

COUP D' EVENTAIL: THE MAGHREB, THE FRENCH,
AND IMPERIAL PRETEXT

by

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ABSTRACT

This thesis examines the experience of the men and women of the Maghreb through an analysis of regionally-based writers, historians, and cultural and geopolitical analysts, as well as alternative sources detailing salient factors involved in this era. The Maghreb, a region of North Africa consisting of three nations, Morocco, Algeria, and Tunisia, experienced well over a century of colonial rule by the French. The colonial era lasted from the early 1800's to the culmination of the French-Algerian War in 1962. France was determined to establish Algeria as an integral component of the French empire and the cornerstone for an economic and cultural expansion known as *Eurafrique* that would allow for the dominance of the African continent. Additionally, French Protectorates were established in the flanking nations of Morocco and Tunisia, resulting in absolute regional dominance. An interdisciplinary analysis merging the literary, cultural, and geopolitical history of the region provides the reader with an opportunity to evaluate multiple perspectives of this turbulent era. Further, it provides one with a practical foundation from which an objective critique of ongoing strife between the globalizing influences, for good or bad, of the West and the traditions and cultures of the Muslim world can be effectively based. Ultimately, this study reveals that French imperial pretext failed due to a combination of tragic miscalculations regarding basic geopolitical, cultural, and traditional traits of the Maghreb.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

The incident is famous, and known to history as the “coup d’eventail” (the blow of a fan). During the course of a dispute between the Dey and the French consul, Deval, the former, exasperated beyond bearing, so far forgot himself as to strike the Frenchman with his fan. To this day, Algerian gentlemen habitually carry fans, largely to ward off flies, and it would be impossible to inflict any physical injury with such an instrument: only the dignity of the consul had been wounded. The whole trivial affair could easily have been hushed up; but it gave the French government a pretext for intervention, which it was hoped might bolster up the increasing unpopularity of the King, Charles X. An expeditionary corps was accordingly fitted out, in the hope that public discontent might be distracted by a cheap and easy campaign which should increase French prestige abroad and add to the popularity of the Crown at home.

(Nickerson 99)

An analysis of the 19th and 20th century Maghrebian (alternately referred to as Maghrebi or Maghribi) experience with the French presents one with an intriguingly relevant literary, historical, and geopolitical record. Numerous trends found in the colonial and postcolonial works manifest themselves in the modern day and will likely continue to arise in the ebb and flow of international geopolitics. A selected review of the stories, histories, and various analyses of the Maghreb will provide one with an objective and relevant understanding of this

overlooked region and people. The long, violent story of the Maghreb between the early 19th century and the present readily initiates a comparison with the multitude of ongoing military, cultural, and economic Western thrusts into the Muslim world. An ignorance of the story of the Maghreb poses a needless risk to the primacy of the West, democracy, and globalization.

The impetus for this study was a disappointment with the prevalence of misinformation and ignorance of literary, cultural, and geopolitical history. A cursory review of the body of Tunisian, Moroccan, and Algerian literature, history, and related geopolitical analysis, revealed several key friction points in the contact of two cultures that eventually led to the collapse of the French Empire in the Maghreb. The absolute failure of such a strong empire to succeed in the economically and militarily weak region of Northern Africa would ideally have provided lessons in imperial geopolitics. Disappointingly, the lessons that can be derived from these friction points have been overlooked or ignored by individuals and accordingly, the democracies and decision-making bodies in which they exist. A further detriment to achieving a useful understanding of imperial failure is the fact that Western studies dealing with the Maghreb have typically been specialized to a degree that it is difficult, if not impossible, to ascertain a relevant regional understanding, particularly the sort of understanding that is now most needed. This study hopes to integrate a multifaceted history of the French experience in the Maghreb that reveals fundamental and useful aspects of this complex interweaving of cultural, political, and military forces. At the conclusion of the study, the overwhelming impression gained will be one of realization:

reliable indicators of the debilitating and ultimately fatal disease of failed imperial pretext will be exposed from behind the shroud of popular opinion and politically, religiously, and culturally-sponsored misinformation.

The basis for this study deals with the tension and friction that develops in the collision of culture, religion, and tradition that has occurred since the crusades of the Middle Ages. The failure of multiple empires to identify characteristics of competitors both great and small is a commonplace occurrence throughout history. One misidentified characteristic of the Maghreb deals with the lack of French understanding regarding the outcome of displacing, forcibly or not, traditional Maghrebian man, manhood, and the responsibilities and roles therein implied. In a sense, the men of the Maghreb were offered a choice between outright sociocultural displacement and violent rebellion, with the predictable outcome of most choosing the latter option. Another failure by the French deals with a catastrophic misjudgment concerning the impact of any perception of Western impropriety, let alone actual mistreatment, imprisonment or torture, inflicted upon Maghrebian women. Additionally, the displacement and loss of so great a percentage of the men due to the various forms of insurgency left women in a dilemma between adhering to tradition and adopting the new roles and responsibilities now demanded of them. Dispossessed of the stability of their traditional roles and social organization, the men and women of the Maghreb underwent a crisis of identity that continues in certain forms to the modern day. Ultimately, the tragic misunderstandings and miscalculations of the West were combined with noncommittal imperialism which further galvanized

anti-colonial sentiment. These factors added fuel to the raging fires of divided French popular opinion and due to the extensive, bloody, and protracted nature of the conflict, concluded in the realization of a failed policy outcome, the relinquishment of the Maghreb, and the demise of the much-vaunted French Empire.

This study will reveal the salient perspectives of the men and women of the Maghreb who have fallen into an ancient pattern of domination, oppression, and exploitation. The approach to this topic is specialized only in its scope and intent and should not be viewed as a detailed review of the colonial and postcolonial era of the Maghreb. Ideally, an interdisciplinary project such as this would be undertaken by a group of specialized professionals working in close coordination to reveal the connections that exist between the literary, historical, and geopolitical records of experience. The body of Maghrebian literature spans many centuries and manifests itself as an unbounded expression of regional experience. This study is not an in-depth analysis of Maghrebian identity, interior landscapes, women's voice, the immigrant experience in Europe nor will it adequately address the interplay of males, females, and Islam in the Berber-Muslim region. Multitudes of works concerning regional religious, historic, and geopolitical factors have been written analyzing the region's wars, poverty, and a tradition of colonial and postcolonial injustice. This study challenges why, despite the availability of the aforementioned cultural, religious, and geopolitically oriented material, such a degree of misunderstanding between the West and the Muslim world not only persists but is tolerated.

The structure of this thesis follows a simple format that can be classed in the genre of interdisciplinary regional studies. It is an attempt to apply multiple perspectives in order to provide an understanding of past and ongoing crises between the West and the Muslim world. Chapter two, *The Maghreb*, will provide the reader with a geopolitical background of the region that is essential to attaining a basic understanding of the ancient and complex people, land, and cultural composition. Chapter two should be viewed as a regional study that will provide one with an objective assessment of the homeland of the men and women who are discussed throughout the paper. Chapter three, *The French in the Maghreb*, provides one with a geopolitical account dedicated to an explication of the colonial experience of Tunisia, Morocco, and Algeria. The French-Algerian War, which lasted from 1954 to 1962, provides the center of gravity for the chapter as it was exceedingly violent, impacted the entire region, and signaled the end of French imperialism in the Maghreb. Chapters three and four discuss a literary history of the experiences of the men and women of the Maghreb from the perspective of regional writers. Chapter six provides the reader with an opportunity to compare the journals of two Muslim men, one Algerian and one Iraqi, as they endure, respectively, the trials of colonialism and a new brand of what might be termed force-fed globalization at the hands of dominant geopolitical powers. The conclusion, rather than simply reviewing the entire paper, will reiterate the objectives of the study and provide additional assessment of the imperial policies of the French as they pertain to ongoing crises between the West and the Muslim world. This paper is neither an endorsement praising,

nor a rant against, geopolitical tendencies, oppression, war-making, or past and present government policies. It is an objective assessment of the experience of the Maghreb. The key failing of the French was their failure to identify the necessary characteristics of the region in order to succeed in their expansionism. In sum, the structure of this study is aimed at providing the reader with a sufficient background in the experience of the French in the Maghreb in order to better apply an interdisciplinary approach to assessing current geopolitical challenges faced by the United States.

This attempt to merge the body of literature with a number of regionally related areas of study will provide a pertinent understanding of the Maghreb and the often tragic encounters between the West and the Muslim world. In a sense, the colonial and postcolonial sequence of events in the Maghreb can be compared to a volcano. In a more ancient era, an individual or community might have seen the rising smoke, smelled a sulfurous odor, or felt the earth tremble. However, due to shortcomings in technology, science, and importantly, the integration of information and knowledge, the eruption was often a surprising calamity resulting in widespread destruction. A modern-day volcanic eruption is quite a different thing. The integrated efforts of trained volcanologists, seismologists, geologists, and chemists, working in concert with computer specialists to process masses of data, readily interpret indicators of any impending activity. In this practical application of merged expertise security and safety are made possible. The exact moment of the blast is perhaps the only unknown. The final component in this merger of effort, and likely the most

essential, is the translation and dissemination of the findings of the specialists into a format that is readily understood by all those who find themselves within the reach of the blast. This study will attempt to perform a similar task in order to unmask and promulgate useful information concerning the conflict and tension between the West and the Muslim world.

CHAPTER TWO

THE MAGHREB

“Morocco is a lion, Algeria a man, and Tunisia a pretty woman”

(Gunther 38).

Regional Overview

“Algeria has become a second Haiti” (9 de Beauvoir and Halimi).

De Beauvoir and Halimi’s comparison of Algeria’s status to that of Haiti likely leads one to hazy geopolitical conjecture, certain images of third world depression and strife, and ultimately a shoulder-shrugging conclusion that neither place would make a particularly good travel destination. This lack of knowledge, perhaps forgivable in those who lack access to worldwide and history-spanning information systems, is undesirable for the inheritors of the world’s lone superpower, which itself rose from the ashes of colonial conflict.

The goal of this admonishment is to initiate discussion, catalyze action, and reaffirm the responsibilities of the resource-rich, well-educated, internet-equipped, morally-sound, and democracy-oriented sons and daughters of America. It will be individuals such as these who will venture into the world as representatives of a supreme cultural, economic, and military power without counterweight that steadfastly defies simplistic classification as an “empire” in the

historic (e.g. British, Roman, etc.) sense. In short, it will be the action or inaction of these sons and daughters which will determine the course of the nation as they inherit the unprecedented capacity to provide assistance, export influence, and project absolute power to every corner of the world.

The Haiti to which de Beauvoir and Halimi refer is the Caribbean slave-colony, now restive nation, which France lost in the early 19th Century after nearly a decade of bloody anti-colonial fighting. Though elements of the French language and culture remain, the legacy of the French in Haiti is not proud and the nation continues to languish in corruption, disorder, and strife. De Beauvoir and Halimi's Algeria was, at the time of their assessment, a chronic geopolitical sore in the waning French Empire that presented itself as an unwieldy morass of humanitarian abuse and violent combat; truly the worst failure among many in the doomed family of French colonial aspirations. Algeria is the largest and most geopolitically significant nation in the Maghreb and the logical centerpiece of French imperial expansion into Africa. Who, what, where, why, or for that matter how, then, is the Maghreb?

The term Maghreb, meaning "western" in Arabic, describes a region that represented the western edge of Arab expansionism and exists in relative geographic and cultural isolation from the rest of Africa. It is bounded on the north and west by ocean and the south and east by mountains and the inhospitable expanse of the Sahara desert. The people of the Maghreb are the Berber, a people "made up of a mixture of nomadic mountain pastoralists and settled coastal farmers" (Shillington 64). The Berber refer to themselves as

Imazighen, or “free men” (Gunther 66). The Berbers are in essence a North African people who have evolved over the centuries from the influx of Arabic people from the east, Europeans from the North, and Africans from the south. Gunther’s description offers a snapshot of Berber origin and also provides the reader with an opportunity to consider a mid-1950’s (a climactic period of anti-colonial turmoil and violence in the Maghreb) European perspective of the people of the Maghreb:

By and large, Berbers are fairer than Arabs; some have blue eyes. Berbers, like Arabs, are Mohammedans, but are less orthodox; for instance, some eat pork. An old apothegm is that “a Berber is not a true Moslem, but only thinks he is.” A good many Berbers were converted to Christianity before the Arabs came and engulfed them; St. Augustine was a Berber. Berbers have their own language, which is totally unlike Arabic (of course many Berbers know Arabic too) and which does not exist in written form, except in the case of one Saharan offshoot. Berbers have no written records, and there is no Berber literature. (Gunther 66)

Noteworthy early history of this region includes the rise and fall of Carthage, located in the general vicinity of Tunis, Tunisia, which was ultimately conquered by the Roman Empire. Islam-spreading Arabs arriving from the east in the 7th century described this northernmost portion of the African continent as the *Djezira-el-Maghreb*, or “Island of the West” (Nickerson 4). Currently, the Maghreb consists of three nations, Algeria, Morocco, and Tunisia, as well as the ungoverned and disputed desert expanse known as the Western Sahara.

Geopolitical Comparisons

The following charts depict and compare geographically and politically significant traits of the region. They should be analyzed with respect to their relevance to the goals of imperialism and globalization and assessed according to their relevance to geopolitical action and response.

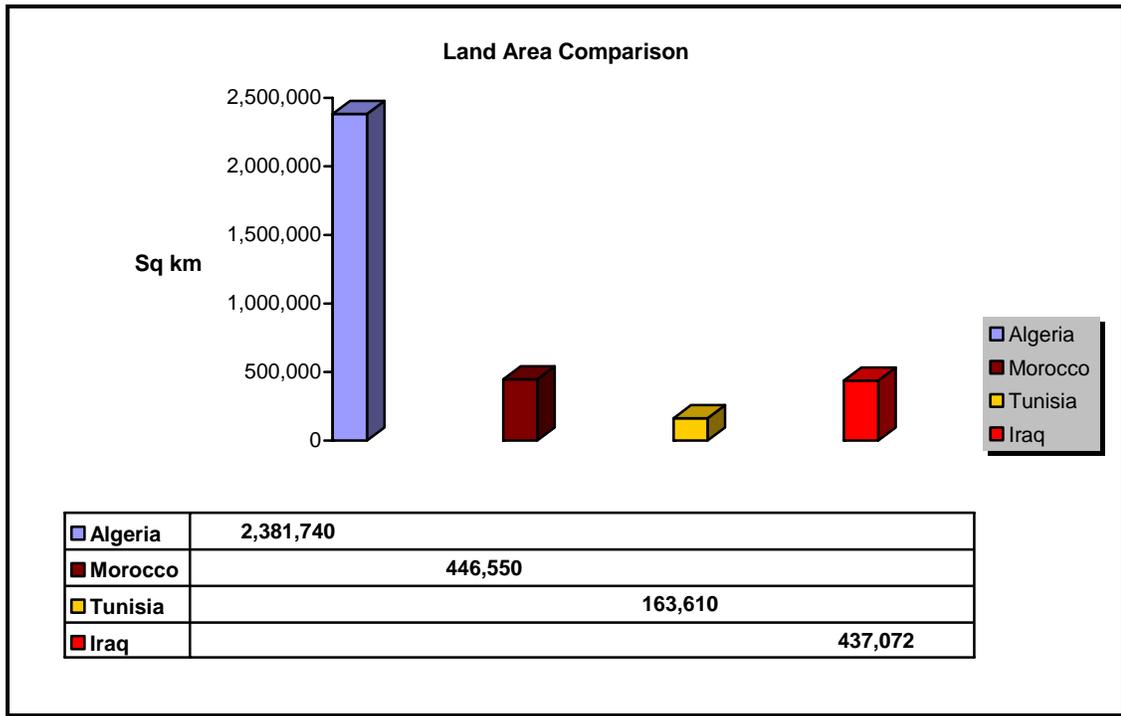


Figure 1: Regional Land Area Comparison [2005] (World Factbook, www.cia.gov)

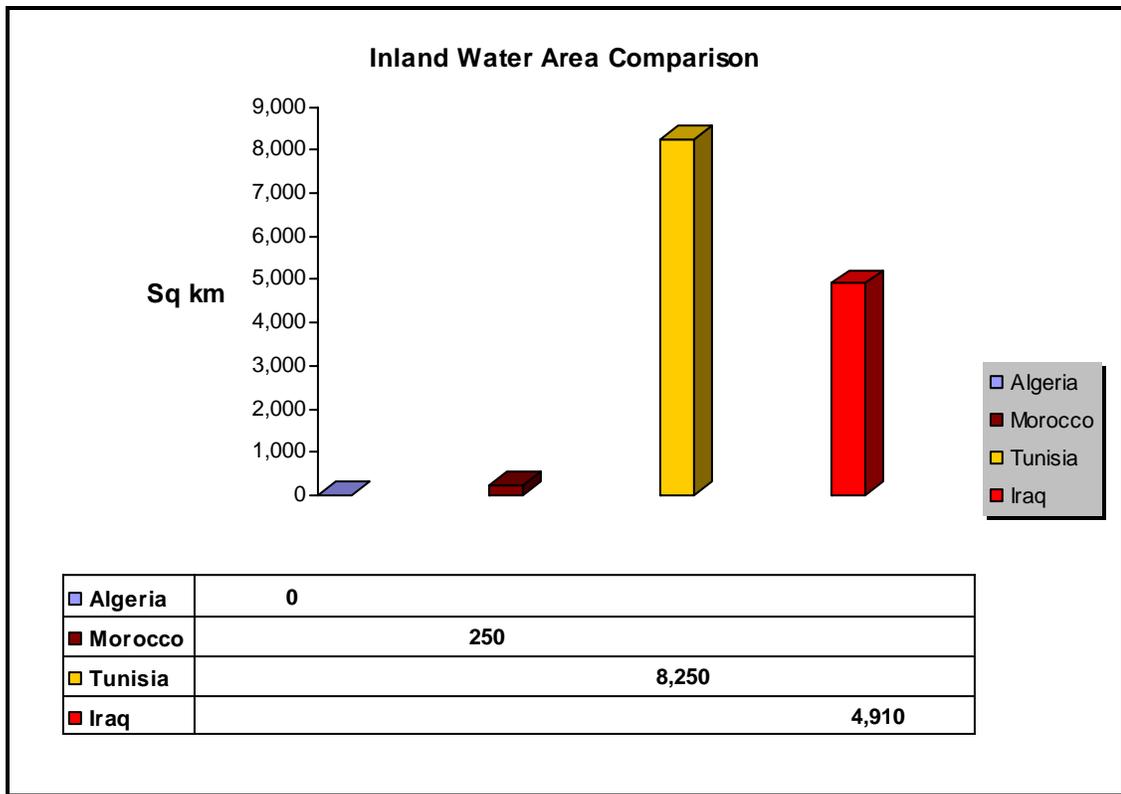


Figure 2: Regional Inland Water Area Comparison [2005] (World Factbook, www.cia.gov)

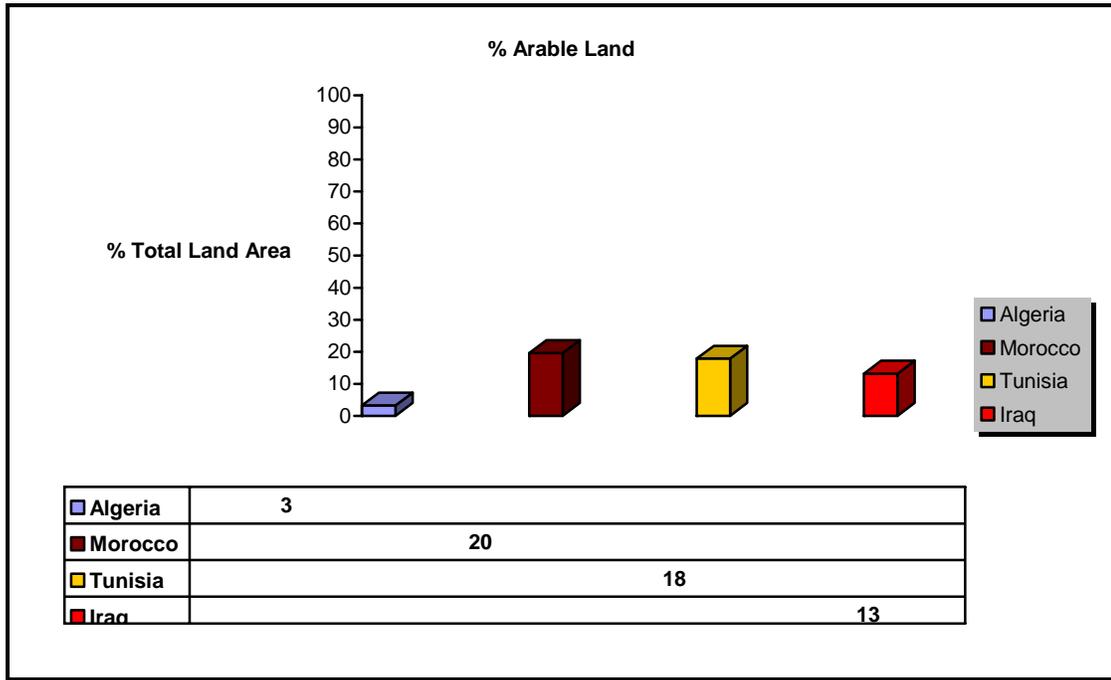


Figure 3: Arable Land Percentages [2005] (World Factbook, www.cia.gov)

