DECENTRING WESTERN FEMINISM AND MANLY NATIONALISM: THE CASE OF ALGERIAN WOMEN (1954-1962)

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ABSTRACT

Gender based segregations either in public and private spheres have been recurrent problem for women in Western world, however the cases of women in the "Third World" highlight the ways in which race and gender intersect, exemplifying a double form of oppression. This intersection also functions between colonialism (external) and local patriarchy (internal) mechanisms that control women as in the case of Algerian women. This article considers the ways in which Algerian women reformulated the ways of decolonising Western feminism and nationalism in the Algerian Revolution (1954-1962). As such, this paper looks at the distinct perspective, created by Algerian women with an emphasis on their implicit contribution to Western feminist scholarship. By veiling and unveiling interchangeably for national liberation movement against France, Algerian women deviate from the very definitions of Western feminism and challenges patriarchal notions of nationalism. The strategic albeit voluntary act of unveiling earns them a space that is self-representative. This space also represents the backbone of national liberation movement where colonial gaze on women, and control on men in Algeria were contested. The paper concludes that Algerian women can successfully cross national and colonial borders, and hence create a space that is beyond the definitions of Western feminist scholarship, and beyond the demands of colonial authority. The theoretical background of this paper is mainly based on the ideas proposed by Chandra Mohanty, Frantz Fanon, Edward Said and Gayatri Spivak to explore insights from transnational feminism and postcolonial theory regarding gender and nationalism.

Keywords: Algerian Women, Western Feminism, Nationalism, Third World.

BATI FEMİNİZMİNİN VE ERİL MİLLİYETÇİLİĞİN ELEŞTİRİSİ: CEZAYİRLİ KADIN ÖRNEĞİ (1954-1962)

ÖZ

Gerek toplumsal gerekse özel alanda cinsiyete dayalı ayrımcılık, Batı dünyasında kadınlar için süregelen bir sorun olmuştur, ancak "Üçüncü Dünya'daki" kadınların yaşanmışlıkları, ırk ve cinsiyetin kesiştiği noktaları vurgulayarak kadınlar üzerindeki çifte baskı biçimlerine örnek teşkil etmektedir. Bu kesişme aynı zamanda, Cezayirli kadınlar örneğinde olduğu gibi, kadınların sömürgecilik (dış) ve yerel ataerkil (iç) kontrol mekanizmaları üzerinden işleyişini sürdürmektedir. Bu makale, Cezayir Devrimi'nde (1954-1962) Cezayirli kadınların Batı modeli feminizmi ve milliyetçiliği nasıl merkeziden edip yeniden formüle ettiğini ilgili teorik alıntılar ile ele almaktadır. Bu yönüyle makale, Cezayirli kadınların Batı feminist yazınına dolaylı katkılarına vurgu yaparak ortaya koydukları özgün perspektifi araştırmaktadır. Cezayirli kadınlar, Fransa'ya karşı ulusal kurtuluş hareketi sırasında geleneksel giyimleri aracılığıyla gizlenerek veya açıktan, Batı feminizminin prensiplerinden ve ataerkil milliyetçiliğe meydan okumuşlardır. Stratejik olsa da gönüllü olan peçe çıkarma eylemi, Cezayirli kadınlara kendilerini temsil edebilecek bir alan kazandırmıştır. Bu alan aynı zamanda, Cezayir'de kadınlara yönelik kolonyal bakışın ve erkeklerin üzerindeki kontrolün tartışıldığı ulusal kurtuluş hareketinin bel kemiğini temsil etmektedir. Makale, Cezayirli kadınların ulusal ve sömürgeci sınırları başarıyla geçebilecekleri ve dolayısıyla Batı feminizminin tanımlarının ve sömürge otoritesinin taleplerinin ötesinde bir alan yaratabilecekleri sonucuna varıyor. Bu makalenin teorik arka planı, Chandra Mohanty, Frantz Fanon, Edward Said ve Gayatri Spivak tarafından önerilen toplumsal cinsiyet ve milliyetçilikle ilgili fikirler üzerinden ulusötesi feminizm ve postkolonyal alanlara dayanmaktadır.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Cezayirli Kadın, Batı Feminizmi, Milliyetçilik, Üçüncü Dünya.

