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**Immigrant Women and the Quest for Identity in
Taos Amrouche's *Jacinthe Noire* (1947) and
Bharati Mukherjee's *Jasmine* (1989)**

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of the requirements for a **Master degree in English Language, Literature and
Civilization**

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Abstract

This work undertakes a comparative study between Taos Amrouche's *Jacinthe Noire* and Bharati Mukherjee's *Jasmine*. Our main aim is to examine how the issues of gender and exile influence the lives of the protagonists, and consider their different strategies of resistance to dominant discourses. Through a thematic analysis of the two novels, we attempt to show that although the two female novelists come from different countries, Algeria and India, and use different languages, French and English, they share similarities related to feminist literature. We consider how *Jacinthe Noire* and *Jasmine* fit in as a response to the colonial and patriarchal practices of discriminating and oppressing the lives of indigenous women. These narratives constitute a site from which they can claim their rights, a site of resistance in the context of patriarchal and cultural oppression.

Key words: *Jasmine*, *Jacinthe Noire*, feminist literature, immigration, patriarchal practices, cultural oppression.

Dedication

We dedicate this work to all those who helped us in carrying out this modest dissertation.

To the memory of my two grand-parents. May you rest in peace.

To my precious family, my mother Belbachir Hania, my father Bouaziz Mustapha.

My dear sister Naima.

My dearest brothers, Rafik, Atmane and Smail.

To my best friends Semmar Zineb and Wissam Benyahia.

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To my parents Messali Saida and Amar, who have always supported me and pushed me to go forward.

To my sweet brothers Kaci and Billa who have always been of great support for me.

To my dearest sisters Tassadit and my unicorn Tifinagh who have always been here for me.

To my dear grand-mother Yemma Zaza.

To the memory of Yemma Hadja who left us too early.

To my beloved Zizi and my whole family.

To my grandfather Md Ou Achour, may he rest in peace, and my grandmother Yemma Hadja.

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General introduction

Introduction

Literature is the reflection of any society, its good values as well as its ills. Moreover, throughout time, literature has served as weapon to defend many causes. In the case of women writers, literature has been among the strongest ways in their struggle for gaining equal status with men. In fact, women writers transmit through their literature the real events they experience in their societies. They present their literature as a mirror through which people can look at themselves, and thus make amendments where necessary.

Women all around the world still struggle every moment looking for their status and their rights. They have innovated many ways for making their fight and identity survive. One of the best ways they found is writing. In fact, Feminism is one of the most powerful movements that swept the literary world in recent decades. As a critical theory, feminism aims at providing an altogether new awareness of women's role in this complex world. It has been articulated differently in different parts of the world by various writers depending on their class, background and level of consciousness.

Feminist literature scrutinizes several issues including patriarchal society, women's identity, individual freedom and emancipation. The experience of immigrant women is also present in feminist literature.

Identity formation is integral to every human being whereby a person locates oneself in society. However, in the case of emigrants, many of them undergo identity transformations as part of their adjustments within the host society. For emigrant women, the question of identity is not only a matter of cultural heritage but also a matter of sex. Cultural identity is inseparable from sexual identity, hence leading to double marginalization of the exiled woman as an emigrant and as a woman.

Feminist writers write on the issue of the quest for identity for emigrant women. Notable among them are Marie-Louise Taos Amrouche (henceforth Taos Amrouche) and

Bharati Mukherjee. Both authors faced exile, far from their mother country and both devoted their lives to promote their identity and freedom as women and to fight racism.

Marie-Louise Taos Amrouche was the first woman to write in French in Algeria and the first to sing proudly her mother's ancestral Kabyle (Berber) songs (Kizzi 11). She was born in Tunisia, after her family moved there to escape persecution because of their conversion to Christianity. Taos was very interested in her mother's country Kabylia and she loved the rich oral traditions of Kabyle songs. Additionally, she expressed very early the need for the emancipation of women. Indeed, through her strong songs and autobiographical novels, she transmitted her will to break the society's chains and taboos and to defend her place in society and impose herself as a woman. She contributed to the continuity of the Kabyle songs and identity. Besides, she expressed her suffering from being rejected and oppressed first for being a woman, second for being Kabyle and third for being a Christian in a Muslim society.

In her very first novel *Jacinthe Noire* (1947) (*Black Hyacinth*), Taos Amrouche describes an "uncivilized" young Tunisian girl named Reine, who goes to France for her studies and who faces many difficulties because of the different life styles. The girl resists in front of being rejected because of her identity and religion and suffered of being far from her family. This girl symbolizes Taos Amrouche. *Jacinthe Noire* is the first novel ever published in French by a North African woman writer (Kizzi 17).

Bharati Mukherjee was born in West Bengal, India. She is an American Indian writer and professor, who devoted her life to fight for women's rights. Through her literature and writings, she dealt with the problems of emigrant women in imposing themselves as women and preserving their identities in foreign societies. In her novel *Jasmine* (1989), Mukherjee recounts the adventurous life of the protagonist Jasmine, a girl from the village of Hasnapur, who migrates to America and later encounters identity issues in her journey to integrate into

the American society. These changes make her a strong woman, one who wins over her destiny. The narrator Jasmine takes her reader to different time shifts. The novel is a weaving together of the present situation and past memories which in turn exhibits the shifting of her multiple identities.

Therefore, the choice of the corpus in this study is not a coincidence; it is rather a considered choice, because the two novels *Jacinthe Noire* and *Jasmine* share the same themes namely exile, alienation, the quest for identity, and emancipation experienced by emigrant women.

Literature review:

Taos Amrouche has been studied by different researchers from different perspectives. In “Grandeur de Taos Amrouche” (2012), the essayist and critic, Denise Brahimi, seeks to highlight the strong personality of Taos Amrouche and to underscore the experiences she had been through. Through the analysis of *Jacinthe Noire*, she evokes the suffering and pain that Taos Amrouche experienced because of her exile in Paris (244). She also explains the obsession of Marie-Louise Taos Amrouche for being accepted and admired. This obsession is embodied in all her autobiographical novels (20). Taos Amrouche is represented in her autobiographical novels by figures of tragic heroes, constantly confronted with failure, a failure that in fact provides them strength and power to resist the established male order (53). Brahimi deals not only with the pride side in Taos Amrouche’s personality but also with her passion; Taos Amrouche is described as an incurable romantic who, through her writings, shows her need for affection, love and tenderness (150). In addition, Brahimi underlines the great attachment of Taos Amrouche to her origins and Kabyle identity and retraces her path and efforts to preserve the Kabyle heritage through writing and singing (39).

Another significant work is Tassadit Yacine's article "*Taos Amrouche, précurseur du Féminisme Nord Africain*" (2009) which shows that Taos Amrouche owes her character traits of a woman refusing the established male order to her mother, Fadhma Ath Mansour and her grandmother, Aïni Ath Larbi Ou Saïd, from Tizi Hibel. What's more, she is brought up in the double Kabyle and French cultures and belongs to a Christian minority converted under colonization, a situation that contributes to its discomfort and its rejection by the Muslim community. That's what pushed her forward to fight for her freedom and intensified her willingness to have a social and sexual existence as a woman, when this issue was still a taboo in her society. Yacine also examines the deep impact that Fadhma Nath Mansour had on her daughter Taos as a woman rejected by her society for being an "illegitimate child".

Equally relevant and recent is Akila Kizzi's Phd thesis "*L'accord im/possible Ecriture, Prise de parole, Engagement et identités multiples chez Marie-Louise Taos Amrouche*" (2016) which deals with the multiple identities in Taos Amrouche's writings. She explores Taos Amrouche's capacity to write and express herself politically and to express multiple identities. Kizzi stresses that despite the race and gender discrimination Taos Amrouche had been through, she could face them all and always achieve her goals.

Kizzi shows the relation between the songs and writings of Taos Amrouche by demonstrating that Taos Amrouche was a pioneer in writing on the sensitive subjects of her time. As a matter of fact, through her writings and songs she defied the society she lived in and she succeeded in finding a balance between the search for Kabyle origins, the oppressed woman's need to speak, her multiple identities, and the Muslim, Christian heritage.

Additionally, Kizzi analyzed the historical and political environments in which Taos Amrouche grew up. She shows that her mother's life and experiences had been a source of inspiration for Taos Amrouche; it was thanks to her mother that she started singing to preserve the traditional Kabyle songs.

Jacinthe Noire was for Taos Amrouche the first step in her literary career and a way to express her suffering of exile and gender and race discrimination. It paved the way for other women to write and to fight for their rights. In addition, Akila Kizzi explains that the cause of Amrouche's family "exiles" is its difficult economic situation under the French colonization and its conversion to Christianity in a Muslim society (151).

Likewise, there is wealth of research on Bharati Mukherjee's work. In an article entitled "*Feminist Perspectives in Bharati Mukherjee's Novels*" T.Ramesh Babu states that Bharathi Mukherjee is a Third World Feminist writer who deals with the problems and issues related to South Asian Women particularly in India. Like her contemporary feminist writers, she upholds the cause of women, but she differs from them because her basic concern is to delineate the problems of cross cultural conflicts faced by Indian women immigrants. Concerning her novels' protagonists, Babu maintains that Tara Banerjee in 'The Tiger's Daughter', Dimple in 'Wife', Jyothi in 'Jasmine' and Devi in 'Leave it to me', three sisters- Padma, Parvathi and Tara in 'Desirable Daughters' and Tara in 'The Tree Bride' all dealt with the problem of identity because of cross cultural conflicts. He adds that Bharati Mukherjee's heroines are bold and assertive. They have a strong potentiality for adaptability; they live in the firm ground of reality and accept the bitter truth of their lives. Bharati Mukherjee's female protagonists are immigrants and suffer cultural shock but they are potential women and are anxious to establish their identity by undertaking their heroic journeys, they face many problems as a result of being both emigrants and women.

Shazia Tabassum in her article "*Alienation in the works of Bharati Mukherjee with Reference to Jasmine*" (2019) argues that Mukherjee has a strong desire to express the shifting tensions and complexities of an immigrant in an alien land. In her fiction, her women characters struggle to obtain a footing in a New World; they redefine the values and the beliefs and pursue a quest for an identity in a world that is rapidly changing. Tabassum opines

that alienation, identity crisis and cultural clashes are some of the themes that characterize contemporary fiction and Mukherjee's novels frequently use the quest mode. Her characters variously have a quest for identity, a quest for peace, a quest for roots and a quest for meaning. In addition, Tabassum views that Mukherjee, through Jasmine, explores the burden of the native land cultural ties, which represent female oppression, along with the potential of American life style, individualism and the female spirit of liberation.

Significance of the Study

In relation to our primary sources, many studies have been conducted in the study of both novels. However, to our knowledge no comparative study has been conducted about Taos Amrouche's *Jacinthe Noire* and Bharati Mukherjee's *Jasmine*. This study will attempt to fill the gap in research by conducting a comparative study between two novels in order to draw a direct link between their prevailing themes

Aim of the study:

This research aims at demonstrating how women from different areas and eras are always victims of the same patriarchal society. It also attempts to depict immigrant women's alienation due to forced exile, and identity. We will try to show that the two experiences of the two novels' protagonists are the same despite the fact that they were written in different places and times.

Thesis statement:

Our research is a comparative study of Taos Amrouche's *Jacinthe Noire* and Bharati Mukherjee's *Jasmine*. We will undertake a textual and thematic analysis of the two novels focusing on the themes of alienation and the quest for identity. In order to show women from

two different social environments and two different periods of time experienced the same issues of exile, women oppression and the quest for identity.

Chapter division:

Our research paper includes three chapters. The first chapter is devoted to the socio-historical background of the two novels focusing on the main events and the main issues which influenced the authors to produce these masterpieces. Then, it introduces the two authors, Taos Amrouche and Bharati Mukherjee and the summaries of the two selected novels *Jacinthe Noire*, *Jasmine* will be presented.

The second chapter provides a review of feminist literature, explaining their suffering from alienation and emigration and how they fought for the preservation of their identities in exile as women. Additionally, it reviews the history of Algerian feminism and Indian feminism. Moreover, this chapter shows the contributions of both Taos Amrouche and Bharati Mukherjee in the fight for women's rights.

Finally, the third chapter presents the analysis of the main themes of the novels, namely alienation and the quest for identity highlighting the suffering of emigrant women and their struggle to preserve their identities as emigrants and as women.

Chapter One:

A General Overview of *Jacinthe*

Noire and Jasmine

Introduction

This chapter provides a general overview of the two novels under study, namely *Jacinthe Noire* and *Jasmine*. First, the socio-historical background of each novel will be examined. The aim is to shed the lights on the experiences and the main events which pushed both authors to write their novels. Finally, the author's biographies as well as the summaries of their novels will be provided.