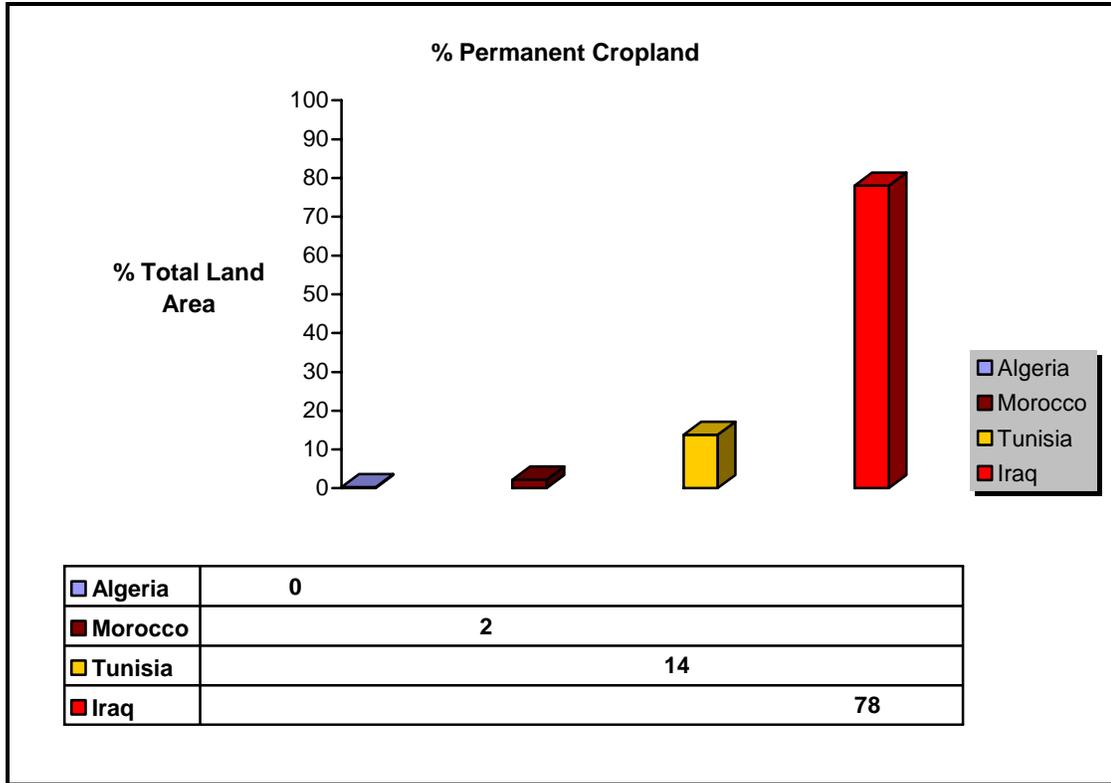


Figure 4: Permanent Cropland Percentages [2005] (World Factbook, www.cia.gov)

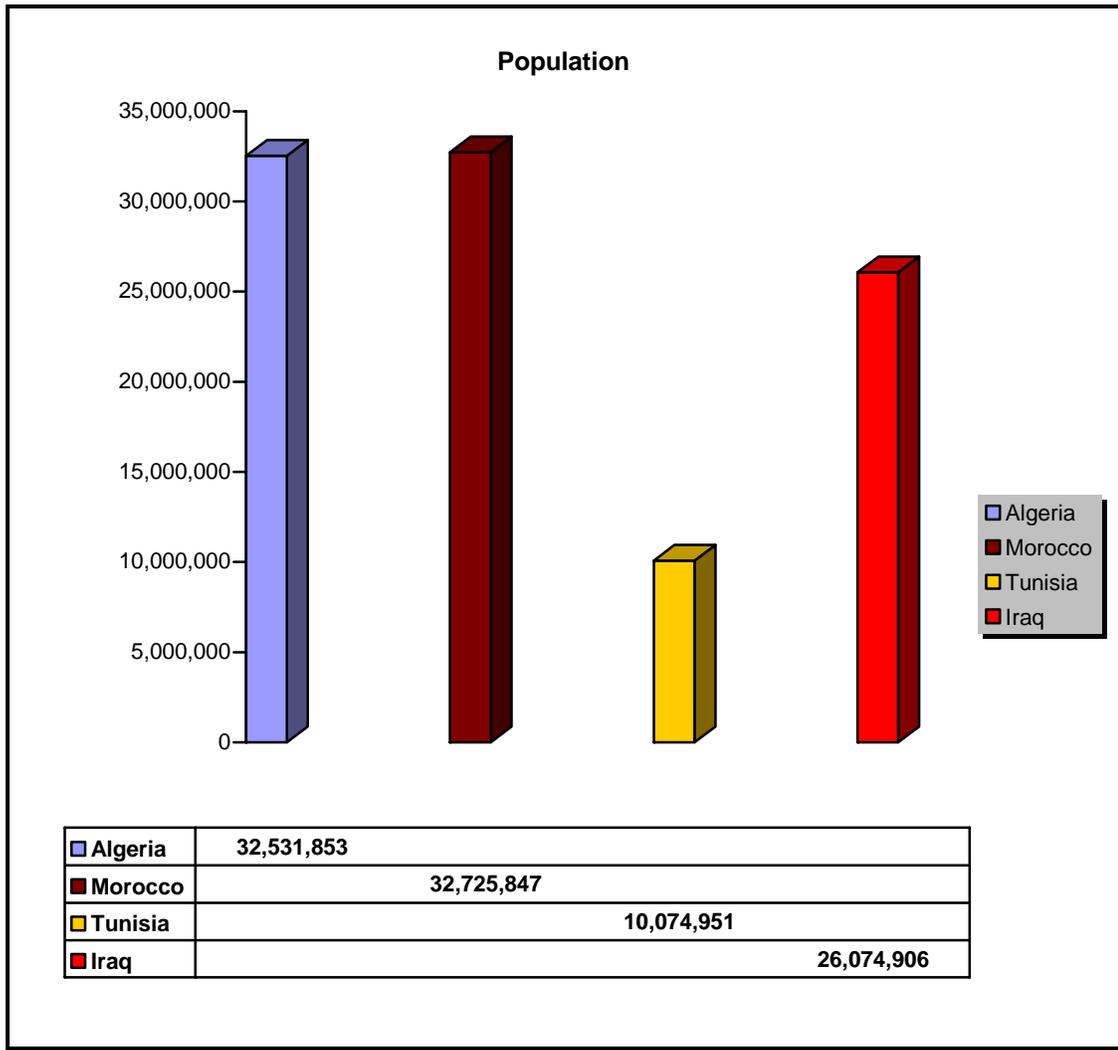


Figure 5: Regional Population Data [2005] (World Factbook, www.cia.gov)

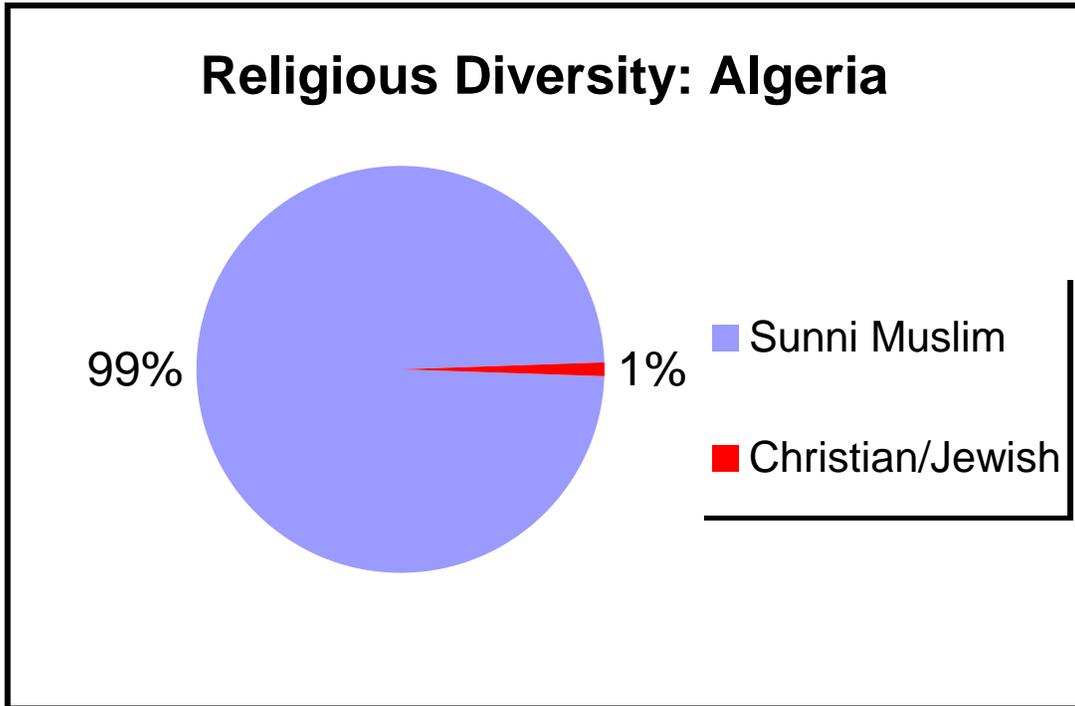


Figure 6: Religious Diversity: Algeria [2005] (World Factbook, www.cia.gov)

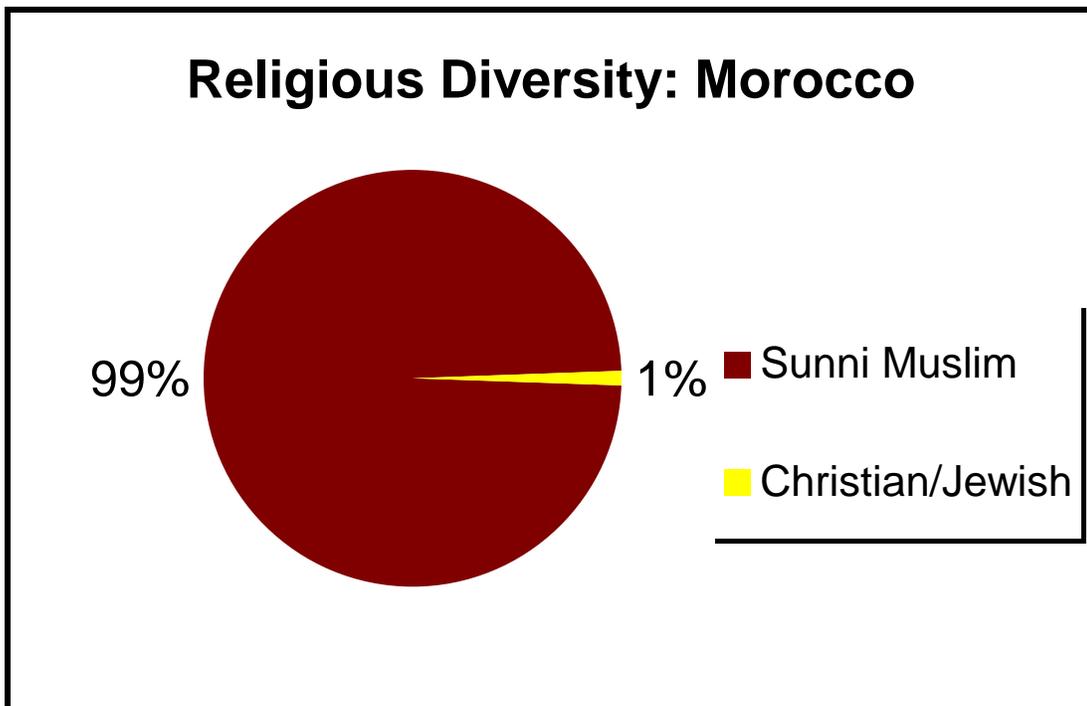


Figure 7: Religious Diversity: Morocco [2005] (World Factbook, www.cia.gov)

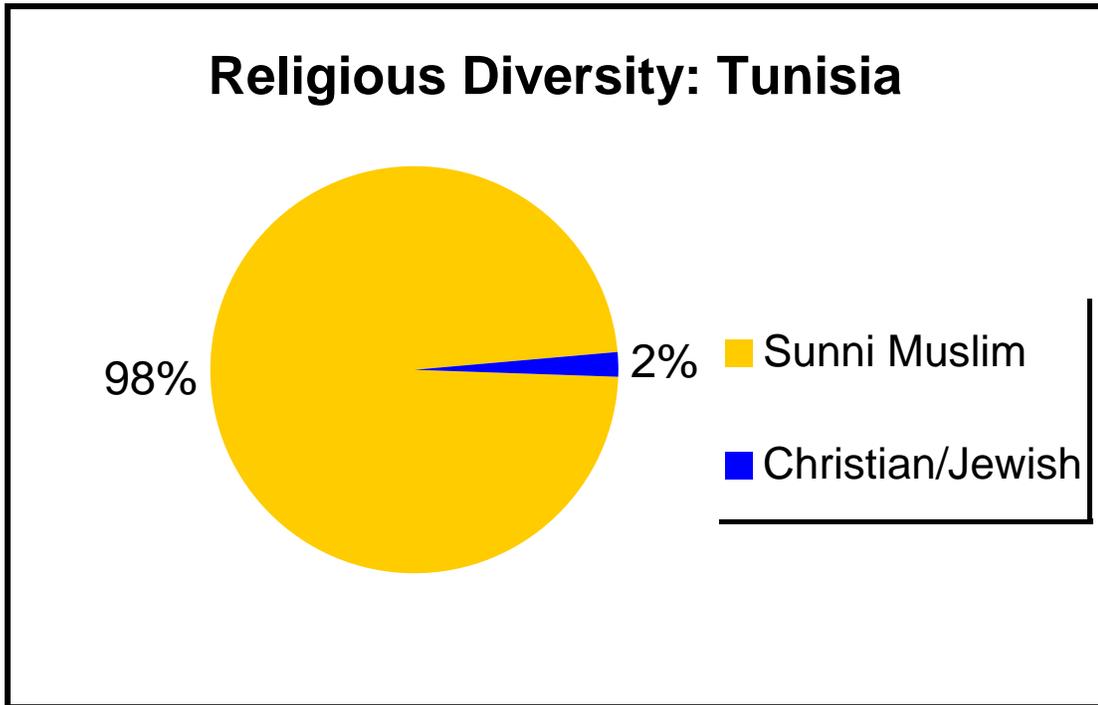


Figure 8: Religious Diversity: Tunisia [2005] (World Factbook, www.cia.gov)

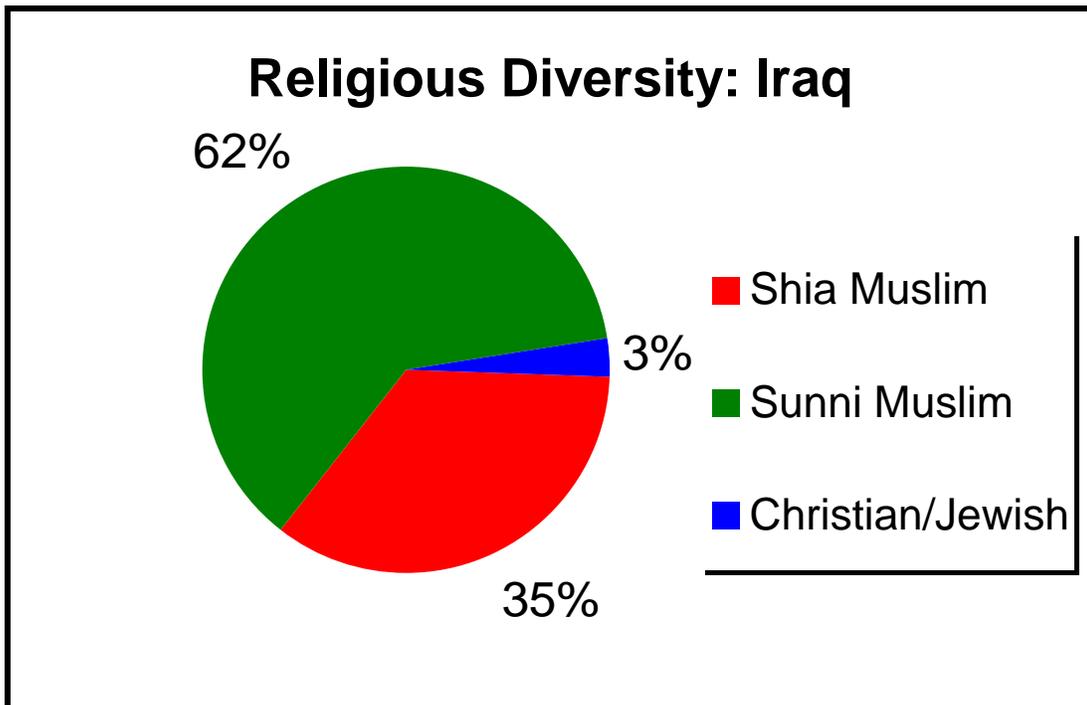


Figure 9: Religious Diversity: Iraq [2005] (World Factbook, www.cia.gov)

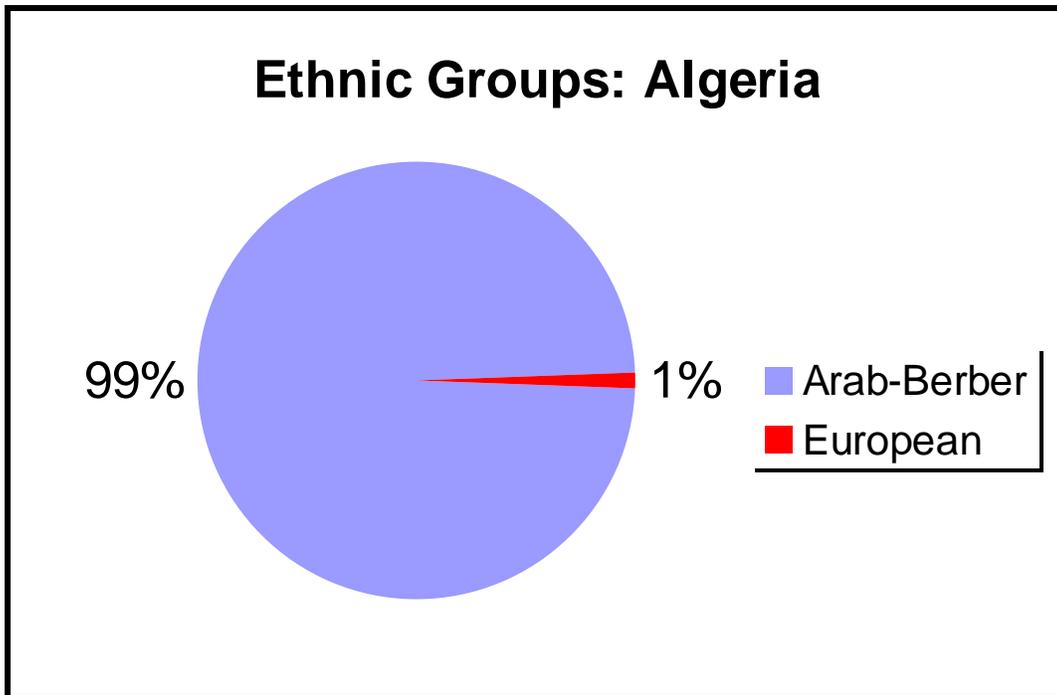


Figure 10: Ethnic Profile: Algeria [2005] (World Factbook, www.cia.gov)

