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*A Comparative Study of Richard Wright's Native Son (1940) and
Mouloud Feraoun's Le fils du pauvre (1950)*

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*To my beloved parents,
The reason of what I become today,
Thanks for your great support and continuous care.*

*To my brother Yanis,
I am so grateful to have a brother like you.*

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Candidate Declaration Form

I, Ammar Khodja Lisa

Candidate of Master in Literature and Civilization, University of Mouloud Mammeri in Tizi Ouzou, I do declare that this piece of research is based on my own work. From the books read Richard Wright's *Native Son* and Mouloud Feraoun's *Le fils du pauvre*, written in my personal style and words. All the references are provided at the end. Last but to least, I'm responsible for all the existing mistakes in my dissertation.

Abstract

The present dissertation is a contribution to comparative literature and cross-cultural studies. By drawing parallels between the two authors Richard Wright and Mouloud Feraoun, we have examined the possibility of connecting two literary works from different literary traditions, distinct cultures, as well as different geographical areas. The comparison revolved around two novels, which were written by the American writer Richard Wright entitled *Native Son* (1940) and the Algerian author Mouloud Feraoun's *Le fils du pauvre* (1950). The objective of my dissertation has been to situate the convergences and divergences between the two authors through the identification of similarities and differences in their narratives. The hypothesis on which our comparison was built is that it is possible, due to several political and social factors, to compare two authors issued from two different cultural backgrounds. To reach my objectives, we appropriated the tools provided in *Parallel Theory*, a perspective of literary comparison, which has been suggested by the American School of Comparative Literature. Our dissertation is divided into two major chapters. The first chapter is preceded by an introduction, *Method and Materials*. It explored the connections between the writers' lives as they are represented explicitly or implicitly in the selected narratives. It is followed by the study of the two novels' structures, settings, and characters. In the second chapter, we explored a comparison of the main themes of the novel, showing on the impact of poverty and identity construction in the two works, this part contains also some explanations about Mutual hate in *Native Son*, and the implicit denunciation of the colonial oppression in *Le fils du pauvre*. We concluded the comparison by a conclusion that summarizes the entire study.

Table of Contents

Dedication.....	I
Acknowledgements.....	II
Candidate Declaration Form.....	III
Abstract.....	IV
Table of Contents.....	V
I. Introduction.....	1
A. Review of the Literature.....	5
B. Issues and Working Hypotheses.....	8
C. Methodological Outline.....	9
II. Methods and Materials	9
A. Methods.....	9
B. Materials.....	11
1. The Historical Background of <i>Native Son</i> and Richard Wright’s Biography.....	12
2. The Synopsis of Richard Wright’s <i>Native Son</i>	13
3. The Historical Background of <i>Le Fils du pauvre</i> and Mouloud Feraoun’s Biography.....	16
4. The Synopsis of Mouloud Feraoun’s <i>Le fils du pauvre</i>	18
III. Results.....	20
IV. Discussion.....	21
A. Chapter One.....	21
1. Parallels between the lives of Richard Wright and Mouloud Feraoun.....	21
2. Parallels between the Structures of the Two Novels.....	25
3. Parallels between the Settings of the two novels.....	30

4. Parallels between Characters of the two novels Bigger Thomas and FouroulouMenrad....	33
B. Chapter Two: Comparison of the Main Themes of the Two Novels.....	37
1. The Impact of Poverty in the Two Novels.....	37
2. Identity Construction in the Two Novels.....	40
3. Mutual Hate in <i>Native Son</i>	43
4. Implicit Denunciation of the Colonial Oppression in <i>Le Fils du pauvre</i>	44
V. Conclusion.....	47
VI. Selected Bibliography.....	51

Introduction

My interest in American and African literatures has been the main motivation to undertake research from this perspective. At the university, through all what I learned in Comparative Literature courses, I choose to explore the possibility of rereading two literary texts following comparative studies.

Comparative literature is an interesting discipline that prepares a student to work in any field of critical thinking, such as literary works. It develops understanding and learning different languages and get a broad knowledge of various traditions by providing the ability to know and compare different cultures. It is a field of study that focuses on international literary works across national borders, times, and languages. Its main objective is to allow for the study of probable parallels and links between authors and their literary works throughout various approaches.

I will try to integrate the concept of cross-cultural analysis to understand the American and the Algerian cultures in order to examine the works; find similarities and differences, compare and comprehend the two cultures and areas. Cross cultural analysis is a type of comparative cultural studies emerged in the nineteenth century, under the anthropologists Edward Burnett, Taylor, and Lewis Henry Morgan as they performed and developed cross-cultural analysis in order to draw connections concerning human relationships; this concept is used to discover how individuals communicate with others. For example it is used to learn a language, adapt social norms, customs and beliefs. In this research, I adopt a cross-cultural analysis of my culture (Berber) and compare it to the American culture, through using theory of the American school in the field of parallelism. As a result, I will focus on similarities between these two cultures on the basis of how these societies faced hard life and harsh

situations. Zepetnek Steven and Tutun Mukherjee write in their book called *Companion to Comparative Literature, World Literatures, and Comparative Cultural Studies*:

Twentieth-century pioneers of the roughly the Postwar generation of scholars such as Austin Warren, Anna Balakian, Harry Levin and René Wellek were well-versed mainly in European and North American Anglophone cultures. They tended to promote intellectual and cultural history and pursued formalist and morphological analysis, the tracing of cross-cultural currents and movements, and literary and art periodization”(Zepetnek & Tutun, 2000, p. 353)

The passage shows that during the Twenties, there appeared many researchers and philosophers who developed examinations and studies about different cultures such as the European and the American cultures with the use of the cross cultural analysis techniques.

The following research suggests one of the principles of comparative literature; I have demonstrated some similarities between Richard *Wright's Native Son (1940) and Mouloud Feraoun's Le fils du pauvre (1950)*. Despite the fact that Richard Wright and Mouloud Feraoun are from different geographical spaces, they grew up with different cultures, customs, traditions, religions, and languages, yet it can be argued that both authors' selected works can be compared in many ways. Therefore, the major goal of this research is to uncover thematic and probable textual similarities between the selected novels by comparing them. Richard Wright is an African American writer; he is from Mississippi, a state in the Southeastern region of the United States while Mouloud Feraoun is Algerian, he is from Tizi Hibel, a village in Tizi-ouzou province, Algeria.

Before starting to develop my hypothesis statement, I shall begin with some questions: is there any direct contact between the two authors? Can we find a possibility of influence between the two novels? How can two authors from different literary traditions and cultures be compared? Are the two texts similar in some points? To provide answers to the above questions, we shall, first, start by examining how Richard Wright and Mouloud Feraoun were influenced by the social and cultural circumstances in which they created their works. To achieve such a purpose, we shall attempt to apply one theoretical concept, which has been

developed by The American School studies of comparative literature. The concept of parallelism in which I shall define and then examine the parallels and connections between the novels in terms of literary genres, structures, settings, characters and themes.

First, despite the fact that the novels contain and deal with different contexts, facts, and realities, there is no contextual influence and no shared past between the two literary works. This is why I choose to compare the works through using American school of parallelism; the Americans value comparative literature in order to discover similarities rather than examining influence.

Second, the author Richard Wright is considered as a pillar of Afro American Literature, one of the most well-known figures in American history who opposes and rejects social race, violence, and discrimination. *Native Son* is a book written during the Harlem Renaissance which aim at the rebirth the African American culture by highlighting the issues and the problems of segregation that affected the black community. The African American movement influenced Richard Wright in writing his literary work *Native Son* because it narrates his own life struggles, and it is a mirror of the real life of the majority of black men and women in the 1920s.

Comparatively, the Algerian author Mouloud Feraoun is an Algerian novelist who describes in his works the reality and the history of Kabyle society and culture during the colonial period. *Le fils du pauvre (1950)*, this novel narrates the childhood of the author, at the same time, he describes the traditions and customs that are considered for him as the ultimate option to make a rebirth of the Algerian identity which has been erased by the French colonialist ideology. Therefore, it is also through this novel that Mouloud Feraoun painfully expresses his miserable life and the state of poverty that his community endured during colonialism for decades.

As a point of departure, we can say that both authors share a desire to narrate their real lives in order to describe their lived experiences. The protagonists FouroulouMenrad and Bigger Thomas can be then considered as the vehicles or agents that reflect the writers Mouloud Feraoun and Richard Wright to describe their own lives. At the same time, the authors use their literary works not only to represent their cultures and societies but also to denounce the hard circumstances that their communities endured, such as colonial oppression in *Le fils du pauvre* and the impact of racism in *Native Son*. For both writers, writing in times of conflict aims to criticize those situations of the enslaved and the oppressed communities. Thus, Mouloud Ferrous was engaged to write in time of war and Richard Wright is seen as a “literary knight-man” against racism in United States of America.

A. Review of the Literature

According to my readings of some literary critics about Richard Wright's *Native son* and Mouloud Feraoun's *Le fils du pauvre*, these two novels have received a large and significant criticism from different perspectives and viewpoints. As far as Richard Wright is concerned, Robert Felgar cites in his book, *Student Companion to Richard Wright*:

In terms of his personal friendships at this point in his career, the same year *Black Boy* appeared, 1945, Wright helped a young James Baldwin win a fellowship. Unfortunately their friendship ended in acrimony, with Baldwin attacking Wright in several essays. It is possible that Baldwin felt the need to kick against Wright as a father figure, the way sons sometimes establish their autonomy from their fathers. Ralph Ellison, too, denied what appears to be literary indebtedness when one puts his *Invisible Man* next to Wright's "The Man Who Lived Underground."
(Felgar, 1944, p. 8)

The help and the guidance that Wright has provided to his friends James Baldwin and Ralph Ellison helped them to become authors and be known in the world of literature. They started criticize him about the failed literary works of Richard Wright.

