

Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research

Mouloud Mammeri University of Tizi Ouzou

Faculty of Letters and Languages

Department of English



**A Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of
Master in English**

Option: Comparative Literature

Subject:

***Emancipation in Buchi Emecheta's In the Ditch(1975) and Assia
Djebar's Loin De Médine(1991).***

Presented by:

Ouafa Djebbar

Board of Examiners:

Dr. BOUTOUCHENT Fadilah, M C B, University Mouloud Mammeri of Tizi-Ouzou ; Chair.

KHOUDI Mohamed Amine, M A A, University Mouloud Mammeri of Tizi-Ouzou; Supervisor.

DALI Leila, M A A, University Mouloud Mammeri of Tizi-Ouzou; Examiner.

Academic year: 2013- 2014

DEDICATIONS

*To my dear parents and to my two sweethearts brothers
Chafik and Ghiles.*

Acknowledgements

I would like to express my gratitude and thanks to my supervisor Mr. Khoudi who provided me with great help to accomplish this modest work. I would like also to thank all my teachers who were always ready to help me all along my Master studies.

Abstract:

This research paper is a comparative study between the two novels “Loin de Médine”(1991), written by the Algerian Francophone author Assia Djebar, and “In the Ditch”(1975) of the Nigerian Anglophone writer Buchi Emecheta. The main purpose of this study focuses on the importance of women’s emancipation that can let them to reach a more civilized status in their societies. In this research, the first step is to introduce the subject with a general overview of women’s situation in the world with reference to some of their eternal actions that marked history. In addition to this, it is necessary to have a clear idea of the two distinct periods of time where the two stories are held. So, the historical background of the two novels is very significant to highlight a strong basis of the study. This comparison concerns the main female characters of both novels; for this purpose the ideas of the feminist author Simone De Beauvoir in her book entitled “The Second Sex” (1953) are suitable to have a convincing analysis. This feminist writer explores many aspects that lead to women’s submission and thinks that it is up to women to get their emancipation, through mainly their access to the working class. This principal idea is shared by the two writers. However, both Assia Djebar and Buchi Emecheta in their novels have a different approach to deal with this main issue, which is the importance of women emancipation. Finally, it is clear that the two African authors seem to have the same objective, which is to correct the previous false perceptions of women by men before the appearance of Islam, and also in the 20th century.

CONTENTS

Table of contents.....	I
Acknowledgments.....	III
Abstract.....	IV
General Introduction.....	1
Method and Materials.	7
The Summery of the Two Novels.....	8
Results.....	11
Chapter One: Historical Background.	
I 1. Assia Djebar's <i>Loin De Médine</i>	10
I 2. Buchi Emecheta's <i>In the Ditch</i>	17
I 3. Conclusion.....	22
I 4 .Notes.....	23
Chapter Two: Brave Women who Challenge their Patriarchal Society	
II.1.The Affinities:	
II.1.1. Introduction.....	29
II.1.2. Adah, Fatima, Oum Hakim: The Warrior Women.....	30
II.1.3. Adah and Aicha: The Educated Women.....	32
II.1.4. Sirin and Carol: The Defenders of the Oppressed Women.....	34
II.1.5. Atika and Adah: The Insubordinate.....	36
II.1.6. Conclusion.....	38
II.2. The Discrepancies:	
II.2.1. Introduction	
II.2.1.1. .Adah, Fatima and Hakim: Women from Different Worlds.....	39
II.2.1.2. Adah and Aicha: Instructed but Diverse.....	40
II.2.1.3. Carol and Sirin: Women Belonging to Different Societies.....	41
II.2.1.4. Adah and Atika: Distinctive Choices.....	42
II.2.1.5. Conclusion.....	43
II.2.1.6. Notes.....	44

Chapter Three: Emancipation in Buchi Emecheta's *In the Ditch* and Assia Djebar's *Loin De Médine*:

III.1. Introduction.....	46
III. 2 Women's Emancipation in Assia Djebar's " <i>Loin De Médine</i> "	47
III. 3. Women's Emancipation in Buchi Emecheta's " <i>In the Ditch</i> "	50
III. 4. Notes.....	56
General Conclusion.....	58
Selected Bibliography.....	64

Introduction:

Starting from the early history, men considered women as being inferior. Their access to higher education and their escape from thin gender roles was not easily surpassed. Men always allocate women only as means to assure their sexual needs. However, during the twentieth century, this unfair women's situation does not remain the same. It was certain that they would ultimately have to revolt.

It is vital to note that women had noticeable contributions in different domains throughout the history of different countries in the world. Apart from their everyday roles of house kippers, women participated in the scientific, political and even revolutionary organizations. As an example of these women, we may allude to Indira Priyadarshini Ghandi, who was the first prime minister in India from 1966 to 1977. We may also mention the heroines of the Algerian War for Independence, during the French colonization. For instance, the legendary war leader against the French colonizers the Berber woman, Lala Fatma Nsoumer, and Jamila Bouhired, who are both of them nowadays viewed all over the world as idols of the Algerian war of liberation. These women suffered a lot during the war; they scarified their life and their youth as well as men, so that their country would be liberated from the ruthless French colonization, and that the future Algerian generations will live in an independent and free country.

Women must live their emancipation, because it is both necessary and required to have the right to direct their lives, and to change the social institutions that contribute to their submission. Women started to express themselves through writing books, essays or even articles in journals, either about their personal lives or about others women's experiences. This movement is called "Feminism". Indeed, the great "feminists" who fight for the women's rights have always insisted that they worked for the interest of women all around the world. Thus, the feminist movement is considered as being a humanist movement. Some of its

representatives are reformers, others revolutionaries, but practically all of them worked for an improved, more equitable, and more humane world.

Among the most known feminist thinkers, we may refer to Simone De Beauvoir, Julia Kristeva, and many others. Much can be learned from their experiences. They often received scorn, persecution, but also won admiration, sustain, and triumph. Progressively, they achieved many steps towards their goals.

After the publication of their two novels, Assia Djébar's "*Loin De Médine*" and Buchi Emecheta's "*In the Ditch*", the two writers received a large bulk of criticism. In the one hand, Djébar's novel "*Loin De Medine*" has been studied by many scholars from many perspectives. For instance, In the study of Briana Belciug entitled "*La figure de Fatima ou la antigone musulmane*"¹ (2006), Briana studies the character of "Fatima", the daughter of the prophet Mohamed, as being the voice of all Muslim women during the emergence of the Islam religion. Moreover, it shows that the novel of Assia Djébar explores the important role of women during the golden age of Islamic era. In addition to this, Rachel Van Devenner writes an article in the Canadian magazine *Voix plurielles*², about Djébar's novel which stipulates that the author of the novel manages to illustrate the power of the feminine voice, that contribute significantly to help the Prophet Mohamed in his mission of propagating the new religion Islam. Moreover, the novel of Assia Djébar "*Loin De Médine*" is studied by Hannan Elayed in her work entitled "*Représentations littéraires du sacré dans le roman maghrébin de langue française*"³. Elayed in her work makes an interdisciplinary learning. she explores how Driss Chraïbi's "*L'Homme du Livre*" (1995), Assia Djébar's "*Loin de Médine*" (1991), and Anissa Boumediène's "*La fin d'un monde*" (1991) deals with a particular historical moments, during the first appearance of the Islam religion. The author also explores the importance of writing which deals with the reconstruction of the historical events.

On the other hand, the other feminist writer Buchi Emecheta focuses on the dilemma of African women who, fight against patriarchal family structures, the unfair gender stereotypes, and conflicting social values in contemporary Africa. Her novel "*In the Ditch*" is studied by many writers, among them we may mention the work of Nancy Topping Bazin's 1985 article, "*Venturing into Feminist Consciousness: Two Protagonists from the Fiction of Buchi Emecheta and Bessie Head.*"⁴ its main concern is how women in Emecheta's novels especially "*In the Ditch*" and the novel of Bessie Head, defeat the patriarchal structures to attain and recreate the world they inhabit, for a better future for women.

In her book "*Women and social Realism in the Novels of Buchi Emecheta*"⁵, published in 1981. Marie Umeh, Through the novels of Buchi Emecheta explains the troubles of the identity, womanhood and individual affirmation. The author gives convincing images of African women's problems and their personal confrontation of these problems especially in the novel of Buchi Emecheta's "*In the Ditch*". Also, Abioseh Michael Porter, in his study entitled "*Second Class Citizen: The point of departure for understanding Buchi Emecheta's Major Fiction*"⁶ stresses on the importance of self determination of "Adah", the main character in both novels, "*In the Ditch*" and "*Second Class Citizen*". The author suggests that when reading these two novels, it is more important to understand them from the side of the women's achievements, and their personal resistance to oppression thanks mainly to their admission to education.

It is true that all previous researches concerning the two feminist works which are "*In the Ditch*" and "*Loin De Médine*", deal with the women's condition from the early times in the history, until the twentieth century, and also study only their roles without stressing the immense importance of the women's liberation in these two works. Nevertheless, it is clear that these previous studies do not explore the notion of women's emancipation in both novels. Their challenger became aware that their legitimate consideration could not be covered up

forever. Assia Djebar and Buchi Emecheta can be considered as the most prominent intellectual and revolutionary writers, who try to give more value to the women's conditions in their societies.

This research paper is a comparative study, that will be dealt between the works of these two feminist writers, who are Assia Djebar's "*Loin De Médine*" (1991), and Buchi Emecheta's "*In the Ditch*" (1975). The central issue of this comparison is to demonstrate how women managed to gain their right of emancipation in different periods of time, and also different surroundings. Djebar's novel deals with the story of a group of women during the period of appearance of a new religion, which is Islam and especially after the death of the Prophet Mohamed. Whereas the novel of Buchi Emecheta, deals with the story of a group of black women, that live in a European society during the 20th century. It is evident that in the two novels the major events are held mainly by women, yet there are differences concerning the period of time, religious believes and also the environment. However, the two novels share an important idea which is the importance of women emancipation. For this reason, the main purpose of this research is to demonstrate to what extends this important notion is really expressed by these two feminist writers in their two novels. It is evident this new approach needs a theoretical basis, which is the feminist ideas of the French and existentialists philosopher author, Simone de Beauvoir, with her book "*The Second Sex*".

Method and Materials:

De Beauvoir's book *The Second Sex*, published in 1953, is one of her famous books that deal with the status of women throughout history. It is also considered as an important philosophical and feminist work. *The Second Sex* is one of her earliest tentative to tackle with history of women's conditions from a feminist perception. De Beauvoir had many admirers and disbelievers. Today, it is considered as a masterwork, and also a pillar of feminist philosophy in general. Therefore, the approach that will be applied to this study will be based on the theoretical framework of Simone de Beauvoir's *The Second Sex*. In her book, Beauvoir emphasizes on the idea that a woman can be independent in her life, which means that a man is not a necessity for her to be successful. It is clearly expressed in this quotation from her book: "It is high time to 'woman' being left to take her own chances".⁷

The Second Sex reports De Beauvoir attempt to situate the origins of this unfair situation of the gender roles. In the first volume, entitled *Facts and Myths*, she wonders how the female occupies a secondary position in her society. To have a convenient answer De Beauvoir explores different fields, for instance, biology, psychoanalysis, and history. All these disciplines divulge crucial differences between men and women, but this does not justify the inferiority of women. De Beauvoir studies some of the ways by which women reinforce their own reliance, and contribute to reinforce their secondary roles, for example, the Narcissists, women in love, and mystic or spiritual.

