.

II.1. Becoming process: challenging patriarchy

In the following section of the second chapter, we are concerned with examining the departures undertaken by Djebar and Dangarembga in reviewing the dominant female subjectivity's representation in the Algerian and Zimbabwean patriarchal discourses. As opposed to the stereotypical and monolithic roles that women were related to in the patriarchal tradition, Djebar and Dangarembga envision female

subjectivity through dynamic representations of agent of the Algerian War of Independence and autonomous educated woman, respectively.

II.1.1. Challenging patriarchy in Djebar's novel:

The representation of female subjectivity in nationalist patriarchal narratives has since a long time preoccupied the Algerian woman writer Assia Djebar. In fact, her novel, *Fantasia: An Algerian Cavalcade* reconsiders the marginalization of female subjectvitity within the early male- produced Algerian literature. Through her female protagonist, Assia Djebar sheds light on a woman's grapple with the patriarchal exclusionary dynamics of female subjectivity within the complex Algerian Liberation War context. Through her female protagonist, Cherifa Amroune, Assia Djebar reconsiders the traditional roles attributed to women in the Algerian patriarchal discourse. In this regard, she introduces an image of a female subject that asserts herself as a freedom fighter within the sphere of the maquis.

Djebar introduces a thirteen-year-old female protagonist whose elder brothers joined the maquis during the Algerian War of Independence. Because of Cherifa's family involvement in the 'brothers' growing revolt, their house is burnt several times by the French soldiers. Though each time 'the brothers' managed to rebuild it, when proofs of her family's help to the freedom fighters were discovered, '' the family's house was burnt once again.'' (FAC: 118) Despite their refusal to leave at the beginning, Cherifa's family and other families were, in the end, obliged to go down into the plain.

Shortly after, Cherifa's elder brother, Ahmed, escaped from the French camp. Cherifa's family and the rest of the villagers were, then, divided into groups and were taken to the outskirts of the village where they were put in tents. Soon, the young Cherifa adolescent was sent a message from the 'brothers' asking her to join them in the 'maquis'. Djebar reports the message: ''come back here with one of your sisters, we need you up here! I nearly danced for joy; I clenched my teeth to hold back my ululations.''(FAC: 118) Frantz Fanon discusses the way women were for the first time incorporated in the Algerian resistance. He assumes that married and widowed women were the first to be involved by the FLN's war activists and then in light of the increasing volunteering of young unmarried girls, the FLN was obliged to accept support from all women. Fanon asserts:

> We have first chosen married women whose husbands were militants. Subsequently widows or divorced women were involved. Anyway, there were no young adolescents involved. First, because a young girl of twenty and twenty-three- year -old has never the opportunity to get outside alone, but the duties of mother or wife of this woman, the concern to restrict to the minimum the eventual consequences of her arrest and her death, and also the increasing willingness of young girls, urge the FLN Leaders to take a step further, to forbid any restriction and to accept support from all women.[1]

Hence, we see how the war context and the repressive French colonial policy toward the colonized population who got involved in the uprising push the adolescent to join the 'maquis'. Despite of the French officers' attempts to control the free circulation of the natives through a policy of containment in camps, Cherifa succeeds to escape. Soon, when she knew that her brother was hiding nearby, she got convinced of the need to join the popular uprising. Hence, the adolescent managed to flee from the

[1]. « On a d'abord choisi les femmes mariées dont les maris étaient militants. Par la suite furent désignées des veuves ou divorcées. De toute façon, il n'y avait jamais de jeunes filles. D'abord parce qu'une jeune fille même âgée de vingt ou vingt-trois ans n'a guère l'occasion de sortir seule du domicile familial mais les devoirs de mère ou d'épouse de cette femme, le souci de restreindre au minimum les conséquences éventuelles de son arrestation et de sa mort et aussi le volontariat de plus en plus nombreux de jeunes filles conduisent les responsables politiques à faire un autre bond, à bannir toute restriction, à prendre appui indifféremment sur l'ensemble des femmes Algériennes. »: Maspero.op.cit ,287.

French camp in which her family and other families were held captive. After walking for several hours with the guide, she reached the Algerian freedom fighters' hiding-place. There, she found her brother and few other women war activists.

It is significant to say that the new tasks of nursing, cooking and laundering which were granted to women following the establishment of the Soummam Summit, made of women a new combat component and to a certain extent gave visibility to women within the public sphere. In the same way, the FLN-ALN body involved Djebar's protagonist, Cherifa Amroune, in the uprising against the French colonial administration. Indeed, the young adolescent was compelled to engage in the Liberation War to support women war activists in the maquis. Notwithstanding the apparent rehabilitation of women's agency and visibility within the complex War of Independence context, Danièle Djamila Amrane Minne denounces the absence of a coherent program that includes the female subject within the FLN's war discourse.[2]

Unfortunately, Djebar's female protagonist growing activism within the war context is fraught with difficulties. Indeed, her society throws an accusing gaze at her involvement in the Algerian Liberation movement. Djebar writes:

> She's the one the thirteen- year- old shepherd- girl, the Amrounes' eldest daughter, the one the cousins, neighbours, relations by marriage, all accuse of behaving as if she were the fourth son in the family, running away like that from the douar and the French soldiers, instead of staying put with the other females! (FAC: 122)

In fact, her community considers her enrollment in the ranks of the revolt as unatural and unfeminine. This shows how patriarchal the Algerian society is. Indeed, this scrutiny of Cherifa's behaviour and her labelling as unfeminine denotes of the rigid gender roles conceptions which have clear-cut definitions of masculinity and

[2]. Amrane Minne.op.cit, 253.

femininity. It is significant to say that the fact of involving herself in the male-centered liberation's movement assimilates her to labels of unfemininity and denotes of the patriarchal limitations operated on the female subject. Hence, Cherifa's enlistment in the ranks of the Algerian War of Independence is translated as an act of transgression that challenges the established boundaries between the domestic sphere which is related to the female subject and the public sphere which is considered as being exclusively 'the world of males'. Yet, instead of submitting to her patriarchal society's exigencies with regard to the female subject's development, Cherifa asserts herself and engages in the popular uprising side by side with male activists. By assuming her new role of war activist, the young adolescent does not only assert herself within the public sphere where she had no visibility so far, but, also, reconsiders her patriarchal society's arbitrary exclusion of women from the war context.

Unfortunately, at Cherifa's arrival to the ' brothers' camp, '' the Hamoud's son gave himself up and led the officers to the brothers' shelter. At dawn, the French officers were surrounding the freedom fighters.''(FAC: 119) The enemy started attacking the camp. Under the enemy's shooting, Cherifa's brother, Ahmed, asked his sister to run away. However, while her brother was running in front of her a bullet hit him harshly behind the ear. Cherifa continued along a 'Wadi'[3]. She hid in a clump of trees and didn't move out of her shelter for several hours. Soon, four men who looked like war activists appeared. Cherifa jumped down from the tree. The first thing that came to her mind was her brother who had been hit by the French soldiers' bullets. Djebar reports: ''Ahmed was there. The enemy had emptied his pockets of all his

[3]. A term in dialectal Arabic borrowed from the term 'wad' meaning stream. Assia Djebar, *Fantasia: An Algeria Cavalcade*, translated by Dorothy Blair (London and New York: Quartetbooks, 1985)120.

papers, all the photographs he'd had on him. They'd taken his best clothes. The only thing left of his partisan's uniform was the trousers.'' (FAC: 121) Then, the young adolescent ''manages to drag her brother's corpse to the Wadi nearby to wash him, at least to moisten his face.'' (FAC: 121)

In spite of her sadness, Cherifa managed to control her emotions. Djebar writes: '' then slowly she stroked the dead man's face, she rested it once more against the rock by the stream, and she drew herself up.'' (FAC: 123) Though she lost her brother in traumatic conditions and in a place which was completely unknown to her, Cherifa remained strong and determined. In fact, instead of giving up on her war involvement after her brother's death, the young adolescent exhibited an unprecedented maturity. One can say that Cherifa's self-control as reflected in her calm reaction following her brother's traumatic death denotes of her maturing identity of a war activist.

In fact, Cherifa's decision to stick to her war commitment after her brother's traumatic death goes at odds with her male counterparts' expectations. Djebar reports one of the war activists' reactions to Cherifa's resilient attitude. Djebar claims: '' The spent cry dies away, sloughed off shrivelled skin. It leaves the child standing with a questioning look. She does not seem exhausted; perhaps she has been strengthened. Awkward in his uniform, the partisan draws near; embraces his sister, strokes her hair.'' (FAC: 123-124). In there, Cherifa's determination to pursue her war engagement reconsiders all the clichés with regard women's so-called inability to handle the difficulties of the war context and the harshness of the maquis' conditions.

It is worth noting that getting outside the domestic sphere was in itself a huge accomplishment for Algerian women with regard to the conservative codes which governned women's circulation within the male-dominated public sphere. Though the FLN's call for women's involvement in the Liberation War had a positive reception amidst the young adolescents, most of those involved by the FLN-ALN were either daughters, sisters or wives of male militants. Indeed, the FLN's decision to engage women war activists, as with Djebar's female protagonist, whose male relatives were involved in the uprising, denotes of the paternalistic standpoint from which the FLN ruling body approached women's participation in the Liberation War. Danièle Djamila Amrane Minne highlights the patriarchal conservatism that the FLN practised on women's participation in the War of Independence. She denounces the constant reference to women's contribution in the Liberation War in relation to her male counterparts. In fact, women's role was simply to support male agents in liberating the country. She asserts:

> Nonetheless the inability of the militants to consider women as thinking beings is obvious. Mentioned only by their relationships to men, be they '' mothers, sisters, wives'', women are confined in roles though glorified, but limited of procreators and 'educators''.[4]

Because of all these pre-conceived ideas vehicled by the Algerian conservative society, women were excluded from the Algerian War of Independence and left on the margin of the official nationalist narratives. It is significant to say that Cherifa's challenging of women's confinement within the domestic sphere is reflected in the first instance in her joining of the 'maquis' and the assumption of her war activist's

[4]. « Pourtant l'incapacité des militants à considérer les femmes comme des êtres pensants à part entière est manifeste. Evoquées uniquement par leurs liens avec les hommes, « mères, sœurs, épouses », les femmes sont cantonnées aux rôles, certes glorifiés mais limités, de procréatrices et d'éducatrices. »: Amrane Minne.op.cit, 33.

identity. Cherifa takes further her identity development within the sphere of the 'maquis' when she loses her brother. In there, Cherifa's attitude contests and goes against the infantilism which the FLN's patriarchal discourse used to imprison female agency and activism during the War of Independence. Consequently, the subordinate and dependent relationship that relates the female subject to the male subject is reconsidered by Cherifa's ability to be a subject by herself and to be able to adjust to the war demands. Frantz Fanon postulates in this regard:

> And first of all, this much talked about Algerian woman's status. Her supposed confinement, her radical isolation, her humility, her silenced existence leading nearly to total absence. And the 'Muslim society' which has left no room for her, handicapping her personality and allowing her neither self-fulfiment nor maturity keeping her in a continuous infantilism. Such contentions, sustained by scientific works receive nowadays the only valid contestation: the war experience.[5]

Hence, we see a female protagonist that relies only on herself and undertakes to further her people's uprising against the French invader. Though Cherifa is left with no family support, she commits herself to the Liberation War and proves her physical and mental ability to exist on her own and not in relation to a male figure, be it a father, a brother or a husband. Amrane Minne assumes:

> The move to the maquis is the act that marks deeply and irreversibly the break with the family and the traditional way of life. These young girls whose movements outside the domestic sphere were controlled by the parents, demonstrate examples of courage and determination by deciding to let down their protected life to join the resistance in the 'maquis'.[6]

[5]. « Et d'abord ce fameux statut de l'Algérienne. Sa prétendue claustration, sa radicale mise à l'écart, son humilité, son existence silencieuse confinant à une quasi- absence. Et la « société musulmane » qui ne lui a fait aucune place, amputant sa personnalité ne lui permettant ni épanouissement ni maturité, la maintenant dans un perpétuel infantilisme. De telles affirmations, éclairées par des « travaux scientifiques » reçoivent aujourd'hui la seule contestation valable: l'expérience révolutionnaire. »: Maspero. op.cit, 300.

[6]. « Le départ au maquis est l'acte qui marque le plus profondément et de manière irréversible la coupure avec la famille et le mode de vie traditionnel. Ces jeunes filles, dont la moindre sortie était controlée par leurs parents, font preuve d'un courage et d'une volonté exemplaire en décidant d'abandonner leur vie protégée pour la lutte dans le maquis. »: Amrane Minne.op.cit, 233.

Hence, Cherifa reconsiders the FLN's attempt to define women's role during the Liberation War context in terms of the support they provide to their male counterparts. She proves her ability to stick to her involvement in the popular uprising in spite of her brother's unexpected death. Besides, when Cherifa was standing next to the corpse of her dead brother, she lets '' escape one prolonged preliminary cry'' (FAC: 123). In fact, this cry does not only denote of Cherifa's traumatic experience of colonial oppression, but her will to bring out her silenced voice as well as the voices of sisters whose sufferings and contributions have been silenced. Djebar reports:

> Then, the voice cautiously takes wing; the voice soars, gaining in strength, what voice? That of the mother who bore the soldiers' torture with never a whimper? That of the little cooped-up sisters, too young to understand, but bearing the message of the wild-eyed anguish ? (FAC: 123)

Under the influence of Muslim conservatism, the Algerian society during the Liberation War period left women's lived experiences much sidelines. Through her novel, Djebar denounces the silencing of women's voices and the 'effacement' of women's war experiences within the Algerian patriarchal discourse. Hence, reconsidering the pre-conceived ideas about women's inability to fit within the war context and its demands, Cherifa voices her experience of colonial oppression and that of her 'sisters' in spite of her patriarchal society's attempt to veil women war activists' sacrifices and contribution.

Cherifa takes her development into a war activist a step further by challenging her patriarchal society's pressures with regard the issue of marriage. Indeed, in an attempt to regulate the male-female relationships in the 'maquis' according to Muslim values, the FLN-ALN undertook to organize marriages for male and female war

activists.The FLN's iniative of organizing weddings translates a clear expression of paternalism towards women war activists. Infact, arranged marriages of young adolescents was regarded as the only way of preserving the ''family's honor''. Similarly, Harbi translates these organized marriages as a clear intention to keep the Algerian woman's body and sexuality under the control of the FLN's patriarchal authority. Following from this, he assumes that the FLN went to the extent of assassinating women activists who had affairs with male activists and required even in some cases medical checks of their virginity. He says:

> In Kabylia, in 1957, we imposed medical checks on girls to know if they were virgin or not. According to the tests, this could end up with a sentence to death, but the doctors were against these medical checks and declared all the girls examined virgin.[7]

Hence, when Cherifa Amroune receives a proposal for marriage from a leader of the Mouzaia, she refuses. Djebar's female protagonist refusal to marry one of the male war activists denotes of her rejection of the FLN's attempt to govern the female activist's sexuality according to the patriarchal Muslim values through the institution of marriage. Beyond disapproving the FLN's patriarchal definition of female sexuality within the exclusive terms of marriage, Cherifa claims her right to evolve outside her patriarchal society's expectations with regard women's roles. With the advent of the War of Independence, the traditional representation of female identity usually related to marriage was soon replaced by a dynamic representation of female identity answering to the era's demands.

[7]. « En Kabylie, en 1957, on a fait passer des visites médicales à des filles pour savoir si elles étaient vierges ou non. Selon les examens, cela pouvait aboutir à une liquidation physique. Mais les médecins étaitent hostiles à la visite et déclaraient vierges toutes les filles qui passaient entre leurs mains. » : in Dufrancatel.op.cit, 81.

In spite of the visibility that the FLN sought to give to the female subject, it proved to be a failure as it confined women's agency in a traditional representation not so different from the tasks of the domestic type they were so far concerned with. Furthermore, despite of the FLN's ruling body attempts to limit women's agency during the Liberation War, Djebar's female protagonist growing involvement as a war activist challenges her Algerian society's stereotypical vision of female subjectivity. In fact, Cherifa's refusal to marry one of the brothers denotes of her ability to challenge the FLN's patriarchal authority through the deconstruction of its attempt to keep women dependent on men through marriage. The challenging of the patriarchal authority in Dangarembga's novel is analogous with the standpoint undertaken by Djebar in deconstructing the patriarchal institution in *Fantasia: An Algerian Cavalcade.* In fact, Dangarembga's female protagonist development into an assertive female subject is achieved through the challenging of her Zimbabwean patriarchal society's privileging of men in different areas particularly in education.Through hard work and financial independence, 'Tambudzai', 'Tambu' or 'Sisi Tambu' succeeds to overcome the impeding mechanisms operated by her patriarchal society's in her becoming into an educated woman and a self-realized female subject.