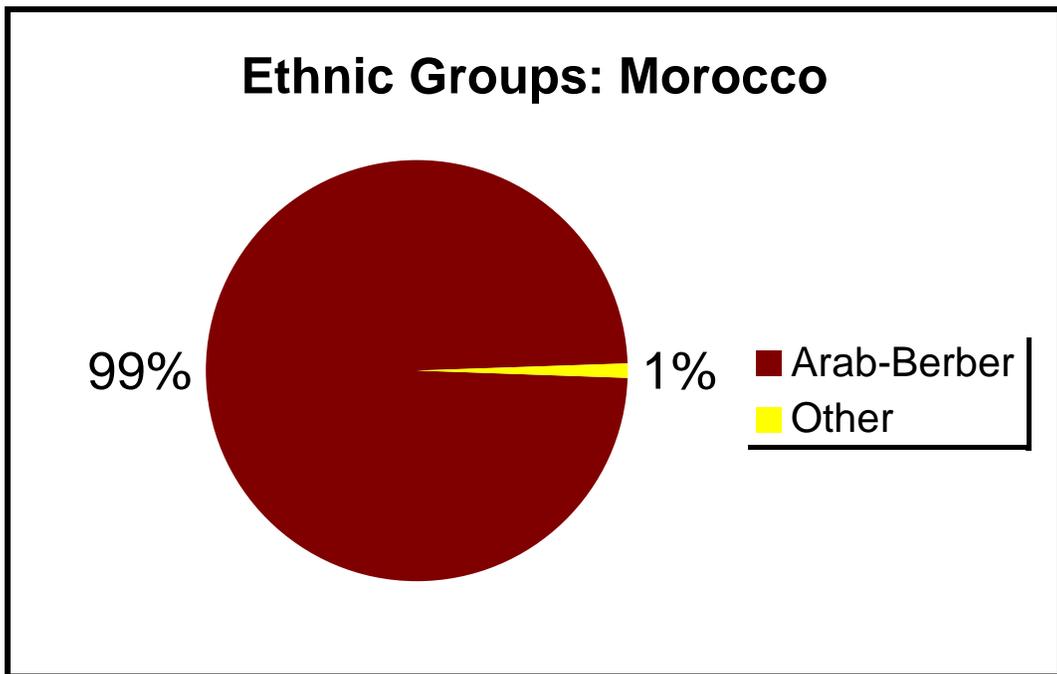


Figure 11: Ethnic Profile: Morocco [2005] (World Factbook, www.cia.gov)

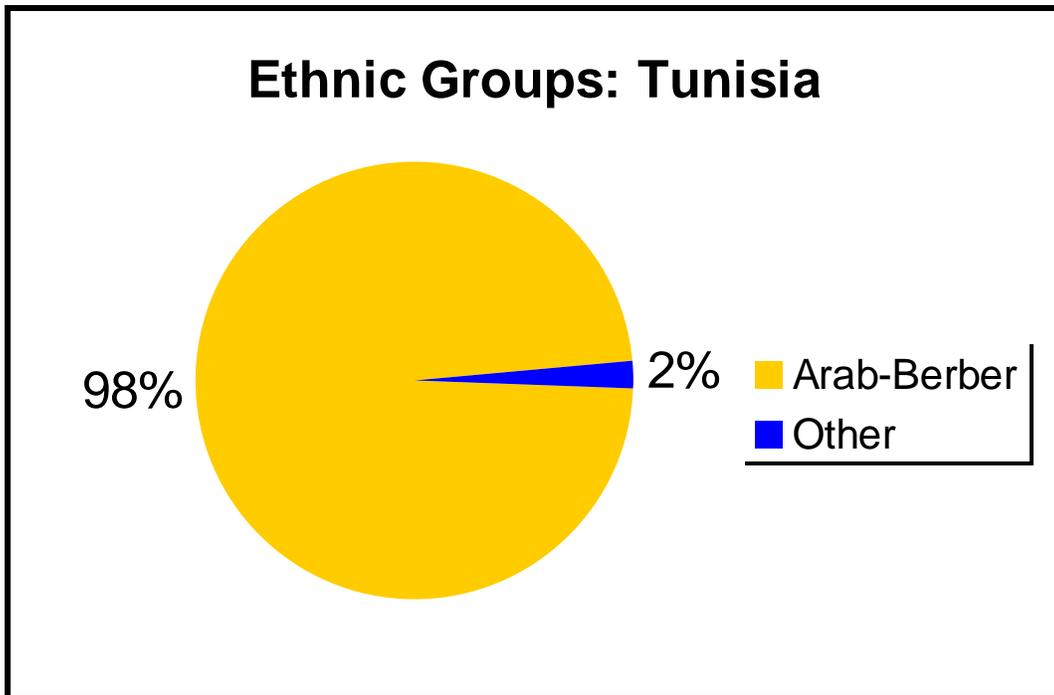


Figure 12: Ethnic Profile: Tunisia [2005] (World Factbook, www.cia.gov)

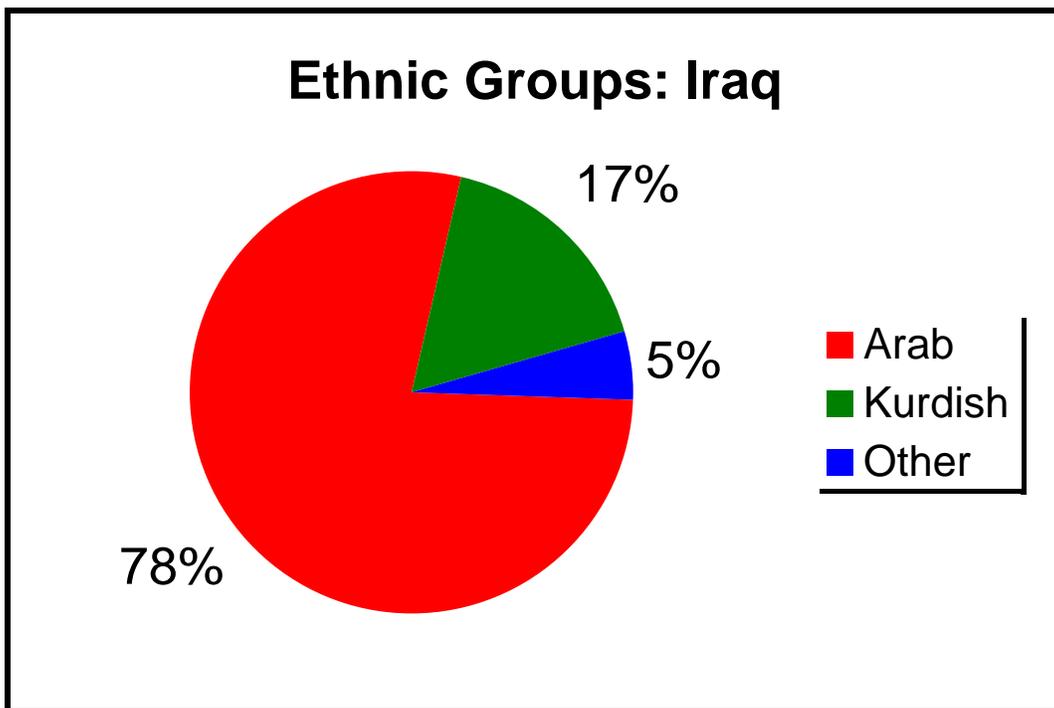


Figure 13: Ethnic Profile: Iraq [2005] (World Factbook, www.cia.gov)

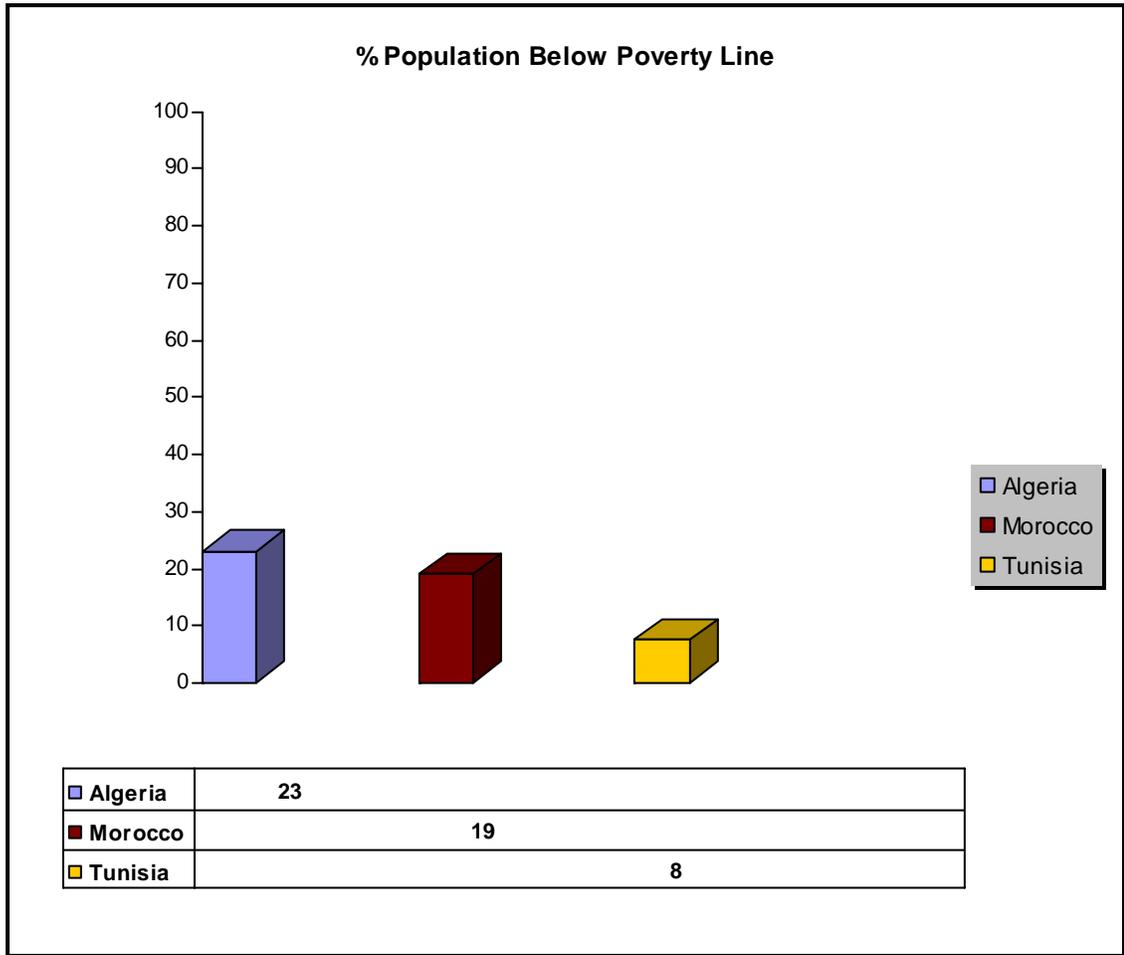


Figure 14: Poverty Estimate [1999] (World Factbook, www.cia.gov) (note: post-invasion Iraq information unavailable)

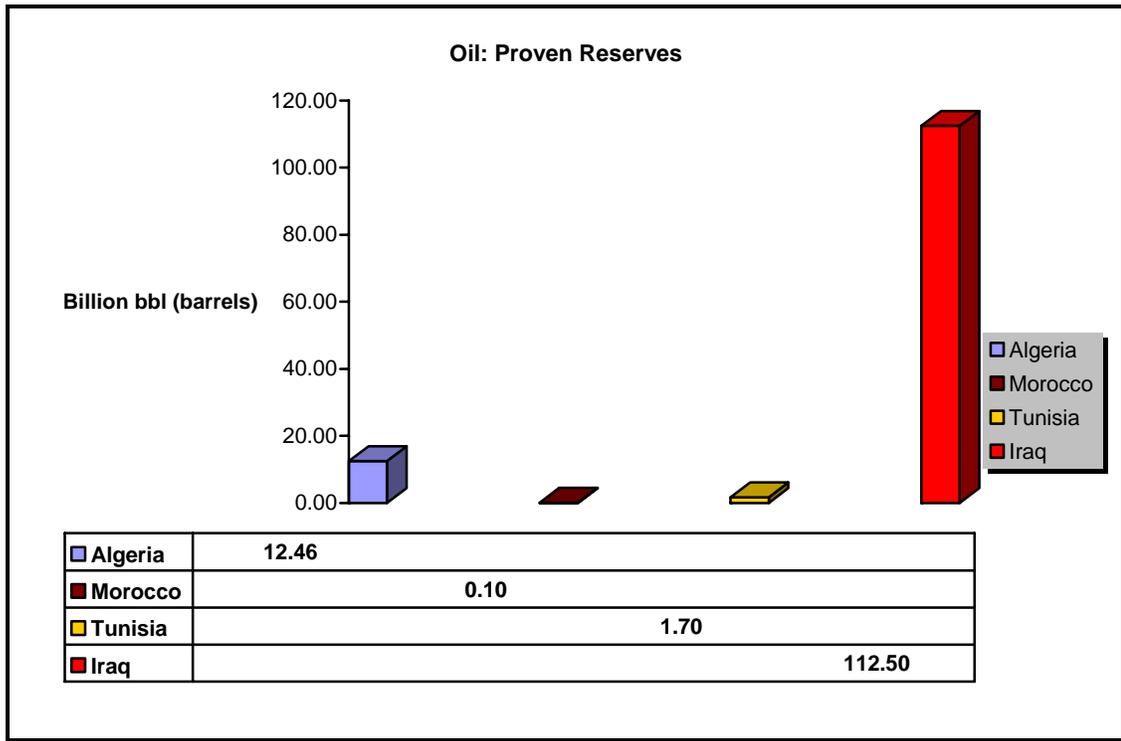


Figure 15: Petroleum Reserve Comparison [2005 data] (World Factbook, www.cia.gov)

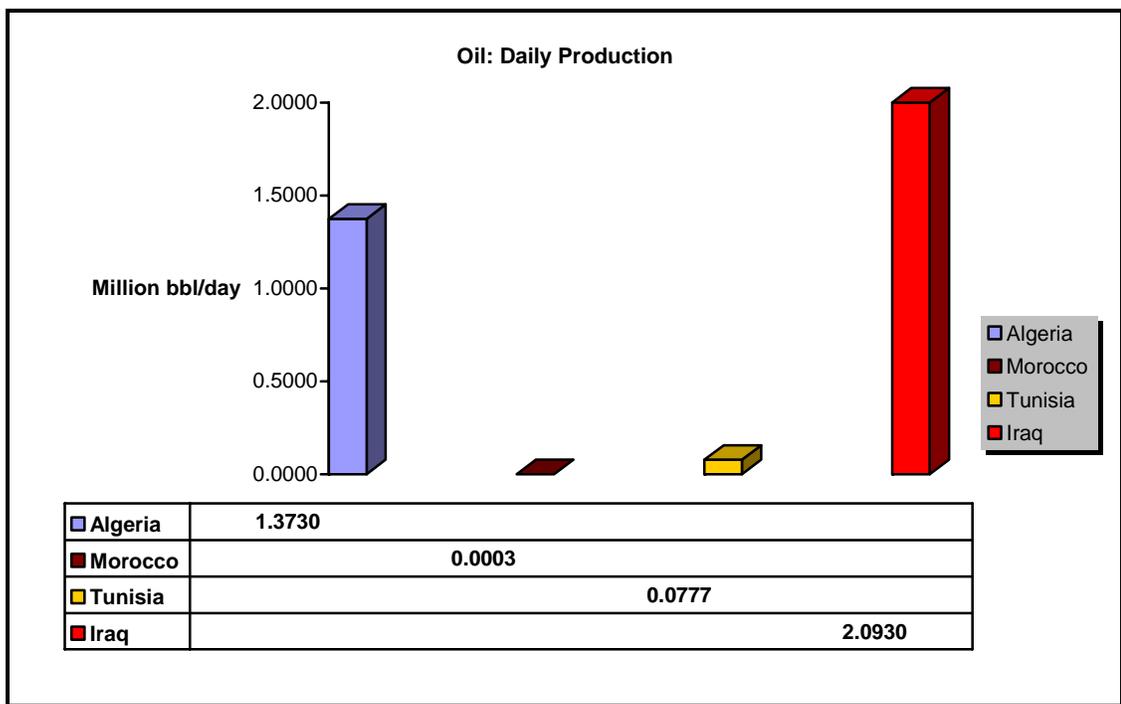


Figure 16: Petroleum Production Comparison [Maghreb, 2003 data; Iraq, 2004 data] (World Factbook, www.cia.gov)

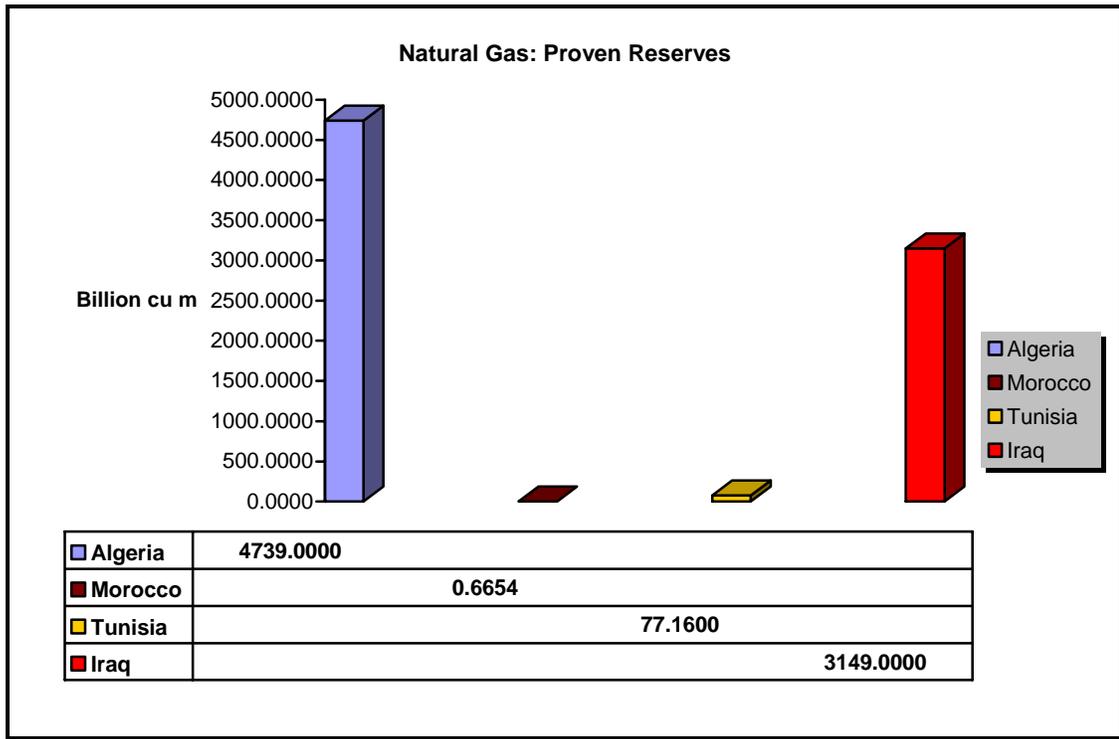


Figure 17: Natural Gas Reserves Comparison [2005 data] (World Factbook, www.cia.gov)

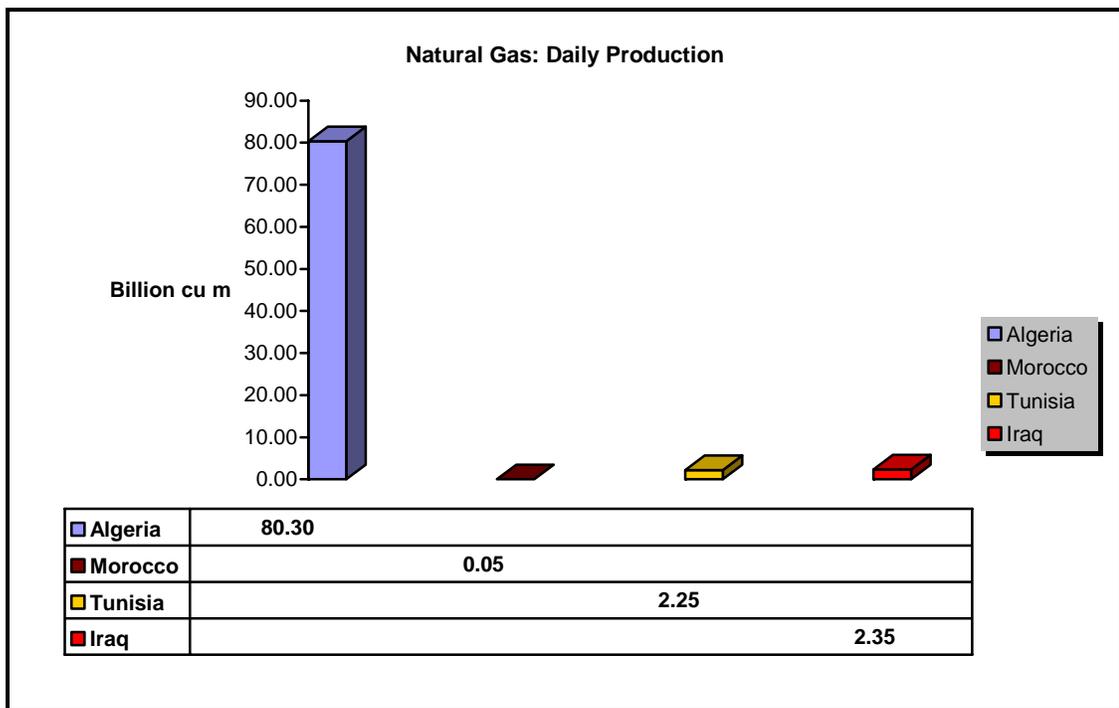


Figure 18: Natural Gas Production Comparison [Maghreb, 2001 data; Iraq, 2002 data] (World Factbook, www.cia.gov)

