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**Female Identity in Postcolonial African Literature. Case Study; Assia
Djebar's *Les nuits de Strasbourg***

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Declaration of Originality

I hereby declare that this submission is my work and that, it contains no material previously published or written by another person nor material which has been accepted for the qualification of any other degree or diploma of a university or other institution.

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A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Bendenia', written in a cursive style with a large initial 'B'.

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Dedication

This dissertation is whole heartedly dedicated to my mother for her endless love, for showing me a Woman can do it all. To my father, my forever hero. To my sister Hanane and my brother Kamal who supported me in each step forward.

To my teachers at each level of my learning journey, who gave me generously and unconditionally, and to all whom believe in the richness of learning.

Abstract

The study under investigation explores the representation of female identity in postcolonial African literature in Assia Djebar's *Strasbourg Nights*. It shows how Assia Djebar uses a post-colonial background to build characters that focus on their memory, story, and identity. Analyzing colonial identity reveals its connection with history. Therefore, the portrayal of Thelja, the protagonist of *Strasbourg Nigh* who has a clear sense of emptiness in the novel, is clearly presented through the definition of the character's identity and the influence of emptiness on the characters and their communities. The study goes under qualitative type of research; it is descriptive analytical. Postcolonial theory and Feminism are used to analyze the character's identities in the case study. Consequently, the study reflects how African woman challenged the norms and the colonial memory they have to create a new strong identity.

Keywords: Female identity, Post colonialism, African literature, feminism.

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General Introduction

Colonized people had lived a long period of time under the power of the colonizers. This power changed a lot in natives in almost all aspects of life . Socially, politically, economically and for sure culturally Africans, including Magharibbeans, as all the colonized countries suffered long period living under the mercy of their colonizers. Those impressers pass and implant their own terms and consciousness about class, customs, race, gender and language in the colonized minds and souls. Taking the political independence does not mean that the ex-colonies are free to determine their self-definition, it means that they took partially their freedom and kept walking in the colonizers' shoes. By time, they became lost from one hand and indulged into the colonizers' cultures from another because of taking education in the pressers' schools and the long interact with them.

Identity as an essential topic in postcolonial studies have got its importance from the fact that no ex-colonized has well defined unique sense of identity. They do not know how to define ones' sense of identity. As the identity is the construction and the combination of all what characterizes a given group of people or a society in terms of their way of living, eating, speaking and believing. The long interaction between two different cultures or more under the context of oppressor and oppressed made the weaker group lose their own originality and wearing the shoes of those who had, at their own concepts, superior culture.

Post colonialism in its own sense is the area of having a voice that gives back the colonized people their own rights and dreams. Postcolonial writers and novelists had no military strength to get their own public free but their pens. They had the responsibility to reflect the misrepresentation of the colonized identities. They challenged the norms to break the leg and tells the world , starting by their own people, that the colonizers' imperial practices need to be

ceased and people should have taken their own originality back. Algeria as one of the African countries which was under the control of French colonialism has its own novelists, specifically women, who wrote for defending and showing how they got identity crisis.

African women were imprisoned by colonists and under the domination of African men which portray patriarchal society of Africa. It means the domination of men have created another kind of suppress and suffer for them, enabling African women writers to express their cultural traditions and taboos. , Race, gender, and sex.

African writers are trying to develop a novel that represents hope, desire and historical memory, embodied in their perceptual language, combined with colonial collective history. Among them, Assia Djebar has become an important spokesperson in the post-colonialist movement and the feminist movement. *Strasbourg Nights* reflects the true identity of African women, The Algerian one. This novel features a history of revisionism, undermining colonialism and patriarchal attitudes.

In her novel *Strasbourg Nights* . Djebar sheds the light the identity problem to challenge the marginal status of African women known as "dual colonization"; and portrays the silent voices of many African women during and after the post-colonial period .

Djebar claimed that African female identity is a cultural construction influenced by multiple oppression and marginalization. She pointed out that the issue of loss of identity in African societies is of paramount importance. Her novel created a space for women in Algeria where they could redeem their female identity and be reborn.

The objective of this study is to introduce the African female experience during colonialism and to validate the conceptualization of identity under the postcolonial feminist era.

It portrays the representation of African women through analyzing Djébar's *Strasbourg Nights* focusing on the emptiness of the main characters as a symbol of “lost identity”.

The study attempts to answer questions such as how does Assia Djébar represent the female identity in her *Strasbourg Nights* ? and how do African women challenged the norms to create an independent identity ?

The hypotheses of the study are formulated as follows. Assia Djébar uses a post-colonial background to build the female characters that focus on their memory, story, and identity. She portrayed women lost and living under control of their imperial memories or their husbands' severe treatments. Analyzing colonial identity reveals its connection with history. African women challenged the norms of their societies to fetch their own identity through having new relationships. Some of the characters like, Irma, accepted ~~the~~ multiculturalism as a sign that characterizes Their identity while main character, Thelja, after having her experience with new relationship, she at least knew what to do to gain her identity back.

The research follows a descriptive analytical method to give an overview about postcolonial feminist approach in Africa, as well as to examine the African female identity through *Strasbourg Nights*. It consists of three chapters. The first deals with the debate of Post colonialism and Postcolonial African Literature. It reviews historically and chronologically how post colonialism appeared and coined. Post colonialism as a term cannot be grasped without referring to the colonialism. After reviewing what colonialism did in the hearts and soul of the colonized people, it is easy for theorists to coin new term of neo-colonialism and thus they give more prominent definition to post colonialism. After that, postcolonial theory has been defined and characterized. The attentions go mainly on the treatment of the notion identity in this context. After that, the identity as theme is proven to be essential in postcolonial literature.

Finally, Postcolonial African literature with focusing on Algerian one is explained and defined. The second is under the title of Postcolonial Feminism and Female Identity. It shows how post colonialism and Feminism goes hand in hand and have ideologies in common. As both concerned with the imperial impacts and oppression over people, Feminism exploitates the notion to prove that postcolonial women are double colonized, by men and imperialism. However, the attention of postcolonial feminist theory is concerned also how postcolonial African women are marginalized not only because they are just a women but also they are only a shadow of their past without necessary a clear notion of who they are. Thus, the notion of identity within this theory is stressed and presented in the Algerian literature. Right after, the Feminism in Algerian literature has been presented and showed how women are having a voice to scream it out achieving their position within the feminist world. Assia Djebar as one the prominent feminist writers is focused on as it is the focus of the current study along with her master piece *Strasbourg Nights*. The third is about analysing the representation of female identity in the novel of *Strasbourg Nights*.

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Introduction

Taking the physical independence for the colonized countries is deemed only to leave the colonized territories free from military appearances and colonial agenda. Africa was not an exception. Basically, the colonialists planted their roots in the hearts and the souls of the public. Colonized people, accordingly, especially those who passed decades under oppression, were ignorant, poor, hungry and above all self lost. Identity quest for Africans was not only getting back their traditions and customs, but also, they desired to have their pure culture back. The impossibility of realizing their true self urged the novelists and creative writers to take the responsibility of spreading the awareness of the imperial practices impacts on the masses. To be specific, women novelists have their role to give and to urge Eve's daughters to fight for their true- self. They wanted women to get rid of the colonial and imperial control over them such like the oppressors' culture and language, let alone men's control. Thus, the current chapter is divided essentially into two parts: firstly, it gives an overview about Post colonialism in Africa. Secondly, it depicts the postcolonial Feminism along with postcolonial African literature.

1.1. Definition of Post colonialism

Postcolonialism, as a term, tends to be vague and ambiguous due to its unclear and unfixed historical background and theoretical framework. Theorists such as Daniel, G, John, C and Janna agreed along with Ashcroft that post colonialism is "in all discourses more or less

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related to formerly colonized countries” (6). Thus, to understand the essence of post colonialism, colonialism needs to be defined.

1.1.1. Definition of Colonialism

Colonialism, as the word may imply, is the oppression of one population to another with occurs mostly is physical conquest. It is referring also to the political, economic and cultural control over public. As a result, the colonized, after having entire life under the colonizers’ subjection, started to adopt the colonizers’ culture as it indicates the supremacy over the original culture.

Colonialism gets back to the period when Europe explicated and occupied lands and nations for imperial purposes let alone the wealth. Clearly, Colonialism is one of the forms of Imperialism. Young stated that Imperialism “operates as a policy of state driven by the ostentatious projects of power within the beyond national boundaries” (26-27).

Nkrumah assured Young’s definition and defined Imperialism as” susceptible to analysis as a concept grounded in exploitation, partnership and assimilation” (1). In fact, colonizers subjugate over territories not to elevate them culturally but to” promote the colonizers’ economic advantages” (2). Without doubt, the oppressors does not dominate physically; but the practice all what can impact the politics and economy purposefully for dominating forever. DavidYoung stated that giving the flag independence meant only the colonizers’ disappearance military, but it did not bring freedom to economy or politics (102). Imperialism as a concept and colonialism as a practice are still active in new form of called a Neo-colonialism.

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1.1.2. Definition of Neo-colonialism

Neo-colonialism refers to all the new indirect ways to control over the ex-colonies. It indicates the modern practices that appeared after the Second World War. In its clearest and simplest definition, it is re-controlling and re-colonizing the territories after their political independence. Neo-colonialism is where the ex-colonizers interfere politically and economically in post independent nations. New colonialism is an “outgrowth of classical colonialism” (qtd. in McCulloch 120-121). For Robert Young, it is “the last stage of imperialism”. He regards neo-colonialism as a “partly planned policy” and a “continuation of the old practices” (46). It is believed that neo-colonialism is imperialism in its last stage. While people who were colonized think that they had their independence and freedom, in fact they face a new colonialism which is not necessarily a physical conquest but it is political and economic control over the colonies.

1.1.3. Definition of Post colonialism

The term first appeared the mid 1980s. Essentially, its real start was in 1970 with Edward Said's *Orientalism* which helped much towards shaping the notion. Orientalism represents, as Said argues, “the way in which the colonizers consider themselves inferior than the colonized who needs surely to be cultivated accordingly (12). Thus, they gave themselves the right to conquer them easily. Consequently, the term post colonialism represents what occurs one culture is dominated by another. Taking into consideration Said's *Orientalism*, post colonialism refers to all what concerns social and cultural changes happened after colonialism.