After the publication of *Native Son*, a series of responses came from the friend of Wright James Baldwin who publically criticized him, despite the fact that Wright has helped him in starting his literary careers, he starts criticizing *Native Son* in a series of essays and speeches in the 1940s and 1950s. The black author writes public comments on Wright's work in the collection of essays entitled *The Price of the Ticket* 1985, his argument focuses on the protagonist Bigger Thomas who is viewed to be everything except a human. He thinks that he is not conscious and does not merit to belong to the province of humanity, he writes: "a social and not a personal or human problem, somehow analogous to disease which must be checked" (Baldwin, 1985, p. 66), also adds that: "That fantasy Americans hold in their minds when they speak of the Negro: that fantastic and fearful image which we have lived with since the first slave fell beneath the lash" (Baldwin, 1985, p. 71), Baldwin also argues that sociology creates a stereotype of the black man that restricts him of his own identity. He claims that novels like *Native Son* contribute to misrepresentation which diminish and limit the value of

the black community. James Baldwin has preferred that Wright represent Bigger as a "fully realized person" rather than an imperfect person who symbolizes and stereotypes the black community. James Baldwin claims that the novel demonstrates bad faith in black people, claiming that the writer's methodology of writing represents the savage experience of black Americans. For him, the purpose of authors is to create writings that express a deeper truth about life rather than to open the doors to political topics that generate real problems. The following excerpt summarizes his critique of the novel:

Bigger is Uncle Tom's descendant, flesh of his flesh, so exactly opposite a portrait that when the books are placed together, it seems that the contemporary Negro novelist and the dead New England woman are locked together in a deadly, timeless battle; the one uttering merciless exhortations, the other shouting curses. And, indeed, within this web of lust and fury, black and white can only thrust and counter-thrust, long for each other's slow, exquisite death; death by torture, acid, knives and burning; the thrust, the counter-thrust, the longing making the heavier that cloud which blinds and suffocates them both, so that they go down into the pit together" (Baldwin, 1985, p. 27)

*In notes of native son (1955)*for James Baldwin, Bigger's failure effect on stereotypes about black community, the aggressive person of bigger is entirely the opposite of the ignorant and stupid Uncle Tom. Therefore this may create problems for Richard Wright who presented his protagonist with such characteristics. James Baldwin is certainly not the only author who attacks Wright's *Native Son*, The work's contents are also criticized by the writer of the classic novel *Invisible Man* (1952) Ralph Ellison, who states in *Remembering Richard Wright's* (1971):

In my terms, Wright failed to grasp the function of artistically induced catharsis – which suggests that he failed also to understand the Afro-American custom of shouting in church (a form of ritual catharsis), or its power to cleanse the mind and redeem and rededicate the individual to forms of ideal action. . . . Yet it is for such moments of inspired communication that the artist lives. The irony here is that Wright could evoke them, but felt, for ideological reasons, that tears were a betrayal of the struggle for freedom (Ellison, 1971, p. 211)

The collected essays of Ralph Ellison edited by John Callahan:

Just as Baldwin would laments the polemicist of *Native Son*, so Ellison cautioned time and again against any attempt to straitjacket the black writer, noting, in 1955, that if 'the Negro, or any other writer, is going to do what is expected of him, he's lost the battle(Callan, 1995, p. 211)

These arguments about Wright's *Native Son*, agree that his work is a failure, since it portrays and represents savage stereotypes about the African American society through the criminal behaviors of the protagonist character Bigger.

Mouloud Feraoun's novel *Le Fils du pauvre* received numerous responses. HébatallahEmad El Dine Abdel Razek Ibrahim, a Professor at the French department of the University of Ain Chams, has analyzed the novel from a comparative perspective. He draws parallels between the two novels: *Le Fils du pauvre* by Mouloud Ferrous and *L'Enfant noir* by Camara Laye. While comparing the two novels, he gives a definition of the term "*Fils du pauvre*" and says:

Le titre révèle un sentiment de pitié chez le lecteur qui a hâte de découvrir l'histoire de ce fils démuni dont le récit de vie est triste....En fait, le titre révèle l'histoire de l'enfance malheureuse du protagoniste. Il annonce ainsi le thème abordé dans le livre. L'horizon d'attente du lecteur est donc préparé à lire l'histoire d'un garçon qui appartient à une société misérable: son père est qualifié de (pauvre) ; c'est-à-dire, sans argent, en-même temps, cette pauvreté peut être considérée comme un jugement de l'auteur qui éprouve une sorte de pitié par rapport à ce père démuni(Hébatallah, 2021, pp. 65-66)

The reviewer stresses the pity felt by the reader, which appears right from its title. When reading the story, one cannot be indifferent to the misery of the protagonist, Fouroulou Menrad's life. It also announces one of the novel's major themes, which is poverty.

Joanna Ducey, an American student graduated in French and senior teaching from the university of Boston has developed an article about Mouloud Feraoun's novel entitled: *La mort de Khalti dans le Fils du pauvre de Mouloud Feraoun* in 2014she writes:

« La première partie du *Fils du pauvre* de Mouloud Feraoun intitulée « La famille » se termine par un passage primordial retraçant la mort de Khalti qui déclenche une réponse tourmentée et inquiétante auprès de son entourage. Cet événement hautement symbolique sous-entend l'initiation très douloureuse que subit Fouroulou pour atteindre l'âge adulte, aussi bien qu'une rupture imposée et violente avec ses origines kabyles. Ainsi s'agirait-il non seulement d'un témoignage funeste de la perte de la tante bien-aimée mais aussi d'une méditation profonde sur la dissolution, voire la disparition, de toute une culture. » (Ducey, 2014, pp. 101-102)

According to the American student Joanna Ducey, the loss of Fouroulou's aunt is a great tragedy since she is seen as a cultural symbol of the Kabyle society; Fouroulou lost not only his close aunt but also a part of his own identity and culture.

B. Issues and Working Hypotheses

The previous review of the literature that I have covered contains various critical studies among many authors on Richard Wright's *Native Son* and MouloudFeraoun's *Le fils du pauvre*. However to my best knowledge, I think that no previous study has so far been interested in the study of both works in the field of a comparative study. Therefore, the main objective is to carry on a new study which consists on finding parallels and drawing them in a manner of creating and establishing some literary connections between the two authors and their novels.

To achieve my purpose, I have used cross cultural analysis perspective; cultural analysis of African American and Kabyle society. This perspective studies and compares different cultures. To realize the comparison, I have used the theory the American school of parallelism introduced by Renne Wellek in 1958, a theoretical concept which studies the similarities between literary works. These parallels have been demonstrated through a comparison of the two novels in the context, author's lives, settings, protagonist characters, themes.

C. Methodological Outline

My dissertation is composed of three sections divided into parts. The first section is devoted to an introduction that states the main purpose of the research. A review of critical studies written on novels, the issue and working hypothesis and a methodological outline are parts of the introduction. The second section is devoted to the Method that defines briefly the American school of parallelism, and the Materials, applied to Richard Wright's *Native Son* and MouloudFeraoun's *Le Fils du pauvre*. This section contains parts that include historical background and synopsis of both novels. The third section is the result that concerned with the different findings. Concerning the Discussion section, it deals with the analysis of the two novels, which is divided into two different chapters: the first contains some parallels between the lives of the authors, and connections between the novels structures, settings, and main characters. In the second chapter, I shall draw a comparison between the major themes of the two novels. The work ends with a Conclusion that summarizes up all the ideas and main issues that I have dealt with in my research.

A. Methods and Materials

A. Methods

In the course of this section, I intend to explain my theoretical approach. In order to be relevant, I have planned to conduct my study in accordance with Renne Wellek's side as with his American school of Comparative Literature in the field of parallelism, with other practitioners.

American School of Comparative Literature

There are many schools that study and develop Comparative Literature such as the French school, the Russian school, and the Indian school. Renne Wellek's and Warren Austin's book, *Literary Theory* managed to the foundation of American School of Comparative Literature which is a well-known school of comparative literature in 1958, the book has been developed by the researchers in the American University of Chapel Hill.

I shall explain briefly the main principles of American school because these principles are the appropriate point that can guide to develop and achieve the comparison of the two literary works. Henry Remark has announced and presented these principles as a reaction to the principles of the French school, since it is completely the opposite of it. Therefore, he abolishes the language barriers created by the French school (the two literary works compared shall be in different languages). The American school accepts language differences and there are no languages conditions. Additionally, the practitioners of the American school refuse the importance of studying the historical connections between literatures introduced by the French school. For Americans the important thing is to find the similarities.

The most important principle that they criticize is the concept of "Influence" of the French school; French writers believed that the best and the powerful intellectuals and literary works are those of Western areas and they should be followed especially by the authors belonging to colonized countries. Hence, Americans refused that rule and assert that there are no positive or negative literatures; all the literary works have values. Consequently, the principles of the American school can be used in the work because there is no trace of influence or direct contact between the two selected authors. The book entitled, *Theory of Literature* (1958) contributed to the appearance of the American school because it contains criticism about French methodologies of literature. Another representative of the American

school is Charles Bernheimer who edited the book entitled: *Comparative Literature in the Age of Multiculturalism* where he points out that:

The most serious sign of the precarious state of our study was the fact that it had not been able to establish a distinct subject matter and a specific methodology (...) Wellek maintains, should be the focus of the discipline. It sounds that these and other essays in comparative literature in the age of multiculturalism reflect a general understanding of the fact that literature is at the center of our field. The disagreement and the anxiety are not so much about that; rather it is about whether the expansion of the field of literature would eventually lead to a marginalization of literature (Bernheimer, 1995, p. 11)

This above quote shows the negative point of view of Renne Wellek about the concept of influence created by the French comparatists and intellectuals; the first methods of comparing literatures can lead to the reduction of the values of some literary works. So, for Wellek, influence should be isolated from the word of comparative literature.

American school of comparative literature is an interesting discipline that examines the relationship between literatures and people, but there are few articles and essays that focus on the practical aspects of American school. If practitioners publish it, there is a need of practice to make the school more understood by the others. I have chosen it mainly because my dissertation deals with a concept that is not practiced a lot before.

A further reason to choose the field of parallelism is that it studies the connections between two literary works without indebtedness. The aim is to investigate the similarities between the two chosen works despite the fact that they are not related in terms of geography, time, or literary traditions.

B. Materials

The following section include the historical backgrounds of the two works *Native Son* and *Le fils du pauvre*, these two works are used as examples to compare two communities by space and time and culture. This analysis contains two brief biographies of the two authors Richard Wright and Mouloud Feraoun and synopsis of their two novels.