I. The Historical Context Of the Novels

1. Algeria and France: The Historical Context of *Jacinthe Noire*

1.1. French Colonization of Algeria

The French colonization of Algeria started in 1830 and lasted around a century and a half (until 1962). France couldn't reach and completely conquer Kabylia until 1857. It was due to the geographical characteristics of the region which was very mountainous. That's why the French soldiers found difficulties to organize attacks there. Akila Kizzi explains how this region suffered during several years because of the resistance that its habitants showed and the successive revolts lead mainly by Cheikh El Mokrani, Cheikh EL Hadad and Lalla Fadhma N'Soumer. This latter is an important figure of the Algerian anti-colonial Resistance. She is described by Kizzi as the first woman to break the traditions of the Kabyle society which impose on women to stay at home and wait for marriage as their only fate, "très jeune, elle révèle une personnalité exceptionnelle qui ne peut se satisfaire du statut réservé aux femmes [...] rejetant le mariage traditionnel elle préfère la retraite solitaire et mystique" (49)

The Kabyle society then was a very conservative one. Henri Genevois in his book *Education Familiale en Kabylie* notes that "à la naissance du garçon, la maison s'emplit de joie, les poutres elles-mêmes semblent se réjouir. La maison devient toute gaie : une lumière s'y est allumée [...] a la naissance d'une fille, la maison se remplit d'une sombre tristesse: on

dirait que les poutres même se lamentent ; tout est froid " (18) From this passage it is clear that the Kabyle society favored the birth of a boy than a girl. Fadhma N'Soumer broke the society's chains and took weapons to face the French colonialism just like men. In *Récits de Kabylie (La Campagne de 1857)*, Emile Carrey gives the following description of Lalla Fadhma N'Soumer:

En trois coups les deux battants tombent à l'intérieur. Aussitôt une femme kabyle, petite, presque massive, mais belle encore, apparaît sur le seuil de la maison. Son regard rayonne. Son visage est tatoué à la mode berbère. Elle est vêtue de fins burnous et couverte de bijoux [...] elle s'est jetée devant l'ennemi, comme un pontife pour sauver son peuple. (280)

Afterwards, in the 1870s, France adopted the policy of "les Terres Brulées" (Burnt Lands) which consisted of burning the lands and properties of the Kabyle Families who participated in the revolts and rebellions against the French army. They also sent many families to New Caledonia as a forced exile (Kizzi 55). During the 1880s, many people in Algeria and specifically in Kabylia died of fever, pneumonia, cough and tuberculosis; the sanitary conditions of the war at that time contributed to spread of all these illnesses as explained by Hanoteau and Letourneux: "le Kabyle est donc placé, dans son habitation, au milieu des conditions les plus défavorables à la conservation de la santé [...] le renouvellement insuffisant de l'air, l'absence de lumière, l'humidité, l'encombrement [...]" (410). This situation was favorable for the French colonizer because it was the occasion to send missionaries composed of men and women of the church, called "les pères blancs" and "les sœurs Blanches" for the purpose of helping Kabyles and spreading Christianity. It is in

these conditions that the French colonizer managed to settle and impose its presence in Kabylia.

1.2. The Establishment the French Schools in Colonial Algeria

The historian Karima Direche-Slimani explains that during the French colonization the missionaries were sent to Algeria specifically to Kabylia for purpose of evangelizing the population and spreading Christianity. She specifies that it was mainly orphans, children, young adults and poor people who were the first to convert to Christianity after receiving care and food from the French missionaries.

France started a policy of evangelizing Algeria and the whole African North by establishing schools and orphanages directed by les *Pères Blancs* and les *Soeurs Blanches*, (Kizzi 59). The first school in Kabylia opened in Fort National (nowadays Larebaa N At Yiraten) in 1878. These schools were at the time limited by the traditions of the local population. They could not use the same educational system as in France for fear of shocking the families and pushing them to stop their daughters from going to school. Some *Sœurs Blanches* even learned Kabyle language in order to be able to understand the Kabyle conservative society of that time (Kizzi 60; Direche-Slimani 34).

1.3. Women's Education in Colonial Times

Fadhma Nath Mansour was an illegitimate child. This is why she was rejected by her society and that forced her mother to entrust her to the Ouadhia's school run by the *Soeurs Blanches*. It is in these schools that Fadhma Aït Mansour, Taos Amrouche's mother, got her education and converted to Christianity. This was another reason that led her society to reject her even more. These schools for girls were initially orphanages that welcomed orphaned or illegitimate little girls. Fadhma wrote in her book *Histoire de Ma Vie*:

Ma mère apprit qu'il y avait aux Ouadhias des Sœurs Blanches qui accueillait les petites filles et en prenaient soin. Elle pensa être tranquille sur mon compte en me confiant à ces religieuses. Toutefois elle résista longtemps [...] Me voyant encore en butte à de mauvais traitements, elle décida de s'en remettre aux Sœurs Blanches. [...] Le monde est méchant, et c'est « l'enfant de la faute » qui devient martyr de la société, surtout kabyle. Que de coups, que de bousculades, que de souffrances n'ai-je pas subis! (25-26).

At that time, only forced parents let their daughters go to school. They were not able to feed them or to take them in charge. Orphans or illegitimate girls abandoned by their families also were welcomed in these schools. Sometimes, the French missionaries gave parents money or promised them lands in order to let their children go to school (Kizzi 60). Education then was poor and mainly religious but after 1880 under the orders of Jules Ferry, France adopted secularism and applied it in its colonies, where a better educational system was elaborated. Missionary schools were replaced by the republican secular schools which had a much better educational system and attracted more population (Colonna). It was under these social conditions that finally some women had access to education.

1.4. The Impact of French Schools on the Kabyle Society

French schools established in Algeria had a great impact on the Algerian society in general and Kabylia in particular. On the one hand, it was beneficial because it was an opportunity for Algerians, particularly women, to get education, as Tassadit yacine explains, "female expression is perceived as a threat to peace, a reversal of the struggle for power and meaning, and, furthermore, an inversion of the world" (105). However, on the other hand, the French schools caused identity and cultural uprooting because, as Taos writes in *Rue des Tambourins*:

Car le pays avait été coupé en deux le jour où des missionnaires étaient venus l'évangéliser. Depuis, les membres d'une même famille se regardaient d'une rive à l'autre, désespérant de se rejoindre [...] Il y avait donc deux clans face à face, bien distincts, et qui se défiaient. (37-38)

The fact that French schools gave women the occasion to get access to learning made the conservative Kabyle society perceive them as a threat. In this context, Tassadit Yacine writes that:

La colonisation et les guerres coloniales en déstructurant les sociétés traditionnelles d'Afrique du Nord ont permis - fut-ce de façon marginale - l'ouverture des champs du possible à certaines femmes pour rompre avec les structures patriarcales de la société autochtone, marquée par une division sexuelle du travail qui privilégie les garçons en leur donnant la possibilité d'avoir une formation intellectuelle au détriment des filles (3-4).

It is clear from this quotation that the French schools opened doors for girls to get education in a patriarchal society where boys were privileged. However, the fact that these girls had access to education made the society hate them, reject them and oppress them more for breaking the traditions that imposed on them to stay home.

Many writers of the colonial period explained the impact of this radical separation with their origins through the French schools. Kateb Yacine wrote "Ainsi avais-je perdu tout à la fois ma mère et son langage, les seuls trésors inaliénables et pourtant aliénés!" (181-182). The theme of exile has been very common in Algerian literature. This theme was frequently

addressed by the Amrouche's family. Taos Amrouche writes in *Solitude ma Mère* "(...) nos racines étaient à nu; c'étaient-elles qui demandaient à s'enraciner en un être qui me devienne l'équivalent d'un pays à jamais perdu et me fasse oublier le sentiment d'exil atroce que nous trainions partout (38). Taos Amrouche was not the only one in her family who suffered from this exile, her brother Jean Amrouche wrote in *Chants de l'Exil*:

Eboulez-vous, montagnes

Qui des miens m'avez séparé.

Mère, ô mère bien-aimée,

Ah ! L'exil est un calvaire !

Taos Amrouche suffered from this exile like her mother Fadhma Aïth Mansour who wrote in her autobiography *Histoire de ma Vie*:

Je viens de relire cette longue histoire et je m'aperçois que j'ai omis de dire que j'étais toujours restée "la Kabyle": jamais, malgré les quarante ans que j'ai passés en Tunisie, malgré mon instruction foncièrement française, jamais je n'ai pu me lier intimement ni avec les Français ni avec les Arabes. Je suis restée, toujours, l'éternelle exilée, celle qui, jamais, ne s'est sentie chez elle nulle part. Aujourd'hui, plus que jamais, j'aspire à être enfin chez moi, dans mon village, au milieu de ceux de ma race, de ceux qui ont le même langage, la même mentalité, la même âme superstitieuse et candide, affamée de liberté, d'indépendance, l'âme de Jugurtha! (201)

Taos Amrouche's family suffered from the exile of being forced to leave Kabylia because of their conversion to Christianity. This is why they wrote a lot about exile and their great attachment to their Kabyle identity which is clear in the above citations. Taos Amrouche writes in her first novel *Jacinthe Noire* "Je fais partie de la catégorie de ceux qui se sont séparés des leurs, qui ont rejeté la foi de leurs ancêtres pour accueillir le Christ. La solitude des êtres qui me ressemblent est particulièrement pesante. C'est une solitude pathétique, absolue" (227). It is clear from these passages that the Amrouche family regret the fact that the Kabyle society rejects them because of their religion, so they were forced to leave Kabylia for Tunisia from where Taos and Jean went to France where they experienced a second exile. As a sum, the French colonization and its policy of the evangelization of North Africa created a radical break between the population and their culture. Consequently, many families were exiled and endured suffering resulted from it.

Taos Amrouche facing this situation chose to use an autobiographical style in all her books. It was for her the best way to describe the problems she faced through her life and the exiles she experienced. She always put forward her identity as a Kabyle Berber and as a woman, she wrote a lot about living in exile. Being rejected for her identity or her sex, she always tried to portray the patriarchal society in which she lived. This is why she considered writing as a way of fighting women oppression and racism, "écris des livres [...] Convertis tes déboires en littérature, tu n'as pas d'autres issues" (329). In *Carnets Intimes* Taos Amrouche, conscious and aware of the power of writing, insists: "Ecrire! Oui, c'est bien le seul exutoire [...] Il faut écrire. Voilà ce que je dois me rappeler" (371-375).

2. India and the United States: The Historical Context of *Jasmine*

2.1. Indian Emigration before Independence

With the establishment of the East Indian Company in 1612, India became one of the Second British Empire's colonies and it remained under its control until 1947. Immediately after independence, India had to deal with a variety of problems, as the joy of Independence was tempered by the sadness of partition and the migration of a large majority of people. Furthermore, India was left in a chaotic situation with widespread poverty, diseases, destroyed economy, illiteracy, and many political conflicts. Consequently, many Indian people started to flee to other countries mainly to the USA in order to benefit from its economic opportunities and satisfying life. The main cause of immigration to the USA from all over the world not only from India is what is called the "American Dream" since America is considered as the land of opportunities. So, emigration in India is a consequence of poverty and socio-economic problems which resulted from the bad rule of the British colonizer from 1858 to 1947.

2.2. Indian Partition Riots of 1947

After independence in 1947, the Indian subcontinent was partitioned into the largely Hindu country of India and the largely Muslim country of Pakistan. This division broke out violence and bloodshed between the Muslims, the Sikhs, and the Hindus in the Indian subcontinent, in what have come to be known as the Partition Riots.

When India was divided into two separate states, the border between Hindu-majority India and Muslim-majority Pakistan was kept secret until the very last moment, ignoring the social realities of India, and the result was bloodshed. This decision was not just an administrative formality but a matter of life or death. Violence on the streets between Hindus and Muslims began to escalate, and nearly

one million died and over 15 million were displaced as Muslims fled to Pakistan and Hindus and Sikhs fled to the opposite direction (Steven Brocklehurst). According to conservative estimates about 70,000 women were abducted and raped, leaving both countries with deep psychological and political scars (Sarah Ansari). Punjab was down the middle and many did not know whether they would be living in Pakistan or in India as Punjab was situated between the borders of the two new states.

Jasmine the main character of Mukherjee's novel *Jasmine*, was born in a rural village called Hasnapur, 18 years after the Partition Riots, approximately in 1965. Yet these Riots had a profound effect on her life. Like many Hindus at that time, Jasmine's family left the area that became Pakistan, leaving behind relative riches in exchange of squalor during the partition riots. It was a time of bloodshed and upheaval, so many families left behind not only material wealth but established roots. Nowadays the struggle between the Muslims and the Hindus still continues to be a source of tension in India.

2.3. Sikhs and the Crash of Flight 182

The Sikhs is a religious group in India which forms 1.7 percent of the Indian population, about 24 million people. Nearly 77 percent of the Sikh's population is located in Punjab, their religion is Sikhism and it is the fourth largest religious group in India (National Commission for Minorities).

On June 23, 1985, Indian Flight 182 was on route from Toronto to London, continuing to Bombay. After a routine stop in Montreal, Canadian officials removed three suspicious packages, and then the jet flew to London as scheduled, but only 45 minutes later the jet disintegrated in midair and to the Atlantic Ocean. The crash caused the immediate death of all the personal in the jet, the 325 passengers as well as the crew members.

