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**Symbolic violence in Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* (1958) and Mouloud Mammeri's *La Colline Oubliée* (1952)**

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*In the memory of  
my lovely brother Tarik  
my lovely sister Zevda  
my dear father Yahia*

**Abstract:**

*This research paper is a comparative study of Chinua Achebe's Things Fall Apart (1958) and Mouloud Mammeri's La Colline Oubliée (1952). To carry out this study, we have relied on Pierre Bourdieu's Symbolic Violence. This theory has helped us to explain the 'soft' manner of domination between two social groups as the case of colonial implicit policies in colonization. Symbolic Violence has also explained the arbitrary power between individuals of the same social group such as Masculine Domination. Our focus is on the affinities in the two novels. This dissertation is divided into four major sections: An Introduction, a section of Methods and Materials, and another for Results, Discussion, and a Conclusion. After a thorough analysis of the two works, we have come some conclusions: the first conclusion is that, in their works, both Achebe and Mammeri have depicted, the Symbolic Violence of the dominant colonist. They have both revealed some cultural and political policies imposed on the indigenous people. The second conclusion is that the traditional social norms of the two societies (Umuofia and Tasga) have reflected clearly the Masculine domination. The last conclusion reached in this study is that Achebe and Mammeri have embraced the post-colonial position of fighting Symbolic Violence and have engaged themselves in supporting their nations' dignity and freedom.*

**Key words:** Symbolic Violence, 'Soft'manner of domination, Habitus, Arbitrary power, legitimate power, Masculine Domination, Cultural industry, Affinities.

# Contents

<b>Acknowledgements</b> .....	<b>I</b>
<b>Dedications</b> .....	<b>II</b>
<b>Abstract</b> .....	<b>III</b>
<b>Contents</b> .....	<b>IV</b>
<b>I. Introduction</b> .....	<b>1</b>
Review of the Literature .....	2
Issue and Working Hypothesis .....	4
Methodological Outline .....	5
Endnotes .....	7
<b>II. Method and Materials</b> .....	<b>8</b>
Methods .....	8
Pierre Bourdieu’s theory of Symbolic Violence.....	8
Materials .....	10
a. Background and Summary of <i>Things Fall Apart</i> .....	10
b. Background and Summary of <i>La Colline Oubliée</i> .....	12
Endnotes .....	15
<b>III. Results</b> .....	<b>16</b>
<b>IV. Discussion</b> .....	<b>18</b>
<b>Chapter I: Cultural Symbolic Violence in <i>Things Fall Apart</i> and <i>La Colline Oublié</i></b> .....	<b>18</b>
a- ‘Cultural Assimilation’ as Symbolic Violence.....	18
b- Cultural Symbolic Violence through Education .....	20
c- Meddour and Enoch as products of ‘Cultural Assimilation’ .....	21
d- Effects of Cultural Symbolic Violence on Umuofia and Tasga.....	22
e- Nowye and Menach’s Dilemma .....	23
Endnotes .....	25

<b>Chapter II: Political Symbolic Violence in <i>Things Fall Apart</i> and <i>La Colline Oubliée</i> .....</b>	<b>26</b>
a- Political Symbolic Violence in <i>La Colline Oubliée</i> .....	26
b- Ibrahim in <i>La Colline Oubliée</i> : A Victim of Political Symbolic Violence.....	28
c- Political Symbolic Violence in <i>Things Fall Apart</i> .....	31
d-Effect of Political Symbolic Violence on Umuofia and Tasga.....	32
Endnotes .....	34
<b>Chapter III: Masculine Domination as Symbolic Violence in <i>Things Fall Apart</i> and <i>La Colline Oubliée</i> .....</b>	<b>35</b>
a- Umuofia And Tasga: The Masculine Dominated Societies .....	35
b- Women’s complicity in Masculine Domination.....	38
c- Ekwefi and Aazi: the issue of motherhood.....	40
Endnotes .....	42
<b>Chapter IV: Opposing Symbolic Violence in <i>Things Fall Apart</i> and <i>La Colline Oubliée</i>.....</b>	<b>43</b>
a- Post Colonial Literature’s resistance to Symbolic Violence.....	43
b- Chinua Achebe and Mouloud Mammeri’s biographies .....	44
c- Resistance to Cultural and political Symbolic Violence in <i>Things Fall Apart</i> and <i>La Colline Oubliée</i> .....	45
d- Resistance to Masculine Domination: Ekwefi and Aazi.....	48
e- Achebe and Mammeri’s commitment to oppose Symbolic Violence.....	49
Endnotes .....	52
<b>General Conclusion .....</b>	<b>53</b>
<b>Selected Bibliography.....</b>	<b>55</b>

## **I- Introduction:**

The present dissertation is a contribution to the field of comparative literature. It is a study of affinities between two novels, which were written by two prominent African writers; namely: *Things Fall Apart* (1958) by the Nigerian novelist; Chinua Achebe and *La Colline Oubliée* (1952) by the Algerian Francophone author Mouloud Mammeri. Our main purpose is to explore and to examine the 'soft' and 'invisible' domination in the two works. To be explicit, we will try, through this humble work to focus on the theory of Symbolic violence as it was set by the French sociologists Pierre Bourdieu and John Claude Passeron in *La Reproduction* (1971) as another perspective of the novels.

Algeria and Nigeria were both colonies, the former was a French colony until 1962, while the latter was a British protectorate until 1960. Consequently, the two authors adopted the colonial languages that they both received from colonial schools. Mammeri and Achebe used only the languages and rejected the colonial culture. Mouloud Mammeri says: "J'ai appris le français à l'école. Il s'agissait donc d'un apprentissage artificiel"<sup>1</sup>. Chinua Achebe goes further and says: "the colonial education was saying there was nothing worth much in my society and I was beginning to question that to see there were things that were beautiful even in the heathen"<sup>2</sup>. The two novelists target their own involvement and experiences in their works. They portray the social issues as well as the oppression that their people are exposed to. Mammeri in *La Colline Oubliée* treated a crucial and burning period that the Kabyle society witnessed during the World War II, whereas Achebe in *Things Fall Apart* discusses the Igbo society during the arrival of the European Missionaries.

## **Review of the Literature:**

This part of our dissertation includes a review of some of the critical studies written on *Things Fall Apart* and *La Colline Oubliée*. We have selected the most influential comments and written articles on both novels.

It is worth noting that Chinua Achebe is read and discussed more than any other African writer. At its publication in 1958, *Thing Fall Apart* received harsh criticism that faulted Achebe for not mentioning the pain, struggle and colonial injustices that the Nigerian people witnessed. Among the critics Ode Ogede in his analysis entitled: *Achebe or the Politics of Representation* wrote that Nigerian Nationalist cause was not Achebe's main concern. The critic affirmed that Achebe failed to construct an adequate anti colonist narrative<sup>3</sup>.

Apart from this first critic and throughout the impressive amount of readings and comments, Achebe's first novel becomes the best African work. Among the literary critics relevant to his works, Wole Soyinka who reveals that *Things Fall Apart* makes the great shift of the western perspective about the Africans and their 'Africanity'. For him, *Things Fall Apart* was a tale told 'from the inside' about the destructive impact of European Christianity on pre-colonial Igbo society. Wole Soyinka claimed that *Things Fall Apart* is:

The first novel in English which spoke from the interior of an African character, rather than portraying the African as exotic as the white man would see him<sup>4</sup>.

*Things Fall Apart* becomes one of the most widely read novel of the twentieth century; ten million copies were sold in more than forty five languages. Isidore okpewho wrote: "*Things Fall Apart* is in its home continent of Africa...the most widely read book, next to the Bible and the Quran. Outside Africa, it has become part of a global literary canon."<sup>5</sup>Achebe

was called the founding father of the African novel and his *Things Fall Apart* is considered as a classic in every sense.

For Ngugi Wa Thiong'o this Novel represents the period of pre colonial Igbo society in a way which is full of confidence and self worth. He also highlights Achebe's mastery of the English language. Ngugi Wa Thiong'o declares in *Moving the Centre*:

There is a kind of self assuredness, a confidence, if you like, in the scope and the mastery of material in some of the best and most representative products of the period: Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*<sup>6</sup>

Like Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*, the value of Mouloud Mammeri's *La Colline Oubliée* has built up over time. Just after its publication in 1952, it arouses the strongest controversies in the history of Algerian literature. Patrick Corcoran in *The Cambridge Introduction to Francophone Literature* writes:

Early reviews of Mammeri's *La Colline Oubliée* (1952)... accused the novel of serving the colonial cause through its failure to portray Algeria as a society in transition. The pressure on writers to visibly commit themselves and their work to furthering the cause of independence was palpable<sup>7</sup>.

Among those reviews, there were some articles in *Le Jeune Musulman*. In 1953. The article entitled *La Colline du Reniement* written by a militant in the Algerian Popular Party (PPA) called Mohamed Cherif Sahli. He accused Mammeri of not serving the political movement. The work was for him only an 'art for art sake'.

Il nous importe peu qu'un écrivain Algerien écrivant en français, se taille une place dans la littérature par la qualité formelle de son œuvre. La théorie de l'art pour l'art est particulièrement odieuse dans ses moments où les peuples engagent leur existence dans les durs combats de libération".<sup>8</sup>

Furthermore, Amar Ozeguane in the same newspaper claimed that Mammeri has put his pen for the service of the colonial cause. "Et s'il y a des imbéciles pour oublier la triste réalité d'oppression nationale de notre patrie ...en suivant le mirage de l'art pour l'art, notre jeunesse

musulmane ne sera dupe de la grocière manœuvre politique tenté par l'impérialisme français".<sup>9</sup> In addition a critic called Mustapha Lachref attacked the novel. He declared that the novel is far from being a historical document. "Le roman de Mammeri est-il un document ? Il ne mérite pas entièrement cette qualification pour sa subjectivité même son absence de chaleur humaine".<sup>10</sup>

Later on, many foreign critics reacted to those nationalistic reviews mainly Isaac Yativ who considers Mouloud Mammeri's work as a portrait of his real small world that the nationalists ignore. "Mammeri décrivait son petit monde, la Kabylie et les Berbères...Mammeri avait décrit une situation réelle mais que les nationalistes voulaient ignorer."<sup>11</sup>In 1956, the Egyptian Taha Hussein wrote an article ; *La Colline Oubliée, roman de l'écrivain Algérien Mouloud Mammeri*. He qualified the novel as an 'excellent novel'. "Ce livre est si remarquable qu'il peut être un des meilleurs parmi ceux publiés ces dernières années en littérature française ...une étude sociologique fine et profonde."<sup>12</sup>. Taha Hussein claimed that *La Colline Oubliée* is a deep and fine social study of the Kabyle society.