1. The Historical Background of *Native Son* and Richard Wright's Biography

Studying the historical background of *Native Son* cannot be fully understood without knowledge of Richard Wright's life and society, his writings are generally related to the African American society. Richard Nathaniel Wright is a popular American author, poet, writer of short stories, novels of fiction and nonfiction, he was born in Natchez, Mississippi, on September 4th 1908. At that time, to be born black in the South parts of America means to be subjected to racism, poverty, brutality, and other forms of oppression, this was the case with Richard Wright; his family and all Blacks living in the Southern regions undergo the same difficulties. Robert Felgar depicts the difficult circumstances that the black people of Mississippi faced in his book *Student Companions to Richard Wright*:

To be born black in Mississippi in 1908, when accurate records of the time of birth of black children in that state, was to be denied most opportunities for literary accomplishment, although Wright is obviously an exception. In 1908, black Mississippians could not vote, live where they wanted to, attend white schools (which were much better financed than black ones), or ride on integrated train cars (Felgar, 1944, pp. 1-2)

The extract makes it clear that the author spent his childhood in extreme poverty. Richard Wright lived with his mother who was a school teacher, while his father abandoned them. The author was forced to leave school because of his mother's illness. He worked hard and though he left school, he became an avid reader. After moving to Chicago, he got the opportunity of using public libraries to widen his knowledge. He publishes his first collection of short stories when he was just 16 years old. They deal, most of them with the social injustices that black men faced. *Uncle Tom's children*(1938) is just one example. Richard Wright was also engaged politically, he became a member of the Communist Party and published his first novel in Paris *The outsider*(1953), which was followed by *The long Dream*(1960), *White Man*,

Listen(1964), *Eight Men*(1961), and many other works in which the topics are basically about race relations and discrimination. His major work remains *Native Son*(1940), which has been a source of influence to many generations of black writers and intellectuals.

If we look at the historical events that inspired Richard Wright's work, we may say that the violent events in the story of *Bigger* can be related to the author's own personal experience of violence in his life. So, Richard Wright personal experience is reflected through the portrait of the character of Bigger Thomas. In fact, a writer's social circumstances and personal experiences are likely to impact his writings. In this context, Richard Wright's life in segregation is a determining factor in shaping his writings, which represents the racism that he and his community experienced as demonstrated by Andrew Warnes in his book *Richard Wright's Native Son* where he points out that:

Wright's works would prove wonderfully alert to the paradoxes of such behavior. More than any other American writer, he would expose the intellectual dishonesty of racism...no other novelist is more alive to the vicious contradictions involved in racial segregation (Warnes, 2007, pp. 2-3)

What the critic reveals is that we cannot separate Richard Wright's literary output from his own lived and real experiences of racism, which reappear in his novel through his imagination.

2. The Synopsis of Richard Wright's *Native Son*

Richard Wright's novel *Native Son* (1940) tells the story of Bigger Thomas, a twenty year-old black youth who grows up and lives in an abject poverty. The events take place in the southern part of Chicago during the 1930s. That period was characterized by social violence and political instability when the African Americans endured discrimination and oppression by the white forces. The novel contains three major parts, Fear, Flight, and Fate.

All of them narrate the major events of the story of a young man called Bigger who is forced to work in Dalton's house in order to feed his poor family. Fear and racism let him to accidentally kill Mary and his girlfriend Bessie; his criminal acts and the brutal ways of killing these two white ladies prove his capacities of doing these actions and confirm that the protagonist experiences severe discrimination. Bigger's conversion to murder is a result of white oppression and racism.

In *Native Son*, Bigger Thomas is accused to be a criminal since he is black, and the reasons that push him to kill Mary Dalton accidentally is the fear and the feeling of inferiority. He is conscious of the fact that his actions have added a negative stereotype to black people. He is ashamed of his behavior and feels that he has failed to achieve the black community, but when he murders the woman he reinforces the opposite of what he wishes to show because he wants to show that he is a normal and safe person. More black people feel and believe that they must demonstrate to the world that they are not violent and dangerous because of the racism they frequently encounter from white people.

Additionally, injustice and racist white society drive Bigger Thomas to have a life full of violence in search of an identity. Wright writes in his novel: “to bigger and his kind white people were not really people; they were a sort of great natural force, like a stormy sky looming overhead, or like a deep swirling river stretching suddenly at one’s feet” (Wright, 1940, p. 129). This passage explains how Bigger sees whites. He thinks that whites are not even human beings just as whites view Blacks.

This mutual hate is clearly expressed in this excerpt: “She was dead; she was white; she was a woman; he had killed her; he was black; he might be caught; he did not want to be caught; if he were they would kill him” (Wright, 1940, p. 121). In these few sentences of the novel, the protagonist does not want to be a criminal; it is the fear of being caught by Mary’s mother in his bedroom that pushes him to kill her.

Dr. Martin Luther King wrote a letter to eight white church leaders in the south in response to a statement about civil rights strategies in Birmingham concerning race relations, and says: “All segregation statutes are unjust because segregation distorts the soul and damages the personality.”(Luther King, 1963), For the king, white authorities are unjust and the source of destruction of black values, because many black people who experience oppression and discrimination such as children grow up to have unhealthy personalities and commit misdoings and forget their values.

In *Bigger Thomas*, Wright created a nightmarish warning of what are being produced in the urban ghettos. He never again wrote such a powerful book. *Native Son* was very well received by the general reader... while black readers praised it but were also leery that such an aggressive protagonist as Bigger Thomas would confirm white stereotypes about black men. In a matter of weeks, *Native Son* was topping the charts: it was truly an overnight sensation. (Felgar, 1944, p. 7)

This is the opinion of Robert Felgar in his book *Student companion to Richard Wright* he claims that the aggressive behaviors of the major character Bigger Thomas reveals the racism he faces daily; negative stereotypes about African American Negroes push Bigger to be a murderer and a dangerous character .

Black people who have been treated unjustly due to their skin color. They have developed a type of fear that has transcended generations as well as their minds and feelings. This is another effect of black segregation in the novel for instance: Mrs. Thomas Bigger's mother is aware for losing her home by the powerful racist whites that's why she encourages his son to work since he is the unique man of family. The protagonist Bigger starts working as a chauffeur in Dalton's house, but worries every time to do that job since the white family members and colleges view him as an inferior dark colored man. This fear conducts and pushes him to commit a crime, in the night when he accompanies Mary to her room; he kills her accidentally with a cushion to make her silent because her blind mother gets into the room searching for her. For Dalton's family, it is forbidden to have a relation with blacks because they consider them as no humans. He commits the crime for the second time when his

girlfriend Bessie discovers the truth; he kills Bessie for fear that she can reveal the truth. After the analysis of the disturbed behavior of Bigger, there are really feelings of guilt and fear, Frantz Fanon offers a psychiatric analysis of this sort of fear in his book *Black Skin, white Masks* (1952), he writes

A feeling of inferiority? No, a feeling of non-existence. Sin is Negro as virtue is white. All these white men in a group, guns in their hands, cannot be wrong. I am guilty. . . . It is Bigger Thomas – he is afraid, he is terribly afraid. He is afraid, but of what is he afraid? Of himself. No one knows yet who he is, but he knows that fear will fill the world when the world finds out [...] In the end, Bigger Thomas acts. To put an end to his tension, he acts, he responds to the world's anticipation (Fanon, 1952, p. 139)

Frantz Fanon's analysis can be applied to Bigger's feeling of guilt, fear and loneliness, which is not innate. It is rather the outcome of his vision about himself which is being black. Inside his mind, being a Negro has only negative connotations. It makes him feel afraid, he grows up with this idea since childhood, and this idea is caused by the whites' oppression towards blacks.

From the violent historical context and the biography of Richard Wright, we can deduce the close relationship that links the writer to his society, as it is displayed in his novel. But, can we say the same thing for the Algerian author Mouloud Feraoun?

3. The Historical Background of *Le Fils du pauvre* and Mouloud Feraoun's Biography

Considered as one of the first pioneers of Algerian francophone literature, Mouloud Feraoun was born on May 8th, 1913, in Tizi Hibel, one of the villages of Beni-Douala in the province of Tizi Ouzou. As Richard Wright, Feraoun experienced a miserable childhood because he came from a family of peasants. Ramdane, his father, was a peasant who was as

poor as the title of the novel suggests, *The Poor Man's Son*, its translated version in English (2005) by Lucy McNair with an introduction by James D. Le Sueur.

Mouloud Feraoun, like the majority of Algerian peasants of his time, his father chooses to immigrate to France to work hard to rescue his family from starvation. Though Algeria was a rich country, colonialism spread death and misery among its population, as Albert Camus described it in his newspaper articles, *La Misère en Kabylie* (1939). Consequently, in order to provide a better life for his large family and children, Feraoun's father has six other brothers and sisters; he is the third child of the family.

Like the American author, Mouloud Feraoun spent much of his childhood reading and studying. He started to go to the school of the village when he was seven years old. Thanks to his abilities and hard efforts, Feraoun was able to join Tizi-ouzou College and then was admitted to the Algiers, Bouzareah Normal School where he spent three years. Feraoun became a teacher; he married his cousin Dahbia in 1935. He had seven children: two boys and five daughters. He started his career in 1935 in Taourirt-Moussa, a village in the neighborhood. He became a headmaster at one of Fort National schools in 1952. He then moved to Algiers where he worked as an inspector of education before he was assassinated, with five of his colleagues, in the Social Education Center a few months before the Algerian independence in 1962. His tragic death with his five companions, assassinated on March 15th, 1962 by the OAS, (French Secret Organization), put an end to his life and brilliant career.

Mouloud Feraoun was known for his kindness, sensibility, honesty, and modesty. His portrait is well described by a journalist in Djazair, an unnamed journal article entitled *Peinture Algérienne: la maturité*, an homage to the novelist: « Oui, Feraoun était un homme bon, un homme simple comme l'étaient les gens dont il décrivait la vie dans ses œuvres » (2003, p. 3) The journalist adds : « Feraoun était un homme calme, paisible et sobre, somme toute facile à vivre et de surcroît, attentif aux autres » (2003, p. 11).

Despite dying at an early age, Mouloud Feraoun has left a rich literature that can be used by many generations as a source of knowledge, about the history of Algeria during the colonial period. His literary works demonstrate that Algeria gained freedom from the colonial authorities, also by the engaged writers like Mouloud Feraoun who sacrificed his life for the Berber and Algerian identity and liberty.