II.1.2. Challenging patriarchy in Dangarembga's novel:

Just like the Algerian socio-historical situation in Djebar's *Fantasia: An Algerian Cavalcade,* the social and historial context in Dangarembga's *Nervous Conditions* is characterized by the prevalence of the patriarchal institution and of its conservative values. It is worth saying that within highly conservative African patriarchal societies, no room was made for women. In fact, they were excluded from the public life and

were relegated to the domestic sphere. Taking these departures, Dangarembga attempts to reconsider women's confinement in traditional representations in her Zimbabwean patriarchal society. Hence, through her central female character, who thanks to her access to education, succeeds to free herself from the domestic sphere's confinement, Dangarembga questions her patriarchal society's exclusion of women from the public life. In this vein, we will particularly shed light on Dangarembga's female protagonist development into an assertive female subject through a challenging of the limited prospects given for women's self-fulfilment in her patriarchal society.

Dangarembga introduces her central female character as an adolescent girl living in a rural setting with her parents, elder brother and two younger sisters. The Sigauke family lives a precarious life as reflected by the house they dwell in. Dangarembga writes in one passage of the novel: '' The thatched roof of the kitchen was falling out in so many places that it would be difficult to find a dry spot inside when it rained. Great holes gaped in the crumbling mud-brick walls of the 'tsapi' and the 'hozi' '' (NC: 125) Tambu's father, Jeremiah, is presented as an illiterate peasant who subsists on the meager benefits of maize selling. Unfortunately, he is regularly confronted to problems in paying his two children's education. Thus, he relies on his educated brother Babamukuru with regard financial matters. Despite his insufficient earnings, with the financial support of his brother, Jeremiah succeeds to offer schooling to his children. Though educating a girl child was not a necessity in her patriarchal society, thanks to her uncle, Tambu is given the chance to have an education.

Nevertheless, Tambu draws attention on the privileging of boys over girls in the sphere of education as voiced by the brother's harsh answer to her concern about being

taken out of school. Nhamo contends: ‘‘ ‘ Why do you bother me ?’ he asked, his eyes twinkling maliciously. Don’t you know I am the one who has to go to school? ’’ (NC: 20) In fact, when Jeremiah was confronted again to financial problems, backing his daughter’s education started to be questioned. Just like his patriarchal society, Jeremiah believes that a woman’s appropriate place and therefore his daughter’s place is at home and not at school. In his discussion on gender roles’ construction, Anthony Easthope highlights that sociologists did not look at femininity and masculinity from the inside, but more at the way social roles are recreated and lived imaginatively by individuals. He notes in this perspective that ‘‘ every society assigns ‘new arrivals’ particular roles which they have to learn.’’[8] In fact, Easthope highlights that young male and female adolescents reaching adulthood are introduced to their communities by being socialized into specific gender roles. Moreover, Carol Macmillan sustains with regard to the female identity’s construction that any differences which may exist between sexes are said to be fostered culturally by forcing women to concentrate their activities in the domestic sphere.[9] It is worth noting that Tambu’s father tries to socialize his daughter into traditional roles of the wife and mother. Furthermore, he does not even tolerate to see his Tambu involved in long readings. In fact, he considers that her quest for education is inappropriate and stands as an obstacle for real tasks of ‘feminine living’[10]. Tambu reports her father’s strong objection. She says:

[8]. Anthony Easthope, *What a Gotta Do: The Masculine Myth in Popular Culture* (New York: Routledge, 1990): 2.
[9]. Quoted in Moyana.op cit, 28.
[10]. According to Macmillan concentrating women’s activities within the domestic sphere leads to the development of supposedly feminine traits such as self-sacrifice and passiviy which inhibits the development in women of their potential as rational, intellectual and creative beings.(see: Quoted in. Ibid) print. She notes that it is this kind of traits that are fostered on Tambudzai in the name of tradition and culture. (see: Ibid) print. Moyana highlights that Tambu rebels against her society’s womanly virtues that Brenda Almond identifies as a mixture of timidity, tenderness, compliance, docility, softness, innocence and domestic competence. (see: Rosemary

> He became very agitated after he had found me several times reading the sheet of newspaper in which the bread from magrosa had been wrapped as I waited for the sadza to thicken. He thought I was emulating my brother, that the things I read would fill my mind with impractical ideas, making me quite useless for the real tasks of 'feminine living'. (NC: 34)

However, as much as her family's poor living standards and her patriarchal society's gender prejudice were detrimental to Tambu's educational advancement; they turned out to be, as the story unfolds, true challenging motives in her development. Indeed, Tambu did not want to submit to her society's pressures and to be confined within the domestic sphere. Though the young adolescent seemed to be clearly aware of her family's poorness, she felt upset and disillusioned about not being able to go further in her educational ascent. She asserts:

> I understood that selling vegetables was not a lucrative business. I understood that there was not enough money for my fees. Yes, I did understand why I could not go back to school, but I loved going to school and I was good at it. Therefore, my circumstances affected me badly. (NC: 15)

As a result**,** she undertakes to grow maize to pay her school fees. She asserts in a passage in the novel: '' I will earn the fees, ' I reassured him laying out my plan for him as I had laid it out in my own mind.' If you will give some seed, I will clear my own field and grow my own maize. Not much. Just enough for my fees.' '' (NC: 17) Thus, with the help of her teacher, Tambu succeeded to sell the mealies to the city-dwellers and managed to gain much more money than what was expected. Yet, despite the fact that Tambu succeeded to gain the needed sum of money to pay for the school fees, she got confronted to her father's restless attempts to usurpate it from her.

Moyana ''Men and Women: Gender Issues in Tsitsi Dangarembga's *Nervous Conditions* and S*he No Longers Weeps*'' in *New Trends and Generations in African Literature* Ed. Eldred Durosimi Jones and Marjorie Jones (London, James Currey : 1996)28. print.

In fact, Jeremiah undertook to claim the money earned by Tambu from her teacher on the basis that she was his daughter. He claims: ‘‘ ‘ That money belongs to me. Tambudzai is my daughter, is she not? So isn’t it my money?’’(NC: 30)

In fact, by virtue of being the family’s patriarch, the patriarchal figure was considered as the money-provider and money-benefactor. Children reaching adulthood were expected to support financially the family. Yet, as earning money was related to the public sphere, women had seldom the opportunity of enjoying the benefits of money. Though a handful of women succeeded to secure financial independence, they were, still, confronted to the controlling attempts of the patriarchal figure.This exigency of the patriarchal societies to have a hand over the money secured by women denotes of the attempt to keep them dependent on men. This, undeniably, stands against any women’s potential development into autononous and self-realized female subjects. In a similar way, Jeremiah’s claiming of Tambu’s money, by virtue of being her father, indicates both his strong disdain of women’s ability to potentially manage money and his attempt to reproduce this vicious cycle of women’s financial dependence on men with his daughter.

Fortunately, Tambu succeeded to carry on her schooling despite her father’s ongoing threats. Her success in overcoming the obstacles of her patriarchal society, as seen through her father’s disregard for her educational ascent, proved her strong determination to go further in her becoming. Indeed, Tambu remained fully determined to get the same educational opportunities with males in her society. Thus, Tambu challenged her father’s authority by preventing him from taking from her the money she secured by herself.

In light of the recurrent financial problems faced by his brother's family, Babamukuru decided to find a solution. Instead of providing his brother with financial help to pay the children's education each time, Babamukuru undertook to offer his brother's male child new educational opportunities to ensure a better life for the whole family. Thus, he decided to take Tambu's brother from Rutivi School to the mission school where he worked as a headmaster to follow a course of secondary education.

Though the fact that Nhamo was older than Tambu made of him a more legitimate choice, the age factor did not seem to convince the young female adolescent. Indeed, Tambudzai brings to the fore some arbitrary motives embedded in a well- seated gender prejudice that provide the male figure and the female figure with unequal opportunities. In fact, Tambu got confronted to the unfair treatment of men and women in the different spheres of life which as in the educational field disadvantages the female child and gave more legitimacy to the male child. Tambu expressed her strong resentment with regard to this arbitrary discrimination. She says:

> I understood that Nhamo was older than I much more advanced academically. I understood that that made him the logical choice for Babamukuru's project. If he had not insisted that there were other criteria that disqualified me at the outset, I might have been happy for him. But he did insist and I was very angry indeed. (NC: 50)

Unfortunately, in the summmer of the year 1968, Nhamo fell terribly ill and died at the mission school. Tambu was only thirteen when her brother passed away. Hence, Babamukuru's project of securing a better life for his brother's family was put in jeopardy. He decided, then, to take Tambu to the mission school to ensure the family's financial emancipation.

Though her joining of the mission school was considered by her uncle as a mere source of financial support for her family, Tambu's educational ascent gave her a chance of going further in her becoming into an independent and self-realized subject. Hence, she moved from Rutivi school to the city to take Nhamo's place at the mission school. In fact, from the peasant girl condemned to live within the confinement of the domestic sphere and under the threat of patriarchal sexism, Tambu gained visibility within the public sphere by securing the status of educated urban girl. Though the academic standards at the mission school were away higher than at Rutivi local school, Tambu worked hard to catch up with the others and to perfom as well as possible in the examinations. She contends:

> The only thing that was not strange in those days was that I continued to be one of the best students in my class. The standard at the mission was higher than at Rutivi School and we had tests often, but I performed better there than I had done at home because Baba and Maiguru knew that my school work was important and did not disturb me when I was studying. (NC: 96)

Besides the pressures operated by her father, Tambu was confronted to her brother's patriarchal exigencies. In fact, Nhamo treated Tambudzai and his younger sisters with disregard. In there, when he visited his family during vacations, he used to ask from his sisters to carry his luggage. Just like his father, Nhamo considered that women's main role is his society is to serve men and so is his sisters' role. Rosemary Moyana stressed Nhamo's sexist attitude toward his sisters. She says: '' It is Nhamo who further practises his sexism and male chauvinism on both Tambudzai and Netsai by always asking them to go and fetch some of his luggage from the nearby shops even when he could have carried it all.''[11] In fact, Tambu denounced harshly her

[11]. Rosemary Moyana, ''Tsitsi Dangarembga's *Nervous Conditions* : An Attempt in the Feminist Tradition'' in *Zambezia*, vol XXI, N°1(Department of Curriculum and Arts Education : University of Zimbabwe, 1994)28.

brother's behaviour. She recognized in there a clear patriarchal inclination that works to subjugate women and to keep them in a relationship of servitude toward men. Still, Tambu rejected completely this frame of mind that denied women's subjectivity and relegated them to the status of object at the service of men. Instead, she claimed the right to exist by herself and for herself and not to serve men. Moreover, Nhamo tried relentlessly to socialize his sister into her gender role by developping in her aspects of self-sacrifice and compliance following the family's financial descent. He did not sympathize with his sister's concern and urged her to accept her lot when the family's poverty threatened his sister's educational ascent. He reminded his sister of ''the priority and necessity of providing an education for the male child over the female child when she wonders why she can not go back to school.'' (NC: 21)

It is no wonder that Tambu feels relieved when Nhamo moved to the mission school and did not feel even saddened by his death. As a matter of fact, the death of Nhamo early in the storyline and the emergence of Tambudzai signify with no doubt that the story is not about death, but about the birth or re-birth of her character in the novel. In fact, in her patriarchal society little prospects were given for female subjectivity's development. We clearly see that Tambu became visible in her society the day when Nhamo passed away. She got the opportunity to move to the mission school for a secondary education which set the starting point of her educational ascent and identity becoming. Thus, we clearly understand that Tambu's development could not have been possible without Nhamo's death.

While the death of Tambu's brother signified, undeniably, the challenging of the patriarchal institution, her transfer to the mission school triggered in her a strong sense of self-assertion. In fact, Tambu's escape through the pen signified also her escape from the shadows of poverty and illiteracy. Self-independence and determination are what definitely enable Dangarembga's female protagonist to free herself from the throlling patriarchal sexism and catapults her into a different world where she achieved a liberation marked by the demise of her brother. Rosemary Moyana sustains, in this perspective that '' Tambu practically eliminates Nhamo from the scene to make way for her educational advancement. ''[12]

Hence, by getting an education and penetrating a public sphere from which women were hitherto excluded, Tambu succeeded to reconsider her patriarchal society's mindsets with regard to the gender roles. Although Tambu was fully aware that women's needs and sensibilities were neither a priority nor legitimate, she did not want to give up under the burden of womanhood as her female relatives did under the pressure of her patriarchal society. Though Tambu's mother urged her to conform to her society's expectations in terms of women's roles, Tambu refused to submit to her pressures considering them as futile. She sustains:

> She began to prepare me for disappointment long before I would have been forced to face up to it. To prepare me she began to discourage me. ' And do you think you are different, so much better than the rest of us? Accept your lot and enjoy what you can of it. There is nothing else to be done.' (NC: 20)

In fact, Tambu rejected the exclusive terms in which female identity was defined in her society. She reconsidered her patriarchal community's socialization of young female adolescents into passive and docile wives and mothers.

[12]. Moyana. op.cit, 31.

Yet, contrarily to her mother, Tambu did not accept to be confined in traditional women's social roles. Rather, she undertook to make of education her way toward emancipation and self-realization**.** It is worth saying that though to different intensities, Dangarembga's novel matriarchs submitted to the norms of their society. In fact, Maiguru and Tambu's mother conformed to the traditional expectations of their ''patriarchal societies which considered women as second-class citizens and therefore as people who should work at home, tending their husbands and children and with no opinion of their own to be vocally expressed.''[13] Yet, as opposed to her mother's and aunt's submissive attitude, Tambu worked to deconstruct these gender prejudices which defined women's identity in terms of the ''house wife'' and ''house guardian''. She asserts: '' my mother said being a woman was a burden because you had to bear children and look after them and the husband. But, I did not think this was true.'' (NC: 16) Indeed, Tambu decided to throw away the burden of womanhood imposed on her and undertook to reach financial independence that her uncle's wife succeeded to achieve thanks to education. Tambu claims: '' She was altogether, a different kind of woman from my mother. I decided it was better to be like Maiguru, who was not poor and had not been crushed by the weight of womanhood.'' (NC: 16) She envisioned female identity under a different light. In fact, she opened up perspectives of dynamic female identity through financial independence, autonomy and education.

Tambu pursued her assertion within her male-centered public sphere by going a step further in her development into an educated urban girl with her entrance to the mission school. In fact, Tambu spoke of her transfer to the mission school for her secondary education as the period of her ''reincarnation'' (NC: 94). It is noteworthy

[13]. Moyana. op.cit, 32.

that her joining of the mission school sealed forever her break with the old Tambu who was predestined to submit to the burden of womanhood and the new Tambu that sought to achieve self-fulfilment through education. She acknowledged the radical changes brought about by her moving to the mission school. She recognized that her urban life freed her from both the constraints of poverty and the limited prospects of the domestic life. She discussed it in the following passage:

> With the egoistical faith of fourteen short years, during which my life progressed very much according to plan, I expected this era to be significantly profound and broadening in terms of adding wisdom to my nature, clarity to my vision, glamour to my person. In short, I expected my sojourn to fulfil all my fourteen- year- old fantasies, and on the whole I was not disappointed. Freed from the constraints of the necessary and the squalid that defined and delimited our activity at home, I invested a lot of robust energy in approximating to my idea of a young woman of the world. (NC: 94)

Moreover, Tambu highlighted how moving to a new setting and changing life style has even reshaped the nature of her relationship with people mainly with indigenous people like her. In fact, while she lived in her village, Anna, the house maid, treated her as second-class citizen. However, since she moved to her uncle's house, Anna treated Tambu as she treated the rest of her employer's family members. Hence, Tambu noticed how her new life in the city gave her a superior status to Black native people like Anna. With this new status, natives, like the housemaid, became agents at her service. So, we clearly see the extent to which her educational ascent succeeded to give her tools to reconsider her previous underprivileged status as a native. She underscores:

> It was very sobering to think that in my change of address had changed me into person Anna could not talk to. It was so disconcerting too, because I was aware only of the change of address. The self I expected to find on the mission would take some time to appear. Besides, it was not to be such a radical transformation that people would have to behave differently towards me. It was to be an extension and improvement of what I really was. (NC: 86)

Furthermore, Tambu's challenging of her patriarchal society's exigencies takes a more significant dimension with her entrance to the Nun's School. In fact, two places were on offer to all the African Grade Seven girls in the country (NC: 180). Hence, late in the third term just before Grade Seven Examination, the nuns came to the mission school. Tambu performed brilliantly in the entrance examination, thereby earning the privileges of being admitted on an honorary basis. Dangarembga writes: '' True she has triumphed again receiving one of the two places in the highly competitive (and largely Convent School) of the Sacred Heart, where she is trained by the nuns. '' (NC: XI) With her success in joining the Young Ladies Sacred Heart School, Tambu got the opportunity of going further in her education.