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As the term study all what happens after colonialism, it indicates to what extent these colonial effects still in all aspects of life: race, culture, identity and gender. Thus, colonies in fact are facing a new way of colonialism. Post colonialism yields itself to problematic nature. Since the colonized dealt almost their entire life with the colonizers, and as the colonizers were the upper hands, the oppressed people and 's dictionary adopted new vocabularies as their owns and decreased the importance of their owns. Words tends to have" different meaning in different contexts" which led the term with its vague to be "unstable" according to the wide "range of societies and cultures whose very different uses of English words not only change with time but also take on inflections of nation, region, class and gender, narrow definitions of these terms can seldom pretend to absolute authority. (Ashcroft, B., Gareth, G & Helen, T. 2).

Postcolonial literary criticism had its fame in the early 1990s. For Ann Dobie, it investigates the works of postcolonial writers who discuss how the colonized accepted the values of the power and resist them too. She adds that post colonialism mixed the culture and economic system in time both must be well distinguished. In fact, he wants to keep the difference between the immaterial realities that represented as culture, religion, traditions, customs, beliefs, rites and so on in one hand ; and in the other hand the material realities that include economic system.

Bill Ashcroft et al define the postcolonial theory as discussion of "race, gender, place, and responses to the influential master discourse of imperial Europe" (2). Postcolonial theory gives room for the entire marginalized individual to scream out their voice and to be respected too. Scholars like Homi Bhabha propose theories based on "the nature of postcolonial societies and the types of hybridization their various cultures have produced"(Ashcroft et al 32).

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Post-colonialism is a continuing process of resistance and reconstruction that deals with the impact of post-independence colonization on culture and society. It sheds light on the challenges that colonies struggled with and still. In literature, it is an academic discipline or study that aims at analyzing and explaining the effects of colonialism and imperialism. Post-colonialism in literature comprises the study of theory and literature as it relates to the colonizer-colonized experiences in different fields.

1.2.Post-colonial Theory

Post-colonialism relates directly to the colonial and imperial practices left in the controlled countries. It stemmed from the power imposed on the colonized people on all perspectives, or the effect left after taking the political independence. Hans Bertens assumes that by 1980 postcolonial literature “become part of the then emerging and now vast field of literary, cultural, political and historical inquiry that we call postcolonial studies”(200).

Post colonialism indicates historical and ideological importance. Postcolonial theory stresses and focuses on the colonized societies’ views about the colonial and the imperial experiences in their lands. This theory cannot be understood without reoffering to colonialism in all its forms and effects such as binary opposition themes; white/ black, self/other, language and landscape.

The self-representation and quest for identity are essential in post-colonial theory. The problem of race, ethnics, groups, and identity are exposed in literature to portray sufferings of the

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societies from the imposed principles on them which affected their originality and true self. The post-colonial studies pivot around the countries under control or recently got the independence.

Post-colonialism was not only interested in tracing the effects of colonialism, it rather stresses on the postcolonial discourse. The latter attempted to redefine and reformulate the colonized self. It is a contrast study that starts with the national independence against the imperial rule. In fact, the roots of colonialism did not end by giving the colonies the independence rather they started a new form of colonialism which described the ex-colonies as post-colonial .

Neo-colonialism started to be conceptual framework for the creative writers. Edward's theory along with Spivak 's and Bhabha 's gave the term a framework. Edward's *Orientalism* refers to a particular and long-standing way of identifying the East as 'other' and inferior to the West.(Barry193). He claimed that all the colonizers create kind of societies, which are entirely different from them. Thus, the colonizers will give themselves the excuse to control over territories. The way they see the other makes them think that all the humans who are not the same as the colonizers are inferior and objectionable. Said raises many questions about colonization, imperialism and constructions of the other. Again, the intent of post colonialism, as Dobie claimed, is to study what occurs when culture is dominated by another.

Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak is an outstanding postcolonial theorist who ranked as a feminist. In fact, her critical work *In Other Worlds: Essays in Cultural Politics* (1987) deserves a special attention including in particular her essay 'Can the Subaltern Speak?'. Spivak stresses the idea that women gained less attention in patriarchy society. She also emphasizes that even

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women was underestimated by men of their origin; hence, she is double exploited in post-colonial literature. Subaltern is a military term, but Spivak used it to denote the lower rank, marginal status of women and the literature exploring it.

1.3. Post-colonial Identity in African Literature

Identity is the most discussed issue in the field of postcolonial literary criticism. It is expressed through the social, economic, historical, and cultural perspectives of people and societies. Moreover, identity is based on the cultural interactions between national and ethnic groups; in which identity is affected by the mixture of both concepts. Thus, colonized person's identity in specific can be shaped by the social relations determined inside their society in terms of class, customs, race, and gender.

The term Identity is widely used in literary and cultural criticism because it appears in extensive discussions and debates in anthropology; however, in postcolonial discourse, the term provides a special focus to illustrate colonial relations .However, in postcolonial discourse the term provides a particular focus for clarify the complex nature of colonial relations and inflection Ashcroft et al *Key Concept 2*). . After colonialism, how do people define their identity? What impact does an increasingly neocolonial world have on the construction of identity?

The problem returned by the identity returns to a persistent public opinion, which led Homi Bhabha in his book *The Cultural Impact* argued that “There is no native who does not dream at least once a day of setting himself up in settlers place”(44). In addition, the ambiguity or loss of identity examines the conflict of cultures in which people consider themselves superior

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and impose their own practices on the weak in order to recognize the locals and impose new ones. (Hall 187).

Edward Said divides identity into two well-known traditions: Philosophical tradition refers to the process of self-reflection in the mirror of mankind. Anthropology is a division of culture and involves differences in human identities (Bhabha 46). And this process is visible, because the identities are different, not unified, and not fixed.

With the attempts to define the notion of identity, the definition yields itself to various aspects that form the concept. The most important of them is language. André affirms that identity “maintains an organic relationship with language that derives from the per-formative process: identity is affirmed by language, there is no identity which does not speak, does not express itself.” (9). It has been revealed that language is a part from identity because this latter protect the language and maintain its existence. It is impossible to explain or talk about identity without using-language.

As the African writers tends to write with language of colonialists, mostly French, André continues to wonder how can they aware the public about identity quest and the novelists address people with colonialists’ language and automatically their culture too. Thus the term identity became more problematic since “act of writing for an African resides in the problematic of literary communication” (10).

Consequently, the redefining the natives’ true self and identity urged the African intellectuals and creative writers to show the true identity of the ancestors and to flourish the

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primitive people culture and tradition without necessarily be less important or inferior than the origins' ones. James Gibbs and Bernth Lindflrs insisted to show to the new generation the importance of the African societies before colonialism and how they lived without any kind of identity conflict or resistance for their traditions, identity and culture (301).

Hence, the African writers did their best to maintain their identity through their literary work, their aim is to establish an African identity that includes all the elements of the African culture without being contracted with other cultures. Thus they have always been intimidated with the struggle for independence and the nations building. They depended on writing always what opposes the African identity and culture to the one of the colonialists (Bhabha 301)

Finally, the period of colonialism left a lot of bad traces and cultural elements that are totally against the African identity and traditions. For that reason, some writers tried to resist the colonialism forms in order to present the African identity in very sophisticated and beautiful image.

1.4.Postcolonial African literature

Since 1980s, many novelists, writers, poets and dramatists are labelled as postcolonial writers. Postcolonial literature presents all literary works that has a direct relation with the subjugation of nations and the practices of imperialism in colonies. It is considered as post-independence literature that portrays the nations' struggle for their identities.

Following WWII, postcolonial literature came from the colonized region, which included the Indian subcontinent as well as a large portion of African countries. It is stemmed from

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Britain's former colonies in Africa and in India. Critics yields postcolonial literature to several names that describe different phases such as "literature of resistance, literature of national consolidation, literature of disillusion and/or neo-colonialism; postcolonial literature and diaspora literature (Innes 17).

Postcolonial literature refers to the number of artistic works that are acted and reacted against the colonial discourse. Decolonization is one of its major themes that retell the nations' strive for economical and political freedom from colonizers' power. Because it is written out of the specific local experience, postcolonial literature can be thought of as a self-consciously literature of otherness and resistance, as John Lye characterizes it. Leela Gandhi, in her book *Post-colonial Theory* 1998, sees it as a contentious category which refers to those literatures which have accompanied the projection and decline of British imperialism.

Throughout the 1950s, many inspiring texts of Post colonialism were published; to mention some, Aimé Césaire's *Discourse on Colonialism*, Frantz Fanon's *Black Skin, White Masks*, Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* (1958). Also, George Lamming's *The Pleasures of Exile* appeared in 1960 and Fanon's *The Wretched of the Earth* followed in 1961.

As the ex-colonizers controlled over education, as they controlled everything, of the colonized. The latter winningly became as a shadow of the oppressors' thoughts and culture which led them to loose their dignity about their original culture. Reasonably, African novelists flourished their literature by the second half of the 20 century to" addressing and readdressing issues of education and mis-education in and about Africa"that is distorted by the colonizers. ((Ernest.et al.XI)

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What is common between all literatures is that it treats the themes which suit a given society' struggle and suffering backgrounds. As the Africans were questing for identity ;African literature is regaining back their” dignity that many African peoples all but lost in the colonial period” because the worst thing that can happen to any people is the loss of their dignity and self

Not only the African literature themes makes it special, but also its differences and varieties. It is known that identity is been conquest by number of different colonialists; English, Portuguese, French, German, Dutch and numerous other colonizers and invaders . The fact that it gives the African literature treats m any different themes according where the colonizers “left their indelible influence on those parts of Africa which they occupied.(Jonathan 1).

The earliest written African literature has been found in the northern part of Africa, which has traditionally maintained ties with Europe and the Middle East. The writings of West Africa were heavily influenced by Islamic writings. West Africans wrote poetry, by and large, is of a religious nature. Hence, the countries of south region in Africa were as a museum of the ancient African written work comprising the Islamic writing and poetry. He also added that “Literature written in Africa can be traced back at least to the 18th century. African fiction in French dealt with the struggle against colonialism, the search for identity, and conflicts” (3).