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INTRODUCTION: Algerian Women and War of Independence

The complex interplay between gender-based segregations, race, and colonialism has been a persistent issue in women's struggles for equality, both in the Western world and the "Third World." This multifaceted intersectionality of oppressions becomes particularly evident when examining the experiences of Algerian women during the Algerian Revolution (1954-1962). In this context, Algerian women navigate not only the tensions between colonialism and local patriarchy but also their unique position within the broader framework of Western feminism and nationalist movements. This article critically analyses how Algerian women's engagement during the Algerian Revolution reshaped the paradigms of decolonizing Western feminism and nationalism.

Central to this study is the exploration of how Algerian women's agency and strategies could potentially redefine prevailing notions of gender and nationalism. The primary argument posits that through their strategic practices of veiling and unveiling as tools of resistance, Algerian women transcended conventional definitions of Western feminism and reframed the parameters of nationalist discourse. As such, this research attempts to answer the critical question of how did Algerian women's participation in the national liberation movement against France reshape the established paradigms of Western feminism and nationalist ideologies during the Algerian Revolution? To unravel the multifaceted dynamics of Algerian women's experiences, this research draws on a theoretical framework informed by Chandra Mohanty's perspectives on transnational feminism, Frantz Fanon's insights on colonialism and identity, Edward Said's concept of Orientalism, and Gayatri Spivak's examination of subaltern voices. This blend of transnational feminism and postcolonial theory provides a nuanced lens through which to examine the intersections of gender, race, and nationalism. Regarding the Algerian context, Lionel Babicz suggests that "the war … represents the ultimate legitimation of the existence of the nation" (2015: 206). This research explores the evolution of nationalist discourse, which was initially dominated by masculine perspectives, and examines how Algerian women have reshaped it to legitimate their own presence in opposition to prevailing authoritative narratives of Western feminism and "manly" nationalism.

Algerian women played a central role in decolonising French occupation and control over Algeria during the Algerian war of independence (1954-1962). Engaged in the struggle for liberation, they became the focal point of scrutiny, both domestically and internationally. Their voluntarily involvement within the war, a patriarchal domain, in a sense meant an emancipation from their assigned traditional roles. However, the Algerian women got stuck

between the demands of local patriarchy operating in the form of nationalism against France, and Western feminism promising a release from the patriarchal control. Colonialism in the Algerian context revolved around "modernising" Algerian women through westernisation. Colonial France claimed to protect the Algerian woman for being marginalised and disregarded within society, while at the same time perpetuating the idea of her eternal passivity. Algerian men were portrayed as medieval, barbaric, and conservative resisting "modernisation". They were blamed for oppressing and exploiting women, which supposedly positioned them as the culprits for the so-called backwardness of society. The occupying power strategically attacked social and cultural values which in traditional societies as in Algerian context were supposed to preserve by women. Women, supposedly backbone of nation making, were threating the masculine authority both at national and international levels.

The term masculinity refers to the socially constructed and culturally specific set of characteristics, behaviours, norms and roles that have historically been associated with men in a given society. The masculine norms such as men as the defender of nation or protector of women often exert a considerable influence on shaping societal structures, including nationalist ideologies. Driven from the concept of masculinity, "manly nationalism" as the departure point of this research denotes to the prevailing preoccupation with patriarchal values and male-dominated perspectives within nationalist discourse. This concept underscores the inherent gendered dynamics that shape the course of nationalist movements, ideologically sidelining women from matters concerning the politics of warfare.

The war of independence that would appear to be a masculine concern indeed created a space for the Algerian women and it played a fundamental role in shaping their own destiny. The colonial administration deemed all forms of traditional clothing to be a longstanding addiction, urging women to break free from it. The white colonialist primarily targeted the Algerian woman and the veil that represents religious and national identity. Franz Fanon (1961) reveals that the colonial administration understood that colonisation of Algeria could only be made possible through controlling women through military means, recognizing her potential roles in the resistance and preservation of cultural heritage. For this reason, assimilation of women into foreign cultural values, and dislodging them from their social positions were key to break patriarchal resistance against colonialism. In other words, control over women would be translated into seizing real power over men and gaining an institutional means to dismantle Algerian culture.