However, Tambu's uncle proved to be another obstacle in her educational advancement. In fact, taking his Nyasha's rebellious and non-conformist behaviour as an example of the negative impact of colonial school's education on the native population, Babamukuru pressured Tambu on the need to give up on this opportunity. Feeling concerned by Tambu's development into an obedient woman, he urged his niece on the need to refuse this opportunity. He sustains: '' In all we are doing for you, we are preparing you for this future life of yours, and I have observed from my own daughter's behaviour that it is not a good thing for a young girl to associate too much with these people, to have too much freedom. I have seen that girls who do that do not develop into decent women.''(NC: 183). Thus, one clearly notices that despite his Western education, Babamukuru remained deeply into his patriarchal society's traditional expectations with regard female subject's development.

In fact, though Babamukuru agreed upon giving Tambu a chance to ensure her family's financial emancipation, he surprisingly seemed less convinced by her joining of the Sacred Heart Convent School. We can read in there that Babamukuru's reluctance stemmed from the broad perspectives of individual self-fulfilment that the Nun's school represented as compared to the narrow and closely supervised mission's school opportunities. Hence, women's access to the field of education as it was the case with Dangarembga's female protagonist was authorized only if it served the patriarchal society's interests. We understand that Tambu's joining of the mission school was required only because it was meant to provide financial support for the family and to fulfil a collective interest and not an individual one. Thus, we can understand that the perspectives of self-realization which go beyond the control of the patriarchal authority were considered as a threat to the patriarchal society's attempt to keep women under control. Nevertheless, Tambu rejected her uncle's and her patriarchal society's rigid gender-based standards of behaviour urging women to avoid promoting one's indvidual interests and perspectives of becoming.

Though Tambu's brother ended up completely alienated from his family because he associated too much with the Whites, Babamukuru did not seem as worried by his becoming as he was by the becoming of his female relatives. Rosemary Moyana highlights that these restrictions imposed upon women, denote of the patriarchal attempts to prevent women's development into independent individuals. In fact, Babamukuru's objection to Tambu's joining of the Sacred Heart Convent School expressed his will to control Tambudzai's sexual freedom, which ''should be practised and lived out in the way prescribed by the patriarchal norms. In other terms, Moyana

highlights that gender was constructed in patriarchal societies to serve the interests of male supremacy.''[14] Yet, despite her uncle's reluctance in sending her there, Tambu remained fully determined to consolidate her newly acquired status of educated woman and, hence, gain more visibility within the male-dominated public sphere. She decided then to join the Nun's Convent School and to promote her self-interest. She claims in this perspective: '' this is how I settled to take another step in the direction of my freedom. '' (NC: 186)

Hence, Dangarembga introduced to us her female protagonist's identity becoming through her assertion within the public sphere which was developed in a confrontation with the patriarchal authority and its exigencies with regard to the female subject. A regaining of social visibility which was achieved through the challenging of the patriarchal shackles and pressures as embodied by different male characters in the novel. In fact, Tambu made of education her way out of poverty and patriarchal sexism which hindered the full development of her potential as a female subject. Indeed, thanks to education, Tambu was catapulted beyond the kitchen and the monolithic domestic sphere into a world of her own**.** She succeeded to develop into a free individual and a self- realized subject and not a mere object in the hands of her patriarchal conservative society.

As seen through this section of the second chapter, in repositioning women within the Algerian and Zimbabwean patriarchal discourses, both Djebar and Dangarembga introduced becoming identities which challenged the patriarchal gender-based prejudices. Indeed, while Djebar negotiated her female protagonist's assertion

[14]. Moyana.op.cit, 30.

within the male-centered public sphere by challenging the marginalization that women suffered from in the Liberation War context, Dangarembga introduced her female protagonist's becoming through the challenging of poverty and the burdens of womanhood imposed by her family. Still, the two African women writers' project of offering a dynamic vision of female subjectivity goes also through a repositioning of the female subject within the Western colonial discourse. Indeed, besides patriarchy, the two women writers envision a dynamic female identity through the challenging of the colonial bias with regard female subjectivity's representation.

II.2.Becoming process: challenging colonialism

As Djebar's and Dangarembga's female protagonists confronted the patriarchal impediments to make a way for them to the male-dominated public sphere, their development is equally related to the challenging of the paternalistic colonial authority. Though patriarchy proved to have a similar impact on Djebar's and Dangarembga's female protagonists' becomings considering the dominant stereotypical visions of the female subaltern of the Algerian and Zimbabwean patriarchal discourses, the two women writers take different departures in discussing colonialism and its effects in relation to their central female characters' developments. Indeed, the distinct socio-historical settings in Djebar's and Dangarembga's novels result in different perspectives from which the two women writers approach their female protagonists' challenging of the colonial enterprise. While Djebar's female protagonist becoming during the Liberation War is materialized in terms of direct confrontation with the colonizer and its agents, Dangarembga's female protagonist

development, however, is articulated around aspects of denunciation of the colonial system and deconstruction of its alienating effects on natives' culture and identity.

II.2.1. Challenging colonialism in Djebar's novel:

In *Fantasia: An Algerian Cavalcade*, Djebar introduces a woman war activist who does not only stand against her patriarchal society's exclusionary politics of the female subject within the War of Independence context, but also challenges the French colonial marginalization of the female subaltern within its official war discourse. Natalya Vince highlights how the fact of evoking the war period leads to discuss women war activists' marginalization following the Algerian Independence. She sustains: '' the war continues to exist as a metaphor of solidarity, self-abnegation and unity of purpose, exploring how the role of women in the War of Independence has been remembered or forgotten by the state historians and interviewees themselves.''[15]

After having contributed as equally as their male counterparts, women war activists were prevented in the post-independence era from becoming part of the official Western colonial discourse. Adrienne Leonhardt stresses, in there, the ''implication of both the patriarchal and colonial ideological discourses' purposes in the stereotypical way in which women were portrayed to the world, which prevented them effectively from becoming part of an authentic war narrative.''[16] Yet, while Algerian women were already granted the status of second-class citizen within the conservative Algerian patriarchal tradition, the situation did not much improve with

[15]. Natalya Vince, *Our Fighting Sisters: Nation, Memory and Gender in Algeria* (Manchester: University Press, 2015) 12.
[16]. Adrienne Leonhard, *Between Two Jailers: Women's Experiences During Colonialism, War and Independence in Algeria*, 15.

the inception of French colonization. Amrane Minne emphasizes the exacerbation of women's conditions following the inception of French colonialism. She asserts:

> The old Mediterranean background and the Berber culture have infused a component in the Algerian society: a rigorous patriarchy that relegates women to a secondary status. Far from changing the situation of women, Islam interprets it the same way and reinforces male hegemony. Colonization has left the situation unchanged allowing no progress.[17]

Nevertheless, Natalya Vince notes that '' war continues to provide a space, albeit a space with shifting and contested limits within which female agency can be inscribed.''[18] Djebar's treatment of colonialism in *Fantasia: An Algerian Cavalcade* takes this departure and is inscribed in the perspective of reconsidering women's visibility within the colonialist war discourse. In fact, by introducing a female protagonist who assumed a significant role in the Algerian resistance against the French colonizer, Djebar undertook to reconsider the colonial marginalization of female agency in the official colonialist war narratives.

Soon after the death of her brother, Cherifa was captured in one of the French soldiers' ambushes. Though after being arrested, the young war activist was kept under the surveillance of many soldiers, they decided to chain her. In spite of her young age and her recent involvement in the Liberation War, the French colonial officers did not hesitate to use harsh methods of imprisonment. Yet, the young Cherifa dared to stand against her chaining. In fact, she prefered to be guarded rather than to go through unbearable chaining. She shouts: '' Never!' I shouted. ' Nobody's going to touch me !

[17].« Les vieux fonds Méditerranéens et la culture berbère ont imprimé à la société Algérienne une composante réductible: un patriarcat rigoureux qui relègue la femme dans un statut subalterne. Loin de transformer la situation de la femme, l'islam interprète dans lemêmesens conforte l'hégémonie masculine. La colonisation fige la situation en ne permettant aucune évolution. »: Amrane Minne. op.cit, 17.
[18]. Vince.op.cit, 12.

Several of you can guard me, if you like! Nobody's going to tie me up! ' ''(FAC: 133). It is significant to say that many Algerian captives complained about the ill-treatment they received from French soldiers in colonial prisons and, also, about their inhuman captivity's conditions. As a matter of fact, besides the insanitory conditions of imprisonment, Algerian war activists were tortured and were even chained like animals. They were even threatened of being murdered if they dared to criticize openly their conditions of imprisonment. Hence, in spite of the French colonial officers' attempts to subjugate her by using violence and imposed enchainment, Cherifa resisted. Indeed, she got confronted to the French officers and stood against their inhuman methods of enchainment and torture in colonial prisons. Thus, despite the risks that such a daring reaction could have resulted in, the young freedom fighter exhibited an incredible confidence. She even took further the assumption of her status of war activist against French colonialism in Algeria.

Moreover, all along the period of her imprisonment, Cherifa was regularly interrogated and tortured by the French soldiers to try to get information from her about the ' brothers' hiding place and the nature of her involvement in the Algerian colonized population's uprising. It is worth noting that women war activists were subject to the most brutal colonial practices and torture methods. Meredith Turshen notes in this regard that'' The French military and police did not spare women participants who were captured; about 2200 mudjahidat (women freedom fighters) were arrested and tortured.''[19] Indeed, the French colonial agents used even one of their most oppressive colonial methods to subjugate women which is rape. Aware of

[19]. Meredith Turshen, '' Algerian Women in the Liberation Struggle and the Civil War: From Active participants to Passive Victims'', *SOCIAL RESEARCH* vol 69, N° 3 (2002): 891.

the importance of preserving the female body from the male gaze in the Muslim religion, the French soldiers used rape and women's undressing in public spaces as a way to spoil the female body and bring ultimate humiliation to women war activists. In her monologue Zoulikha, Djebar's female protagonist in *La Femme sans sépulture*, recounts the tensions between her and a French officer and the fear to experience the violence of rape. She asserts: '' And Costa, not only by his voice, by, also, by his body, ready, this time to hold me tight, to oppress me, to embrace me thinking that he has broken me down…Yes, the moment of the rape hovers, wanted, denied, getting closer, we confusingly think about it, me and him.''[20] Moreover, 'Lla Lbia' or 'Dame Lionne', another of Djebar's war activist in *La Femme sans sépulture*, reports the humiliation that she and her sister went through when they were undressed by the colonial officers and left naked as the day they were given birth. In there, she emphasizes the dramatic impact that this traumatic event has had on her sister.[21] In similar instance, Adam Shatz sheds light on the traumatic war experience of Louisette Ighilahriz, a famous Algerian woman war veteran. Ighilahriz reports that '' when she was captured by paratroopers at the outskirts of Algiers, she was transferred to a prison where she went through three months of uninterrupted interrogations and torture. She was also raped and abandoned by the French soldiers.''[22]

Henry Alleg, the Director of ''Alger Républicain'', the only newspaper that published from 1950 to 1955 about the Algerian War of Independence was arrested in

[20]. '' et 'Costa', pas seulement de la voix, mais du corps, prêt, cette fois, à m'enlacer, me violenter, m'étreindre en croyant ainsi me briser …Oui, la seconde du viol craint, désiré, renié, s'esquissant chaque fois, nous y pensions confusément, lui et moi. '': Assia Djebar, *La Femme sans sépulture* (Paris: Albin Michel, 2004)133-134.
[21]. Djebar.op.cit, 125.
[22]. Adam Shatz, *The Torture of Algiers* (New York: The New York Review, 2002), online, internet.Available at:www.nybooks.com/articles/2002/11/21/the-torture-of-algiers.

1957 and his newspaper prevented from publication. Alleg was imprisoned for a month in a prison in 'El-Biar'(Algiers) in which he was victim of the colonial violence. There, he wrote his book *La Question* in which he made a detailed description of the inhuman French colonial practices in Algeria. Despite the restless attempts to prevent its publication, Alleg's friends managed during his time in prison to publish it. In 1958, the world discovered through this book, the use of torture in French colonial prisons in Algeria. He asserts: '' My case is particular with regard to its impact. It is in no way unique. What I asserted in my complaint, what I will say here illustrated well what is a common practice in this horrible war.''[23] Furthermore, Alleg discussed the purpose of the French colonial administration in relying on coercive war methods in repressing the nascent Algerian resistance. He explained that the French colonizer's use of torture sought to weaken a growing rebellion going more powerful day by day and affect psychologically the Algerian colonized population. He sustains: '' during the Algerian War (1954-1962), the French military used torture to gain information and, in turn, suppress the Algerian nationalist movement. In fact, torture had a dehumanizing effect on the Algerian colonized population.''[24] However, despite the French enemy's restless attempts to weaken the Algerian Liberation War through massive campaigns of arrestations, assassinations as well as an expanding use of torture in French colonial prisons, women war activists stood against and resisted as equally as their male counterparts to the French colonizer's strategies of repression.

[23]. « Mon affaire est exceptionnelle par le retentissement qu'elle a eu. Elle n'est en rien unique. Ce que j'ai dit dans ma plainte, ce que je dirai ici illustre d'un seul exemple ce qui est la pratique courante dans cette guerre atroce et sanglante. »: Henry Alleg, *La Question* (Paris: LES EDITIONS DE MINUIT, 1961)14.

[24]. Quoted in Jeff Erikson, '' Torture: Henri Alleg and the Algerian War '', *The University of Iowa Undergraduate History* Journal 4 (2013) 25.

Djebar's female protagonist stands out as one of these women war veterans who challenged and resisted the abuses of the French colonial enterprise in Algeria. Despite the French officers' use of torture methods such as electricity, the young war activist did not reveal any name of the leaders of the Liberation War. Moreover, when one of the French soldiers expressed his disdain for a woman's involvement in a male-dominated uprising, she assumed her allegiance and support to the Algerian war activists. Chérifa claims: '' I don't recognize France! I've been brought up according to the Arab world! 'The brothers' are my 'brothers'.''(FAC: 134) Regardless of the fact that the French colonial administration considered the Algerian War of Independence as illegitimate and Algerian war activists as outlaws, Cherifa stuck to her war commitment. Moreover, in most of the cases, the pressures operated by the colonial admnistration on Algerian prisoners, ended up, unfortunately, by the betrayal of their war companions. Hence, by shedding light on Cherifa's enduring of the most brutal methods of colonial repression and her unequivocal devotion to the Algerian population's uprising, Djebar gave back legitimacy to women's unacknowledged war-time sacrifices and contributions. Indeed, Cherifa asserts herself by resisting the French colonial enterprise and its restless attempts to break her war engagement. She matures and proves her becoming in her status of war activist by resisting the colonial attempts to shake up side down her loyalty.

Still, within the perspective of reconsidering women's representation within the French colonial configuration of history and its biased historical visibility in the colonial program, Djebar introduced a female character who did not stand on the sidelines of the Algerian War of Independence, but held an active role in fighting the

French intruder. Hence, beyond questioning the patriarchal exclusion of the female subject during the War of Independence by asserting oneself as an activist, Cherifa's becoming was, also, characterized by a direct confrontation with the French colonizer and its agents. Indeed, Cherifa asserted her status of woman activist in the War of Independence not only by enduring the French colonial captivity's conditions as well as their violent methods of torture and interrogation, but also by criticizing the agents complicit with its colonial enterprise as represented by the 'goumiers'.[25] As a matter of fact, during the period that Cherifa spent in prison, she got confronted to a goumier who tried to threaten her. Though the latter kept pressuring her and trying relentlessly to bring her down, Cherifa remained indifferent. She answered to his harassment by insulting him. She says: '' a man who had sold himself for a bowl of a soup! '' (FAC: 133). In fact, she confronted the goumier with a disappointing reality which is that of his disloyalty towards his country and people. She expressed her disdain for his traitorous behaviour.