All of these women are linked and dependent on the mirror, a lover, or God. In her book, she cites examples of women being imprisoned in their "Otherness", mainly with marriage. For the author, a woman must help herself in order to achieve a form of liberation. In the concluding chapters of "*The Second Sex*", De Beauvoir discusses the obstacles that women face in pursuing this ambition.

It is true that the two stories are set in different epochs, Assia Djébar's novel deals with the story of a group of women during the time of the appearance of Islam, at this particular period, women had their own rights, and they started to express their opinions. "*Loin De Médine*" exposes the problem of the passage of the Islamic memory or heritage; the novel can be viewed as a record of historical events, but with a distinctive feminist perspective, which surpasses the structure of the traditional historical novel.

Buchi Emecheta's novel "In the Ditch" speaks about the daily life of black women in a European society during the 20th century. This means in a society which is completely different from their traditional one in Nigeria. In this novel also, women rely on themselves, unless the difficulties they face every day to assure a good life for their children.

In the European society, women were viewed as inferior and dependent on men. Moreover, they were considered as witches; a symbol of bad and maleficent spirit. The situation of women in other societies did not differ. For instance, in the Arabian society, women were also marginalized by men before the appearance of Islam, women were buried alive; the Arab people believed that a girl brings shame to their family. Through time, the role and the place of women in society changed. It is true that this change took time, but the result is great.

Emancipation is the key word in this comparative study. In Assia Djébar and Buchi Emecheta novels, different images of women's situations are presented, but their purpose seems to be the same because both of them try to improve the role of women in their societies, even if the two periods and cultures are distinct. So in this study, I will demonstrate that both authors try to give another view of women and their true abilities, that is to say how the two African writers had broken the ordinary and the old image that was carved in the mind of all people for a long time ago.

To sustain my hypothesis, I will use Simone de Beauvoir ideas that she develops in her book: “*The Second Sex*” published in 1953. De Beauvoir writes in her book: “*Women raised and educated exactly like men would work under the same conditions and for the same salaries*”⁸ .

De Beauvoir’s most important opinion is that men primarily oppress women by characterizing them, at the all levels of social life, as the “*Other*”. Man has the role of the subject, whereas woman is the object or the other. The woman is not important, and man imposes his will on her, she is constantly considered by man as hopeless. The man creates, invents while the woman is always put aside.

For the author, woman must help herself in order to achieve a form of liberation. In the concluding chapters of *The Second Sex*, de Beauvoir discusses the obstacles that the woman faces in pursuing this ambition. De Beauvoir also writes that a woman does not come to life as a woman, but it becomes a woman when she is in contact with the men in her society, which means that it is up to her to get her emancipation.

Major feminist work often presented as existentialist, in her novel *The Second Sex*; the author condemns the male domination, and the female submission. The author believes that the emancipation of women will be held through the motivation of men and women. *The Second Sex* is still the standard of many feminist movements and, the book is often a reference not only to feminist philosophy, but also to the political philosophy.

The Summary of the Novel *Loin De Médine*:

Assia Djébar's novel *Loin De Médine* was published in 1991. Her novel is a renewal of the history events, exactly during the appearance of a new religion "Islam". The particularity of this novel is that, it is mostly keen towards the feminine contribution in this major and important historical event. In her novel, Assia Djébar gives rise to the significant role of women during the different actions of the Prophet, and his continual struggle to strengthen and secure his holy message, proceeding the terminal days of his life. At that moment, the Arabian provides a landscape to stories of the Prophet, Caliphs and queens of tribes. Fatima, the Prophet's daughter, is proud and determined, whereas the destiny of Aisha, his young widow is to be as the memory, who tells exactly what happened to the future generations. There are also over fourteen other women, in this novel that are commemorated, because of their magnificent accomplishment. They are seen today as a significant example, to counter those who want to diminish the Muslim woman.

The summary of the novel *In the Ditch*: "*In the Ditch*", is the novel of the Nigerian author **Buchi Emecheta**, first published in 1972. The novel starts with the separation of the main character, called Adah from her husband, and tells us her demoralizing experiences while working and raising her five children on public assistance in a London tenement. There are also other stories of other women in the "Mansion", where Adah lives, for instance Mrs. Marshall; Mrs. Devline the majority of them shares her same conditions, with a distinct life's story. A single mother and black African immigrant, Adah was deprived of education in Nigeria, so once in England she decides to carry on her studies, despite the hard difficulties she encounters there, she manages to grow her self-awareness and confidence.

Notes and References :

¹Briana,B,“*Loin De Medine D’Assia Djebar La figure de Fatima ou Antigone*”,

(MusmaneAnnals of Ovidius University Constanta, 2011).

²Rachel, Van Denver, “*La subjection des femmes musulmanes et la sororité dans Loin de Médine*”, (in “ Voix plurielles”, 2006),6

³Hannan Elayed, “*Représentations littéraires du sacré dans le roman maghrébin de langue française*” (New Brunswick, New Jersey, 2010) ,222.

⁴Nancy Topping Bazin,”*Venturing into Feminist Consciousness: Two Protagonists from the Fiction of Buchi Emecheta and Bessie Head.*”(A scholarly journal on Black Women, 1985) 32-36.

⁵Marie Umeh, “*Women and social Realism in the Novels of Buchi Emecheta*”, (University of Wisconsin, Madison, 1981),392.

⁶Abiosch M,P., “*Second Class Citizen: “The point of Departure for understanding Buchi Emecheta’s Major Fiction”*”,(Drexel University ,1988),129.

⁷H. M. Parshley, Trans.,*The Second Sexe*, (London : Bound and Baydone, 1953),751.

⁸Ibid.,760.

Results:

In this research study, I can say that the first chapter focuses on the analysis of the historical context of both novels of the two African and feminist authors, Assia Djébar's "*Loin De Médine*" and Buchi Emecheta's "*In the Ditch*". It is quite evident that, the historical epoch of these novels are completely poles apart, yet the basic element that joins the two stories is the fact that both novels deal with the same issue which is the importance of women's emancipation. The shared point between these stories is that the two authors deal with how women manage to get away from their oppressive patriarchal society. This comparative study needs to be contextualized according to the period of time, and also the location where the events take place, to have a clear idea about their distinguishing historical backgrounds.

In addition to this, the theoretical source is also required. For this reason, the feminist ideas of the French writer Simone De Beauvoir, which are extracted from her book "*The Second Sex*", are imperatively important in this study. As a radical feminist, Simone De Beauvoir believes in the idea, that a woman needs to be enlightened and liberated independently, but she is requested to fight in solidarity with the working classes.

Throughout her famous assertion which stipulates that women are not born as women, but rather become women. Thus, women are no longer considered as inferior to men. Simone De Beauvoir contributes significantly in transforming the efforts of feminism towards the renovation of the women's place in society.

Thanks to the "Islam", this religion which was transmitted by the Prophet that women had many liberties, for instance the right to inherit, to participate in many domains for example education, "Aïcha" participates in the transmission of the valuable principles of the Islamic religion. With time, women all over the world gained during different stages their rights in

the social and even the economic life. This idea is clearly expressed in the novel of Buchi Emecheta, through her main protagonist “Adah”.

From the comparison of some female characters, many common features are shared between them. Even though the main protagonist of Buchi Emecheta’s story belongs to the modern society of the 20th century, this does not contradict the fact that she shares the same determination and characteristics of the female protagonists of Assia Djébar’s novel, which belongs to the old times of the first appearance of Islam.

For instance, “Adah” is not only an educated woman like “Aïcha”, but also has the same courage to affront the society, where she lives like “Fatima” and even “Oum Hakim”. There are other similarities shared between other characters of both novels. We may refer to the example of “Sirin” and “Carole” who share the important aspect of being the defenders of the oppressed women.

Moreover, the theme of woman’s emancipation is dealt in both novels differently. This means that Assia Djébar and Buchi Emecheta have a distinct approach of this central point that joins them. Assia Djébar is based on true historical events taken from her Islamic heritage to consolidate her feminist thinking, whereas Buchi Emecheta uses her personal experience to transmit her liberal thoughts. However, both of them have the same central idea which is, the women can have their due position in society through their activities.

To sum up, we may say that the women’s emancipation is very important, because thanks to the access of women to the domain of work they can gain their freedom. It is through their actions and achievements that women can affirm their existence in any society, and this can be applied in any epoch of the human’s history.

The First Chapter:

I. 1 Historical Background :

I .1. Assia Djébar's Novel " Loin de Médine" :

In this chapter, I will show the historical context in which the stories of both novels are written. It is important to give details about the different women's conditions mainly after the death of the Prophet, and then during the twentieth century. The purpose is to formulate a clear idea of the two distinct periods of time and to have a concrete bases for the analysis of the importance of women's emancipation.

The novel of Assia Djébar, "*Loin De Médine*" is set when Islam religion appeared and in particular after the death of the Prophet "Mohammed". However, before the emergence of this new religion the Arabs were known as aggressive and warlike people. Their tribes were in a constant look for grazing land and water, their perpetual struggle is characterized by the triumph of the stronger over the brittle. Because of these circumstances many wars were held, as the war of "Bassous", "Dahe", "Foujar" and many others.

In the Arab world, dating before the appearance of Islam, the era of ignorance "Jahiliyyah" women experienced many injustices and have been subject to discrimination. In the desert dweller the "koraiche", one of the Arabic tribes during the pre-Islamic period, practiced the savage custom of burying female infants alive, because at that time, it is a dishonor and a shame to have a girl in their family, in other words it is a curse. Qais Bin Assem, a leader of the "Tamim" tribe, killed every daughter he had for fear of their capture by other outside tribes during the tribal wars that subjugated the life of the Arabian society at that time. Women were likely to be killed, regarding them as a burden on a starving family. At that time also, we could not speak about the marriage, because men used to have many sexual

relationships with a lot of women. In other words, people had no value and respect to this noble alliance which is the marriage.

In addition to this, women had no benefits or rights at all and were treated no better than an article of trade. They were enslaved, but also they could be inherited as an ownership. They were inferior to the men, who can be their fathers, brothers, and husbands. In some instances, women were chattels. A woman had no part in the inheritance, because she was viewed as foolish and unqualified of successfully running her inherited property.

Thus, when the light of the Islam rose on the whole world, women were suffering from different sorts of humiliations. Fortunately, a new glimmer of hope emerged from the Arabian Desert. It is the new religion of Islam that the Prophet Mohammed took the heavy responsibility to convey to all people all around the world.