Algeria

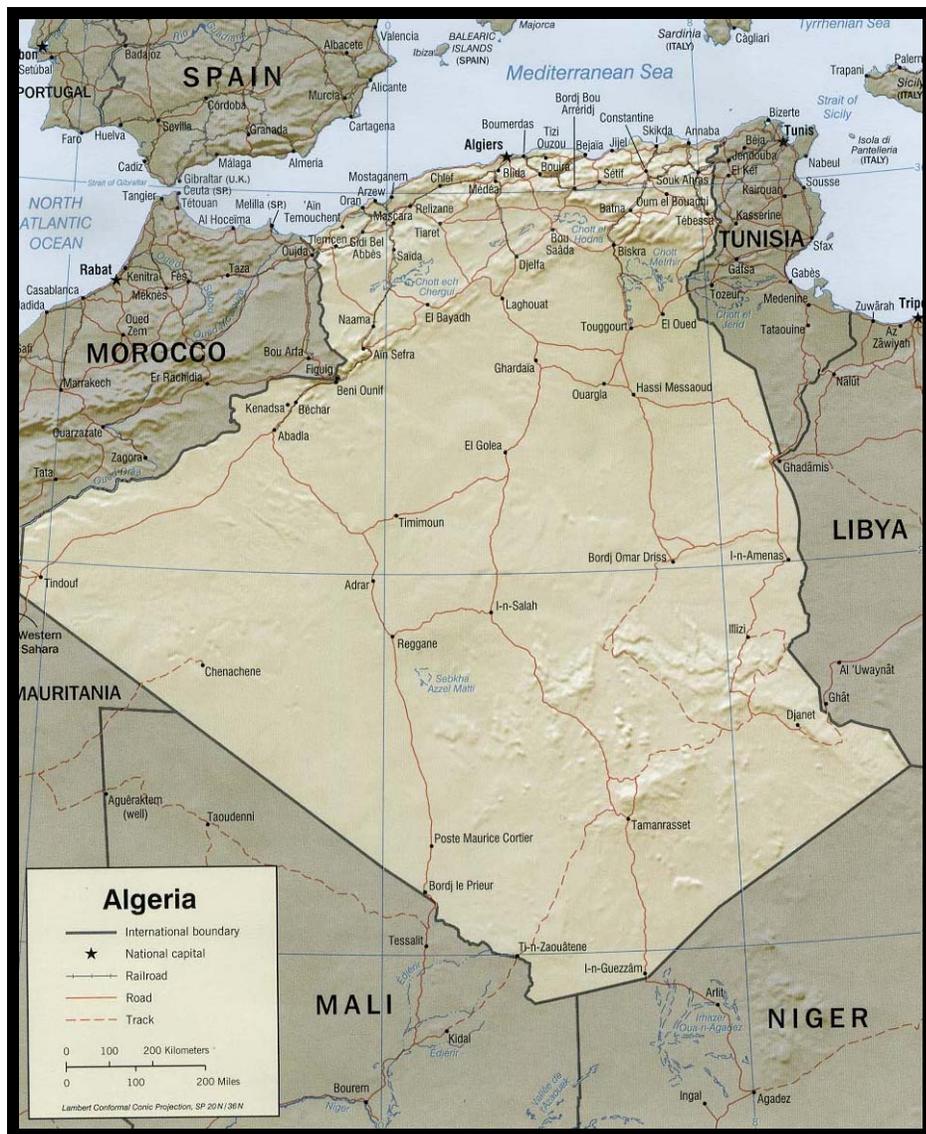


Figure 19: Flag and Map of Algeria (World Factbook, www.cia.gov)

If we view the process of colonialization as a wound – which many Maghrebian writers do – we must conclude that Algeria’s wound was deeper and more painful than that of its North African Neighbors, Morocco to the west and Tunisia to the east. (Mortimer 1)

Algeria is overwhelmingly the largest country in the Maghreb and the second largest country in Africa. It is five times the size of France and just over three times the size of Texas. In addition to size, it is geographically significant due to proximity to Mediterranean shipping routes (northern border) and the desolate Western Sahara region. The hydrocarbons industry is the backbone of the economy, accounting for roughly 60% of budget revenues, 30% of GDP, and over 95% of export earnings. Algeria has the seventh-largest reserves of natural gas in the world and is the second-largest gas exporter; it ranks 14th in world oil reserves (World Factbook, www.cia.gov). The capital of Algeria is Algiers and other significant cities are Constantine, Tamanrasset and Oran. The French began the conquest of Algeria in the early 1830, named it a protectorate, and were only driven out following the French-Algerian War that lasted from 1954-1962. Among the Maghrebian nations, Algeria was most severely ravaged by colonialism. Even following its independence from France on 3 July, 1962, Algeria continues to suffer violent bouts as factions within the country vie for post-colonial power.

Morocco



Figure 20: Flag and Map of Morocco (World Factbook, www.cia.gov)

Morocco is the most undefiled, the least contaminated, of all Islamic states, except possibly Saudi Arabia itself. It is a country secretive and resistant to change. I have visited every Islamic country in the world but two, but I have never felt such a dense, closed in atmosphere as in Morocco. Here one breathes deep of the most formidable and ancient essences. (Gunther 41)

Gunther's fifty-year old description is replete with the undertones of mystery and adventure that one would expect to find in such a geographically positioned nation. Of the Maghrebian nations, it is furthest from the Middle East and therefore was least affected by their expansion. It has extensive coastline on the Atlantic as well as Mediterranean oceans and forms the southern half the Strait of Gibraltar. Thus Morocco, roughly the size of California, is sited in a strategically important position that has allowed it to benefit culturally and economically from transit and trade from the days of the Roman Empire to present times. The capital of Morocco is Rabat and other well known cities include Casablanca, Tangier, and Marrakech. Economically, Morocco lacks the gas and oil reserves of Tunisia and especially Algeria and this is one reason that it continues to pursue an increased hold on the disputed, and potentially oil and gas-rich, Western Sahara. Morocco was made a protectorate of France with the signing of the Treaty of Fez, on March 30, 1912 (Gunther 45) and achieved independence in 2 March, 1956.

Tunisia

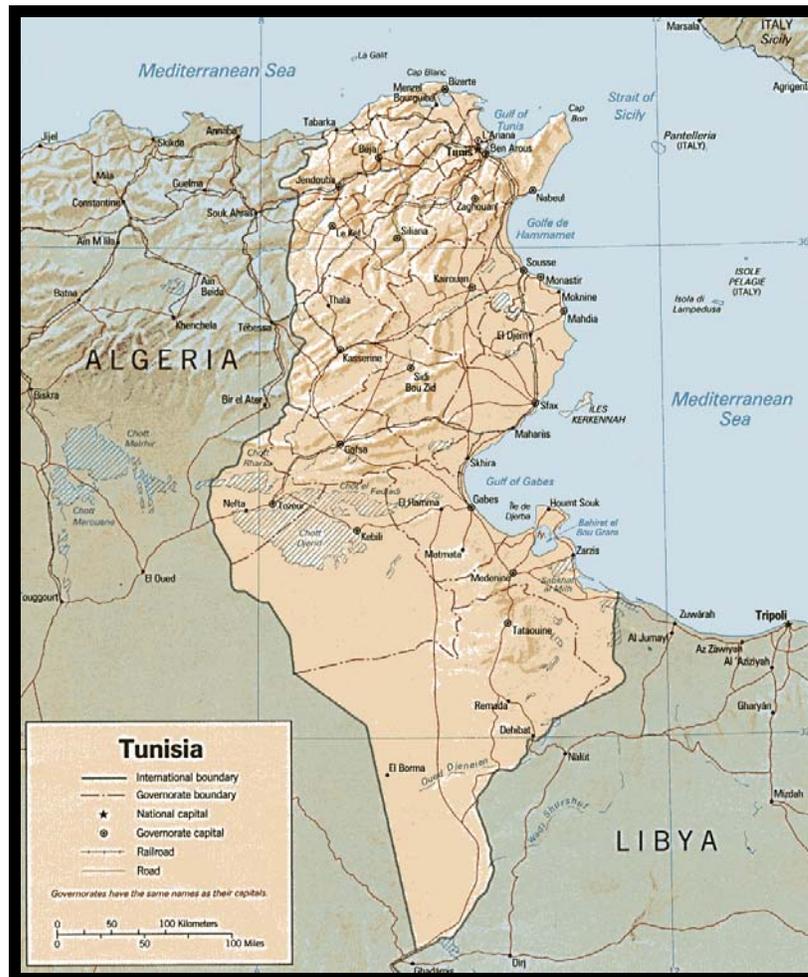


Figure 21: Flag and Map of Tunisia (World Factbook, www.cia.gov)

It must always be remembered that Barbary is one, from the Atlantic to the Egyptian frontier – there is a native saying that a man cannot beat his donkey in Morocco without its protests being heard in Tunisia. (Nickerson 110)

Tunisia is roughly the size of Tennessee and is almost half-covered in desert. The major cities of Tunisia are Tunis and Bizerte. The nation is smaller and better developed than either Morocco or Algeria due in part to the fact that it has more inland water and therefore, more viable croplands that were “once the granary of Rome” (Gunther 149). The historically significant city of Carthage, which battled for centuries with Rome, was located near present-day Tunis. The Carthaginian origins of Tunisian society allowed this sea-going people to interact regularly with Europe. This interaction spawned cultural and economic developments that allowed the country to maintain a strong, adaptable Tunisia culture and identity that emerged from conflict less affected than its Maghrebian neighbors. Tunisia was overrun before either Algeria or Morocco during Arab expansion in the 7th century and thus maintained closer ties to Arabism. It was seized without undue violence by the French in 1881 and named a protectorate of France until independence in 20 March 1956 (Grolier 12). Tunisia maintains a reasonably close and well-coordinated relationship with France.

CHAPTER THREE

THE FRENCH IN THE MAGHREB

Private financial initiative was largely responsible for involving France, and the mixed and dubious interests which drew the French government into a military adventure of which no one at the time foresaw the far reaching consequences. (Nickerson 97)

France was involved as an imperial power in the Maghreb from the nineteenth through to the mid-twentieth century for a period of roughly 130 years. The impetus of this involvement was due entirely to the economic goals of the French Empire during the early 1800's. By the end of the century, France had established itself as the dominant colonial power in Algeria, Tunisia, and Morocco. One key impact that occurred as a result of the French presence in the region was a population explosion that resulted when western medicine and health practices became widespread through the region. In a very few decades, the growing population (essentially due to a drastic reduction in death rate combined with a healthy birth rate) led to an exceedingly large population. This boom was combined with the influx of several million Europeans, the *pieds-noirs*, or "black feet." Another feature of French colonialism and the opening of the Maghreb to European settlement was the fact that well-organized European farmers quickly capitalized on nearly every bit of the arable land. This left many Maghrebians landless, compelled to live in cities, and without employment. A

final aspect of the French experience in the Maghreb is the fact that the French and the Maghrebian made very few inroads toward an understanding of one another's cultural, religious, and social backgrounds. Strictly divided along religious and national backgrounds and suffering from a disparity in land ownership, these growing populations ultimately clashed. Algeria, as the largest nation and centerpiece of the Maghreb, bore the brunt of the French Empire's might. It is important to note that Tunisia and Morocco each endured a long sentence of French rule, 75 and 44 years, respectively. The nations of the Maghreb were nearly synchronous in starting rebellion in the 1950's and within little more than a decade, had each attained independence. An overview of the French-Algerian War is necessary in order to understand the magnitude of the conflict and the impact it had on neighboring Tunisia and Morocco.

Following the initial advance into and exploitation of Algeria in 1830, the French found themselves embroiled in an increasingly bloody conflict throughout the region. The response to this was to dedicate more troops to Algeria and to put pressure on the bordering nations of Morocco and Tunisia in order to isolate the Algerian fighters from support and refuge. Within two decades, France had asserted dominance over Algeria, and thus the region:

What is certain is that her establishment in Algeria was not disputed, and did not meet with reservations on the part of any power, not even the Sublime Porte [Ottoman Empire], which might have invoked ancient rights, and that it was sanctioned, beginning in 1847 by the acceptance of the populations. (Nickerson 144)

The period of conflict leading up to this “sanctioned” takeover had resulted in numerous French and many more Algerian lives. Anthony Sullivan, a historian who studied French pacification of Algeria in the 1830’s and 1840’s argues that by 1843, the violent conduct of the French Army had reached a point that would “make the hair on the head of an honest bourgeois stand straight up” (Merom 60) and recalls an instance in which approximately 500 Muslim men, women, and children were asphyxiated in a cave by French forces. The French never completely conquered the rebellious element of Algeria but, by means of maintaining a large military force in the region, were able to uphold a marginally peaceful state until the middle of the next century. This in turn led to increased emigration by Europeans into Algeria. These one hundred years of European influx resulted in quite a different Algeria by the 1950’s.

The population of Algeria by the mid-1950’s was made up of approximately one million Europeans, 140,000 Jews, and nearly eight million Muslims who divided themselves further into a distinction between Berbers and Arabs. Rampant anti-colonial feelings were heightened by the fact that a group of approximately six thousand European farmers owned 87% of the land in Algeria (Wall 10). The land rights issue was a perpetual source of anger for the Muslim population who were often obliged to live in shantytowns known as *bidonvilles*, or tin towns (Nickerson 135). The progression of the war highlighted the presence of two subgroups within the population which supported the French. The *Beni-ouis-ouis* were Algerians who supported the French cause and were, during the French-Algerian war, the most likely to be targeted by the insurgency,

the National Liberation Front (FLN). The *Harkis* were Algerians who served in the French Army in Algeria, primarily during World War II. World War II presented an interesting opportunity for Algeria and a predicament for France. France needed manpower and Algeria wanted to reclaim some measure of control over national destiny and to improve the treatment of Algerians with respect to their rights:

They presented a manifesto to the Governor General [...] “Le Manifesto du Peuple Algerien” [...] The chief request of this document was that “after the War Algeria shall become a state with its own constitution, drawn up by an Algerian constituent Assembly, elected by universal suffrage in which all the inhabitants of Algeria shall participate equally.
(Nickerson 194)

This manifesto was not given serious treatment by the French and resulted in increased alienation of Algerians who had sensed the need to act while anti-colonial sentiment worldwide was at a culminating point. By the mid-1960's, all *Harkis* and the remaining population of *Beni-ouis-ouis* fled Algeria for France (Wall 252). The war greatly weakened the political and social infrastructure in Algeria and was a large factor in initiating the turbulent period that followed France's withdrawal. One additional point should be addressed that led to the war: the discovery of oil in the Sahara. In 1945, the French began a dedicated exploration of the desolate Sahara and thus, “in December, 1955, the first big strike was made at Edjele, near the Tunisian border” (Nickerson 219). The discovery of oil provided Algerians with a final validation for the upheaval of the French.

The French-Algerian War began in 1954 and ended on March 8, 1962 with the signing of the Agreement of Evian (Merom 151). It can be roughly divided into two phases, 1954-1958 during which the FLN was militarily successful and 1958-1962, a time in which the power and influence of the FLN was effectively diminished by superior military forces and rapidly adaptable strategies and tactics of the French. The forces were mismatched from the start: the total number *mujahideen* (fighters) and *moussebiline* (support troops) never exceeded fifty thousand total troops (Merom 87). The French, in an avoidance of their NATO commitment to providing 14 Divisions against Soviet aggression, provided NATO with only 3.5 undermanned and poorly-trained Divisions. This allowed the French to put over 400,000 well-trained troops in Algeria (Wall 25).

One interesting note is that a significant majority of the French troops deployed to Algeria were employed in static positions and were focused on peace-keeping and enforcing duties from static forward operating bases. A small minority of highly-trained Foreign Legionnaires (traditionally headquartered in Sidi-Bel-Abbes, Algeria) and Paratroopers were used to conduct almost all of the fighting and counter-insurgency work (Wall 35). Large-scale violence was initiated when disillusioned Muslims rioted and killed 103 Europeans (men, women, and children) in the village of Setif on May 8, 1945. The brutal French response was the killing of between three and ten thousand Muslims (men, women, and children) following a series of air force bombing mission (Wall 12). Growing anti-French sentiment and increasing violence resulted in a rapid response by the French military and paramilitary who immediately began to

conduct *ratissages* and *ratonnades* (mopping-up operations) and broke the country into *quadrillages*, essentially military zones wherein “the work of pacification could be carried out” (Wall 35). These actions, although larger in scale, were not a significant departure from the brutal historic norms of French actions in Algeria.

Violence of this nature continued throughout the war with little thought on either side dedicated to the non-combatant status of women and children or the rights of prisoners of war. The *quadrillage* system, which dispersed troops regularly throughout Algeria, was initially successful but the insurgency adapted tactics and began to concentrate their attacks with the goal of creating spectacular events that would draw international media attention. Most importantly, the publicized brutality of the French divided public opinion in France to a degree that the imperial designs of the French government were thwarted:

Nevertheless, the criticism of the intellectuals and the press was at the root of the French disengagement from Algeria, it fractured the state system...and ultimately made Algeria both the cause and price of the divorce between France and itself. (Merom 145)

The French response, designed by General Maurice Challe, was to adopt a more proactive stance using the American-made helicopters (intended for use against the Soviets by NATO forces) that allowed French forces to more effectively locate insurgent concentrations and then collectively mass troops in any given sector of Algeria (Wall 160). The strategy, which became known as the Challe Plan, was both brutal and effective and represented an important turning point in that France was from that moment onwards easily capable of defeating any force

the insurgency could muster. The turning point of the political war however was initiated after the bombing of the Tunisian town of Sakiet Sidi Youssef:

The bombardment of Sakiet is often taken as the most flagrant case of an independent military run amok and a civilian regime unable to control its military. (Wall 104)

Following a successful Algerian raid on a platoon of French troops, during which fourteen troops were killed and twelve of those badly mutilated by insurgents (Wall 103), the French decided to officially attack Algerian insurgents in Tunisia. The fact that French troops executed their policy of “*droit de poursuite*” (Wall 102), (essentially a right to pursue an identified enemy across sovereign borders) in Tunisia is unremarkable as they had been conducting limited missions in both Tunisia and Morocco since the onset of the war. Although effective and precise in the mission (90% of the village was left intact with 100 rebels and only their military facilities destroyed (Wall 104) the 25-plane heavy-bomber armada that was used for the bombing campaign was deemed overkill by the international community. It caused a good deal of outrage in many nations of the UN who had been sitting quietly in the periphery. Moreover, internal discord, mostly between the military and government and those that supported them and the detached intellectual and press establishment, led to increased calls against the war:

Nevertheless, the criticism of the intellectuals and the press was at the root of the French disengagement from Algeria, it fractured the state system...and ultimately made Algeria both the cause and price of the divorce between France and itself. (Merom 145)

The central issue highlighted by the press was the brutality of the war and the French military's acceptance of torture. By the late 1950's, friction over the numerous accounts of torture led to a critical division in the population which prevented effective decision-making at all levels of government. This, combined with international pressure, decreased the amount of support for de Gaulle's government and his three-pronged plan. The internal divisions within France and the failure in Algeria is often cited as the reason that French power worldwide declined significantly in the latter half of the 20th Century. Merom argues in his conclusion that democracies inevitably fail due to similar reasons.

What fails democracies in small wars is the interaction of sensitivity to casualties, repugnance to brutal military behavior, and commitment to democratic life. (Merom 230)

Another rational argument could be made that had the de Gaulle government continued to ruthlessly pursue their goals in Algeria, despite internal and international pressure, they would have succeeded. The battlefield reality is that the French military won every aspect of the war from the tactical to the strategic level. This lack of conviction and dedication could perhaps be viewed as the single largest failure of de Gaulle and his government. This costly failure in France unfortunately coincided with roughly four decades of continued violence as factions within Algeria vied for supremacy in the vacuum left in the French withdrawal. Although it has to some degree subsided and democracy has struggled to the fore, 21st Century Algeria is still a violent country prone to rapid governmental upheaval.

The fight for independence in Tunisia and Morocco was considerably less violent, but nonetheless is deserving of a brief review. Historically, French aggression impacted both Tunisia and Morocco and resulted in the forcible taking of the two nations in order to secure regional dominance. A notable difference between Tunisia and Morocco and their neighbor Algeria is geographic: they are considerably smaller nations and were therefore less geopolitically significant to French goals in the region. This fact was compounded by the tendency of the leaders in Tunisia and Morocco to align themselves with Algerian leadership. Indeed, both Morocco and Tunisia were universally supportive of Algeria's fight for Independence. A second distinction is that Morocco and Tunisia were protectorates (thus maintaining a native head of state) of France and never actually incorporated into France as was Algeria. These important differences notwithstanding, Tunisia and Morocco endured many decades of French oppression and ultimately demanded independence.