Furthermore, she castigated the goumier's choice to betray his people's resistance and to forget about his sense of duty usually for nearly nothing. In fact, though the goumiers sided with the French colonial enterprise, they were not considered as equally as the French officers. In fact, they served in auxiliary units and helped the French colonizer to have a better knowledge of the Algerian War of Independence in exchange of their survival or sometimes meager earnings. Just like the French colonial enterprise's distrust and marginalization of the Algerian Harkis'

[25]. A term derived from the Arabic word ''gum''or in Academic Arabic ''qaum'' or tribe in English. The term had a particular significance within the context of the Algerian War of Independence as it referred to tribe members who became complicit agents within the French colonial enterprise: www. laroursse.fr/dictionnaires/ français/ goum/ 37630.

contributions in the aftermath of the Algerian Independence as well as in the two World Wars, the goumiers' collaboration with the French colonizer was left much sidelines. Though daring to answer a colonial agent the way the young Cherifa Amroune answered would have put any Algerian prisoner under the threat of violent reprisals, Cherifa remains fearless. It is worth noting that the rivalry that grew between the FLN's ex-war activists (goumiers) and the FLN's war militants' factions resulted in the most obscure assassinations in the history of the Algerian War of Independence. Hence, we see Djebar's female protagonist growing more assertive by confronting the agents of French colonialism as represented by the goumiers with the upsetting reality of their disloyalty with regard the Algerian resistance. She disdained the goumiers' cowardice and criticized their disloyal and unethical way of ensuring their survival. Indeed, Cherifa seemed ready to assume the consequences of her strong-headedness and daring attitude than betraying her war companions.

As the time that Cherifa spent in prison passed by, the goumiers' intimidations did not come to an end, but rather intensified. Indeed, one day, one of them got close to Cherifa's cell and started threatening her. He says: '' I am going to kill her.'' (FAC: 134) While the second goumier advised the first goumier to put an end to his threats, '' the third one sarcastically puts a riffle next to Cherifa and challenges her to take it and shoot him dead.'' (FAC: 134) In so doing, the goumier expressed clearly his distrust of Cherifa's audacity and ability to take the riffle and to behave as a true war activist would do. Still, Cherifa rudely answers the goumiers: '' but I retorded d'you think I can't shoot ? Give it to me you'll soon see.'' (FAC: 134). Cherifa's answer to the goumier sought to prove to these colonial officers that, though she is portrayed in

western colonial writings as fragile, she has got enough courage to be a true agent of resistance. Hence, even though the goumiers expressed disdain and undermined women's participation in War of Independence, Cherifa's fearless attitude challenged the colonizer's clichés and pre-conceived ideas about women's ability to fit within the war context.

One morning they loaded Cherifa and other prisoners in trucks and drove them off. They stopped at some barracks once in Cherchell. Then, they put Cherifa in a cell and asked her if she wanted to have a bath. Cherifa agreed. Thus, one of the officers took her to a tap and gave her some soap and a towel. (FAC: 135) Soon, they came and fetched her for an interrogation which lasted long hours. All along her interrogations, Cherifa did not give any information to the officers. In one of their interrogations, the French officers asked her questions about the 'Hamdaniya' tribe, named after the name of its leader 'Hamdane'. Indeed, the officers wanted to enquire if the tribe had broken up and collapsed. Cherifa answered invariably that 'she does not know' (FAC: 135). Thus, one day one of the officers lost his temper and hit Cherifa twice across the face. Unfortunately, Cherifa's persistent silence and unwillingness to co-operate pushed the French officers to go further in their violence using torture.

Still, Cherifa remained determined not to surrender to the officers' pressures even under torture. She claims: '' I didn't feel any fear: God made these Frenchmen seem like shadows in front of my eyes! And it was true, I would have preferred to die!'' (FAC: 135) Though she was taken for long hours of interrogation and went through the most dehumanizing torture practices, Cherifa refused to help the colonial agents. She seemed, even, ready to die rather being disloyal towards her war

companions. Hence, the young female subaltern develops into a courageous war activist who is not afraid of death as much as she is afraid of treason.

Then one day the officer who slapped her in the face came and told her that she was going to move to Gouraya, a prison known for its officer 'Bénardi', who was the chief of the SAS[26] and who was well-known in the locality. However, Cherifa didn't stay a long time there. In fact, soon she was taken to a place called Sacred Woods which held the biggest prison in the district. There, Cherifa was received by a lieutenant known as Lacoste[27]. At her arrival to the prison, Cherifa reported her first encounter with the lieutenant. She asserts: '' He didn't speak to me, just looked me over then nodded.'' (FAC: 137) Lacoste ordered then his officers to take Cherifa to her cell. The day after, she was taken again to be interrogated about names of leaders of the growing popular uprising**.**

Moreover, she criticized openly the French colonial enterprise and highlighted its illegitimacy in Algeria as she disapproved of the traitorous behaviour of the goumiers and their complicit attitude with the colonial administration. Hence, through her capacity of bearing some of the most brutal methods of torture, Cherifa succeeded to reconsider the biased French colonial vision of the female subaltern's agency during the War of Independence period. Moreover, through the young adolescent's

[26].The Specialized Admnistrative Section stand as the legacy of the '' Arab Bureau'' of the 19th century. Yet, the link is not clearly established. '' The Algerian Arab Bureau'' doomed to disappear with the progress of the civilian population were dismantled in Northern Algeria between 1870 and 1880. Yet, this tradition was still visible in 1954. First of all, the Algerian desert (Sahara) known as '' the territories of the South'' remains a military territory admnistered by officers of the Saharian matters. : Jacques Fremeaux, *Guerres Mondiales et Conflits Contemporains* ed. Presses Universitaires de France n 208(Paris: PUF, 2002)55.

[27]. Guy Mollet appoints Robert Lacoste in February in 9th, 1956 resident minister in Algeria. He wants to make of Algeria a multiracial democracy, harsh in his repression of the nationalists and communists, he decides of the executions of the resistants and introduces centers of house arrests and he agrees on the pacification zones and operations of general Beaufre which justify massive population confinement. Maurice Faivre. '' Une biographie nonpartisanedeRobertLacoste''Availableat: etudescoloniales.canalblog.com/archives/2011/06/22/21466016.html

psychological strength, Djebar reconsidered the dominant ideas about women's incapacity to adjust to the war conditions and demands that resulted in their marginalization and exclusion within the offical French war accounts.

However, Cherifa was locked in day and night as a result of her persistent refusal to speak. One day the lieutenant Lacoste arrived and asked her if she was alright and satisfied with her captivity conditions. Cherifa answered the lieutenant harshly: '' No! I am not all alright! It's like an oven in here!... When we take your men prisoner, we don't lock them up night and day! … We don't act unjustly like you do!'' (FAC: 137). Hence, since the day Cherifa confronted Lacoste, her captivity's conditions improved considerably. She underscores: '' then, they allowed me to keep the door on the courtyard open. If I wanted to go out for a moment, I could. At night the door was locked again. I remained there for seven months or more! '' (FAC: 137). Thus, by getting the right of keeping the door open, Cherifa reconsidered the Algerian prisoners' captivity conditions as well as reconsidered the limited circulation they were attributed in colonial prisons. Hence, Cherifa goes a step further in her identity becoming not only by confronting directly the French colonial officers, but also by contesting their repressive colonial methods.

Hence, in addition to challenging the patriarchal restrictions operated on the female subject's development within the Liberation War context, Djebar equally highlights the significance of deconstructing the French colonial stereotypical representation of women in articulating Cherifa's development into an assertive war agent.

II.2.2.Challenging colonialism in Dangarembga's novel:

Similar to Djebar's female protagonist whose development into an assertive war activist was related to the challenging of the colonial entreprise, Dangarembga's central female character becoming was built through a criticism of the colonial institution and of its alienating effects on natives. In fact, in Dangarembga's novel, the regaining of women's visibility within the male-centered public sphere was, also, enacted through Tambu's growing awareness of the alienating impact of colonial education and White Western cultural values on her people. Throughout her process of discovery and growth, Tambudzai was guided by her cousin, Nyasha whose experiences in England gave her a better knowledge of the urban life. Relying on her own experiences in the city and Nyasha's insightful accounts in a Western-like setting, Tambu constructed her becoming by criticizing the British colonial project in Zimbabwe. Hence, Dangarembga set Tambu's development by making of her a critical agent of the disruptive impact of the British colonial experience on Zimbabwean Indigenous people. In there, Dangarembga fueled each stage of Tambu's development in a Western setting with an imperative for self-preservation of one's native identity and culture.

The first character whose life is affected by colonialism in Dangarembga's novel is Tambu's brother Nhamo. Tambudzai drew attention on how the colonial education that her brother received at the mission school turned him into a stranger. In fact, she brought to the fore Nhamo's growing estrangement from his previous life following his joining of the mission school. In there, Dangarembga drew attention on the visible gap between Nhamo and the mission school's life on the one hand and Tambu and the

life at the homestead on the other hand. It is significant to say that during his first days at the mission school, Nhamo used to visit his family at the homestead from time to time. As time passed by, Nhamo ended up refusing to come to the homestead even during summer vacations. Tambu claims:

> Very soon after going to the mission school, my brother stopped coming home to stay during the short vacations. Although he did visit occasionally with my uncle, he came back home to stay only once a year when the school year ended and the maize year began. During the april and august holidays Nhamo refused to come home, saying it was necessary to read his books ceaselessly in order to pass his examinations at the end of the year. (NC: 5-6)

In fact, when Nhamo was dwelling in the homestead, he used to share the house chores with his sisters and to shoulder as best as possible the miseries that the family went through. Yet, since he moved to the mission school, the life of the homestead and its burdens became so heavy for him that he set himself apart from his rural life. Tambu claims:

> All this poverty began to offend him, or at the very least embarass him after he went to the mission, in a way that it had not not done before. Before he went to the mission, we had been able to agree that although our squalor was brutal, it was uncomprisingly ours, that the burden of dispelling it was, as a result, ours, too. But, then something that he saw at the mission turned his mind to thinking that our homestead had no longer any claim upon him. (NC: 7)

However, Tambu seemed to be less affected than her brother. In fact, she got aware of the alienating effect of colonial education that emptied her brother's brain from his native culture and traditions and filled it with alien Western values. In this regard, she strived to assert herself, as a 'girl of the world' as she says in the novel, being careful not to lose herself as a Zimbabwean native. As a result, in contrast with Nhamo, in spite of the complex financial situation of her family and the precarious living conditions of the homestead, Tambu kept accompanying her uncle whenever he

came to the homestead and remained as involved as she was before moving to the mission school.

Taking this fact into consideration, Tambu envisioned the British colonial enterprise in Zimbabwe and its institutions under a different light. Her maturing self became aware that the colonizer's educational institutions posed serious threats for the Zimbabwean local population like her and her brother. She grew suspicious of a blind and unquestioning acceptance of the benefits of the Western civilizing mission in colonized areas and on colonized populations. Therefore, Tambu's understanding of the reasons behind her brother's rejection of his homestead life stood a powerful tool in challenging the disruptive impact of colonialism on the native's development and in handling her future experiences in a Western-like setting.

Tambu goes further in the denunciation of the destructive impacts of colonial education on Zimbabwean indigenous people. In this regard, she drew attention on her changed relationship with her urban cousins when they came back from England. Tambu noticed, right at the beginning, the estrangement from their native culture that characterizes Nyasha and Chido. In fact, at the ceremony celebrating Babamukuru's homecoming, both Nyasha and Chido stayed apart from their relatives preferring not to get involved in their traditional songs or dances. Moreover, when Tambu tried to communicate with them in their native language, none of them understands. Her uncle's wife ended up explaining to Tambu that her cousins have been speaking nothing but English that most of their Shona language has gone. Tambu expresses her disappointment. She says: '' It was difficult though. I had been looking forward to having my cousins back so that things would be fun and friendly and warm as they had

been in the old days, but it was not happening that way. So deep was my disappointment.'' (NC: 43)

Hence, we see Tambu longing for the strong connection that used to relate Tambu and her cousins, in particular her female cousin, Nyasha. Indeed, while Tambu and Nyasha used to be close to one another, the experiences that her female cousins went through seemed to have changed her deeply and it is their hitherto warm relationship which is most affected. At the very beginning of the novel, Tambu highlighted the strong relationship that related Tambu to her urban female cousin. In point of fact, the narrator revealed that Tambu and Nyasha used to take baths in Nyamiria's river. They used to speak only in Shona. However, since her homecoming, Nyasha seemed to be lost amidst this rural life and it seems that her native people could no longer have any claim on her. Tambu says about her cousin:

> I missed the bold, ebullient companion I had had who had gone to England but not returned from there. Yet, each time she came I could see she had grown a little duller dimmer, the expression in her eyes a little more complex, as though she were directing more and more of her energy inwards to commune with herself about issues that she alone had seen. (NC: 52)

Hence, Nyasha's Western experience seemed to have ruined their relationship. Though Tambu failed to communicate with her cousin in their native language and in spite of her undeniable alienation from their native culture, Tambu recognizes that'' there was something that was intangible about Nyasha, so intangible that she could not decide whether it was intangibly good or bad.''(NC: 76) She got to know soon that though she disagreed with Nyasha on many things, there was something about her that gave to her becoming full significance.

As the storyline unfolds, Nyasha's influence proved to be the most significant in Tambu's development into a self-realized subject and critical agent of the British colonial enterprise. In fact, Tambu benefits from Nyasha's knowledge and experiences in England, which though alienating proved to be an asset in Tambu's development in a colonial setting. It is undeniable that it was thanks to Nyasha that a new Tambu emerges who did not only challenge patriarchal exigencies towards women, but, also, reconsidered colonialism and its impeding forces. She underscores:

> So I should have been content to go to school and achieve my good grades. I should have been content with preparing myself for the life I have described. But Nyasha's energy, at times stormy and turbulent, at times confidently serene, but always reaching, reaching a little further than I had even thought of reaching, was beginning to indicate there were other directions to be taken, other struggles to engage in besides the consuming desire to emancipate myself and my family. Nyasha gave me the impression of moving, always moving and striving towards some state that she had seen and accepted a long time ago. Apprehensive as I was, vague as I was about the nature of her destination, I wanted to go with her. (NC: 153- 154)

Moreover, in the denunciation of the British colonial enterprise, Tambu did not only tackle the challenging effects of colonialism on her relationship with her cousins, but even with her brother Nhamo. It is significant to say that when Nhamo used to live at the homestead, he already had a particular sense of male authority that he operated on his sisters to make them do things for him like carrying his luggage or catching a hen. Nevertheless, even if he moved to the mission school, his sense of male superiority remained as strong as it was before he started the city life. As a matter of fact, when Tambu was implored by her father to curb her unatural inclination to accompany him and Nhamo to the airport to welcome Babamukuru, her brother had fun in asking silly questions about the aeroplane simply to irritate his sister. Tambu reports:

> My brother was to accompany my father on the trip and exaggerated his anticipation of the event for my benefit by asking rhetorically in my presence very silly questions.Was the roar of an aeroplane so loud it would deafen? Was it in fact a leonine roar or did it sound more like a giant bee- fly? How did an aeroplane flap its wings when it was close to the ground? Naturally, I would not answer. (NC: 32)

Indeed, Nhamo's showy attitude towards his sister and his intent to irrate her as he has been chosen by Jeremiah to welcome by Babamukuru reveals, also, the belief in the male figure being more fit than the female figure within the Western colonial discourse that prevents Tambu from enjoying a journey to the airport

Moreover, Tambu notices clearly the male-centeredness of the Western colonial discourse as seen through its privileging of male education over female education. As a point of fact, Tambu considers this singling out of Nhamo for an educational promotion, which prevents her educational ascent not as part of a logical and natural process, but as a choice fueled by gender bias that exclude the female subject. Tambu reports her growing frustation:

> Whereas before I had believed with childish confidence that burdens were only burdens in so far as you chose to bear them, now I began to see the disappointing events surrounding Babamukuru's return were serious consequences of the same general laws that had almost brought my education to an abrupt, predictable end. It was frightening. I did not want my life to be predicted by such improper relations. I decided I would just have to make my mind not to let it happen. (NC: 38)

Still, though Tambu performed as well as her brother at school, her brother stressed his intellectual superiority as a significant reason in Babamukuru's decision to take him to the mission school instead of her. He claims:

> 'You know', drawled my brother, twiddling a stalk of grass in the gap between his front teeth, ' Babamukuru wants a clever person, somebody who deserves the chance. That's why he wants me. He knows I've been doing very well at school. Who else is there for him to take ? ' (NC: 47-48)

Thus, despite Babamukuru's privileging of Nhamo over Tambu and the growing doubts about her secondary education, Tambu managed to send herself back to school

on her own by selling mealies to city-dwellers. She even kept performing very well at school despite both her community's and the colonizer's distrust of her intellectual capacities as a female subject.