It seems to be that the African literature treated some essential subjects as the identity and the hard struggle against colonialism. According to André characterizes the African literature as an “art whose essence resides in the use of the word, the only material, the only substance of creation endowed with property, at the difference of sound, image or colour, The specificity of

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the language literary is this necessary anchoring in the secularity of the reflection of its raw material.”(9).

The African literature contains great literary productions that attempt to give the reader the correct image about Africa in both the period of during and post colonialism. According to André citation, it has been clarified that “written African literature is a literature "of language", "of writing", "of spelling" or "expression". The destiny of such a literature is to be the unusual product of the encounter, of the coupling of a culture and of sensitivity with a language: both do not originate from the same space”. Finally, the African literature deals with language which a necessary element in expressing ideas, emotions, conflict, defending the identity or talking about culture and traditions.

The art of writing has a fundamental place in the world of literature because it is an extremely important activity. Writing is considered an artistic talent and a creative trend. There are many Algerian writers who like or prefer to write in French (FLE) which means French as a foreign language, such as Yasmina Khadra, Khalida Messaoudi ,Assia Djebar ... etc. The process of writing is a cultural act which allowed the writer to build and express his personal ideas, his feelings. As well as, the Maghrebian literature of French expression which was defined by Gikandi as ;

a literature which was born mainly towards the years 1945-1950 in the Arab Maghreb countries: Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia. The authors of this literature are indigenous, that is to say from the country. Maghreb literature will become a recognized form of expression after World War II (534).

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The emergence of this kind of literature was during the Algerian war 1950s and broke through after the Algerian independence 1962. Many writers as Mouloud Feraoun or Kateb Yacine attempted to present the situation of Algeria through their literary production. They all considered as ethnographic writers. Besides that, some writer mix the Algerian Berber culture by the French language to produce what is called by the intercultural form in many roman or novels.

Kamel argues that they presented the identity, the traditions, the language, their way of life in order to not being influenced by the French culture and show how they hate French colonization by describing them in bad words manners. They wanted to draw the real image of colonialism for the future generations or the post colonial generations and described that the “Algerian novel written in French as an indication of the identity of one’s literature. They believe also that their relationship with French is that of embattlement, dismantlement, and subversion. (Kamel,175).

Algerian maghrebian literature considered as a weapon against the French colonialism. It treats many interesting topics as Identity, self-assertion, and refusing the existence of any kind of colonialism ideology or culture. So, that literature has been developed after the independence of the country to be more special and creative

To shed the light on the subject matter of the current study, the attention should go specifically to the feminist Algerian literature. Assia Djébar has been chosen for its fame about writing all what concerns colonial period and women. Her work can be seen as a place to remember and rebel against the past. Women’s experiences of sexual abuse, male violence and exploitation in the workplace can provide us with valuable knowledge about the past (Ruiz 4).

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The subjectivity of women, such as race, ethnicity, social class, sexual orientation, and gender, constructs a new version of traditional history, taking into account the perspective of women and the interpretation of the world.

Since then, many critics have talked about and written about the parallel relationship between women and the relationship between the colonized, citing the dual colonization of women, who are a result of the white imperialists and African men and women. Beatrice and Ikem commented: “The women are, of course, the biggest single group of oppressed people in the world, if we are to believe the book of Genesis” (15). This leads to a key question: how do women as writers integrate their perceived repressive identities? Why are they characterized by silence?

Conclusion

This chapter reviewed the historical background of Post colonialism; its definition and development. As the identity quest is the key term that unifies all post colonialism requirements, it has been traced how did the theory defined the identity quest specifically in African literature. African writers attempted hard to protect their identity through their writing. Also, it has been disclosed how the African women defended their liberties and resist against oppression especially in the period of post-colonial. The theoretical concepts of the post-colonialism , postcolonial theory, African literature, and African identity are discussed. The detailed discussion of postcolonial feminism will be reviewed in the following chapter.

Chapter Two: Postcolonial Feminism and Female Identity

Chapter Two: Postcolonial Feminism and Female Identity

Introduction

Historically, women suffered from all form of marginalization and discrimination socially, politically, sexually and economically. By decades, a group of women refused the reality of having no power or control over their lives and decisions. They started by asking their rights and equality ; as men as women , then they noticed that problem is not just to be equal to men in terms of respect and gaining men position in all societies. So, they exceeded to ask for their political and social rights. The struggle for gaining their diverse rights created a movement called Feminism. Feminism concerns all what make women respected and their voice heard in all different forms of aspects. Women from different backgrounds and culture have unique understanding about being a feminist. One of the women who recently become trendy is the postcolonial ones is Assia Djebar The current chapter discusses the relationship between post colonialism and Feminism. It further portrays the postcolonial Feminism theory.

2.1 Post colonialism and Feminism

By the twentieth century, the literature of women started to rise and their voice has attention. Female artists whose works flourished the idea of women have the right to revolt against the unfair norms and traditions. They gave birth to a school of thought called Feminism. After Feminism gained its supremacy through the movements it went through, its literature is a source of pleasure, simulation, confirmation insights, self-affirmation, doubt and questioning. (Plain and Sellers 3).

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In its core essence, feminists insisted to study the cultural differences concerning class, race and ethnic discrimination on women. Notably, it has been proved that the women's lives around the world are linked by the unequal practices which are clear to make them empowering and exploited. Consequently, the essential-objective of feminism is to create equality between male and female to get rid of women's inferiority in the social, political and economic institutions (Dobie 14).

It is known that, post colonialism focuses mainly on culture. It is an ideological requirement that considers culture as an activity or a process which is bound up with the social relations. Accordingly, terms like hybridity⁽¹⁾ and diasporic identities⁽²⁾ related much to the essence of Feminism during colonial period. Narayan concluded that the location of postcolonial feminist can be crucial to grasp the gendered identities and culture as dynamic and ideological processes (681).

Despite the fact that postcolonial feminism is a new theoretical field, the intersection between post colonialism and feminism as writing clarified is "a mode of critical engagement that is enacted as a cognitive practice to fight against oppression" (Dobie 225).

⁽¹⁾ It is significant that the productive capacities of this Third Space have a colonial or postcolonial provenance. For a willingness to descend into that alien territory . . . may open the way to conceptualizing an international culture, based not on the exoticism of multiculturalism or the diversity of cultures, but on the inscription and articulation of culture's hybridity. (Bhabha 38)

⁽²⁾ Typical of most migrant populations that retain objective components of a coherent ethnic **identity**, such as a shared history, language and culture, and in some cases, **diasporic identity** also contains a powerful link (imagine or real) to the territorial homeland

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Feminist literary studies have a central role in the development of postcolonial studies because literary criticism has served as a site for analyzing images of colonial forms of subjectivity. Consequently, lots of novelists combined between post colonialism and feminism.

Recently, postcolonial feminism gained a wide range of disciplines, such as literary studies, cultural studies, history, and anthropology. It emphasizes that patriarchy is the source of oppression and social inequality in historical, political, social and cultural contexts. (plain and sellers 284).

Macauley clarifies that feminism becomes women's weapon to win their struggle. He confirms that postcolonial feminism become to put an end for all "forms of marginalization in order to take change for their lands and burden the reconstruction form of colonialism" (164). Ekpa confirms that African feminism owe the women sense of self and deny all stereotypical image that discriminate women's positive identity.

Feminism in African literature is considered as an essential literary production because African women attempted to defend their-selves and their liberties. Also, women defended their identity especially in the period of colonialism and post colonialism. African Feminism for Walker is the call of the "African women in the fight against racism, colonialism, and oppression, and attentiveness to the additional barriers that women must face in the form of political, social, and cultural exclusion" (128).

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This kind of literature represented the literary creation of African women that appeal for justice, equality, to stop oppression and defend their identity as it has been declared in the citation of Alice Walker. Moreover, Killam & Alicia agreed with Walker and affirmed that “feminist critics and women authors have drawn attention to a canon of works by African women that better represents African literary history and identity” (129).

So, African Feminist literature leads the readers to well introduced and maintain the history of Africa and its struggle against colonialism. According to Juliana—the African women writers are often left in the shadows of their male counterparts. It is true that a number of books have been published on African women's writing. A few are on a single author, but the rest are edited collections of critical essays either on one author or on a number of authors (XI). In other words, we can describe the last decade as the period of the development in African literature feminism because literature was made just for male writers.

There is no doubt to say that in the African continent always the priority is for man in all domains, for that reason women used the African literature to defend their existence and liberties hence challenging men to prove their-selves. Yet, Juliana explained that African women writers have had to endure these same kinds of exclusions and contempt from a male-oriented African literary scene.

The study of African literature has long been the preserve of male writers, and despite the enviable position women have occupied as oral artists African women writers were not given the attention they deserved; even after the advent of the feminist movement, the male voice

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continued to be the dominant one (Juliana 2). From that concept women writers found a lot of problems and critics because of the feminist movement. Basing on the data collection above, the African women write about their rights, liberties and defend their identity through literary production as books, novels and poetry.

Men in the African society could not accept the feminist movement and they had always the opportunities to be higher than women. Africa has produced some of the more exciting literary works of the 21st century, and most were written by women. One of the important topics that were treated by women are; the identity, liberties, and oppression.

2.2. Post-colonial Feminist Theory

As post colonialism and Feminism have ideologies in common, the emergence of postcolonial feminist theory is inevitable. The resistance against all kinds of oppression and subjection made both theories tied to portray the oppression is not only accused by the colonizers but also by men and by all the imperial practices. The following defines the postcolonial feminist theory and its objectives and characteristics.

2.2.1. Definition of Postcolonial Feminist Theory

Post-colonial feminist theories focuses on the construction of gender differences in colonial and anti-colonial discourse, the representation of women in anti-colonial and post-colonial discourse, and especially considers the works of female writers. Critics of postcolonial

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feminism have raised many concepts, methods, and political issues related to the study of gender representation.