The works of Mouloud Feraoun include several novels written in French language. He prefers to write in his native Kabyle language, but due to historical circumstances, he was forced to use French language. His major literary works include: *La Terre et le Sang* (1953), *Jours de Kabylie* (1954), *Les Chemins qui montent* (1957), *Lettres à ses amis* (1969) and many other works and articles. One of his major works is *Le fils du pauvre* (1950).

So far then, we can deduce that there are significant similarities between the two contexts in which the two novels were written and produced. The American unstable and violent society can be compared to the French colonial policy of expropriation, violence and misery. More over the personalities of Richard Wright and Mouloud Feraoun can be compared too. Both lived in poverty and both had succeeded to bypass it. Before they became famous writers, they worked in a range of professions to support their poor families. They enjoyed reading books and spent much of their time in reading. They are both active writers who have used their writings to challenge social injustice and repression.

4. The Synopsis of Mouloud Feraoun's *Le Fils du pauvre*

Mouloud Feraoun's *Le fils du pauvre* (1950) is an autobiographical work that tells the story of the protagonist, Fouroulou Menrad, who lives in the high mountains of the Great Kabylia. The novel's main character is the vehicle through which the author tells his own story. The novel devotes a long part of the real life of Mouloud Feraoun, Fouroulou is a young boy who lives with his family, he practices agriculture with his father and goes to school

at the same time unlike the other boys in the community, Fouroulou has the opportunity to study; he is encouraged to study by his father who was abroad. Despite the absence of the father he was there to replace him and take care of his family and the fields. At an early age, he becomes a brilliant student and goes to study in one of the bigger schools in Algeria; the hardworking young man becomes a teacher and a director.

Feraoun describes his village, the manner of life, traditions, and customs of Kabylean civilization, he describes also the hard life and the miserable conditions that villagers endure during the colonial period. The author also offers representation and the role of women in his society, immigration, war and destitution. What appears from our comparison of the two novels' summaries is that in Richard Wright's *Native Son*, we have fragments of the author's life while Mouloud Feraoun's novel is based on the author's whole life and career as a teacher.

B. Results

The comparative analysis of Richard Wright's *Native Son* and Mouloud Feraoun's *Le fils du pauvre* revealed that there were many parallels. Despite the different historical backgrounds, the two authors' lives are comparable in many aspects as they are described on their novels. Although Algeria is situated in North Africa and is far from America, their communities live in the same violent conditions such as poverty and oppression. The other similarity is that the novels of the authors belong to the same writing style; they follow the same technique of narrating the lives of the main characters that both lived miserable lives. Both works also share the same context "writing in time of conflict"; racism in United states of America and colonialism in Algeria. In addition, the two literary works deal nearly with the same themes such as: poverty and identity construction.

Moreover, by comparing the two novels' characters, structures, settings, and themes, despite all the parallels that I have cited before, there is no existing influence between the novels, but there are some elements in which they are similar such as the lives of the two writers, the novel's structure, protagonist characters, settings and themes. All these topics have been discussed and illustrated through the dissertation chapters.

C. Discussion

A. Chapter One

In the previous sections of my work, I have established some parallels between Richard Wright's *Native Son* and Mouloud Feraoun's *Le fils du pauvre*. Firstly, I have divided the context examination into two parts that: writing in time of conflict; racism in the United States of America and colonialism in Algeria, the second section was concerned with some connections between the lives of the two writers. In the course of the present chapter, I shall continue to look for similarities; in the two novel's settings, structures, main characters, and themes. This section starts with a comparison of the two novels' structures. Are there similarities in their way of shaping their two narratives? Do they use the same genre?

1. Parallels between the lives of Richard Wright and Mouloud Feraoun.

Despite the different origins and settings of Mouloud Feraoun and Richard Wright (Algeria, USA), there are some parallels between their experiences in childhood and life. After the analysis of their two literary works with of the notion of parallelism, there are some interesting parallels and few differences between the authors' lives. After having read the autobiographical novel *Le fils du pauvre*, I have read some passages of Wright's autobiographical book *Black boy* especially the first chapter, it is an essential work to know about Richard Wright's life, because *Native Son* does not describe all his realities.

Both writers are born under difficult conditions with their poor families; they grew up in a society that struggled against racism and colonialism. In *Student Companion to Richard Wright* by Robert Felgar:

“Because of the lack of money in his family, Wright sometimes went with food (hunger of various sorts is a persistent theme in his work) and could not afford clothes for school.” (Felgar, 1944, p. 4) Felgar describes the harsh circumstances that the child Wright endured, because of poverty; the black author cannot go study at school with good and suitable clothes and full stomach as it is mentioned in Wright’s *Black Boy*:

Hunger stole upon me so slowly that at first I was not aware of what hunger really meant. Hunger had always been more or less at my elbow when I played, but now I began to wake up at night to find hunger standing at my bedside, staring at me gauntly. The hunger I had known before this had been no grim, hostile stranger; it had been a normal hunger that had made me beg constantly for bread, and when I ate a crust or two I was satisfied. But this new hunger baffled me, scared me, made me angry and insistent” (Wright, 1945, p. 22)

The author describes hunger as a normal thing that becomes no strange for him, since it is present in his everyday life. Thus, he is completely satisfied if he eats just some breadcrumbs, but as the problem is that this daily famine makes him feel bad emotions such aggression and fear.

Comparatively, in *Le fils du pauvre* narrates the facts of hunger and poverty that Feraoun and his family faced, the old men of the village believed that every family from this village experience the cases of poverty, the old man says: “ Chacun de nous, ici-bas doit connaitre la pauvreté et la richesse. On finit jamais comme on débute, assurent les vieux.ils en savent quelque chose” (Feraoun, 1950, p. 17). Even the wealthiest experience the realities of poverty during the war, disease, and a cold winter. This is the situation of Fouroulou's father, but everyone in that area does not worry about poverty.

Furthermore, both families’ writers encouraged them to learn. Wright’s mother motivates him to read even though he cannot study in white schools. Similarly, the whole Feraoun's family supports him to attend school. It is thanks to their experiences of learning That their lives changed, Felgar writes:

“However, Wright’s childhood was not completely negative. There were books in his house, and his mother had been a schoolteacher. She also encouraged him and taught him how to read.

One morning, the coal man taught him to count to 100“(Felgar, 1944, p. 2). In *Black Boy*, Richard Wright himself states: “When I had learned to recognize certain words, I told my mother that I wanted to learn to read and she encouraged me. Soon I was able to pick my way through most of the children’s books I ran across” (Wright, 1945, p. 29) Robert Felgar confirms the messages and supports of Wright's mother's to read and learn about life; these motivations to her son are discussed in *Black Boy* novel. Even the father of Fouroulou encourages him to attend school and says:

Va mon fils, Dieu sera avec toi. Il te montrera le chemin(...) tu vas a Alger, dit celui-ci. Vous serez très nombreux là-bas. on n’en choisira que quelques-uns. Le choix c’est toujours le hasard qui le fait. Tu vas a Alger comme tes camarades. Nous la haut, nous attendrons. Si tu échoues, tu reviendras a la maison. Dis toi bien que nous t’aimons.et puis ton instruction, on ne te l’enlèvera pas, hein ?elle est a toi(...). Ta mère saura que je t’ai parlé. Je dirai que tu n’as pas peur. Oui, tu dirais là-haut que je n’ai pas peur. (Feraoun, 1950, p. 131)

Ramdane, Fouroulou's father, offers glowing words to his son that drives him and helps him accomplish his goals; it is thanks to his parents' support that he is the first student in his class: “ Mon père pour sa part m’avait remis, la veille une petite corne de bouc renfermant des talismans ; et je devais porter continuellement sur moi cette corne qui me défendrait contre les mauvais esprits » (Feraoun, 1950, p. 138)This clearly illustrates how proud Feraoun is of his father, but what differentiates the two authors' families are their fathers. Although Wright's mother is kind to him, his father is regarded as a negative character in Wright's life, the first chapter of *Black Boy* demonstrates it: “A father out there somewhere who could have helped but who chose not to” (Wright, 1945, p. 8)He also adds:

I stared in bewilderment. Yes, it was true that my father had not come home to sleep for many days now and I could make as much noise as I wanted. Though I had not known why he was absent, I had been glad that he was not there to shout his restrictions at me. But it had never occurred to me that his absence would mean that there would be no food (Wright, 1945, p. 23)

In contrast to Feraoun’s father, Wright’s father is always absent; he abandoned them, and his father chose to go on without any offer or help and encouragement. In addition to these

experiences, the authors choose to leave their hometowns and families in order to achieve success and get more knowledge, they gain employments for the first time after they have acquired good knowledge and have enhanced their minds with information. Wright takes various jobs before becoming a writer cleaning up in a hospital in Chicago. Felgar says: “He worked in the Michael Reese Hospital, cleaning up after mice and rabbits which, because of a fight between two of his coworkers, got put back in the wrong cage, Wright often wondered later what effects this had on the medical experiments that involved these animals” (Felgar, 1944, p. 5). Despite the fact that Wright worked in an uncomfortable cheap profession at the beginning, he ends up as a famous black writer of his time. Mouloud Feraoun passed all his exams and started working as an institutor then director. The writer José Lezini adds in his books *Mouloud Feraoun, un écrivain engagé*:

Kabyle, fils de pauvres, Feraoun est devenu instituteur à la force du poignet. Élève à l'École normale, il s'est imprégné de valeurs qu'il a faites siennes parce qu'elles correspondaient en profondeur à sa nature: s'élever et se rendre meilleur par l'éducation, l'usage de la raison et du libre arbitre. Du “parti de la France”, lui ? Non, du parti qu'il avait choisi, en pleine conscience, réticent aux impératifs du fanatisme, fidèle aux siens et à son pays (Lenzini, p. 13)

In the future, each one of the writers became well known writers who achieve successful literary accomplishments; Feraoun wrote many novels about his life and the life of Kabyle community. He narrates about the misdeeds of the French colonizer and the tragic events experienced by the Algerians. His literary works include: *Le fils du pauvre* (1950), *La terre et le sang* (1953). *Jours de Kabylie* (1954), *Les chemins qui montent* (1957), *Les Poems de si Mohand* (1962), *Journal* (1962), *Lettres a' ses amis* (1969), *L'Anniversaire* (1972), *La cite aux roses* (2007) and several articles. Richard Wright publishes many literary books such as: *Uncle Tom's Children* (1938), *Native Son* (1940), *Black Boy* (1945), *The Outsider* (1953), *Eight Men* (1961), *Lawd Today!* (1963).