Smaller and considerably more densely populated, Tunisia possessed a proportionally large population of Europeans. Many were of Italian origin (such as Tunisian writer Albert Memmi) and due to this European influence, Tunisia had a far better educated population than either Algeria or Morocco. The relatively closer ties with Europe combined with the relatively well-educated population with the result that many Tunisians sought education and employment in France and elsewhere in Europe. The effect of this reasonably large and well-educated workforce was a heightened sense of Tunisian nationalism that focused on total

equality with France regarding employment, education, and social and political priorities:

The young men who went to France to study returned to find no outlet for their energies, all the important positions being held by Europeans. Instead of being accepted by their French fellow-citizens as equals and co-partners, they found themselves relegated to a permanently inferior status.
(Nickerson 159)

The grief and anger of the Tunisian educated class quickly spread throughout the nation. The imperative for equality rose to its greatest height in the mid-1900's. During the height of the fighting in the French-Algerian War, Tunisian leaders seized the opportunity to negotiate the terms of their relationship with France. France, burdened by an increasingly bloody and difficult fight in Algeria, relinquished control of Tunisia following a series of agreements. These included a pact to discontinue Tunisian aid of any sort to Algerian rebels and to allow the French troops to move freely throughout Tunisia in support of the war effort.

Due to the geopolitical importance of Tangiers (essentially the southern tip of the Gibraltar Strait) Morocco has historically been a divided nation. This division is evident in the characters of their major cities, particularly Tangiers, which was established as an international city under the governance of Morocco. Fez, in the north, has historically close ties to Spain. The south of Morocco is centered in Marrakech and is less well-developed and more sub-Saharan African in character:

Fez is Europe, but closed. Marrakesh is Africa, but open. Fez is black, white, and gray; Marrakesh is red. The name Morocco derives from

this ancient Berber capital, and the rouged sands of the Sahara wash it. This is the great market town for the northwestern desert tribes. (Gunther 52)

Morocco was not colonized by France until 1912 and endured less time under French rule than either Tunisia or Algeria. The Moroccans were subjected to a noncommittal political tug-of-war between France and Spain throughout the early decades of the 1900's. The fact that neither France nor Spain was particularly interested in the outcome resulted in the rise of a highly-educated minority Moroccan nationalist movement that successfully rose to power:

One of the gravest weaknesses of the administration of Morocco has always been the inability (or unwillingness) of the French and Spanish governments to cooperate. (Nickerson 178)

Moroccan rebellion, led by the combatant *Istiqlal*, the Moorish Nationalist Party, pounced on the opportunity to regain a measure of control at the height of the French-Algerian War. By putting Spain and France at odds during any nationalist uprising, Morocco was further able to free itself from a half-hearted French grip in 1956.

Ultimately, the three nations of the Maghreb achieved independence due to the French inability to juggle a violent war in Algeria with the geopolitical machinations and minor uprisings of Tunisia and Morocco. The French legacy in the Maghreb is one of tragedy and failure, and the historical, geopolitical, and literary records together reveal a detailed account of failed imperialism.

CHAPTER FOUR

MAGHREBIAN WOMAN

Djamila did her best, but the position was a difficult one to describe [to the court]. They had trussed up her wrists and ankles, tied her knees and elbows close together, and thrust a large stick through the space between them, horizontally. It was rather like the way a hunter hangs his game. Then two torturers each took one end of the stick and carried Djamila, still suspended from it, over to the bath. The bath was full of water. When the stick was set down across it, Djamila at once sank below the surface. (de Beauvoir and Halimi 149)

The French-Algerian war has been shown to have been the most traumatic flashpoint in the conflict between the French and the Maghreb. The killing, suffering, and torture of this eight year period represent the culmination of the anti-colonial movement. War has a decidedly different impact on noncombatants than on the active participants, be they men or women. By and large, however, the war in Algeria (echoed in Tunisia and Morocco) had a distinct effect on the women of the region. The women of the Maghreb region representing the colonial and postcolonial generations have found themselves alternately abused and oppressed by the both the traditional ways of life and the imposed standards, intrusion, and sanctioned atrocity that typified French colonialism. In many ways they can be said to suffer an entrapment akin to the geographical situation of the Maghreb: they are isolated between the Atlas

Mountains, the desolate Sahara desert, and the depths of the Mediterranean and Atlantic. Consequently, women writers have been compelled to adapt to a complex web of repression, traditional expectations, and the pressures involved in modernization and in this process develop techniques of expressing a textual history of their experience. The unified impression gained in an analysis of their work is that although they have been (in the best cases) marginalized, their work provides one with an essential component to understanding regarding the impact of French imperialism in the Maghreb. It is also important to consider that even historical texts of the 1950's, during the height of anti-colonialism and the beginning of the overthrow of the French oppressor, point to the standard limited role of women in the Maghreb. In Gunther's account, one is witness to the accepted norms of the day. When compared to the following postcolonial era, these assessments readily support the rise of rebelliousness against the oppression of women that is apparent in the works of authors such as Djébar, de Beauvoir, Halimi, Jelloun, and Memmi:

Perhaps we should add a word about the position of women in Algeria. A French journalist I know has Arab friends whom he has met every day for twenty years; yet he has never seen one of their wives. Most Arab women, here as in Morocco, live totally useless lives except to bear children; they cannot sew a button or cook an egg. (Gunther 123)

The voice of the female writers of the Maghreb is one of resistance, physical, moral, and mental resiliency, and an adept traverse of a woven tightrope of culture, religion and geopolitics. The difficulties of womanhood and religious and cultural equality are further revealed in the works of certain male authors of the

region. A discussion of the factual account of one young woman's (herself a rebel combatant) experience reveals the severity of the colonial reality and is an ideal introduction to the far-reaching implications of the struggle of the Maghrebian woman.

The experience of the young Algerian girl, Djamila Boupacha, provides a powerful historic example of the horrors endured by a young Muslim woman trapped between the dueling forces of tradition and the intrusion of the French. Djamila Boupacha, a work that resulted from the cooperation of French-Tunisian lawyer Gisele Halimi and French journalist/activist (and longtime companion of Jean-Paul Sartre) Simone de Beauvoir, is an intriguing account of the torture and trial of a twenty-three year old FLN rebel following her attempt to bomb a University café. A young Algerian woman, a traditional Muslim, and a true combatant, Boupacha was a minority in every sense:

An inquiry into a catalogue of war veterans shows that among 10,949 women militants catalogued, the majority, 9194 or 84 percent, were members of the Civil Organization of the Front of National Liberation [FLN]. As such, women acted as liaison agents, collected medicines, and transported weapons. A minority of women, 1,755 or 16 percent, were involved in the armed force of the FLN, where most had responsibilities such as staffing the infirmaries, caring for the wounded, and sometimes serving as cooks. (Charrad 185)

The goal of de Beauvoir and Halimi's book is to reveal the internal workings and outcome of the potent French propaganda machine. Ultimately, one is forced to conclude that Boupacha's trial, in court and out, is indicative of the highly organized and efficient practices of the French military-political establishment

that were zealously anchored to the tenets of *Eurafrique*, French nationalism, and the domination of a colonized people. French goals in the region were to act as the leader of a French-African federation and in doing so use Algeria to provide the centerpiece for European expansion in the Maghreb, resulting in *Eurafrique*, a region of great economic and geopolitical potential. This zeal should be considered an imperial fever or sickness. Indeed, the nationalistic pride and ego embodied in *Eurafrique* manifested itself as a sort of national weakness: it permeated a democratic nation to the degree that vital standards of lawful civilization were sacrificed thus devastating the physical and moral integrity of the French Empire. For Boupacha, it represented a nightmarish tour through the darkest depths of a multi-tiered and effective French campaign to crush the FLN and its supporters throughout the Maghreb and in France.

According to the French, Boupacha's case was an "open and shut affair. She planted a bomb in a café" (de Beauvoir and Halimi 26). The actual incident was a well-planned and executed FLN terror attack on a University restaurant that was only thwarted when the bomb was defused by a highly-experienced French counter-terror explosive ordnance disposal team. It is immediately difficult to find pity or sympathy for any fate that might befall the perpetrator of such a deed. It is necessary and fundamental to an understanding of Boupacha's case that she be identified as a combatant, rather than a terrorist, captured during war. A common understanding of the term "terrorist," most often stated to be a violent and politically-motivated actor who commits atrocities during times of peace, is awkwardly applied to Boupacha when one considers

the singular asymmetric option available to the Maghrebian *fellagha* when faced with the modern military might of nearly half a million NATO-standard French troops. Boupacha's bombing occurred during war and should be considered an act of war, nothing more and nothing less. Had she been shot by a French paratrooper during her attempted attack, she would merely have been accorded the status of a fighter killed in action. However, she was captured and brutalized in a manner that defies any civilized code of military or governmental organization. Halimi and de Beauvoir give the subject of Boupacha's guilt scant coverage and instead choose to focus on the incidents of torture, government corruption and ineptitude, and subsequent propaganda and misinformation effort that are shown to infuse most every area of French government.

The torture of imprisoned combatant Boupacha was brutal, inhumane, and violated every principle of the renowned humanitarianism and universalism for which the French were known (and prided themselves) worldwide as pioneers. The language used by de Beauvoir and Halimi to describe the incident is expressed in a fittingly plain and unfeeling manner:

An Algerian girl of twenty-three, an FLN liaison agent, illegally imprisoned by French military forces, who subjected her to torture and deflowered her with a bottle: it is a common enough story. (de Beauvoir and Halimi 9)

Somewhat disappointingly, de Beauvoir and Halimi continually downplay aspects of Boupacha's (who freely admitted to hiding the café bomb in the name of Algerian independence) complicity in an attack intended to cause maximum civilian casualties. However, the primary issue at hand remains the absolutely

improper treatment of Boupacha by the French military and paramilitary forces once she entered custody as a combatant. Halimi, the lawyer called at Boupacha's request, immediately examines the origins of Boupacha's plight. She quickly ascertains the primary source of the entire incident and subsequent torture as the marginalization of a young, intelligent, and by all accounts, proper Muslim woman hoping for a steady career. Boupacha turned into an FLN combatant only after she had wrongfully been denied employment along with several of her countrywomen:

I stole some medical supplies from the Beni Messous Hospital where I was a probationer, to take them to my comrades in the Maquis [rebels]. The day before I had learnt that all Moslems among the girls due to qualify were to be debarred from taking their certificates. (de Beauvoir and Halimi 53)

Boupacha's response to losing her job indicates an interesting, although by no means isolated, departure from standard practice. Until this time Boupacha, as de Beauvoir and Halimi vividly portray in a series of family photographs, is a motivated and endearing young Algerian benignly absorbed in the routine of family life while concurrently entranced by the prospect of marriage and her future as a wife and mother. The fact that she would so rapidly turn into a capable *fellagha* bomber demonstrates both the impact of the colonial marginalization of women and also how deeply the cause of Algerian independence had penetrated the outlook for Algerian women.

Halimi, a French-Tunisian lawyer, is confronted by the challenges of marginalization herself and is similarly compelled to rebel against the domination

of the politicized French legal system, the “frosty silence” of the court and the manner in which she is treated by the president of the court (military judge):

The President, Colonel Catherineau, was decidedly short with me. ‘Maitre’ he observed, in the characteristic accent of an Algerian Frenchman, ‘this court is not here to wait upon your pleasure’. (de Beauvoir and Halimi 56)

Halimi was a few moments late for the trial. When she is thwarted in her ability to have the court adjourned so that she, hastily appointed and recently arrived from France, has time to piece together a defense position, Halimi resorts to a request for support by the Leader of the Algerian Bar, M. le Batonnier Laquiere. She expects that his endorsement of her request will legitimize her efforts in the eyes of the historically male led and French nationalist (supporters of a French Algeria) dominated system. Surprisingly to Halimi, this highly regarded individual arrives in the courtroom and offers no support. He condescendingly explains Halimi’s situation to the court following a smug “sentimental-cum-political” (de Beauvoir and Halimi 56) tirade against the FLN terrorists and champions the role of the law as a crucial ally to be used to crush the resistance. He contends that Halimi is merely “doing her duty” as obligated by law and hints that she is not really determined to seek justice for her client. Rather, he insists, she is merely a hard-working Tunisian lawyer who has been obligated, based on her regional background and language skills, to provide a perfunctory defense for an admitted propagator of terrorist deeds. Following Laquiere’s speech, Halimi disparagingly takes note as a “mood of conspiratorial warmth spread through the courtroom” (Halimi 56) that threatens the legitimacy of all subsequent aspects of the court

fight. From the perspective of a majority of the French legal, military, and press institutions, this case threatened the reputation of the French military, highlighted well-known (but seldom debated) practices of torture, and ultimately and perhaps most importantly, risked turning public opinion against *Eurafrique* and the support for the violent continuation of French influence throughout the Maghreb.

A parallel experience to the biased Algerian court proceeding occurs in France. When Halimi returns to France to build her argument and garner support for the case, she is thwarted at every turn by the male judicial and political establishment. Halimi seeks to counter this oppression by creating the Djamilia Boupacha Committee, which in essence is a group of important French women, including journalist (a fellow co-writer) Simone de Beauvoir of *le Monde* and novelist/journalist Françoise Sagan of *L'Express*, from a variety of backgrounds who rally to Boupacha's defense. de Beauvoir writes an article, "In Defense of Djamilia Boupacha" that describes the ordeal in graphic detail. Much as the Algerian barrister had stifled Halimi's legitimacy and primacy of cause, the editor of *le Monde* softens de Beauvoir's story of Boupacha for the reason "that this presented too crudely violent a picture" (de Beauvoir and Halimi 65) and does not allow an actual description of the rape to be printed. Furthermore, the 2 June Algiers edition of *le Monde* (which contained the article) was not even printed or distributed and the Premier, M. Michel Debre, instead chooses to disseminate the following communiqué that was specifically intended to stifle the matter:

A certain evening paper has published an article describing the torture supposedly undergone by a young girl arrested and charged after a

bomb-outrage committed in Algiers, in September, 1959 [...] It will be the duty of the Military Court in Algiers to study the case put before it, bearing in mind all aspects of the affair, in particular the confession made by the accused, entirely of her own volition, at the preliminary hearing before the examining magistrate, and the findings of the expert medical testimony – which to date has not confirmed the truth of her allegations that she was tortured. (de Beauvoir and Halimi 66)

The attempts to stifle Simone de Beauvoir's article failed miserably and letters from all over the world poured into the magazine. The Committee for Djamilia Boupacha was a great success and succeeded in overcoming, at least in the eyes of the reading public, any doubt that Boupacha's case was deserving of the highest scrutiny and dedication to a fair legal treatment. An affiliated result of the committee's actions, which included public speeches, letters, and meetings, is that it brought into question every remaining pro-colonial activity within the government and demanded that it too, be subject to the highest scrutiny in order to maintain the high standards and principles upon which French society was based:

Hundreds of letters, all more or less summed up in that written by a teacher, which concluded: 'If you could somehow convey to this poor unhappy girl, by message or word of mouth, that we feel shame for France, that we can no longer vaunt our high moral code in the same way as we did'. (de Beauvoir and Halimi 68)

The ultimate success of the Committee was due to growing support among French liberals and was driven by the high-power personalities, including many prominent men, that gave their support including Vercors, Lacan, Jules Roy, Jean Amrouche, Aime Cesaire, Lucie Faure, Eduouard Glissant, Rene Julliard,

Jean-Paul Sartre, Germaine Tillo, etc. (de Beauvoir and Halimi 70). This galvanization of influential personalities, described in detail in de Beauvoir and Halimi's work, was consistently ignored and suppressed by the mainstream in French government and surprisingly, the media. The magnitude of the personalities involved in the Committee resulted in backfire of the government and media efforts to repress the Boupacha story and instead resulted in a growing adversity to French policies and actions in the Maghreb by the public. The prevalence of this attitude supports the premise that France critically miscalculated the impact of the mistreatment of the Maghrebian woman on the voting public.

Over a short period of months, Boupacha's story was promulgated by Committee members and gained momentum in France and among intellectual groups throughout Europe. Despite the increased scrutiny that resulted from the actions of the Committee, the media and government maintained a position of denial and programmed repression of the story. Combined, the pattern of denial and repression endured by the Committee represents a reliable indicator of the impending collapse of the French in Algeria: the critical failure was the inability of the government to sufficiently address the concerns of a growing portion of the population who did not endorse the way in which Algeria was being handled.

The failure of the French media, whether government controlled or not, to accurately and objectively portray Boupacha's (and many others who endured similar treatment) story, was surprisingly mirrored by the Algerian press. Logically, one is led to conclude that the Algerian press was controlled by

Francophile Algerians. This is only partially true. A substantial portion of the Algerian press was often critical of French policies and was openly supportive of Algerian independence. In the case of the rape, the news media is shown to be dominated by traditional concerns and the guilt of the crime is often placed on Boupacha herself:

The Algiers papers devoted a great deal of space to Djamila that day, describing her as 'the imprisoned hand grenade terrorist,' or 'the bomb-dropper'. Articles in the local press [...] the thing they criticize her for most was dressing up so coquettishly, 'in the height of summer fashion' – blue costume, white shoes, and the rest of it. One indignant journalist emphasized the fact that she had the effrontery to do her hair a la cretoise [in the current Parisian style]. (de Beauvoir and Halimi 84)

In this criticism, the Algerian media, much like Boupacha, finds itself utterly trapped between well over a thousand years of Muslim Berber tradition and a century-long immersion in European culture. The Algerian press (in this case both *Echo d'Alger* and *Depeche Quotidienne d'Algerie* on the same date) further accuses Boupacha of serious transgressions of traditional Muslim standards of womanhood as more information of her activities with the FLN, including providing support and shelter for FLN fighters, is revealed in the investigation:

Do not these documents suggest that Djamila Boupacha, that supposedly straitlaced and orthodox Muslim girl, really used her bedroom to entertain men in? If that be so, what are we to make of her complaint against the troops whom she alleges to have outraged her? (de Beauvoir and Halimi 88)

The unintended collusion of the French and Algerian media, the former determined to maintain French dominion over Algeria and the latter focused on maintaining the honor of the traditional Muslim woman, results in a dilemma for Boupacha and Halimi and demonstrates the situation of the Maghrebian woman as one of cultural displacement and marginalization. Between the ego and geopolitical goals of the imperialist Frenchman and lost pride of the oppressed Muslim man, the Maghrebian woman is left without sanctuary.

This multi-layered crisis of the Maghrebian woman further unfolds as Boupacha discusses with Halimi the unending torment of rape for a Maghrebian woman. In analyzing this story of rape and torture she is shown to be ensnared in Berber and Muslim tradition much as she is trapped by the French authorities. Halimi recounts a conversation with Boupacha in which she fears the impact of the rape on traditional marriage. "Marriage is normally the inevitable lot of every young Moslem girl once she has attained the age of puberty [...] 'Do you think any man would want me after I've been ruined by that bottle?' (de Beauvoir and Halimi 75). In this, Boupacha struggles to maintain her role as a young Muslim woman stoically preoccupied with tradition and the deep-seated need to marry. This discussion continues with a graphic description of the traditional wedding night:

In Kabylia, the bridegroom does not spend the entire night with his bride: the moment the union is consummated, he goes out to show her bloodstained nightdress to the other men in the village. In Algiers, those women who are still awake hasten into the bridal chamber to make sure,

again, that the girls' shift displays the appropriate bloodstains. (de Beauvoir and Halimi 75)

In this merger of Kabyle-Berber and Muslim tradition, the oppression of the Maghrebian woman is shown to be complete. Combined with the overwhelming influence of French colonialism, Boupacha's plight amid oppressive regional traditions is indicative of the shortfall that threatened the pillars of the Maghreb and any sense that a modern, civilized society could result from such dominant forces of oppression.

A fitting complement to de Beauvoir and Halimi's account is found in the work of Algerian author Assia Djébar (Born Fatma Zohra Imalayine in 1936 to an Algerian Arab father and a Berber mother) who was eighteen years old when the French-Algerian war erupted. Two years later, at the age of twenty, she wrote her first novel, La Soif, translated literally variously into either "The Thirst" or "The Mischief," and released in the West with the title, Nadia. This early work is based on Djébar's experiences with the merging of European and Maghrebian culture and her interpretation of the struggle to attain womanhood. Djébar remains an active writer and film-maker today whose work portrays the often lamentable predicament the woman of the Muslim Maghreb. Most recently, her work has addressed the various effects of modernization and Europeanization on Maghrebian woman in So Vast the Prison and Algerian White. Her experience and accordingly, her writing, uniquely transcend both the conflict and post-conflict environments and provide a dramatic opportunity to witness the development of a postcolonial female voice and identity. In the case of Nadia, Djébar depicts an

identity that stems from her own wealthy, Western-educated perspective of a young woman of Algiers. In an assessment her work, one is witness to the maturation, in various transitory stages, of what can be termed the “Djebar-woman” who is psychologically tormented by French colonialism but nonetheless finds comfort in, and is to a degree bound by, the regional beliefs, traditions, and practices of Maghrebian womanhood. In her work Nadia, Djebar speaks of a young postcolonial woman who straddles a fence of generation, culture, and race. She is neither wholly Algerian, nor French, and cannot easily decide what to do.