“Islam” is the name approved to the religion, which the Prophet Mohammed in the year of 600 A.D has brought to the whole people all around the world. The messenger of God ‘Mohammed’ was an Arab who was born in Mecca about 570. He believed he had been sent to advise and steer his people, also to label them to be devoted to the only God, what the Arabs call (Allah). “Moslem”, refers to the name of the people who comes from the Arabic word “Muslim”, which means one who is submitted to God. The Koran the holly book of the Muslims, teaches the unlimited power of God, but forbids many impure, bad qualities such as, dishonesty, robbery, treachery, and murder. Yet, teaches the virtues of patience, compassion, truthfulness, generosity, respect, and bravery. Islam gives us lessons about life, and defines the existence of human being on this earth as only a period, where he or she is tested. For that reason, the Muslims should try to do their greatest efforts to apply this, to gain the God gratefulness.

The Prophet Muhammad is the Messenger of God, who received and transmitted the Koran. It is however not an intermediary, but he was a man who changed the world in the light of revelations that were received from the One. He made the establishment of the corporation of the Islamic State and for the foremost time, the Arabs would be governed by a constitution and their capital would be located in “Yathrib”. The creation of an Islamic state was not the only goal, but also the Prophet Mohammed wanted to establish a new civilization that will extend in all places and it’s good reputation would be unforgotten through all times. The bases of this new nation is the conviction in only one God and the acceptance of the most dignified human values, all races are not excluded to follow this new religion of impartiality, and they were all invited to support the sacred word of God.

The most significant positive bringing of Islam to the society of that time, is that it gives a great honor to women, because according to the Koran verses taken from the one of the surat, which is Surat An-Nisā' (The Women), which stipulates:

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ اتَّقُوا رَبَّكُمُ الَّذِي خَلَقَكُمْ مِنْ نَفْسٍ وَاحِدَةٍ وَخَلَقَ مِنْهَا زَوْجَهَا
وَبَثَّ مِنْهُمَا رِجَالًا كَثِيرًا وَنِسَاءً ۚ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ الَّذِي تَسَاءَلُونَ بِهِ وَالْأَرْحَامَ إِنَّ
اللَّهَ كَانَ عَلَيْكُمْ رَقِيبًا

1

“O mankind, dread your Lord, who created you from one soul and shaped from it its mate and discrete from both of them many men and women. And fear Allah, through whom you ask one another, and the wombs. Indeed Allah is ever, over you, an onlooker”.

This verse clearly explains, that god creates the men and women having the same spirit.

According to the Koran the woman is the source of life, she is the one who gives life, and she symbolizes the continuity of life. So the Islam gives the women, the same rights like man as being also a human being like him. The woman has the right to inherit, which means the woman has her due right to have a part of her family's heritage. This is also illustrated in this verse from Surat An-Nisā':

لِّلرِّجَالِ نَصِيبٌ مِّمَّا تَرَكَ الْوَالِدَانِ وَالْأَقْرَبُونَ وَلِلنِّسَاءِ نَصِيبٌ مِّمَّا تَرَكَ
الْوَالِدَانِ وَالْأَقْرَبُونَ مِمَّا قَلَّ مِنْهُ أَوْ كَثُرَ نَصِيبًا مَّفْرُوضًا ﴿٧﴾

2

“The men have a share of what the parents and close relatives leave, and for women also a share of what the parents and close relatives leave, whether it is little or much, it is an obligatory share”.

Unfortunately, many of the proper Muslim values are disrupted in many Arabic countries throughout the world. Many of the Muslim thinkers have interpreted the koranic laws according to their own benefits and their personal inclinations. This movement is called “Islamism”, which is still in the illusion of good misused Islam by the Islamists, who have not understood the authentic Prophet's message of peace.

They have led to a clamping down on women's upheaval. This is the case of the Algerian country. In her article entitled “*Algerian Women's Resistance against the Islamist Femicide*” Zahia Smail Salhi, writes that after the 1988 political reforms introduced by the political party “FLN”, three women's associations emerged for instance “The Association for emancipation of women”, “The Association for Equality before the Law between Women and Men” and “The Association for the Defence determination of the women's Rights”³. But, Zahia Smail

Salhi insists on the fact that even though the Algerian women's associations emerged, they had not the freedom to achieve their activities. She writes: "*Women's associations and liberal political opposition parties were alarmed and very worried by the Islamists' non- democratic agenda on the one hand and their populist discourse on the other*"⁴.

Thus, we can clearly comprehend that during this period, women's function in the Islamic and Arab's world especially in Algeria are extremely limited to mere fact of educating her children, they are imprisoned in her house, they are rejected from the social, economical roles. The equality of men and women before God is difficult to achieve, with the repressive injunctions on women's social and legal position that persist in the society, This divide leads to difficulties of interpretation.

Consequently, we can say that the Algerian author Assia Djebar publishes her Novel in a period where the Algerian society lived a crucial, difficult and embarrassing period, which is the emerging of an extremist thinking of the Islamic laws, which are introduced by the Islamist leaders. In order to contradict these bad, irrefutable ideas the author decides to correct History, by giving more advantages to women in her novel.

Moreover, Juliette Minces' letter entitled, "*Lettre aux Femmes du Maghreb*" addressed to women of the Maghreb, especially the Algerian women, whose participation in order to get the independence was great. Besides, Juliette Mince refers to the Maghreb women after the independence. This letter includes very judicious comments on the delicate balance between reclaiming national culture against colonialism and the struggle to create a new liberating society for women, which goes further than both colonial and traditional Islamic culture.

In her novel, the author shows that even in the period of the first appearance of the Islamic religion, women were not absent, but very present in each stapes that determined later the

future of this religion. Here there is what the author Assia Djébar says about her Novel “*Loin De Médine*”:

*“Loin de Médine est une coupure- c'est une interruption, je dirais presque'une assure dans mon œuvre- qui a été écrite d'un coup, pour participer a un débat précis: c'est une œuvre de circonstance”.*⁵

In an unpublished interview with Assia Djébar in 1991 Clarisse Zimra, reports what Assia Djébar says about her true two main reasons that pushed her to publish her novel, she says:

*First, as you know, I would stress a primary trigger for its composition; it is a book that is meant to respond, (I want to stress this!): it is a piece written to indict the "official" version of history, according to which Woman must be all covered up - see-no-evil, speak-no-evil and kept house-bound. Thus, in my book, there are women not all of whom are Muslims and, above all, there are women who move about freely. What I was discovering while reading Tabari, was that these women were present through their voice and their eloquence, first of all. Those who have some weight, those who are listened to are those women who can express themselves superbly those who know how to use the verb.*⁶

It is obvious from this citation, that Djébar clearly argues her ambition to give the real value and image of women. She uses her writings that relay on true history events to illustrate her feminist views, which defend the women’s valuable and importance in the world, but also specially in the Islamic and Arab world. In addition to this, the author also gives her second reason she asserts:

The second reason- but it should be obvious- is to respond to the Surat about women who must wear the veil, Surat four. In the beginning this rule concerned primarily widows - and the Prophet's widows exclusively, not the others. Over the twenty-one years of the Prophet's mission, this was imposed only the last five years, give or take. Therefore it is obvious that this freedom of movement must have brought about great female heroic figures. When I describe them, even if I take some liberty with the facts, I remain true to their spirit as far as I am concerned. For example, look at the one who rushes away to the desert in search of her missing husband; look at that other one running away from her own father to seek refuge in Medina. These women are well known of all Muslims. I am not inventing anything .These are facts and events such as Islamic memory preserves them still nowadays among our people. As

*for me, I choose to stress the initiative these women exhibited. What interests me is to describe them physically, their long flowing hair, the way they carry themselves One can see them morally and physically. One can see their bodies, and the problem of the veil does not interest me it does not yet exist at This point in time it's but a detail.*⁷

Concerning her second reason, Djébar explains her exact interest in exposing in her novel, examples of women who were eager to face any hard difficulty to achieve their goals. She also emphasizes on the idea that her main concern is not linked to the question of the veil, which is still a subject of debate.

Assia Djébar wrote *Loin de Médine*, to answer back scrupulous conditions it was also a way to confront certain conventional notions about Muslim women, which were and still established. In an interview with Sophie Bonnet in *Les Inrockuptibles*, Assia Djébar says her mind about her decision to write her novel “*Loin De Médine*”, she says:

*It was then that I decided to write Far from Medina. By writing Fantasia: an Algerian Cavalcade, I acquired a certain expertise in the Interplay between history and the novel. So I told myself that I should use this know how to tell the story of the beginnings of Islam, from the point of view of the women of the time; I had the feeling that the fundamentalists were going to come back with a vengeance and monopolies the history of Islam.*⁸

All in all, we may say that Assia Djébar’s text is quite innovative, the francophone, feminist author uses the French language, and instead of the Arabic one to express her thoughts concerning the importance of the women’s liberation. The author can be considered as the defender of the women’s liberation and emancipation in the whole world. For that purpose, she uses the Islamic heritage, and what women of that period have done to demonstrate the importance of giving the women their due importance in society.

I .2. The novel of Buchi Emecheta *In The Ditch*:

In this second part, the study will be devoted to the different historical events that contributed to the publication of this Novel “In the Ditch”. The Nigerian author Buchi Emecheta, is surely like other writers she is influenced both by her personnel life, and the social environment where she lived.

For many centuries, women suffered many injustices, and were perceived as objects that can be used by men. In almost all African countries, especially in Nigeria where women were always under the absolute control of men. For instance, in the Nigerien community the woman is always placed in the second class after the man. She has to obey the Male and has no word to say.

Besides, the women’s access to education was very limited if not forbidden. In Africa, girls having not yet achieved the age of fourteen or less, are given by their parents to a Man, who is ready to pay a good dowry, the girl has no word to say she has to accept. The life of an African woman is dominated by the conventional laws of their tribes. The women’s African identity is dominated by the ancestral traditions that are unchanged through centuries. Women were left at the back to keep the house and to raise her children.

In addition to this, according to their customs the women in Africa usually is assumed that she is economically reliant to the men, as she only fulfills her role as a wife, a mother and a builder of home. African woman should be involved in domestic duties like farming task and skilled craft production. In some societies in Africa only the male children are counted in a family during the census, because they believe female children cannot stay long in the family, they will get married, and their husbands count their wives as possessions.

Women in a typical African society are placed second to men; the African society feels that a woman's problem cannot be solved without the help of a man. An African woman who, is without a husband is looked down upon, and has no protection from any in self-respect. The assumed psychological belief that women are second to men, has made women to be deprived equal political post with men in the society.

Buchi Emecheta is a Nigerian author, who belong the Igbo people. They are a nation who lives in the southeastern Nigeria. They are one of the main ethnic groups in Africa. They are profoundly religious. These polytheistic people worship many gods, and they believe that there are three levels of divine beings: the uppermost level is the supreme god, or "Chukwu". The supreme God "Chukwu" and then "Umuagbara", and the under of these gods is the "Ndi Ichie," the spirits of dead people. The Ibos also believe in reincarnation. They see death as a transitory phase between life and the spirit world. When someone dies, he or she starts a new life in the spirit world. After a time in the spirit world, a dead person would be reborn as a new person and the cycle of life would carry on. Each village has priests and priestesses, like conducting ceremonies, rituals.