After the Algerian Independence, *La Colline Oubliée* started to be disassociated from the 'noise' it provoked. Many Algerian scholars analysed the novel as Abdelaziz Khati in his *La Kabylie par ses romanciers* who examined and analyzed it through literary theories. He confirms that *La Colline Oubliée* is a portrait of a society struggling to reconcile its internal tensions under an external force .<sup>13</sup>

### **Issue and Working Hypotheses:**

Through all the above literature, we notice that *Things Fall Apart* and *La Colline Oubliée* have received a great deal of criticism. However, in our best knowledge, the two works have not been compared. Therefore, in the present paper we shall attempt to compare the existing affinities between the two novels using the sociological literary theory of

Symbolic Violence. Our task in the present dissertation is mainly to present this hidden violence in both novels and its effect to maintain the ‘soft’ manner of domination. In other words, we shall attempt to find if Bourdieu’s theory of Symbolic Violence is echoed in the two novels.

It is worth to mention that our issue in the dissertation consists of showing the possible similarities between Achebe’s *Things Fall Apart* and Mammeri’s *La Colline Oubliée*. Despite the fact that the two novels were written in different languages, close affinity comes to exist since both of them belong to societies under colonial domination. We hypothesize, then, that there is a parallelism between the two authors’ description of the indigenous societies under the Symbolic Violence of the colonizer’s authority.

### **Methodological Outline:**

At the methodological level, we intend to undertake our piece of research following the auspices of IMRAD method. Our dissertation is composed of four sections. It contains a general introduction that states our main purpose. It includes a review of some of the critical studies written on both works. Besides, it raises our issue and working hypothesis. In Methods and Materials section, we define the theory of Symbolic Violence and its characteristics with reference to Pierre Bourdieu’s *La Reproduction* (1971). After that, we present the two novels of Achebe and Mammeri respectively in a brief way. The Results section contains the findings of our research. Concerning the discussion section, it will be divided into four chapters. The first one is related to the Symbolic Violence in Cultural Assimilation in which we compare the literary works and also two important characters of both works by drawing some parallels between them. The second part deals with the political Symbolic Violence imposed by the dominant colonist and how the two authors build connection between fiction and reality. The third chapter deals with Masculine Domination as a prime example of Symbolic Violence in

which we demonstrate the multiple forms of male discrimination in the two works. The last chapter will be devoted to the resistance in the two novels and the post colonial literature's role in opposing colonial Symbolic Violence. Our dissertation will end with a general conclusion that sums up the main ideas that we have treated in this piece of research.

## Endnotes:

1. Ali Sayad, *Mouloud Mammeri le défricheur de savoirs*, Compus. April 2006, 25.
2. Chinua Achebe, *Anthills of the Savannah* (London: Penguin books, 1987), I.
3. Nadia Naar Gada *Modern African Literature Revisited: A Study of Literary Affinities* (Saarbrücken: Noor Publishing :2016)
4. Chinua Achebe, *Anthills of the Savannah* (London: Penguin Books, 1987), I.
5. Isidore Okpewho, *Chinua Achebe's Things Fall Apart* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 3.
6. Wa Thiong'o Ngugi; *Moving the Centre* (New Hampshire: Heinemann, 1993), 61.
7. Patrick Corcoran, *the Cambridge Introduction to Francophone Literature* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 45.
8. Mohamed Cherif Sahli, *La Colline du Reniement* (Le Jeune Musulman N° 12) January 02<sup>nd</sup>, 1953.
9. Amar Ouzegene, *Qui nous donnera une version nationale de La Casa de l'oncle Tom ?* (Le Jeune Musulman N° 7) October 17<sup>th</sup>, 1952.
10. Mustapha Lachref, *La Colline Oubliée ou Les Consciences Anarchiques* (Le Jeune Musulman N° 15) September 13<sup>th</sup>, 1953.
11. Isaac Yetiv, *Le Thème de l'Aliénation dans le roman maghrébin d'Expression Française de 1952 à 1956 : 21.*
12. Hussein Taha, *La Collie Oubliée, Roman de l'écrivain Algérien Mouloud Mammeri* (Naqd Oua Islah N°4) 1956.
13. Abdelaziz Khati, *La Kabylie par ses romanciers* (Alger : Casbah Edition : 2018).

## II. Methods and Materials

### 1. Methods

This dissertation studies some forms of ‘soft’ manner of domination via symbolic violence in Chinua Achebe’s *Things Fall Apart* (1958) and Mouloud Mammeri’s *La colline oubliée* (1952). To accomplish our study we decided to rely on Pierre Bourdieu and John Claude Passeron’s *La Reproduction* (1971) and other works by Bourdieu such as *La Domination Masculine* (1998).

As a classical theory of power, Symbolic Violence was first set by the German economist and sociologist Marx Weber. It has been synthesized by the French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu. He addresses the issue of invisible and non-physical violence as it is manifested between and within social groups. “La manière douce peut être le seul moyen efficace d’exercer le pouvoir de violence symbolique dans un certain état des rapports de force...”<sup>1</sup> Pierre Bourdieu explained how social order is maintained through Symbolic Violence as a means of subjugation even though it is seemingly invisible. ‘Soft’ manner of domination aims at mass destruction of social identification and of individual’s Habitus through pedagogical actions. It focuses on the formation of the ‘Habitus of submission’ that benefits the dominant agent and maintains his authority. “...La violence symbolique est comme un travail d’inculcation qui doit durer assez pour produire une formation durable i.e. l’Habitus”<sup>2</sup>

As it is at the heart of all Bourdieu’s theories, we find important to explain the concept of Habitus. It refers to all the beliefs, tastes, thoughts, interests, social abilities, the way of speaking, the way of dressing...that an individual acquires during his life. It is also a system in which individual perceives and reacts to the new social situations. Thus each individual

develops in general a regular and coherent behaviour which seems natural to him but which is in fact the product of all these past social experiences that orient his future.

Moreover, the social experiences are closely linked to the social and cultural belonging. So the individual's Habitus is built up from his culture and social environment. The individuals placed in comparable conditions of socialization have quite similar Habitus and a rather homogenous life style. Similarly, a social class contains a set of individuals with quite the same Habitus.

The essential point in Bourdieu's theory is the fact that Symbolic Violence affects the individual's thoughts and beliefs. Pierre Bourdieu studied how individuals dominate without being present and without materials (soldiers, sophisticated arms ...). Moreover, the dominant agent controls without creating awareness. The process of domination is done through symbolic means and through daily life and routines. In *La Reproduction*, Bourdieu focuses on education and pedagogical actions as a crucial element of 'Habitus' production of cultural arbitrariness.

L'éducation considérée comme processus à travers lequel s'opère dans le temps la reproduction de l'arbitraire culturel par la médiation de la production de l'Habitus producteur de pratiques conformes à l'arbitraire culturel".<sup>3</sup>

Symbolic Violence means having 'illegal' power through exercising influence by hidden and symbolic means such as: communication, political arbitrary laws, discourses, media, pedagogical actions, social institutions which transmit the social identification...

[Le] pouvoir de violence symbolique qui se manifeste sous la forme d'un droit d'imposition légitime renforce le pouvoir arbitraire qui la fonde et qu'elle dissimule.<sup>4</sup>

The above passage explains that there is, in Symbolic Violence, an arbitrary authority becomes legitimate. This change in meaning is made with the active complicity of the

dominated agents. In other words, the dominants place their system of thought as legitimate. They impose the ideology that generates on their followers a deep sense of inferiority. The dominated perceive social hierarchies as legitimate and natural. In the same way, the relationship between the dominant and his subordinate remains natural and silent (no opposition, no physical conflict).

Symbolic Violence prevents the victims from thinking critically. They blame themselves for their situation, while the responsible remains hidden for them. They accept power relationship as natural and social hierarchies as legitimate. For Bourdieu, the victims are convinced that the social order in which they live is natural and inevitable. In this respect, the subjugated individuals participate in their own subjugation.

...dans son analyse des effets de l'idéologie dominante, l'efficacité réelle du renforcement symbolique des rapports de force qu'implique la reconnaissance par les dominés de la légitimité de la domination ...".<sup>5</sup>

To sum up, the theory of Symbolic Violence explains the mechanisms of 'soft' manner of domination. Symbolic Violence functions via important components acting simultaneously. The abuser can impose any system of thought or arbitrary laws as legitimate via symbolic means to dominate. The Victims recognize this domination as legitimate and then participate in it. Such domination, not only strikes at the integrity of the individuals, but it also attacks their dignity.

## **2-Materials: Background and Summary of the Novels**

### **a. Things Fall Apart (1958)**

*Things Fall Apart* is a novel written in English by the Nigerian author Chinua Achebe in 1958. The title is taken from a poem called *The Second Coming* (1921) by the Irish poet; William Butler Yeats. Set in 1890's, *Things Fall Apart* tells with great realism

the unity of the Igbo world before the incursion of the white man. Achebe describes the society and the changes that come to it. The novel is set in Ibo land towards the end of the nineteenth century, when Europeans were penetrating inland in West Africa. At the time of the novel, there was no idea about 'state', Ibo land is merely the convenient name we give to the large area settled by people who all spoke the same language Ibo, and who shared the same social structure and religious beliefs. They were organized into groups of related villages in basically democratic system. *Things Fall Apart* is centred on the life of the protagonist Okonkwo in Twenty-five short chapters, divided into three parts.

The first part of the novel describes the life style of the characters as well as the societal environment where the plot is set. It is also dominated by the Igbo social structure and its system, beliefs and the fundamental connection of the people such as the Igbo festivals, the worship of the gods and the practices in the ritual ceremonies. Through all this social interactions Okonkwo, the hero of the book, built his Habitus. He has achieved social respect among his clan but he is obsessed by the fear of inheriting the weakness of his father Unoka and the fear that his son Nwoye will not inherit his honour. As the Umuofians have respect to Okonkwo, they chose him to take care of Ikemefuna, a boy given by the neighbouring village as a sacrificial gift, this boy is later killed and Okonkwo takes part in the killing. This event affects his son Nwoye and destroys their relationships. The fact that Okonkwo advertently kills a kinsman; he has been exiled for seven years in Mbanta where he lives with his uncle.

The second part covers Okonkwo's exile in Mbanta. From his friend Obeirika, who looks after his affairs in Umuofia, he learns how the first six white missionaries and officials like Mr. Brown come and how their soft domination has spread among the villages. The intruders start the process of incorporating new religion, language and values to maintain their domination. Many Umuofians are converted to Christianity among them Okonkwo's son

Nwoye. Okonkwo's reaction is to fight in defence of the old and traditional way of life. He decides to withdraw the white man after his exile.