The veil along with its cultural and religious significance for the Algerian society stands as the symbol of Algerian independence war. Traditionally associated with women as part of their clothing, the veil later serves as a mechanism of resistance where local patriarchy and colonialism fight over: veiling and unveiling. For Leila Ahmed it was indeed Western discourse that transformed traditional significance of veil: "in the first place determined the new meanings of the veil and gave rise to its emergence as a symbol of resistance" (1992: 167). According to Fanon (1952) the veil, prior to the revolution, represented an obstacle for the colonizer that needed to be eradicated, symbolizing backwardness, secrecy, and resistance to French influence. From the perspective of the coloniser, veil carries negative connotation in front of "modernisation", and for Algerian men it stands as a cultural symbol that must be protected and sustained. In this regard, Algerian woman was likely to be double oppressed due to the clash between two modes of patriarchy, namely colonial and local. The voluntarily act of veiling and unveiling interchangeably and strategically during the revolution created a space for the Algerian women to challenge cultural and patriarchal domination, as well. At the same time, this clash indeed created another space for the Algerian women to deviate from the very definitions of Western feminism and manly nationalism.

Problematising the "West" for the "Rest": Feminism and Nationalism

The context of Algerian women offers unique insights by which hegemonic Western narratives of feminism and nationalism can be problematised. The context of the Algerian women evokes the Eastern Women's Congresses of 1930 and 1932 that took place in Damascus and Tehran respectively. As detailed by Charlotte Weber (2008), the congresses aimed to establish a women's movement that could operate independently of both Middle Eastern male nationalists and Western feminists by combining feminist internationalism with anti-colonial nationalism. As such, Algerian context potentially uncovers the complex dynamics that shape the ways in which women's agency and national identity interact within the broader framework of gender struggles and national liberation movements.

Edward Said states the idea of "flexible *positional* superiority" in which the West always feels in the position of characterizing the East/Orient with any possible descriptions. It is "the relative upper hand" of the Western hegemony that we never lose anything related to the Orient (1978: 7). A possible hegemonic representation, in this case, portrays the war-zones gendered and do not recognize the multiplicity of women agency and resistance as in the case of Algerian revolution. Also, the social and ecological resistance of the revolution is blinded by "upper hand" of Western media. Spivak on her seminal article *Can the Subaltern Speak?* (1988)

critiques the ways in which the West perceives itself as sovereign 'Subject' and recognize 'no geo-political determinations'. This monolithic portrayal of women as the subaltern creates romanticised and orientalised images of Algerian women. The western media promotes itself as the 'conscious-bearer' of the women in the "Third World" and simplifies the revolution to an arm struggle that should be avoided. Female agency is only depicted with the war because this is what seems to be more attractive to the Western world. Perhaps it is fair to describe the Western media's attitude on narrating the women of the revolution as essentialist, restricted, and manipulative. The representation of women from "the third world" in the Western media is leading to the rebirth of a new sexist zone. The narrative account of this recent political reality is being constructed through the normative sense of Western understanding of the Other that was originated because of colonial dominations.

The West identifies itself in the position of talking on behalf of the Other without being knowledgeable about the discourse of the Other (Spivak 1988: 66). Spivak asserts that it is not possible for non-specialist, non-academic population to enter the world of the Other as Subject because "the episteme operates its silent programming function" (1998: 78) She importantly emphasizes "how to keep the ethnocentric Subject from establishing itself by selectively defining an Other" (1988: 87). The study claims that Algerian women in the revolution is multiplicitious, benefitting from Spivak's argument that "the colonized subaltern subject is retrievably heterogeneous" (1988: 79). However, there is a lot being missed and women in Algeria would not speak and act for themselves if the Western media continues presenting a homogenous, fabricated and romanticised images of Other, namely of Algerian women from its own bourgeois seat.