Furthermore, Tejero defined Postcolonial feminist criticism as the examination of How women are embodied in colonial and post-colonial literature and challenge the assumptions about women in literature and society. Colonialism and patriarchy are closely intertwined in history, but the end of a formal empire does not mean the end of oppression of women in the former colonies. Postcolonial feminists point out the ways in which women continue to be stereotyped and marginalized. Ironically, sometimes postcolonial women writers can claim to challenge oppressive culture (254).

Women after colonialism resisted against two powers; men and colonial experiences they went through. As a female gender, the feminists around the world have not the same opinion about being a feminist. Those who are Western feminists consider those who came from colonial countries less important and need to be silent about their culture and background. So, post-colonial women need to prove their own feminist to the Westerns ones. Feminism attempts to empower a female community that transcends cultural characteristics and geographical boundaries; on the other hand, nationalism exaggerates these characteristics and restrictions to resist hegemonic occupation. The famous postcolonial theorist Franz Fanon⁽³⁾ criticized the neoliberal universalism of feminism and other positions.

⁽³⁾ Fanon is best known for the **classic analysis of colonialism and decolonization**, *The Wretched of the Earth*. ... He claims that decolonization is inherently a violent process, because the relationship between the settler and the native is a binary of opposites

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In her article “*Feminist Approach to African Literature*” Piterson argues that ~~the~~African literature flourished by the 60s to re-establishing the African past, re-gain their identity and re-take their original culture. In this regard, the female role has been eliminated or discriminated by ~~the~~ men writers. They considered the women heritage is nothing but a dignity problem. Piterson along with others assures that men have limited the representation of women only as stereotype or as social creatures only.

African feminist criticism was first established in 1986 by Carole Boyce Davies and Anne Adams Graves. They declared that not all women, with different positions and background, have the same conceptual opinion about how to be a feminist and what should it have. Instead, they claimed that they have bridged the gap between western women of color and Third world women.

2.2.2. The Objective of Postcolonial Feminist Theory

The aim of establishing ~~the~~ postcolonial feminism is primarily to make the literature written by postcolonial women obvious to the west and worthy. Unfortunately, the term postcolonial women tend to be vague and problematic in nature. As ~~the~~post colonialism and colonialism concerns all what shape the society and thus its definition is not fixed yet, the postcolonial women as a term suffer the same conceptual meaning. Tejero defined it as “over-simplification and unthinking assertions of oppression, an approach which is an impediment to a reading beyond obvious questions of ‘_good’ and ‘_bad’” (100) , Mohanty said that its relation to “‘racist’ and ‘_sexist’ are more or less interchangeable, resulting a confusion between the image of

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postcolonial women in the context of feminism, and that of the native in the context of colonialism” (254).

The importance of creating postcolonial feminism is not only to shine the works written by the postcolonial women but also to accuse the modern world by treat the postcolonial feminism as an “other” discriminating their subjectivity and imaginations. The western feminism considers the postcolonial women as a migrant object. Thus, the postcolonial feminism is eclectic in the nature of the writings in the Third World often responds to different societies, regions and ethnic groups, and their aesthetic values are very different..

Postcolonial feminism opposes traditional Western white feminism because it is related to the political liberation movement. Women around the world have very different histories in terms of post-colonial heritage, including experiences of imperial conquest, slavery, forced immigration, and even genocide (Tejro 246). Post-colonial feminists advocate rewriting history based on the specific experiences of previously colonized people and their various survival strategies.

The concept of Chandra T. Mohanty (1991) can prove the characteristics of post-colonial feminism. She coined the term "imaginary community". The term refers to potential alliances and cooperation across common borders, as well as opportunities for in-depth work for the sorority. The idea of envisioning a community keeps us away from the traditional notion of post-colonial feminist struggle, implying the political foundation of the alliance rather than the biological or cultural foundation (Tejro 257).

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In addition, they not only question all norms that discriminate against women's status, but they also despise the general assumption that Western white middle-class women are norms. At the same time, they worked hard to eliminate the stereotypes that defined them as subordination, pointing out that despite the decline of imperialism, they still faced neo-colonial pressure in many ways (258).

2.3. The Identity in Post-colonial Algerian Literature

The identity is a very pivotal element in any country worldwide. It is the existence and the value of each nation. The Algerian writers defended their identity through their literary productions. Those writers have an awareness of identity, which means that they belong to the same land including diverse culture, traditions, and religious principles. For that reason, they keen hard to represent their country during and after the French colonization in order to confirm that they are attached to their country and identity.

Postcolonial identity, for which belonging to a national identity, is no longer a sufficient condition for representation. However, Algerian postcolonial writers depict a different representation of difference and identity in terms of inclusion/exclusion and interiority/exteriority. These writers redid the writing space by moving from one space to the other without any frontier. Madeleine Dobie makes an interesting point stating that, "The transition from 'universal' values to 'global' awareness, underpinned by the argument that the call to universalism has often masked Euro centrism, has of course been one of the central concerns of recent cultural theory" (kamel 175). It is important to note that Algerian

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postcolonial writers are deemed as anti-nationalist by pan-Arab nationalism. Nevertheless, these writers do not deny their national identity and heritage (Kamel 175)

In addition, the Maghrebian writers were considered after the independence as defenders of their identity and heritage. Moving to another idea has been shared by Kamel that in the Maghreb they still use the French language as a means of communication, also they use it to talk about sensitive topics which are forbidden in the Islamic laws as sex.

Several writers attempted to rewrite the Maghreb literature of the actual language of the people during the decolonization of Algeria. For example, Kateb Yacine tried to participate in the revival of Algerian-Arabic literature. However, when Yassin realized that the formal restoration of classical Arabic or the standard language would eliminate the potential of Algerian dialect works, the redefinition of literary space quickly shrank. French is still the modern, scientific and technological language of the Maghreb, as is the discussion of taboo topics in Muslim society, such as sex. In view of the tension between Berber Arabic, French-Arabic and the internal dichotomy of secular religion, the concept of the ideal Maghreb "nation" composed of nation, region, and language is not a realistic model (179).

Esra Barak declared that "Literature has become a field in which "identity" takes on several dimensions that open up to dynamism and differentiation"(N.d). Literature is the only way that gives the author the opportunity to speak or deal with several themes about identity. Also the concept of the quest for identity in the novels of Maghrebian and especially Algerian literature presents the diversity of the African community and its differences between the other

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countries of the world. Also, the concept of identity has gone through some changes that have gone beyond self-assertion.

Since modernity, the concept of "identity," which is viewed as a stable and fixed entity of existence and the posture of the self toward the other, has changed dramatically. With the advent of postmodernism, identity as a self-affirmation has given way to a more decentralized, distributed, fluctuating, and adaptable vision in which the conscious subject vanishes. The postmodern conception of identity rejects any determinism in terms of identity definition, which reinforces all forms of categorization, classification, imprisonment, and closure within a rigid framework of identity positioning, in which memberships are carriers of judgments, prejudices, and preconceptions about the individual (Barak 284).

He confirmed that in literary novels and especially the ethnographic novel has become a place where several identities and different kinds of linguistic and culture, and also traditions of several nations. It can be discovered through the themes narrated by ethnographic authors and which represent the culture of such countries which help foreign readers to be intercultural and know the culture and identity of others. To conclude this debate, basing on the quotation of Esra Barak who said that literature becomes the meeting place of all these identity constituents through narration and writing with regard to linguistic and cultural material. It is the sri launched against a deadly, pure and idealized ethnocentrism since modernism and now promotes the difference, otherness and decentralization of the modern individual.

2.4.The Algerian Feminist Literature

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The feminist movement emerged in 1991. Its objective is to defend women liberties and rights. The concept of Algerian feminist in literature was created to stop violence against women. So, during the Algerian Civil War between 1991 and 1999, a new feminine literature emerged in the literary space called the literature of urgency⁽⁴⁾. The rise of Algerian female literature at that time was due to the fact that women were convicted before and during the Civil War. Women are the specific target of Islamism; therefore, Algerian women writers not only take up the pen to witness the horror of "turmoil"; they also condemn physical violence against women, especially to regain the public space where religious fundamentalism wants to exclude them. (Camel 179). In addition, the feminist movement enables women to express their thoughts and emotions freely without hesitation or fear. Female Algerian scripts that allow women to express their struggles are still popular today. It is worth noting that French female literature in Algeria frequently appears in exile. The poetics of space is redefined in this "foreign literature". To borrow a term from Deleuze, it is related to the conscious deterritorialization movement formed by the "law" of the father.

Researchers gave more importance to the feminist writers or the feminist movement in which women ~~they~~ had fortune to speak and express their feelings through their literary works as novels. Jean Dejeux argues that In terms of writing, it would be suitable to include sociological, historical, cultural, or literary critique pieces, which do not fit within the framework of fiction and hence do not need to be included here, but which are an important element of Algerian

⁽⁴⁾ For Jeanelle, this certain kind of literature had to be written, to help sort out the complexities of the time, to express the immediacy of death and war, to chronicle the various tragedies of suffering and deprivation. It is a literature that can only be produced from a specific context and circumstance. And it is a literature that, in its international dimensions, is beginning to displace the emphasis from a body of literature to a mode of reading

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women's speech. Researchers are becoming increasingly interested in this Algerian women's literature, which will disclose other great authors if the word is left in the hands of women, or, in other words, if they know how to retain it. Women's collectives can support this voice in a variety of social circles, including academic, bourgeois, and strictly urban communities (44).

Postcolonial Algerian writers who considered as feminists are one of the essential icons of the feminist literature in Algeria. They defended her land, identity and the oppression against women. For that reason, women created the feminist movement to express their ideas, liberties and rights. The quest for women identity is still at the top of objective of postcolonial Feminism. Thus, female identity will be explored, accordingly, in one of the outstanding postcolonial Algerian pieces of art.