Before British colonialism, the Igbo were organized in a range of subgroups or in clans, according to their ancestry, village memberships, and dialects. This way of living changed radically under the British colonialism in the 19th century. The Igbo became devastatingly Christian under colonization. Chinua Achebe's "*Things Fall Apart*", (1958) can be considered as one of the most popular novels that depict the Igbo culture, and the significant changes that occur due to colonialism.

Concerning the situation of women during the British colonization doesn't differ from the precedent one. The women are also abused and enslaved by the colonizer. Nevertheless, this doesn't deny the fact that a small number of women could have access to education; at

least they could read and write. Thanks to the missionary schools that the British colonizers built in different tribes. These facts lead in the future years, to the emergence of new generations of women, capable of expressing themselves, to defend their rights and to raise loud their voices, through their writings. Women rebelled and created their personal lives within the framework of possibilities and limitations set by structure and culture. Those days women are very motivated to have their say in the society. Moved out are the days when women are relegated to the ground. The notion of the education of women limited to the kitchen does not apply to the women of this age, as they unite their Motherhood with their respective careers. They are able to do these successfully without one affecting the other. Indeed the women of this age have successfully survived, and they are found at the top in the society in different fields.

The women's contribution in the progress of their society can't be put aside. In the economic growth like, weaving, manufactured products and also household affairs. The society however did not pay keen attention to the great contribution of women to the growth of the society and this has gone without recognition to humiliate their morals and make their effort fruitless. In spite of the efforts of women to strive to the higher place in the society, they are still at great difficulty and seen as inferior by their male counter parts.

In the European society of the twentieth century, women did not live in the same circumstances of the previous centuries. After the colonization of the African countries, the European ones received many groups of emigrants coming from different countries, in particular from the black countries like: Nigeria, Congo, and many other countries. The women were of Color among the people, who left their home countries to settle in foreign ones and some of them chose to study and even to be graduated in high Universities.

The novel '*Efuru*'(1965), written by Flora Nwapa, she is the first female writer in English language in Nigeria. It is Nwapa who opened up opportunities for other African women writers of the future. There is, today, the distinctiveness of Igbo English writers, which manifests itself in experimentation in language, in recreating distinct Igbo discourse in English, and in stylistic innovations. The various manifestations of this distinctiveness can be seen in the works of Chinua Achebe, Cyprian Ekwensi, Buchi Emecheta, Nkem Nwankwo, Chukwuemeka Ike, Elechi Amadi.

Since the 1970s, an immense concern in African literature has grown considerably in European and American universities. Practically all of the writers read and discussed were male. These writers produced an image of the male dominance, and women were portrayed in the old roles of mothers and wives. In fiction, women characters also were nearly constantly having secondary roles, to the major male protagonists. In Some works, like Elechi Amadi's novel, "*The Concubine*", the author gives the major role to a woman, but he went so far as to frankly ridicule women. Critics also concentrated solely on male writers and examined the roles of women primarily from a male perspective. We can also add that, even the lack of female writers has added to these partial views on women.

Buchi Emecheta is a Nigerian author, who is now among the most important female authors to emerge from postcolonial Africa. After the publication of her first novel, in 1972 her work has been and continues to be a vehicle for fervent debate over issues relating to the role of African women within their societies. Buchi Emecheta as an Anglophone writer focuses on the role of women in traditional African cultures and the conflicts they face as they are forced to be assimilated into a colonial standard of living. She has been rejected by some male African writers like Brians who writes that Buchi Emecheta is a "*hostile emigrant contaminated by European views*".⁹

Her novel, *"In the Ditch"* is a semi biographical novel of the author. As an African woman the author exposes her real experience as a single woman, in an overseas country Britain. The African women writers and intellectuals, try to make a sense of their multipart costumes, even though they have different stories in distinct contexts.

In addition to this, she exposes the unfairness of the male imposed African social mores, which reduce the life of women into simply children's bearing. Often regarded as a feminist writer, Emecheta illustrates the value of education and freewill for hopeful young women, who fight back against sexual, moral intolerance, injustice, to realize their expected independence.

Finally, we can say that Emecheta's fiction is distinguished by her realistic female characters, informal prose style. Emecheta also is highly regarded for introducing a more emancipated and authentic female perspectives to the contemporary African literature, and tries to show how woman are excluded from language and full Subjectivity in general, and the black women in particular.

The Nigerian author Buchi Emecheta is distinguished for her glowing descriptions of female secondary statue and inconsistent cultural values in modern Africa. Her best known novels, including *"Second class citizen"* (1974), *"The Bride Price"* (1976), and *"The Joys of Motherhood"* (1979), expose the unfairness of traditional, male oriented African social customs. *"In the Ditch"* (1972), is her first tentative of writing this novel is inspired by her first life after she leaves her husband, and is left alone with her children.

To conclude this chapter, we may assert that Emecheta's world includes African traditions of the "Igbo" people, but also the living of the emigrant in England. Djebbar's novel includes and reflects her Muslim and Arabo-Berber origins; her writings replicate her French education.

Despite the differences, the two authors exemplify in their fictions the concrete stuff of their culture, allowing their female protagonists to be restless to find their place in their society, and to fight the Patriarchal oppressions. As a result, both of these writers, Assia Djebar and Buchi Emecheta represent the reflexion of two feminist writers, whose differences regarding the historical events which lead to the publication of their novels, do not deny the fact that, they represent in their fictions the tangible substance of their cultures. These two feminist authors through their protagonists, struggle, suffer and worry in their search to find their voices as emancipated women.

I .4 Notes and References:

¹Surat An-Nisā' (The Women), verse number 01 taken from the holly book of the Koran.

²Surat An-Nisā' (The Women), verse number 08 taken from the holly book of the Koran.

³Zahia, Smail Salhi, “*Algerian Women’s Resistance against the Islamist Femicide*”, cited in the International Collogue” Gender Resistance and Negotiation”, Mouloud Mammeri University of Tizi-Ouzou,2011, 215.

⁴Ibid.,215.

⁵CLARISSE, Z., *Not So Far from Medina: Assia Djébar Charts Islam's "Insupportable Feminist Revolution"*, Oklahoma,1996, 823.

⁶Ibid.,824.

⁷Ibid.,825.

⁸Sophie, Bonnet in *Les Inrockuptibles*, quoted in “*Assia Djébar : In Dialogue with Feminisms*”, Priscilla,R ., Amsterdam, New York, 2006,23.

⁹Paul. B., "Buchi Emecheta: *The Joys of Motherhood*." Department of English, Washington State University, 1996.n,p.

II .The second chapter: Brave Women who challenge their patriarchal

society: A comparison between the female protagonists:

II.1 The analysis of affinities between the Female Characters of “*Loin de médine*” and “*In the ditch*” :

Female characters in Assia Djébar and Buchi Emecheta’s novels have many aspects in confluence, Although, the two authors deal with numerous characters in their novels, only few of them can be regarded as truly representative of women’s emancipation and whose accomplishments and actions can be viewed as being greatly significant.

Portraying their major characters, Emecheta and Djébar present the reader with an epitome of daily struggle waged by a group of women. Assia Djébar depicts a group of women, whose achievements following the appearance of “Islam” remain until now immortal. Among them, “Fatima”, “Aicha” and many others. Buchi Emecheta tells us the story of her main character “Adah” and her daily struggle for a better life, as well as the story of other women who live under the same conditions, and have diverse stories. Hence, it turns out that the female characters of both authors have the sufficient courage to affirm themselves.

II.1.2. Adah, Fatima, Oum Hakim : the Warrior Women:

Fatima is the daughter of the prophet Mohamed; she is the first woman in the Islamic era who says “no” to the whole patriarchal community of that time. After the death of her father she opposed everybody to secure her legal right, as a woman in Medina which was for a long time ago dominated by men. “Fatima” defends her right of heritage; she affirms that she has

the legitimate right to inherit her father, like other women. The following excerpt which is extracted from the novel, affirms this idea: " *Ainsi elle a dit "non", la fille aimée. « Non » au premier calife pour son interprétation littérale du « dit » du Prophète.*"¹ This proves that, "Fatima" is not afraid of saying her opinion openly, her courage of affronting the others is shared with the female character "Adah", who is described by Emecheta as a solitary black woman; who lives in a foreign country Britain: "*She was black, separated from her husband and, with five kids all under six*".²

This sentence taken from the novel demonstrates that the life of Adah is not effortless at all. She is a single woman and she bears the responsibility of five children alone, without the help of their father. "Adah" like "Fatima" refuses to drag down, instead of this they struggle and they do their best to dare all the obdurate of life. This idea echoes Adah's words: "*but I am thought and free, she thought, she repeated to herself*"². This means that, "Adah" is described as a tenacious woman, who does not accept to be surpassed by the obstacles she encounters in her life. From the comparison of these two female characters, we can figure out that both "Adah" and "Fatima" are courageous women who confront the hard life's difficulties and especially the male dominance in their societies.

Through their exceptional female characters, the two feminist authors try to prove the propensity of women in dealing with hard and difficult situations, like or even better than man. Both authors want to contradict the superiority of the man in the previous patriarchal society, where the man is always viewed as superior to the woman.

Simone De Beauvoir explains obviously in the second part of her book entitled "History", that this world had always been controlled by men, she writes: "*This world has always been man's world*"³.

Nevertheless, this archaic view is questioned in the light of existential philosophy, which helped in the understanding of the establishment of this idea of the male dominance. When two human genders are presented, each one of them desires to impose its control to another, this confrontation might create hostility or acquaintance.

The ideas of the feminist De Beauvoir are clearly illustrated through the two characters “Adah” and also “Fatima”. Thanks to her resolution, Adah does her role of an affectionate mother and at the same time she works outside to meet the needs of her five children.

Fatima shares this determination to say her thoughts, without any fear of the men of that time who represent the power, and take decisions. Hence, from this we can understand that the woman’s liberation is very significant, because it gives them opportunities to confirm themselves in their societies.