2. Parallels between the Structures of the Two Novels

Richard Wright's *Native Son* and Mouloud Feraoun's *Le fils du pauvre*, as we mentioned earlier are inspired from the authors' real experiences. Both mixed their own experiences of racism and colonialism to shape their fictions. If Richard Wright's *Native Son* is based on the reality of the 1930s, it cannot be reduced to a single narrative because it includes other aspects and features, which can be related to: Crime Fiction, Social Drama, and Modernist novel (the psychology of the character). All these narratives appear through the ways in which Richard Wright conducts the actions of Bigger Thomas. We can even add some features of Naturalism, which appear through the negative image and situation of American society of that time. The impact of racial segregation on the individuals (Blacks) is so apparent. It is displayed mainly in the poverty and oppression of Bigger, which led him to bad behaviors. There are also few passages that determine Realism in the novel, it is found mainly in *How Bigger was born*: "The birth of Bigger Thomas goes back to my childhood, and there was not just one Bigger, but many of them, more than I could count and more than you suspect." (Wright, 1940, p. 506)

The quote shows that the novel is realistic in some parts. Richard Wright narrates Bigger's story with the aim to put the minds of the readers to his past.

When we compare Richard Wright's narrative with *Le fils du pauvre*, Feraoun's novel follow the adventures of the protagonist FouroulouMenrad in his personal development, who shifts from a poor life to success as the young man becomes a teacher. *Native Son* sheds light on racism, social injustice, and oppressive laws in America. Bigger thought that working, as a driver for a white family, may help his family get out of poverty, but with his feelings of fear to be black, he kills a young white woman. He is charged to be a murderer. The major events

of the novel show that there are actions that describe the literary narratives of drama and crime, it also explains that Wright uses Naturalism to demonstrate that crimes might be a result of an oppressive racist environment.

What is comparable is Richard Wright's and Mouloud Feraoun's use of simple sentences and easy language to allow their readers to understand the moving actions. Both authors use numerous sorts of figurative language to make readers living inside the plots of the stories. Richard Wright, for instance, chooses animals to describe the relationship between blacks and whites, the black rat symbolizes the black society and Bigger, the white cat of Dalton's house symbolizes the white society. The author uses these two animals to demonstrate the distant and toxic relationship between the blacks and whites, because cats and rats are eternal enemies: "a huge black rat squealed and leaped at Bigger's trouser-leg and snagged it in his teeth , hanging on"(Wright, 1940, p. 3)In another passage, he adds: "Then he was stone-still; the white cat bounded past him and leaped upon the desk, it sat looking at him with large placid eyes and mewed plaintively" (Wright, 1940, p. 53), Furthermore, Richard Wright uses the "light" and "dark" motifs to reveal one of the major tools in his novel which dramatizes the racial tensions. This kind of writing is aimed to create suspense. The author adopts this technique to problematize the relationship between Bigger Thomas and the Daltons. In Robert Felgar's book, for instance, the author states in "Richard Wright's Literary Heritage" section:

It is naturalistic in that it depicts, particularly in *Native Son*, life for black Americans as set in a jungle, a site of murderous competition for survival. On the other hand, Wright was influenced by literary modernism as well as realism and naturalism. Modernism emphasizes myth, symbolism (Felgar, 1944, p. 13)

All what is mentioned in the last paragraph is explained by Robert Felgar, *Native Son* is a naturalistic and realistic novel; it narrates the experiences and the realities of the oppressed blacks during the Harlem Renaissance. Racism makes the black community living in an environment where they seem to be non humans. The literary movement modernism is seen in

this novel since it contains many instances of motifs and symbols. There are also many similes in Wright's novel. What follows are illustrations: "...she was staring with blank eyes like a blind woman..." (Wright, 1940, p. 221) "Drumming like a hammer in his brain...and screams coming to him like the roar of water..." (Wright, 1940, p. 313). Moreover, the author employs the literary devices as imagery in his work; color imagery is employed wherever possible to describe every character in the book, even the ones who are less important and significant. For example: the description of a young lady: "She looked like a doll in a show window: black eyes, white face, red lips" (Wright, 1940, p. 71). The author chooses to employ color imagery in a simple simile, using three different color words, to let the reader understand how Bigger feel imprisoned and lost in the sea of colors that seems to dominate his existence.

The genre of African American music "the Blues" is developed by African Americans in the twenties. It affected black American writers in their literary works, such as Richard Wright particularly in his work *Native Son*. The Blues influences *Native Son* profoundly, because the lyrics address important issues such as gender differences, sexual violence and oppression. The author appreciated this musical genre because it was the first artistic expression that exposes the reality of the oppressed black people. Blues lyrics describe the details of the harsh miseries that black societies endured during the Harlem Renaissance. Therefore, the blues is used by Wright in some passages of his book *Native Son*; the following event and dialogue is dramatized by the Blues lyrics (when Bessie knows that she will be killed by Bigger):

I'm scared, Bigger,' she whimpered...
Fear sheathed him in fire. His words came in a thick whisper.
'Keep still, now. I ain't playing. Pretty soon they'll be after me, maybe. And I ain't going to let 'em catch me, see? I ain't going to let 'em! The first thing they'll do in looking for me is to come to you. They'll grill you about me and you, you drunk fool, you'll tell! You'll tell if you ain't in it, too. . . .'
'Naw; Bigger!' she whimpered tensely. . . . He stood looking down at her, waiting for her to quiet. . . . He reached under the pillow and brought out the bottle and took out the stopper and put his hand round her and tilted her head....

“Bigger, please! Don’t do this to me! Please! All I do is work, work like a dog! From morning till night I ain’t got no happiness. I ain’t never had none. I ain’t got nothing and you do this to me. After how good I been to you. Now you just spoil my whole life. I’ve done everything for you I know how and you do this to me. Please, Bigger . . .’ She turned her head away and stared at the floor. ‘Lord, don’t let this happen to me! I ain’t done anything for this to come to me! I just work! I ain’t had no happiness, no nothing. I just work. I’m black and I work and don’t bother nobody . .

(Wright, 1940, pp. 205-206)

This long conversation between Bigger Thomas and his girlfriend Bessie Mears is meant to show the real situation of women in the African American society which is sex oppression. The reason why Wright named Bigger’s girlfriend under the name of Bessie is that the author admires the meaningful songs of Bessie Smith, since this artist sings about romance, gender inequalities, and women's distress. Chris Albertson asserts in his book *Bessie*:

The cultural affirmation intended in *Native Son*’s use of the blues is compromised by the fact that one of its principal manifestations, Bessie Mears, is deprived of the physical and psychological power that one of her likely sources famously epitomized. Writers such as Angela Y. Davis now emphasize Bessie Smith’s unbowed stridency, her effective anti-racist and anti-sexist defiance, fondly retelling how she told some Klansmen bent on disrupting an outdoor concert in the South to pick up their sheets and run!(Albertson, 2003, pp. 155-7)

According to Albertson, *Native Son* has a link with Blues style; it appears when Bigger kills Bessie. Richard Wright uses this genre to show male aggression towards women in the black society, since this genre takes the theme of gender differences. He mentions Angela Y. Davis because she is another writer who criticizes sexual oppression.

Furthermore, Richard Wright uses the AAE literary technique in writing the novel. It is an African American English dialect; a spoken dialogue of the Negroes of America. The author uses this dialect in his work to represent his culture and identity, because language and dialects are the key parts of the individual’s identity. Many authors give importance to using dialects in literary works. Vein Lake (2005) writes in *The Uses and Abuses of Dialect*:“The use of proper dialect helps to vividly express a character’s identity.” (Lake, 2005, p. 40) .it means that the use of dialect in literary works may help the writer to present his origins and

culture. The writer uses dialect in his writings to show a character's regional or social position and representation to the other regions around the world.

Similar to Wright's writing style, Mouloud Feraoun uses simple language with the use of Kabyle words as symbols such as 'Tajmait' which is described as: «de larges dalles de schiste sur cinquante centimètres de maçonnerie indécise, contre les pignons des maisons, forment les blancs de la 'tajmait' sur lesquelles viennent s'asseoir les hommes et les enfants» (Feraoun, 1950, p. 11)The word "Tajmait" represents the belonging to the Kabyle culture, and the social organization of the society. It is a place where men of the village meet, discuss the affairs and problems of villagers .Therefore, the authors uses these descriptive words and creates images, to show his experience in the environment that is familiar to him. He also employs descriptions to reveal his identity, for example: "La cour est généralement exigüe. quelquefois, au-dessus du portail d'entrée se dresse une espèce de pigeonier auquel on accède de la cour par un escalier sans prétention ou une échelle grossière. C'est une pièce supplémentaire » (Feraoun, 1950, p. 16)Feraoun uses some metaphors: « Tremble comme une feuille »(Feraoun, 1950, p. 36)'La grand-mère : on disait d'elle qu'elle était « le pilier de la maison »(Feraoun, 1950, p. 59) « Akli était beau comme une fillette et turbulent comme un diable »(Feraoun, 1950, p. 29),« il faut une patience une délicatesse d'une fée »(Feraoun, 1950, p. 51) . All these words illustrate the realism of the narrative and the author's faithful representations of reality during the colonial period in Algeria.

To summarize the comparison of the novels structures, the novels have common points and similarities, such as the narrative and descriptive writing style that describe the stories of two ordinary characters. Both authors employ symbolism and diction and many techniques to depict the protagonist's struggle and to understand the true value of life.

3. Parallels between the Settings of the two novels

Next to the comparison of the two novels' structures, other literary affinities can be considered through an analysis of the settings. The relationship will be concerned mainly with the two books temporal and spatial time, place, and events. Richard Wright's novel *Native Son* took place in the 1930s in Chicago, the city where the family of author had migrated between 1916 and 1920 and where they had settled in the South Side ghetto. Richard Wright grew up, like his protagonist, Bigger Thomas, in Chicago. It was a place deprived of comfort; there were limited opportunities for the black community to work, because all the infrastructures were controlled by the white men. Blacks were marginalized and were not accepted by them because of their different skin color. Despite the fact that millions of Blacks moved from the Southern to Northern cities like Chicago for the purpose of getting jobs and houses, they still faced discrimination and violent crimes, and some of them were tortured.