Nadia is a young, wealthy, half-French, half-Algerian manifestation of the Djebar-woman who, immersed in a leisurely existence among the jet-set of Algiers in early 1950’s, has recently broken off her engagement.

My blond hair and easygoing ways caused most people to be unaware of my origins, and even those who knew them recalled the fact that my mother, who had died giving me birth, was a Frenchwoman and my father had brought me up in Western style. Even if I didn’t go around with these Europeans, I was one of them. I knew it very well, and so did my brother-in-law, who looked askance at my trousered legs and the tip of my cigarette burning in the darkness. (Nadia 15)

The immediately apparent contrast of the fictional Nadia to Boupacha is a stark example of Djebar’s desire to provide a character that deviates from the standard Maghrebian image of the woman. In this, her rebellion against the traditional Maghrebian treatment and consideration of women is plainly evident. However, the complete endorsement of a European ideal, the embrace of modern Western

society and culture, is far from Djébar's goal. Djébar, at the time of writing herself a war-displaced Algerian, instead chooses to focus her characters on the development of vital and proven aspects of both the traditional Maghrebian woman and the modern European woman

Djébar points to a previous generation of Algerian women as noteworthy; "She had the realistic judgment of the strong women of a generation earlier" (Nadia 66). However, in the knowledge that Algeria had been oppressed by France since the 1830's, one is left to ponder to what degree the "strong" generation of Algerian was impacted by European influence. It is useful to examine Djébar's criticism of various characteristics of traditional womanhood. This is often displayed in the form of a debate during which Djébar's characters challenge one another, and in doing so, reveal a tension between a stoic adherence to tradition and the allure of the modernization offered by the European. In one example, the characteristically European-minded (yet marriage-hopeful) Nadia departs from her normal stance and reveals a facet of traditionalism as she chastises Jedla, her married friend:

Don't be too proud! You ought to be content with your lot as a woman. I've come around, myself to the point of view of our mothers and grandmothers. As long as women have a home of their own where they can serve and obey their husbands, they need ask for nothing more. What if their husbands have affairs on the outside? As long as the wifely position is respected, what does it matter? Of course they know that as they grow old, other and younger wives may take their place. But they're not jealous; they remain calm and submissive, and who's to say they haven't the right idea. (Nadia 126)

The debate is shown to evolve in the characters themselves. In this contest, the women are often shown to be imprisoned or at the very least torn between tradition and modernization, and dispute the manner in which one must survive. In this, the women face a choice between the known and traditionally accepted solitude of prison and the anguish and departure inherent in the quest for individual freedom. For example, when Nadia herself finally marries a longtime friend and swimming partner, the lawyer Hussein, she feels a calmness that is occasionally overwhelmed by a terrible fear regarding her kinship with the position of her ancestral mothers:

Here in the great double-bed, I was afraid. Why must these ghosts besiege me? I thought that I had entered the vast company of disingenuous, matured women, that I had acquired the wisdom of security. It was so easy to welcome Hussein when he came home, to play the roles he preferred [...] and yet, now that he was asleep, I was alone, staring with wide-open eyes into the darkness. (Nadia 140)

This internal clash regarding the embrace of tradition or the adoption of French-borne modernization is never fully resolved by the conclusion of Djébar's Nadia. The reader is left with an impression of frayed loyalties, displaced tradition, and the omnipresent appeal of modernization. Ultimately, Djébar creates from this debate a woman altogether separate from previous molds. In a departure from tradition, Nadia proclaims independence from both European and Maghrebian dominance and often longs for a transcendence of womanhood altogether:

I felt young and attractive, and I was grateful to Hussein for my careless well-being. I wished I could be a man, a real pal, and when I was

inebriated with the speed at which we took a curve, I told him so, quite frankly. (Nadia 23)

Djebar's more recent work, So Vast the Prison (1999), depicts a variant of the Djebar-woman who has matured and is considerably more sophisticated and retains certain traditional longings and reverence established in the attitude of the character Nadia. The French oppression embodied in the Eurocentric social immersion of affluent Algerians was an unavoidable influence felt throughout the Maghreb. The ancient cities such as Tangiers, Algiers, and Tunis became epicenters for the society and culture of the *pieds-noirs*. The fashionable trends of Europe strode ever more loudly alongside the veils and donkey-carts, enveloped in the heat, dust, and tuneless prayer calls of the *muezzin*. The experience Djebar relates through Nadia in the 1950's is mated with a more refined view of the pressures of the Maghreb to adapt to an increasingly modern (in a Western sense) and globalized world. In the same manner as Nadia "wished to be a man", the main female character in So Vast the Prison aspires to a status between that of man and woman:

Seeing me from a distance (with my very short hair, my straight white trousers), he had bet that I was a young man. Although I am thirty-seven, I probably seem less than thirty: thin hips, a boyish haircut, flat buttocks; that day I was so proud of my androgynous silhouette. (Prison 46)

The prospect of attaining manhood represents change on multiple levels for a traditional Algerian woman, not the least of which would be leadership of a household and the privileged status of membership in the *djamaa*, or village

council, of traditional Berber society. The traditional leadership organizations at all levels of the Maghreb were based on patrilineage within the immediate family wherein the senior male was the leader and the representative of the family in affairs beyond the family:

The essential function of the djamaa is to legitimise the decision of the collective leadership, whether that of a village, a tribe, a clan, an interest group, a town or even a nation-state. In Algeria, there are djamaa'at [plural] at all levels and in all sections of society. (Stone 126)

In this, a likely motivation of the Djebbar-woman to attain manhood becomes more apparent: neither traditional Maghrebian nor European, nor necessarily man or woman, but rather one who has attributes, and thus the implied strengths, of all. Further, this woman is forced, due in part to the displacement and absence (during war) of the male, to become more capable of attaining a position of leadership within the androcentric system of both the household and the *djamaa*. French colonialism, in a combination of subjugation and modernization of the Maghreb, effected change in the role, design, and future outlook of women for Djebbar. Moreover, the womanly ideal of Djebbar's design had attained attributes of manhood that, although not detracting from the strength of the traditional Maghrebian woman, do in fact represent a distinct change that arose as a result of French colonialism. Rebellion, whether a reaction to certain outmoded traditions in the Maghreb or the often violent exploits of the French, is a primary component of this change and one that is evident in the stories of Djebbar.

Halimi and de Beauvoir's depiction of the torture and rape of Djamilia Boupacha, whether known to Djebbar during the French-Algerian War or realized

in the aftermath through similar accounts, likely served as a mechanism that reinforced her examination of the Maghrebian woman. Djébar herself left Algeria for Morocco and then departed the region altogether in order to pursue higher education in Europe and the United States after the fighting began. It is interesting to consider Boupacha's situation in comparison to that of Djébar. Further, one is witness to a kinship of sorts between the two types of Algerian woman in the form of the narrator in So Vast the Prison, a highly educated married woman in her late thirties who pursues a younger man (albeit platonically) whom she faults for lack of experience due to the fact that he was not alive during the French-Algerian War. She is surprised at the differences in their impressions of the current era and view of postcolonial existence. More significantly, she belittles the younger man and states her wish to have participated in violent rebellion against the French:

When I was fifteen I lived in a country at war! Arabic was the language of flames – not of governmental power, as it is now. When one learned Arabic, outside of school, it was not to have a career but to be willing to die! Oh, how I wanted to go off into the mountains then! (Prison 41)

This sentiment is no doubt a window into the mindset of the writer who chose exile and pursuit of higher education instead of participating in the fighting. The rebels or *fellaghas*, operating from Atlas mountain redoubts and the rugged terrain of the Kabyle region, were determined fighters who daily faced a far stronger foe and were (and are) legendary heroes in Algeria. Boupacha embodied the female *fellagha* and one sees in certain among Djébar's female

characters a longing to have participated so directly. Furthermore, the entrapment of Boupacha between the French courts and military and the popular traditional sentiment of Algerian men (who criticized her in the news for her haircut and for housing rebels) is similar to the sense of imprisonment Djébar's narrator finds in her marriage. She is trapped in a postcolonial web blended of tradition and modernization that culminates following her admission of adultery to her husband, "Adulteress! [...] Anywhere, except in this city of iniquity, you would deserve to be stoned!" (Prison 85). Although the narrator's husband was considered progressive by Algerian standards, even the city of Algiers in the 1990's was host to the customary Muslim repression of women. Djébar provides a snapshot of the juxtaposed crises of being a modern and educated yet proper Muslim woman walking the streets of Algiers in the traditional veil:

*Because they spy, they watch, they search, they snoop!
Smothered this way you go to the market, the hospital, the office, the
workplace. You hurry, you try to make yourself invisible. You know that
they have learned to make out your hips or your shoulders through the
cloth, that they are judging your ankles, that in case the wind lifts your veil,
they hope to see your hair, your neck, your leg. You cannot exist outside:
the street is theirs, the world is theirs. Theoretically you have the right to
equality, but shut up `inside,' confined. Incarcerated. (Prison 180)*

Djébar's later works depict the tragic postcolonial inheritance of displacement amid the disarray of traditional and modern influences. The population, in which Djébar focuses primarily on the women, is in its entirety left in limbo between history and modernity.

In Algerian White, she describes the impact of the ongoing assassinations and turmoil in Algeria as it struggles to adapt as a new nation irrevocably changed by French colonialism. A pivotal issue in her work is the battle to determine the identity of the Maghrebian woman, a component of national identity, amid the occupiers and intruders of history: Berbers, Arab Muslims, the French, and perhaps the penetrating fingers of the ongoing Western-led globalization that can be considered the most recent. The push to secure a female identity is inextricably linked to a postcolonial assessment of the Algerian nation as a “mother” to the fatherless and displaced people:

Camus, an old man: it seems almost as unimaginable as the metaphor of Algeria herself, as a wise adult, calm at last, at last turned toward life, ordinary life...In the same way, is it possible to think of Algeria as peace-loving, with her dignity restored? And why not as a peace-loving man? Why always Algeria “my mother,” my sister, my mistress, my concubine, my slave? Why in the feminine? (Algerian White 103)

Struck down in his prime, writer Albert Camus is an icon to the intellectuals of the Maghrebian writing community, and is particularly so for Djébar. She lamented his death and compared the loss to the loss of Algerian identity. For Djébar, the purity and strength embodied in the writing of this *pied-noir* was an indicator of a new national integrity, a hint of the great potential of modernization, and possibly, a bright flash of light amid the dark cloud of the French empire. The loss of this iconic figure, a component of the new breed in Algeria neither wholly French nor Algerian, at the high point of his career is for Djébar a symbol of the sad plight of her postcolonial nation. It is as impossible for her to consider “old man” Camus

pleasantly writing and adding to the record of Maghrebian experience as it is for her to contemplate a peaceful and happy “old man” Algeria, calm patriarch of the Maghreb. Djébar’s Algeria, although as beautiful, stoic, and ancient as the deserts and mountains of the region, is considered a woman in the traditional sense: oppressed, trapped, dislocated, and raped by a combination of forces quite beyond its control.

The plight of the Maghrebian woman has also been considered by male writers in the Maghreb. In particular, Albert Memmi of Tunisia and Tahar Ben Jelloun of Morocco have dedicated considerable energy to the explication of the Maghrebian woman. Viewed from a male vantage, the predicament of the women is accorded a full measure of the traditional oppressor’s view of oppression which results in an externalized assessment of the impact of tradition that differs from the woman’s perspective.

Jelloun’s Sand Child and sequel The Sacred Night together complement Djébar’s contemplation of a transition from man to woman. The main character, a Moroccan named Mohammed Ahmed, is a girl that is forced from birth to exist as a boy and then a man. The origin of this role reversal is the pride of the domineering father, Hajji Ahmed, who refuses to have anything but a son after he and his wife have had seven daughters:

He was convinced that some distant, heavy curse weighed on his life: out of seven births, he had had seven daughters. The house was occupied by ten women- the seven daughters, the mother, Aunt Aysha, and Malika, the old servant woman. The curse was spread over time. The father thought one daughter would have been enough. Seven was

too many; tragic, even. How often he remembered the story of the Arabs before the advent of Islam who buried their daughters alive! (Jelloun 9)

Upon the eighth pregnancy, Hajji Ahmed vows that the child will be a boy, whether or not it is a girl. The androcentric tradition of subordinating the birth of a girl stems from both an economic and political basis as much as it is an issue of pride. The son would be able to maintain his father's family and carry on in his stead as required; a daughter is simply and inevitably absorbed into another man's family, often to the detriment of her own. In Jelloun's story, the newborn girl is given the name Mohammed Ahmed and forced to endure a childhood of isolation and secrecy in order to hide her female identity (a fact which is shared only by the father, mother, and the midwife attending the birth). Late in life, Mohammed Ahmed ponders this and reiterates the timelessness of this traditional point of view to a woman of the region:

To be born a girl is a calamity, a misfortune that is left by the roadside where death passes by at the end of the day. Oh, I'm not telling you anything new. My story is an old one, from before Islam. (Jelloun 130)

Jelloun's portrayal of this tortured individual keenly notes the differences between a male and female upbringing. The seven sisters and mother quietly acquiesce as they are immediately relegated to subservient roles in the household. Hajji Ahmed parades his new "son" around the city as his grand accomplishment in life. The analysis of Mohammed Ahmed's life reveals Jelloun's understanding of the traditional oppression of women.

The torture endured by the young Mohammed Ahmed during her existence of forced manhood, embodies both a sense of complete character displacement and the uprooting of every aspect of normalcy. The fact that she is bound by loyalty to her father not to reveal her true identity compounds the degrading and absolute oppression. The resulting individual possesses a unique view of traditional Maghrebian society and this is an important facet of Jelloun's work. He perceives the life behind the veil much as would Djébar, or likely any other Muslim woman of the region:

I can never distinguish between the faces. The body of a man, or of a woman? My head retains only confused images. When I had a life in the outside world, when I went out and traveled, I noticed how hungry people are for sex. When the men look at a woman, they petrify her body.
(Jelloun 75)

Existence behind the veil creates a sense of mystery for the men whose leering is considered by the women to be commonplace and expected. Jelloun perceives this as a Moroccan man and this perception is found throughout his work. Similarly, he shares with Djébar some understanding of the longing for androgyny and the potential that existed in a woman with male attributes. Jelloun's character reveals this understanding with clarity for as a woman forced to exist as a man; she was able to perceive both worlds. In one such instance, Mohammed Ahmed ponders the example of a locally legendary woman who was admired by other women for her manly attributes, themselves an indicator of a rebellion against oppression:

There are women in this country who step over all barriers, dominate, command, guide, trample others underfoot – such a woman was Um Abbas. Men – and not only her son – feared her. She claimed to have had two husbands at the same time. One day she even showed me two marriage certificates in which there was no mention of divorce – a rare, strange thing, but not really surprising to anybody who knew her. (Jelloun 100)

Jelloun's ability to perceive the plight of the Maghrebian woman with a certain degree of accuracy is a testament to the fact that ignorance was often the traditionally accepted course of action.

In his work, Dominated Man, Albert Memmi explores the impact of colonialism by means of an analysis of the intermixture of oppressor and oppressed. In a chapter that focuses chiefly on women, "A Tyrant's Plea", he centers on a discussion describing Simone de Beauvoir's work The Second Sex (which he views as an incomplete failure), as well as her partnership with Jean-Paul Sartre. This decidedly French focus is complemented by a strong undercurrent of the crisis of the Maghrebian woman. The essay, fundamentally an assessment of de Beauvoir's description of the oppression of women, reveals certain aspects of the impact of French colonialism on the women of the Maghreb from the perspective of a Tunisian of Jewish origin. Moreover, his argument highlights common trends that are evident throughout colonial and postcolonial era regional literature of the Maghreb. Specifically, Memmi (in a self-proclaimed role as the "Tyrant") assesses the long-established objectification of the woman, her reactionary self-rejection, and the impact of a radical realignment of the traditional role of the Maghrebian woman.

Dominated Man is Memmi's testament to the legacy of ruin left in the wake of colonialism and traditions of sexism and racism. A witness to the ravaging of the Maghreb in his homeland of Tunisia as well as during his travels throughout Algeria, Memmi dedicates himself to analyzing the basis of the omnipresent domination of the weak by the strong. Nowhere is this more apparent than in the traditional treatment of women in the Maghreb and the standards that exist in marriage. Memmi eloquently shares a sense of the desperation situation endured by women, his abilities no doubt enhanced by his Jewish heritage as well as his being a member of an entire region dominated by French imperialism. However, he focuses much criticism of the traditional mindset of the Muslim male and his view of his wife. "A man is prone to jealousy because he considers his wife as his property, as his possession; he allows no one to touch her (Memmi 149)." This arrangement, one of object and owner, lends itself to a state of imprisonment for the women, the likes of which is prevalent in the aforementioned literature of the women writers of the region. Furthermore, it leads to a state of constant unease and distrust wherein the man considers his wife in much the same manner as a banker might treat his vault. Finally, in the looting of this vault, the colonized man is left dishonored and hopeless, bereft of his pride and possession. Memmi's goal, however, is to explain the situation of marriage with a realistic approach that makes sense in the aftermath of domination.

In his critique of de Beauvoir's unwillingness to have children and her tolerance of Sartre's other women, Memmi asserts that it is destructive for

women to adapt so much to the male standard that they ignore fundamental strengths of their being:

In order that their emancipation may be real, women must be considered as women: that is, as lovers and mothers. For the liberation of the female sex, new relations must be established in the domain of love and of maternity. (Memmi 156)

Memmi's interpretation points to natural function of man and woman, and states that aspirations of modernity and the drive to evolve culturally, socially, and sexually can lead to negative outcomes. In de Beauvoir's case, she forgoes tradition in order to pursue a higher state of existence that is devoid of any component of domination that characterizes a traditional man-woman relationship:

I should say that in the case of Simone de Beauvoir, we find ourselves faced with self-rejection. It is certainly only a partial self-rejection, since she has overcome her natural failings on so many scores, and has achieved what so many women are deprived of. But she has to pay for her success by this one great privation [...] For to reject maternity is to reject one's essential femininity. And I think I have already proved sufficiently that to deny one's own nature is never a valid solution. (Memmi 153)

In Memmi's opinion, the fundamental nature of women cannot, and should not, be denied, particularly by the women themselves. This is shown to be especially evident when one is compelled to rectify the wrongs of colonialism. Memmi, himself the product of a traditional early twentieth century Tunisian upbringing, readily demonstrates his understanding of the cultural norms that exists between man and woman in the Maghreb. In a certain way, his objective treatment of the

subject provides him with a departure point from which he attempts to transcend the masculinization of the woman as described in the works of Djébar and Jelloun. Memmi provokes an initiative to determine a “new” Maghrebian woman who is fundamentally different yet simultaneously champions her status, physically, culturally, and socially, as a woman. He concludes that this strong figure, ideally the manifestation of the postcolonial Maghrebian woman, will defy the outmoded standard:

For, after all, women form more than the half of society, which up to now has always been conceived with the aim of satisfying the desires of the male sex. The principle of this reorganization is clear too: woman is exploited because of her function as a bearer of children. From now on men must be prevented from taking advantage of this state of affairs the better to lead their women by the nose. (Memmi 159)

Memmi's perspective contributes to an understanding of the plight of the Maghrebian woman. His conclusion supports the necessity of maintaining a solid and lasting standard of womanhood and is integral to understanding the damage wrought in colonial oppression and violence by the French and their tragic miscalculations. When one combines accounts of rape, torture, cultural and social dislocation, traditional oppression, and the internal turmoil suffered by post-colonial women as they struggle to recognize and maintain an identity, one can readily envision a region that has undergone a tragic rebirth at the hands of the French. Furthermore, the failure of the French to establish order in the region becomes equally simply to comprehend. Following the literary history of the region during the colonial era, it is not difficult to see how the French failed to

properly identify the impact of Europeanization and Western standards in a Berber Muslim region dominated by centuries of tradition. In the aftermath, the women of the region were left to contemplate a compounded oppression that resulted in the combination of ineffectual French practices and the traditionally accepted dominance of the Maghrebian male.

When attempting to determine root causes and geopolitical outcomes based on the analysis of history and literature pertaining to the women of the Maghreb, it is useful to understand and evaluate regional political assessments. The women of this region were caught in a hammer and anvil dilemma regarding their treatment under pre-colonial traditional standards, colonial rule, and during postcolonial strife. In her work States and Women's Rights, Mounira M. Charrad proposes that the three nations of the Maghreb, although achieving independence within a decade of one another, developed postcolonial standards pertaining to women's rights quite differently. She argues that reasons for this are evident following an assessment of the family and tribal organizations and adherence to Islamic law. Charrad's work supports the premise that the brunt of the colonial effort, comprising the most violence and bloodshed, was expended in Algeria. It is therefore unsurprising that Algeria's development of women's rights followed a convoluted path which resulted in a nearly complete stagnation of progressive women's rights in favor of the repressive policies of Islamic law. A brief review of the development of women's rights in Algeria, Morocco, and Tunisia reveals much of the background for writers such as Djébar, Jelloun, Halimi, and Memmi.