In part three, unhappy with this cultural invasion, Okonkwo and other villagers come together to drive the white missionaries out of their land. Their efforts are in vain as the missionaries send their messengers to stop them. Okonkwo kills one of the messengers and in shock at his actions the villagers let the other messengers escape. The messengers report back to the missionaries and they decided to bring Okonkwo to the court house but they find that Okonkwo hangs himself.

#### **b. La Colline Oubliée (1952)**

*La Colline Oubliée* is a novel about a burning and crucial period in Algerian history in general and that of Kabylia in particular. It evokes the tragic destiny of the neglected peasants of the hills of Kabylia during the World War II. Mouloud Mammeri claims that there is, in *La Colline Oubliée*, a whole colonial situation as it is experienced at that time; there is a generalized misery, the injustice of an order based on violence and the desire for elementary rights, there is mobilization of young Algerians to defend a cause where they are not involved.<sup>6</sup>

*La Colline oubliée* is a story of Tasga, a hill where peasant people live in harmony with their land. The harvest of olives and figs, the last speech of the Sheikh at the public assembly are the only big events in the hill. The 'Habitus' of Tasga's inhabitants are built up from this social environment which turns around the cyclical seasons.

For the little protagonist Mokrane, who grew up in Tasga, the big event is when he meets his group of friends called themselves 'Thaâssast' or 'the guard' ; Menach, Idir, Aazi, Sekoura, Meddour. They meet in the upper room of Mokrane's home which dominates the hill.

The critical situation of Tasga starts when it is devastated by natural disasters: hailstorms and wildfires that destroy the crops and cause an unusual famine and a terrible economic crisis. During such hard times, the hill is forgotten by the authorities. Tasga is alienated from any real reforms and economic help. Throughout the story, all the heroes, the bung of Thaâssast, struggle to maintain their 'Habitus', but everything is an endless upheaval around them and their hopes take a dark day.

As misery plagues the hill, the members of 'Thaâssast' never meet and the room remains closed as a symbol of a lost paradise. The story of *La Colline Oubliée* turns around all the members of 'Thaâssast' and the novel explains how the colonist's policy pushes them to dark days and put an end to their self worth. Despite their attachment to their childhood, their laughter and wellbeing gradually disappeared. Their dream of reopening Thaâssast becomes an illusion. In fact, all the characters, through their collective memories and their actual suffering, are involved in the presentation of the colonist's symbolic violence.

Famine plagues the hill. This affects Sekoura and her husband, Ibrahim. He suffers from the colonial policy that causes his unemployment. The miserable situation of Ibrahim's family pushes him to sell his land, an important wealth for Kabylia people. He works as a slave for the French colons for insufficient wages. Finally he decides to leave Tasga and his family to work in the 'South'.

All the young people of Tasga receive enlistment order to fight in World War II; Mokrane, Menach, Mouh, Idir, Meddour... They leave Tasga and participate in a war which is not theirs. This war constitutes a diversion which puts an end to the windless life of the village in general and that of the young characters in particular. During more than eleven months, Mokrane and his friends accomplish their military duty imposed by the French authorities. They return without Ahcene and Azouaou who died needlessly. They find Tasga

deteriorated further while fundamental conditions for survival remain absent. The village is still ignored by the colonist and no economic supports and helps have been received.

The villagers are unable to reorganize the real causes of their harmful situation. They do not understand all what happens around them. The famine and malnutrition lead to the degradation of their health. The 'Typhus' epidemic spread to the hill. People struggle to nurse themselves because of the absence of public health assistance. Mouh, who survived from the war, died after being contaminated. Tasga begins lamenting and mourning her dead children.

During this dark period, the female characters suffer from double oppression, internal and external. Aazi, Mokrane's wife fights to live in dignity as a 'sterile' wife. Her step mother repudiates her during her husband's absence. As she learns how to read and write, she sends letters to her husband about her situation. She informs him about her pregnancy. It is while trying to join her that Mokrane faces his tragic end in the Col of Kouilal covered by snow in the middle of winter.

The last part of the story is then narrated by Menach, Mokrane's best friend. In addition to what he has witnessed, with his friends, he suffers from a forbidden love; he loves a married woman called Davda. He helps Aazi and her mother in their crisis and debts. He finally decides to exile to escape this unbearable life. His last words in Mokrane's grave, confirm that their common dream to reopening Thaâssast will never be done in Tasga but in another better world where no form of violence will exist.

**End notes:**

- 1-Pierre Bourdieu and Jean Claude Passeron, *La Reproduction* ;(Paris : Les Editions De Minuit1971) ,32
- 2-Pierre Bourdieu and Jean Claude Passeron, *La Reproduction* ;(Paris : Les Editions De Minuit1971) ,46-47
- 3-Pierre Bourdieu and Jean Claude Passeron, *La Reproduction* ;(Paris : Les Editions De Minuit1971) ,47-48
- 4-Pierre Bourdieu and Jean Claude Passeron, *La Reproduction* ;(Paris : Les Editions De Minuit1971) ,28
- 5-Pierre Bourdieu and Jean Claude Passeron, *La Reproduction* ;(Paris : Les Editions De Minuit1971) ,19
- 6- Wadi Bouzar , *L'Aller, le Choc et Le Retour :Mouloud Mammeri (1917-1989) Romancier*, Compus. April 2006,32

### III. Results:

This part of our dissertation sheds light on the findings reached throughout our comparative study of Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* and Mouloud Mammeri's *La Colline Oubliée*. Our analysis has come up with some affinities between the two novels. The results have been achieved after having implemented Pierre Bourdieu's theory of Symbolic Violence. The comparison reveals that there are many similarities even though there is no real connection between the two authors. The investigation has also revealed that the two literary works share the theme of 'soft' domination and its effects.

the discussion of the issue of cultural Symbolic Violence comes to the findings that even though *Things Fall Apart* and *La Colline Oubliée* deal with different colonizers respectively; English and French, the Symbolic violence they use is similar. The policy of 'Cultural Assimilation' as a process of soft domination is reflected in both novels. In addition the two novels share the same theme of colonial violence, the two writers analyse the two societies in transition, Umuofia and Tasga .

From the discussion of the issue of political Symbolic Violence we come up with important findings. Although Achebe and Mammeri do not call or deal with revolution in a direct way, their novels reflect real colonial situations. In fact, they both reveal the invisible arbitrary nature of the colonial policies. Besides, the two novels are strikingly similar in that they both break barriers between fact and fiction i.e. their literary works report real-like events.

The comparative study depicts also some similarities between the two settings, Umuofia and Tasga, in terms of gender. The two traditional societies in the works are male centred societies that reflect clearly the Masculine Domination and the Symbolic Violence exercised on the female characters.

The last chapter offers also some vital findings concerning how post colonial writers, including Achebe and Mammeri, oppose Symbolic Violence. Even though the two novelists write in different languages; Achebe writes in English and Mammeri writes in French, they embrace the post colonial position of fighting Symbolic Violence and engage themselves in supporting their nations' dignity and freedom. They both teach their readers, through their novels of denunciation, important lessons about how to save their identities and to avoid submission.

## **IV. Discussion**

The discussion of the present dissertation is divided into four chapters. The first chapter examines the way in which the two authors describe and represent the Symbolic Violence by the colonists' arbitrary 'Cultural Assimilation'. As for the second chapter, it explores the 'soft' manner of domination via the political rules imposed by the dominant colonists. The third chapter is devoted to the Masculine Domination as a prime example of Symbolic Violence in the traditional societies. The last chapter entitled 'Opposing Symbolic Violence' focuses on the role of the Postcolonial literature, including Achebe and Mammeri's works, to fight the Symbolic Violence and the soft domination.

### **Chapter I: Cultural Symbolic Violence in *Things Fall Apart* and *La Colline Oubliée*.**

#### **a- 'Cultural Assimilation' as Symbolic Violence:**

This chapter centres on the soft domination via 'Cultural Assimilation' in *Things Fall Apart* and *la Colline Oubliée*. Our purpose is to examine how 'Cultural Assimilation' is used as a means for invisible domination and control. We also aim to explain how 'Symbolic Violence' in 'Cultural Assimilation' affects Umuofia's as well as Tasga's inhabitants.

Colonization is not always invading regions with an armed force or physical violence; it often goes through many concepts that are implicit. Colonizers employ not only guns but also symbolic means to achieve control and maintain authority. 'Cultural Assimilation' is among the major ideological components of colonialism. The concept of 'Assimilation' is at the heart of colonial civilizing mission. It is rooted in an imaginary hierarchy in which European civilization and European culture are projected as being superior to other civilizations and

cultures and further advanced in the general definition of progress. Europe's colonial expansion is often accompanied by a severe 'Cultural Assimilation'.

For Pierre Bourdieu the cultural domination starts when an individual or a social group imposes his or their arbitrary culture as superior and legitimate. "La légitimité dominante n'est autre chose que l'imposition arbitraire de l'arbitraire culturel dominant"<sup>1</sup>. He calls this process of 'Cultural Assimilation' 'L'industrie culturelle', i.e. the Cultural Industry which produces the culture to be consumed by the dominated. This process is invisible and not felt by the followers. Chinua Achebe in *Things Fall Apart* recognizes this 'soft' domination and explains how the white man reaches control and authority in Umuofia in an implicit way:

The white man is very clever. He came quietly and peaceably with his religion. We were amused at his foolishness and allowed him to stay. Now he has won our brothers, and our clan can no longer act like one. He has put a knife on the things that held us together and we have fallen apart<sup>2</sup>.

European colonizers view the people in the land they colonized as uncultured and savage who are in need of European governance, religion and other cultural practices. For Achebe, the European invaders see that their mission in Africa is "the pacification of the primitive"<sup>3</sup>. Consequently, the African traditional cultures and identities are erased and then rebuilt according to the occupying power's needs. Paulo Freire considers Cultural Invasion on the one hand an instrument of domination and on the other hand the result of domination<sup>4</sup>.

Both Achebe and Mammeri aim through their works to highlight the damaging effects of the Symbolic Violence of the dominant colonist on the natives' cultures and identities. Achebe provides his readers with an insight of Igbo society right before the white man's invasion in more than thirteen chapters. His detailed description of Igbo life style pushes the reader to see the real image of those called 'savages'. He also portrays the Igbo society as a well structured and organized community. This shows that the indigenous people are not

uncultured or inferior. Similarly, Mammeri portrays the simple life in the hill and emphasizes the inhabitants' attachment to their native soil. He shows through his characters the morality and values of the Kabyle people. Both writers focus on dignity and pride that characterize their indigenous societies. They tell the readers about their full cultural heritage with careful desire to restore their local identity and self-worth.