In addition to this, “Adah” also can be compared to “Oum Hakim”, this woman who is called by Djebbar “*la Combattante*”, which means “the fighter”. Unlike the other women of Medina, in her tribe which is called Mequa “Oum Hakim” is described by the author as a great warrior. She accompanies her husband “Ikrema” in his battles. Djebbar explains undoubtedly, that women had done a major role in the spread of the Islam and also in fighting those who want to interrupt the Prophet’s mission, Djebbar writes:

*Se battre, Se battre à cheval, ou à dos de chamelle, et pour l’Islam dorénavant. Leur montrer à eux, les chefs de Médine, les fameux Compagnons que, même du clan vaincu, ces femmes de la Mecque restaient des dames. A la fois des épouses, des maitresses de maison, mais aussi des combattantes.*⁴

The example of “Oum Hakim” is insightful this woman is lively and combative. Similarly, Adah struggles with the hard life in the British community especially in the “Mansions”, where she lives with the other black emigrants, and poor people. The “Mansions” are places which are described by the author Buchi as “dark”, having a “dark atmosphere”. Hence, the life of Adah in this place is not simple; it is full of danger and is unhealthy. Emecheta

explicitly writes: “*Adah’s problems were many. How to study, keep her job and look after the kids. Looking after her children was one of the problems created for her Mansions ‘set-up.’*”⁵

“Adah” is like “Oum Hakim” have both of them the same courage to offend all the difficulties of the life. It means that, “Oum Hakim” is a warrior woman who fought for the glory of the religion she worships, at the same time she does her duty as a house wife. Comparable to “Adah”, who is the representative of a modern woman, she affronts all the harshness of life alone, she is like a combatant who challenges the danger in the battlefield of her life.

Simone De Beauvoir refuses this old conception of women, and she insists on the great role that women have done throughout of the old times until nowadays. This is illustrated in this quotation:

*It would appear, nevertheless, that in many cases the women were strong and tough enough to take part in the warriors’ expeditions. We need recall only the tales of Herodotus and the more recent accounts of the amazons of Dahomey to realize that woman had shared in warfare.*⁶

II.1.3 Adah and Aicha :the Educated Women:

An essential mutual aspect, is shared between these two characters is the fact that “Aicha” and “Adah” are both skilled this characteristics, makes them unique and exceptional women.

The life and works of “Aicha” are studied and are the subject of research by students and teachers of Islam’s history. “Aicha” often called “*the mother of all the believers*”, she becomes the wife of the Prophet “Mohammed” in Mecqua, but she went to live with him after the migration to Medina.

Much of her vast treasure of knowledge was acquired when she was still quite young. In her childhood, she is raised by her father “Abu Baker”, who is considerably loved and respected, mainly due to his great knowledge, good manners and company. In addition to all

this, he is the closest friend of the noble Prophet, who made frequent visits them in the early days of his mission. In this regard Assia Djébar writes:

pemière des rawiyates ...elle voit son destin se dessiner : oui, nourrir la mémoire des croyants, entreprendre cette longue patience, cet inlassable travail, distiller ce lait goutte à goutte. Préserver, pour toutes les filles d'Ismaël⁷.

Much of her time, “Aïcha” learns and understands the two most important sources of the Islam, the Qur'an and the Sunnah of the Prophet. She is one of three wives “Hafsah” and “Oum Salamah” to memorize the Quran.

Regarding the “Hadith”, which is the Prophet’s word that demonstrate his wisdom and prediction, “Aïcha” was the only woman who is known until now by her intelligent and pertinent explications of the Prophet’s “Hadith” she is considered as being the only woman who has the same role of transmitting the wisdom of the Prophet “Mohammed” like the other four men, who are “Abu Hurayrah”, “Abdullah ibn Umar”, and “Anas ibn Malik”.

Similar to “Aïsha”, “Adah” is also an educated woman; she is not like the other emigrant women, for whom the education seems to be the last of their priorities. “Adah”, represents for the author the picture of her real experience. This main character feeds her children by working in a library at the British Museum; she is required to live in a housing park set aside for problem families. This estate is known as the “Pussy Cat Mansions” and it is a place overcrowded with women. “Adah”, cannot make out with the women of the “Pussy Cat Mansions” and her dignity is hurt, because of the donations she is forced to accept. “Adah” promises to herself, to be unlike the other women: “I am going to be different” ⁸.

The principal characteristic of this main protagonist “Adah” is her determinate initiative and good will to get out of the Ditch. Emecheta writes: “*She was not going to be like the other*

separated mums. At the Mansions, women with kids and no husband did not go out to work.”⁹.

In this context, De Beauvoir expresses the idea that a woman can achieve her due position in her society, regardless the place or the époque only if the woman works. In the fourth chapter of her book, entitled “Towards Liberation” De Beauvoir plainly expresses this idea:

It is through gainful employment that woman has traversed most of the distance that separated her from the male; and nothing else can guarantee her liberty in practice. Once she ceases to be a parasite, the system based on her dependence grumbles; between her and the universe there is no longer any need for a masculine mediator”¹⁰.

From this, we can understand that the old and archaic thinking which concerns the dependent women is refused by Simone De Beauvoir and a new vision towards her emancipation is proposed by this feminist author in order to have a more equal life for all women.

II.1.4 Serine, Carol : the Defenders of the Oppressed Women:

Both authors, Assia Djebar and Buchi Emecheta express in their works the solidarity between the women. This means that, this unity between them is very necessary to them to have their autonomous life.

It is quite clear, that the two novelists demonstrate the female complicity in their own victimization. In the novel of Emecheta, Carol assumes the role of the family adviser she is described by the author as: “.... *The lady was a true diplomat, a trained and experienced social worker...*”.¹¹

Carole takes the responsibility of informing and directing the women, especially the African women, who comes for the first time to Britain; a foreign nation completely different from their own country. It is true that, the first confrontation of Adah with carol seems to be unfriendly, but as the conversation develop between them; Adah begins to understand that

Carole tries her greatest efforts to help her and to give her advises. For instance, she tells her that in this country she is not allowed to let her children alone at home, when she is outside to work or to study.

Adah knows this reality, but she has no choice she feels helpless. Yet, she accepts the fact that she has to accept the help of this lady, she thinks that:

Well, the lady seemed to care, even if society had to pay her to care. Adah would have to Swallow her pride as a woman, her dignity as amother, and let Carole help her..... She needed to be protected against troublesome neighbors like the smalls and she wanted the assurance of knowing that her children were in good hands when she was at knowing that her children were in good hands when she was at the Polytechnic. She was grateful to the lady, and had to thank her.¹²

The same action of solidarity between the female characters is also expressed in the novel of Assia Djebar. Through her female character “Sirin”, who is called by the author “la chrétienne”, “the Christian”. “Sirin” is the sister of “Marya”, one of the wives of the Prophet Mohammed. Both sisters were Christian, “Marya” becomes Muslim when she is married with the Prophet, but “Sirin” when she arrives to “Médina”. “Sirin” is originated from Egypt, especially from a place called “Alexandria”.

It is true that “Sirin” shares the same religion of the other women in “Médina”, and also her husband “Hassan ibn Thabit”. He is known to be the favorite poet of the Prophet Mohamed. Nevertheless, the other women of “Médine” do not consider her as a member of their community. Therefore, Sirin has the nostalgia that drives her to remember what she has lived in her youth. She has always this envy to go back, where she is born. After the death of her little sister, Sirin decides to go away far from “Médine”, to settle with her daughter “Safya” in “Basra”, which is located in Irak.

Once there “Sirin”, decides to make her house as a refuge for the women who are slaves, servants and women who are without support. She devotes the rest of her life for helping the other women; she feels that it is her duty to help the other women, because perhaps, in the

past she also experienced the difficulty of being marginalized, and before she adopts the Islamic religion was a servant. This excerpt explains this idea :

*La maison de Sirin” joue alors le rôle d’un havre de paix, d’un lieu de protection pour les femmes esclaves, pour les servantes effrayées, en un temps ou l’opulence de la nouvelle société –composée également de chrétiens protégés, d’esclaves et d’affranchis de races variée---occasionne des injustices inévitables, des violences internes.*¹³

From all this, we can say that both characters, “Carole” and “Sirin” share the characteristics of liberated women who want to assist women, who require their aid. In this context, De Beauvoir argues that women can have their freedom, through personal determination but with also combined achievements of all the effort of women, which means that the women should be united to secure their freedom.

II.1.5 Atika and Adah: the Insubordinate:

The insubordinate women are those who rely on themselves, they do not accept to be resumed into a mere fate of being under the supreme control of men. The two feminist writers express this central trait through their female characters, “Adah” and “Atika”.

Throughout the novel of Buchi Emecheta, the main character “Adah” is presented as a single woman, she lives lonely with her five children. As it is know, this novel is an auto-biographical work Emecheta which depicts Adah's struggle to raise five children while depending on welfare payments, attending college, and her attempt to achieve her first novel. Emecheta tries to write down what she experienced when she first arrives to England. “Adah” embodies all the aspects of a woman, who traces the path through the hard conditions alone, with no assistance of men. She works part-time jobs to sustain her family. Also, she earned a degree in sociology at the University of London.

When she arrives to the “Mansion”, “Adah” has three important and elementary things to never forget: “*her independence, her freedom and peace of mind*”¹⁴. She promises to herself

that she will not give up, and she will never trust any man again. She says: “the *whole race of men were beasts*. ”¹⁵

Through the female character “Atika”, the author Assia Djebar in one part of her novel entitled “*Voix D’atika*”, which means “*The Atika’s voice*” introduces this remarkable and exceptional character “Atika”, she is like Adah both of them have the same willpower of the self assertion in her small family and also in her community.

“Atika”, is presented first as the wife of “Abdallah ibn Abou Beker”, the latter adores her, and no man of their tribe loves his wife like “Abdallah ibn Abou Beker” does. She also challenges her husband, in telling the most beautiful poems. “Atika”, has a great influence over her husband they use to stay with each other for long time so much so, that “Abdallah” forgets many times his prayers. This situation does not please his father, the first Caliph of Islam “Abou Beker Seddik”, he orders him to repudiate her. But after a long sorrow “Abdallah”, succeeds to live again with his beloved “Atika” until his death.

Like “Adah”, “Atika” makes the promise that she will never submit to a man especially after the death of her adored husband, she makes the promise to never remarry with another man. Nevertheless, when “Omar ibn el Khattab” proposes her to marry him she accepts.

“Omar ibn Khattab” is a man, who is known for his harshness, exaggerated jealousy, and severe character; “Atika” decides to dare all people of “Médine”:

*Suis- je donc une femme à demander le confort en ménage, la sécurité des habitudes et d’un horizon amoindri ? Omar a une stature qui dépasse l’espace des jours ordinaires. Quand a sa jalousie « soupçonneuses » comme suggèrent certaines, je l’affronterai ; je l’affronterai ; je ne le craindrai pas car je ne m’y soumettrai pas !.*¹⁶

After her marriage “Atika”, went to the mosque to do her prayers there, as she uses to do she doesn’t not care about what others says, because she is afraid of her husband she is confident of what she is doing.

“Une semaine après, une errante, habillée en campagnarde, m’accosta dans la rue, tandis que je me rendais, selon l’habitude que j’avais reprise, pour la prière du dhor à la mosquée du Prophète.”¹⁷.

It is evident from this quotation, that “Atika” has the same liberated characteristics of “Adah”, they both of them have the same will to live their life as they wish, at the same time they are self confident. This is an excellent proof which shows that both “Adah” and “Atika” are women who confront all the obstacles that are put in their way towards their salvation

To close this part of the chapter, we may say that starting from the analysis of the two authors’ female characters, they have the same distinctiveness. They are educated, unsubordinated and hard workers. All of these selective characters like “Aisha”, “Fatima”, “Adah”, “Carol”, “Sirin” and Atika share an essential aspect in common, which is their determination to gain their emancipated life.