The cause of the crash was not immediately known, but after the first investigations, it turned out that the Sikh extremists were behind the explosion, for they planted a bomb on the aircraft. (The Editors of Encyclopedia Britannica)

By the 1980's India faced a violent civil unrest between Sikh and Hindu factions. Mukherjee lived during this civil unrest and was deeply affected by Sikh extremism, especially after the bombing of Flight 182. From 1985 Mukherjee referred to Sikh extremism several times in her writings. In *Jasmine* for instance, Sukhwinder, the man who killed Jasmine's husband Prakash Vijih, was a Sikh extremist.

2.4. Indian Traditions: The Dowries and Suttee Cults

The Indian population is among the most popular in terms of traditions, cults, and mainly "strange" rituals. It is a land with a lot of traditions and rituals, and a rich culture which seems sometimes weird, and some other times it seems downright scary, and inhuman. Dowries and Suttee are among those old weird and inhuman rituals which we find in India till modern times, even though most of them are banned by the Indian laws.

a. The Dowries Cult:

Dowry is a payment made in cash or kind to a bride's husband in-laws at the time of her marriage. The amount depends on a large number of factors, including region, caste and sub caste, groom's education, bride's skin tone, and the negotiation skills of both the involved families. Indian women pay at marriage is a common phenomenon among both rich and poor.

Even though dowry has been illegal in India since 1961, it is still practiced, and it is rarely reported as a crime. According to the National Crime Records Bureau of India, in a country with nearly 10 million weddings a year, less than 10,000 cases of dowry were reported. (Kavya Sukumar) In 2015, Dowry gets reported only when the groom's demands go beyond what the bride's family can afford or when the bride is physically abused or, worse,

killed, as cases that gained media attention show. Kavya Sukumar in her article “Dowries are illegal in India -but families including mine- still expect them” stated that:

More often, dowry related-abuses are filed under a law that prevents domestic abuse: in 2015, more than 113,000 women reported abuse by their husbands or in-laws, and 7,646 deaths were classified as related to dowry disputes. That is nearly 21 women killed every day by their husbands or in-laws because their families could not meet the dowry demands.

Mukherjee was against this inhuman practice which belittles women as it drives into women oppression and domestic abuse. In *Jasmine* Mukherjee refers to this cult. Jasmine’s family was expected to offer a dowry to her prospective husband. For somebody whose little family money would go to the older four daughters, the future seemed grim. Jasmine was born in a society where daughters were and to some extent, even today, are considered as curse.

b. The Suttee Cult:

The Suttee cult is among the most savage and inhuman cults in India and the world, in which women burn themselves to death during or after their husband pyre (funeral). This tradition goes back to ancient ages and it is sometimes linked to the myth of the Hindu goddess Sati, who burned herself to death in a fire after her father insulted her husband, the god Shiva. The suttee practice is revered by some as a miraculous and meritorious act that embodies ideals of Hindu femininity, spirituality, and tradition. Still, it is condemned by others as an act of manifest violence against women and an indicator of her subjugation and oppression. (Wendy Doniger). Sometimes Suttee is committed voluntarily,

but cases of compulsion, escape, and rescue are known and scattered instances of it continue to occur. Till modern times, there are widows who are forced to scarify themselves by sitting atop their deceased husband's funeral pyre.

Mukherjee as an Indian woman writer and feminist activist denounces these abuses and weird practices committed against women in the Indian subcontinent, and she refers to these practices in many of her notable writings. In *Jasmine*, when Jasmine's father died her mother shaved her hair meaning that she gave up her own life. Jasmine heard about a woman who committed suttee cult by burning herself in her husband funerals, a story that made her praise god that her mother shaved only her hair instead of burning herself.

II. Authors in Context

1. Taos Amrouche

Marie Louise Taos Amrouche is a Kabyle Algerian singer and writer. She was the first Algerian woman to publish a novel in French. She was born on March 4th, 1913 in Tunisia after her family moved there to escape persecution after their conversion to Roman Catholicism. She was raised in Tunis, where she received an education entirely in French. Taos Amrouche was the only girl in a family of six sons. She spent a considerable amount of time in Kabylia with her family on several occasions during her childhood, which made her very close and attached to the Kabyle Berber culture.

Taos Amrouche's mother Marguerite Fadhma Ait Mansour, was an illegitimate child, which had led to her social exclusion from Kabyle society. She provided her daughter Taos with a solid education in Christian schools, and transmitted her Kabyle ancestral songs, stories and values that Taos perseverated to preserve and transmit to the whole world. Taos's brother Jean El Mouhouv Amrouche, who was seven years older than her, was the first to achieve

fame on the French literary scene. Jean appears several times in the characters of Taos's books, such as "Laurent Le Prestigieux" in *Rue des Tambourins*, or as "Alexandre" in *Amant imaginaire*. Through her brother's and mother's influence Taos became interested in the rich oral traditions of the Kabyle Berber people.

In 1934, at the age of 21, Taos Amrouche obtained her "brevet supérieur" in Tunis. In the following year she went to France for studies at the École Normale at Sèvres. However, she came back 2 months later because of the difficulties she found to adapt to the new way of life at the French boarding school, where she lived her first experience of exile and discrimination due to racism and religion. It is from this experience that the young woman found the inspiration to write her first book *Jacinthe Noire* that will be examined in this study. Taos Amrouche decided to write under the name of Marguerite Taos Amrouche in respect to her mother.

Taos Amrouche was very attached to her Kabyle Berber culture and worked a lot for its preservation. The Algerian filmmaker Abderahmane Bouguermouh reports that Taos Amrouche was the first woman to introduce the Berber question to the world during a conference about minority languages in Madagascar in the early 1930s. Many languages were mentioned but not Kabyle or Berber, so she rose and spoke to question the personalities present: "Vous parlez des langues minorées, il y en a une qui est immense et qui s'appelle le Berbère. Et vous oubliez que c'est l'une des premières civilisations du monde. De quel droit oubliez-vous cette langue?" After that she gave a detailed speech to explain Berber to the audience. (Bouguermouh)

In 1935 she started writing her first novel *Jacinthe noire*, in Tunisia after her experience of two months in France, which she finished in 1939. Yet she couldn't publish it until 1947 due to many obstacles including her brother Jean. In 1936, in collaboration with

her brother Jean and her mother Fadhma Ait Mansour, Taos Amrouche collected and began to interpret Kabyle songs. In 1937–38 she presented her repertoire in Paris and in Munich. After that, she participated in a singer's convention in Fès in 1939, during which she won a scholarship to the Casa Velasquez in Madrid, to extend researches on the ties between Berber and Spanish popular songs.

During that period, she met her future husband André Bourdil, a French painter, with whom she had a daughter. They moved to France in 1945, where Taos started working for the French radio; she performed in many recitals of traditional Kabyle music. On November 18th, 1956 Taos Amrouche published an article entitled "*Que fait-on pour la langue Berbère?*" in *Document Nord-Africain*. She demonstrated the urgency and the need to save oral Berber tradition (songs and recitals), the basis of Berber culture, and she looked for a connection between the Maghreb and France to work for their rapprochement and to show common heritage of all the children of North Africa.

Taos also continued her activities as a writer, publishing her second novel, *Rue des Tambourins*, in 1960. In 1966, she published a collection of Berber Kabyle stories, poems, and proverbs entitled *Le Grain Magique*. And in 1975 she wrote and published her third novel *L'Amant Imaginaire*, this time in the form of a diary. Amrouche's fourth novel, *Solitude ma Mère*, was written starting in 1955 but published only much later by her editor, Joëlle Losfeld, in 1995. This was well after Taos Amrouche's death, in Paris, on April 2, 1976 because of a cancer disease.

All Taos's books are considered autobiographical novels, reporting different events of different periods of her life. Through her books, she expressed a certain rebellion toward society. Taos Amrouche didn't follow the same path that women of her time did follow. She received education and succeeded at a time where education was reserved to men. Moreover,

she sang her culture and wrote her life. Taos Amrouche is considered the pioneer of Feminism in the Kabyle society and in North Africa, as it is highlighted on many of Tassadit Yacine's articles among them, "*Taos Amrouche, précurseur du Féminisme Nord Africain*" published in *Awal* in 2009.

During the last ten years of Taos's life, and after she divorced Bourdil, she devoted herself to the recital of Berber folk songs, for which she became very well known. Writing about this attachment to Kabyle songs, Denise Brahimi stresses that: "c'est la berbèrité, qui prend la forme d'un art populaire à travers la chanson kabyle, mais Taos fait une création beaucoup plus complexe en se constituant comme interprète des chants berbères. Ce serait un autre ouvrage qu'il faudrait consacrer à la grandeur et à la magie de cette interprétation."(161).

Taos Amrouche became much more attracted to the Berber population of Algeria since the late 1950s. She spoke and wrote a lot in favor of the preservation of the Kabyle and Berber language and heritage. In order to give a scientific and official dimension to the Berber language Taos Amrouche with other Kabyle intellectuals founded the Berber Academy in Paris at her home on June 14, 1966. This is highlighted by the writer Denise Brahimi in her book *Grandeur Taos Amrouche*, where she reports how much this writer fought for the promotion of the Berber culture. She explains that Taos Amrouche gave herself the "mission" of defending and promoting her Kabyle heritage:

Taos est porteuse de l'héritage kabyle parce qu'elle a conscience de l'incarner, mais elle se donne aussi la mission d'en promouvoir la « défense et illustration » et profite à cet égard de l'occasion qui lui en est donnée par son séjour en Espagne. On a d'elle le texte d'une conférence qu'elle a faite à Madrid, en 1941.

Il compte plus d'une vingtaine de pages et développe l'idée, certainement exacte à l'époque, que les chants berbères de Kabylie sont tout à fait méconnus. Taos y exprime fièrement, fermement, l'idée qu'elle s'est donné pour mission de les faire connaître. (46)

Thus in sum, Taos Amrouche was very attracted to her mother's culture that she tried to preserve through her writings and songs.

2. Bharati Mukherjee

Born on July 27, 1940, in Calcutta, west Bengal, India, Bharati Mukherjee is an American Indian writer and professor. Her father was Lal Mukherjee, who had a successful pharmaceutical company, and her mother was Bina Banerjee a housewife. After the independence of India, she traveled with her parents to Europe and she stayed there until the early 1950s where she returned to her mother country. Mukherjee during her life attended many schools in India, England, and Switzerland, and she earned advanced degrees in creative writing in the United States. Mukherjee first joined the Loreto School, and she received her Bachelor's degree in English from the University of Calcutta in 1959 as a student of Loreto College. Then, she received her Master degree from the University of Baroda in 1961. She traveled to the United States of America to study at the University of Iowa where she received her M.F.A (Master of Fine Arts) from the Iowa writers' workshops in 1963 and her PhD from the department of comparative literature in 1969 in Iowa.

Bharati Mukherjee wrote many notable works. She wrote about various topics, and she tackled many issues related to the condition of Indian women, mainly those living in exile. She wrote Postcolonial Anglophone fiction, Asian American fiction and memoirs. She also

wrote about American culture, immigration history, reformation and nationhood in the 1990s, autobiography writing, form and theory of fiction, and women oppression.

The very first writing of Bharati Mukherjee was an essay entitled, *An Invisible Woman*, published in the magazine *Saturday Night* which is a critic on Canadian racism. After that, Bharati Mukherjee published her first two novels, *The Tiger's Daughter* in (1972), the most autobiographical of her works, which tells the story of an American Indian educated woman who returns home to India she no longer recognizes, and *Wife* in (1975), which tells the story of a Bengali woman who rebels against her arranged marriage after moving to New York. Then, she published a story collection entitled *Darkness* in (1985) where she turned her attention to the issue of immigrants struggling to get rid of traditions and remake their lives.

In 1989 she published her notable feminist novel *Jasmine* which tells the story of a young Indian widow who fled to the USA after her husband's death. Throughout the novel the protagonist tried her best to adapt to the American's way of life in order to fit in society. But this was not an easy task for her not only because she was an immigrant, but also because she is a woman.

At the beginning of the 90s, Mukherjee started to turn her attention to the writing of a series of expansive novels with multiple plots, starting with *The Holder of the World* (1993), a novel within a novel based on part of Hawthorne's *The Scarlet Letter*, and *Desirable Daughters* (2002), which traced the different fortunes of three sisters from Calcutta, was first in a loosely joined trilogy of novels. The others are *The Tree Bird* (2004) and *Miss NewIndia* (2011).

Bharati Mukherjee lived for more than a decade in Canada where she married the Canadian writer Mr. Blaise, who was a fellow student, in 1963. She lived with her husband in Montreal from 1966 to 1970. In the late 70s they moved to Toronto but they couldn't resist

there, because of racial tensions Mukherjee encountered there. In 1989, they moved for the last time to the United States of America. She died on January 11, 2017 at the age of 76, in Manhattan, New York.

Bharati Mukherjee is an established voice of the Indian Diaspora in North America and a significant feminist novelist. All her novels are written basically from a feminist point of view. She has taken up issues of female gender, related to the Indian women who migrate to foreign countries, and explored the possibilities of freedom offered to women in the new land. Her female characters are strong survivors, who venture out to fulfill their dreams and desires. The protagonists in her novels project her beliefs and so she makes them to act with courage. Her heroines have pushed out of the domestic barrier of home to reach beyond geographical limits of the country itself. In fact, her works reflect the transformation which comes inevitably when one migrates from one's own country to a foreign one. This journey has many ups and downs, which becomes clear through her protagonists. All her protagonists are women who are bold and assertive. Thus, through her characters she holds up the ideals of feminism (P. Saranya 7).