### **b- Cultural Symbolic Violence through Religion:**

The natives' identity and dignity have been stolen by the colonial policy of Assimilation. The already existing religion, customs and languages are eradicated. In *La Colline Oubliée*, 'cheikh', the religious and Wiseman of the hill, compares the hill before and after the influence of the French beliefs and customs. He sees that the inhabitants of Tasga don't follow the old order and they will no longer speak the language of their fathers. For him Tasga becomes dirty.

La montagne est profanée de partout, et les fils de ceux qui t'écoutaient comme un second prophète y ont fait pénétrer des coutumes qui feraient se dresser tes cheveux sur la tête. Ils ne suivent plus les lois, le jour est proche où ils ne parleront même plus la langue de leurs pères<sup>5</sup>.

In *Things Fall Apart*, when Okonkwo returns to Umuofia, he realizes that the clan has profoundly changed. During his stay in Mbanta, the clan's traditions fade away because of the new religion, schools and government of the white man.

The clan had undergone much profound change during his exile that it was barely recognizable. The new religion and government and trading store were very much in the people's eyes mind<sup>6</sup>.

The Christian religion is the major element that changes Umuofians. It pushes the Igbo people to question their beliefs and customs. The people who convert to Christianity suddenly have a new mind. Everything related to the old way of Umuofia suddenly seems 'bad' to

them. Obierika tells Okonkwo: “he [the white man] says that our customs are bad; and our own brothers who have taken up his religion also say that our customs are bad”<sup>11</sup>. In fact, the Symbolic Violence through ‘Culture Assimilation’ aims at undervaluing the native’s culture. For Pierre Bourdieu, cultural domination succeeds when those invaded become convinced of the dominant culture. For Bourdieu, when people lose faith in themselves, their dominant needs no more efforts; he has reached his objective. In *La Colline Oubliée*, many young Kabyle don’t marry, they follow the French ideology which says that ‘money comes before marriage’. But for Mammeri this contrasts the religion of their ancestors who married without taking into consideration the financial side which is for them the God’ will.

Les jeunes gens ne se mariaient plus. Ils disaient comme les Iroumien qu’il leur fallait d’abord gagner beaucoup d’argent...ils ignoraient que c’est Dieu qui comble et Dieu qui appauvrit. Nos aïeux étaient sages qui se mariaient d’abord, sachant bien que c’est une nécessité naturelle et un devoir envers Dieu et la loi du prophète...<sup>12</sup>.

### **c-Cultural Symbolic Violence through Education:**

The fundamental weapon to expand the dominant colonists’ culture is education. According to Pierre Bourdieu, education and schools are the industry that produces the assimilated Habitus through cultural messages. “L’habitus acquis à l’école est au principe du niveau de réception et de degré d’assimilation culturel des messages produits et diffusés par l’industrie culturelle”<sup>7</sup>. Bourdieu also considers all the pedagogical actions Symbolic Violence, since they impose arbitrary culture as legitimate. “Toute action pédagogique est objectivement une violence symbolique en tant qu’imposition par un pouvoir arbitraire d’un arbitraire culturel”<sup>8</sup>.

### **d-Meddour and Enoch as products of ‘Cultural Assimilation’:**

By drawing some parallels between Bourdieu’s views of school, it becomes clear that Mammeri’s character Meddour is the best illustration of the assimilated persons. He joins the French schools and becomes a teacher. He absorbs the French culture and ideologies. He, then, considers himself as superior as the French. He speaks about the modern way of thinking and sees himself more civilized.

Meddour, dans un an, sortirait de l’Ecole normale d’instituteurs de Bouzareah. Il s’était fait à Tasga le promoteur de tout ce qu’il l’appelait des mots vagues de «civilisation», «progrès», «idées modernes»<sup>9</sup>.

However, Mokrane considers Meddour a traitor of the Kabyle honour. Mammeri writes: “Meddour n’a plus rien gardé de l’homme Kabyle, c’est un Aroumi”<sup>10</sup>.

Similarly, Enoch in *Things Fall Apart* accepts the western idea and changes his identity. He takes up the white man’s religion and rejects the religion of his ancestors. His disrespectful act of ripping the mask off an egwugwu during an annual ceremony leads to violent quarrels between the indigenous and colonial systems. He becomes more dangerous to his tribe than the white man.

### **e- Effects of Cultural Symbolic Violence on Umuofia and Tasga:**

More importantly, the ‘Cultural Assimilation’ is a ‘soft’ process for domination; it is felt only in its huge impact on the indigenous cultures and social organization. In their novels, Both Achebe and Mammeri emphasized the broken families as the most harmful effect of Cultural Assimilation. In *Things Fall Apart*, in chapter twenty, the clan decided to go to war even if it means harming their own brothers who have joined the missionaries. Obierika claims that it is too late. Umuofia’s sons have already followed the way of the stranger<sup>13</sup>. The family of tribal brothers has turned against one another and can no longer act as a group, so

opposing the white men means opposing the tribal brothers as well. In fact, the soft domination is more effective. It disrupts the traditional social norms and transforms the dominated agents into mindless followers and breaks their unity. Ngugi Wa Thiang'o argues in *Decolonizing the Mind*:

But its [colonist's] most important area of domination was the mental universe of the colonized the control through culture of how people perceived themselves and their relationship to the world. Economic and political control can never be complete or effective without mental control<sup>14</sup>.

At the end of this chapter we find interesting to analyse the portrayal of Nwoye in *Things Fall Apart* and Menach in *La Colline Oubliée*. Both characters are comparable through their identity crisis. Nwoye and Menach reject their social belonging because they find some traditional customs brutal. Consequently, they both leave the culture of their ancestors.

In *Things Fall Apart* Nwoye rebels silently against Igbo collective submission to their god's acts, even when a religious rule makes no sense, as it is the case in the execution of the innocent Ikemefuna. Nwoye is also against exposing twins to death in the forest. This shows that Nwoye is already, before the coming of the white man, questioning the barbarity of some of the old customs. He decides to attend the missionary school in Umuofia. Nwoye agrees with the church beliefs and convert to Christianity<sup>15</sup>.

Similarly to Nwoye, Menach in *La Colline Oubliée* rejects the old customs. He is also against the social structure of Tasga. Influenced by the French education, he rebels by practicing some taboos without taking into consideration the Kabyle values. This creates his sorrow and dilemma. Menach "souffrant seul dans l'impasse où l'avait acculé une passion que les coutumes de chez nous font payer de la vie"<sup>16</sup>. Menach dreams of an impossible love with

Davda, a married woman. He also spends nights consuming alcohol and has an unnatural homosexual relationship with Mouh in defiance to the established order.

Menach is like Nwoye when they choose the opposite side of their ancestors' values. Nwoye rejects the Igbo religion whereas Menach rejects what the Kabyle people call 'nif' 'the honour'. Both of them rebel against the oppressive nature of the traditional culture. Consequently, they both decide to throw the burden of traditions.

It follows from what precedes that *Things Fall Apart* and *La Colline Oubliée* demonstrate the colonists' arbitrary policy of 'Cultural Assimilation' as a justification of their arbitrary intrusion in the African soil. Similarly, the two novels reflect the symbolic means used by the dominant colonist in transforming the Habitus of the indigenous people to reach control and domination. Both Achebe and Mammeri try to get the reader's attention on the implicit tactics and the damaging effects of the Europeans' assimilation on the traditional social values. They both agree that the dominated colonized countries got destroyed culturally and socially by the Europeans' Symbolic Violence. For them, the indigenous' identity, under colonialism, is fallen apart.

## Endnotes :

- 1-Pierre Bourdieu and Jean Claude Passeron, *La Reproduction* ;( Paris : Les Editions De Minuit1971) ,37
- 2- Chinua Achebe, *Things Fall Apart* (Berkshire: Heinemann;1989) ,124
- 3-Ibid, 148
- 4-Paulo Freire, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (England: Penguin Books; 1993), 134
- 5--Mouloud Mammeri, *La Colline Oubliée* (Alger: El Dar El Outhmania; 2015), 84
- 6- Chinua Achebe, *Things Fall Apart* (Berkshire: Heinemann; 1989), 129
- 7- Pierre Bourdieu and Jean Claude Passeron, *La Reproduction* (Paris: Les Editions De Minuit 1971), 57
- 8-Ibid, 19
- 9- Mouloud Mammeri, *La Colline Oubliée* (Alger :El Dar El Outhmania; 2015),23
- 10-Ibid, 174
- 11-Chinua Achebe, *Things Fall Apart* (Berkshire: Heinemann; 1989), 124
- 12- Mouloud Mammeri, *La Colline Oubliée* (Alger: El Dar El Outhmania; 2015), 29
- 13-Chinua Achebe, *Things Fall Apart* (Berkshire: Heinemann; 1989), 124
- 14-Ngugi Wa Thiong'o, *Decolonising the Mind* (New Hampshire: Heinemann; 2003), 16
- 15- Chinua Achebe, *Things Fall Apart* (Berkshire: Heinemann; 1989), 103-104
- 16- Mouloud Mammeri. *La Colline Oubliée* (Alger: El Dar El Outhmania; 2015),42

## **Chapter II: Political Symbolic Violence in *La Colline Oubliée* and *Things Fall Apart***

The following chapter of our discussion is devoted to the analysis of the political control through arbitrary colonial rule in the two novels. Because of its setting, *Things Fall Apart* appears with few elements of such domination. In fact, Achebe's novel deals with Igbo society during the Pre-colonial Period which means that the British control is in its first steps.

According to Pierre Bourdieu, Symbolic Violence in politics corresponds to the ability to impose a system of rule as legitimate to such population via arbitrary laws, political discourses and media. Symbolic Violence refers also to all the discrimination that is practiced in enactment of everyday life conventions. The victim's misrecognition of power relations generates also the possibility of such discrimination. In this respect, the real violence remains hidden within the system and it is linked so deeply that it becomes part of the natural order.