It is not yet clear if colonialism ended or not, but it has worn a new mask and begun to be called with the affiliations such as neo-. Women from underdeveloped countries, as in the cases of Algerian women have received their share from colonialisms and neocolonialism as well. Feminist movements have appeared in Western countries with the aim of freeing women everywhere from the male domination both in private and public spheres. Western feminists have tried to be the voice of the subaltern women as well, but they have been unable to create a space for them, which is self-representative as the experiences of women either geographically or culturally have greatly diversified. The practices of colonialism were initially carried through physical intervention and domination of what is perceived to be weak or inferior (Margaret Kohn and Kavita Reddy 2023). Neo-colonialism has taken on different forms, often linked to

capitalism and globalization. To put it more plainly, both colonial and neo-colonial influences can be seen as exerting a strong impact on those who are considered less powerful. This becomes particularly relevant when we consider how Western feminists have attempted to impose their ideas on women from the "Third World" through their scholarly work. One of the points to be covered in this paper is to show how Western feminists have failed to embrace the women in the Third World and what can be offered as an alternative to Western feminism in today's world.

While reading the book, *Feminism without Borders: Decolonizing Theory, Practicing Solidarity* (2003a) by Chandra Mohanty, the term "Third World" that constantly appears needs being problematised and defined before critiquing neo/colonialisms and feminism/s. During the Cold War, the term "Third World" emerged to classify nations that did not align themselves with either the capitalist First World led by the United States and its allies, or the communist Second World led by the Soviet Union and its allies (Andrews 2016). Since colonization is a process of socially or economically exploiting and suppressing people, the "Third World" feminism is a result of being suppressed and dominated by Eurocentric feminists. "The Third World" feminism entails looking at the problems of subaltern women in their own reality, not from a Western perspective. However, Mohanty (2003a: 17) should not be understood that while critiquing Western feminism, she seems to be forming a feminist movement working in the same way, rather, the "Third World" feminism is neither geographically nor ethnically or racially grounded, it is "across class, race, and national boundaries". Nevertheless, since Western feminisms' scope is geographically limited, both hold a culturally with their western centred view towards patriarchy and male dominance, they are likely to fall short to be the voice of those in the "Third World". This limitation they experience "appropriate[s] and colonize[s] the constitutive complexities that characterize the lives of women in these countries" (Mohanty 2003a: 19). So problematising Western feminism to go beyond its margins is key to be able to reformulate a self-representative feminism for those non-western women from different cultures.

"Third World" feminism tries to deconstruct Western-oriented feminisms that geographically, historically, and culturally base themselves to Eurocentric concerns. Mohanty further argues that Western feminists deal with "Third World Woman" as singular and monolithic subject." She also believes that Western feminists refer to women in the Third World in terms of the "feminist interests that have been articulated in the United States and Europe" (Mohanty 2003a: 17). Mohanty (2003a) makes an analysis of how "Third World" women have

been constructed in Western feminism and why Western feminism is inconsistent through its dealing with Third World women.

Based upon these concerns related to Western feminism, Mohanty presents a way through which she makes the "Third World" women's voice hearable in their own context and without being under the hegemony of Western feminisms. Certainly, there is a group of people who define themselves as "Western" and others as "non-Western." Therefore, Mohanty prefers using the term "Western feminism". Her concern in "Under Western Eyes: Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourses" is to demonstrate how Western feminism functions in the Third World and the urgent necessity of having the "Third World" scholars who write on their cultures rather than reading on such issues from a Western discourse. There is not any "universal patriarchal framework" according to Mohanty; therefore, "a particular world balance of power within which any analysis of culture, ideology, and socioeconomic conditions necessarily to be situated" (Mohanty 2003a: 20).

Mohanty critiques feminist writing on women in the "Third World" as she believes that they are written under the hegemony of Western feminist scholarship. Herein, colonialism is not regarded only a physical domination over underdeveloped countries, but colonialism might lend itself through Western feminist scholarship and this scholarship might cause the exploitation of "Third World" women. At this point, the scholarship from Western representation of Third World women appears to be "colonizing," as Mohanty puts it "the production, publication, distribution, and consumption of information and ideas" (Mohanty 2003a: 21). can be westernized, namely used as a way of colonization as well. Eurocentric universalism is a reality of today's Western feminist writings. However, Mohanty's point while going against those writings lies in the fact that not all women share identical interests or desires, and putting the burdens of all women in the same category is what has been criticised by the "Third World" women.