Native Son is a fictitious representation of those events. The story is that of a young black man who lives with his family in the same apartment, which is very small home, it contains only one room. The family members suffer from poverty and oppression, since the white people do not allow them to work and study. The protagonist decides to accept the offer to work as a driver in Dalton's house to feed his family. The conflict starts when Bigger Thomas kills Mary Dalton (the daughter of his director) accidentally, just because of his feelings of fear and alienation: "She was dead; she was white; she was a woman; he had killed her; he was black; he might be caught; he did not want to be caught; if he were they would kill him" (Wright, 1940, p. 121) This quote reveals the beginning of the conflict, when he kills the white Mary and do not want to be discovered.

The second dramatic event is when Bigger kills his girlfriend Bessie after he tells the truth; it is mentioned in Flight Book of the novel:

He wished he could clench his fist and swing his arm and blot out, kill, sweep away the Bessie on Bessie's face and leave the other helpless and yielding before him. He would then gather her up and put her in his chest, his stomach, some place deep inside him, always keeping her there even when he slept, ate, talked; keeping her there just to feel and know that she was his to have and hold whenever he wanted to.. (Wright, 1940, p. 159)

The major events of Richard Wright's work demonstrate that the black community does not have any right in America. The Black men live in bad conditions; they experience isolation, division and discrimination by the white society. For example in the novel, Bigger Thomas experiences racism and oppression by the controlling whites, he couldn't work as any white man do because he is considered as an inferior person because of his skin color. The racist behavior of white people, mainly the Dalton family, pushes Bigger Thomas to commit crimes. He kills the white Mary because of his feeling of fear; he was terrified by the fact she can reveal his relation with her. He kills his girlfriend Bessie, since he is aware to be discovered by the rest of his relatives.

If the events of *Native Son* took place in Richard Wright's home town, Feraoun's novel set in Tizi Hibel a Kabyle village in Tizi-Ouzou, where the author was born and grew up. The events happened during the period of the French colonization, when Mouloud Ferrous was a child. *Le fils du pauvre* describes the Kabyle setting in a village a place in the mountains; villagers spent their lives working in agriculture as "Fellahs". Their job was limited to grow barley and wheat, dry figs, pick olives and transform it into oil. But the production was not sufficient to feed people. There was no factory to work; the few resources allowed the villagers only to survive during the cold winters and the long hot summers. People at that time lacked food and all the modern means. Most of the Kabyle families lived in misery and poverty.

During the colonial period, the Kabyles are forced to live in limited and narrow houses like the blacks in Richard Wright's novel. Ferrous describes the difficulty of life on the mountains. The traditional society was under the colonial control. When the Second World War started, the situation worsened. While the French took all what is produced in Algeria, the local population lived in misery. The prices got higher and the population was in state of panic, there was no grain and wheat. Many people died of famine. Feraoun refers to That difficult time: « *Bientôt les magasins se vident, les prix montent, les embarras commencent. Les fellahs, sans s'en douter sont à la veille d'un terrible cauchemar. Ce cauchemar durera quelques années. Et chaque année semblera aussi longue qu'une décade* »(Feraoun, 1950, p. 180) .

The passage explains that for Kabyle people, poverty is the lack of barley and wheat and figs, they feel afraid of not getting access to it. In addition to food shortage, ignorance spread and familial problems created conflicts between the community members. For example, the struggle of the female characters is cited in many passages, which illustrate their double suffering the following passage tells us more:

C'est toujours une galette bien ronde, khalti est attentive, elle travaille vite. Je sais qu'il ne faut pas lui parler. Ce n'est pas le moment. Nana souriante et très à l'aise, saisit l'argile entre ses petites mains pâles, triture, tâte, caresse(Feraoun, 1950, p. 49)

The word Khalti and Nana means aunts in Kabyle language, Feraoun narrates how female characters work hard in their everyday lives, they are known for their patience since they struggle to solve their daily problems in society.

Accordingly, we can conclude that there are some common points to take into consideration. First, the two communities live in the same living miserable conditions caused by racism in the US and colonialism in Algeria. The white control and French oppressive laws contribute to worsen the life of the Blacks and Kabyles. Both ethnic groups suffered a lot from consequences such as slavery, violence, poverty, and suppression of identities. Both

literary works describe and reflect the difficult and violent periods in the history of the Blacks in America and Kabyles in Algeria. The two novels' settings are based on the authors' hometowns, which inspired the events and contributed to shape the main characters.

4. Parallels between Characters of the two novels

Bigger Thomas and FouroulouMenrad

Bigger Thomas and FouroulouMenrad are the major figures of the two novels. Bigger Thomas is a twenty years old black man who lives in Chicago's South Side during the 1930s with his family. His life is characterized by poverty and misery. The young man wants to get a job, but he lives in a permanent state and psychological torments. He feels restlessness with his environment. As a child, his family taught him that he must avoid risks of punishment of death by the white men. So, he interiorizes the inferiority complex and starts to feel alone and humiliated. The young man becomes psychologically disturbed because of his misery and the social discrimination he suffered in his whole life. This is why he commits illegal actions. From a psychiatric point of view, Frantz Fanon explains the inferiority complex and its impacts in his *Black Skin and White Masks* (1952).

It is Bigger Thomas—he is afraid, he is terribly afraid. He is afraid, but of what is he afraid? Of himself. No one knows yet who he is, but he knows that fear will fill the world when the world finds out. And when the world knows, the world always expects something of the Negro. He is afraid lest the world know, he is afraid of the fear that the world would feel if the world knew(Fanon, 1952, p. 107)

According to Fanon, Bigger Thomas is afraid of his being a Negro. He believes that when people will discover his crime, they will have a bad stereotype about blacks. This young man who experiences distrust and racism of whites during his whole life has very hard childhood, full of poverty and oppression. He lives in a society where he sees white boys, able to enjoy life, but for Bigger, they can do everything they want because they are rich and whites, as he says in the novel: “we live here and they live there, we black and they whites, they got things

and we ain't, they do things and we can't" (Wright, 1940, p. 20) .This affirmation of Bigger Thomas reveals a segregated American society.

Bigger's living conditions create a distant relationship toward his family because he feels weak; he sees them suffering without being able to help them. When he found a job in Dalton's house, he still feels afraid because of his position as a Negro. This feeling pushed him to kill accidentally the rich white Mary Dalton, and then he begins covering up the crime. This accidental misconduct contributes into other crimes; the murder of his girlfriend Bessie. Bigger Thomas is a representation of all black men of his time who try to make a living, but due to their skin color, they are limited to a very few things in their lives.

In contrast, the protagonist character FouroulouMenrad, a young Kabyle man who lives in Tizi-ouzou province; he lives in a country occupied by the French colonizer. He is a studious student, educated by poor parents, a father who works hard to feed his family, and a lovely mother. The young man Fouroulou is supposed to be a Fella in Kabylia with his father, but he struggles constantly to escape from his destiny, by a strong ambition and dream to become a competent teacher. He is the only one who believes in a different and better future. We can say that he is poor but happy, a fighter for his dreams; he wants to be successful in order to not to stay a Fella forever. This is why he should leave his family and follow the path of success in his studies.

Bigger Thomas shares many similar aspects with Fouroulou Menrad; both young boys experience adulthood at a young age. Fouroulou starts a career and attends a French school, while Bigger had not the opportunity to go to school, which is limited to the whites. He hardly gets a job as a driver. For the first time, both of them are experiencing the real hard life. Therefore, the two men find themselves in situations that force them to examine their lives. Bigger believes that working for the Dalton family is an opportunity and a chance for him to get out from poverty. Like Fouroulou who also desires to be more educated while attending

school. Both men saw this as a gift for them. Their thinking is somehow the same, they are unable to support and overlook racism and colonialism in their surroundings. Both of them wish to live in places different from their hometowns, where there is neither war nor segregation.

What is important then in comparing these two main characters is that their struggles in their daily lives show how their communities suffer from injustice. Their identity was denied by racism and colonialism. Their backgrounds, events differ, but the two characters faced the same suffering conditions from their early childhood. In addition to the two main characters, other comparisons appear through the ways Richard Wright and Mouloud Feraoun shape their women characters.

The Representation of Women in the Two Novels

In *Native Son*, Mrs. Thomas and Bessie Mears are the only female characters who represent and show how black women suffer during the 1920s and the 1930s in the United States of America. The events of the novel describe the experience of Mrs. Thomas; she is unable to work in most places and forced to stay at home with the kids. Because they are regarded as the ones that must take care of their homes and families, Bessie Mears also faces sexual aggression and violence by her boyfriend Bigger. This is an example of Richard Wright to demonstrate that there is sex oppression on women, who are the victims of male's misdeeds toward them. However, Black women mark the history of women's suffering in the United States of America.

A similar status is apparent in *Le fils du pauvre* through characters like Fatma, Tassadit, Baya, Nana, and Halima. All of them endure hard circumstances during the colonization of Algeria. They are forced to work at home by educating children and outside in the agricultural fields. When the husband is absent like the case of Fouroulou's aunt, woman

plays the role of the father during his absence. The daughters and sisters cannot attend school, they stay at home beside their mothers to clean, cook, and aid their fathers and brothers and take care of animals in the fields.

Finally, both authors employ family figures in their stories, especially women to demonstrate that women are subordinated, voiceless, and marginalized in society. In Richard Wright's novel, Black women live a precarious life because of racism while in Feraoun's novel, they lead a similar life because mainly of the weight of traditions and customs. Women in Kabyle society are implicitly enslaved and she works without a salary, her role is limited to domestic work, taking care of children and family.

B. Chapter Two: Comparison of the Main Themes of the Two Novels

So far, we have established some parallels between Richard Wright's *Native Son* and Mouloud Feraoun's *Le fils du pauvre* in terms of structure, settings, and characters. Our intention is to apply the same procedure to discuss the ways in which the two authors shape the main themes. The two novels include issues such as family, education, society, religion, hope, freedom, struggle and injustice. So, what are the similarities between the two narratives' themes? The focus will be on finding and analyzing the effects of poverty, the quest for cultural identity in the two novels.