### **a-Political Symbolic Violence in *La Colline Oubliée* :**

*La Colline Oubliée* discusses a painful period in the history of Kabylia. It is that of the World War II. From the title, Mammeri draws the readers' attention to the critical situation of the hill. *La Colline Oubliée* or The Forgotten Hill stands, geographically, for a high land but the word forgotten reduces its value and denotes its alienation. Noticeably, Mammeri employs many Kabyle words to accomplish his end. For instance, the hill's name Tasga means in Kabyle language the alienated corner in the house. It is also where the ill old people lay before death "... Tasga, en kabyle, ce toponyme désigne justement un coin, un lieu isolé."<sup>1</sup>

In fact, the novel's plot deals with the last years of the protagonist Mokrane. The novel starts with spring but ends with Ibrahim's prayers on Mokrane's grave. Mammeri shows, through his characters, this misery and despair it creates. The critical situation of

Tasga starts when it is devastated by natural disasters; droughts, hailstorms and wildfires. The latters destroy the crops and the forests and cause an unusual economic crisis.

Deux ans de suite toutes les sources tari et il fallu descendre chercher l'eau très bas dans la vallée. La gèle avait brulé le blé en herbe ; on avait éteint dans le même été quatre incendie a quelques jours d'intervalle dans la même forêt d'Ifran.<sup>2</sup>

This unbearable situation is referred to by Albert Camus as *La Misère de la Kabylie*. It is published as a series of articles in *Alger Republicaine* in June 1939. These articles demonstrate and open our minds to the reality of the famine that plagued Kabylia in the 1930s. *La Misère de la Kabylie* makes connection between Mammeri's fiction and the historical reality. Camus visited Kabylia during the famine and wrote the articles and attacked the colonial policy and the colonial injustice on the vanished Kabylia. "Je suis allée en Kabylie avec l'intention délibérée de parler de ce qui était bien. Mais je n'ai rien vu. Cette misère, tout de suite m'a bouché les yeux. Je l'ai vu partout. Elle m'a suivi partout."<sup>3</sup> Albert Camus explained in his articles the absence of the French reforms and helps to a region which belongs politically to France. He maintains that Kabylia should benefit from reforms to improve its people's living conditions. For him, this economic crisis finds end only if the French government intervenes with authentic reforms

Il ne faudrait pas croire enfin que cette situation soit sans issue. Les Kabyles peuvent le croire, eux... Mais nous savons bien, nous, que c'est faux. Et qu'un tel abandon de tout et de tous ne trouve pas seulement sa raison dans une crise économique. Il y a des erreurs à réparer et des expériences à entreprendre.<sup>4</sup>

In fact, this silent colonist is reflected in *La Colline Oubliée*. Mammeri does not personalize the colonizer in his novel intentionally to reflect his non-involvement in the secure of Kabylia. However, this absence of the dominant colonist was negatively interpreted

by the critics at that time. This absence illustrates, in reality, the indifference of the colonizer for the indigenous lives.

In the same way, the Franco-Tunisian writer and essayist, Albert Mimmi reveals the effect of famine on the colonized people in his *Decolonization and the Decolonized* (2004).

Yet from the evidence, poverty leads to and helps prolonging ignorance and superstition, stagnant forms of social behavior, the absence of democracy, poor hygiene, sickness, and death<sup>5</sup>

He mentions that hunger is a weapon of war. It is a social issue because of the increased risk of mass starvation. It is a tactic used when the dominant attacks on food which is a vital element for individual's physical survival. For Mimmi, famine occurring in states where basic human rights are suppressed or absent, can be seen as a form of violence that deprives people from the fundamental human rights to life.

### **b-Ibrahim in *La Colline Oubliee* : A Victim of Political Symbolic Violence:**

In *La Colline Oubliee*, the inhabitants of Tasga are left alone to face their tragic destiny. These people struggle without any help of the authorities, for their fundamental rights (food, water, clothes, health...). The miserable living conditions benefit the ruling class, as it ensures that the societies turn into societies 'without minds'. This reminds us of the victims of Symbolic Violence who cannot question or recognize such violence. Mammeri illustrates this point in Ibrahim's hard situation that pushes him to become mindless:

Mais le plus affecté de tous c'était encore Ibrahim. Depuis qu'il avait été débauché du chantier chaque jour il fallait chercher de quoi manger le lendemain. Ce soucis l'abrutissait, bornait ses idées, ses désires.<sup>6</sup>

Drawing on Bourdieu's critique, this inability to recognize tyranny, oppression, and exploitation is in itself a Symbolic Violence. By diverting the dominated's attention from the

real causes of their misery, necessarily weakens their struggle and results in their submission or what Bourdieu calls ‘ Habitus of Submission’ . Let us consider, another time, the case of Ibrahim and how he becomes a subordinate. He accepts the hard working conditions and his chief’s arrogance who takes advantages from his situation.

Pendant ce temps ses trois enfants, sa femme, sa mère et lui même, n’en mangeaient pas a la maison, l’été il fauchait le foin du chef, l’automne, il labourait ses terres pour toucher 50 francs...<sup>7</sup>

... Le chef était devenu arrogant avec lui. Il l’humiliait sans raison, lui faisait faire devant tout le monde les besognes les plus sales.<sup>8</sup>

This was at the benefit of the ‘French colons’ at that time who started their investment in the Department of Algeria. It was also the beginning of the shift towards Capitalists Societies. Mammeri highlights this shift and claims that this new economic system affects the social values of Tasga; the man’s value depends on his financial income. “On mesurait jadis les hommes a leur courage et a leur sagesse : c’était maintenant leur portefeuilles qui décidait de leur valeur et c’était Akli l’homme de Tasga.”<sup>9</sup>

The famine and malnutrition lead to the degradation of the human health. The typhus epidemic spread in Kabylia. Mammeri continues the story of Ibrahim whose wife is ill. He faces difficulties to nurse her in the absence of public health assistance.

...entre temps Sekoura tomba malade. Il fallut appeler le médecin de l’état. Il devait en principe passer tous les quinze jours à Tasga soigner gratuitement les malades indigents de la tribu. Mais il y avait cinq mois que personne ne l’avait vu. Lui payer un déplacement? Ibrahim n’avait pas d’argent.<sup>10</sup>

Ibrahim and the villagers ignore the reality of their situation. They link it to superstition. For them, this event results from Timechret that they have stopped doing.

Timechret is a ceremony of solidarity where all the inhabitants collect money, important means and ingredients to make the traditional dish called Couscous. Many sheep and calves are sacrificed. This ceremony is interrupted because of the hill's insufficient incomes. But for the villagers, this creates this bad situation; it is a curse. "Il est vain qu'on avait tout fait pour mériter cette malédiction!"<sup>11</sup>

The dominated people of Tasga feel guilty about their situation. They never mention the French policy and how it alienates them. The French colonizer does not consider the indigenous people as equal to French. They only consider their land and resources as French. This discrimination is well demonstrated by Mammeri when he portrays how the young people of Tasga bear the duty of fighting as French citizens. This means that indigenous people are considered French citizens only in terms of war but not in terms of human rights. This French policy of 'inclusion/exclusion' of the kabyle to and from French citizenship reflects an arbitrary law and a form of symbolic violence. The majority of young male characters in the novel receive enlistment order to fight in the World War II for French Army; Mokrane, Menach, Idir, Mouh, Meddour...They find themselves obliged to accomplish an arbitrary military duty imposed on their freedom. "La limite arbitraire qui imposait à notre liberté la mobilisation prochaine avait comme exaspère en nous le désir de vivre."<sup>12</sup>

This arbitrary power which deprives indigenous Kabyle from their basic human rights but obliges them to accomplish their duty is just a form of injustice and hidden violence. At that time, French government promises, through its political discourses, the 'Assimilation' of all people of France including the Algerian department. It also promises equal democratic rights and protections. In reality, their promises are never kept. The indigenous people are never treated as equal to the French; they were used as objects for war sake. Mammeri in *La Colline Oubliee*, is reflecting this arbitrary system. He holds a mirror up to the symbolic violence that the kabyle of Tasga are exposed to. Through the sample of his fictional Tasga,

he enhances the quality of humanity in the oppressed societies. His novel is also a contribution to the field of history since it gives details about the painful period in Kabylia's history. *La Colline Oubliee* sends also a message to the colonist readers about the focus they put on "Cultural Assimilation" rather than on politico-economic one. WaThiong'o N'gugi sees this fictional Assimilation advocated by the colonizer as a justification to mask the harsh colonial realities, oppression and exploitation.

[Dominated] people were taken to work on tea or coffee plantation for the settlers or conscripted to fight in European imperialistic wars; the missionaries had the audacity to tell them to lift up their eyes and sing Allilulia to the Lord<sup>13</sup>

### **c-Political Symbolic Violence in *Things Fall Apart*:**

Similarly to the arbitrary laws imposed by the dominant French colonist, Chinua Achebe shows in his novel some political arbitrary power. In chapters twenty two and twenty three, a great conflict starts between the new converts and the clansmen. Enoch commits a crime of unmasking an Egwugwu during the ceremony of earth goddess. As a reaction, the eldest of the tribe destroy Enoch's compound. After a confrontation between the traditional forces and the representatives of the new faith, they burn the church to the ground. This revenge act cost the arbitrary arrest of six leaders of Umuofia including Okonkwo in the court house. This decision has nothing to do with justice, since the arrested leaders were maltreated, beaten, let to starve and clapped in chains. The so-called 'Peaceful Administration' is just a fiction or a justification for maintaining authority. All the missionaries' discourses, including that of Mr Brown, are symbolic means for domination.

... If only you agree to co-operate with us. We have brought a peaceful administration to you... We have a court of law where we judge cases and administer justice as it is done in my own country under a great [British] queen...<sup>14</sup>

In addition to this violation of the six elder's rights, the court decides to fine heavily the Umuofians for their release. In fact, the men of Umuofia collect the fine of two hundred and fifty bags. This submission and obedience is a first image of an arbitrary authority that uses symbolic ways and violence. The capture and the ransom of Umuofia's leaders disrupt so much the daily life that the villagers do not continue their customary nightly activities. They stay in their huts immobilized by fear and confusion. Such an offense has never been committed against their leaders and the villagers do not know how to react.

### **c-Effect of Political Symbolic Violence on Umuofia and Tasga:**

From what has been said above, we notice that *La Colline Oubliee* and *Things Fall Apart* deal with arbitrary political rule used by the dominant colonizers to maintain their political authorities. Similarly, they mourn the results of such Symbolic Violence and its effects on Tasga and Umuofia's future. Mammeri writes: "C'était donc cela la guerre! Tasga ne se remettrait pas du mal dont elle souffrait, quand tous les jeunes capables de travailler a sa guérison seraient partis..."<sup>15</sup> In the same way, Achebe expresses his despair: "He mourned for the clan, which he saw breaking up and falling apart... He mourned for the warlike men of Umuofia, who had so unaccountably become soft like women."<sup>16</sup>

To sum up, both Mammeri and Achebe mourn the downfall of the traditional life and its future. They both complain about the result of the arbitrary dominant system. The people

of Umuofia and Tasga are divided as a result of the colonist policy. The two writers blame the intruders for the destructiveness they caused to their societies. Readers should also consider the African's hope that once existed fallen apart because of the arbitrary policy of the European colonists.