Algeria suffered the most during its struggle for independence from French rule and it has accordingly enacted the most repressive policies concerning women's rights. The source of this repression is found in a review of the traditional laws and standards of the Maghreb as it pertains to the rights and entitlements accorded to women. Charrad describes three "paths" of development in the Maghreb. In essence, each of the three paths describes a pattern of postcolonial development followed by each nation of the Maghreb. In Morocco, the nation develops postcolonially with a close adherence to traditional tribal groups and adopts a conservative approach to law. In Algeria's case, the massive injection of European culture resulted in social, cultural, and governmental bewilderment, and a complete inability to make progressive decisions. This regressive state lasted for decades and resulted in a predictable retreat to the most restrictive traditional practices in society, law, and government. In Tunisia, the postcolonial state develops in isolation from tribal traditions and is able to adopt very progressive laws and policies very quickly. Charrad cites Tunisia as having followed the third, and logically most progressive, postcolonial path. It is interesting to consider the significance of these paths regarding an assessment of the current situation in Iraq and predicting potential post-conflict government and cultural development.

The basis for determining women's rights in the Maghreb originates in the principles of *Maliki* law. *Maliki* law, named after 8th century religious scholar Malik (Charrad 39), is one of the four primary Sunni Muslim legal schools and is the dominant interpretation of Islamic law throughout northern Africa:

The thrust of Islamic Law in general is to permit the control of women by their male relatives and to preserve the cohesiveness of patrilineages. The subordinate status of women constitutes one of the most apparent and distinctive themes in the legal texts that show how the law places women in an inferior position and gives men power over them. (Charrad 31)

The conservative and repressive tenets of *Maliki* law should be considered the starting point from which all current manifestations of women's rights emanated. Departure from *Maliki* standards are a reliable indicator of the development of women's rights. It is not surprising that Algerian women suffer the most oppressive policies of law in the Maghreb. Following the French-Algerian war and the nearly million and half killed, Algeria was trapped in a period of postcolonial strife and government indecision for nearly two decades, during which time, no advances in women's rights transpired. In 1984, a conservative Family Code was finally formalized based on strict Islamic Law:

Like the Shari`a and the Moroccan Code, with only minor differences, the Algerian Family Code of 1984 included a conception of the family as an agnatic [male relative in the paternal line] kinship structure in which the patrilineal male line had primacy and women were subordinate to both husbands and male kin. (Charrad 197)

Charrad examines the root of Algeria's long delay in developing a cohesive system of women's rights. Her conclusion is that the development of family and tribal-based factions during the war with the French resulted in an increased turmoil following independence as these groups battled (and continue to battle) for dominance. Furthermore, traditional Berber practices that predated Muslim

customs were more highly developed in the mountains of the *Kabyle* region of Algeria than elsewhere in the Maghreb. Women's rights, lost during the factional infighting, were simply not enough of a priority to warrant progressive initiatives. Predictably, the long period of violence resulted in a retreat to traditional values and the endorsement of a legally supported, repressive and androcentric structure.

Morocco's story is not far removed from that of Algeria and essentially adopted a standard based on *Maliki* law and, although more reinforced than divided (as in the case of Algeria) by strong tribal groups, consistently refuted the rights of women. The Moroccan Code of Personal Status, known as *Mudawwana*, was adopted in November 1957 (Charrad 236). It maintained practices that marginalized women including unabashed support of polygamy, repudiation (the practice of allowing the husband to unilaterally terminate a marriage), and did not change inheritance laws that were exclusively in favor of the male(s) of the family. The basis of the *Mudawwana* is found in an initial declaration of male authority:

The first article of the Mudawwana defined marriage as a pact between a man and a woman, with the purpose of creating a family, under the husband's guidance. (Charrad 163)

The goal of a Maliki-based system is to ensure that the dominance of the patriarch continues to the basis upon which the entire government system is founded. In Charrad's view, the fact that both Algeria and Morocco developed a legal process in which the rights of women are subordinated stems from

adherence to family and tribal-based structures. One could augment this, however, with the premise that the extreme brutality of the conflict with France endured by Morocco and especially Algeria, in both cases worse than that experienced by Tunisia, resulted in a retreat to the repressive practices of *Maliki* law and the subjugation of women's rights. The *Mudawwana* of Morocco was thus a regressive step that resulted in an official policy of androcentrism and the suppression of women's rights:

The family law of newly independent Morocco thus should be read as the triumph of conception of the family as an extended patrilineage held together by ties of solidarity among agnates. (Charrad 167)

In contrast, Tunisia, the smallest and least populous nation in the Maghreb, boldly moved away from traditional *Maliki* standards. This nation is representative of the potential for a brighter future regarding women's rights, an integral component in a successful democratic government, for both the Maghreb and also has potential to assess potential outcomes elsewhere. Thus it is imperative to understand the basic underpinnings of Tunisia's departure from *Maliki* standard and the essence of the unlikely rise of women's rights in this traditionally oppressive region.

Upon achieving independence from French rule, Tunisia immediately established a progressive system endorsing women's rights. One prime mover in this support for women's rights was the fact that Tunisian independence was achieved with far less bloodshed than in Algeria. The Code of Personal Status (CPS), or *Majalla*, was adopted on 13 August 1956 (Charrad 224). It outlawed

polygamy and eradicated the practice of repudiation. Further, women were granted greater rights in the allocation of inheritance and rules pertaining to the right of women to file for divorce. Charrad notes a key factor in the ability of the Tunisian government to support women's rights is the fact that the nation was more uniformly populated by Arab Muslims, with only a small minority Berber influence. Once again, however, one should not minimize the significant fact that Tunisia experienced less national bloodshed, devastation, and dislocation of identity in attaining independence from French rule than its neighbors to the west. This somewhat less damaging experience, combined with Tunisia's more homogenous and less-tribal based government structure, allowed their leaders to make progressive decision almost immediately (within five months) following the declaration of independence:

Initiators of the CPS stated that their primary objective was to encourage the development of a modern nation-state. When I asked him what was prominent in his mind in designing the code, Ahmed Mestiri [1956 minister of justice] replied that his primary interest was to help create a new society and equip it with a uniquely Tunisian legislation. He added that he and his collaborators wanted to eradicate practices that they considered "feudal," such as child or compulsory marriages, polygamy, and divorce by repudiation. (Charrad 220)

This departure in both in the nature of the decisions made (Tunisia's progressiveness to Morocco and Algeria's regression to *Maliki* standards) and the time required (5 months for Tunisia to 21 months for Morocco and 22 years for Algeria) for the decision-making itself greatly separates the outcomes for women in the Maghreb. Implications for analysis and comparison of the

postcolonial development of Tunisia to her neighbors, primarily the stabilizing factor found in the surprisingly aggressive pursuit of women's rights, are germane to any study of potential outcomes in Iraq. Representing at least half of the eligible members of a democratic society, women, and especially those endowed with the essential protections, rights, and entitlements, are a cornerstone in the creation of a successful government and state. Charrad's analysis leads one to conclude that Tunisia's ability to move away from the restrictive *Maliki* standards and adopt a more progressive stance identifies it as a Maghrebian nation with the potential for modernization and increased rights and privileges for its citizens. The ability to empower women strengthens a fundamental portion of a democracy and bodes well for the peaceful future of that nation.

The historic condition endured by the women of the Maghreb was traditional oppression due to both the native Berber customs and the Arab-introduced standards of Islam. The intrusion of the French empire added to this oppression and further forced them to adopt new roles as a result of the death and displacement of the men and male-based institutions. Each of the writers discussed in this chapter dealt with the need for women to transcend traditional and colonial oppression and achieve a new status. Djébar proclaims the need for a new type of woman. Her literature spans the length of a single Maghrebian woman's experience and originates in a youthful fascination with the wealth and promise of modern Europe offered by the French colonizer. Djébar compares this to the stoicism and strength of her female ancestors despite traditional

oppression. She determines that the woman of the Maghreb, if she is to survive and succeed in the postcolonial world, must adopt beneficial traits of both the traditional and the modern woman. The alternative would be to languish in a state of imprisonment and torture.

Memmi similarly insists that a new and progressive outlook is required if women are to ever attain equal footing. He describes the need for modernization and an end to oppression, but insists that women not lose their identity as women and as mothers. Memmi views this complex new woman as the ultimate postcolonial expression and a necessary attribute to transcending the injustice of colonial and traditional oppression. An additional facet of Djébar's writing is the use of androgynous features and characteristics in her female characters. These physical attributes complement an attitude that rebels against restrictive forces. The imperial focus on attaining increased power, wealth, and influence resulted in the women of the Maghreb being left in a state of cultural and sexual nomadism. A similar byproduct of oppression, the androgynizing of the woman, is also seen in the work of Jelloun, who like Memmi can be classed as a partial outsider (a man) who can provide an intriguing perspective. The reason for the prevalence of this idea is due to the writers' combining of modern progressive thought with an innate knowledge of and experience with traditional and colonial oppression. The Maghrebian writers conclude with the premise that progressivism can surmount traditionalism, but that the surmounting of oppression can only be found in the adoption of multiple traits. The traditional oppression of women in the region necessarily spawned a strength and ability to

prevail. The experience gained in this act of survival amid the crushing oppression of tradition and the rape at the hands of the European should not be dismissed by the modern woman, but should instead be maintained as a now ancestral asset.

The torture of Djamila Boupacha was unwarranted and due to the widespread application of torture throughout the region, indicative of the failure of the French empire. The writers of the region, who as a group are given only brief coverage in this study, are shown to acknowledge the value and strength of the Maghrebian woman, and provide a body of literature that can be said to be the literature of rebellion. The androcentric organization and tradition described by Charrad was the root of oppression for the women of the region. The insertion of colonialism into this region caused a reaction that resulted in revolution and in the postcolonial reality, the need for women to adapt and evolve to meet the requirements of modern, postcolonial existence. In their inability to identify the fundamental strengths of the women's adaptation and rebellion, during which women like Boupacha ensured that the stance taken was not a wholly silent or reactive one, the French compounded their troubles. When added to the traditional mindset and customs of the men of the Maghreb, the French failure was inevitable.

CHAPTER FIVE

MAGHREBIAN MAN

It is never easy to me a man of two worlds. It is hard enough to be a man of one. (Gunther 10)

Having reviewed a selection of works describing the experiences of the women of the Maghreb, it is logical to look to the men of the region. Gunther's reflection, although sited in a paragraph of remarkably (by modern standards) racist sentiment in his 1953 history and geopolitical assessment of the African Continent, Inside Africa, describes an important element of the crisis of Maghrebian manhood when faced by the intrusion of the French empire. Simply stated, the French empire placed the men of the region in a dilemma from which armed rebellion was the only alternative. Unraveling the legacy of colonization is made possible through an analysis of the experience of the men of the Maghreb. The primacy of manhood in Maghrebian society is categorically abused and displaced by the colonizer. This pattern is highly evident in the works of authors such as Kateb Yacine, Mohammed Dib, Albert Memmi, Tahar Djaout, Mouloud Feraoun, Mouloud Mammeri, and Tahar Wattir. Each writer demonstrates the impact of the French colonizer and the outcome of the emasculation of the man of the Maghreb which ultimately led to the collapse of the French Empire.

Deprived of this essential vigor, the region has struggled in the postcolonial era to regain a cultural, linguistic, and social identity.

The men of the Maghreb are shown to have initially given a measure of faith to the European colonizer. They saw an opportunity to display their historic prowess and legendary bravery in battle during World War II. By all accounts, the men of the Maghreb performed heroically and loyally and this is reflected in the literature of the colonial era. However, following the war, the men were marginalized and not accorded status as equals. The demystification of Europeanization was the final nail in the coffin of the colonialization of the Maghreb. Left no realistic alternatives, the men of the region struggled and rallied in rebellions of various sorts to reassert their traditional position of dominance and eventually ejected the French from the region.

Algerian Kateb Yacine's work, Nedjma, describes Algeria's colonial predicament in terms of torture, displacement of male ancestry, the loss of land, and the tragic waves of impotency that inevitably occur. The story, told in a very disjointed fashion with a confusing structure, nonetheless weaves together the experiences of four men and their pursuit of a married woman, Nedjma ("star" in Arabic). Nedjma herself can be said to represent the predicament of a colonized Algeria in that she was conceived by a French woman who was repeatedly raped in a cave by different men and thus was doomed to an existence devoid of an identifiable patrimonial ancestry. The four men, Rachid, Lakhdar, Mourad, and Mustapha, are nonetheless infatuated by the beautiful Nedjma and determined to possess her.

Lakhdar's experience highlights the torture endured by the revolutionaries in Algeria at the hands of the French:

Lakhdar let them tie his hands and feet. Then the inspectors ran a long rod through the two bindings, which immobilized the prisoner whom they grabbed around the waist and threw into the tub [...] He felt something cold pressed against his lips. From the taste, he realized that they were sticking a big stone down his gullet to keep him from closing his mouth. Then another object was pressed to Lakhdar's lips, and he could tell what this was too: it was the metal tip of a drainpipe. The water was turned on. (Yacine 79)

This treatment, similar in nature to that which is described by Djamila Boupacha, is given a markedly different consideration. It is shown to be an act committed by the male colonizer upon a Maghrebian man. Instead of being victimized and lamenting his experience, Lakhdar and one of the French troops (a witness to the torture) he is somewhat friendly with go to a bar and analyze the torture. Far from being broken by the experience, Lakhdar simply questions his oppressor: "Why does everyone in France treat Algeria like a zoo" (Yacine 82)? This simple question perplexes the Frenchman who is obliged to admit that there is no satisfactory answer. In this, Yacine demonstrates the strength, integrity, and perception of the Algerian despite the extensive physical and mental damage wrought at hands of the torturer. Furthermore, he discounts the ability of the French to validate torture and dismantles the legitimacy of French imperialism.

Another integral aspect of French colonization is the loss of Algerian land. This loss is shown through the experiences of Mourad. As demonstrated in the charts, only a very small portion of the vastness of Algeria is fertile. The

importance of land, in both agricultural and regarding the honor and traditions of the family, cannot be underestimated. It is therefore highly destructive that the French took so large a proportion of this valuable resource:

While comprising one-eleventh of the total Algerian population, the Europeans were favored 17 to 1 in the distribution of land; 25,000 Europeans had 1,540, 650 hectares of arable land, whereas 532,000 Muslim farmers had to make do with 2,593, 410 hectares. Moreover, the best land in Algeria was used for the production of wine, which Muslims did not drink. (Wall 81)

The lattermost fact, regarding wine production, is merely added insult. The essential disparity in the French division of land resources is shown by Yacine to have been one fundamental source of the rebellion that had its roots in the early encroachment of French imperialism:

This fortune, when Sidi Ahmed met with disaster, was swallowed up in a series of mishaps, some fatal, others merely stupid; the land, for instance, was lost in the struggle against the French: Mourad's great-grandfather had fought under Abdelkader, exposing himself to Bugeaud's [a French officer tasked with subduing Algerian rebellion during the mid-1800's] reprisals, the latter distributing the finest estates to the European colonists. (Yacine 103)

The fact that Mourad's ancestor had failed in the face of the well-organized French domination of Algeria is a point of honor that Mourad will struggle to the end to regain. For the French colonizer, the use of the land and the belittling of subordinates in the military are the just prizes of colonial dominance and the superiority of the French Empire. It is not hard to imagine that the typical *pied-noir* viewed his presence in the Maghreb as a beneficial one that enabled peace

and the promise of modernization at the hands of one of the most powerful empires. In the mind of the colonized, which is invaluable apparent in the words of the literature of the region, it is quite simple to acknowledge that the benefits and progressive promise of being colonized were quickly lost on the men of the Maghreb. The lure of *Eurafrique* had lost its luster.

Mustapha's experience is shown by Yacine to be indicative of the futility, desperation and impotency of the Algerian man when overwhelmed by the onslaught of French civilization. Mustapha turns to alcohol:

Somewhere in the shop is a razor; it wouldn't take much to set the vendor's head rolling at my feet...can crime alone assassinate injustice? Mother, I'm dehumanizing myself, turning into a leper-house, an abattoir! What's to be done with your blood, madwoman, whom can I take vengeance on for you? It's the idea of blood that leads me to wine...
(Yacine 110)

Plagued by visions of the entrapment and rape of his nation's women yet fearing the outcome of his own brutal response against a pied-noir barkeep, Mustapha faces the dilemma of acting against overpowering odds and the dishonor inherent in inaction. When viewed from the perspective offered in Wall's assessment, the fact that much of Algeria's valuable land is dedicated by the French to wine-making, the idea that Mustapha would seek solace in a bottle of wine is the ultimate insult to the formerly land-holding and now landless Algerian.

The experiences of Rachid are revealed by Yacine to be an account of the historic cycle of domination and oppression that exists in any example of colonization. This cycle is shown to have disastrous effect on the patrilineal

organization of Algeria. Si Mokhtar, a man thought to be the murderer of Rachid's father, is one of the rapists of Nedjma's French mother. Rachid searches for the truth about the murder of his father and allows Si Mokhtar to tell his story while the two travel the Mediterranean by ship. Si Mokhtar recalls the outcome of the murder of a certain European road worker and his wife whose bodies were found in a mosque in the mountain village of Nadhor:

The Nadhor was put to fire and sword, military judges were appointed; a little later, the six chief males of the tribe had their heads cut off, all on the same day, one after the other [...] After the six executions, the tribe remained without a leader [...] leaving a handful of old men, widows and orphans in the profaned patrimony, which was least to keep the trace, the memory of the defunct tribe. (Yacine 168)

The loss of such a large number of leaders, tragic enough its own right, resulted in the scattering of a far greater number of leaderless subordinates who had little choice but to subject themselves to the indignities of French domination. This pattern is reinforced by Yacine as he recounts the history of colonialism and its ability to displace a long-standing civilization through the subordination of language, culture, and established norms of the oppressed. In this example, the young Algerian is lectured by his French schoolmaster prior to being expelled for disruptive "Berber" behavior:

He (Agricola) had the children of the leaders educated, and suggested that he preferred to the acquired talents of the Gauls the natural spirit of the Bretons, so that these peoples, lately disdaining the Roman language, now prided themselves on speaking it gracefully; our very costume was given a place of honor, and the toga became

fashionable; gradually, they yielded to the seductions of our vices [...] that is what you read in Tacitus. That is how it is that we, descendants of the Numidians, now undergo the colonization of the Gauls! (Yacine 298)

The Roman Empire's conquest of England is shown to have been an inevitable cycle of history. The justifications of the Frenchman are an attempt to validate the ongoing campaigns of the French to Europeanize the Maghreb, particularly Algeria.

Another Algerian writer who attacks colonialism is Mouloud Mammeri. In his work, The Sleep of the Just, one is witness to an alternative consideration of the reversal of manhood that occurs during colonization. The work is the first Algerian novel to be translated and published in the United States. It is additionally significant due to the fact that it provides the reader with a perspective of pre-French-Algerian war Algeria and the growing realization of the population that an all-encompassing drive for independence was necessary to avoid complete sublimation and was therefore inevitable. In many ways, the life of Arezki Ait-Wandlous, the main character of Mammeri's work, is the male equivalent of Jelloun's Ahmed Muhammed, the girl forced to grow up as a man in The Sand Child and The Sacred Night. Arezki is the feminized Kabyle boy who initially finds a career for himself translating French letters from Algerians who have gone to France to work, then heroically serves in the French army during World War II, and is finally jailed by the French government for a murder he did not commit. This cycle, in which the young man is cast out of traditional Berber society and then experiences a rise and fall of fortune with the French,

demonstrates the inability of any good to come of the colonialization of the Maghreb.

In Arezki, Mammeri creates a character who finds himself at odds with traditional Berber customs and society. He is portrayed as a girlish and weak boy who is ostracized by his father and more masculine brothers: “he had the features of a young girl, and a tall thin body which grew too quickly” (Mammeri 12). Arezki’s father, in particular, is shown to be helpless in developing some spark of manhood:

There was, for instance, the day when he had turned up with his hair long, as if he did not already look sufficiently like a girl. Without any preliminaries, his father had straight away given him a beating with a stick.
(Mammeri 14)

The initial experience of Arezki is that of a young boy who resists tradition and finds little traction in the established practices of his society. His brother, Sliman, speaks of a legacy of honor which every man must uphold: “The honour of us Kabylia’s means more than peace, riches – more than life – than death” (Mammeri 8). Though a boy, Arezki finds little value in such sentiment and replies, “Honour? That’s just a joke” (Mammeri 8), thus isolating himself from his own family, his tribe, and his people.