It is imperative to notice that, even though the protagonists of the two novels share many common aspects, but this does not exclude the fact that there are many other distinctive features that make them very different. It is clear that, the period of time where the two stories of the novel are held is absolutely dissimilar. The period of time of the novel of Assia Djebar is the period that dates very far back in time, whereas the events surrounding the novel of Buchi Emecheta are held during the 20th century. In addition to this, even the milieu where the stories of both novels are not the same.

II.2 The main Discrepancies between the characters of Emecheta's novel *In the Ditch* and Assia Djébar's *Loin De Médine*:

In this part, we will make a reference to the main differences between the female characters of the two feminist authors. The purpose is to show that each of these authors have his own culture, values and depending on the milieu in which their stories are happening.

II.2.1.1 Women from Different Worlds :

Adah, Fatima and Oum Hakim:

Even though, these women have the same power, courage and fortitude to offend the patriarchal supremacy in their both societies. Nevertheless, these characters are distinctive in many aspects. Fatima is not an ordinary woman; she is the daughter of the Prophet Mohammed and her place in the Muslim society of that time, with the emergence of a new religion "Islam", is particular. She is described in the novel as being the most favorite girl of the Prophet; in this context he says: "*Ce qui bouleverse Fatima me bouleverse!*"¹⁸. Which means that what offend his daughter Fatima, also offends him. In addition to this, the Prophet says: "*craignez ce qui met en colère Fatima car cela me met en colère !*".¹⁹ The Prophet says obviously explains that people should pay attention to what can upset his daughter Fatima, because this will upset him.

However, "Adah" is an ordinary black immigrant of the 20th century, who lives in England. She has to bear the responsibility of raising and educating her five young children. As a single woman without the help of her husband "Adah" has no protector or someone who helps her, she lives all alone without the help or support of any man, because she is divorced and orphan, because her parents have died when she was young.

Moreover, “Adah” belongs to the lower social class and lives poorly in the place called the “pussycat Mansion”, where a deprived and rejected community of people are grouped or gathered. Whereas, “Fatima” belongs to the family of the Prophet, and she is graced in the memory of all the Muslims, and she is until now respected and honored by them.

“Oum Hakim” also has many distinguishing characteristics, which make her different from “Adah”. Oum Hakim is depicted by the author as a historical heroine, because she is among the few women who participate in the battles of the Islamic conquests.

From this we can say that, the circumstances that characterize the living of these three characters are not the same, they belong to dissimilar social status and this can be considered as a significant element to differentiate them.

II.2.1.2 Instructed but Different:

Adah and Aisha:

It is evident that, “Adah” and “Aisha” are presented by the two authors as educated women. They can read, write and they both of them have a certain level of comprehending and understanding. However, this is not enough to confirm that their education is completely the same.

In days of yore, in the Arab’s desert before the appearance of the Islamic religion only a selective category of women had the right to be educated. And with the coming of the Islam women had the free choice to be educated. The majority of women who embraced the Islam religion preferred to learn how to read or to write, because they wanted to learn the “Koran” which the written form of the god’s words.

Unlike the other ordinary women of that time “Aisha”, had the privilege to be the wife of the Prophet. So she always assists to his own interpretation of the “Koran” and “hadith”. As a result, her vocations contribute for the explanation of the holly message of this religion.

*Aicha n'a pas encore vingt ans. Souvent le conseil consultatif se réunit dans sa chambre. Assise dans un coin... Non, Aicha n'a pas encore vingt ans. Se tenant derrière son père, et souvent face à lui, elle commence sa formation politique. Aisha au cœur de Médine.*²⁰

Concerning the main protagonist of Buchi Emechets' novel “Adah”, the description of her access to education is not deeply explained by the author. In the novel, the author refers to her studies briefly; this is explained in this short sentence : “..... so she told her that she was a sociology student, and that she attended classes in the evenings”²¹. Whereas in Assia Djebar's novel, a more important consideration is given to the importance of certain women's education especially “Aisha”, who thanks to her complete understanding of the Prophet's “hadith” many women and even men of that time could understand and memorize what their religion teach them to do.

Consequently, from all this we can understand that both “Aisha” and “Adah” do not have the same form of education. It is true that these two protagonists want to prove that they can be gain their due place in their societies as liberated women. Yet, the causes, which push them to be successful in their studies, are not the same. “Adah” wants to study not to be successful in her professional life but also to ameliorate the situation of her living, and to have a better and to secure a better future to her children. “Aisha”, has a different objective she wants to make her duty as a Muslim woman, she wants to transmit to the other generations the sacred message of the Islam.

II.2.1.3. Women Belonging to Different Societies:

Carol and Sirin:

In the novel of Buchi Emecheta, “Carol” is presented as the Family Adviser; she works with the government and takes the responsibility of controlling all what the women of the Mansion do, and what they need. We can say that it is her job, and she is paid by the government for her services. She is described in this quotation:

Carol observed, bending her thick neck to one side. In another woman the attitude and posture she adopted would have been feminine and maternal, but her bulk robbed her of all those qualities. No wonder they made her the Family Adviser²².

It is apparent, that “Carol” does her work as an employer of the government Nevertheless, “Sirin” does not consider what she makes as a profession, she feels like it is her duty to help the other women, who suffers from many problems like the separated, the orphan, the oppressed women. She decides to make her own house as a shelter for them. It is also imperative to notice that “Sirin” is pushed by personnel factor, because she experienced in “Medina” the feeling of being far from her home country “Alexandria”, where her distant childhood memories, and this pushes her to be more comprehensive of the women’s sufferings.

La voici quittant finalement Médine, non pour retrouver ses lieux d’enfance (L’Egypte est pourtant devenue province musulmane), mais pour aller encore plus à l’est : mourir à Basra, en exilée permanente, protectrice des servantes, des esclaves, des femmes sans appui.²³

Therefore, we may say that each of these two protagonists have special and a unique way of doing her responsibility towards the other women to assist them.

II.2.1.4. Distinctive Choices:

Adah and Atika

It is proper that, these two characters have the same strong fortitude, to confirm their presence in their respective societies. But, this does not refute the fact that they have many differences concerning their way of living, and their decisive choices in their life.

After the death of her first husband “Atika” renounces to her promise to never remarry again, and she marries with “Omar Iben Khatab” who is known for his austerity and jealousy. She decides to live with another man, to prove to the others that she can even live her life as she uses to do, even with a harsh husband. Contrary to “Adah”, who decides to live lonely and to take care of her five children alone, without the help of any man. In addition to this, we can also mention that “Atika” is an excellent poet; she also uses to challenge her first husband in improvising new verses of poesy. Whereas, “Adah”, in this novel does not have any kind of literary means to express herself. Finally, we can say that both “Atika” and “Adah” do not have the same way of living. Each one of them, have chosen her own manner to find her place in her society where she live.

To conclude this chapter, we may say that both Assia Djebar and Buchi Emecheta have selected many characters to transmit their liberal and feminist thinking. These chosen protagonists share many common features, and also they can be differentiated according to unlinked characteristics. Yet, the aim of the two authors is the alike their objective falls into the same aim. They want to substantiate throughout their central characters the significance of the women’s emancipation to validate their due statue in their society, regardless the period of time and even the community where they live.

II.2.1.6Notes:

¹Assia Djebbar, “*Loin De Médine*”, (Paris :Albin Michel,1991), 85.

²Emecheta Buchi, *In the Ditch*, (Great Britain:Allison and Busby,1979), 02.

³Ibid.,03

⁴H.M. Parshley, Trans, “*The Second Sex*”, (Great Britain: Bound and Baydone, 1953),87.

⁵Assia Djebbar, “*Loin De Médine*”, 142.

⁶Emecheta Buchi, “*In the Ditch*”, 17.

⁷Ibid., 87.

⁸Ibid., 22.

⁹Ibid., 21.

¹⁰H.M. Parshley , “*The Second Sex*”, 641.

¹¹Emecheta, Buchi, “*In the Ditch*”, 25.

¹²Ibid.,28

¹³Assia Djebbar, *Loin De Médine*, 200.

¹⁴Emecheta Buchi, “*In the Ditch*”, 15.

¹⁵Ibid., 05

¹⁶Assia, Djebbar, “*Loin De Médine*”, 207.

¹⁷Ibid., 210.

¹⁸Ibid., 75.

¹⁹Ibid.,84

²⁰Ibid.,295-296

²¹Emecheta, Buchi, “*In the Ditch*”, 27

²² Ibid., 26.

²³ Assia, Djebbar, “*Loin De Médine*”, 200.

III. Chapter three: Emancipation in Buchi Emecheta's In the Ditch and Assia Djébar's

Loin De Médine:

It is only at the beginning of the 20th century that the term "Feminism," became widely used in the fields of literature. It refers to the fight for women's liberation it was and it is still important. "Impartiality", "equal rights" and "civil liberties", "emancipation". All these terms motivate the emergence of feminism.

Hence, the essentials of this feminist thinking belong more to the fight for women's equality with men. The well known opinion about the women's movement is conveyed by the American women's movement, in 1848 at "Seneca Falls". The main focus at that time, was on votes that is to say that, the first women's claim was their fights to have their due right to participate in the political decisions of their country. "*Rights equal to those granted men*"¹.

In this context also, Oliver Banks has defined feminism as a historical phenomenon, which started from:

A sense of dissatisfaction with the conditions of women's live and opportunities coupled with the beliefs that women's disabilities rise not from nature itself, nor indeed from any ills which afflict mankind but from the way in which woman's desire and abilities have been made subordinate to their needs, desire and interest of men .²

Women's emancipation had been in use since the beginning of the 19th Century. We can say that this term refers to the climax phases of the feminist women's movement. Throughout the two novels, the two feminist writers Assia Djébar and Buchi Emecheta develop their feminist thoughts within their two stories, and also the domains in which they extend their points of view and thinking. Assia Djébar, locates her story during the previous and the first appearance of the new religion "Islam", and the place where the events take place is the Arab desert. For this reason, the writer uses the true, real events that happened during this period of time, but with the great emphasis on the chief role of women during this crucial period.

Concerning Buchi Emecheta's novel, the story deals with the life of an ordinary woman, who belongs to the black emigrant community of England. Her main protagonist represents the illustration of the women's struggle against the hard conditions of the modern life.

From all this, we may deduce that when reading the two novels, it is very obvious that the two authors investigate in their writings a principal theme which concerns the significance of women's liberation. Since, the two stories give us a clear demonstration of what women are capable to accomplish, unless the immense obstacles that prevent women to have their owed place in their societies.

Consequently, in this chapter the study will focus on how Assia Djébar and Buchi Emecheta apply their ideas about the great importance of the women's emancipation. Each one of them has his own personal approach about this fact, yet their perception has the same goal which consists of giving the women their outstanding place in the society.