1. The Impact of Poverty in the Two Novels

As far as Richard Wright is concerned, as we mentioned earlier, poverty represents the miserable conditions where he and his family lived and passed through. The main character shows the black community fighting social injustice for regaining the right for a decent life. Bigger Thomas tries also to change his life of misery, regain his lost identity throughout the story, but he did not succeed. In both *Native Son* and *Le fils du pauvre*, the issue of poverty has been examined by the two authors through the lives of two young men, Bigger Thomas and Fouroulou Menrad, who reside with their poor families and fight to survive.

Because of his skin color, Bigger Thomas is unable to work as the white men, the members of his black community are denied from employment opportunities. All these misrepresentations of the Black community contribute to their poverty. It is also because of poverty that the relationship between Bigger Thomas and his family become toxic, mostly with his mother Mrs. Thomas. She fights with him all the time to find a job, as she expresses it in the novel "if you get that job...you could be comfortable and not have to live like pigs" (Wright, 1940, p. 11). She wants him to work in Dalton's house: "if you don't take that job

the relief will cut us off, we won't have any food".(Wright, 1940, p. 11) All these conversations between the mother and his son show that this black family live in poverty. Additionally, it is due to poverty that Bigger Thomas ends up as a criminal; poverty and hard life creates in Thomas's mind a kind of fear and mental disorder.

There are many studies that discuss the topic of how poverty can contribute to mental illnesses and misdeeds. Harvard University scholars demonstrate how poverty affects a person's mentality and personality. One of the academic researchers, who made the connection between poverty and social mobility, is Robert Sampson, the Henry Ford II Professor of the Social Sciences. This social scientist has long recognized that a child's setting, particularly living in poverty, may have an impact on his personality in the future. An analysis in an April paper:

What this paper is trying to do, in a sense, is move beyond the traditional neighborhood indicators people use, like poverty," Sampson said. "For decades, people have shown poverty to be important ... but it doesn't necessarily tell us what the mechanisms are, and how growing up in poor neighborhoods affects children's outcomes(Reuell, 2019, p. 1)

In this article, the researcher applies these studies on Human Development in Chicago Communities, degrees of crime. The analysis shows that the black and white girls that are exposed to hard life and harsh surroundings register higher cases of pregnancy. The study claims that Chicago's black children who are exposed to hard settings can impact on their behaviors and views, because aggression, poverty can impact their physical and mental health. Reuell adds that Sampson believes that children who grow up in a segregated and poor neighborhood may affect their minds and their physical evolutions (Reuell, 2019, p. 1)

This research is supported by Robert Sampson saying that a child who grows up in poor neighborhoods has serious consequences on him and the other generations. At the same time the research explains the attitude of bigger Thomas in the novel, a young man grows up in a poor setting that change his personality. For instance, in the novel, the poor lives full of discrimination push a young man to be a criminal. The theme of poverty is mentioned in

several passages in Richard Wright's *Native Son*, Mrs. Thomas says to her son Bigger: "If you don't take that job the relief will cut us off, we won't have any food".(Wright, 1940, p. 11) The quote shows that this black family suffers from poverty, the mother suggests to her son to go to work to get out from the misery of poverty.

It is important to point out that the theme of poverty is also a recurrent issue in Mouloud Feraoun's *Le fils du pauvre*. It is voiced by the narrator as follows:

Tant qu'ils purent trouver de l'orge sur les marches-au prix ordinaires, s'entend-les kabyles n'étaient pas à plaindre .Quand les céréales furent bloquées pour être servies parcimonieusement par des docks spéciaux dépendant d'un service spécial, les pauvres fellahs connurent la faim avec laquelle, pourtant, chacun était un peu familiarisé depuis sa naissance(Feraoun, 1950, p. 181)

The passage explains that the majority of the villagers are poor. They work in their fields, but they do not have enough grain and wheat because the land in mountains is not fertile. Consequently, they suffer from a permanent famine in the village; there is always food shortage and lack of the basic food supplies. The primary motivation for Fouroulou to pursue his studies is poverty. He believes that when he will become an educated man, he can gain more money to help his poor family and improve their conditions. Mouloud Ferrous considers education as the only means to escape from the misery of life. This autobiographical novel describes how Mouloud Feraoun himself accomplishes a successful life by studying.

Many social scientists and researchers about social means believe that growing up in poverty may also help to be successful. The following article: *How Some Kids Escape Poverty* demonstrates how some children can escape poverty. Researchers show that only a small percentage of children who grow up in poverty are successful adults:

Caroline Ratcliffe and her co-author Emma CancianKalish found that 16 percent of "persistently poor children" (those living more than half of their lives from birth to 17 years in poverty) become successful young adults, meaning that between the ages of 25 and 30 they are consistently working or in school, and are not poor.(Kirk, 2017)

Children who spend their lives and whole childhood in poverty may accomplish the best achievements in adulthood. FouroulouMenrad becomes a successful teacher due to his poverty. He realized his goal in spite of poverty rather than abandoning like Bigger Thomas did by becoming a weak murderer man. Therefore, both authors experience poverty in different settings; they have a desire to depict their experiences through their main characters who suffered from poverty with their families. But the difference is that poverty contributes to improve Fouroulou's social status; it is then a positive factor while it pushes Bigger Thomas to commit crimes leading to his tragic end.

2. Identity Construction in the Two Novels

If the theme of poverty is a common theme in the two novels, the need of self-definition is another comparable theme in Richard Wright's *Native Son* and MouloudFeraoun's *Le fils du pauvre*. The subject of identity is displayed in the first novel by Richard Wright in shaping Bigger Thomas as a distant character from the rest of his community. He feels uneasy and suffers from a lack of identity and freedom. He is a man who struggles for a belonging to the American society and culture, which marginalizes and rejects him. Because he is aware of being a normal person as whites, but due to his black skin color and racism, he lives at the fringe of his daily life.

One of the obstacles that prevents his self-definition is fear, this feeling is present in most of the Black people's psyche. It is an inferiority complex which has been imposed on them by racism and enslavement experience. However, racism is one of the reasons that motivate the writer to defend his origins and identity through the story of Bigger Thomas.

Furthermore, in the novel, black aggression helps to humanize the black identity as violence creates identity and a meaning for the black lives. This philosophy is confirmed only in the psychology of Bigger Thomas, when he says: "I didn't know I was really alive in the

world until I felt things hard enough to kill” (Wright, 1940, p. 501). This statement echoes Frantz Fanon’s idea of violence as a cleaning force.

The issue of identity is also foregrounded in Mouloud Feraoun’s autobiographical novel *Le fils du pauvre*, which tells the story of a young Algerian man born in Kabylia who studies and becomes a teacher during the French colonization. Mouloud Feraoun wants to be an educator in order to share his cultural identity to the world. In his writings. He aims to make his origins and culture known through writing to a worldwide audience. He rejects and denounces the repression of the French army vaguely in the majority of his works that discuss the Algerian identity and particularly the Berber one.

The colonial regime attempted to suppress the Algerian identity, so Feraoun constantly questions why they call him by this name, *Le fils du pauvre*. The following excerpt illustrates the point of rejecting the nickname: “ leurs oncles ou leurs cousins préfèrent, sans doute, le nom de Chabane pour bien montrer aux gens que les orphelins avait de qui tenir et qu’ eux, ils remplacent en fait et en doit celui qui n’était plus” (Feraoun, 1950, p. 196) The author wants to get the name of the son of Chabane instead of fils du pauvre and wants to eliminate this given name because it may seem strange to the Kabyle people and will never serve as a reminder to the following generations of their past and family's history.

Furthermore, the author reclaims his identity and highlights the significance of the family name in his village because it symbolizes the patrimony which is one of the elements of the Algerian identity. Therefore, he desires to let the names of his origins such as his family name “Menrad” to show that his family has a history and an identity in Kabylia.

Similar to Bigger Thomas, Feraoun describes his society and its people’s way of life; The narrator asserts: « au milieu des aveugles » (Feraoun, 1950, p. 7) which stands for an erasure of identity, then he maintains: « Supportant avec eux tous(...), l’âme clame(...) avec fatalism indifférent » (Feraoun, 1950, p. 8) For Feraoun, it is a kind of blindness because his

Kabyle community resists on that misery of life, they are still silent rather than denouncing the responsible of their harsh situation. The goal of the writer is to open the eyes of his community to fight for the liberation of their identity.

Related to this context, Professor Brooke Durham states in: *Analysis of the Self-Identification of Algerian Novelists Mouloud Feraoun and Yasmina Khadra and Their French Education*

Feraoun's primary identity is Kabyle. Aware of the uniqueness of his education and achievements, Feraoun decides to describe Fouroulou—and himself—as an “every man,” as a Kabyle like any other. This is another angle on his perception of himself as évolué while deeply connected to his native Kabylia (Durham, p. 22)

Feraoun decides to publish his autobiographical book to describe his life and share Kabyle identity at the same time. Brooke also argues that the Kabyle author who accomplishes his studies in French education, he uses this foreign language to discuss about his origins and culture (Durham, p. 15). It is important to point out that Mouloud Feraoun spent his whole childhood studying in French language; it was an opportunity for him to describe his origins through it. *Le fils du pauvre* is a novel written in French language but does not narrate anything about the French traditions.

Mouloud Feraoun uses several words using his mother tongue in his literary works in order to maintain his identity, for example the Kabyle expressions and proverbs such as: “Belles mains de soie” / “Brillants comme l’huile au soleil” / “Ikoufan” and “Tadjmait”. All of these descriptions are meant not only to present Kabyle identity to the readers, but he also uses them to send a message to the French authorities to defend his origin.

Finally, we can deduce that Feraoun's novel is a good example which explains how the educational abilities of Fouroulou Menrad can contribute to the building of Kabyle identity. All these descriptions demonstrate to readers and the future generations that identity is a component of personal and cultural developments.

3. Mutual Hate in *Native Son*

The other theme that appears in the novel is hate of the black community, which comes from the impact of race relations in the American society. In *Black Boy*, Richard Wright makes his alienation and hate for the white society very clear:

I now knew what being a Negro meant. I could endure the hunger. I had learned to live with hate. But to feel that there were feelings denied me, that the very breath of life was beyond my reach, that more than anything else hurt, wounded me. I had a new hunger. (Harold, p. 9)

It is this crucial situation that is illustrated in *Native Son*'s characters; the blacks get psychologically sick and their only desire is to escape from their reality, for example Bigger's mother has looked to religion for peace and comfort because God promises a nonviolent lifestyle in the future. Blacks use alcohol, sex, and religion to escape their harsh realities and numb their pains and miseries.