Conclusion

The chapter reviews the deep relationship between Post colonialism and Feminism. The theoretical framework of postcolonial Feminism has been developed in relation to identity which is in core of the current study. After, the attention directed to the concept of feminism in Algerian literature and how it treated the notion of identity related to the use of French language. the Maghrebian literature means that the author writes and expresses his ideas and feelings, either politics or speaking on a social situation. The feminist literature is a means that frees the women writers to defend their liberties and rights. The explanations of theoretical notions such as Maghrebian literature of French expression, the definition of the Identity and feminist movement are discussed. The postcolonial feminist writers plays an important role in the feminist movement to defend their land, identity, traditions and liberties. The next chapter will

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follow an analytical approach on how Assia Djébar represented the Female identity in her masterpiece *Strasbourg Nights*.

Chapter Three: Female Identity in Assia Djebar's *Strasbourg Nights*

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Introduction

Africa, as one of the continents which lived under a long period of colonization, witnessed all kinds of suppression and marginalization. African women accordingly suffered from double colonization. The novelists and cultivated people of feminine gender have always asked: Do the African women have the essence of their identity?. This question urged many writers to depict and describe the reality of women in the African postcolonial societies and show how these women created, by all means, a sense of identity and constructed their own meaning of how the true-self should be and how should it be strived for. This chapter analyzes how the Algerian feminist, Assia Djébar, as an African writer described and portrayed the female identity in postcolonial period in her masterpiece *Strasbourg Nights*.

3.1.1. Postcolonial Context in *Strasbourg Nights*

Strasbourg Nights recounts the story of nine persons through nine nights they spent in Strasbourg. Significantly, the characters portray different cultural and historical backgrounds. Each of them came from a past which is full of suppression and marginalization. The novel stressed the feeling of colonial effects and men control over women. Although they settled down in Strasbourg, which is not their origin country, the choice behind that was not of random selection. The setting of Djébar's romantic fiction is chosen to be in Strasbourg. She wanted to create expressive places for her characters to suit best the motif of this novel which according to her is "a city that bursts with history". Additionally, she could not really detach herself from her

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country Algeria, since there was a whole story between Alsace, a city in Strasbourg, and Algeria because of emigration.

Historically, this city has been colonized by Great Latin and Germans. Strasbourg has always been a meeting place for different religions and cultures. This city was called "Argentoratum" under Roman rule who built an important military camp. Upset by the invasions of the Germans, which Julian the Apostate points out piece in 357, then by Les Vandales, Les Suèves, les Burgondes and des Huns, the city is then destroyed. It witnessed a second birth under the name of "Stratiburgum". It was Grégoire de Tours who first spoke about this city under the name of "Strasbourg", its current name, which means, according to its etymology "Road town" or "road town" which indicated its relation with lots of effects of colonialism.

It is situated in the border between France and Germany. Accordingly, Strasbourg characterized by a dual identity which has made it a cosmopolitan metropolis "A crossroads city". It portrays and embrace several languages and cultures. It is also by occupying a geographical position of passage "at the crossroads" thanks to its two rivers, the Rhine and the Ill, allowing transit from one bank to the other than Strasbourg became an important "river crossroads". It is also an important 'cross roadsroad" by its bridges rebuilt after the Second World War. Due to this in-between situation, this town also suffered a fatetragic during World War II. The infiltration of the German army was facilitated by its many bridges which served as passages between the two countries, Germany and France. In 1939, the inhabitants were driven out before

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the arrival of the Germans. It is believed that it was this detail of the void "the empty city" that prompted Assia Djébar to write, on this subject:

Thus , Strasbourg does not only indicated a colonized city, but it also characterized by a multiculturalism and different languages which make it a perfect postcolonial setting that suits the characters and their quest of identity.

3..2.The Representation of Female Identity Quest

The exile, which the characters experienced in this novel, made the characters in a continuous search for their identity and originality. It is a quest that does not take place, neither in an original space nor even beyond the borders, but somewhere in themselves. Living between yesterday and today, between a torn childhood and the present relationship, between wars and suffering characterizes the perpetual and dangling movement of these characters who cannot give up their own stories; histories and memories. Obviously, they cannot overcome and forgive their scratches their past which is whether affects of colonialism or authority oppression. Each of them responds to an uncertain identity, even unrecognized due to the consequences of the war (Second World War and Colonial War) which torments them and generates the desire to open up to the Other and at the same time this withdrawal and fear of the Other.

The quest for identity characterizes the movement of almost all the characters in the novel and appears to be the reason of the grief that propels them into this incurable wandering. These characters are in search of their reality that is part of their being, of their individual

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identity, starting with Irma who did not have the chance to know her parents. She is a woman who in her own words is “Without genealogy precisely, without ties, without roots!” (Djébar.287). In another passage, it is the voice of the narrator who speaks to describe Irma's condition “there! Yes, she was too emigrant, but without a point of departure, and therefore without hope of arrival. Without even a navigation drawing; sum without route” (287). Assia stresses that Irma is deemed to lose her identity since she was and will be without root. The motivation behind which she is striving for to seek her identity.

On the other hand, Irma has a French name that allowed her to escape the fate of her Jewish parents deported to the concentration camp, according to the story “Jewish parents, taken to Struthof and killed, there were too many! But no paper was found of this filiation “ (265). All what Irma knows that she is of Jewish origin and the cruelty of colonialism by killing her parents made her a shadow of person who has no certainties of who she is.

The woman who adopted Irma gave her this name to protect her from the misfortunes of that time. This story is accepted by Irma until the day when her personal stories come together. Complicating, she then begins to do her own research to elucidate the mystery surrounding her life and simultaneously to thank this generous woman, years later. She then decides to come and settle in Strasbourg to find this woman who could ask about who is Irma?. There she meets Karl, an Alsatian younger than her. Irma remains very discreet about her past as a Jewish child, but during a meeting with her friends, she decides to tell them everything. She confesses her situation to them as follows: “Its very French name because a young resistance fighter who could

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not save the parents had kept it, she, as a baby, had registered it under her name: in short, she had saved my life and I was grateful to this stranger'' (301-302).

After relentless research into her past, Irma ends up finding this stranger in a village, not far from Strasbourg. But the latter refuses all contact with her, even to the point of refusing to call her by her first name "bitter mother" (298) an expression used by Irma to designate this woman who denies all motherhood "She wasn't looking at me, because in fact, it was her own past that she was denying!" (265). The quest for identity is not just a desire for recognition, but also for Irma, a desire to pronounce the name in the original language, to the sound and voice of the first fruits: " just say out loud my first and last name - or simply, my first name: French, German or Alsatian! If only she had spelled it out in front of me, how much the upheaval I would have felt would have fixed the essential'' (304).

Not only Irma, a female character, was in search of her identity , but also Thelja, the main protagonist. Thelja in fact is quite different from Irma's confused situation. She seems to be the most complex character whose real quest remains unacknowledged. After leaving a stable life, leaving behind a husband and a five-year-old child in Algeria, she decides to spend nine successive nights with her beloved in Strasbourg. François is twenty years older than Thelja. A glimpse through which this relationship consists the eternal quest for the absent father; a father who was executed by the French army shortly before her birth, try to explain this adventure with this lover whose first name François designates her obsession, the desire to erase the memory of a past that has always haunted her: "I cannot answer; I will try to understand in front of you what

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I am confusedly inquiring. And the truth that slips away in me will arise when I face you" (50).It is once in the presence of Francis, face to face, that perhaps the veil that has hovered in her life for so long will disappear. The meeting of these two characters is above all synonymous with "proof" or rather "test" (p.50) in the sense of Thelja.

During a night of intimacy with him, Thelja, remembering François's terrible childhood in Strasbourg in 1939, suddenly had a thought for her unknown father:

My father, this stranger, this ghost who assails me, this Berber warrior like so many others before him, from the Roman legions at home, now this mountain comes back to haunt me, where was he, precisely, at Christmas 1939 ? ... Under the uniform of a soldier from France, had he been eighteen then, enlisted by force in mainland France? Maybe in a Strasbourg barracks? Were there any Algerian skirmishers? ... I will look for!(229).

Reasonably, that she decides to consult the archives of Father Marey, who wrote, at the very beginning of the fifties, a history of the Maghreb emigration to Strasbourg, in the form of a diary that he keeps up to date. The day since the founding of a home for Algerian emigrants, mostly emigrants from eastern Algeria:

French-Muslims (as these colonized people were then called), often barely demobilized, moved to the North African home of Marey's father, to work as laborers or plumbers, carpenters, electricians, for two years, three or

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more. Returning from this Algerian South, which began, as early as 1954 and 1955, to be drawn into the war, they found themselves, in Alsace, suspects, hunted down, detained for having kept or transported nationalist leaflets, quickly considered as plotters for such contribution paid, willingly or not, to the outlaws ' (145)

This quest that Thelja undertakes is not really the only one. During this brief stay in Strasbourg, she also intends to restore the distant past, not only her own past, but that of other forgotten voices, she dives back into the collective memory of Strasbourg to get to know herself better. Passionate about the tragic life of the young abbess, Herrade de Landsberg, for her manuscriptencyclopedia, entitled "Hortus deliciarum" 19, she discovers that the original was burned during the collective historical events of the siege of 1870: "aren't these recently made copies a virtual resurrection of the masterpiece? ... They should be enough for me, console me!" (102-103).

During a meeting with her friends, she also falls in love with another fact, just as similar, the story of the famous genocide of the Khmer Rouge which caused the dislocation of their musical heritage for which she feels a certain pain. "[...]What troubles me, or torments me, is this, the "destroyed music", that of an entire people, for centuries! ... Irreparably disappeared, really?.."(275).

Thelja, unlike her friend Irma, seems unwilling to know her father, such ignorance of the roots causes her to seek, question and identify in life with other real people, who have existed

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before her, such as the tragic life of the abbess or that of the Khmer people. The restitution of these voices and these memorial traces has the effect of compensating for a past, a past that she barely knows. Through the recovery and redemption of this past, she tries in somehow to fill the void that torments her and at the same time that echoes her.

The other mixed couple often testifies to a desire to erase all traces of genealogy; Eve, an Algerian Jew, and her German lover Hans. They are waiting a child. This child represents for them the hope of severing all ties with their ancestors: "Before the child arrived, we extinguished all memories of genealogy!" (238). On the other hand, the fourth female voice of this group, Jacqueline, seems to be deprived of roots, she does not feel solidarity with any origin and it formulates this erased identity as follows: "I, the emigrant revolted against his own, having cut the moorings, disdainful of the alleged solidarity of the group, I, the emigrant from nowhere" (329).