> I went back to school the following year, although I had to go back into SubA. I came First this year and people said it was because I had been repeating which might have been true. I was top of my class again the next year in Sub B. That time people said it was because I was older. (NC: 31)

Yet, with the death of her brother and her move to the mission, the challenges that stood in Tambu's development faded away. In fact, she undertook to turn her mission school's opportunity and Western colonial charity into a truly deserved one. Thus, Tambu kept performing very well at school and took full advantage of this educational opportunity by securing on honorary basis a scholarship from the Nun's Sacred Heart Convent School. As opposed to the Bakers and Nyasha's brother, Chido whose entrance to a multiracial school and access to a scholarship could not have been possible without the help of one Babamukuru's acquaintances, Tambu, thanks to her hardwork and nothing more, got the privilege of going to the Nun's Sacred Heart Convent School that only a handful of Africans managed to attend. Hence, Tambu transcended the gender and race prejudices that prevented her from going further in her development. She challenged the colonial enterprise's privileging of male education over female education, by being offered a scholarship as a reward to her hardwork and determination.

While Tambu's development into a self-realized subject and a dissenter of colonialism was constructed through the denunciation of the alienating impact of the mission school experience on her cousins and brother as well as its privileging of the male figure, it is taken further down with Nyasha's demystification of White Western

culture's superiority and disinterested benevolence with regard to the colonized populations. It is worth noting that, all along the storyline, the financial emancipation that Tambu's uncle succeeded to secure thanks to his mission school's education was praised by his relatives. In the same perspective, Tambu considered her mission school's opportunity as a way of breaking with the burdens of poverty and sexism that she had always suffered from. Though she grew distrustful about her mission school's experience as she got stuck with the aggressively barking dogs at her uncle's house gate, her relatives' miserable living conditions soon took away her doubts. She says:

> To me they were loose, ferocious guardians of the gates for this kingdom, this kingdom that I should not have been entering. Their lust for my blood was justified: they knew I did not belong. (NC: 66)

When to break the misfortunes that befell on his relatives, Babamukuru decided to achieve her mother's unfulfilled will of organizing a Christian wedding for his brother Jeremiah, Tambu did not seem that concerned. It is worth saying that the prosperous financial situation that Babamukuru achieved thanks to the mission school's education reduced the family's poverty and put him in a hero-like status for his people. Hence, the White Western colonizer's education as seen through Babamukuru's example stood as the only way out of poverty for natives. Indeed, when Babamukuru's father died and left the family with no financial support, his mother decided to take the nine year-old Babamukuru to a mission school not far from the homestead to get schooling. Tambu reports:

> She walked, with my uncle, with Babamukuru, who was nine years old and wearing a loin cloth, to the mission, where the holy wizards took him in. They set him to work in their farm by day. By night he was educated in their wizardry. For my grandmother, being sagacious and having foresight, had begged them to prepare him for life in their world. (NC: 19)

Thus, despite the ideals of charity, education and progress to which the White Western culture and values was related in the novel, Tambu still did not feel at ease with the idea of her parents getting married according to the Western Christian tradition. In fact, Tambu failed to associate herself, her parents and her sisters to sin since as ‘‘ she was taught in Sundays’ school, sin was to be avoided.’’ (NC: 152-153) Though Tambu stood in the role of the grateful and obedient relative from the moment she arrived at the mission school, she grew aware that she had to come to a decision that took some sort of action. (NC: 165)

Despite her weakness and the difficulties to acknowledge that this wedding was a farce, Tambu remembered that she could not probably join the mission school if she was not able to stand up against her father’s patriarchal authority and its exigencies towards women. Hence, she confronts Babamukuru and expresses openly her refusal to attend the wedding’s church ceremony. She claims: ‘‘ ‘ I‘m sorry, Babamukuru,’ I said, ‘ but I do not want to go to the wedding.’ ’’ (NC: 169) Following this unexpected decision, Babamukuru kept pressuring Tambu. He threatened to send her back home. He even assimilated her to evil as she stood against his authority by refusing to attend her parents’s church wedding. Tambu reports : ‘‘ He threatened all sorts of things, to stop buying me clothes, to stop my school fees, to send me home, but it did not matter any more.’’(NC: 169) In fact, Tambu got conscious that she was not doing evil for having gone through hard time and having taken high risks in order to make up her mind and be sure of her decision. She seemed even ready to wrap up her things and leave the mission school if necessary. Finally, she assumed with courage Babamukuru’s lashes and two- weeks chores’ punishment.

Hence, Tambu's new status of educated urban girl offered her an opportunity of reconsidering the patriarchal obstacles that impede her development and self-fulfilment, but also deconstructed the mystification of the colonial enterprise and its discourse by denouncing its disruptive effects on native identity and constructing her becoming as opposed to its alienating aspects.

Our discussion in this second chapter has revealed that Assia Djebar and Tsitsi Dangarembga set out the importance of questioning patriarchal and colonial domination in their two novels. Through our postcolonial feminist discussion on the distortions in representing female subalternity in male-written literatures, we have shown that, for both Djebar and Dangarembga, the challenging of the dominant traditional and stereotypical vision of female identity of the patriarchal and colonial discourses stands as part and parcel in the dynamics of negotiation resulting from the discursive dilemma of the female subject's representation.

We have tried to show that women's becoming within the public sphere is meant to reconsider the silencing mechanisms deriving from both the patriarchal and colonial discourses. Moreover, we have discovered that in the two novels, there is a deep concern with the reconsideration of the traditional female social roles' representation that can overturn the silencing mechanisms of patriarchy, colonialism and even authoritarian nationalism as far as Djebar' novel is concerned. In fact, the two postcolonial African women writers seek to develop a critical vocabulary capable of enunciating the experiences of '' third world'' women whose narratives of experience have been effaced by dominant male-centered discourses.

The discussion in this chapter has revealed that the writers' denunciation of the patriarchal and colonialist institutions to build their female protagonists' becoming within the male-centered public sphere, is related to the silencing apparatuses of patriarchy and colonialism which relegate female subjectity to the margin of official historical accounts. As it has been discussed in the first part of the chapter, both Djebar and Dangarembga engage in a similar way the challenging of patriarchal restrictions with regard women's social visibility through a confrontation with the representatives of male authoritarianism. However, the writers seem to undertake different departures as far as the denunciation of colonialism is concerned. While the interrogation of the colonial enterprize in Djebar's novel is introduced through the central female character's confrontation with the colonial system's proponents during War of Independence, in Dangarembga's novel it stands in terms of female subject's deconstruction of the Western benelovent colonial discourse and its effects on natives.

As the assertion of Djebar's and Dangarembga's female protagonists within the public sphere is ensured through the reconsideration of patriarchy and colonialism, the presence of women at every stage of their assertion within the public sphere denotes of the significant role they hold in their developments into self-realized female subjects. A central place which goes to the extent of being of a central importance in the consolidation of Cherifa's and Tambudzai's becoming processes. Indeed, the two writers go further in their rehabilitation of a dynamic female subjectivity by proposing becoming identities which become interconnected with collective narratives. Hence, in the third chapter, we will shed light on the particular relationship between the female individual's self-fulfilment and the community of women.

Chapter three:

Female becoming through the dimension of the collective.

We have examined in the first chapter of our dissertation the socio-historical contexts in which Assia Djebar and Tsitsi Dangarembga set their narratives. In there, we have discussed the place given to the female subject throughout the Algerian and Zimbabwean colonial and postcolonial histories. In there, we emphasized the way some historical episodes impacted female development. In the second chapter, we have shed light on the two authors' introduction of their female protagonists' becoming processes through the challenging of the silencing mechanisms of authoritarian patriarchal and colonial discourses as discussed in Gayatri Spivak's politics of negotiation of female subjectivity in '' Can the Subaltern Speak ?''.

In the present chapter, we shall analyse aspects of Djebar's and Dangarembga's treatment of sisterhood between their female protagonist and the community of women. In fact, we seek to highlight the significant place that the female collective holds in the female subject's becoming which takes from Rita Felski's assumptions on women's role in the dynamics of woman individual's development in her female Bildungsroman. In this regard, we will discuss the special relationship between Djebar's female protagonist and the women from her maternal tribe whether from the war or post-war generation that makes a room for a collective female story instead of an individual one. Similarly, though in different ways, the community of female cousins, mothers and aunts impact Dangarembga's development into a conscious, autonomous and educated female subject.

III.1. Individual becoming through the community of women in Djebar's novel:

A fresh and stimulating postcolonial undertaking, Djebar's *Fantasia: An Algerian Cavalvade,* is praised for foregrounding '' l'écriture féminine''[1], rewriting history and unveiling Algerian women. Yet, besides the novel's anti-colonial engagement with history, critics have'' equally placed Djebar's novel within the autobiographical genre.''[2] Indeed, in examining the narratives of Algerian women war activists during and after the War of Independence, Djebar displaces the tenets of the literary discourse that separates real life experiences and literary fiction. In this perspective, in reconstructing female subjectivity in her writings in relation to the collective memories, Djebar emphasizes the novel's narrative grapple with the boundaries between her personal life and collective female experiences. In there, we shall discuss the female collective's role in female individual development as reflected through the sense of sisterhood between the Algerian Liberation War's veteran, Cherifa Amroune and the community of women war activists on the one hand and Djebar's female

[1]. Laura Cremonese. highlights that women's writing engages with main aspects among which the assertion of a proper female voice in literature. Another aspect that ''l'écriture féminine' works to deconstruct is the set of mythical representations to which women are related in male literature. (see: Quoted in Noémie Martineau, *Ecriture du feminin ou écriture au feminin autour de la question de La femme Sauvage chez Kateb Yacine*. Master II de Lettres Modernes, Université Lumière Lyon(Lyon) 41. Hélène Cixous, who stands as a major Feminist voice, made of asserting a specific female identity and personality in the social and literary conventions one her early engagements in literature.(see: Quoted in Martineau, op.cit, 33. Moreover, Béatrice Didier highlights that women's writing is inscribed in the perspective of assuming one's female self, emotion, body and sensations. (see: Quoted in Ibid, 40) The reconstruction of female identity through the introspection of the self or ''autobiographical self''takes these departures. (see: H. Adlai Murdoch,'' Rewriting : Identity, Exil and Renewal in Assia Djebar's *L'Amour, la fantasia''*in *Post/ Colonial Conditions: Exiles, Migrations and Nomadisms.*N°83.Vol.2 (Yale : Yale University Press, 1993)71. In attempt a context marked by colonization, conceptualizing, the autobiographical self raises the question of reconsidering the conventions of the genre.(see : Murdoch.op.cit, 71) Hene, postcolonial women writers' urge to overcome the fixating patriarchal and colonial literary discourses and to construct an authentically female and resistant voice are translated as in an autobiographical self constructed through a network of female voices as in Djebar's *Fantasia:An Algerian Cavalcade.* (see : Ibid,72)

[2]. Ferna Lekesizalin. ''Defiant History and Agency in Assia Djebar's *Fantasia: An Algerian Cavalcade*'' *Africology: The Journal of Pan African Studies*, vol.11, no.1, December (Istanbul : Aydin University, 2017)200.

narrator on the other hand. In addition to recreating the stories of the Liberation War's heroines through the voice of the female narrator, Djebar recreates herself.

The autobiographical practice is particularly complex when examined from the perspective of gender politics. In fact, Bella Brodzki and Celeste Schenck note that '' the autobiographical genre has been mainly criticized as being essentially constructed by the masculine viewpoint. ''[3] Concerned with the absence of women's voices, feminist critics started to increasingly engage with the genre. Given the growing interest in women's representation through ''autobiography'', one of the most important aspect of women's autobiographies lies in the question of memory. Sidonie Smith highlights that since memory represents a central element of the woman's autobiography, through the '' ' fictional self ', the woman writer creates connections with the past.''[4] Through her readings of literary works of Maghrebian women writers such as Taous Amrouche, Assia Djebar, Malika Mokkedem, Leila Bouraoui and other women writers, Chikhi notes that the woman's individual story is narrated within broad contexts characterized by decolonization movements.[5] Following from this, Ferma Lekesizalin highlights that Djebar's constructs female subjectivity in *Fantasia: An Algerian Cavalcade* in relation to collective female memories by incorporating their testimonies of the colonial oppression and the Algerian War of Independence.[6]

Anne Donadey highlights Djebar's strategy of relying on women war veterans' memories in recovering the silenced and repressed female voices in her novel. She

[3]. Quoted in Koichi Hagimoto '' Female Voices in Revolution: Autobiography and Collective Memory in Assia Djebar's *Fantasia: An Algerian Cavalcade* (Wellesley: Wellesley College, 2012)41.
[4]. Quoted in Hagimoto.op.cit, 42.
[5]. Chikhi.op.cit, 39.
[6]. Lekesizalin.op.cit, 203.

indicates in there that it is common among women writers of the formely colonized countries to adopt a strategy of ‘‘anamnesis’’, described by Françoise Lionnet as ‘‘resisting anamnesis’’.[7] Indeed, Algerian women’s collective memories are more explicitely exposed in the third part of the novel entitled ‘‘ VOICES FROM THE PAST’’. Koichi Hagimoto notes that this part is divided into five chapters of movements in which the author includes some essays whose titles indicate reference to diverse forms of Algerian women’s orality ‘‘ Voice’’, ‘‘ Clamour’’, ‘‘ Aphasia’’, ‘‘Murmurs’’, ‘‘ Whispers ’’, ‘‘ A widow’s voice’’.[8] It is significant to say that in one of the third part’s autobiographical sections, Djebar exposes a‘‘ brief instant of distress that a seventeen-year-old girl living in Paris shares with two strangers.’’ (FAC: 116) In another chapter, Djebar discusses the female adolescent’s inability to express love, just like her, in her mother tongue that she terms ‘‘Aphasia of love’’. (FAC: 125)

However, as Djebar, through her female narrator, shares with the reader different stages of her personal life, she joins her own voice to the whole chorus of women’s voices from the past. As a matter of fact, the first voice from the past that Djebar exposes is that of a young adolescent who dedicates herself to the struggle of the Algerian War of Independence. After giving voice to the freedom fighter to recount her story, the narrator introduced the war veteran’s identity and revealed the context in which the encounter with her has been made. The female narrator reports: ‘‘ Her name is Cherifa. When she tells her story, twenty years later.’’(FAC: 124)

[7]. Quoted in Anne Donadey, ‘‘Between Amnesia and Anamnesis : Re-membering the Fractures of Colonial History’’ *Studies in 20th century Literature*.Vol.23. IssueI (University of Iowa, 1999)112.
[8]. Hagimoto.op.cit, 47.

The story is based on the oral testimony the author collected from an interview of a veteran of the War of Independence, who was deeply committed to the country's liberation. Due to the impossibility of representing themselves within the official war discourse, the female narrator stands as a translator that, after recuperating their oral testimonies, reproduces them within the text. Hence, Djebar's narrator exposes the oral testimonies of Algerian women freedom fighters who recall their memories of the Liberation War. Priscillia Ringrose highlights that these war veterans' ''verbal'' testimonies are contrasted with the colonizer's written testimonies. In this regard, she assumes that '' the simplicity and the terseness of these transliterated oral testimonies provide a sharp and a deliberate contrast not only to the written testimonies of the colonizers…but also to the richness of Djebar's own virtuoso use of French language.''[9] Hence, Djebar draws from the voices of her female compatriots as well as from her personal experiences to re-inscribe Algerian women and their collective female story within the official historical narratives.