The cultural distinction made by mainstream western perceptions is likely to divide women into two as western and eastern. For example, according to Mohanty, "Third World" women are implicitly regarded to be sexually constrained, ignorant, poor, uneducated, tradition-bound, domestic, family-oriented, and victimized. On the other hand, Western women are regarded "as educated, as modern, as having control over their own bodies and sexualities and the freedom to make their own decisions." The author argues that while Western feminists are trying to have a right to say on women, they are portraying the "Third World" women as "the

other" and Western women as "the norm or referent" (Mohanty 2003a: 22). This fact can be traced in the case of Algerian women, who were presented as backward for being unable to beyond the demands of local patriarchy. However, western women too have been exposed to patriarchal control both in public and private domains.

"Third World" women who are physically and socioeconomically defined as "powerless" are coherently and constantly pictured by Western feminists as "victims of male violence," "universal dependents," "victims of the colonial process," "victims of the Arab familial system" and "victims of the economic development process" (Mohanty 2003a: 23). Mohanty explains that Western feminists put all the women in "powerless" category and men in "powerful" category and define them in terms of these two statuses without taking into consideration the society-specific issues and that, Mohanty thinks needs, to be challenged.

In three ways, Mohanty critiques the way that Western feminists verify their claims or findings about the women in the "Third World". First, she states that they justify their claims with numbers. For example, in order to show how wearing veil segregates or controls women's actions, Western feminists verify it with numbers of women who wear veil all around the world instead of comparing the reasons or contexts why women wear veils. The author exemplifies it with the case in Saudi Arabia and Iran by stating both have distinct reasons and histories and so they should be analysed in their own discourses.

The second way Mohanty (2003a: 34) problematises is gender-based tasks in which women are supposed to take sole responsibility such as reproduction, the sexual division of labour, and family. These are also criticised as they are considered "without their specification in local cultural and historical contexts". As a last point to her criticism, Mohanty adds the confusing use of gender as both "a superordinate category of analysis with the universalistic proof and instantiation of this category" (2003a: 36). What Mohanty strongly objects in the first chapter of the book is that Western feminists put Western women in "subjects" position; on the other hand, the Third World women remain as "objects" (2003a: 39). She asserts that this "subject/object" binary is a result of "feminist scholarship and colonial discourses".

After having written so much on why Western feminism falls short to meet the needs of the women in the "Third World", Mohanty (2003a), in the chapter "Sisterhood, Coalition, and the Politics of Experience" mentions about the texts written by Robin Morgan and Bernice Johnson Reagon. They propose the ideas of "global sisterhood" and "coalition" respectively. Upon making a critique of a universal feminism as being cross-cultural or cross-racial, Mohanty

leads the reader to contemplate over the possibility of forming "transnational feminism" (2003a: 106). Contextually, when considering the experiences of Algerian women within the broader framework of feminist discourse, Mohanty's insights hold particular significance. The discourse around Western feminism's limitations in addressing the multifaceted needs of women in the "Third World," as previously discussed, resonates with the ideas developed by Mohanty. In light of Algerian women's involvement in the national liberation movement and their strategic adoption of veiling and unveiling, the complexities of their agency, cultural contexts, and struggles are manifest.

Just as Mohanty engages with Morgan's idea of "global sisterhood" and Reagon's concept of "coalition" the applicability of these concepts needs to be tested for the Algerian context. The dynamics of Algerian women's participation in a national struggle against colonialism add layers of complexity to the discussion of transnational feminism. Their engagement challenges conventional definitions of feminism and calls for a nuanced understanding that acknowledges the intersections of culture, identity, and agency. Hence, Mohanty's exploration of "transnational feminism" beckons us to reconsider Algerian women's experiences in the Algerian Revolution. It invites us to navigate beyond the borders of Western feminist paradigms and delve into the intricacies of their unique struggle, as they simultaneously negotiate their identity within both a national liberation movement and a global framework.