## End notes :

- 1-Fatima Boukhrou .*Definition et Evolution de la Figure de l'Intellectuel dans l'Œuvre Romanesque de Mouloud Mammeri*, (Doctorate thesis, Mouloud Mammeri University Of Tizi Ouzou, 2006), 23
- 2- Mouloud Mammeri. *La Colline Oubliée* (Alger: El Dar El Outhmania; 2015), 27-28
- 3-Albert Camus *Misère de la Kabylie*, (Alger Républicain; June 5<sup>th</sup>to 15<sup>th</sup>, 1939) ,19
- 4-Ibid, 20-21
- 5-Albert Mimmi. *Decolonization and the Decolonized* (London: The University of Minesota; 2006), 5
- 6- Mouloud Mammeri. *La Colline Oubliée* (Alger: El Dar El Outhmania; 2015), 185
- 7-Ibid, 88
- 8- Ibid, 109
- 9- Ibid, 185
- 10- Ibid, 89
- 11- Ibid, 30
- 12- Ibid, 98
- 13-Ngugi Wa Thiang'o. *Writers in politics* (Oxford: Heinemann; 1997), 116
- 14- Chinua Achebe. *Things Fall Apart* (Berkshire: Heinemann; 1989), 137
- 15- Mouloud Mammeri. *La Colline Oubliée* (Alger : El Dar El Outhmania; 2015) ,36
- 16- Chinua Achebe. *Things Fall Apart* (Berkshire: Heinemann; 1989), 131

## **Chapter III: Masculine Domination as Symbolic Violence in**

### ***Things Fall Apart and La Colline Oubliée:***

This chapter deals with the analysis of the two novels and their social settings. It is specifically focused on Symbolic Violence as a powerful weapon in Masculine Domination. Pierre Bourdieu analyses 'Masculine Domination' as a prime example of Symbolic Violence. For him, the latter is a kind of gentle invisible and pervasive violence exercised through the everyday practices of social life. Masculine domination is so anchored in our unconscious that we hardly perceive it. He always draws attention to the importance of the Symbolic Violence that is the essential part of Masculine Domination. Masculine domination presents an illuminating new vision of gender power relations. Bourdieu explains how this domination functions as a structure of every day activity. The gendered vision of the world is, according to him, inscribed in our Habitus (beliefs, behaviour, taste, way of speaking, perception, appreciation, reactions, thoughts...). This gendered Habitus is either a product of our social experiences or transmitted by different social institutions such as family, school, church/mosque ...

la domination masculine s'affirme dans l'objectivité des structures sociales et des activités reproductives...fondées sur une division sexuelle de pouvoir dans lesquelles elles sont prises, des schèmes de pensée qui sont le produit de l'incorporation de ces relations de pouvoir ...Il s'ensuit que leurs actes de connaissance sont par la même, des actes de reconnaissance pratique ...et qui fait en quelque sorte la violence symbolique qu'elle subit.<sup>1</sup>.

### **a-Umuofia And Tasga: The Masculine Dominated Societies:**

As the two authors are concerned with traditional societies (Umuofia/Tasga), their novels are strikingly similar in that they both represent the masculine domination. In their settings, the division and inequality of the sexes appear completely natural and taken for

granted. This discrimination serves as an organizing principle for Umuofia as well as for Tasga

In *Things Fall Apart*, women are considered weak and are not given any power. They are man's possession, as wives and other possession like yam barns, to have a social title. The man who has all these possessions will be respected and get the highest title.

There was a wealthy man in Okonkwo's village who had huge barns, nine wives and thirty children. His name was Nwakibi and he had taken the highest hurt on little which a man could take in the clan <sup>2</sup>

Similarly in *La Colline Oubliée*, the social structure of Tasga reflects a male centred community:

Notre société...est mal bâtie. Il est conforme à la nature que l'homme et la femme vivent ensemble...or dans nos mœurs le monde des hommes et celui des femmes sont comme le soleil et la lune ; Ils se voient peut être tous les jours mais ils ne se rencontrent pas<sup>3</sup>

Les pousseuses d'eau que nous rencontrions baissaient la tête en nous croisant comme une femme doit le faire chaque fois qu'elle rencontre un homme. <sup>4</sup>

The above quotations reflect what Pierre Bourdieu reveals through his works and ethnographic analysis of Kabylia. He declares that Kabylia exemplifies a society organized on the androcentric principle, i.e. one that centres on men. According to Bourdieu, the Kabyle people emphasize the sexuality of the body. In effect, the Kabyle people put a large amount of value on the femininity of woman's body, and in turn masculinity of a man's body. As a result, they use gender to distinguish labour and social roles. Through everyday habitual and routine labour, women are conditioned to believe that they are less competent than men and thus should act in a submissive way. This supports the credibility of Mammeri's work. It means that *La Colline Oubliée* derives directly from the author's real world.

Another interesting point is that the two authors speak about the man's fear of being told weak. In Umuofia as well as in Tasga, weakness is associated with women; it is considered as a 'feminine trait'. Achebe in chapter eight tells us about the incident in which Okonkwo felt guilty because of killing Ikemefuma. He, in fact, loves this boy but he is afraid of being told weak. He does it not to "become like a shivering old woman"<sup>5</sup>. For the same reason, Mokrane's father, Ramdane, hides his face with his 'burnous' in the funeral of his unique son not to appear weak.

Quand le chikh levant un coin du lincul, decouvrit le visage du mort, le père de Mokrane laisse sur ses yeux le capuchon de son burnous, car un homme ne doit jamais montrer sa douleur.<sup>6</sup>

Furthermore, this male domination functions in a soft way, that it becomes part of the customs and traditions. It is not seen as a social issue. Its victims never question it. In the second chapter of *Things Fall Apart*, Okonkwo brings Ikemefuna for the first time and orders Nwoye's mother to look after him. When she asks for more details, Okonkwo answers:

'-Do what you are told, woman,'

And so Nwoye's mother took Ikemefuna to her hut and asked no more questions.<sup>7</sup>

Similarly, Mammeri shows in his novel that the last word is always that of man. When Mokrane's mother is involved in conflicts with Aazi, it is only his father's intervention that stops the noise immediately. This explains how the male's decision or intervention are immediately respected and executed.

Tant de vacarme finit par éveiller mon père qui vint, notre grande lampe d'argile à la main. Il s'approcha lentement, écouta sans rien dire les mots qui étouffaient la gorge de ma mère : Quand elle eut finit, mon père dit simplement :

-Va à la maison. Et tout rentra dans l'ordre.<sup>8</sup>

In Addition, when he received his enlistment order, Mokrane decides to hide the date. Aazi choked when informed by Davda, but she never tells why or questions her husband's decision. She just cries "...éclata en sanglots sur mon épaule. J'ai compris qu'elle savait..."<sup>9</sup>. This passage explains the lack of communication between the man and his wife in Tasga. The wife is completely excluded from her husband's decision making.

### **b-Women's complicity in Masculine Domination in *Things Fall Apart* and *La Colline Oubliée***

It is remarkable that Achebe's recognition of women's complicity in this domination matches that of Mammeri. The female characters are harmonious members even when they are barren from any say in the communal decision-making. "It was clear from the way the crowd stood or sat that the ceremony was for men. There were many women, but they looked on from the fringe like outsiders"<sup>10</sup>. This quote illustrates what Bourdieu calls 'La Femme Objet' or 'Woman Object'. In his *La Domination Masculine* (1998), Bourdieu explained how women are treated like objects since they are excluded from man's social games or even from the whole social world. For him, woman is perceived through the dominant eyes that place her in a permanent state of 'bodily insecurity' i.e. she exists only for the others as an attractive welcoming object.

In *La Coline Oubliée* Aazi wrote to her husband about her suffering because of his absence and how women of the village make fun of her in the water fountain.

Je n'irai pas à la fontaine. Mes camarades se moquaient de moi parce que je n'ai pas de mari. Je suis allée Vendredi avec Tassadit. Daadi m'a dit devant toutes : pourquoi es-tu orgueilleuse puisque tu n'as pas de mari ?<sup>11</sup>

From this passage, we understand that women have no value without their husbands. Being married is an important status in their life. When her husband is obliged to work away, Sekoura feels a strong fear. She recognizes, by herself, that the man's role is more crucial and decisive. Consequently, women in Tasga accept the symbolic order that renders gender differences natural.

Le Sud, dit Sekoura, pourquoi le sud ? Que m'importe à moi que tu sois riche au sahara si tes enfants ici n'ont pas de père ? Qui les mènera au marché le jour de la grande fête ? Est-ce moi qui leur apprendrai à devenir des hommes ?<sup>12</sup>

To maintain such domination, many symbolic means are used. The masculine domination in traditional societies is exerted for the most part through channels of communication, pedagogical actions and stories. Many pedagogical scenes are shown in *Things fall apart*. The well known one is when Okonkwo orders his daughter Ezinema to sit in accordance with the traditional norms dictated for girls and women. This significantly shows how cultural values in Igbo societies are shaped by gender.

-sit like a woman! Okonkwo shouted at her.

Ezinema brought her two legs together and stretched them in front of her.

-she said: can I bring your chair for you?

-no, that is a boy's job<sup>13</sup>

Furthermore, to ensure that Nwoye values the tradition as Okonkwo does, he is proud of telling the stories to his son about his wars, violence and bloodshed. He is determined that this custom must be preserved and valued. This kind of stories differs from female stories. "He told them stories of the land, masculine stories of violence and bloodshed".<sup>14</sup> This is displayed in the following quotation: "... so Nwoye and Ikemefuna would listen to Okonkwo's stories about tribal wars or how, years ago, he had stalked his victims, overpowered him and obtained his first human head..."<sup>15</sup>

Moreover, in reading *Things Fall Apart*, we immediately understand the ‘masculinist’ personality of Okonkwo because of his fear to be like his father Unoka. Besides that, we notice the absence of his mother’s influence. This explains the woman’s weak role and value. The allusion to Okonkwo’s mother occurs in chapter nine of the novel significantly because it deals with the protagonist’s trauma and weakness after his participation in the ritual murder of Ikemefuna. Obviously, Okonkwo’s mother is not named.