It is worth noting that Algerian women veterans were considered as subaltern subjects as they were relegated to the margin of the authorial official discourse and, hence, separated from the text space they are, in fact, supposed to inhabit. Thus, the voices, who remained silenced after years, the bodies immobilized and their storytelling muted, are given full expression in Djebar's narrative in the last part. Indeed, twenty years following the Algerian Independence, Cherifa Amroune transmits testimonies from the past to the female narrator and perpetuates this female

[9]. Priscillia Ringrose, *Assia Djebar: In Dialogue with Feminisms* (New York : Rodopi, 2006)43.

oral heritage throughout the post-independence era and the women's post-war generation. Following from this, Cherifa's becoming, years after independence, was materialized in aspects of solidarity and shared female story that resurrects vanished women's voices from the Algerian past. In fact, at the beginning of the last part, the reader discovers in the first person ''I'', the war testimony of an unknown female character. The young war activist is a 13 years old shepherd girl living at the Sidi M'hamed Aberkane Zaouia in time of a raging Liberation War. Yet, as the young adolescent introduced her war testimony in the second section entitled ''Voice'', the female narrator resumed Cherifa's narrative in the following section. In fact, in the third section, ''clamour'', the female narrator magnified the resonance of Cherifa's war engagement. She praises her daring attitude in fighting the French enemy. She assumes:

> The girl's long yellowish hair must at one time have suddenly turned flaming red. The suspicious-minded old busy-bodies had said her green eyes were like those of a 'prowling cat'. Wide green eyes whos irises were flecked with gold… How proud the mother had been of the daughter born after three boys ! (FAC: 122)

By involving herself in the narration of Cherifa's war experience, Djebar moves away from the network of separate historical voices of the novel's two first parts to introduce a kind of collective female voice in the third part. Kiyoko Ishikawa notes that what is specific with Djebar's writing of the third part is the unprecedented intermingling of the narrator's voice with that of the female characters. She says: '' but what was particularly difficult to follow is the third part of the novel, in which the first

person the 'I' of the narrator and that of the female characters who speak, mingle and merge for the author, has totally dazzled and delighted me by the end''.[10]

In another section of the third part ''embraces'', the female narrator takes the Amrounes' daughter narrative further, when she reports her encounter with an ageing Cherifa twenty years after independence. She digs out her voice from the past that revives the old popular uprising. She claims: '' Cherifa's voice embraces the bygone days. Tracing the fear, the defiance, the intoxication in that forgotten place…Strange little sister, whom henceforth I leave veiled or whose story I now transcribe in a foreign tongue.'' (FAC: 141) Djebar sheds light on a housebond Cherifa Amroune who takes care of the five children of a widower. The woman '' braves a suspicious mother-in-law who prowls around hoping to discover what the hesitating narrative reveals'' (FAC:141) and comes to share reminiscences of her adolescence war experience. She reports: '' She speaks slowly. Her voice lifts the burden of memory; it now wings its way towards that summer of 1956, when she was just a girl, the summer of the devastation…'' (FAC: 141)

Twenty years following independence, the war veteran breaks the silence imposed upon women war activists and rehabilitates her presence within the official war discourse. She says:

[10]. « Mais ce qui était particulièrement difficile à suivre est la troisième partie du roman dans laquelle la premiére personne ''je'' de l'auteur et celle des femmes qui parlent se mêlent et se confondent pour l'auteur m'a totalement ébloui à la fin. »: Kiyoko Ishikawa, '' Traduction en Japonais de « L'Amour, la fantasia »: son importance et son retentissement'', in *Lire Assia Djebar !* (Alger : Sedia, 2015) 84.

> I do not claim to be either a story- teller or a scribe. On the territory of dispossession, I would that I could sing. I would cast off my childhood memories and advance naked, bearing offerings, hands outstretched to whom?- to the Lords of yesterday's war, or to the young girls who lay in hiding and who now inhabit the silence that succeeds the battles …And what are my offerings? Only handfuls of husks, culled from my memory, what do I seek? Maybe the brook where wounding words are drowned… (FAC: 142)

Hence, Cherifa asserts herself in the post-independence era by setting herself free from the burden of the passing years where women war veterans were prevented from becoming part of the authorized national and colonial war discourses. Djebar writes: ''As she sets her voice free for me, she sets herself free again; what nostalgia will cause her voice to fail presently?...'' (141-142)

Yet, as much as Djebar's war veteran expressed a need to get back with the female narrator to her adolescence days, the female narrator, just like Djebar, seemed equally in search for her identity amidst this chorus of voices that are part of her personal story. In fact, beyond Cherifa Amroune's will to share her war memories, the female narrator expressed equally the need to situate herself and recuperate her story as a woman from the post-independence generation. Apart from the dominant critical readings that inscribe Djebar's novel within the postcolonial literature that challenged the fixating patriarchal and colonial discourses, other critical views formulated by critics such as Patricia Geesey(1996), Jennifer Bernhardt(2003) and Anne Donadey(2001) classify Djebar's novel within the genres of Postcolonial Autobiography and '' l'écriture féminine.''[11]

According to Lionnet, 'Anamnesis' on the part of the colonized peoples, became a particular way of resisting 'Amnesia'. She notes that it is a strategy

[11]. H. Adlai Murdoch, quoted in Lekesizalin .op.cit, 201.

especially embraced by women writers, for whom self-portraiture (the autobiographical genre) is transformed into a piecing together of a collective history.[12]

Bensmaia's and Mudimbe- Boyi's essays highlight that to write the joint anamneses of the self, the female genealogy, and Algeria in her dazzling novel, *L'Amour, la fantasia* (1985), Assia Djebar uses the metaphor of speleology to render the writer's task of exhuming her people's history through the French archives, written documents as well as oral Algerian traces.[13] Being a central aspect of the women's autobiographical practice, the author seeks to recover an often-shifting set of personal and collective ''memories'' that constitute the foundation of female subjectivity.[14] Lekizalin stresses that the autobiographical forms allow Djebar to renew histories of female voice and situate herself within the circle of Algerian women from her maternal tribe of the Chenoua.[15]

In fact, in *Fantasia: An Algerian Cavalcade*, the autobiographical chapters of the third part revealed a process in which a little girl in the Algerian Sahel developed her perceptions about the two conflicting cultures she inhabited: the Algerian and the French. Djebar says: '' I am alternately the besieged foreigner and the native swaggering off to die, so there is seemingly endless strife between the spoken and the written word.''(FAC: 215) Then, the narrative detailed different stages of her life moving from her adolescence which starts with the value of the French culture in her life which, just like Djebar, allowed her to pursue her education as opposed to her female cousins. Then, is introduced her alienation from the Arabic community and her

[12]. Quoted in Donadey.op.cit, 111.
[13]. Quoted in, Ibid, 112.
[14]. Hagimoto.op.cit, 41.
[15]. Lekizalin. op. cit. 202

educational experience. Finally, her burning desire to return to the past to reconnect with the Arabic world is exposed. It is actually reflected in Djebar's female narrator reunion with the women war veterans who are guardians of the past.

It is noteworthy that a special relationship is visible between the female narrator and the women war veterans she interviewed. In fact, a strong sense of sisterhood stemmed from the exchanges between the war activists and their guest. In fact, the female narrator used terms such as ''companions'' to refer to these heroines of the past. She even goes to the extent of referring to them as her ''accomplices''. She underscores: '' Torch-words which light up my women-companions, my accomplices; these words divide me from them once and for all. And weigh me down as I leave my native land.''(FAC: 142) All these terms that the female narrator associates with these women war veterans reflects the strong bonds between the war and the post-war generations. To recuperate her personal story as a female subject from the post-independence Algeria, Djebar conceptualized her autobiographical self by rehabilitating the history of her own people; in particular the history her Algerian sisters. Indeed, in regaining the women war veterans' visibility, the female narrator made of these heroines of the past her accomplices in her project of re-establishing women as protagonists of history in the official discourses. As Cherifa Amroune digs out the Algerian women war veterans' testimonies, with her '' torch- words'' (FAC : 142), the female narrator made them visible to the world. Hence, the French enemy's language became an effective tool for Djebar in terms of both producing an autobiography and inscribing the colonial history of Algeria.

Hence, the quest for identity for Djebar was conditioned by re-creating the link with the past and her female ancestors. Similarly, Cherifa's development could not have been possible without the female narrator who stood as the only voice through which Cherifa and the other women veterans may regain their due place within the official war narratives.

Cherifa's and the women war veterans' mission of transmitting a female collective story is taken further with a narrative of the traumatic experience of another war veteran '' Lla Zohra from Bou Semmam''. In fact, the female narrator's journey into the war veterans' reminiscences carries on with '' Lla Zohra''. Just as the female narrator met Cherifa Amroune, she encounters Lla Zohra years after the end of the War of Independence. Right from the beginning, the woman war veteran emphasized her strong activism in the Algerian Liberation War. Indeed, the war activist was involved at different levels of the popular uprising mainly in providing support to the freedom fighters. ''Sohraoui Zohra'' or ''Lla Zohra'' as she was called by the ''brothers'' used to shelter war activists in her farm.

Unfortunately, Lla Zohra has had her farm burnt several times and has lost all her cattle. Zohra's traumatic experience is unfolded at moments by the character herself and at other moments by the female narrator. The first time the character of ''Lla Zohra'' is introduced, we are told that she is actively involved in the Algerian resistance. Lla Zohra went through tough moments following her four sons' joining of the maquis. After the French soldiers' burning of her house, Lla Zohra found herself with no shelter. She ended up fleeing to her niece's house in Hadjout. Lla Zohra's niece, Jennet played a significant role in the war activist's ability to take till the end

her war engagement. Moreover, Lla Zohra's adopted daughter prevented her mother from being captured and arrested as she bursts into tears whenever interrogated by the soldiers about her mother. Khadija was, also, another female character who held a significant place in Zohra's narrative. Though she run a bawdy house, Khadija shared with Zohra her strong war commitment.

The female narrator's journey into the Algerian women war veterans' reminiscences went further with '' Zohra Sohraoui''. Just as Djebar's narrator encountered, years after independence, Cherifa Amroune, the female narrator met Lla Zohra who grew older. She claims: '' 'Lla Zohra, from Bou Semmam, is more than eighty. I cross the threshold of the house she lives in nowadays, just on the edge of the village of Ménacer.'' (FAC: 164). Actually, the female narrator and Lla Zohra had family bonds. She asserts:

> I talk of my grandmother's death, which occured just after independence. I hadn't seen Lla Zohra since. ' We were cousins, your grandmother and I,' she says. 'It's true I'm closer to you through your mother's father; we belong to the same fraction of the same tribe. She was related to me through another marriage, through the female line!
> (FAC: 164)

Then, Lla Zohra started narrating the glowing days of the past. The narrator shared her turn some stories from the far past. She recounted the story of two sisters Meriem and Fatma who have been murdered by the French officers She says: '' It is my turn to tell a tale. To hand on words that were spoken, then written down. Words from more than a century ago, like those that we, two women from the same tribe, exchange today.'' (FAC: 165) Indeed, as 'Meriem' was dying, she dropped a button that she had torn off from the uniform of her murderer. A button that the lieutenant

who couldn't save the woman leaves in the hands of the French painter and writer, Eugène Fromentin,[16] to imprint his paintings with the violence of this tragic event.

Indeed, Djebar's female narrator went far back to 1853 to capture the violence of the tragic episode of the murdering of two ''Naylettes''[17] from the oasis of Laghouat by the French officers. Thus, the narrator re-told stories of women that stood as undeniable evidences of the violence endured by women under French colonialism. Hence, we feel that the female narrator in Djebar's novel is invested by the community of women she gives voice to with a kind of symbolic mission of breaking the silence that has been imposed upon them in the aftermath of independence. Indeed, Djebar's narrator as a representative of the post-independence generation was endowed with the responsability of re-establishing the truth about women's activism throughout the different stages of the Algerian resistance. She asserts: '' The fires in the orchads gutted by Saint Arnaud are finally extinguished, because the old lady talks today and I am preparing to transcribe her tale. To draw up the inventory of tiny objects passed on thus, from febrile hand to fugitive land! '' (FAC: 177)

[16]. Eugène Fromentin is a French painter and writer of the 19th century. From 1846, Fromentin carried on the tradition of travels to North Africa instituted by his mentor and famous painter Eugène Delacroix.The Discovery of the Algerian exotic lands fascinated him and supplied him with travel accounts such as his work *Un été dans le Sahara*(1874) or (*A Summer in the Sahara*) and fine pieces of paintings.: Anne-Marie Christin, *Eugène Fromentin Un été dans le Sahara* (Paris: Flammarion, 2010) available at : http://editions.flammrion.com/Amel Chouati highlights Djebar's attempt to transcend the antagonisms by creating dialogues with literatures of writers such Pauline Rolland, Eugène Fromentin. She asserts :'' C'est incroyable la force de la littérature que d'avoir permis de dépasser les antagonismes, d'avoir rencontrés sur le terrain de leur écriture ces autres, Pauline Rolland, Eugène Fromentin, et d'avoir pu gagner une certaine libération par leur entremise. Cela n'a pas de prix: (see : *Lire Assia Djebar !* (Alger : éditions Sédia, 2015)22. print.)

[17]. The term refers to women from one of the most ancient tribes of the Algerian South ''Ouled- Nail''.The female narrator in *Fantasia: An Algerian Cavalcade* shares with the women war veterans, the story of two sisters Fatma and Meriem who have been murdered by the French soldiers. Gayatri Spivak highlights that Assia Djebar reports in her novel, the story of two nineteenth- century Algerian prostitutes, Fatma and Meriem, included in Eugéne Fromentin's *Un été dans le Sahara.* Djebar's war activist 'Lla Zohra' recounts the story of the two sisters to the female narrator as if it were a legend.: Quoted in Alfred Hornung and Ernestpete Ruhe, *Postcolonialism and Autobiography* (Amsterdam, Rodopi, 1998)10.

Thus, the third chapter has revealed that Djebar's female protagonist development is connected to the community of women in the novel. In there, Cherifa's self-realization is considerably related to the regaining of women's visibility in the post-independence era. It is mainly reflected in the breaking of the burden of years of women's marginalization. Moreover, it is observable in the transmission of women's collective story and heritage to the post-independence generation of women that the female narrator stands for in the novel. Yet, given the gender and racial discrimination which stand the daily lot of women in Zimbabwe, Dangarembga's female protagonist conscientizing on the prejudices on the basis of sex and race is in a significant way ensured by the community of women.

III.2.Individual becoming through the community of women in Dangarembga's novel:

Similar to the relationship of sisterhood between the old and the new generation of women in Djebar's novel which conditions Djebar's female protagonist becoming, Dangarembga's central female character development into a subject aware of the challenging aspects of gender and race is made possible thanks to her female relatives.

Forging from this ground, Trena Brough reports that in their interview of Dangarembga, Rose Marangoly and Helen Scott have correctly observed that *Nervous Conditions* is a hopeful book in the sense of its impeding change in the scope and subtly of its critique of gender relations within and beyond the boundaries of race and class.[18] In fact, the novel identifies oppression not only in the White settler's racism

[18]. Marangoly, Scott and Dangarembga.op.cit, 309.

but, also, in the conservatism of the Shona patriarchy which confirm the double denial of power which Black Rhodesian women endured.[19]

Indeed, all along Dangarembga's novel, we are shown patriarchal conventions which do not offer for the Zimbabwean woman any sense of self-fulfilment except what is provided by its connections with male relatives.[20] In this regard, Dangarembga discusses women's emancipation as opposed to the patriarchal and colonial pressures on the female subject's becoming. In fact, right at the beginning of the novel, Dangarembga's female protagonist development is introduced as being conditioned by the death of the patriarchal figure that her brother stood for. Tambudzai asserts: '' I was not sorry when my brother died… For though the event of my brother's passing and the events of my story cannot be separated, my story is not after all about death.''(NC: 1) Right from the moment Nhamo passed away, Dangarembga's narrative became exclusively about women's experiences. Indeed, the Zimbabwean woman writer centers her narrative on a young adolescent's development from a rural peasant girl to an urban educated girl. In her journey towards emancipation and self-realization, Tambu was guided by her female relatives. Though at various levels and with different intensities, women embody significant roles in Dangarembga's female protagonist becoming. Yet, as much as the female community impacted the woman individual's development and growth into a self-realized subject, Tambu enhanced the becoming of the women's community. In fact, the sudden and traumatic death of

[19]. Anthony Chennells, ''Authorizing Women, Women's authoring Tsitsi Dangarembga's *Nervous Conditions''* ed Emmanuel Ngara, in *New Writing from Southern Africa* (London: James Currey Ltd, 1996) 61.
[20]. Chennells.op.cit 64.