Colonial representation of the "Third World" women in Western feminist discourses has caused women to come together to decolonize and deconstruct Eurocentric representation of the "Third World" women. And Morgan, as one of those feminists, held the idea of global or universal sisterhood as a way to fight male dominance in the world, which Mohanty (2003a: 110) criticizes it by stating "[u]niversal sisterhood is produced in Morgan's text through specific assumptions about women as cross-culturally singular, homogenous group with the same interests, perspectives, goals and similar experiences". Nevertheless, even if the common of oppression of women is a reality, there is a "hidden history of women's resistance and bonding" (Adrienne 1984: 29). While the imperatives of universal solidarity persist, the Algerian experience illuminates the mosaic of diverse stories, forms of resistance, and aspirations. Algerian women's contributions are rooted not only in their shared struggle but also in the nuanced interplay of their unique cultural identities and historical trajectories. This dynamic narrative of collective strength amidst diversity challenges the very notion of a homogenized

global sisterhood. Instead, it celebrates the myriad ways in which women have historically risen against oppression, forming bonds that transcend and subvert colonial representations. Their narratives encapsulate both the shared threads of resistance and the individual colours of their unique journeys, echoing the call for a feminism that is both inclusive and sensitive to the complexities of diverse contexts.

As sufficiently stated above, even though there might be potential to build solidarity among women everywhere regardless of geographical and cultural differences, Mohanty (2003a) goes against the concept of global sisterhood since it holds a singular, monolithic approach against the problematic issues of gender. She thinks Morgan's approach that the women who are victims and oppressed should act in concert is not enough to provide solutions to race, culture, or nation specific female problems. Morgan intends just to transcend the male world (2003a: 116). Mohanty further argues that Morgan fails to see the complexities of the historical differences in the Third World and "the need for creating an analytical space for understanding "Third World" women as the "subjects" of various struggles "in history" (2003a: 193). Yet, what the women in the "Third World" need to do is to begin with their own female bodies and [n]ot to transcent this body, but to reclaim it" and "speaking where silence has been advised or enforced" (2003a: 31). As for Reagon's notion of "coalition", even though it is a cross-cultural coalition, she does not talk about the universal oppression or exploitation of women everywhere, she "uses the coalition as the basis to talk about the cross-cultural commonality of struggles, identifying survival, rather than shared oppression, as the ground for coalition" (2003a: 117).

When the notions of Reagon and Morgan are closely examined, they do not actually have anything in common even if they look similar in the first place. Morgan does not appreciate differences that the women in the world have. According to her, every woman is face to face with the same hardship or oppressions without taking into consideration their local social or historical contexts. On the other hand, Reagon knows the differences these women have, and commonalities as well. Reagon, as being aware of these important aspects in dealing with female issues or problems, enables having "transnational feminism". Transnational feminism means building feminist the solidarity without having any boundaries of race, class, nation or beliefs (Mohanty 2003a: 250). However, Dagmar Lorenz-Meyer states in her article (Dagmar 2004) that the dialogue or solidarity which is to be built can be fruitful only if there are different voices in feminist epistemic. Otherwise, for example when it is only built by Western-oriented feminists or the "Third World" writers, it is not going to be "solidarity" or "dialogue", but a

(Eurocentric) monologue. Meyer quotes from Mohanty and states that her struggle is "an ongoing 'movement between cultures, languages and complex configurations of meaning and power" (Dagmar 2004: 3). And even if Gayatri Spivak (1988: 308) asserts that the subaltern cannot speak, Mohanty believes the other way, encouraging them at least try to have a voice if not a share in the mainstream feminist movement.

All in all, a critique of Western feminist scholarship as it retains the way to adopt the West as "subject" and the Third World as "object." It is still ethnically, racially, culturally and historically grounded and has a Eurocentric approach which legitimizes the implicit superiority of the First World over the Third World. Mohanty (2003a: 192) argues against the way that women in the Third World being categorized as "a homogenous, undifferentiated group leading truncated lives, and victimized by the combined weight of their traditions, cultures, and beliefs, and [their] (Eurocentric) history". She also goes against the idea of "global sisterhood" as it sustains being cross-cultural and universal yet lacking the quality of meeting the needs for being a feminist movement for women in the "Third world". However, Mohanty is still hopeful that "transnational feminism" can be an alternative against Western feminism.