### **c-Ekwefi and Aazi: the issue of motherhood**

At the end of this Chapter, we compare the two female characters Ekwefi in *Things Fall Apart* and Aazi in *La Coline Oubliée* that we find quite similar. The two female characters are strikingly linked in their struggle to overcome the restrictions placed on the wives in patriarchal societies. Both Ekwefi and Aazi wish to accomplish the only role of women in their societies, which is to become mothers. Ekwefi suffered a lot at the beginning, she has held ten children, but she buried one child after another.

Ekwefi had suffered a good deal in her life. She had borne ten children and nine of them had died in infancy, usually before the age of three. As she buried one child after another, her sorrow gave way to despair and then to grim resignation. The birth of her children, which should be a women’s owning glory, became for Ekwefi mere physical agony devoid of promise. The naming ceremony after seven marked weeks became an empty ritual.<sup>16</sup>

Similarly, Aazi suffered during her first three years. She lived around the idea that she is like a barren empty land. “Sa [Aazi] situation devenait plus difficile chaque jour car que faisait elle dans notre maison si elle n’avait pas d’enfant ?”<sup>17</sup>

Being mother means for them being alive. Women accomplish that role to survive in such patriarchal societies. Ekwefi as well as Aazi are blaming themselves and feel guilty for

not being able to be mothers. That is a clear image of symbolic violence. In *La Colline Oubliée*, Aazi goes to the holy place called the temple of Abderahmene to ask for children. She reveals to an old woman that her husband married to have sons, but she cannot offer them to him. “Ma mère, dit-elle [Aazi] en parlant à la Vielle, voici mon mari, voilà trois ans qu’il m’a épousé pour que je lui donne des garçons et Dieu ne veut pas.”<sup>18</sup> Achebe as well as Mammeri show through Ekwefi and Aazi the sorrow of women, their struggle to be valued in traditional societies, Umuofia or Tasga, dominated by man.

From the analysis above, we come to notice the similarities between Chinua Achebe’s *Things Fall Apart* and Mouloud Mammeri’s *La Colline Oubliée*. The two traditional societies in the novels, either Umuofia or Tasga, are patriarchal. The women accept this form of oppression and participate in the Symbolic Violence they are exposed to. Therefore, Pierre Bourdieu’s Masculine domination is echoed in the two works.

## End notes:

- 1- Pierre Bourdieu. *La Domination Masculine* (Paris: Edition du seuil;1998),33
- 2- Chinua Achebe. *Things Fall Apart* (Berkshire: Heinemann;1989),14
- 3- Mouloud Mammeri. *La Colline Oubliée* (Alger : El Dar El Outhmania; 2015),158
- 4- Ibid,42
- 5- Chinua Achebe. *Things Fall Apart* (Berkshire: Heinemann;1989),46
- 6- Mouloud Mammeri. *La Colline Oubliée* (Alger : El Dar El Outhmania; 2015),115
- 7- Chinua Achebe. *Things Fall Apart* (Berkshire: Heinemann;1989),11
- 8- Mouloud Mammeri. *La Colline Oubliée* (Alger : El Dar El Outhmania; 2015),60
- 9- Ibid,47
- 10- Chinua Achebe. *Things Fall Apart* (Berkshire: Heinemann;1989),83
- 11- Mouloud Mammeri. *La Colline Oubliée* (Alger : El Dar El Outhmania; 2015),137
- 12- Ibid,155
- 13- Chinua Achebe. *Things Fall Apart* (Berkshire: Heinemann;1989),32
- 14- Ibid,37
- 15- Ibid,38
- 16- Chinua Achebe. *Things Fall Apart* (Berkshire: Heinemann;1989),55
- 17- Mouloud Mammeri. *La Colline Oubliée* (Alger : El Dar El Outhmania; 2015),29
- 18- Ibid,81

## **Chapter IV: Opposing Symbolic Violence in *Things Fall Apart* and *La Colline Oubliée***

This Chapter traces the resistance to the symbolic violence by Chinua Achebe and Mouloud Mammeri. For this, it will first show how the post colonial literature was created to appeal to the cultural self worth and the identity of the dominated colonized people. Indeed, the objective of this chapter is to demonstrate how Achebe and Mammeri, as post colonial writers, respond to the ideology of cultural inferiority imposed by the dominant colonist in their two novels.

### **a-Post Colonial Literature's resistance to Symbolic Violence:**

The beginning of the twentieth century is the period of crossroads of cultures in Africa. It is the great and complex extending imperial power and domination through employing hard power as well as soft one. Among the symbolic means that the dominant colonist uses, is the ideology of the superiority of the 'white man's civilization'. In this respect, Franz Fanon explains that the stereotype and the colonial racist discourses and ideologies are used to obscure the truth, to give the native people a false picture of their history and culture, for him, the colonist policy aims at deconstructing the indigenous' history and identity as explained in this quotation:

Le colonialisme ne se contente pas de piéger le peuple dans son filet ou de drainer le cerveau colonisé de toute forme ou substance. Avec une sorte de logique perversité, il se concentre sur le passé du peuple colonisé et le déforme, le défigure et le détruit. <sup>1</sup>

To oppose such stereotypes, a growing concern was seen among the 'elites' colonized people to elevate their indigenous culture and societies. Paulo Freire claimed, in his *Pedagogy of the oppressed* (1970) that those who learned to read and write come to a new awareness of selfhood and begin to look critically and question the social situation where they live. They

take the initiative in acting to transform the society. As a result, a 'new' literature was born; a Post Colonial Literature has emerged to portray the real image of the native people and their cultures. Among the fathers of this Literature we find Chinua Achebe for the English Written Literature and Mouloud Mammeri for the French Written one.

### **b- Chinua Achebe and Mouloud Mammeri' biographies:**

Achebe is a Nigerian novelist, poet and critic who is regarded as the most influential African writer. His writings, including *Things Fall Apart*, have introduced readers to factual insides of African life and history. Born in Ogidi in Eastern Nigeria in 1930, Achebe is the fifth child of Isaiah Okafor Achebe. His father is an instructor for the Church Missionary Society. His parents named him 'Albert', but Achebe himself chooses his Igbo name 'Chinua' when he is in the college.

Chinua Achebe attends his father's school and goes to study medicine at University. After a year, he switches to literature in which he is introduced to the mainstream of the English novel and to its critical study since the educational institution, at the time, was under British colonial control. However, Achebe immediately feels the British undervaluing of his Igbo culture. He says:

the colonial education was saying there was nothing worth much in my society and I was beginning to question that to see there were things that were beautiful even in the heathen".<sup>2</sup>

In 1917, the Algerian novelist, playwright and anthropologist Mouloud Mammeri was born. His works, including *la Colline Oubliée*, depict the realities about Algerian societies and origins. He is initiated to his culture through his father who repeats to him many traditional oral poems. He shows from his young age a keen interest in his origins and the culture of his ancestors.

Mammeri attends a primary colonial school in his native village. Then, he migrates to Morocco to live in Rabat where he writes his first essay entitled *Berber Society* (1937). Mammeri expresses his revolt cry against the colonial regime which prevents the free development of autochthones society. This first essay is a foundation where Mammeri, subsequently, builds his works. Similarly to Achebe, Mammeri claims that he sees the colonial school no more than artificial education and knowledge. “J’ai appris le français à l’école. Il s’agissait donc d’un apprentissage artificiel”<sup>3</sup>. Ironically, the colonial schools which are created to serve the colonial power fostered as well nationalistic ideas which were certainly not in the colonizer’s plan.

It appears clearly through this outline of their biographies that Achebe and Mammeri’s lives do meet intellectually despite the fact that they lived in different parts of Africa. The two authors have had similar experiences in their education which have affected their writings. As we shall see through this chapter, their two novels reflect the social, political and cultural realities they have experienced. They have fought using their pens, for the betterment of their societies and the recovery of their ‘Africanity’.

### **c--Resistance to Cultural and political Symbolic Violence in *Things Fall Apart* and *la Colline Oubliée*:**

Achebe questions the colonial ideology since he was a boy. The literature he studied consisted entirely of works by Europeans such as Conrad’s *Heart Of Darkness* and Joyce Cary’s *Mister Johnson*. This latter portrays a comic African who adores his white boss to the point of accepting to be shot to death by him. Achebe questioned this inadequate representation of the native Africans. He said that it was this indignation at Cary’s novel that inspired him to write *Things Fall Apart*. For him, African people did not hear of culture for the first time from Europeans. The Africans are not mindless; they have values, customs and

culture. Achebe aims through his novel to reinitiate the sense of pride in African culture to help societies to believe in themselves. He also examined the ways which the colonist distorted the shape of African history. In his final 'Ironic Twist', he comments the whole story and sets *Things Fall Apart* in the wider context of the African colonialism.

One could almost write a whole chapter on him. Perhaps not a whole chapter but a reasonable paragraph... He had already chosen the title of the book, after much thought: The Pacification of Primitive Tribes of The Lower Niger.<sup>4</sup>

From these last words of the novel, we acquire knowledge that suddenly the whole story of Okonkwo and his people is strangely diminished by the commissioners. In fact, the history of Africa is also written in the same way by the Europeans. The image of Africa, as it is drawn by the colonist, neglects the native humanistic values, circumstances and culture. *Things Fall Apart* is packed with ironies and reveals how misleading the African history which is written by the Europeans is.

Similarly, the birth of Algerian literature was a response to the colonial violence. During the harmful colonial period, many young Algerian writers, including Mouloud Mammeri, emerged to restore the repressed and the buried realities about the indigenous people and their history.

La naissance de la littérature algérienne d'expression française est une réponse à la littérature française et surtout à la littérature coloniale qui n'a souvent fait qu'aggraver, qu'assombrir davantage l'image déjà sombre de l'indigène insolent, sauvage, farouche, chaotique.<sup>5</sup>

For Mammeri, the worst thing that may happen to any people is the loss of their self-worth and dignity. He advocates, through his writings, the dominant's means and tools that block the indigenous integrity. He sees that 'Tasga' is forgotten because its people have no more value and dignity. This is why he highlights the danger of losing one's own culture. Mammeri

is conscious of the tactics and policy of French colonist to erase the native identity. He always makes references to his mother land. He once said that the colonized people are like orphans not only weaned from the good milk of their mother, but condemned to such a sour milk of a step mother. He writes: “Nous sommes des orphelins non seulement sevrés du bon lait de notre mère, mais encore condamnés à téter l’aigre lait d’une marâtre.”<sup>6</sup>

Both Mammeri and Achebe ‘Africanized’ the language they borrowed to write their works. Mammeri joins his French language with Kabyle words: “...Oua akka ? Qui est là ? , ...Laaslama! Bienvenu! ,...Tamda n teslit : La marée de la mariée. Vou tamart : Le barbu. , ... Ruhat di lahna a tarwa : Partez en paix mes enfants.”<sup>7</sup> This is used significantly by Mammeri to elevate the Kabyle language and to add truth to their story’s atmosphere. It is also done to describe the lifestyle of the characters as well as the environment where the plot is set.