3.3. Double Identity

The more you read the novel, the more you get to know the characters in the story. Another form of quest emerges. Through the friendly relationship between the characters, another form of understanding appears, implicit, underlying, but which makes itself felt as one evolves in the romantic world of *Strasbourg Nights*. Apparently, the search for the Other as a double, as an image of oneself that allows us to suppose that after the search for a close relative, for a past, another implied search appears, that of his or her double.

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The word "double" comes from the Latin *duplus* which means "formed of two identical or analogous things which compose a whole" hence the name of "alter ego" which means: "two people who show such a striking resemblance to each other that they are confused."

The notion of "double" constitutes an important figure in literature, and it is from the 19th century, with the rise of the romantic current and subsequently of the fantastic, "That double becomes a literary motif". This should not make us forget that the myth of the double dates back much further in time, and the meanings attributed to it over the centuries are different according to the beliefs in which it appeared.

The structure of the double thus defined appears above all in the characters of Thelja and Eve. Many characteristics make these two women look alike: They both spent their childhood in Tébessa, in eastern Algeria. They grew up together "there", and as Thelja would say, they are "alittle binoculars" (78). It is deduced that the two childhood friends are so close. They designate one or the other. They use different names which are repeated each time in the novel. : "Eve, my friend, my sister", "You, my sister from Tébessa", "Eve from my land and whom I can, for that, call Hawa", and "Eve, Hawa, my sister", (47.70.61.71)

The bond between Thelja and Eve is stronger than a simple friendship, they are like twins, sisters of heart, sisters of soul, almost Siamese. So, many names apply to their relationship. They are complementary to each other, and one cannot live without the other. They illustrate two different faces of the same person, of the same origin, of the same childhood, past,

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and pain "She often returned to Tébessa, to their little girlish escapades; she found herself describing the bow of Caracalla meticulously; she remembered the dust too" (84).

Thelja and Eve both abandoned their husbands and children in Algeria and Morocco (Tawfik, the son of Thelja and Selma, the daughter of Eve), to give themselves entirely to extramarital affairs with men who reciprocally represent the enemy. It indicates that they deny the norms of their own society and they are in search of their true identity. So, they decided to come to Strasbourg: "Here we are again, as in childhood, at least twenty years ago, here we are, wandering, floating, sleeping in the heart of the same. city... " (137).

Thelja is in a way the double of Eve and conversely, they reflect the same journey to each other, they are as Jean-Paul Richter would say: "The one who walking alongside, the traveling companion" (22) .Many similarities that make it impossible to talk about one without involving the other. Thelja would also be the double of this heroine of the time of the Algerian war, this "image-idol" (221), who allowed herself to be seduced by his "executioner" (222), a Frenchman, and fell in love with him as is the case in his relationship: tapped for a long time ... Maybe my forbidden French love got stronger there... "(222).

Irma appears as the female double of writer Elias Canetti. They are both in search of the voices, of the "original sound" of their name. Likewise, Lucienne, the patient Irma treats, somewhat reflects her double. Both are looking for a relative lost in World War II. Irma is looking for her mother and in a reverse quest; Lucienne is looking for her daughter. This somewhat explains Irma's choice to take up the profession of speech therapist which is very

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significant in the novel. If we break this word down, we have: ortho: correct, phonè: voice, this explains that through her patients, Irma is daily in the presence of patients, kind of doubles, who suffer from the same disorder as she and whom she tends to help to find the original voice.

Even if the characters of *Strasbourg Nights* remain suspended because they have not really succeeded in elucidating the dark side of their past, the search for a form of compensation

3.4. The Quest for the Other

All couples in *Strasbourg Nights* relate them one kind of relationship; love. Although they are different and , cases enemies, they are dangling between who they are and what they should be. Their intimate nights with each other reveal their desires to recognize if they can find a definition of their identity depending on the other.

Living in this duality, Eve said that: "I am in hell and in paradise ("in hell" for memory, "in paradise" for pleasure" (70). Eve has very strong feelings for Hans, but the memory of her unknown parents who killed by Germans makes their love impossible. It is already difficult for her to live in a city from which the people have been driven out in atrocious conditions :But she agrees to live with her love, and even to give Hans a child, on condition that she does not speak the language of Hans, German, with whom she maintains a neurotic relationship. This refusal is respected by Hans, who, conversely, is initiated into the mother tongue of Eve, Moroccan.

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But it's not always easy for this couple to get along. Crises everyday life and misunderstandings make dialogue difficult, the couple's different affiliations complicate their relationship to the point that each of them tries to impose their rituals on the other.

Francois's interest in Thelja's name is so sincere that he prompts him to say it in his own language to translate the flame he feels for her: "- O Snow, he sighs, fiery woman who burns me!" (59). Thelja shows a lot of tenderness and love for François, something she never felt for Halim, her husband who remained in Algeria. Her experience with François represents for her a challenge to free herself from the obligations of her society and customs. She reports that this situation would have seemed improbable to her in the past: " You are monamant and you are French! ... Ten years ago, when I arrived in Algiers to go to university, such ... intimacy would have seemed unbelievable to me!" (55). But the violent history of war between their countries complicates any romantic relationship between French and Algerians from Thelja's perspective. Francis can persuade heartaches nothing to do with the events of the Algerian war: " The war at home? ... I was neither in Alsace, nor in Algeria [he has a sort of absence, he adds very quickly, with a bitter accent that surprises her]. Not even in France " (54). She continues, however, to see in him, the Other, the enemy, the " French ".

Despite all the love that Francis gave her, Thelja still carries a feeling of guilt towards her family. She knows that she betrays her language, her culture and above all betraying her parents' memory which affects her terribly. She feels that her identity is being trampled upon, if there is only one belonging that matters, if it is absolutely necessary choosing between the memory of an

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original homeland and the new life that Strasbourg offers her, then she finds herself splited and torned. Thelja remains very discreet about her private life in front of her friends, even with Touma, who nevertheless shares the same nostalgia as she does and to whom she feels closest. Thelja does not want to confess her affair with Francis for fear that she will judge her and see in her actions the image of deception and infidelity “If I told her right away that I, the daughter of a man killed by the French army, would share my nights with a Frenchman from the city? ... Maybe she knows it” (244)

Thelja continues to wander. She asks Touma about the reasons why she thinks that a man has the right to have relations with a foreign woman when it is forbidden for a women “Are you not unfair, you, a mother: as in the country, you apply their law to us, to 'us', the women! What good is it for you to emigrate, if you do not broaden your thoughts “ (245).

Whether with Irma or Thelja, the quest for the Other appears, at first glance, difficult to achieve since the characters persist in thinking only with their own culture and therefore with exclude the Other.

3..5.Language and identity

Language is the major issue, as we had already indicated. Alsace and Algeria are two territories where several languages are spoken. With regard to Alsace: French, German, Alsatian; and for Algeria: Arabic, Berber, French. Following the Franco-German war, several languages are in question. These languages guide you. We observe the war of languages. It is for this

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reason that we try to give examples that prove that it is indeed the war of languages. Since it is a book between languages and cultures, the work highlights the importance of language.

Language is also linked to love. There are couples who are made up of different origins, cultures and religions as well as Thelja and Francis; Eve and Hans; Irma and Karl; Jacqueline and Ali. Thelja is Algerian but François is French. Eve is Jewish but Hans is German. Irma is Jewish but Karl is Alsatian. Jacqueline is Alsatian but Ali is Algerian. After spending nine nights with François, Thelja, the main character, suddenly disappears only to reappear one night, six months later in Strasbourg. Is it the disappearance or the rebirth? In what language do couples communicate? Can one love in another's language even if he is an enemy? It should be noted that this essay will answer these questions and address the question of language in *Strasbourg Nights*.

"Hans" shows us that the man mentioned comes from a different nationality than the woman. His first name is not heard until the middle of the work. Eve is afraid to say her name out loud, she cannot scream her love out loud because of the impossibility. There we find traces of the impossibility of love, for it is about the imperceptible war between Eve and Hans. She cannot even confess to herself. The war between France and Germany sees itself as an obstacle even a trap for their dying relationship. The love between a French woman and a German is seen as so dangerous that she fights and struggles to get out of it. It is like the search for a cure: their love can soften the trauma that war causes: "I can't I can't say out loud, even to myself, your name ... Why? So long after the war - I specify "the war at home between yours and mine" (78)

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Eve has an idea never to go to Germany for even a day, but she fell in love with a German man. We observe the question of language which causes internal conflict. She refuses to go to Germany because it is a place where Jews died. The German language represents the language-conflict: “Jamais, jamais, moi née d’un père juif andalou et de mère juive berbère , “I will never set foot in Germany, not even for one day! Preserve me! ... ”. (68) Here is that following a “thunderbolt”, I find myself in the very heart of “my” forbidden zone, so to speak in enemy territory ... So, I turned, turned, I did not no longer knew where I was! ... I repeated: “not Germany!” (68).

Nationality is a notion that can cause some problems between couples. Love is seen as an obstacle in front of the man who is German. It is better to overcome obstacles to build the true relationship and provide the exchange until the resigning communication “Why my “last love”? you continued, writing the questions for me. -The last one, because he's a German man” (67).

She refuses to speak German even though she learned in high school. Perhaps it is that she defends the notion of not speaking the language of the enemy because one sees him as an enemy. Her choice shows us that she would not want to betray her identity, her people and salangue. His refusal is respected by Hans. On the other hand, he is learning Moroccan Arabic which is Eve's mother tongue: “I will find work in this town. He needs to learn French a little. I don't speak to him in "his" language. (You know that I learned German in high school. Out of challenge.) But I won't speak that language with him” (69).

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Their relationship is restricted. They communicate using a few words in French and English. They fail to come together and unite at the same point. It is better that they find a point of balance: "When we didn't have so many words to exchange: you, ten French words, and me, two or three times as many ... in English. You whistled then; I often followed you humming. Thus, you appeal to the complicity of the beginning, of the last year" (93).