3. Summary of *Jacinthe Noire*

Jacinthe Noire is Taos Amrouche's first book. She wrote it in Rades, Tunisia, between 1935 and 1939, but it hasn't been published until 1947 in France by the house of editions Charlot. Taos Amrouche was then 22 years old. She narrates her experience of two months in a boarding school in Paris, France, where she went in order to prepare her license degree in literature but finally got expelled after around 2 months. These details are mentioned in her mother's autobiography *Histoire de ma Vie*, as follows:

Au mois d'octobre, Marie-Louise Taos fut reçue au brevet supérieur et nous demandâmes à la Compagnie un emprunt pour l'envoyer en France continuer ses études ; nous avons même retenu pour elle une chambre à Paris, dans une maison d'étudiantes. Mais elle ne put s'adapter et revint à Radés au bout de deux mois. (190-191)

Jacinthe Noire tells the story of a young Kabyle, Tunisian woman named Reine (Queen in French) who is actually Taos herself. However, the book is told entirely from the perspective of the third person; the narrator is a French friend of Reine called Marie-Thérèse Maité. The latter narrates us the story of her meeting with Reine, their long conversations, their life in the boarding school, and every trouble they faced either with the other girls there or with their entourage.

All the story turns around the two months Reine had spent on that pension in Paris explaining her difficulties to adapt to that new milieu facing exile and racism. She felt exiled because she was far from her native country, Kabylia and far from her birthplace Tunisia, where all her family was. In addition to that Reine was rejected by her mates at the boarding school because of her differences and her origins, Reine explains the reasons why her supervisor Mrs Anatole expelled her:

Voici ce que me reproche Mlle Anatole :

- une trop forte personnalité.
- Une échelle des valeurs différente de la vôtre.
- Des opinions, des pensées, des façons de parler qui me sont propres.

- Nier la volonté (!).

- Parler de Rousseau et de Gide à tous moments.

Je pensais trouver chez vous - jeunes filles à l'idéal haut placé- la compréhension véritable et non celle qui s'en tient aux apparences... Non, vous n'aimez pas : vous faites le don, mais l'élan, l'amour, en sont absents... (129).

At the end, Reine concluded that it is not enough to belong to the same religion or speak the same language as the other girls to be accepted or considered as part of them. The French girls rejected her because of her different sense of morality and principles in religion. Meanwhile, her native society, Kabylia, rejected her and her family for abandoning Islam and being close to the French colonizer.

4. Summary of *Jasmine*

Jasmine tells the story of a seventeen-year-old Indian girl widowed after her husband's murder in a bomb attack. She and her husband originally planned to move to Florida, but as a result of his death Jasmine continues with the trip on her own. In her path she faces many obstacles as she travels from Florida to New York City to Iowa. The female protagonist passes through one situation and country to another and so is her inner self reborn several times towards a higher level, until she finally seems to have found a place to rest.

The novel begins with Jasmine retelling a story from her childhood about an astrologer who predicts her future as a widower living in exile. Born as Jyoti in Hasnapur, a little town in India, Jasmine is told by that astrologer that she will be a widow at the age of 17. She doesn't believe it, but a man hits her and she falls on the ground, bites her tongue and gets a scar on the forehead. "It's my third eye...now I'm a sage" (5) is what she tells her sisters. The

pain she feels and the scar will always remind her of that moment in her life, when she tries to run away from her fate. When Jasmine runs to her sisters at the river, she swims a while in it and suddenly sees a rotten dog's body. The stench she smells and the pictures follow her for the rest of her life. Later in her life she still remembers the stench whenever she drinks a glass of water: "I know what I don't want to become" (5).

Jasmine's father dies when she is a teenager. He gets killed by a bull after stepping out of a bus. Her mother shaves her head afterwards as a sign that she has given up her own life. Jasmine knows a story of a woman who burned herself on her husband's grave after his death, so what her mother has done is not the worst case. But having experienced this sort of mental violence, see the father dead and the mother resigned, Jasmine stays strong and takes over the role of the mother in the house. At that point in the novel, Jasmine already takes over a new role in her life and leaves the old behind. She is no longer only a daughter, but she has to take responsibility for the rest of the family. The child is gone and she is reborn as a young woman.

As that young woman, Jasmine is getting ready to find a husband for herself. She meets a friend of her two brothers and later on, they get married and move to a bigger city. Jasmine's husband Prakash is planning to move over to America, for his former professor lives there and could help him. Jasmine's past comes back to her mind when her husband is killed through a bomb attack in a shop shortly before his departure to America. She has been just seventeen at that moment. The bomb, the work of some radicals, was supposed to hit her and other women in that shop for being "whores" (93) meaning "too modern". That cruel act of violence changes something in Jasmine. First of all, she goes back to her mother's home and they live isolated as two widows for a while. But Jasmine wants to do more with her life, as "a matter of duty and honor," Jasmine continues with her husband's plans to move to Florida. She gets her brothers' help to get documents for a journey to America. She takes her

husband's clothes with her and intends to burn herself with them at the university he wanted to study at.

Jasmine, given that name by her husband when she still was named Jyoti, already has changed into the more modern woman her name represents. She already has turned from Jyoti, the girl from Hasnapur, to Jasmine, the woman who immigrates to America, travelling by plane, train, and ship. Half-Face, the captain of the ship drives Jasmine to a motel when they arrive to land. He then sexually assaults her. Jasmine contemplates killing herself but instead kills Half-Face. She burns Prakash's suit that she carried with her and leaves the motel. This violent act is both of physical and mental pain, but it again changes her into another person. Jasmine leaves the old Jasmine behind and now begins the life of an illegal immigrant and murderess.

Jasmine meets Lillian Gordon, who takes her to Mrs. Gordon who is also housing three Kanjobal women. She calls Jasmine, Jazzy, and helps Jazzy get to New York to meet with Professor Vadhera. Lillian also has a daughter named Kate Gordon-Feldstein who works as a photographer in the city. Lillian is later sent to jail for exploiting immigrants for free cooking, cleaning and yard work. For five months, Jasmine lives with Professor Vadhera, whom she calls Professorji. She becomes depressed because she fears to leave the house without a green card. Professorji agrees to get her a green card, for fifty thousand rupees, or three thousand dollars.

Jasmine begins working for Wylie and Taylor Hayes, friends of Kate Gordon-Feldstein. She moves in with them in Manhattan to take care of their adopted daughter, Duff. Taylor calls her "Jase." After some problems Wylie leaves Taylor, but Jase continues to take care of Duff. She falls in love with Taylor. One day while the three of them are at the park, Jase spots Sukhwinder, the man that killed Prakash. Consequently, she flees New York for Iowa. She chooses Iowa because Duff's birth mother lives in Iowa.

In Iowa, Jane meets Bud Ripplmayer, a fifty-year old agro-banker and lives with him and their adopted son Du, a young Vietnamese Orphan. Bud and Jane fall in love. After they had a romantic relationship, she gets pregnant with Bud. Jane receives a letter from Taylor, letting her know that he and Duff are on their way to find her. With the coming of Taylor, Jane gets confused, she doesn't know whether she continues with her beloved Bud, or she comes back to Taylor.

Bud begs for Jane to tell him she loves him, but she doesn't respond. While Jane is working in the kitchen, she sees a car pull up the driveway; Taylor and Duff get out of the car. Taylor tries to convince Jane to come with him to California. She is conflicted, thinking of Bud who will lose everything if she leaves. She calls Karin and tells her she's "going somewhere," to see Du. Jasmine stops thinking of herself as Jane and follows Taylor and Duff to the car, whispering "Watch me re-position the stars," to the astrologer who foretold her widowhood and exile.

Jasmine's journey begins from Punjab to California passing through various stations, mainly Florida, New York and Iowa. The narrative oscillates between past and present and Jasmine's identity changes with her new names. She is born as Jyoti, was renamed Jasmine by her husband. From Jasmine she becomes Jazzy and Jane afterwards. In America, Jasmine sways between her past Indian culture and her present experiences of American culture. She compares all the time while narrating her story, at each step her past and present experiences. She was born and has been brought up in a society where women do not have any identity of their own. They were ruled and governed completely by the patriarchal tradition. But now in America she moves from one personality to another looking for an identity of her own.

Conclusion

In this chapter, we first have provided a general overview of *Jacinthe Noire* and *Jasmine* by introducing the social milieu in which the authors Taos Amrouche and Bharati Mukherjee lived. In order to elucidate the conditions of women in the Algerian society and Kabyle society in particular, in order to show the conditions of women during the colonial period. Likewise, we have also shed light on the living conditions of women in India. We have explored some traditions and cults oppressing women, which the writer Bharati Mukherjee mentioned and referred to in *Jasmine*. After that, we have introduced Taos Amrouche's and Bharati Mukherjee's biographies. Finally, we have provided the summaries of the two novels and demonstrated that both *Jacinthe Noire* and *Jasmine* deal with the same themes, namely exile, emigration, alienation, the quest for identity, and women's emancipation.

Chapter Two:

Feminism in Algeria and in India

Introduction

Feminism has generated an ongoing debate all over the world and it emerged to solve women's problems. It was the voice of women in times they were not able to speak or to express their feelings and wishes. This chapter will be devoted to the theoretical framework; it will review the feminist theory by providing its definition as a movement and as a literary theory. Additionally, it will shed the light on the three waves of feminism giving the main principles of each wave. Moreover, this chapter will review the history of feminism as well as the history of the feminist literature in both Algeria and India. As a last part, this chapter will demonstrate the feminist thoughts of the two authors namely Taos Amrouche and Bharati Mukherjee.

I. Feminist Literature

In the past, women have always been oppressed by male dominated culture and patriarchy. They did not have any kinds of rights, and they were neglected and mistreated by man. Women were confined to the domestic sphere, while public life was reserved for men. Even in the early 20th century, women could neither vote nor hold elective office in Europe and in most of the United States. The struggle for gaining social, political as well as economic status and welfare was not an easy task for women. They had first to break down the cultural burden that the patriarchal society imposed on them. Indeed, they had to fight the whole society with its cultural norms and male dominance, then to change minds and mentalities.

Feminist writers use literature as a weapon to express and impose their ideologies. It is the mirror through which experiences of oppressed women all over the world are reflected. Feminist literature refers to fiction and non-fiction works written by women. It emerged in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Its basic motive as an ideology is to end gender inequality and establish a more gender sensitive society. As such, feminism focuses on the

values of “equality, self-development, individual achievement, and freedom from restraint on the one hand, and the actual norms in male preference, discriminatory treatment, and restriction of women’s development, self-expression and activity on the other” (Maren Lockwood Cardon, 172). Feminist narratives expose and denounce patriarchy which position men as the absolute authority in a society while females are subordinate and inferior to males wherever in the family and society. (Rongqiong 454).

Feminism evolved through three waves or phases. The First wave Feminism began from the mid-nineteenth century to the early twentieth century. This wave was concerned with equal rights for men and women, with a focus on suffrage, employment opportunities and the right for education. Discussions about women's right to vote and participation in politics led to an examination of the differences between men and women as they were at that time. Some feminists claimed that women were morally superior to men, and so their presence in the civic sphere would improve public behaviour and the political process. A major text that influenced the first wave is Mary Wollstonecraft’s *A Vindication of Women’s Rights* (1792), written in the wake of the French revolution. In this book she made the first consistent critique of the social and political systems that relegated women to an inferior position. She demanded equality and better education for women arguing that the educational system at that time deliberately trained women to be frivolous and incapable. Wollstonecraft suggested women being wives and mothers had a huge influence on society, so an educational system that allowed girls the same advantages as boys would result in women who would be not only exceptional wives and mothers but also effective workers in many professions and such change would benefit the whole society.

Another seminal text in this period is Simone De Beauvoir’s treatise *The Second Sex* (1949) which is considered as classic of the feminist theory. This book outlines the existing sexual differences and how this is related to socio-economic conditions. Above all, it was a

critique about male dominance in society and its central idea is that women have always and are still considered a "second sex" in relationship to men.

The “Other” is another important key term in feminist literary criticism. It refers to alienated women who are under control of other people or surroundings. Beauvoir claims in her book that femininity is not inherent but a social construct developed through the long process of socialization. According to her a woman is not born but made into women (one is not born a woman but becomes one) through the process of socialization which is predominately male centric and that has made women inferior to men. De Beauvoir contends that society considers men to be the ideal toward which women should aspire. De Beauvoir asserts that for feminism to move forward, this attitude must be set aside (De Beauvoir).

As regards the second wave of feminism, it began in the 1960s and continued into the 90s in the context of the anti-war and civil rights movements, black power movement and liberation movements. These movements demanded the rights of “oppressed” groups including, working class, Blacks and women. Second wave feminism did not only fight for women’s liberation from domesticity but also stressed their political and economic contributions.