Bigger observes that no one reacts to their oppressive environment; he believes that if society does not respond, struggle, and react to change their miserable situation, things will continue to haunt them. The problem with this escapist thinking is that it makes black people look blind and drives them to lose sight of their mission which is identity and freedom. Bigger Thomas thinks that they have to struggle rather than stay silent, he believes that religion does not protect children from the impacts of racism, to have access to food, or to get a job, that's why self-defense is important to have a better lifestyle.

However, disturbed behaviors of black community are the effects of oppression that shall be avoided, because it develops their difficulties and suffering. The racist characters of the novel of *Native Son* include Peggy, the housekeeper at Dalton's house, who feels superior to Bigger because she is white, and the police officers. Racism is also evident in Jan and Marry who make friendship relation with Bigger Thomas to prove that they are not racist by telling

Bigger Thomas that they want to eat at a restaurant. Furthermore, race relation in America is a motif that affects also on the African American identity and freedom. Blacks are deprived of their belonging to their culture and tradition and become dependent to the rules of white powers. The book entitled: *Frantz Fanon: A Life*, which was written by David Macey, refers to the racial antagonism between the whites and blacks and its impacts:

Reading Wright's work in 1940s Paris, the Martinican anti-colonial intellectual Frantz Fanon seems to have experienced similar feelings of identification. Indeed, Fanon, the leading post-colonial theorist of his lifetime, read Wright long before he met him, devouring the French translation of *Native Son* upon its appearance in 1947. In the words of his biographer David Macey, the novel would be the Martinican's 'main – if not sole – source of information about race relations in the United States (Macey, 2000, p. 127).

This psychological state of impatience, anger, frustration, and terror characterize much of Richard Wright's life and develop into a spirit of defiance that is frequently extreme to the point of irrational. This feeling of resistance is Richard Wright's first weapon.

4. Implicit Denunciation of the Colonial Oppression in *Le Fils du pauvre*

Mouloud Feraoun's first novel suggests a sense of pastoral calm and the pervasive beauty of nature. But the author also criticizes the colonial oppression in an implicit manner by describing the bad living conditions of the Algerian people. He does not refer directly to the French occupation, but in *Le fils du pauvre*, he reflects the colonial period by tracing the miserable life and worse social situation of Kabyle society during the French colonization of Algeria. He tells the story of his own childhood and adolescence during the time of war through the central protagonist Fouroulou Menrad, as well as the experience of lack of food of his family and the villagers: "les gens crèvent de faim dans un pays qui possède la Mitidja » (Feraoun, 1950, p. 187) The statement draws the reader's attention and points out to a great contrast between the richness of the country and the starvation of its people.

Furthermore, the narrator continues to show how life was difficult : « N'est-ce pas Fouroulou qui nous disait que le couscous c'est-à-dire l'orge-était la seule nourriture des gens de chez nous ? Enlever l'orge à un kabyle, c'est condamner à la famine » (Feraoun, 1950, p. 181) We understand that Mitidja is an area in northern Algeria that is used for agriculture. Mouloud Feraoun claims that, while Algerian lands are fertile places of agriculture that produce great quantities of goods, Algerians suffer from famine since they are still colonized. Mitidja produces wheat, so the two preceding passages show that the author believes that if the authorities forces do not permit Kabyle people to consume wheat, the villagers starve because wheat is the only food available to the poor Kabyle people. José Lenzini writes in his book, *Mouloud Feraoun, un écrivain engagé*:

Mouloud Feraoun, évidemment, n'aura pas à choisir son camp. Cet homme de culture, amoureux inconditionnel des lettres françaises, cet écrivain algérien de langue française, auteur de *La Terre et le Sang*, des *Jours de Kabylie*, des *Chemins qui montent*, de *Si Mohand*... ne reniera pas ses origines. Ce qui ne l'empêchera pas, après avoir dénoncé la répression féroce de l'armée française, de critiquer certaines pratiques des rebelles, avec qui on sait aujourd'hui qu'il était en contact au plus haut niveau ; tout ce dont témoignera son Journal (Lenzini, p. 3)

Mouloud Feraoun uses the language that he studies at school, the language of the French colonizer, but not to destroy the values of Kabyle culture, in his literary essays, he rejects the external French force with the use of cultural descriptions of Kabyle lifestyle; this literary technique aims to get France out of the Algerian territory. This attitude is however designed to achieve independence. He wishes to universalize and expose his culture to Western readers, for example in the novel, he describes:

Elles s'asseyent, alors, le dos appuyé au mur, introduisent les brins de la trame entre les fils de la chaîne et tassent avec un peigne en fer. C'est une occupation qui n'empêche pas les bavardages. Lorsque un métier n'est pas encore dressé, mes tantes sont occupées soit au cardage de la laine, soit au filage de la chaîne à l'aide de la quenouille et du fuseau (Feraoun, 1950, pp. 52-53)

This excerpt shows the intention of the author to present Kabyle customs and traditions to make them known to all.

Finally, the author considers his writings as an arm against colonial domination, and the only solution to get out of the misery. *Le fils du pauvre* is a literary work written to convince his community that Algerian residents have their place and right in their country, he uses colonialism as a main theme in this novel with the aim of rejecting the presence of the French force in Algeria.

B. Conclusion

This work aimed of conducting a comparative analysis of two literary authors: the African American writer, Richard Wright and his novel *Native Son* (1940), and the Algerian writer of French expression Mouloud Feraoun in his autobiography *Le Fils du pauvre* (1950), by focusing our attention on the concept of Parallelism which has been the basis of the American School of Comparative Literature. This theoretical concept offers the possibility of establishing parallels between authors without the existence of an influence.

The two authors did not meet; they did not belong to the same countries, cultures, languages, and religions, but we have found some common characteristics; There is no influence between the two literary works but it doesn't mean that they are not comparable, after reading and analyzing the novels we can say that despite the fact that there are differences, I choose to analyze and demonstrate similarities in many aspects such as the impact of poverty of on the two communities, identity loss and how Richard Wright and Mouloud Ferrous tried to revolve these problems faced by their communities.

The context in which the two authors produced their literary works was marked by violence and instability. Our comparison of the writers' biographies revealed that both authors went to school. The two authors struggle in their countries against social injustice and oppression. Richard Wright fought racial oppression, while Feraoun denounced colonial exploitation. Additionally, both Wright and Feraoun worked with same topics, including the themes of poverty in their communities and the search for identity.

The first chapter of the work focused on some parallels between lives of both writers, especially on their careers, and how their communities faced racism and colonialism. The second part of the chapter contains findings, including similarities between the two novels'

structures, setting and protagonist characters. In the second chapter, we explored a comparison between the main themes of the two novels.

The objective of this work is to make researchers understand that despite the differences between the literary works it is possible to find many parallels in the way of life of the two the two authors and their communities such as bigger Thomas and Fouroulou Menrad who are two major characters who share common points. Parallels are also found in the setting; both areas share lived in misery and oppression even though the countries are separated geographically. Richard Wright and Mouloud Feraoun have different style of writing but the important thing to retain in this work is that it indicates similarities of the novels structures.

The main themes of the novels are the most important parts of this research, which include the place of women in the African American and Algerian; the two books demonstrate clearly how women face hard life during that time. The impact Poverty and identity loss are also principle concepts narrated again and again in the passages of the *Native Son* and *Le fils du pauvre*. All these elements contributed and pushed Richard Wright and Mouloud Feraoun to write in time of conflicts; writing during the war and discrimination was the only solution to defend their countries from colonization and racism.

Despite the fact that the two authors use different languages (French and English), and are separated by vastly different period of time (1930s and 1950s), their shared social experiences created creative works that are comparable in some ways. They also shared same objectives of writing; they engaged to write in order to contribute to the renaissance of their cultures.

The Algerian Nahda political movement appeared during the 1920s by the Algerian politicians and intellectuals such as Abdelhamid Ibn Badisse in order to reject French authorities and rebuild the Algerian identity; the objective of our leaders is to reconstruct what

is broken such as pedagogical systems in the fields of learning, relive mother tongue at school since French language became took the first place during the colonization of Algeria, many writers also were engaged to write about Algerian customs and traditions in order to reborn identity and the most known of them is Mouloud Ferrous, all of these contributions are parts of el Nahda El Djazairia contributions.

If we return to the African American culture Harlem renaissance of the 20s is the symbol of their cultural awakening and the ultimate solution to blacks to suppress white racist beliefs, during that time, many artists appeared in painting, dance, writing, music... the most known writers of Harlem renaissance include Claude McKay, James Baldwin, Bessie Smith and many others without forgetting Richard Wright. The two awakening movements emerged with the purpose of showing the power and the wealth of the two nations.

We can also deduce that war experience the Algerian communities and racism in America left serious consequences, the colonization of Algeria cause the death of more than 500 millions of people, it lead to mental and physical disabilities such as traumas and depression, Many Algerians become 'Pied Noirs' and thrown into exile...Even the Black Americans suffered from the consequences of racism which impacted their way of life as healthcare, housing, working, voting rights and education.

Therefore, the two texts need further research, I invite next master students and other researchers of comparative literature to develop this example and try to find more parallels between *Native son* and *Le fils du pauvre* or between the two authors' other literary works.

There are also several literary works that can be compared with the concept of parallelism of American school of comparative studies, this theory can be illustrated with the two novels '*Go Tell it on the mountain*' (1952) by the African American author James Baldwin and '*Une Ville en Temps de Guerre*' (2013) written by the Algerian author

Abdelkader Djemai. Their novels narrate the life of two protagonist adolescents, growing up in events that marked their lives, the voices of war, discrimination, oppression, poverty.

Students can also use the concept of parallelism of American school of comparative studies to compare other cultures such as Asian and African cultures; they can discuss about how Indians face poverty and injustice and how the authors of this country defend their country, by adding the same common feature of another country such as Pakistan, Syria or Palestine, Parallelism is very broad concept that should be employed to examine two common topics in almost all fields.

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