Eve sees him as an absolute stranger because he is of a different nationality and he speaks a different language than Eve's. She is content to call him "foreigner" instead of calling him by his first name which recalls the war and which causes the trauma. She just calls him a "foreigner": "The absolute stranger, she thought, tomorrow will be Hans. Him, my German love that my cousin can't help but reproach me with, at their Saturday lunch" (112).

It shows that Hans is trying to learn the Arabic language. He already knows a few words but would like to enrich his lexicon. Moreover, he pronounces the French words to learn Arabic. It is possible to specify that he wants to learn different languages: Hans cannot use French properly, he is for sure at a beginner level because he cannot conjugate verbs, he uses them in infinitive. So his knowledge of conjugations not enough. His sentences do not relate to articles; Once again we can see the lack of knowledge of the French language: "Then, in her French cut short, chopped, without an article most often and with the verb often in infinitive, in her French at the beginning of primary school, Touma, the sixty-year-old lady, feels the need to tell. Quickly, Hans enters the interrupted rhythm, follows the flow and the fever of past sufferings" (140)

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Eve had promised not to speak German, even not to return to Germany. Yet they take an oath with regard to the language. Eve swears in Germanic language and looks for a compromise to live her story with Hans: "Eve then, her voice a little muffled, began in Germanic language the same oath; her voice gradually cleared up, she didn't distort anything consonances, nor rhythm of the language of Hans who listened to him, moved" (237). The acceptance of the other's language suggests that Eve has come to understand to have an identity in Strasbourg the acceptance of the other is a necessity.

3.6. Multiculturalism as a Solution to Achieve Women Identity

As long as everything and this is what we notice in this novel where this situation of antagonistic contacts which was initially in conflict finally leads to the search for and the affirmation of the self; but at the same times it is a call from the other, an opening to the Other. In short, the affirmation of plural identities tends towards the desire for exchange and acceptance.

Strasbourg is a sign of a quest for a lost origin which is reflected in the novel by reminiscences. As a result, identity is in contact, or in communication with its past. This is updated at each time that Theldja is facing the other, represented in the posture of Francis.

It can be said that the encounter with the other triggers a certain identity dynamic. Indeed, the different encounters between Theldja and François are first of all encounters of two different identities. We acknowledge, moreover, that each time that one is in front of the other, it is the

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memory which is summoned, for the example of this scene which shows us the heroine (Theldja) in the process of remembering after meeting his alter ego (François). Here memory is above all a part of personal identity. His intrusion into the various encounters of the protagonists is a sign of the identity dynamic implemented.

In addition, this otherness of the two characters makes it possible to question oneself. In fact, the identity of the subject seems "jostled" with the meeting of the other; one who is different from oneself. The text abounds in questions about its own identity; one has the impression that the feeling of being "foreign to oneself" (Kristeva 9) reappears at each meeting.

Indeed, Thelja's different wanderings reflect her discomfort at being exiled; we can also speak of a discomfort with identity. In this continual wandering, she finds herself grappling with a past full of memories. These belong to her country of origin but also to those of her childhood.

Djébar puts into text a heroine who represents both a collective and individual identity. The first refers to a country, a culture and a language; it is represented sameness because it is static. The second concerns the individual identity that the character represents, the one that can be considered. The latter is changeable. Torn between two shores, two memories, the real challenge for Thelja is to build her own identity.

Moreover, the identity process involving otherness is also triggered in the story by memory. This seems to be both the reservoir we use and a burden. We get the impression that the protagonist is carrying a load of memories which she must free herself to live better with herself.

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In other words, Thelja feels lightened every time she passes or sees a memory. Thus, memory here is akin to therapy. The most remarkable fact in the way in which the identity dynamic is triggered in the narrative is the exaltation of an individual identity. This takes shape in the text through the posture of characters such as François and Thelja.

Eve and Hans organized an evening which reflects openness and cross-border atmosphere. Eve wanted to invite all her friends for whom, although claiming different origins: between the Maghrebian Thelja belonging to the Berber community, and four French people, among whom we find different influences, German (Jacqueline and François), Jewish (Irma) and North African (Karl), and of course the organizers of this evening who themselves are a heterogeneous couple: Eve (North African practicing the Jewish religion) and Hans (of origin German), she hopes that this meeting will strengthen ties and abolish all the borders that exist between them.

In the author's sense, the meeting of these mixed couples tends to install a relational cultural space synonymous with dialogical exchange with the Other; an exchange based essentially on the balance between similarity and otherness, unity and diversity, continuity and differentiation. Ultimately leads to an opening to Others, recognition and exchange. *Strasbourg Nights* appear to be the place where the cultural polyphony which stems from the rejection of a unique culture closed in on itself. Eve who seems to be the closest to Thelja (they spent their childhood together in Tébessa and moreover they speak the same language, Arabic), is surprised to see François call her by the first name Snow, she who thought that his first name was of

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Berber origin and not Arabic: 'I, who have known you for at least twenty-five years, never - and I thought I understood enough Arabic! I never thought your name (she takes her friend affectionately by the shoulder) made sense... And, this one!'"(173).

Thelja as a real storyteller begins to tell the story of her birth and at the same time the meaning of her first name. In a nostalgic atmosphere, she tells them about a secular Arab tradition that his Berber ancestors had practiced for a long time. This tradition boils down to the fact that before the birth of a child it is the grandparents who take care of the name, not the parents. This habit had been practiced for generations by his own until the day his mother, a daring woman, decided to break this law. This act represents for her family a dishonor and a lack of respect for ancestral customs:

She will be called' Thelja '(so in French Neige, she says) because, since that winter night when I had to go back down barefoot, hours and hours into that frozen night, I have suffered so much from my frozen, burnt feet, and that throughout my pregnancy! -Thelja, call her! She ordered, and she was breaking customary practice, for it is customary with us that the grandmother decides the name! (176).

By telling her story like a legend, Thelja manages to move her friends with her sincerity and authenticity. For her, it is above all a question of transforming the cultural otherness that separates and freezes them, into a thirst for knowledge and knowledge. Even François, who feels closer and closer to Thelja, is surprised to see her give herself up like this: "She remembers this

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time in front of everyone, but in a different way. Other than in my arms!" However she speaks and she will be relieved! He says to him."(175).

What characterizes this evening in the first place "is the absence of distances, the possibility of separating and reuniting, the acceptance of everyone in their difference and with his memory " (49) , the occasion also to speak freely his language, his culture without fear of being judged or looked askance:" The two men began to dialogue a little low, in German "(177). This evening, properly based on cultural exchange, continues with the evocation of "The Voices of Marrakech" which awakens deep vibrations in Irma: "Before, this passage from the song of the blind moved me ... But I only understood the impact on me of this book on Marrakech when I arrived in Strasbourg, eighteen months ago! [...] I must have told you, Eve, how the first time you arrive to stay in Strasbourg, the reception of the natives is most often distant" (180)

Irma tells herself that throughout her life she has never ceased to search for her origins, to draw from the depths of the memory of any clues that respond to her original quest, to become attached to the different "voices" (50) to watch for the slightest repercussion, but today she is surrounded by people from all over the world, the affinities that have developed between them are stronger than the bond of a genetic kinship. Like the example of Canetti, so expressive for Irma, the network of friendships that have grown around her represents her new family.

The people who settled in this post-war Strasbourg took awareness that living together in difference requires a transformation of mentalities and cultures, a broadening of ideas and thoughts in order to establish a harmonious understanding. Mixed couples experience rich

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exchanges where the different languages, cultures and traditions use the voice of intersection and mutual influence to establish a dialogue. Plurality and interbreeding are the faces of this existence together in a now plurilingual and pluricultural society. The new situations, the diversity of cultures and languages of departure and arrival, require communication.

Language is an important theme in *Strasbourg Nights*, and in ceroman, the protagonists play to create between them a form of multiple, intertwined and mixed language responding to linguistic imaginaries and which therefore refer to the different systems of representations of each. . Thus the languages, put in contact, represent for the characters a vast field of exercises, of practices where each one tries oneself in the language of the other: "love," he said amusedly, "would therefore be our pronunciation exercises. , rhythm, phrasing..." , François said (on page 225).

Through this contact of languages and cultures, the couples in this dialogic space to communicate, opt not only for a bodily dialogue, a "tactile dialogue" (p.374) but for an understanding achieved in a new tacit language, a form of secret code in which certain words, certain expressions take on a new meaning that can only be understood by themselves. From this weaving of letters, words and sentences is born an original language which brings together all the languages of the world, a kind of language before Babel in the perspective of Thelja "[...] - she had desired it, him, the French man , but in a wild talk from the other end of the earth! "

At the end of the novel, the protagonist climbs to the highest point of the city, symbolizing an unknown space, and declaring that he will not sink:

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I will not come down again: after night and just before day, emptiness reigns there, standing, a cry in the submerged blue, ... I would like in these nights, my nights, to be metamorphosed into these liberated dogs, scenting and seeking under the eyes of the people of angels, saints and the twelve apostles! (Djébar 404-5).

In addition, Thelja disappeared and moved her location from Strasbourg to another place "Paris" as a possibility of rebirth. Djébar feels that the novel is a tapestry of life, sex, conflict, the past and second chance, as the realization of "Alsagérie" (Déjux 118). As Ivid declared: "The child is neither a German nor an Algerian Jew, a child of Alsace,...this is the time of love...for the palm tree! I feel like a flash Fleeting, there are twenty-seven fleeting fleets" (Djébar 171).

Assia Djébar created the personal and collective identity of Algerian women, who told about their past and looked forward to the future. Djébar's work tends to focus on the post-colonial era, history, feminism, body and stillness. In this way, she combines important topics that are significant and represent memory, sexual intimacy, and linguistic diversity..