With her book *The Feminine Mystique* (1963), Betty Friedan (1921-2006) broke new ground by exploring the idea of women finding personal fulfilment outside of their traditional roles. She also helped advance the women's rights movement as one of the founders of the National Organization for Women (NOW). In this period, sexuality and reproductive rights were dominant issues, and much of the movement's energy was focused on passing the Equal Rights Amendment to the Constitution guaranteeing social equality regardless of sex.

Feminism began in the early 1990s responding to perceived failures of the second wave feminism, is known as “third wave feminism”. This wave often criticized the second

wave feminism for its lack of attention to the differences among women due to race, ethnicity class, nationality and many other factors. They argued that the second wave over-emphasized experiences of middle-class white women, neglecting women of other classes especially black women. Third wave feminism examines issues related to women's lives on an international basis. Schneiders describes the third wave feminism as a movement of liberation: "this movement is concerned not simply with the social, political, and economic equality of women with men but with a fundamental imagination of the whole of humanity in relation to whole of reality, including non-human creation" (98). The third wave also noticed the appearance of many writers and scholars who wanted to achieve total equality between women and men. Among those writers, there was Judith Butler who through her books like "*Gender Trouble*" (1990) and "*Bodies That Matter*" (1993) tried to discuss and criticize unfair rules put by the governments and some anti-feminism organizations. There are also some other literary works worth mentioning like "*The Vagina Monologues*" written by Eve Ensler.

The idea of feminism was able to raise awareness mainly for woman and to build her identity as well. Feminism was not only a way to make women take back their rights and achieve equality and freedom; but also a way of pushing them to work on their real identities. This idea was able also to build woman culture and interest in many things like literature, poetry, politics and religion...In fact, the idea of equality and woman identity was welcomed by women writers. We can deduce the feminist movement fights for women's rights and that feminist writers denounce the ideology based on the dominance of patriarchy and the subjugation of *Jacinthe Noire* and *Jasmine*. In fact the novels portray the protagonist Reine and Jasmine two immigrants suffer from alienation and struggle for their identity and emancipation in male dominated environments.

II. History of Feminist literature in Algeria and India

1. Feminist Literature in Algeria

The history of the feminist movement in Algeria can be considered in four different periods, during the French colonisation, after the French colonisation, during the civil war of the 90s' and finally from the 2000s' to present days.

During the French colonization which lasted around a century and half, women were the guardians of traditions and cultural values; they were the cement that kept the society strong. When the French colonist realized the importance given to women they started a policy of assimilation of the Algerian society by raping Algerian woman. The writer Bennoune reports the General Montaignac's letter to his mistress "in a letter you asked me what happens to the Algerian women we capture; some we keep as hostages and the rest are auctioned to the troops like animals [...] the most hideous thing is that the women were actually killed after being dishonored" (40). Raping Algerian women was not a way of punishing them but a way of dishonoring Algerian men who considered that their honor was depending on women. As a consequence, raped women were rejected by their families and excluded from the society. Franz Fanon explains how the French tried to dominate culturally the Algerian society through harming its women: "if we want to hit the Algerian society in its deep contexture, in its resistance strategies, we must start to conquer the women; we must go and find them behind the veils under which they conceal themselves and in the houses where the men hide them" (19).

It is in these conditions that between 1943 and 1979 that the UFA (Union des Femmes d'Algérie) and the AFMA (Association des Femmes Musulmanes Algériennes) were created. They were the first feminist organization created in Algeria. They deplored the miserable condition of Algerian women and suggested possible solutions such as education among rural

and urban girls (Salhi 115). Since then many women joined the ranks of the ALN (Armée de Libération Nationale) and participated in huge numbers to the liberation war that started in 1954. As the writer Zakia Daoud states “Algerian women won their rights by their participation in the war” (141). By participating to the war women did not only break the French colonizer’s domination but also the patriarchal chains of the traditional Algerian society.

On July 5th, 1962 Algeria finally got its independence after more than a century of French occupation. Women’s efforts and contribution in the independence war were hardly recognized. A woman who participated in the war explains: “we were all equal in the war – it was afterward that our citizenship was taken from us.”(Turshen 893) Henceforth women thought that the chains of conservatism and traditions they broke by participating in the war would never be brought back. However, the Algerian society was not ready for such a change, on the contrary, now that the French colonizer is no more in Algeria, things could get back to their places, traditions could be brought back as Zahia Smail Salhi states:

Interestingly enough, the roles of women were seen at the top of the list of things that should be restored to their original places [...] Women were quickly identified as the repositories of these values and the guardians of traditions and customs, all fundamentally important components of the Algerian national identity. (116)

In 1962 the first government of independent Algeria, led by Ben Bella, included women rights in its program by creating the UNFA (Union Nationale des Femmes Algériennes). The union held its first manifestation in March 8th of the year 1965, with the

participation of almost 6000 women. Slowly women continued gaining influence in the Algerian society thanks to the access to education. In 1984, under Islamists pressure, the government created a family code which was clearly reducing women's rights. Zahia Smail Salhi explains that "in short, the family code is a piece of legislation that decrees men's superiority and codifies women's subordination. The code makes women minors under the law, treats them as non-citizens and defines their role primarily as daughters, mothers or wives" (119).

After that, during the early 1990s Algeria entered a dark era of terrorism and Islamism. This era badly affected the Algerian society especially women who were the first enemy of the Islamists. Turshen Meridith asserts that women were "targets and pawns in the power struggles between the Islamists and the government." (897). In a climate of terror the FIS (Front Islamique du Salut) forbade women to go out without a veil or even to work; women "do not have the right to work outside home, become political leaders, or participate in sports. They should not wear makeup, perfume, fitted clothes, or mingle with men in public" (Turshen 898). Many women disobeying these orders was killed, beaten, tortured or raped. Women, even if they were victims, were believed that they had brought shame and dishonor upon their male family members (Rohloff 18). The FIS, in 1994, announced a commandment which "legalized the killing of girls and women not wearing the Hijab (veil)" (Turshen 898) In 2000, after the end of the civil war that caused the death of over 200 000 persons, women were still facing one major issue which was the "government's failure to recognize the 2,029 women who survived rape by terrorists [...] as legal victims of terrorism." (Turshen 903)

After the decade of horror from 1990 to 2000 in Algeria, women started seeing many changes and improvements in the Algerian society. In 2004-2005 many reforms were brought to the family code of 1984 in favor of women. Zahia Smail Salhi indicates: "the decade of terrorist violence was a decade of profound social changes in Algeria. While many would

have thought women would have been intimidated and left the public sphere, on the contrary, they have occupied many new and non-customary positions.” (122).

Nowadays, although women have made considerable progress through history, and even though they proved their importance and contributions in the progress of the nation, the Algerian society remains a patriarchal one. This is why women still fight every day for their rights and total freedom until true equality with men is achieved.

In 1947, the first Algerian novel written by a woman in French saw the day thank to Taos Amrouche who published her first book *Jacinthe Noire*. In the same year, Djamila Debeche published her first book *Leila Jeune Fille d'Alger*. José Santos notes that the novels of Taos Amrouche didn't receive much attention because: “[...] de facture plutôt classique, [ils] ont été édités dans les années cinquante, au moment où la vague du Nouveau Roman faisait rage, et sont passés, peut-être en partie pour cette raison, relativement inaperçus, n'étant d'ailleurs pas paru chez les grands éditeurs.” Akila Kizzi analyzed that both Taos Amrouche and Djamila Debeche were at the beginning of their writing as almost all women at that time, marginalized because of their origins, to put it in her words:

Au regard de ce qui a été dit sur le travail pionnier de ces deux écrivaines, Djamila Debbèche et Marie-Louise Taos Amrouche, leurs parcours n'étaient pas des plus faciles comme il est de coutume pour tout travail et action pionniers mais encore davantage pour ces deux femmes car exposées à des dominations multiples. Leurs origines n'ont pas toujours été des facteurs positifs en France et leurs engagements politiques et féministes n'avaient pas reçu et rencontré l'accueil espéré en Algérie. (69)

Kizzi explains the reasons of the late emergence of feminine literature and underlines how much difficult it was for these two writers to publish their books “d'une part, les femmes subissaient le poids des traditions, et de l'autre les affres de la colonisation et l'appauvrissement économique et mental auxquels elles étaient soumises. Les femmes étaient doublement colonisées [...]” (40). It could be deduced that it is through Taos Amrouche that the Algerian feminine novel in French was born, she remains until today a symbol of courage and determination to defend her culture and her positions.

Few years later, during the outbreak of the war of liberation (1954), women's literature in Algeria saw new female figures such as Assia Djebbar with her novels: *La Soif* (1957) and *les Impatients* (1958). After that and starting from 1970s, other women appeared in the Algerian literary scene such as Assia Dridi with *God et Trinité* (1973), Aicha Lemsine with *La Chrysalide* (1976) and many others. The 1980s witnessed the appearance of other new names and an increase in writings by women, for example: Nadia Ghalem with *Les Jardins de Cristal* (1981), Farida Belghoul's *Georgette* (1986), Assia Djebbar again with *Femmes d'Alger dans leur Appartement* (1980), *l'Amour, La fantasia* (1985). Later on, during the year of 1990 many women's writings' saw the day: Malika Mokeddem wrote *Hommes qui Marchent* (1990), Ferrudja Kessas published *A Beur's Story* (1990) and Nina Bouraoui wrote *Voyeuse Interdite* (1991).

Women's writing continued rising in Algeria until today. Thus, literature remains a way of fighting and emancipation as Taos Amrouche writes in her book *Carnets Intimes* “Ecrire! Oui, c'est bien le seul exutoire [...] Il faut écrire. Voilà ce que je doit me rappeler” (371-375).

2. Feminist Literature in India

In the Indian context we can see the rise of feminism and women's movement in three distinct phases, the pre-independence era, the era of struggle and war, then the post-

independence era. The first phase began in the mid-nineteenth century, when the British male colonizers began to speak out against the social evils of Sati practice (Geetanjali Gangoly). The colonial intervention in India during the 19th century was not confined only to the market or polity, but it was penetrating into the areas of the Indian culture and society. Consequently, this affected the transformation of the social fabric of Indian society.

In the pre-independence era, the Women's Movement began as a social reform movement in the 19th century. At this time, the western idea of liberty, equality and fraternity was being imbibed by the educated elite through the study of English and the contact with the West. This western liberalism was extended to the Women's question and was translated into a social reform movement (Rekha Pande). This social reform presented a threat to the Indian society, a threat that pushed the Indian intellectual reformers to react in order to preserve their values and culture.

The second phase starts from 1915 to Indian independence, when Gandhi incorporated women's movements into the Quit India movement, and independent women's organizations began to emerge. During this period struggle against colonial rule intensified, and nationalism became the pre-eminent cause. Gandhi legitimized and expanded Indian women's public activities by initiating them into the non-violent civil disobedience movement, believing that women by nature were non-violent and hence would be more successful in carrying out his programs of picketing and non-cooperative movement. However, women in this struggle were only there in supportive roles, the leadership was assumed only by males, women could assume it only if the men were dead or in prison. In this context, Radha Kumar argued that even the Indian women joined the struggle against colonialism, but they were only encouraged to participate by leaders like Gandhi. However, their work in the struggle was just an extension of their domestic work. Very few women were allowed to join the front ranks with men, and the ones that did spoke of the isolation they felt at times (4).

The third phase starts from post-independence India, when the focus was on demanding fair treatment of women in the work force and right to political parity. This phase started by a period of Accommodation from 1947 to 1960's where many changes started to occur within the Indian constitution; bills were added and others were revised. This led to the introduction of the franchise and civic rights of women in the Indian constitution. The period from the late sixties has been marked by economic crisis and stagnation, rising prices, increasing landlessness and generalized discontent both in rural and urban areas. Women were more affected by this crisis than men.

In 1974, the official Status of Women Commission published their report, *Towards Equality*, on women's low and ever decreasing status in Indian society. It focused attention on the fact that, despite much progressive social legislation and constitutional guarantees, women's status had indeed not improved much. (Women in India - A Country Paper).

Since 1975, there has been a steady increase in the number of women's welfare organizations in India. There were various issues that the Women's movement took up during this period against Liquor, missing girl children, violence against women, to name a few. Even women's representation in the media has been taken up by the Women's movement.

From mid to late 1980s, women's groups concentrated on providing services to individual women to enable them to gain advantages already given in law. Agnes Flavia stresses, "This is significantly different from the welfare dispensed by earlier women's groups. The earlier groups sought amelioration; the new groups sought recognition and realization of rights" (19-30). To conclude, one can notice that there has been a progressive increase in the plan outlays over the last six decades of planned development to meet the needs of women and children in India. Indian women have been so far studied by many

Western as well as Indian writers. But Indian women have always been handicapped by forgetting about their upbringing and their social and cultural background.

All these attitudes were combined to bring about the renaissance in 19th century India. Antonia Navarro holds, “The majority of these novels depict the psychological suffering of the frustrated housewife, this subject has matter often been considered superficial compared to the depiction of repressed and oppressed lives of women of the lower classes” (21). Reformers supported female education in India, believing that social evils could be eliminated through the education of women. Indian women writers gave a new dimension to the Indian literature, in that they expressed all their feelings by way of art and literature.