III. 1 Emancipation in Djébar's novel Loin De Médine :

Assia Djébar uses the voices and the immense accomplishment of a group of representative women, such as "Aïcha" or "Fatima", and uses them as a palimpsest on which they write their own living speech. In order to avoid the forgetfulness of these fascinating Muslim women fighting for the "Islam", the novel "*Loin De Médine*" proposes to tell the story of eighteen female destinies in their heroism and bravery. In this context, Assia Djébar says:

" J'écris, contre la mort, j'écris contre l'oubli, j'écris contre l'espérance dérisoire de laisser une trace..."³

Through the texts of Djébar, we can undoubtedly notice that the women's voices are given the opportunity to tell their own version of history, this also allows Assia Djébar to add more relevant feminine sources to those of the male historians such as, Tabari, Ibn Hichem and Ibn Saad.

The author wants to confirm the great role of women during the emergence of the Islam religion, and to assert that it is thanks to this new religion that women could enforce their presence in their society, without letting women in the shadow of men, and which allows the renewal of the women, to break the silence in which they were forced to stay in it for centuries. In her foreword she writes: “ *Au cours de la période évoquée ici, qui commence avec la mort de Mohammed, de multiples destinées de femmes se sont imposées à moi ; j’ai cherché à les ressusciter...* ” ⁴.

In Djébar's novel, it is clear that the women are not merely presented as the other previous historians used to marginalize the role of women. As first a Muslim woman, and secondly as the defenders of the women, Assia Djébar demonstrates that women has the right to inherit, the example is the one of “Fatima” the Prophet's daughter. Djébar argues:

“ *Le coran ne venait- il pas précisément de leur donner, révolution dérangement, leur part d’héritage reconnue et le droit, théorique, de gérer leurs biens matériels, indépendamment du mari, ou des frères ou des fils* ”. ⁵

From this, we can understand that the writer wants to say that even though the holy book of “Islam” gives women the complete and legitimate right, but this does not deny the reality which stipulates that, they still have to fight to confirm their existence as an indispensable fraction of the society.

In addition to this, they also take part in the wars that are held for the spread of the Islam, for instance “Oum Hakim”, or even her mother “Fatima bent el Walid”. In this context,

Djebar writes: “*Elles combattirent en personne et rivalisèrent avec les hommes. Parmi ces combattantes se trouvait Oum Hakim bent ibn Hichem*”⁶.

As a narrator of these events, Assia Djebar will not only describe this historic moment, but she will certainly review it from her personal perspective. As it is known, Assia Djebar has been educated in both the Coranic School and later on in the French institutions. So, she is influenced by both cultures. Assia Djebar decides to write, because for her the act of writing is the preeminent way to defend and to express her feminist thinking. Baida Cheikhi writes about Assia Djebar’s feminist commitment: “*Ecrivain femme porte-parole des femmes séquestrées, écrivain témoin d’une époque historique, écrivain stimulant la mémoire des aïeules et secouant les archives*”⁷.

The theme of emancipation, in the novel of Assia Djebar is illustrated through the endeavor of this group of women, who have fulfilled in different domains many great accomplishments.

For instance, the “*Rawiyat*”, which means “the transmitters” are the women who surrounded the Prophet during his life and after his death, they recorded and reconstructed his “*Hadit*”. Moreover, in this novel the authors demonstrate also that the women presence is decisive during the battles that the Prophet has done to consolidate his power. The author wants to make a discourse that opposes any ideology that denies women's speech. For the author, all previous perceptions about the Muslim women as the marginalized and insignificant beings are no longer legitimate.

For the author, this new religion “Islam” gives a new valuating statue to all women of the world and to the Arab women in particular. It is quite evident, that through the novel of Assia Djebar “*Loin De Médine*”, women are given much more importance and particularly she emphasizes on their significant improvement in distinct domains of the life at that time.

In fact, the novelist opposes fearful image of woman, the woman that is always by introducing the inventive female character. The Yemeni queen is presented by the author as a woman who is capable of organizing conspires to eliminate the man who pretends to be the Prophet, named “Aswad”.

Djebar writes: “*Au terme de cette illusion, sa haine. Elle s’est trompée. L’homme n’est même pas un simple croyant ; il vit en païen. Ce n’est qu’un imposteur. (...) Bien loin d’être réduite au rôle de simple intrigante, la voici l’âme de la machination*”⁸.

The author also explores the great significance of woman’s emancipation and its positive impact in the society of that time. It is obvious that, the author wants to show that the involvement of women that contribute for the glory and the majesty of the Islamic religion. It includes also the women’s work in the battle fields; they work as nurses. “Aicha” is a perfect example of women who has the role of not only the wife of the Prophet, but also she helps him in his missions: “*Aicha fait l’infirmière*”⁹, so her role as a nurse has a very significant role to help her husband the Prophet “Mohammed”, and all other Muslim warriors.

Subsequently, the author manages in her book to give us a concrete illustration of the great achievements of the Arab’s women in this magnificent period of time, which is the period after the emergence of the Islamic religion.

It is thanks to their admittance to many domains in society, which were previously banned from them, for example having the right to be educated, because the Islam urges the men as well as women to be educated, women are equal to men; they can inherit and even express their thought freely without any restrictions.

III. 2 The women's Emancipation in Buchi Emecheta's novel:

Women in Africa, have joined women of the other nations in their pursue for the rights opportunities, relevance and acknowledgment. Fortunately today, a flood of female writers in Africa is emerging every year. The emergence of women writers on the literary scene in Nigeria marks the opening of female centered novels. "Adimora Ezeigbo" is a feminist writer that believes that when a woman writes, she focus on her personnel life to provide an evidence of her struggle towards her liberation.

The Nigerian author Buchi Emecheta published many novels. Starting from 1975, when she first wrote down her semi- biographical novel "*In the Ditch*". In 1962, she was just eighteen; Emecheta went to London with her husband. Despite the fact that her skills in English were still deficient, she was determined to ameliorate them and begin writing. Her husband's lack of objectives in his life urged her to work outside the home. She found a job in the library of the British Museum in 1965. And after her divorce, Emecheta became a single woman who suffered a lot to live a honest life, without the help of anyone else. Here is what Emecheta says about what she experienced in her life:

*"I thought I would wait to be as old as Big Mother with a string of degrees before writing, but I had to earn my living and the only thing I could do was write."*¹⁰

Emecheta is a majestic example of the African women who defied all the obstacles to achieve her goals of success. She first engaged at the University of London, earned a degree in sociology, and began writing articles about her experience in London for "*the New Statesman*" in 1972 and after this short experience as a journalist, Emecheta decided to write her first novel "*In the Ditch*".

In his book entitled "*Women writers in Black Africa*", Brown confirms the idea that all women share the same problems, which are: "*dependency, secondary existence, domestic*

*labor, sexual exploitation, and the structuring of their role in protection into a total definition of their existence”*¹¹.

As it is said, the story of Buchi Emecheta is a semi-biographical novel. The author expresses her personal point of view about the importance of women's liberation throughout her true experience. Emecheta thinks that, it is thanks to work that a woman can feel that she exists.

The main protagonist “Adah” is portrayed as a hard worker she is a single woman, and a mother of five children. Unless the rigid obstacles, “Adah” manages to live freely her life and continue her university studies in London, this place that “Adah” calls “free country” where she can work and raise her children alone. In addition to this, “Adah” incarnates the emancipated woman, and she is independent. “Adah” likes taking decisions alone; and her only resolve is to have a better life for her and her children is immense.

“Adah” wants to work and to study in order to leave the Mansions, to have another life elsewhere. She says: *“I suppose I have to go....I have to learn to make my own decisions without running to Carol”*¹². “Adah”, is considered by Emecheta as the representative of her own thinking and also ambitions.

The author does not refute the fact that the roles of women in child's education and raising children are indispensable in any given society, and that it is through her, that the child learns the first indispensable rules in of the social life, such as the good manners. So, the role of the women is necessary to have better future generations.

Nevertheless, Buchi Emecheta as an African feminist author is against this African tradition, which has stereotyped and reduces the woman statue to merely the motherhood and marriage. It is for that reason that the author stress on the importance of the “Adah”'s work,

thanks to her hard vocation the main protagonist feels that she exists as a complete citizen in her society.

The author wants to confirm that a woman needs to have the complete control of her life, and in order to achieve this, she has to participate in the working world like men. Emecheta as an African author wants to confirm her presence as the defender of women through her writings, she shoes to be a writer, because for her when writing, she frees herself to express freely her thoughts. Buchi Emecheta says: *“I am an ordinary writer who was to write, because if I didn’t write I think I would have to be put in an asylum”*¹³.

From the analysis of the theme of woman’s emancipation, the two authors seem to join the same idea. In their novels, the female characters can be described as liberated women only thanks to their vocations, efforts and works in many domains. Regardless the period or the place, according to the two authors, the woman can only be considered as an emancipated woman, if the latter can work, and especially can have access to education.

This is what Simone De Beauvoir wants to convey, she always insists on the enormous importance of the women’s effective role in any given society. In this context Simone De Beauvoir writes:

*“Woman is no longer limited to the reproductive function, which has lost in large part its character as natural servitude and has come to be regarded as a function to be voluntarily assumed”*¹⁴.

Moreover, in a 1972 an interview with “Alice Schwarzer”, Simone De Beauvoir declares as a feminist that the most important thing that women can do in their lives is to work, so that they can be independent. The work is not a perfect solution, nor it is a resolution to all the women’s problems, but to De Beauvoir insists on the fact that it is the employment which is the *“first condition for women's independence”*¹⁵.

In her book, Simone De Beauvoir gives the example of a charwoman who is proud of what she is doing, because she gains her life with her personal efforts she says: “*I never asked anybody for anything. I succeeded all by myself*”. She was as proud of herself sufficiency as a Rockefeller”¹⁶.

Islam gives an immense importance to women’s role in the society, and does not prevent women from work. Djebbar’s work wants to demonstrate that this new religion liberates women from the previous awful myths that surround their life. As it is known, before Islam the Arab women during the dark epoch of “Jahilia” societies were not only subjugated, but also resumed to the plain function of satisfying the man’s desires.

This verse from Sourat “An Nahl” (the Bee), confirms this idea:

مَنْ عَمِلَ صَالِحًا مِّنْ ذَكَرٍ أَوْ أَنثَىٰ وَهُوَ مُؤْمِنٌ فَلَنُحْيِيَنَّهٗ
حَيٰوةً طَيِّبَةً ۖ وَلَنَجْزِيَنَّهُمْ أَجْرَهُم بِأَحْسَنِ مَا كَانُوا
يَعْمَلُونَ ﴿١٧﴾

17

This verse taken from the Koran, stipulates that the woman has the same right like the man to work. All depends on their faith. This means that they have to do their work correctly to assure a better life, and thus God surely give them their reward.

This common thinking about the importance of women’s work is shared between these two feminist writers, but it is crucial to distinguish between the ways they express their ideas. Assia Djebbar tries to give her perception starting from her own religious believe, she uses the historical events to illustrate her ideas. She emphasizes on the idea that, all previous false conceptions about the Arab women are wrong. The Muslim women were liberated thanks to

the” Islam” religion, and due to this new stage in the history of the Arab’s women, that women could realize great accomplishments which is still graved in the history.