Nhamo early in the narrative makes the way for deep changes for the female protagonist and her female relatives.

The passing away of Tambu's brother, in a sense, had to be willed retrospectively in *Nervous Conditions,* since it represented an enabling event for women. Anthony Chennells highlights that although the female protagonist in Dangarembga's novel starts off talking about death, she ends up insisting that her story is not at all about death, but about her escape. He notes that the word ''escape'' is placed in direct opposition to death, and thus it displaces life and by displacing it, it becomes a pre-condition for living.[21] Rosemary Moyana highlights that instead of merely describing women's socialization into their feminine roles like in male-written works, Dangarembga depicts women who challenge traditional patriarchal perceptions of female identity. While some female characters try to protest against their socially accepted roles, other female figures engage in a debate on how they are being used or misused by men-folk. Indeed, chief among the women who protest against their feminine roles are Tambudzai, the fictional narrator and protagonist, Nyasha, her anglicised cousin, as well as Tambu's daring aunt Lucia.[22]

It is significant to say that all along the novel, Tambudzai is made to feel that the chosen standards for ''femininity'' are natural and so when she seems to resist conformity, she is labelled unfeminine and unatural by male characters such as her father, Jeremiah or her brother, Nhamo. In this perspective, the questioning of her society's standards as well as her becoming within the male-dominated public sphere

[21]. Chennells. op.cit, 64.
[22]. Rosemary Moyana, ''Tsitsi Dangarembga's: An attempt in the feminist tradition'', in *Zambezia* vol xxi(I) (Department of Curriculum and Arts Education, University of Zimbabwe, 1994) 26.

are made possible thanks to the female community in the novel. In fact, Dangarembga's novel makes little reference to the immediacy of the war context. The war areas, however, are, according to Caroline Rooney, set within the patriarchal tradition and its pressures on women.[23] Breaking with traditional male representation of female characters as passive and oppressed subjects, Dangarembga enables us to see adult girlhood as a productive time and mainly as a site of positive agency. Indeed, Dangarembga's female protagonist and her Westernized cousin Nyasha fall into what it means to be an agent of change as an adolescent girl struggling against entrenched sexism in the institution of both family and education.[24] The two young female adolescents are introduced in this novel as feisty young women, who in different ways and with different levels of individual self-fulfilment, try to counter the oppression to which they are subjected.

Of all the female characters, the character of Nyasha seems to be the closest to Dangarembga's central female character and the most impacting in her becoming. Though at the beginning, Tambu felt resentment at the person that her cousin turned into when she came back from England, she recognized that her relationship with Nyasha was her '' first love affair.'' (NC: 79) Even though each time that Nyasha came to the homestead Tambu could see that she had changed, she acknowledges that it was '' the first time that she grew to be fond of someone whom she did not wholeheartedly approve.''(NC: 79) It is worth saying that when she moved to the city, Tambu agreed with Babamukuru's criticism of Nyasha's way of dressing. Yet, though frightened by Nyasha's behaviour, Tambu felt surprisingly attracted to her

[23]. Rooney.op.cit, 135.
[24]. Smith.op.cit, 253.

Europeanized female cousin. Tsitsi Dangarembga notes that: ‘‘ there are several references gluing things together, but it seems that there is something in this split-apart condition that Tambudzai finds very positive.’’[25] In fact, Nyasha’s Western experience proved to be insightful in the struggles that Tambu undertook against male authority and oppression with its different forms.

Despite her father’s and brother’s helpless attempts to socialize Tambu into her feminine role, there was a concerned effort from her anglicised cousin to nourish her nascent unatural, unbridled and rebellious spirit. Indeed, living in England has taught Nyasha that the Black woman was not an ontological subordinate to the White and Black men. Hence, she allowed neither herself nor her rural female to be socially constructed as a girl within the classic Shona Cultural discourse.[26]

Indeed, after the sudden death of her brother Nhamo, Tambu moves to the mission school and joins the middle-class Europeanized world of her cousin’s family. Though at her arrival, the obedient rural adolescent fails to see the reasons behind the tensions between Nyasha and her parents, the disputes confronting her cousin and her father help Tambu to see the real reasons behind this violence. Indeed, after her uncle’s criticism of Nyasha’s readings and the harsh beating he gave his daughter, Tambu realized her uncle’s strong patriarchal expectations from his daughter. After moving to the city, Tambu got confronted again to the patriarchal conservatism which was clearly restrictive with regard women’s perspectives of emancipation. Hence, Tambu identified with her cousin’s struggle against patriarchal authority and

[25]. Quoted in *Talking with African Writers: Interviews by Jane Wilkinson* (Oxford: James Currey Ltd, 1992)193.
[26]. Chennells.op.cit, 66-67.

sympathized with her sufferings. Rooney highlights that ‘‘ Nyasha and Tambu, represented as very different characters, seem very similar at times and could be regarded as one and the same character…Nyasha's spectacular fights with her father (a Creon figure of justice provoked to lose his cool) recall of Tambu's violent fights with her brother, Nhamo.’’[27] Hence, the conflicting relationship between Nyasha and her father and Jeremiah's antagonist expectations towards his daughter raise Tambu's awareness about the incompatible faces of Babamukuru as a patriarchal figure in the Zimbabwean culture on one hand and a member of the colonial elite on the other hand. While Tambu tended to idealize her uncle and to consider him as a representative of law and justice, his inflexible expectations and violence toward Nyasha makes of him a mere tyrant. In this perspective, we do not only realize the strong sense of solidarity between the two adolescents but we understand the significant place that they hold in each other's life and becoming.

Still, the colonial situation indicates a more complex situation for the female subaltern' development in Dangarembga's novel.[28] In fact, Anthony Chennells notes that‘‘ *Nervous Conditions* describes a shattered community and individuals disoriented by a dominant alien British culture.’’[29] Indeed, besides the poverty and sexism that Zimbabwean women had to endure in their patriarchal society, they were equally burdened by the prejudice of race or what Dangarembga's female narrator and protagonist terms ‘‘Blackness’’ (NC: 16). While Nyasha contributes significantly in raising her cousin's awareness about the gender prejudice, she contributes, as well, in

[27]. Rooney, op.cit, 137.
[28]. Chennells.op.cit, 60.
[29].Ibid: 62.

shaping the nature of her relationship with the colonial enterprise and its Western culture. Chennells highlights that: ‘‘disclosures of the hidden and the ambiguous within the narrative are provided by Tambudzai’s mother and cousin as they rail against the damage that the colonizer’s culture has inflicted.’’[30]

Tambu’s relationship with the colonial institutions is quite complex. While on the one hand the colonial enterprise offered to Tambu prospects of emancipation, on the other hand, it generated an endless questioning of the knowledge instilled to her since her earliest childhood about its superiority and benevolence. Indeed, though the rural girl was predestined to be confined within the domestic sphere with limited perspectives of individual self-realization, her joining of the mission school offered Tambu an opportunity to get a colonial education and free herself from the burdens of poverty and her patriarchal society’s sex prejudice. Hence, thanks to the insightful experience of Nyasha in England and her own experience, Tambu acquired new knowledge about life in a Western-life setting. She was given the opportunity to draw her own impression of the colonial enterprise and its institutions. In there, in spite of the alienating power of Western education, Tambu grew aware of the need to adjust to the Western world to ensure her becoming without getting rid of one’s own identity and culture. Indeed, it is only with her access to the colonial school that Tambu was given a chance to fully develop her potential as an individual. Chennells notes that

> Colonialism ubiquitous as a power in the text but as a power it also offers women a chance to locate themselves outside the traditional hierachies…The rebellious Tambudzai, the non-conformist Tambudzai has been validated but not by the patriarchy or the women around the cooking pots. Instead the validation derives from British women authors, from voices within the colonial power that as far as Tambudzai’s grandmother and mother are concerned has fragmented the spiritual and physical

[30]. Chennells.op.cit, 62.

wholeness of the people.[31]

Though colonialism is the primary cause of the dispossession of the Zimbabwean natives in Dangarembga's novel, it constitutes a saving paradox as far as Tambudzai's development is concerned. Actually, the colonial enterprise, as seen through the precariousness of Tambu's family and her difficulties to get an education, testifies of its destructive effects on natives' life. Yet, though colonial education represents enabling prospects, as far as Tambudzai is concerned, it produces antagonisms between her African self and her growing educated-Anglicised persona. However, Tambu remains determined to take her mission school's opportunity and to lighten the burden of poverty and sexism that her mother and the women in her society have sunk under. She highlights in the following passage her confidence in her ability to overcome the alienating effects of Western culture and education. She underscores:

> Some strategy had to be devised to prevent all this splendour from distracting me in the way that my brother has been distracted. Usually in such dire straits, I used my thinking strategy. I was very proud of my thinking strategy. It was meant to put me above the irrational levels of my character and enable me to proceed from pure, rational premises. (FAC: 70)

Yet, parallel to the ascent and financial emancipation that Tambu strived to achieve, her urban cousin tried helplessly to attract her attention on the fact that there were other directions to be taken and other struggles to engage in. Thus, Nyasha strived to sensitize Tambu on the need to read prolifically just like she does to discover unprecedented truths. She asserts'' If she was to find solutions she had to know the facts.'' (NC: 95)Indeed, it is clear that the education that Nyasha's parents' have received in colonial mission schools was extremely alienating. Thus, '' after a

[31]. Chennells.op.cit, 65.

Western-oriented education in England in which Nyasha acquired a strong sense of equality and female emancipation, she got stuck at the crossroads because she is a girl whose parents miraculously expect from her to conform to their traditional ways.''[32]. Hence, Nyasha's nervous breakdown and her complex relationship with her parents helped Tambu to develop a growing self-awareness about the alienating effects of colonialism and colonial education that her uncle's family was suffering from. Once again, the female community held a pivotal role in Tambu's advancement. In fact, Tambu's female cousin nourished her growing awareness about the uprooting impact of colonialism on Zimbabweans. She drew from her traumatic and alienating experience in England to help her, as a Zimbabwean native, to manage as best as she can her experience in a Western-like context.

In another instance, to revoke the bad luck that befell on his brother's family, Babamukuru undertook to organize a Christian wedding for Tambu's parents. To raise the consciousness of her cousin, Nyasha delivered a lecture on the danger of assuming that White Christian ways are progressive and Indigenous people's customs are backward. In fact, Nyasha urged Tambu to cling to her native traditions which are in no way inferior or regressive in comparison with the Western practices. She denounces it as a mere colonial strategy to alienate and acculturate the native and underlined the ruining impact of such a belief on natives' African roots. In this regard, Rooney interprets Nyasha's Anorexi-bulimia problem as a compelling African need to vomit out all the Englishness she has been fed.[33]After restless attempts, Nyasha finally succeeded to raise Tambu's consciousness about the alienating power of colonialism

[32]. Moyana.op.cit, 32.
[33]. Rooney.op.cit, 138.

and of its institutions. As a matter of fact, Tambu confronted Babamukuru and expressed openly her refusal to attend the Church wedding' ceremony. Following from this, she was made to think '' of the ambiguous status of Babamukuru and to doubt his authenticity as an agent of moderniy as well as a Great father within the classical Shona discourse and culture.''[34]

Hence, despite her uncle's attempts to oblige her to attend her parents' Church ceremony, Tambu did not accept. Anthony Chennells notes that '' In the resulting space, the individual woman compliant to the patriarchy's authority dies and a new woman is born for the mere fact of disobedience to Babamukuru involves transformation into what she describes as her newly acquired identity.''[35]. Indeed, Tambu assumed her uncle's punishment with courage. Moreover, Nyasha even sympathizes with Tambu after being severely punished by Babamukuru. In this perspective, along with Silvester, Nyasha undertook to lighten her cousin's two weeks' house chores punishment by providing secretely help.

Nevertheless**,** Tambu's Europeanized cousin was not the only female character to contribute in Tambu's becoming. It is worth saying that Tambu's aunt Lucia played a significant role in her niece's growth as well. Lucia's impact on Tambu's becoming was considerable as Lucia embodied the characteristics of the transgressive and daring female figure. Though Lucia was banished from the homestead by Babamukuru, because of her ''illegitimate'' pregnancy from Takesure, she dared to confront the family's patriarch and to express openly her point of view. It is significant to say that

[34]. Chennells.op.cit, 68.
[35]. Ibid.

Lucia is the sister of Tambudzai's mother and because of her independence from her patriarchal society, according to Chennells; she was called both whore and witch, the unacceptable sexual and spiritual roles which a woman is assumed to play if she transgresses her conventional role.[36]

Moreover, when the male patriarchal expectations try to sit in judgement on her, Lucia refused to be cowered. She entered without invitation the patriarchal dare that Babamukuru has convened for the purpose of controlling her and speaks on her behalf, articulating herself as wronged presence and rejecting male mediumship. Moreover, she sustained that the failure of conventionality in herself is related to male idleness and greed as it is the case with her baby's father Takesure.[37] In fact, on her own terms, Lucia decided to leave the homestead and went to the city to look for a job. She even attended an adult literacy class to prepare herself for further emancipation through education.[38] Moreover, Lucia dared to question Babamukuru's insistence on Tambu's attending of her parents' wedding ceremony and contested the severe punishment, Tambu received from Babamukuru. For all these characteristics, Lucia provided Tambu with the example of a strong, rebellious and ambitious female figure who existed on her own and not in the shadow of a male figure. With her non- conformist attitude, she sharpened Tambu's growing sense of rebellion which found full expression in Tambu's confrontation with Babamukuru about the Christian wedding's ceremony.

[36]. Chennells.op. cit, 67.
[37]. Ibid, 67.
[38]. Rosemary Moyana, '' Men and Women: Gender Issues in Tsitsi Dangarembga's *Nervous Conditions* and *She No Longer Weeps* ''in *New Trends and New generation in African literature* (James Currey Ltd: the university of Zimbabwe, 1996)30.

In fact, she was the one who explicitly denounces males' idleness as primary reason in her, her sister, her niece and all the women's misery. In fact, he impregnated Tambu's mother and, hence, prevented her and her family from getting a high bride price. Tambu reports:

> My mother's family was very poor, poorer even than my own. At the time that my father took my mother, there we no cattle at all in my grandfather's Kraal. Because of this, some people had believed it was a blessing that the firs two of my maternal grandparents' children were girls…Thus the debate continued in my mother's village, way up in the north-west of the country, until my father, visiting a distant relative saw my mother, impregnated her and was obliged to take her home with him. It was unfortunate that it happened this way because, under these circumstances, my grandfather could not claim avery high bride-price for his daughters and so my mother's marriage did not improve her family's condition very much. That was when my grandfather's daughters gained a reputation for being loose women. (NC: 128)

Moreover, when Mainini's sister joins the homestead to help her during her difficult pregnancy, her husband disrespected her and he was said '' to enjoy Lucia's voluptousness.''(NC: 129) Moreover, his idleness and improvidence prevented him from getting ample harvests to take in charge his family and to pay for his children's school fees. Hence, Jeremiah brought misery and disillusionment for his family in particular for his female relatives being a wife or a daughter.

Another female figure who inspired Tambu and proved to be equally important in her development is her uncle's wife, Maiguru. Indeed, right from the beginning, Tambu identified with her aunt Maiguru who, unlike her mother, did no submit to the burden of poverty and Blackness. Contrarily to her illiterate and desperate mother, her uncle's wife was an educated woman who earned a living as a teacher. Hence, Maiguru embodies the ideal of the educated woman who achieved financial independence. Yet, though Maiguru seemed to gather all the characterstics of the

emancipated woman, she fell in the trap of 'passivity' and 'submissiveness' which prevented women from having their own voice in their patriarchal society.

Indeed, when she was called upon by other women, like Lucia, to take a stand against patriarchy, she declared that'' it is not her concern and, hence, passively upholds the patriarchy's oppressive system.''[39] However, she exploded as the pressure reached a boiling point. She complained to her husband about his ill-treatment and left the house for a while. Maiguru's rebellion and growing confidence was consolidated with the articulation of her opinion about the educational opportunity offered to Tambu. In fact, while her husband was reluctant to let his niece join the Sacred Heart Convent School, Maiguru supported Tambu by delivering an unprecedented speech about the biased signifiers which defined female 'decency' and 'indecency' in the Zimbabwean patriarchal society.[40] She criticized the traditional and male-centered exigencies that considered any unconventional women's attitude and choice as indecent. Her speech and her support of Tambu's choice ended up convincing Babamukuru to let Tambu take full advantage of this opportunity and to ensure her advancement in her becoming process.