Conclusion

The current chapter analyzes the female identity in Assia Djébar's *Strasbourg Nights*. It has been proved that the context of the novel and the setting is purely matching the postcolonial one. Strasbourg, the chosen setting, is turned to be a city which has painful experiences with different kinds of colonialism. The peace has been agreed upon between French and Germans

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made the place welcome different culture, language and religions. Post colonialism characterized by the multiculturalism as a solution to accept the other and to achieve one's distorted identity. Accordingly, the main character Thelja , along with female characters in the novel , came from different backgrounds and have ultimately different cultures. They have in common that they are striving for their identity which is gone by the memories of the colonial practices and all fall in love with their colonial enemies (men). Through applying the theory of postcolonial feminist, the female characters portrayed; at first, dangling between their memories, histories and their new life. Along the story they had obstacles and kinds of repression that is authorized whether by their enemies beloved or by their hanging colonial memories. By the end , some tend to accept the other and achieved a new multicultural identity and others, as Thelja, got rid of all what make an obstacle for her and get relief to have her own independent identity.

General Conclusion

Female identity has been always treated by feminist writers. In the current research, the female identity crisis is limited to the African literature; specifically, the Algerian one. Assia Djébar as a feminist novelists shed the light on the loss of African women identity due to their affection with the colonialism practices in their countries let alone the severe relationship with their husbands and the unjust social norms they had lived within.

The study under investigation aims at presenting the female identity in postcolonial African literature; case study of Assia Djébar's *Strasbourg Nights*. The study is qualitative in nature. It adopts a descriptive analytical method. Post colonialism and postcolonial theory are the tools by which the female identity is explored in the corpus. The study consists three chapters; two theoretical and the last is the practical.

The first chapter goes under the title "Post colonialism and Postcolonial African Literature". It reviews historically and chronologically how post colonialism appeared and coined. Post colonialism as a term cannot be grasped without referring to the colonialism. After reviewing what colonialism did in the hearts and soul of the colonized people, it is easy for theorists to coin new term of neo-colonialism and thus they give more prominent definition to post colonialism. After that, postcolonial theory has been defined and characterized. The attentions gomainly on the treatment of the notion identity in this context. After that, the identity as theme is proven to be essential in postcolonial literature. Finally, Postcolonial African literature with focusing on Algerian one is explained and defined.

The second chapter is entitled “Postcolonial Feminism and Female Identity”. It shows how post colonialism and Feminism goes hand in hand and have ideologies in common. As both concerned with the imperial impacts and oppression over people, Feminism exploits the notion to prove that postcolonial women are double colonized, by men and imperialism. However, the attention of postcolonial feminist theory is concerned also how postcolonial African women are marginalized not only because they are just a women but also they are only a shadow of their past without necessary a clear notion of who they are. Thus, the notion of identity within this theory is stressed and presented in the Algerian literature. Right after, the Feminism in Algerian literature has been presented and showed how women are having a voice to scream it out achieving their position within the feminist world. Assia Djébar as one the prominent feminist writers is focused on as it is the focus of the current study along with her master piece *Strasbourg Nights*. The third chapter is devoted to the analysis.

The study tries to answer two questions: how does Assia Djébar represent the female identity in her *Strasbourg Nights* ? and how do African women challenged the norms to create an independent identity ?. The hypotheses formulated as follows have been confirmed. Assia Djébar uses a post-colonial background to build the female characters that focus on their memory, story, and identity. She portrayed women lost and living under control of their imperial memories or their husbands' severe treatments. Analyzing colonial identity reveals its connection with history. African women challenged the norms of their societies to fetch their own identity through having new relationships. Some of the characters like, Irma, accepted the multiculturalism as a sign that characterizes Their identity while main character, Thelja, after

having her experience with new relationship, she at least knew what to do to gain her identity back.

The third chapter deals with analysis of the female identity in Assia Djébar's *Strasbourg Nights*. We proved that the chosen setting suits better the events and the construction of females' identity in the corpus. Not by coincidence, all the female characters along with the protagonist, Thalja, portrayed and described as a heterogeneous character whose language, religion and culture are totally different. Despite of all their differences falling in love with men who symbolizes their enemy and their hanging memories of the colonial and imperial impact on them are common. The struggle with the oppression of men from one side and history and memory from the other is a trip through which they constructed their identities. Some of the female characters accepted the multi-cultural context to accept the other as Irma. Thalja from another hand got rid of all the obstacles and traditional customs and decided to, after all she has been through, and have an independent identity in totally new place.

Some limitations have been faced by the researcher during the course of the work. First, the English version of the novel has not been found by any means. Thus, we took much time in translation with the regard that the researcher has limited knowledge about French. Second, the impact of the COVID 19 on overall atmosphere.

The study of the female identity in this dissertation is depending on the postcolonial feminist only. As the theory is broad and not fixed the treatment of female identity stills fake and

not well-characterized. For that, we suggest to tackle the subject matter from the psychoanalysts' point of view or from deconstructionists' to have the analysis more accurate and effective.

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Appendix

1- Biography of Assia Djebar

Assia Djebar is a great Algerian writer who belongs to the ethnographic roman which is considered as a part of the Maghrebian literature that keen to describe the situation of Algeria during the period of colonisation and the independence. This writer plays an important role in the feminist movement; she defended the Algerian land, identity, traditions and liberties. Furthermore, she tried to do a combination between our culture and the French one and she is famous of using French to resist the colonial and imperial practices.

She also was one of those who belonged to politics during the Algerian war, for that reason she was exiled. Her first exile was to Tunisia where she got a degree in history. Later, she gained more political wet and started to write her political views in literary production like *Les Enfants du Nouveau Monde* (1962) and *Les Alouettes Naïves* (1967). She returned back in the year of independence when she had a post as teacher at Algerian university and launched her literary productions.

As a feminist writer, Pricillia added that she left much of her life experiences within the lines of her literary production. Thanks to her father, she was exhibited to numerous of educational opportunities which were not available of the girl generation of her time (15). Thus, as she grew up in that cultivated political atmosphere and Francophone background, she was , accordingly, the example of women who defended her country and status as a woman.

Additionally, Djebar wrote artistically about the Algerian revolution not as contextualizing the events or giving it her own priority. However,she was picturing and adopting the status of

women in that period of time. Thus, she used the ethnographic style to keep the voice of women and their own experiences immortal.

She preferred to write in French, as the primitive Algerian writers did, notto signify betrayal of one's culture or identity; on the contrary, it has helped the Algerian writers reclaim their lost heritage and secured them their own identity because the colonizer's language became the weapon used by postcolonial writers to fight the enemy.

From the literary works of Assia Djebar, as writer she used some methods material feminism as to analyse the reality or the situation of women in her society. She also was one of the fundamental women in the feminist movement.

2- Plot Summary of the Novel

It all begins with a chapter that entitled "The City" in which it is witnessed the evacuation of Strasbourg, a border town between France and Germany, deserted in September 1939 by its population condemned to exile. A meticulous description is given of the city during the nine months of the exodus of its inhabitants until the German occupation till the end of June 1940. The total vacuum gives way and falls to the streets of Strasbourg.

Subsequently, after a fifty years of the narrative;, the attention turned to a repopulated Strasbourg between March 12th and 21st, 1989 for ten days and nine nights where it is about exploring the lives of several characters with tumultuous pasts, multiple destinies and uncertain futures who will try to reconcile and confront their personal stories.

The story revolves around the central character, Thelja, daughter of a maquisard killed during the Algerian War, who goes to Paris to pursue a history thesis that deals with the tragic fate of Abbess Herrade of Landsberg. There, she met a Strasbourg resident named François, twenty years older than her, with whom she fell in love and decided some time later to join him in Strasbourg and at the same time, to reunite with a childhood friend, Eve, who lives in the same city.

Along the course of the novel, Thelja left her husband and child in Algeria to live with her lover, François, only nine nights. By defying the prohibitions, Thelja intends to share with François intense moments which it is about exchange and discovery. The sexuality lived with the other constitutes the only practice which allows this couple to explore the pains of their conscious and unconscious being, where the illusions of identity are mixed with the memory. Realizing, during their nights, both the union of entwined bodies and initiation, through words, into the world inhabited by the other, the protagonists work to actualize a universe of forgiveness and reconciliation.

The other couples who revolve around Thelja and François complete the picture of the complex relationships between love and conflicts drawn by the novelist. The couple formed by Eve and Hans encounter the same questions as those of the previous ones. Eve, a Jew of Sephardic origin, separated from her husband and their child, fell in love with Hans, a German teacher at the University of Heidelberg, whom she met in Rotterdam during an unplanned stopover. She has sworn never to set foot in Germany and this after the atrocities of her country during WWI and WWII.

This couple not always easy to manage especially that Eve firmly refuses to speak the language of her lover, German and even to hear him speak it, this opposition ends up installing hatred within the couple. .After facing all the conflicts, Eve decides to forgive her lover by resorting to an oath(the Strasbourg Oath) by which, in the 9th century, two armies expressed not only their will to make peace but also their peaceful acceptance of the language and culture of the other. It is only after making this historic pact that Eve will agree to forgive all the atrocities the people of Hans committed against hers.

The third couple are Irma, a speech therapist born to Jewish parents, who shares her life with Karl, son of Blackfoot Alsatian, lived for generations in Algeria. While having intimate moments with Karl, the feeling of not having known her parents complicates her relationship. Irma seeks in vain to shed light on the enigmas of her past as a Jewish child adopted by an Alsatian resistance fighter who, when Irma has finally found her, will refuse all contact with her.

Jacqueline is the only character from Strasbourg but whose father is a former German soldier, who remained in France after 1945. In the novel, she is divided between the theatres, as the director of a famous play. Sophocles' Antigone presented by actors of various origins and her love life with an Algerian, Ali, son of Touma, Eve's Maghrebian neighbor and whose daughter Aicha is married to an Alsatian. The couple's relationship is a disaster that ends at the end of the novel with the murder of Jacqueline by her lover, Ali.

The other female character is Djamilia, also of North African origin, who plays the role of Antigone in Sophocles's play. She embodies an impossible love in the play and in life too. The actress secretly experiences very strong feelings towards Jacqueline but she will end up doing it

openly, in front of everyone, afterwards. her death, in the chapter entitled “Antigone de banlieue”.

The story ends with an epilogue, entitled "Neigeou le poudroiment" where we witness the sudden disappearance of Thelja after nine nights with François who disappears only to appear in the night, to haunt the streets of 'an empty Strasbourg.