The rise of nationalism in India proved opportune for women writers because in the name of nationalism, they could voice out the dormant oppression that had long been suppressed. Gandhi was totally opposed to gender discrimination. He did not like Indian society’s preference for a boy and general neglect of a girl child. Many common women came out to join in the national struggle for freedom, freedom not only from British rule but also for freedom of expression within the country.

During the pre-independence era, the impact of Western civilization, the rise of political consciousness, and the change in society was perceptible. In the meantime, the Indian feminism advanced by the stimuli of Western feminism; however it took slightly different route from that of the West. Feminists’ condition in India is different from that of Western feminism; the Indian society has always been extremely hierarchical. The Indian culture is different if not older than the Western culture; its diversity has direct role to play in the complexity of Indian women. In a country like India, the problems and issues of women are direct outcome of their upbringing since their childhood: “In childhood, a woman should be under her father’s control, in youth under her husband’s and when her husband is dead,

under her sons, she should not have independence...” (George Buhler). Indian women are trained and tamed as to be good women. They do not have any individual identity. They are always seen as playing their roles in according to different relation. Contrary to Indian women, women in western countries are already born to a comfortable atmosphere; they are raised with love freedom.

Since the post-independence era, Indian Literature in English has been growing rapidly both in quantity and quality. It began, through the vibrant contributions by the contemporary Indian writers as competent as the British, American, Australian, Canadian and African literature. The struggle for freedom was voiced in the form of writings. A great number of Indian writings were produced about various ways and forms of oppression they undergo.

The impact of the English Literature reflected in the regional literatures of the subcontinent introducing several important changes in women’s personal and professional life in postmodern India. Miss Madhuri V. Brahmane stated “Prolific Indian female authors in English like Kamala Markandaya, Nayantara Sahgal, Anita Desai, and Shashi Deshpande gave rise to the emergence of feminism in India” (32).

In present days, emancipator women’s writing has arisen sturdily in all Indian languages, seeking to subvert the man-dominated social order, forging revisionary myths and counter-metaphors by women. A large number of writers are in the process of identifying a pattern of problem-solving within the traditional system and sustain an indigenous process of renewal.

III. Taos Amrouche and Bharati Mukherjee as Feminists

1. Taos Amrouche

Taos Amrouche was twenty-two years old when she began writing her first novel *Jacinthe Noire*, written between January 1935 and November 1939. When Taos Amrouche had passed her baccalaureate, she wished to continue her studies of Letters at the University of the Sorbonne in Paris. Her older brother Jean had already settled there and encouraged her in this project despite the financial difficulties of the family. Akila Kizzi explains that Taos Amrouche was not expected to become a writer nor an activist because of the society where she lived, she precises:

Rien ne destinait cette jeune fille à l'écriture ou à la publication, avec sa condition sociale de jeune femme, de classe populaire et de tradition de langue orale kabyle. En effet, prétendre à une carrière d'écrivaine avec autant de stigmates relève presque de l'impossible [...] La situation familiale qui ne la destinait pas à devenir une femme de lettres avait contribué à faire naître chez Taos Amrouche un sentiment de toujours devoir faire plus et mieux pour se dépasser et dépasser son destin familial. (Kizzi 165)

The failure in her studies pushed Taos Amrouche to writing. Thus, despite all the obstacles she encountered, she succeeded where she was not expected to. In an interview with the journalist M'hamed Abdelaoui, Taos Amrouche explains the discrimination she faces and considers that it is precisely this marginalization that pushed her to discover writing. She declares that feminine literature is marginalized. She adds: "écrire, c'est incantatoire, écrire c'est magique, c'est entrer dans le métier à tisser". (17-18)

Moreover, Taos Amrouche is considered as a pioneer of a certain Algerian feminism, which will serve as a starting point of the Maghrebian and Algerian feminist thought. As Tassadit Yacine shows: “Nous nous fonderons sur la quête de soi chez Taos Amrouche qui figure parmi les premières femmes à avoir osé lever le voile de l’intimité grâce à l’écriture en langue française, ce qu’assurément la sienne interdisait.” (10). Similarly, Akila Kizzi also states that Taos Amrouche is the pioneer of the North African feminism, she precises:

On peut aussi considérer Marie-Louise Taos comme pionnière d'un certain féminisme algérien naissant, basé essentiellement sur une objectivisation de soi mais qui servira comme un point de départ de la pensée féministe maghrébine et algérienne[...] Ses écrits faisaient office d'une secousse pour réveiller les consciences et alerter sur situation des femmes algériennes écrasées par le poids des traditions et dénonçant l'emprise du patriarcat sur elles. (172)

Taos Amrouche stated at the outset in the first pages of her first novel *Jacinthe Noire*: “Que d'autres écrivent; que d'autres nient le pouvoir des mots et les disent vains. Je veux parler”. She had manifested her will and her powerful desire to speak and to assume her existence as a woman. Tassadit Yacine states about Taos’s feminism:

[...] Taos va encore plus loin dans sa quête de l’amour, un amour absolu qu’elle revendique comme un droit, un droit à assumer pleinement sa féminité dans toute sa réalité. Ce qui pour l’époque était une formidable avancée vers un féminisme politique au sens large. [...] L’écriture de Taos est une véritable catharsis qui renvoie les femmes à leur sensualité et à l’assomption de leur féminité, combat suprême pour une égalité des sexes. (163-164)

In addition to her work as a writer, in which she denounced the weight of Maghrebian traditions on the status of women, Taos Amrouche was also one of the rare women to sing in public her ancestors songs. Moreover, she animated radio broadcasts since the 1950s. She resisted in her own way by using the radio as a political platform to express herself and make the word of women in general and that of Maghrebian women exist. Through a radio show she hosted on France culture in the 1960s under the title *Étoile de chance*, she wanted to inscribe women's voices in history and pay tribute to her older feminist sisters. On May 9th, 1962, Taos Amrouche received Edmée De La Rochefoucauld, a first-wave feminist, writer and biographer. Taos Amrouche opened the program by addressing her guest of the day:

Edmée de La Rochefoucauld, à vous qui prisez tant la réserve dans l'éloge, à vous qui savez allier merveilleusement dans vos écrits la discrétion et la ferveur, je voudrais rendre ici hommage au nom de toutes les femmes de France, et même du monde, car nous vous devons toutes, de vous payer un tribut d'admiration non seulement pour l'ardente lutte que vous avez menée en faveur de l'émancipation de la femme française et son accession aux droits politiques mais aussi pour votre attitude exemplaire dans la vie. (Kizzi 172)

In addition to writing, Taos Amrouche had used the radio as a platform to give voice to women who carried out feminist actions to defend those who had no visibility. Taos Amrouche did not know resignation, she overcame the difficulties of being a woman writer and desiring to change the conditions exerted by patriarchal domination nourished by

colonialism. Taos Amrouche had multiplied her activities as an intellectual and as a woman convinced by justice and equality between women and men.

2. Bharati Mukherjee

Bharati Mukherjee is one of the well-known feminist writers and novelists whose writings focus on major issues of women. She devoted her whole career to defend women; in fact, her novels reflect her thoughts and ideas on women. She analyses the various social issues through feministic approach in her works. Bharati Mukherjee's fiction focuses on the concept of migration, expatriates experiences of alienation, position of new immigrants, as well as Indian women and their struggle. She uses women characters in her writings to present the spatial and temporal dimensions among different cultures. She writes also about the experiences of immigrants in her novels and short stories.

Many critics have recognized Mukherjee as a feminist writer, as she writes basically on issues related to female gender, mainly those women who emigrate to foreign countries and faced cultural shocks, identity transformation, and racial tensions there. Her writings have a direct goal, for she writes in order to bring a change within the form of society. In an interview made by Francisco Collado Rodriguez, Bharati Mukherjee responded to a question related to her intentions through her writings as follow: "well, I think that I'm divided in my personality. There is a part of me that is the writer who is thinking of finding the most appropriate narrative strategies for that story or that character... but then there is also another part of me that is politicized citizen who cares very much about carrying out a mission, about social reform".

Bharati Mukherjee is a postcolonial, contemporary feminist writer, who has presented her themes of cultural conflicts in different dimensions; she has depicted problems faced by Indian women immigrants who moved to America. In a journal article entitled "*Social*

critique in Bharati Mukherjee's Jasmine", Arjun Dubey, and Shradha Srivastava have recognized that Bharati Mukherjee in her creative career of more than thirty years, has been engaged in redefining the idea of feminism and diaspora as a process of gain, contrary to conventional perspective that depicts immigration as a condition of terminal loss mainly for women immigrants. For instance her fiction woman is always strong, assertive, and determined. Furthermore, her fiction convinces that gender is a category open to variation and changes according to place time and situation. Most of her novels present the issues related to women and their identity in the society; her female characters are typical representatives of young women in third world countries, who cherish their dreams of emigration to America in pursuit of higher education, higher wages, and finally to settle there permanently. Mukherjee's depiction of women and their different relationship portrays the dominance of patriarchal practices of traditional society and their liberation and empowerment from this set status; in fact, all her novels are celebrations of womanhood.

Conclusion

This chapter has introduced the feminist theory and movement and stressed on its waves and its development through time. After that, in order to understand the importance of the two novels namely *Jacinthe Noire* and *Jasmine*, this chapter retraced the emergence of feminism and its development in both Algeria and India and explained the birth of feminine literature in both the Algerian and the Indian societies. This chapter also shed the light on Taos Amrouche's and Bharati Mukherjee's fights for women's rights in order to show their contributions in their societies.

Chapter Three:

Alienation and Quest for Identity in

Jacinthe Noire and Jasmine

Introduction

Through their works, Taos Amrouche and Bharati Mukherjee tried to raise the voice of women against these male dominating societies. In fact, their writings are a reflection of their own personality through which they show a women's fight for their own rights in different situations. This chapter will be devoted to the analysis of the main themes in the novel of *Jacinthe Noire* and *Jasmine* namely alienation and the quest for identity. We will examine how the two protagonists suffered as women in the migrated countries from alienation and cross cultural dilemma. Moreover, we will explore the quest for identity in both novels, explaining how the main characters undergo identity transformations in order to fit in the society.

I. Analysis of the Protagonists' Alienation

1. Reine's Alienation in France

Taos Amrouche's *Jacinthe Noire* offers an occasion for studying the point of view of a woman who, through her own experiences, suffered from exile. The starting point for Reine is her experience of exile based on a double rejection. Indeed, on the one hand, her Christianity was not understood by the Kabyle society, which obliged the Amrouche family to live and die in exile. On the other hand, despite her attachment to the French language and culture, her attachment to her Kabyle origins and identity provoked another rejection from her French mates when she first went to France for studies, an experience on which *Jacinthe Noire* is based.

Taos Amrouche was already marginalized and alienated from the Kabyle culture because of her conversion to Christianity then her exile with her family in Tunisia then her exile in France. Yet, she rejected assimilation and alienation in of her novels. She used the

autobiographical style that she had undertaken in *Jacinthe Noire*, in order to relate through writing her own life and the experiences that made it up.

Jacinthe Noire is about the first experience of the author herself in exile as a student in a Parisian boarding school. Despite the protagonist Reine, who represents Taos Amrouche herself, efforts and determination to adapt herself to that new milieu, she is confronted to the racism and intolerance from her French mates and the director of the boarding school. They rejected her for being a Kabyle woman and tried to alienate and assimilate her to the French culture and identity, as mentioned many times in the novel:

- Oui c'est une créature bien étrange! [...]

-Une seule d'entre nous me déroute : Reine, cette Reine de race mystérieuse, de sang Africain [...] Je la trouve dangereuse. (59-60)

Here, this “racial” difference is evoked multiple times. Because Reine is of a different origin, she is incomprehensible, and therefore disturbs Paula one of the boarding school girls', who considers Reine as a dangerous element. Therefore, from the very beginning of the novel, Reine didn't feel comfortable in Paris. She expressed her sadness for leaving her country, her parents as well as her fiancé Jacques. On her first day in Paris, she confessed to Marie-Thérèse that she didn't like Paris:

La semaine dernière a été fertile en émotion : je me suis séparée de mes parents, j'ai laissé mon fiancé et me voici en plein calme soudain. J'ai quitté mon pays ensoleillé pour ce Paris que je n'ai jamais aimé. Et me voici dans

cette maison que je ne connais pas davantage. J'éprouve un peu d'impression de vivre en suspens, de vivre entre le ciel et l'eau." (23)

Reine was feeling herself from the first day exiled and lonely. In addition to this, she felt that she was all the time watched and that no one wanted her in the boarding school, as she explains it to the narrator Marie-Thérèse "[...] je suis le sujet que l'on étudie, elles sont légion à m'épier et à me juger. Je ne leur inspire pas confiance." (130). This rejection and hatred made Reine feel more lonely and exiled and made her regret migrating to France. Her mates at the boarding school rejected her for her origins that she showed proudly, she fought and resisted in front of the oppression she faced and the alienation that her mates tried to impose on her. In many discussions Reine made reference to either Tunisia or Kabylia. She often felt very nostalgic of her countries because she was suffering from exile. In a discussion with Marie-Thérèse, Reine expressed her regret and sadness for being rejected from her natal country Kabylia:

-Nous n'avons plus de village. Les maisons et les tombes tout nous rejette. Notre pays est enfermé en notre âme. Qui nous le volera, ce pays idéal à l'image du vrai, de celui qui nous a repoussées ? [...] Il est cruellement beau, hérissé de monts et de rochers impitoyables, creusé de ravins amers. Pas une touffe de verdure, pas une parcelle de terre grasse. Mais il baigne dans une lumière limpide et bleutée, une lumière d'au-delà. [...] Nous l'avons déserté, mais voyez comme il se venge: il ne nous reconnaît plus.