Nevertheless the Nigerian author portrays the living of an ordinary woman “Adah” who lives in a foreign country as a single woman. The living conditions of the Black emigrants are not as good as they hoped when they arrived to England. “Adah” is like other women of the Mansions, a single woman with many children to feat. The author wants to show that it is thanks to liberate life of this protagonist; she can get what she wants without denying the hardness of her life, still she could work and continue her studies without losing hope for better future for her and her children. The Nigerian author Buchi Emecheta develops her feminist thinking from a personal experience, and her own experience is presented in her novel within the actions of her main character “Adah”, who tries to extract herself from the oppressive environment where she lives.

To sum up, we may say that the woman’s emancipation is a fundamental theme in both novels. Both feminist authors expressed this theme in different ways, yet they have the same central idea in common, which is that woman can have her due place in society through her actions and her work, so that she will be considered as really an emancipated woman and thus to assure her expected rights, without being always rejected and let in the secondary position.

III.6 Notes and References:

¹Andrew Sinclair, *The Better Half: The Emancipation of the American Woman* (New York: Harper & Row, 1965).

²Oliver Banks, *Becoming a feminist: The Second Origin of First Wave Feminism*. (Great Britain: Wheat Sheaf Books, Ltd), 1986.

³Mireille Calle-Gruber, *Assia Djébar ou la résistance d'écriture*, (maison neuve, & Larose, 2001), 282.

⁴Assia Djébar, *Loin De Médine*, (Albin Michel : Paris, 1991) ,5.

⁵Assia Djébar, *Ces voix qui m'assiègent : en marge de ma Francophonie*, (P.U.M, 1999), 269.

⁶Assia Djébar, *Loin De Médine*, 155.

⁷Beida Ceikhi, *Les romans d'Assia Djébar*, (OPU, 2002), 67.

⁸Assia Djébar, *Loin De Médine*, 260

⁹*Ibid.*, 277.

¹⁰Kristen, H, Petersen, *criticism and Ideology: second African Writers' Conference* (Stockholm, Nordic Africa Institute, 1988), 71.

¹¹Lloyd, W, Brown, *Women Writers in Black Africa*, (Westport, Greenwood press, 1981), 6.

¹²Buchi Emecheta, *In the Ditch*, (Great Britain Allison and Busby, 1979), 127.

¹³Kristen Holt Petersen, *criticism and Ideology: second African Writers' Conference*, 76.

¹⁴H.M. parshley; trans, *The Second Sex* (Great Britain, Bound and Baydone, 1953), 415.

¹⁵Alice Schwarzer, *"After the Second Sex: Conversations With Simone de Beauvoir"*, (published by Pantheon Books, 1984.).

¹⁶ H.M. parshley,trans, *The Second Sex*, 641.

¹⁷ The Quoran verse taken from Sourat An Nahl, 97.

General Conclusion:

The feminist movement had always been a movement of contestation and protest, with the sole objective of bringing a positive change in the situation of women. Men robbed women their springs and happiness which is so essential to them thus, Their life of subjection and subordination, urged them from different parts of the world to revolt, in order to snatch their liberties. Unless the thorny troubles, the feminist movement succeeded in securing and protecting their rights as a complete civilian, a worker in many domains of the life in society, but without also denying her immense importance to preserve the harmony in the family. Harmony and agreement between the two sexes, male and female do not only means the elimination of their distinctive individual uniqueness, they can easily meet without aggression and opposition.

Emancipation is vital for women, all their affirmation and bustle should attain its complete term to be viewed as a human in the truest sense, and they have to break the barriers and pave the road towards a greater freedom cleared from centuries of submission and slavery. Many female authors appeared during the past centuries, to be the defenders of woman's rights. Despite, the difference of the religion, period of time, language or even the culture, the feminist writers have the same aim. Their writings manage with time to clarify, correct and give more importance to the women's status.

In this comparative research, set the light on the two works of both African authors, Assia Djebar and Buchi Emecheta. In the one hand, the novel of Assia Djebar "*Loin De Médine*" and "*In the Dich*" of Buchi Emecheta seem completely different. Concerning the stories, they are held in period of times which are completely apart. Assia Djebar's novel is about the

first appearance of Islam, so, her records of the historical events concern women's achievement during this particular sensitive epoch. For instance, Aicha, Fatima, Sirin, Oum Hakim, who illustrated the educated, rebellious and the defenders of the subjugated women of that time.

On the other hand, Buchi Emecheta's novel deals with the living of women during the 20th century, and in particular the life of a black woman called "Adah". The comparative study demonstrated that the two feminist authors give a great significance to women's great achievement in their societies, and according to them, a woman can get her emancipation not by imposing themselves by force, but rather by imposing themselves thanks to their works in their society. That is why many female protagonists from both novels shares many liberated characteristics.

Moreover, in both novels the two authors contradict the old negative perception of women. Assia Djébar in her novel provides the image of the Arab women, who are very active with their enormous and unforgettable deeds. The same essential theme is expressed in the novel of Buchi Emecheta through her portrayal of the daily struggle of her main protagonist "Adah". Both of the two authors join the ideas, perceptions of Simone De Beauvoir about having one's emancipation through the women's access to the working class.

From what has been written above, and from this comparative approach, we may deduce that the woman of today is required to learn and to take the example of the previous women who marked the history by their actions, like the group of female characters of Assia Djébar's novel, who have the same strength and willpower of the main protagonist of Buchi Emecheta's novel.

As a final point, we can observe that women are becoming more aware of their duty. They should liberate themselves not only from social restriction, but also from the political, cultural and religious ones. Their claim of being emancipated should not only be written on a raff papers, they have to live and have the benefit of it. Men should alter their vision; renew their work in solidarity with women to liberate the human race from all forms of unkindness.

For this reason, it is true that women's emancipation is very important, but is still viewed only as a process that one can argue can becomes a reality. Nevertheless, a crucial idea can emerge from this problematic issue. The reclamation of women to be emancipated with time will contradict the cultural and the traditions of any given society especially in the Arab countries.

General bibliography:

Primary Sources:

Djebar, Assia, *Loin De Médine*, Paris : Albin Michel, 1991.

Emecheta, Buchi, *In the Ditch*, Great Britain: Allison and Busby, 1979.

Theoretical Sources:

Heinamaa, Sara, “*Simone de Beauvoir’s phenomenology of sexual difference*”, *Hypatia*, Vol.14, 1999.

Parshley, H.M, Trans, *The Second Sex*, Great Britain: Lowe and Bydone, 1953.

Schwarzer, Alice, “*After the Second Sex: Conversations With Simone de Beauvoir*”, published by Pantheon Books, 1984.

Secondary Sources:

Djebar, Assia, “*L ’amour La Fantasia*”, Paris :A. Michel, 1995.

Emechet, Buchi, “*Bride Price*”, Great Britain: Allison and Bushy, 1976.

Emecheta, Buchi, “*the joys of motherhood*”, Great Britain: Allison and Bushy, 1979.

Banks, Oliver, *Becoming a feminist: The Second Origin of First Wave Feminism*. Great Britain: Wheat Sheaf Books, Ltd, 1986.

Briana, Belciug , “*Loin De Medine D’Assia Djebar La figure de Fatima ou Antigone*”, Musmane Annals of Ovidius University Constanta, 2011.

Beasley, Chris, *Gender and Sexuality: Critical theories, critical thinkers*, California: Sage Publications, 2005.

- Brown Lloyed, W, *Women Writers in Black Africa*, Westport, Greenwood press, 1981.
- Calle-Gruber, Mireille, *Assia Djébar ou la résistance d'écriture*, Paris : maison neuve, & Larose, 2001.
- Ceikhi, Beida, *Les romans d'Assia Djébar*, OPU, 2002.
- Djébar, Assia, " *Ces voix qui m'assiègent en marge de ma Francophonie* ", P.U.M, 1999.
- Donald R, Wehrs, " *The Sencible, the Maternal and Ethical Beginnings of Feminist Islamic Discourse in Djébar's Loin De Médine and L'amour, La Fantasia* ", John Hopkins University press, 2003.
- Hiddleston, Jane, *Assia Djébar out of Algeria*, Liverpool: University Press, 2006.
- Moore, Lindsey. *Arab Muslim, woman: voice and vision in postcolonial literature and Film*, New York: Rutledge, 2008.
- Nino, Lana, *Women: Feminism and Sexuality and Equality in the workplace*, Clifornia: Buisness administration, 2006.
- Petersen, Kristen, H, *criticism and Ideology: second African Writers' Conference* Stockholm, Nordic Africa Istitute, 1988.
- Sinclair, Andrew, The Better Half: " *The Emancipation of the American Woman* ", New York: Harper & Row, 1965.
- Smail Salhi, Zahia, " *Algerian Women's Resistance against the Islamist Femicide* ", cited in the International Collogue " Gender Resistance and Negotiation ", Mouloud Mammeri University of Tizi-Ouzou, 2011.

Theses:

Abiosch M,P., “*Second Class Citizen: The point of Departure for understanding Buchi Emecheta’s Major Fiction*”,Drexel University ,1988.

Bennett, M Judith, *Feminism and Gender History*, Vol.1, N.03, 1989.

Cooper, Brenda, “*Buchi Emecheta’s and Assia Djébar’s Gendered language of resistance*”, Indiana University Press, 2007.

Elayed, Hannan, “*Représentations littéraires du sacré dans le roman maghrébin de langue française*” New Brunswick, New Jersey,October, 2010.

Hammam, Mona, *Women and Islam*, Middle East Research and information project, 1981.

Sougou ,Omar, *Gender politics and Difference in the fiction of Buchi Emecheta*, Indiana University press, Vol 34. N.03, 2003.

Ljing, Christina, “*Women's Rights and Shari'a - A comparative study of marriage and family relations under the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women in the cases of Tunisia, Egypt and Yemen*”, Faculty of Law, University of Lund, 2003.

Obioma, Nnaemeka, *The Politics of Mothering: Womanhood, Identity, and Resistance in African Literature*, London: Taylor and Francis library,2005.

Segarra, Marta, “*Revivre les voix ensevelies : Loin de Medine D’Assia Djébar*”,1995.

Topping Bazin, Nancy,”*Venturing into Feminist Consciousness: Two Protagonists from the Fiction of Buchi Emecheta and Bessie Head.*”,1985.

Van Denver, Rachel, “*La subjection des femmes musulmanes et la sororité dans Loin de Médine*”, in “*Voix plurielles*”, Vol.3, N.1, 2006.

Zimra, Clarisse, “*When the past answers our present: Assia Djebar Talks about Loin De Médine*”, Vol.16, N.1, the Hopkinse University press,1993.

The Koran Verses :

The Koran’s verse taken from Sourat “Bee”.

The Koran’s verse taken from Sourat “Nissa”.

The Koran’s verse taken from Sourat “An Nahl”.