Nira Yuval-Davis, writing about the issues on women and nationalism states women are related to national and ethnic processes, and they are considered as having a carrier role in the formation of the nation-state (1989: 1). Davis states the roles of women in national state practices under five subheadings: Women are seen as biological reproducers of members of ethnic collectivises, reproducers of national/ethnic boundaries, the carriers of native culture, reproducers of ethnic/national categories and as participants in a national, economic, political and military struggle (Yuval-Davis & Anthias 1989: 7). Nira Yuval-Davis also emphasizes the importance of having an intersectional approach in analysing gender issue in terms of nationalism. It is necessary because this is how one gets rid of "[s]ituated gaze, situated knowledge, and situated imagination" of a hegemonic masculinist 'positivistic' positioning (2011: 3).

Practically, ideas cannot be neatly defined as they can be in theory. That is why even if in general and in the Algerian struggle, some have regarded nationalism as an obstacle to women's emancipation, it has somewhat led to the empowerment and emancipation of women following the liberation. Yuval Davis (1989: 10) states although women's role in national liberation struggles in terms of military warfare has diversified, women are usually considered to be in "a supportive and nurturing relation to men even where they have taken most risks".

Davis (1989: 11) further states that it should be emphasized that the role of women in national and ethnic practices is not always imposed on them; sometimes women voluntarily participate in such practices. Transposing this insight to the Algerian Revolution introduces the possibility that women's engagement in the revolution could transcend predefined gender roles. Instead, it might be indicative of a more complex and self-motivated participation that aligns with broader historical patterns of women's active involvement in socio-political movements. This possibility sheds light on the multifaceted nature of women's participation in the Algerian Revolution and on a more comprehensive understanding of their contributions to the larger national narrative during the Algerian Revolution.

By relating it to Chandra Mohanty's (2003b: 501) emphasis on micropolitics of context, subjectivity, and struggle in cross-cultural feminist work, this study calls for the necessity of a micropolitical and contextual reading of the agency of the women through Algerian women in contrast to European monolithic assumptions of gender. Mohanty significantly writes about *colonial discourse model* in which cultural practices of white women's, Western or First-World culture are dominant. Mohanty (2003b: 518) describes the model as *feminist-as-tourist model* and *feminist as international consumer*. Under such a cultural relativist gaze, women in the "Third-World" are both victims and powerful.

Another model Mohanty (2003b) states is *feminists-as-explorer model*. In this model, women of the Third-World are the object and subject of the knowledge. It is epistemologically deeper than the previous model. Nevertheless, "[i]f the dominant discourse is the discourse of cultural relativism, questions of power, agency, justice, and common criteria for critique and evaluation are silenced" (2003b: 519-520). These models Mohanty explains are aimed to build a feminist cross-cultural and knowledge solidarity; however, this study problematises for being a singular and hegemonic interpretation of women's agency and resistance in the case of Algeria. It might be true that such a Western relativist approach to the case of Algerian women allows us to recognize women's power and agency in the military, but it is such a limited and restricted gaze that women's agency in other liberatory practices is silenced by both national and international patriarchal practices. A 'de facto' radical political and social transformation is being covered by the capitalist representation.

Related to Mohanty's stance on this issue, it is also argued by Nira Yuval Davis and Anthias (1989: 1) that Western feminism does not recognize the heterogeneity of women in ethnically minority groups. While the Western feminism has not been able to recognize the intersectionality of ethnicity, class, sexuality, and gender, they also have regarded women as