Des larmes roulaient sur ses joues creuses. (197- 198)

In this part of her evocation of Kabylia, Reine explains her exile by the fact that her family was rejected because of its conversion to Christianity. The fact of having been expelled from Kabylia accentuates the impression that it is a Paradise now lost. However Reine seems to insist above all on economic exile, explaining that her family left to live, that is to say not to die of hunger “pour vivre, Marie-Thérèse, pour vivre! Nous pensions pouvoir étouffer en nous la voix du pays, la voix de la mort. Mais ce pays auquel nous avons voulu échapper, il est en nous. Comment échapper à ce qui est en soi-même, et à ce que l’on aime inexplicablement ?” (197-198). Reine considered Kabylia as a part of her Being, a part that was impossible for her to forget or hate. The sadness that Reine felt in her Parisian exile was amplified especially by the conviction that her family has always been exiled, and from there comes her pain and suffer.

Although she missed her parents and the country she had left, Reine kept trying to find harmony among the French girls who either ignored or humiliated her. This is what pushed her to often express her deep regret for having left her people: “je fais partie de la catégorie de ceux qui se sont séparés des leurs, qui ont rejeté la foi de leurs ancêtres pour suivre le Christ. La solitude des êtres qui me ressemblent... est particulièrement pesante. C'est une solitude pathétique, absolue.” (267)

Reine through the whole novel could not adapt to the way of living of her mates at the boarding school. Even her mates noticed that she had no place anywhere, as Adrienne tells “que Reine ne soit pas à sa place dans cette pension, hélas, ce n’est que trop vrai. Un hasard l’a amenée parmi nous. Mais aura-t-elle jamais sa place dans le monde?... elle sera toute sa vie inadaptée” (323). Reine was exiled from both Kabylia and Tunisia and she could not feel home anywhere else.

2. Jasmine's Alienation in the United States

“The immigrants in alien lands are often recognized in great dismay, the loneliness of their condition. The uncertain hazards of new lands expose them to perilous risks. In such a helpless condition, they needed to befriend, for unaided, they knew they were doomed” (T. Ramesh Babu 23). The situations cited above occur in Bharati Mukherjee's novel *Jasmine*. The novel *Jasmine* (1989) written by Bharati Mukherjee depicts an immigrant's journey. With that journey, the reader is shown the struggles that the immigrant woman is faced with having to adapt to an ever changing situation.

The novel *Jasmine* starts with an astrologer prediction of the protagonist's widowhood and exile, “Lifetimes ago, under a banyan tree in the village of Hasnapur, an astrologer cupped his ears—his satellite dish to the stars—and foretold my widowhood and exile. I was only seven then, fast and venturesome, scabrous-armed from leaves and thorns” (1). At the age of 17 the astrologer's prediction becomes true, Jasmine becomes a widow after her husband's murder, and then she flees to America and becomes an exiled illegal woman immigrant. Jasmine leaves for America on forged papers knowing not what future holds in store for her. She is skeptical of life, in the unknown country. “What country? What continent? We pass through wars, through players. I am hungry for news, but the discarded papers are in characters or languages I cannot read” (101).

This novel is considered as a self-discovery journey more than immigration for pursuing a goal. In fact, the entire novel deals with the issue of exile and the fact of being an emigrant woman. Jasmine shares the ambition of her husband, for instance, she looks forward going to America, a land of opportunities. However, even this dream gets shattered by the murder of Prakash just before his departure. She decides to go to America and fulfill Prakash's mission and perform Sati. Once in America Jasmine decides not to perform sati

cult, instead she continues her trip in the US like a modern American woman “I had planned it all so perfectly, to lay out the suit, to fill it with twigs and papers, to light it, than to lie upon it in the white cotton sari I had brought from home” (118). Upon her arrival to America, jasmine gets raped by Half Face, the captain of the motel in which she sailed. After this incident, Jasmine turns to violence in order to express the conflict she is experiencing; she stabs Half-Face to death:

I began to shiver. The blade need not be long, only sharp, and my hand not strong, only quick. His eyes fluttered open even before I felt the metal touch his throat, and his smile and panic were nearly instantaneous. I wanted that moment when he saw me above him as she had last seen me, naked, but now with my mouth open, pouring blood, my red tongue out. I wanted him to open his mouth and start to reach, I wanted that extra hundredth of a second when the blade bit deeper than any when I jumped back as he jerked forward, slapping at his neck while blood, ribbons of bright blood, rushed between his fingers (105).

Through this act, Jasmine finds the strength to continue to live and vows to start a new life in America. Consequently, she lived the motel and started her path in the US, “I buttoned up the jacket and sat by first fire. With the first streaks of dawn, my first full American day, I walked out the front drive of the motel to the highway and began my journey, traveling light” (121).

In America, even when jasmine goes through the worst experiences of her life, she is able to come through the obstacles and attains self-awareness and overthrows her past life. She repositions her stars in the adopted country. At every step of her life, Jasmine is a winner,

she does not allow her troubles and struggles to obstruct her progress in life and she is finding a place for herself in the society. In other words, she is a true feminist who fights every challenge in life to establish herself in the society.

Jasmine has broken away from the shackles of caste, gender and family. She has learnt to live not for her husband or for her children but herself. Jasmine is a survivor, a fighter and an adaptor. She figures against unfavorable circumstances, comes out a winner and carves out a new life in an alien country. Jasmine is also a rebel and revolutionary woman. She protests against Indian stereotypical patriarchy defined concept of womanhood. She revolts against the conservation Indian attitude towards poor widows who are treated like non entities.

The protagonist of this story migrated to the United States after her husband got killed. Since it was her husband's dream, she wanted to make it true and to commit Sutte while burning her husband's suit in America in order not to spend the rest of her life as a widow with a white sari; as it is consistent in the Indian traditions. This gruesome plan inspires her to travel to the U.S. Jasmine leaves for America on forged papers knowing not what future holds in store for her. She is skeptical of life, in the unknown country, "What country? What continent? We pass through wars, through players. I am hungry for news, but the discarded papers are in characters or languages I cannot read" (101).

Jasmine's will to defeat her destiny and what the astrology told her years ago, about her widowhood and exile, gave her strength. Since it is known that America is the land of opportunities, jasmine decides to bring her freedom back and escape from the patriarchal Indian society through discovering herself. However, this was not an easy process for her. It carries with it an intense struggle with the self, with tradition, with the alienation, with the wonders and horrors of a new culture accompanied by growing aspirations, hopes and desires.

Emigration to America gives different experiences to the immigrants; some of them give up their fate whereas some others emerge as survivors. Jasmine is a clear instance of a survivor. Jasmine tries not to be a victim of the feudalistic society in Husnapur and after her husband's death embarks on a journey to America. Even though raped by Half-Face, she moves on and prepares herself to embrace life in America. In her journey with multiple identities, Jasmine discovers more and more of her and seeks ways to remake herself. This is a positive trait in Jasmine that eventually makes her a successful emigrant.

Jasmine's moves from one place to another, betrays her alienation and bewilderment. She remains very conscious of the fact that she is an outsider in America, an illegal immigrant woman without a passport living among aliens. She is always apprehensive about Americans and she constantly suffers humiliation and disappointments. "This country has so many ways of humiliating and disappointing"(29).

From the beginning of her life Jasmine was struggling to prove and demonstrate that she is not useless. In order to confirm that she is an independent woman, she ran away to get rid of her patriarchal society. On the other hand, she faced alienation and loneliness as an Indian immigrant, which complicated her path for her. In order to survive, Jasmine had to get self-refashion in order to fit in the American society. She battled to Americanize herself, and to appear like an American girl. As she explains at the end of the novel, "I am caught between the promise of America and old-world dutifulness" (240), though presumably, she chooses the "promise of America" by leaving with Taylor at the end of the novel

II. Analysis of the Protagonists' Quest for Identity

1. Reine's Quest for Identity

Taos Amrouche chose to use the autobiographical genre that caused also her marginalization as a woman on the literary level. Indeed, feminine autobiography has too often been considered by masculine criticism as an inferior genre having no place in the literary scene. As a Kabyle woman, colonized and Christianized, she found herself doubly and even triply marginalized. Besides being rejected because of her race, ideology and religion, Taos was also marginalized as a woman writer, because writing was then a domain proper to men.

Taos Amrouche felt the need to write about Kabylia and her identity very early. She experienced nostalgia for her country of origin not only because of her many summers spent in Kabylia with her family, but also through her family tales and songs transmitted by her mother in the Tunisian exile. Exile and writing are deeply connected. Exile causes in Taos Amrouche nostalgia and the need to write, as a consequence, it is exile that pushed Taos to writing, especially about her identity as a Kabyle woman.

In *Jacinthe Noire*, Taos Amrouche makes reference to both her countries, Kabylia and Tunisia. Exile pushed Reine (Taos Amrouche) to get more attached to her identity and her origins. In many discussions with the narrator Marie-Thérèse, Reine expresses her feeling of nostalgia and missing her homes: "Marie-Thérèse, pouvez-vous imaginer qu'il fait beau à Tunis?" (179). Despite the French catholic education she received, Reine was very attached to her Kabyle identity. At the boarding school, when she felt nostalgic, she used to sing ancient Kabyle songs that charmed Marie-Thérèse, as she describes them:

Reine m'envoutait de véritables incantations qui naissaient au profond d'elle-même, et montaient à travers tout son être pour affleurer à ses lèvres [...] Quand Reine exprime sa tendresse pour le pays de ses ancêtres sa voix se voile. Quand elle en dit la beauté sa voix devient rauque, son visage prend comme une expression de supplication [...] Son visage s'éclairait puis s'éteignait sur un accent nostalgique. (25)

In another discussion Reine speaks to Marie-Thérèse about Kabylia as a lost country, which corresponds perfectly to the reality experienced by the Amrouche family from her departure for Tunis in 1910. When nostalgia takes hold of her, Reine feels sad for being rejected from her Kabylia but assumes perfectly that her love for her origins and identity is endless “Nous pensions pouvoir étouffer en nous la voix du pays, la voix de la mort. Mais ce pays auquel nous avons voulu échapper, il est en nous. Comment échapper à ce qui est en soi-même, et à ce que l'on aime inexplicablement ?” (198). Even if she and her family were rejected by their country and society, Reine still assumes her identity as a Kabyle, she expresses her regret of being so far from it and affirms that she will always love it because as she said, Kabylia is a part of her.

Reine stood out among her mates at the boarding school by her attitude and behavior. She shows a strong, unwavering personality assuming perfectly her identity. In many discussions between Reine's mates, they make often reference to her as a 'strange race' for example:

- Qui est-ce ? dit une fille de Jephthé d'un air intrigué.
- C'est Reine, répondit notre directrice d'une voix neutre. Une petite Tunisienne...

- On croirait une Espagnole ! s'exclama une autre.

- Moi, j'ai connu une Russe du Caucase qui lui ressemblait, nous assura une petite institutrice sèche comme la chèvre. (146)

All the girls at the boarding school had already had prejudgment and a kind of racism about Reine for her being a Kabyle North African woman "elle est d'une drôle de race" (269) She was quickly spotted for her rebellion and anti-conformism, despite the Catholic religious education she had received. Perceived as a disturbing element which risks destabilizing the cohesion of the group, her comrade Paula declares: "je crois, dit de sa voix enfantine Paula, qu'elle peut être un élément de désordre dans notre maison. Vous ne trouvez pas ?... Moi, elle m'effraie" (59). Some other girls hated Reine more because of her strong personality and for refusing to submit to their rules "alors vous ne savez pas que Paula, Jeannette, Augusta et Mimi l'ont trahie et livrée à Mlle Anatole? Celles qui détestent Reine sont plus nombreuses que celles qui l'aiment." (321) While others admired her for being herself and assuming her identity, as Marie-Thérèse and Adrienne precise in a discussion after the ouster of Reine:

- C'est inadmissible ! reprit-elle avec indignation. Pourquoi la renvoyer ?

- Parce qu'elle est de nous toute la plus entière, la plus courageuse, la plus vraie, lançai-je tumultueusement.

- Parce qu'elle jure comme une négresse au milieu de femmes blanches. Ajouta Adrienne.

- Mais ce n'est pas une raison ! répondit avec force Madeleine. Nous demandent-on ici d'être autre chose que nous-mêmes ? [...] (322)

Moreover, Mrs. Annathole, Paula and other girls tried to manipulate Reine using Catholicism in order to assimilate her and to make her obey to their way principles and way of living. However Reine resists well to this manipulation as she reports to Marie-thérèse:

- A-t-elle essayé de vous prendre par la main pour vous faire entrer dans le rang ?