Thus, Tambu's growth and development was achieved thanks to female characters like Nyasha, Lucia or Maiguru whose insights contributed considerably in shaping a conscious and an assertive Tambudzai. Hence, as seen in this section, Dangarembga's female protagonist's development within the public sphere was dependent on the dimension of the collective. Indeed, though with different intensities

[39]. Moyana.op.cit 31.
[40]. Chennells.op.cit, 73.

and at different stages of Tambu's development, female characters like Nyasha, Lucia and Maiguru all lent a hand in Dangarembga's female protagonist becoming within the male-centered public sphere. Morever, beyond the perspective of individual identity becoming through the mediating structure of the female collective that we have brought forward, we have unravelled instances of resistance witin the community of cousins, mothers and aunts as well.

Through this chapter, we have discussed Djebar's and Dangarembga's treatment of the relationship of the female subject and her community. Through our discussion, we have demonstrated that both of the African women writers display a common preoccupation with the depiction of a sisterhood relationship within the female community.

The female protagonists as pointed out in *Fantasia: An Algerian Cavalcade* and *Nervous Conditions* are examples of women who denounce patriarchal and colonial oppression. In fact, both Djebar and Dangarembga challenge the violence engendered by patriarchy and colonialism, by building female assertion within the public sphere around notions of individual and collective becoming.

We have demonstrated that Djebar's and Dangarembga's novels reflect how the two writers relate the assertion of female individual subjectivity to the community of women. Indeed, both of them engage the perspective of challenging patriarchal and colonial oppression and articulate female individual becoming in close connection with women's community. The analysis has also revealed that the inter-connectedness between the dimension of the individual and the collective serves not only as a tool in

ensuring the female individual's self-realization but, also, in recovering notions of female agency and group resistance.

Conclusion

Considering the centeredness of the Postcolonial discourse and Western colonial ideological discourse on the male figure as agent of change in the theoretical and literary studies, Postcolonial Feminism as an academic discipline is involved in both the questioning of the biased representation of female subjectivity and in the rehabilitation of the female subject as an active agent of literature. As our study has demonstrated, Assia Djebar and Tsitsi Dangarembga have contributed to the Postcolonial Feminist literary tradition by repositioning women as self-realized subjects with dynamic identities that break with the traditional roles they were, hitherto, granted in male-produced literatures.

Furthermore, with regard to Rita Felski's reworking of the female variant of the 'Bildungsroman' genre which exemplifies a female identity in the making, our research has revealed that both Djebar and Dangarembga take this departure in setting their female protagonists' development into female characters with identities in the making. As opposed to the stereotypical roles of 'wife' and 'mother' that the female characters were assimilated to in male-written narratives, Djebar and Dangarembga produce fresh visions of female subjectivity. In fact, through their novels, both women writers set becoming processes to enhance the development of the female subject's full potential either as an agent in the Algerian Liberation War or as an educated woman, respectively. Moreover, the tradition of comparative literature, that seeks to create bridges between world literatures, has allowed us to identify areas of similarities as well as differences between these postcolonial African women's literatures coming from two different countries and with different languages and socio-cultural backgrounds. In there, the comparative perspective has revealed shared interests

among which the writers' concern for the female subject's representation in the discourses on gender and history which stand as a central aspect of almost all people in colonized areas.

The dissertation through its three chapters attempted to address the dynamic representation of female subjectivity in postcolonial women's literature by discussing the actions undertaken in Djebar's *Fantasia: An Algerian Cavalcade and* Dangarembga's *Nervous Conditions* to enhance female identity's development.

Chapter one provided an overview of the complexities of female subjectivity's development throughout the colonial and postcolonial histories of Djebar's and Dangarembga's motherlands. Indeed, we have discussed some historical episodes of Algeria and Zimbabwe in which we have examined the visibility given to the female subject in the patriarchal and colonial discourses. We have deduced that some historical moments in Algeria's and Zimbabwe's past were source of challenging forces for the female subject's becoming.

Though the Algerian Liberation War context and its need for a female agent has induced and helped somehow the female subject's assertion within the public sphere, the patriarchal and conservative mechanisms within the FLN's ruling body operated impeding forces in women's becoming within the public sphere in both the colonial and postcolonial eras. Similarly, the patriarchal primary root in Zimbabwe gave no real importance to women's sensibilities and grievances and made no room for perspectives of social ascent for women. While the visibility which was granted for Algerian women within the French colonial discourse was fueled by mere ideological

motives, the British colonial enterprise and its colonial project which, though emancipating to a certain extent proved to be impeding in the female subject's development. Unlike the Algerian writer's emphasis on her female protagonist's direct confrontation with the French colonial forces, in a context marked by an expanding cultural colonization, Dangarembga builds her female protagonist's development as opposed to the British colonial system and the alienating power of its institutions. Despite the two women writers' apparent differences in terms of reproducing the relationship between female becoming and colonial authority, both of them pursue the common goal of re-inscribing women's visibility within well-seated Algerian and Zimbabwean patriarchal institutions.

Our investigation of the place given to the female subject within the Algerian and Zimbabwean patriarchal and colonial policies is justified by the fact that the two countries went through complex moments in its patriarchal and colonial histories that were not without impact on the female subject's development. Indeed, the inquiry of the patriarchal and colonial politics of female subjectivity's social visibility revealed the impact of the stereotypical patriarchal and colonial representations of female identity on female subjectivity's development.

Chapter two provided an insight into the implication of the traditional vision of female subjectivity within the patriarchal and colonial discourses in the dynamics of the female individual's becoming within the public sphere. In there, we have shown throughout our discussion that the female subject's assertion within the public sphere is achieved through the challenging of the monolithic conception of the female subject's identity in the patriarchal and colonial institutions. Though with the

immediacy of the War of Independence context, the challenging of the colonial institution was reflected in terms of direct confrontation with the colonial administration, the deconstruction of colonialism in *Nervous Conditions* is materialized in the denunciation of the alienating effects of the colonial enterprise on native people.

Hence, our discussion has revealed that the dynamics within the patriarchal and colonial discourses have conveyed traditional visions of female subjectivity which prevented women from being portrayed as autonomous, self-realized and worthy characters in male-written literatures.

The third chapter investigated the implication of women as a group in the dynamics of female individual's development. We engaged the female subject's becoming through the dimension of the collective as reflected in aspects of female sisterhood and solidarity. We have discovered that Djebar's introduction of her female protagonist's self-realization is materialized through aspects of transmission and preservation of a collective female heritage. Similarly, Dangarembga tackles the female individual's becoming through the female community as materialized in women's support and insightful contribution in the female subject's awareness on gender and race prejudices.

It is significant to mention that the comparative approach has allowed us to bring Djebar's and Dangarembga's novels, that despite of the geographical distance and the cultural distinctiveness that separate Algerian and Zimbabwean societies may be assumed to be distant, close to each other more than ever before.

The interconnectedness between the female individual and the women's community in the dynamics of female becoming unravels instances of female agency as an individual and as a group. It is clear that Djebar's and Dangarembga's articulation of female subjectivity's becoming and self-realization through the mediating structure of women allows to recover aspects of individual and collective female activism within literature of the postcolonial era.

Given the limited scope of our research that sought to challenge the traditional representation of female subjects in patriarchal and colonial literatures, our dissertation uncovered and rehabilitated instances of female agency in the literature of the postcolonial era. In this perspective, we hope that we have managed to provide our readership with a better understanding of the strategies deployed by these postcolonial women writers in producing a dynamic representation of female subjectivity and offering becoming identities for women in literature. It is our belief that much can be said about language in the two works. Indeed, both Djebar and Dangarembga mixe up the colonizer's language with their native language which is inscribed in the perspective of appropriation and subversive use of the colonizer's language in Postcolonial Feminist theory. Hence, while Djebar combines the French with the dialectal Arabic, Dangarembga infuses her English language with words from her Shona native language. However, since the two women writers' language use is characterized by the subversion of the colonizer's language with elements from the writers' native language, it engages a literary perspective on the basis of style. This introduces a new perspective which we have chosen not to address as it diverts from

the thematic study on notions of female becoming and self-realization that we have dealt with in our study.

Moreover, this dissertation has identified a number of areas of possible further research that is embedded in a postcolonial feminist perspective. These include aspects of identity crisis for the native female subject stuck between her native language and the colonial cultural influences. Indeed, with regard to the Western cultural hegemony that impacted colonized people's lives in Djebar's and Dangarembga's novels, issues of hybrid identity's formation can be addressed in further literary studies.

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ملخص

العنوان:**المرا ة** ما بين شخصية في تحول مستمروتحقيق الذات في روايتي **الحب ،الفنتازيا** الكاتبة الجزائرية اسيا جبارو**ظروف موترة** الزمبابوية الكاتبة تستي د نغربغا

ملخص

ولدت الرواية الافريقية كظاهرة تاريخية و اجتماعية تسعى الى ان تكون وصفا للواقع وانعكاسا لتجارب عاشها الانسان في ماض تاريخي غيرمستقريطبعه زمن استعماري ماض و حاضر تطرح فيه مسالة الاستقلال حيث ان الواقع الاليم الذي صنعته مخلفات الاستعمار من جهة و خيبة ما بعد الاستقلال من جهة اخرى قد هيات الظروف لنشاة نوع من الكتابة النسوية المتميزة ببعض الافكار المشتركة التي تلتقي وتتقاسمها الكاتبتان وتكمن خصوصية هذا النوع من الكتابة التي تميزها في الخطاب ،بمعنى انها موجهة الى جمهور نسوي ثم انها تنتقد القيم الاجتماعية السائدة في افريقيا بحيث تقوم باعادة النظرالى السياسة الا ستبدادية التي فرضها القوميون سعيا الى تقزيم وتقليص مكانة المراة واخضاعها لسلطة الرجل بالاعتماد على خطاب يحصر مهمتها في نقل القيم التاريخية للاجيال و الحفاظ عليها

يتفق منتقدي مؤلفات جبار ودنغربغا على ان معظم اعمالهما رتستمد من ايديولوجيا نسوية و التي كانت محل نقاش مثيرمن طرف المنتقدين المحللين و الادباء ولكن بعض وجهات النظرترى ان المرحلة التي قامت به الكاتباتان جبارو دانغربغا في روايتهما بمناقشة تجارب نسوية تعكس ظروف سياسية و اجتماعية صعبة تطبعها الصدمات الناتجة من مخلفات الاستعمارالفرنسي و البريطاني على حد سوى والتي تكشف تهجم و انتقاد على ذاتية المراة

يهدف هذا البحث الى ايجاد مظاهرمؤيدة للنساء في روايتين تنتميان الى الكتابة النسوية التي ميزت فترة بعد الاستعمار وهذا بدراسة الافكار الاثوية في روايتها للجزائرية **الحب ،الفنتازيا** اسيا جبار **و ظروف موترة** 'للزمبابوية تستسي دانغربغا هذا البحث يهدف الى برهنة ان من الرغم ان الحياة اليومية للجزائريات و الزمبابويات تاثرت بقوى سياسية و تاريخية مخالفة توجد قواسم مشتركة في كتابتهما و هذا بالنظر الى الخلفية الاستعمارية التي ميزت كلا من الجزائر و زمبابوي فمن رغم اختلافهما من حيث التقاليد والاعراف فان ظاهرة التهميش التي تعرضت لها الاقلية النسوية من قبل القوميون و المستعمرون احدث تقارب ما بينهما وتواجدهدف

مشترك و هو انتقاد اسكات صوت المراة و تهميشها في مجتمعهما فعلى اساس دراسة مقارنة و بالنظرالى الحركة النسوية التي ميزت فترة ما بعد الاستقلال، بحثنا يهدف الى تحليل تصوير الشخصيات النسوية كشخصيات ذوات محقق وجدير بالاحترام في اعمال كاعمال الجزائرية اسيا جبار و الزمبابوية تستي دنغاربغا في اطار الكتابة النسوية المعاصرة ينتقد و يخالف تماما الوصف المتحيز واللاموضوعي التي حازت عليها الشخصية النسوية من قبل

فان دراسة روايتي **الحب الفنتازيا** للكاتبة الجزائرية **وظروف موترة** للكاتبة الزمبابوية تستسي دانغاربغا بين ان كلا من النساء الكاتبتان تقمن بدراسة علاقة النساء بالفترة الاستعمارية و كذا فترة ما بعد الاستعماربهدف مناقشة الاضطهاد الذي عرفته المراة كعنصرخاضع لكلا من التحيز القومي و الاستعماري في دراسة الخاصية و الطابع النسوي في الروايتين، ننوي مقارنة احداث تاريخية اساسية المقتبسة من طرف الكاتبتين بغرض استخلاص اوجه التشابه ما بين نضا ليهما ضد الاستعمار الفرنسي و البريطاني وكذا ضد الخطاب الابوي الذي نزعته المحافظة تفاقمت و تحولت الى نوع من الاستعمار الجديد الذي اعاد النظر و استنكر ابراز مكانة المراة في الحياة العامة و تهميشها خاصة فيما يخص رواية جبار

تقوم كذلك هذه الدراسة المقارنة با لتحقيق في الكيفية التي عالجت الكاتبتين فكرة شخصية المراة في تطور مستمر فرض شخصية المراة في الميدان العام الذي يسيطر عليه الرجل بتحدي سياسة الاستبعاد و الاقصاء الابوية والاستعمارية التي تقوم الكاتبتان جبارو دنغربغا بتسجيلها عبرروايتهما و التي تنخرط في اطارالتفاوض من اجل ابراز مكانة المراة واعادة النظرفي تمثيليها مطابقا مع الافكار الاساسية ' للعنصر الصف' التي قامت الباحثة النسوية لفترة ما بعد الاستعمار **''غايتري شكرافورتي سبيفاك ''**بتوضيحها في مقالتها المشهورة " هل بامكان العنصر الصف بالتكلم" و التي نشرتها في اواخر القرن العشرين

في هذه المقالة التي تعد من ابرزاعمال الحركة التحرر النسوية التي ميزت فترة ما بعد الاستعمارقامت سبيفاك بمناقشة الصورالانحيازية التي حازت عليها المراة في كلا من الخطاب الابوي و الاخطاب الاستعماري و في هذا الاطار نددت **غايتري سبيفاك** ان بما ان التصوي التاريخي مبني على اساس وهوامتياز العنصر الذكري كعنصر فعال و ذونشاط على حساب العنصرالنسوي واعتبارا لهذا تشيرسبيفاك ان الوسيلة الوحيدة لاخراج المراة

من هذه القوالب هو اعادة النظر في الوصف التاريخي الذي اقتصرت عليه مكانة المراة في كلا من الخطاب الابوي و الاستعماري و لتحقيق هذا الهدف فسبيفاك تركزهذه النزعة الانتقادية على مستوى المراة التي تبرزكعنصرناقد للصورة التهميشية للمراة التي فرضت نفسها و تغلغلت في الاعمال الادبيةالناتجة مجموعة من الافكار اللاموضوعية على المراة التي هي في قلب الخطاب الابوي و الا ستعماري

زيادة على ذلك يقوم هذا البحث بمناقشة موضوع مظاهر الاختية و التضامن النسوي في روايتي جبارو دانغاربغا كلا من الكاتبتين تشترك في اصلاح ذات المراة تحت واقع الاستعمار، النزعة القومية و كذا الاستعمار الجديد من خلال الوساطة الانثوية فان استعاد مكانة المراة في المجتمع وخاصة في الميدان العام يقتضي الجماعة النسوية واثارة وعي المراة حول التحيزات على اساس الجنس هو جزء لا يتجزا في نجاح و استمرارية تحرر العنصر النسوي في روايتيهماهاتان المراتان الافريقيتان المنتميتان الى جيل ما بعد الاستقلال متميزتان بطريقة او باخرى حيث ان كل منهما برهان على قوة الانوثة رغم اختلافهما من حيث التقاليد و الاعراف فان على عكس الكتابة الرجالية القومية و الاستعمارية التي فيها الشخصية النسويةغالبا ما تكون مهمشة ففي روايتهما **الحب ،الفنتازيا** و **ظروف موترة** الشخصية النسوية ذو ذا ت محقق