homogenous groups only having social issues to be proposed for consideration. The role of ethnicity and race have mostly been underestimated by the dominant feminist groups especially the mainstream trends such as first and second wave feminisms. This has led the marginalisation of women who are ethnically of diverse origins having different problem than those of white and western majority. This is because what is mostly concerning for women of a minority group is not a matter of concern for women of a majority group. Mohanty (2003b: 501) highlights the intersectionality of power and knowledge constructed in a framework of "Eurocentric, falsely universalizing methodologies that serve the narrow self-interest of Western feminism". Although the Algerian revolution is against capitalist and patriarchal mindset in the region, assumptions constructed through their images in the West serves the desires of the capitalist world. However, Mohanty states: "It is especially on the bodies and lives of women and girls from the Third World/South—the Two-Thirds World—that global capitalism writes its script, and it is by paying attention to and theorizing the experiences of these communities of women and girls that we demystify capitalism as a system of debilitating sexism and racism and envision anti-capitalist resistance" (2003b: 514).

Anibal Quijano writes about European modernity and its determinant role in the production of knowledge. The knowledge of the European or in another word 'Western' world comes out of a relationship between 'object' and 'subject'. The relation is determined 'subject's relation to the 'object.' The 'object' always has the subordinate role, and it is absent in contrast to presence and dominance of the 'subject'. Quijano defines 'subject' as "a category referring to the isolated individual because it constitutes itself in itself and for itself, in its discourse and its capacity of reflection." As for 'object', it is "a category referring to an entity not only different from the 'subject'! individual, but external to the latter by its nature. […] [T]he 'object is also identical to itself because it is constituted by 'properties which give it its identity and define it, i.e.' they demarcate it and at the same time position it in a relation to the other objects" (Quijano 2007: 172). The 'subject' denies the multiplicity of the agency of the 'object'. The 'subject' is individual, but the 'object' is one historically and socially fixed total 'reality'. The 'object' is the 'other'. It is absent. Its presence is an issue only when the 'subject' defines it. And the definition would expectedly be an 'objectivised' one (Quijano 2007: 173). This vision of reality is what leads to the reductionist perception of social realities about the Algerian women. When the 'subject' often rooted in Western perspectives defines the 'object' such as Algerian women's experiences, it tends to reduce the complexity of the realities. This

reductionist perception occurs because the ‘subject’ is dominant in shaping the narrative, while the ‘object’ is frequently absent or seen solely through the lens of the ‘subject’s’ preconceived definitions. The intricate multiplicity of the agency and experiences of the ‘object’ in the case of Algerian women is not fully acknowledged or understood. Consequently, diverse aspects of their experiences may be oversimplified or overlooked, leading to a limited and potentially distorted understanding of the situations peculiar to their unique circumstances.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the persistent issue of gender-based segregations in both public and private spheres have long plagued women in the Western world. However, the experiences of women in the “Third World”, as in the case of Algerian women have revealed the intricate intersection of race and gender, resulting in a dual form of oppression. Those experiences also offer potential ways through which Western feminism could be critiqued for further development to be more inclusive and transformative. As for the intersection of race and gender, it serves as a critical point where external forces such as colonialism and internal dynamics like local patriarchy exert control over women, as exemplified by Algerian women.

Exploring the context of the Algerian Revolution (1954-1962), this article has delved into how Algerian women reshaped the narratives of decolonizing feminism and nationalism. Their unique perspective as observed through the example of veil offers implicit contributions to Western feminist scholarship to include concerns of the non-Western women. The study has demonstrated that through the strategic and voluntary act of veiling and unveiling, these women challenged Western feminist definitions and confront patriarchal notions of nationalism that I termed as “manly” nationalism. By doing so, they created a space that is self-representative, serving as the backbone of the national liberation movement that contested colonial and patriarchal perceptions and stereotypes of women.

Ultimately, this paper concludes that women from the “Third World” as in the example of Algerian women possess the ability to transcend national and colonial boundaries, creating a space that goes beyond the confines of Western feminist scholarship and the demands of colonial authority. Drawing on the theoretical foundations of Chandra Mohanty, Frantz Fanon, Edward Said, and Gayatri Spivak, this study has driven insights from transnational feminism and postcolonial theory to illuminate the intricate relationship between gender and nationalism. Through the experiences of Algerian women, it is possible to gain a deeper and nuanced

understanding of the complexities surrounding gender, power, and resistance in the struggle for the liberation of women.

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