- Elle a essayé. Elle m'a parlé de saint Augustin, de saint Thomas d'Aquin avec cette assurance qu'ont presque toutes nos compagnes, cette assurance qui me choque. Elle m'a vanté la vertu de la méditation et de l'obéissance. Je lui ai répondu que nous n'habitons pas le même monde et qu'en dépit d'une éducation chrétienne, je ne différais guère de ma vieille grand-mère, restée musulmane. Je lui ai avoué que j'assistais à la messe avec ferveur, mais comme à un mystère incompréhensible. (176)

It is clear that Reine goes very far in her rejection of a certain Catholicism, since she invokes her family ties with Islam, because it is for her the best way to assume herself, her identity and to show once again proudly her origins. This kind of resistance pushed the director of the boarding school to expel Reine from there because she refused to assimilate her identity. Religion is here used as a place and a source of political power. Taos Amrouche, through Reine, tried to initiate a reflection around religion in order to rationalize it. This reflection gave rise to an awareness of the role of religion on individuals, a fact doubly experienced by Taos Amrouche. First, in Kabylia who rejected her and her family for their conversion to Christianity. Then in Paris, at the boarding school where she was rejected for assuming her identity and for not sharing the same ideology about Christianity.

Taos through Reine kept fighting for the preservation of her identity through rejecting any form of assimilation. *Jacinthe Noire* pushed other women to get out of their silence and initiated them to speak and express their ideas as she did through Reine. In the very first pages of *Jacinthe Noire* and conscious of the importance of the act of writing, Taos Amrouche writes: “que d’autres écrivent; que d’autres nient le pouvoir des mots et les dissent vains. Je veux parler!” (15). It was in fact this power of words that had prompted her to assume herself as a woman. She had manifested her will and her powerful desire to speak.

2. Jasmine’s Quest for Identity

Identity formation is integral to every human being through which a person locates oneself in society. However, in the case of immigrants, many of them undergo identity transformations as part of their adjustments with the host society. Immigrants are always lost between two worlds, the old and the new; the old world being where they once belonged and the new world being where they seek a sense of belonging. In Mukherjee’s novel *Jasmine*, the main protagonist is always searching for identity and her true self began from the day she was born. Jasmine never gave up her harsh childhood memories, she always remembered them. In fact, her childhood memories became the instrument in her fight against fate and her search for self-identity. In her quest for identity, Jasmine passed through various transformations. In fact, she has built an adequate identity to every situation and every struggle she came through in her life, either in India or in America.

The protagonist Jasmine experienced identity transformation first when she was renamed from Jyoti to Jasmine by her husband Prakash:

He wanted to break down the Jyoti I’d been in Husnapur and make me a new kind of city woman. To break off the past, he gave me a new name: Jasmine. He said, you are small and sweet and heady, my Jasmine. You’ll quicken the

whole world with your perfume. Jyoti, Jasmine: I shuttled between identities (77).

After her husband's murder, Jasmine didn't stay as a hopeless widow in Husnapur, instead she went to America, and she started a new life there. Her journey to America is a process of her quest of true self. Jasmine undergoes a metamorphosis during her life in America. There occurs a transformation to her entire personality that enables her to move from being an Indian village girl to a matured and liberated American. Jasmine tried to fit in the American society through her different identities, from Jasmine to Jazzy to Jane. Every name has a certain purpose assigned to it. To her, life can be "like a giant long-playing record with millions of tracks, each of them a complete circle with only one diamond sharp microscopic link to the next life and to the next and only god to hear it all" (127). As far as Jasmine's life is concerned, it becomes evident that not only her names but her sensibility and physique also undergo radical change. There is a remarkable transformation from Jyoti, the silent village girl to the out spoken Jasmine to Jane, the teller of tales.

Reaching America, Jasmine gets raped by the Captain of the ship in which she sailed. She planned to kill herself after this tragic incident, but she could not; instead she killed the man who raped her and burnt him in the motel "It was the murkiness of mirror and sudden sense of mission that stopped me. What if my mission was not yet over?"(117). Jasmine passes from innocence and enacts a radical break suggesting a form of resistance and rebellion. She is intent upon murdering her past because in the opinion of Jasmine, it is the only way to make a new life, "There are no harmless, compassionate ways to remake oneself. We murder who we were so we can rebirth in the image of dream" (29). This quote shows how violently Jasmine's character is ready to recreate herself. She thinks that she needs to get rid of her old identity in order to adapt and become something new.

After Half-Face's murder, Jasmine discards all her luggage and starts her journey on foot. Then, she is rescued by a kind American lady named Lillian Gordon, who provides her with her daughter's clothes. Ms. Gordon gives Jasmine her first American identity by renaming her Jazzy. At this juncture Jasmine undergoes a physical transformation as well, "I checked myself in the mirror, shocked at the transformation, Jazzy in a T-shirt, tight cords and running shoes. I couldn't tell if with the Hasnapuri sidle I'd abandon my Hasnapuri modesty" (133). Lillian advised her: "Let the past make you wary, by all means. But do not let it deform you" (131). With this new American identity and American clothes, Jasmine changes her character in such a way that even her could not believe that it is actually the old Jyoti from Husnapur who is presented in a new American image.

After moving forward in her modern American identity as Jazzy, Jasmine decides to move to Professor Vadhera's household, an Indian professor living in America. Once there, Jasmine's American image takes a step back, she starts to come back to her old widow image that she wants to forget as professor Vadhera, in spite of his education, was an old-fashioned, strict, and conservative man. Some sort of anonymity begins griping Jasmine, as she was not referred to even by a name. Here we find that Jasmine moves from her exciting new American identity to almost anonymity and she feels that her life is stagnated. She finds herself as "a prisoner doing unreal time there". Despite the hardships Jasmine faced in his house, Mr. Vadhera arranges a green card for her. Once she obtains it, she flies to a new terrain.

She asks the help of Lillian Gordon's daughter Kate to arrange a job for her. Thus, Jasmine takes on a new identity and gets a job as a baby-sitter in the house of Taylor and Wylie Hayes. Jasmine's role as a baby-sitter to Duff can be considered as a shifting point in her identity transformation. Here, Taylor calls her Jase another role and identity for Jasmine. "Taylor called me Jase...I like the name he gave me Jase, Jase was a woman who bought herself spangled heels and silk chartreuse pants" (176). In Taylor's house, Jase feels as if she

becomes an American, “I became an American in an apartment on Claremont Avenue across the street from a Barnard College Dormitory. I lived with Taylor and Wylie Hayes for nearly two years. Duff was my child; Taylor and Wylie were my parents, my teachers, my family” (165).

Jasmine gets yet another identity when she moves to Iowa to become the common-law wife of Bud Ripplemeyer, a local banker and mother to their adopted son and later on becomes pregnant with Bud’s child. Bud renames her Jane, thus her Americanization is complete. She becomes a new individual in Iowa where she enjoys her new liberated self and her new role allows for ambition, curiosity, talent and sexuality and she becomes a part of the American society. She feels that she has chosen the life of an immigrant in America and hence her Americanization is genetic “my transformation has been genetic” (222).

In the novel *Jasmine*, Bharati Mukherjee takes up the theme of search for identity. She writes how the female protagonist tries to tackle the problem of loss of culture, and the alienation faced by women immigrants by assuming a new identity in the U.S. Jasmine leaves her country to fulfill her wishes. Once reaching America, she begins to search for self-independence. She struggles hard to achieve it and at last she realizes that self-independence is not to be an Indian or American but it lies in the inner spirit to be at peace with oneself.

In America, even when jasmine goes through the worst experiences of her life, she is able to come through the obstacles and attains self-awareness and overthrows her past life. She repositions her stars in the adopted country. At every step of her life, Jasmine is a winner, she does not allow her troubles and the alienation to obstruct her progress in life, and she is finding a place for herself in the society. In other words, she is a true feminist who fights every challenge in life to establish herself in society.

Conclusion

The works of Taos Amrouche and Bharati Mukherjee interpret the problems and situations faced by emigrant women living outside Algeria and outside India. The problem of self-identity, cross cultural dilemma, alienation, ethnic struggle of diasporic women, isolation and cultural conflict are revealed in their writings through Reine's and Jasmine's fights. In this chapter we have analyzed the themes of alienation and quest for identity in the two novels under study.

General Conclusion

General Conclusion

Gender inequality is a very problematic issue in the 20th century. In many different societies, women's freedom and life have not been improved. Women writers all over the world have become involved in literary works to the extent that the conditions of their lives, as women, have permitted. Our study considers from a feminist approach, the issue of exile, cross cultural identities, and women's emancipation in the context of cultures in Diaspora through the works of Taos Amrouche and Bharati Mukherjee. We have examined how through their writings, these two authors express a memory of the sufferings and desires of oppressed women, in a society that stifles their voice and confine them to the realm of writings. We have considered how the texts of Mukherjee and Taos fit in as a response to the patriarchal practices of fictionalizing the lives of indigenous women. Their writings constitute a site from which they can claim their rights, a site of resistance in the context of cultural oppression. Through these writings, we have examined how issues of gender and exile influence the lives of these authors, and consider their different strategies of resistance to dominant discourses.

The present work has undertaken a comparative study between two novels of two female writers, namely Taos Amrouche's *Jacinthe* and Noire Bharati Mukherjee's *Jasmine*. We have analyzed the two providing themes of the novels alienation due to forced exile, and the quest for identity to show how the two protagonists from two different social environments and two different periods of time experienced the same issues of women race and gender racism, oppression and the quest for identity.

Throughout the first chapter, and in order to better understand their writings, we reviewed the social milieu in which the authors, Taos Amrouche and Bharati Mukherjee lived. We also introduced the historical backgrounds of both the novels *Jacinthe Noire* and *Jasmine*.

Then, we reviewed women conditions in Algeria and in India. First, we showed the impact of the French colonial policy on the conservative Kabyle society such as the establishment of colonial French schools in Kabylia. Then, we reviewed some traditions and cults oppressing women in India like Suttee and Dowries cults. By doing so, we demonstrated that despite the geographical and temporal differences, both Taos Amrouche and Bharati Mukherjee suffered from women oppression and exile which they portrayed in their novels demonstrated by Reine and Jasmine.

The second chapter reviewed the feminist literature by providing its definition as a movement and as a literary theory. Furthermore, it introduced the three waves of feminism and gave the main principles of each wave. Indeed, it depicted the birth and evolution of feminism and feminine literature in both Algeria and India, for the purpose of a better understanding and interpretation of the two novels, *Jacinthe Noire* and *Jasmine*. Additionally, the chapter undertook the feminist thoughts of Taos Amrouche and Bharati Mukherjee in order to show their contributions to their societies and to situate them in the fight for women's rights. All in all, we attempted to make the link between both the authors' experiences in life, their writings and their fights for women's rights.

The third chapter analyzed the major themes of both the novels, namely alienation, women's oppression and the quest for identity. Furthermore, the chapter analyzes the theme of exile revealing how the two protagonists, namely Reine and Jasmine, suffered in the migrated countries from alienation and cross cultural dilemma. In addition, it examines the quest for identity in both the novels, explaining how the main characters undergo identity transformations in order to fit in the society. This final chapter compared between the experiences of the two protagonists Reine and Jasmine in order to show that they passed through the same issues and troubles of exile, assimilation and quest for identity.

Reine and Jasmine experienced the same issue of exile and both suffered from alienation and cross cultural dilemma. In their fight against alienation, they chose to resist and assume their identities through fighting for their origins. Their quest for identity pushes the protagonists to undergo some challenges towards their societies. Both Reine and Jasmine have struggled against their societies to impose their identities as women.

Jacinthe Noire and *Jasmine* reflect the issues faced by Algerian and Indian women emigrant in exile and illustrate the fight led by each one of them in order to save her identity, to resist alienation and to assume herself as a woman in conservative society of Algeria and India. Taos Amrouche and Bharati Mukherjee, through their writings, give voice to oppressed women over the world and have shown an example of resistance despite racism, rejection and oppression that the two protagonists Reine and Jasmine faced.

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Résumé

Ce travail entreprend une étude comparative entre *Jacinthe Noire* de Taos Amrouche et *Jasmine* de Bharati Mukherjee. Notre objectif principal est d'examiner comment les questions de genre et d'exil influencent la vie des protagonistes, et de considérer leurs différentes stratégies de résistance aux discours dominants. À travers une analyse thématique des deux romans, nous tentons de montrer que même si les deux romancières viennent de pays différents, l'Algérie et l'Inde, et utilisent des langues différentes, le français et l'anglais, elles partagent des similitudes liées à la littérature féministe. Nous considérons comment *Jacinthe Noire* et *Jasmine* s'intègrent en réponse aux pratiques coloniales et patriarcales consistant à discriminer et opprimer la vie des femmes autochtones. Ces récits constituent un site à partir duquel ils peuvent revendiquer leurs droits, un site de résistance dans un contexte d'oppression patriarcale et culturelle.

Mots clés: *Jasmine*, *Jacinthe Noire*, littérature féministe, immigration, pratiques patriarcales, oppression culturelle.