Achebe’s literary style is full of Igbo idioms, proverbs, tales and imagery of rural life. *Things Fall Apart* is rich with Igbo proverbs that Achebe translates into English for the benefit of his readers who are unfamiliar with Igbo language. The proverb is defined in *The Advanced English Dictionary(2000)* as a “condensed but memorable saying embodying some important facts of experiences that is taken as true by many people”. The proverb teaches people of the same community about the principle of right and wrong. The use of proverbs and wise saying are important in conversation since they reflect the value of person in his community. In other words, proverbs are believed to be a fountain of wisdom and of respect. From the onset of the novel, Achebe makes readers aware of the importance of proverbs in conversation. When Okoye pays Unoka a visit to ask him to settle his debt he had borrowed:

Having spoken plainly so far. Okoye said next half a dozen sentences in proverbs, among the Igbo the art of conversation is regarded very highly, and proverbs are the palm-oil with which words are eaten.<sup>8</sup>

Mammeri also explained the value of 'Awel' or 'wise words' in Kabyle society. The speech of Sheikh or other members in the public assembly in Tasga is very measured and reflects the person's value and respect. Many principles and social norms are built on the words and proverbs that are inherited like customs. ...L'honneur est l'honneur ... stérile comme les sources d'été ...n'attise pas le feu qui brûle....

In the two novels, we also notice that Umuofia and Tasga are depicted as having an economy based on agriculture, and thus people have a relationship with both land and environment. In *Things Fall Apart*, the economy of Umuofia is not only a developed one, it is described as an organized complex web of socio-economic relationships to oppose all the cliché about 'The savage Africans'.

In addition, we notice that the plot of *La Colline Oubliée* turns around the four seasons. This is not meaningless. Mammeri significantly explains the traditional lifestyle of kabylian people since the life of these peasants depends on their lands, which in its turn, depends on the four seasons.

Le printemps chez nous, ne dure pas... Il a plein de temps de barbouiller de vert les champs... L'automne cette année-là fut long... Cela permet à mon père de faire sécher les dernières figes. Pour la récolte des olives dont c'était la saison, tous ceux de Tasga se remirent aux gestes séculaires qui accomplissaient leurs pères depuis toujours... Puis se fit tout de suite l'hiver.<sup>9</sup>

### **d-Resistance to Masculine Domination : Ekwefi and Aazi**

Achebe and Mammeri focus, in their novels, on intelligent women. Daring to talk about them, means talking about the 'others', who are erased and denied in the male social space. In *Things Fall Apart* Ekwefi is Okonkwo's second wife. A village beauty, she runs away from her home and husband to marry Okonkwo. Ekwefi's life is full of sadness that

renders her a strong woman. She has the audacity to knock on Okonkwo's door at night to talk to him when he accuses her of killing a banana tree. This kind of strength makes her the favourite wife. In *La Colline Oubliée*, Aazi (Thamazouzth) is called 'la fiancée du soir' 'the evening bride'. She is an important element of Thaassasth group because she has poetic knowledge and her presence reinforces cohesion. She is Menach's cousin and married to Mokrane. Like Ekwefi, Aazi has the audacity to send letters to her husband when she is repudiated by her step mother.

These two female characters try to avoid submission. They are not mindless. Both succeed to be different and attractive. Achebe and Mammeri focus on the fact that they are special and courageous.

### **e-Achebe and Mammeri's commitment to oppose Symbolic Violence:**

Achebe and Mammeri write their novels with originality full of artistic values from their observations and analysis of their 'self'. Through their critical mind, they oppose the submission to the colonial symbolic violence. They realized that the dominated countries got destroyed culturally, socially and politically and this is what they spoke aloud in their works. This is called in literature 'Commitment'. This latter is defined in the advanced Oxford Dictionary (2000): 'The state of being devoted to a cause or the engagement or involvement that restricts freedom of action'. The committed writers draw the attention of their readers towards injustice exploitation and oppression and reveal all forms of violence. Jean-Paul Sartre in *What is Literature?*, writes:

The "engaged" writer knows that words are action. He knows that to reveal is to change and that one can reveal only by planning to change."<sup>10</sup>

In the case of African literature, the above statements remain true. These two works derive directly from their struggle to oppose all colonial violence that tore the African

societies apart. They both create their literature for the service of justice. They believe that their role is to awake the readers and open their minds to be proud and free. Achebe tells Donatus Nuoga in a famous interview that:

A writer has the responsibility to unlock the colonial imprisonment of the African mind because unless our culture begins to take itself seriously, it will never sort of get off the ground.<sup>11</sup>

In the same way, Mammeri tells Tahar Djaout:

Mais moi je ne suis pas un homme politique, en tant que romancier, ce qui m'intéresse surtout, c'est le destin de l'homme, sa liberté, sa pleine expansion et dès que cette liberté n'est pas acquise, dès que cette plénitude n'est pas acquise. J'ai la conviction qu'il manque quelque chose, et que mon rôle c'est justement de crier que quelque chose qui manque à cette plénitude. Sans cela, qui remplira cette fonction?<sup>12</sup>

Mammeri opposes all the ideologies of inferiority that aims at erasing his people's identity. He uses all the literary genres; poetry, plays and prose to raise his culture and 'self'. He starts writing with the 'borrowed' French language. Then, he made anthropological researches to elevate his mother language 'Tamazight'. It is thanks to him, that this oral North African language becomes a written one. He published *the Grammar of Tamazight* (1972) which becomes the standard for writings in Tamazight today. Mammeri is considered as the best representative of the committed Algerian thinkers as explained by Ali Sayed:

Engagé ? Da Lmulud l'était assurément et ce, dans l'effectivité de chaque instant. L'engagement était pour lui une source de réflexion, de protestation, de l'intelligence contre la violence.<sup>13</sup>

This above quote reveals how Mammeri opposes violence using his critical reflexion and intelligence. He is faithful to his origins. He draws all his life for the survival of his culture. Pierre Bourdieu summarizes Mammeri's literary works as an Odyssey travel with a first

movement away towards unknown and seductive shores, followed by a long return towards the native land.

L'histoire du rapport de Mouloud Mammeri peut être décrite comme une odyssée, avec un premier mouvement d'éloignement vers les rivages inconnus et pleins de séduction, suivi d'un long retour, lent et semé d'embauches, vers la terre natale. <sup>14</sup>

From the above discussion, we conclude that Achebe and Mammeri embrace the post-colonial position in fighting Symbolic Violence. They employ the colonial languages; English and French as tools to fight the colonists' Soft domination. They borrowed them to accomplish their objective which is to oppose the colonists' ideologies and stereotypes. Their literary style is adopted to elevate their culture and identity. In fact, the two authors engage themselves in supporting their nations' dignity and freedom.

## End notes:

- 1- Imudia Norman Ajari. *Race et Violence: Frantz Fanon à l'épreuve du post colonial*, (Doctorate thesis, Toulouse University, 2014), 15
- 2- Chinua Achebe, *Anhills of the Savannah* (London; Pnguin books , 1987), I
- 3- Ali Sayed, *Mouloud Mammeri le Défricheur de Savoir*, Compus. April 2006, 25
- 4- Chinua Achebe. *Things Fall Apart* (Berkshire: Heinemann; 1989), 148
- 5- Fatima Boukhrou . *Definition et evolution de la Figure de l'Intellectuel dans l'Oeuvre Romanesque de Mouloud Mammeri*, (Doctorate Thesis, Mouloud Mammeri University Of Tizi Ouzou, 2006), 16
- 6- Ibid, 19
- 7- Mouloud Mammeri. *La Colline Oubliée* (Alger :El Dar El Outhmania; 2015), 84-120-37
- 8- Chinua Achebe. *Things Fall Apart* (Berkshire: Heinemann; 1989), 5
- 9- Mouloud Mammeri. *La Colline Oubliée* (Alger :El Dar El Outhmania; 2015), 11-39-151
- 10- Jean Paul Sartre *What Is Literature? and Other Essays* (Massachusetts: Harnero University Prees: 1965), 23
- 11- Simon Gikandi, *Reading Chinua Achebe* (New Hampshire: Heinemann, 1991), 7
- 12- Ali Sayed, *Mouloud Mammeri le Défricheur de Savoir*, Compus. April 2006, 29
- 13- Ibid, 28
- 14- Denise Brahimi, *Mouloud Mammeri : Lucidité, Désespoir et Résistance*, Compus. April 2006, 7

## **General Conclusion:**

In the course of our comparative study of Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* and Mouloud Mammeri's *La Colline Oubliée*, we have attempted to shed light on the existing affinities between the two literary works and writers. The study was carried out from the perspective of Pierre Bourdieu's theory of Symbolic Violence in order to demonstrate how power and authority is gained through symbolic means, either between two social groups (through cultural assimilation and arbitrary political laws) or between individuals of the same social group ( in Masculine Domination). At the end of our study, we reached the conclusion that the two works converge in many sociological aspects related to the Symbolic Violence and the soft domination. In other words, we conclude that Bourdieu's theory of Symbolic Violence is echoed in the two novels.

These affinities show that in spite of their geographical and linguistic differences, Achebe and Mammeri address similar sociological issues and raise similar questions in connection with the natives' dignity and identity. Even though the terrain of their work is locally situated, their vision embraces different spaces in Africa. Their works are concerned with Nigerian and Algerian people, and by extension, the people of the dominated third world. Both writers are involved in the Postcolonial Literature's position of fighting all the forms of violence and domination.

Although their works do not call or deal with revolution in an explicit way, *Things Fall Apart* and *La Colline Oubliée* depict the colonists' brain washing tactics, the camouflaged and Symbolic Violence that they use to achieve domination and control in a soft way. The two novels are strikingly similar in that they both break the barriers between fact and fiction. They reflect the real colonial situation and the indigenous societies in transition.

This is a consequence of their social and political milieu which calls for a committed literature.

Finally, our study of the two novels is in no way exhaustive or complete because many other researches can be conducted. We believe this topic is still an interesting subject that needs further investigation. Many interesting themes concerning Chinua Achebe and Mouloud Mammeri can be added. Therefore, we invite other students to study these works from different and other perspectives.

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