Mammeri develops this character in opposition to establish Berber norms of manhood in order to demonstrate aspects of the French impact. Many of the characteristics displayed by Arezki are in fact nothing more than attributes gained through his education in French schools. While his brothers toil in traditional jobs, Arezki is able to transcend this experience due to his sharp intellect which

is rewarded by the opportunity to attend and the prestigious French-organized military school system. French schooling provides the young man with a new set of goals and standards that contradict his Algerian heritage:

While I was so utterly ignored by this world, my schoolmates [pieds-noir] entered it directly, head high and strutting, their hands free, like young gods for the dance. I desperately wanted to follow. (Mammeri 120)

The allure of European existence, and success according to French standards, quickly becomes the focus for Arezki. However, Mammeri immediately portrays a cruel paradox of colonialism: the inability of the oppressed, despite his intent to embrace the new standard, to wholly merge with his oppressor. Arezki joins the French Army to fight in WWII and learns that although he is allowed to serve and possibly die for France, he is not given equal status as a French soldier, much less a citizen. During his training, Arezki quickly distinguishes himself as a natural leader; however he is never accorded the same honors as his less capable French peers. In one instance, a voice on the French radio describes the imperialistic perspective. In the reiteration of the nations of the French empire and proclamation of the strength of democracy, Arezki becomes aware of fundamental flaws in the French system:

The worn voice spoke of the victories of the French armies, of the inevitable triumph of the democracies over the inhuman Fascist ideologies. `Come from all corners of the world, speaking every kind of language, worshipping different Gods, yet all animated by the same deep love for the most humane countries, the French from France, from Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, from French West Africa or Madagascar, from

Indo-China or Martinique, whether white, yellow, or black, all equal, all free'. (Mammeri 117)

This sentiment of imperial grandeur is completely lost on Arezki for he has just been denied the privilege of presenting his cadet company to the company commander by virtue of the fact that only a French cadet can present the unit to a French officer. He is similarly forced, despite his demonstrated excellence, to wait until every one of the French cadets (many of them his subordinates) have been served before he can be served and eat. Despite this and other setbacks, Arezki continues to strive to attain equality with his French peerage.

Mammeri's sentiment regarding the French empire in Algeria is quite plainly that of a destructive entity bent on the physical and cultural conquest of a weaker and more technologically primitive Maghreb. The advantages of the French are complemented by certain strict adherences to tradition that limits the modernization of Algeria in certain respects. Arezki's struggle can be compared to the hopeful aspirations of the *harkis* and *beni ouis-ouis* of the Algerian population whose hopes of equality in the eyes of the French were never realized. However, Mammeri does provide certain instances that acknowledge sporadic French recognition of the exploits of loyal Algerians. After Arezki (now a decorated noncommissioned officer in the French military) is wounded in combat while heroically reclaiming France from the Germans in numerous campaigns including the Rhine, Cassino, Modenheim (all rivers) that he crossed in battle (Mammeri 208), his French nurse remarks "You people from North Africa have saved France. It's the same thing anyway – we are all French aren't we"

(Mammeri 153)? Despite this, the fate of Arezki is ultimately shown to indicate the futility of any attempt for an Algerian to gain equal standing with a Frenchman. After his postwar attempt to marry a Frenchwoman and his failure in establishing himself in various careers in France, Arezki returns penniless to Algeria. The integrity of his family has been ruined in his absence and his wartime exploits for the benefit of France are given short shrift by his fellow Algerians. He is ignominiously convicted of a murder that he didn't commit and sentenced to twenty years in prison by a French judge. In his embrace of French ideals, Arezki finds only misery and a complete sense of disillusionment. He is unable to find sanctuary in either Algeria or French society and although both alternately use him for his skills, initially as a translator of French, then as a trained and effective warrior, he is ultimately rejected as a misfit by all.

Tunisian experience was certainly less physically destructive than that of Algeria. However, the displacement of Tunisian manhood by European, chiefly German and French, domination differed very little. Albert Memmi, in his Pillar of Salt, portrays the double-outcast perspective of the Tunisian-Jew. A minority in every respect but one (manhood), Memmi himself experienced firsthand the marginalization of colonial oppression. Memmi's character, Alexandre Mordekhai Benillouche, is a young man who, in a manner similar to Mammeri's Arezki Ait Wandlous, discovers that in his awareness of the effects of colonialism, he realizes his own isolation from every community. The son of an Italian-Jewish father and a Kabyle Berber mother is at birth given a unique and segregated vantage from which to view the effects of the French in the Maghreb:

To try to explain what I am, I would need an intelligent audience and much time: I am a Tunisian, but of French culture [...] I am Tunisian, but Jewish, which means that I am politically and socially an outcast. I speak the language of the country with a particular accent and emotionally I have nothing in common with Moslems. I am a Jew who has broken with the Jewish religion and the ghetto, is ignorant of Jewish culture and detests the middle class because it is phony. (Pillar of Salt 331)

The character Alexandre is shown to develop an awareness of the world and with every discovery, grows increasingly disassociated with his fellow Tunisian whether he is Jewish, Muslim, or a member of European society. Moreover, Memmi reveals a facet of colonialism, particularly the role of language, which allows one to perceive another pervasive aspect of the removal of male Maghrebian identity.

Growing up in the Jewish sector of the ethnically compartmentalized Tunisian ghetto, Alexandre is exposed to a highly variegated environment in which merely crossing a street can be as significant as crossing an international border. This exposure provides Alexandre with a means to compare the benefits and pitfalls of a multitude of cultural practices and beliefs. The focus of his this comparison quickly becomes language. In the competition of language, Alexandre is shown to be able to assess the ultimate successes and failures of a given culture. Early in life, Alexandre is taken from the safe haven of the Jewish ghetto and thrust into the French school system. He experiences his first brush with a sense of the marginalization of Jewish ethnicity, far beyond the tension of Muslim and Jew on

the “street.” For the first time he is privy to the powerful hierarchies that exists in language, and the need to attain mastery if he was going to succeed:

Thus began my struggle with language, if only because my pronunciation of the French r and of the nasals was wrong. Dimly, I felt that I would penetrate the soul of this civilization by mastering its language. (Pillar of Salt 108)

This dim perception of youth rapidly gives way to a keener understanding of the impact of language and his Jewish heritage as he grows up in Tunisia as it dominated alternately by Muslims, Nazi Germany, and finally, after World War II, the French.

In effect, the language I spoke was an amalgam, a dreadful mixture of literary or even precious expression and of idioms translated word for word from our dialect, of schoolboy slang and of my own more or less successful inventions. (Pillar of Salt 111)

In his striving to gain fluency in French, Alexandre is increasingly exposed to the disparities between different ethnic and cultural groups, primarily that of the domineering stance of the French educational system which placed mastery of the French language as the cornerstone of attaining status as a civilized being. Increasingly, however, Alexandre is shown by Memmi to be achieving little more than distancing himself from the likelihood of gaining acceptance in any community. The more he studies French, the less he understands his own culture. Moreover, the French are far from magnanimous in their dealings with the young Jewish man from the heart of the ghetto. Ultimately, Alexandre is forced to admit “the two parts of my being spoke two different languages and would never understand each other” (Pillar of Salt 229). The despair found in

this realization is never fully surmounted by Alexandre and points to the idea that the dissolution of the individual as he attempts to straddle the gaps between ethnic and religious groups is an act of futility, though better perhaps than the ignorance of solely immersing oneself into one's own culture and religion.

Memmi's character is able to draw certain conclusions regarding his place in colonial Tunisia. Although a youth, he comprehends the historic interplay of oppressor and oppressed in his nation:

And I – well, I am my city's illegitimate son, the child of a whore of a city whose heart has been divided among all those to whom she has been a slave. And the list of her masters, when I came to know some history, made me giddy: Phoenicians, Romans, Vandals, Byzantine Greeks, Berbers, Arabs, Spaniards, Turks, Italians, French. (Pillar of Salt 96)

This knowledge fosters within Alexandre a sense of the transitory nature of colonialism. The agony and grief that many of his contemporaries experience is somewhat diminished when Alexandre considers that domination is temporary and eventually, other dominant forces will arise and conquer for a time until they too are absorbed as merely another flashpoint in history. Alexandre instead chooses to analyze his own situation and that of those closest to him. Thus a constant reexamination of his Jewish heritage in a Muslim land, simultaneously dominated by the French, is a primary preoccupation. He readily discerns a disparity that he views as an unfortunate social condition that serves to heighten his isolation. He describes his own status as a "pauper Jew" and compares this to his largely well-to-do population of Jewish classmates:

They were of European culture, going back at least one generation, and the nearness of Europe and the apparent solidarity of the modern world comforted them; several times a year, they went abroad, pampered their digestive systems in various spas, and did most of their business with European firms. It is only fair to add that the Western world really did mean something to them. (Pillar of Salt 256)

Alexandre admits that after many years of effort and attempts to foster a kinship with his upper class schoolmates, he finally determines that essential common ground cannot be gained. His origins in the Tunisian Jewish ghetto prevent his entry into these wealthier and wholly westernized groups. In his final assessment of his place in Tunisian society, and the concurrent realization that he was destined for a life of ethnic and social isolation, Alexandre admits that the various groups he once aspired to join held little appeal. This is particularly evident in his recognition of the “West” as a powerful and modern entity that had unfortunately turned its back on Jewish people:

The war had taught us our real place in the mind of the West. Each time we had needed the West it had ignored us. The news that now reached us from the rest of the world confirmed the selfishness of the west: the desperate appeals of the Warsaw ghetto, the silence of the West’s religious authorities, and its abandonment of most of the Jewish minorities to the Germans. (Pillar of Salt 315)

His disillusionment complete, Alexandre returns to his ghetto in order to regain some semblance of membership within a social group. Faced with the inability to assimilate himself into either French or wealthy Jewish society, Alexandre is left with the sole option of engaging in a nonviolent rebellion against the two and a

return to his origins. Together, the silent rebellion and the return to his roots constitute a rejection of the west and its colonial tendencies.

A postcolonial assessment of Maghreb society arose in the wake of the French retreat from the Maghreb in the late 1950's and early 1960's. Writers of the Maghreb who had spent decades, if not lifetimes, analyzing and comparing aspects of colonialism were now forced to address the postcolonial region they had inherited. Algerians Tahar Djaout and Tahir Wattar represent this new breed tasked to assess the impact and remnants of colonialism as well as the regaining of ethnic and cultural foundations that had suffered during the 130 years of French domination.

Wattar, born in 1936 and educated in the finest of the Algerian French schools, chooses the metaphor of the bridge to explain how the social organization and new technology of the French were employed to dominate Algerians and supplant their traditions. Moreover, in postcolonial Algeria, many of these bridges and other architectural achievements of the French remain as symbols of both the potential and the failure of the French empire. In Wattar's work, The Earthquake, (first published in Lebanon in 1974) he uses the image of the bridge to demonstrate the permanent alterations that occur during colonization. He further hints that these very same bridges, in essence the social and cultural changes imposed on Algerians by the French, are immovable beacons of modernization that will continue to impact Algeria. It is a comparison of Maghrebian tradition and western innovation.

First the West pounced on us militarily and then they dazzled us with their science and technology [...] When the West came, they tore apart our caves and tunnels and patched them over with bridge [...] one way or the other, the West will come back and do more destruction to it than they've ever done before. (Wattar 140)

The narrator of the book is the Shaykh Abdelmajid Boularwah, a wealthy and arrogant individual who embarks on a quest to find a relative who might help him circumvent government land and financial taxes. Throughout his journey, Boularwah encounters a succession of failures and grows increasingly desperate and fearful amid the jostling of the newly freed masses of postcolonial Algeria. Boularwah is not impressed by what has become of the city of Constantine. He is alternately overjoyed and furious as he revisits places in the city and realizes that the growing post-colonial population has resulted in an overcrowded and dirty city. He curses his fellow Muslims as he heads to the Mosque to pray. He looks down on those he considers to be Algerian minorities such as Berbers, and displays downright disdain for Tunisians. He seems to long for the heady days of what he considers to be a grand Arabic past wherein these masses of commoners were dominated along strictly segregated social and ethnic class distinctions. He pleads for a greater power to “get rid of the government, the poor people, the workers, students, and unionists. Rebuild a new nation, populated only by us, the noble classes, people of good stock” (Wattar 116). Wattar’s book demonstrates an individual who exists in the Algeria of the late 1960’s and early 1970’s who is nostalgic for certain aspects of European colonialism yet also considers himself to be a good Muslim. He disdains his

fellow Algerian (and the Tunisian and Moroccan even more) and does not like the rise of socialism that has brought equality to his society. Wattar's character often wistfully longs for a return to colonialism and concludes, "A grand colonialist future has been destroyed...But what on earth has taken its place" (Wattar 84)? This intriguing individual is used by Wattar to demonstrate the disjointed and unavoidable legacy of over a century of French rule: he examines the idea that Algerians have been subjected to domination for so long that they have forgotten what it was to be Algerian.

Unable to recognize certain aspects of their own pre-colonial heritage and challenged in their attempts to adapt from a state of colonialism, the "elite" of the Algerian colonial era, embodied by Boularwah, finds no haven among the newly freed masses. Scorn and contempt are an inevitable result. An example of this is found as he walks through a poor neighborhood:

What's that sign on the wall say? Unbelievable! Municipal Health Unit! The town even takes an interest in the health of these people? That's extraordinary! Not only that, there's a school right over there across the street. Will wonders never cease, O Sidi! [a masculine title of respect, equivalent to "sir" in English] (Wattar 131)

Boularwah alternates between longing for the return of European comforts and organizations and decrying the Muslim hoi polloi and their erratic existence in the places he believes were once more well organized and attended. He then vacillates between a critical and traditional view of the world through a staunch Muslim's eye and a wistful desire for the sight of European girls:

He darted out onto 19 May 1956 Street where he suddenly felt the intensity of the noonday heat [...] This used to be Avenue de France. It began where Avenue Caraman ended and where the Lycee Aumale was located. This used to be a lover's lane, where the eyes of young European and Jewish girls sparkled with infatuation, joy, and gaiety. Here you could always get a whiff of Jasmine perfume, Reve d'Or and other intoxicating scents. (Wattar 43)

Wattar's novel demonstrates the clash of culture and tradition with the promises of modernization offered during the French rule in manner that can be readily compared (as the title insinuates) to the opposed geological forces involved in an earthquake. Algerian traditions have been overrun by the march of modernization and westernization of French colonialism much as the lesser of two crustal plates is subducted and driven downward by its more substantial geologic foe. Accordingly, the mantra of Boularwah is closely related to an apocalyptic passage described in the Qur'an as an earthquake:

Every suckling female will forget her suckling, and every pregnant female will discharge her burden, and you will see men drunk, yet it will not be in intoxication. There will be disorientation, confusion, restlessness and the feeling of a dark shadow invading men's souls. (Wattar 32)

Boularwah fears the earthquake in much the same manner that he respects the words of the Qu'ran: they are for him simply an emotional expletive dedicated to achieving a sense of personal well-being and superiority when compared to his fellow Algerian.

Boularwah's goal to solidify his land holdings in the face of increased taxation indicates a commonality that has been shown to exist throughout

colonial Maghrebian literature. Ownership of the land is an essential aspect of Maghrebian manhood. Although Boularwah differs in many respects from his fellow Algerians and opposes their empowerment, he is forced to align himself with the common sentiments of Algerian land ownership:

Land is Land. Our ownership of it means more than simply owning land. It's a question of honor, majesty and power which elevates you to the level of prophets and men of God, high above those who don't own any at all. (Wattar 115)

Boularwah acknowledges the power of land holding and in doing so is forced to admit a kinship with every other successful man of the Maghreb. A key component of the French intrusion is the pied noir ownership of vast tracts of the very best land. This uprooted ancestral ties and forced many Algerians into the cities which were speedily modernized and westernized. In this, cities became a cauldron of dispossessed men and their destitute families who were forced to adapt in close confines alongside French culture, society, and government. Boularwah, a lover of the colonial city, is shown to despise the empowered postcolonial crowds of Algerians. In his quest for familial support to maintain his land, Boularwah sees the remaining structures left by the French as symbols of a more dignified age:

Over yonder you can see a part of the Sidi Rashid [Bridge, sitting on top of arches fortified by rocks and cement. It valiantly resists the heavy carts and enormous trucks that trample on it. However awesome the earthquake may be, however strong and mighty, this bridge will never collapse. It will surely remain a bridge, even if the river below it ceases to flow or all of its foundations crumble. It's a bastion of men's insistence on

being defiant and arrogant [...] The Lord, through the intercession of Sidi Rashid, will no doubt inspire His pious servants to gather on top of the bridge. At the time of the earthquake, every important landowner, factory owner, merchant and imam will find himself standing on the Sidi Rashid Bridge, exactly at the right moment. European technology has the power to transcend the apocalypse. (Wattar 108)

Wattar creates the character of Boularwah in order to present one who stands in opposition to the postcolonial world. This selfish individual has been so severely transformed by the colonial experience that he is lost in a state of limbo wherein he simultaneously disdains his countrymen as he champions the Qu'ran and various traditional values of the Maghreb.

Algerian author Tahar Djaout was assassinated in 1993 at the age of 39 by extremists who feared that his progressive writing could affect the grip of Islamic rule in Algeria. His postcolonial works, chief among them The Watchers, present a similar postcolonial critique to that of Wattar regarding outcomes of a nation and people left adrift following the French withdrawal. Djaout approaches postcolonialism from a perspective that reinforces the imperative for the citizens of Algeria to retain their tradition and simultaneously, to modernize in a uniquely Algerian manner. The postcolonial bureaucracy that arose in the 1970's is Djaout's target in The Watchers. It is a tale of two men who find themselves alternately endorsing and benefiting from the postcolonial bureaucracy and also experiencing loss and privation as a result of the same bureaucracy. The struggle, victory, and loss experienced by each of these men indicates a perpetuating nature of colonial legacy. Much as the bridges found in Wattar's

“Earthquake,” after 130 years of French domination, the standards, systems, and practices of western government are difficult to ignore and impossible to discard. The displacement of the highly-prized and traditionally granted primacy of the Maghrebian male is shown to continue in the postcolonial nation. Algerian men find themselves trapped in a maze of French-inspired bureaucracy that although apparently less violent, is nonetheless an extremely formidable means of continued domination.

Menouar Ziada is a veteran of the French-Algerian War who has been granted a pension and a position of relative prominence in his community. Ziada is not domineering or power-hungry and instead leads a life of contented retirement. Moreover, he is shown to have a realistic and modest appraisal of his role in the anti-colonial revolution. After witnessing a fellow villager’s execution in a burst of French machine gun fire, Ziada decides that he should escape and join the rebellion:

With great humility and in his innermost being, Menouar would always recognize that he had performed this act [joining the freedom fighters], not out of patriotic awareness (such concepts were to arise mostly after the war had been won), but out of the irrational fear the [French] soldiers had inspired in him. Since he was leaving no children behind, he had taken the plunge more readily. (Djaout 7)

This character is a far removed from the arrogance and selfishness of Boularwah found in Wattar’s novel. He is more or less content with both his past and his fate and is pleased to be enjoying his hard won retirement. Ziada’s Algeria is a post-conflict region that is relatively stable. In fact, Ziada cherishes this modicum

of stability to such a degree that when he notices a lighted room in the village night after night, he is determined to discover what nefariousness is afoot. Following several nights of vigilant watching, he approaches his fellow veteran, Messaoud, briefs him on a possible threat to the peace, and invigorates a sense of responsibility and the need to act:

The country still needs us and our devotion. We liberated it from the chains of occupying forces, and it is our duty to guard its tranquility, even if we old and forgotten veterans have put aside our weapons and made room for others. (Djaout 16)

Ziada's request motivates his peer and they continue to watch the mysterious room that is the sight of mysterious activity every night. The truth of the illuminated room is that another Algerian, the inventor Mahfoudh Lemdjad, is renting the room and working on his latest creation, a new-fangled loom that will greatly increase the output of the traditional Maghrebian weaver. Lemdjad is not a war veteran and enjoys no special privileges. However, his determination to modernize and thus liberate the laborers from a degree of their toil is given heroic treatment by Djaout. Indeed, Lemdjad is shown to be quite a visionary in the recently ravaged postcolonial region and the descendant of some progressive individuals. Lemdjad reminisces about his grandmother, a weaver and the inspiration behind his invention:

She was a high-powered woman who did not pass unnoticed in the village. She was the first person of her gender to own a purse at a time when women would hide their coins in a knotted handkerchief. She had also been the first woman to sport a wristwatch, a man's watch on a black leather band. An old devil in the village, famous for his smutty comments,

had remarked one day in a small group [...] that she decked herself out with this article only so that men would ask her for the time and for more afterward, no doubt. (Djaout 27)

Djaout's creation of a female character such as this demonstrates his dedication to the goal of progressing beyond both the restrictions of tradition as well as the bonds of colonialism. Similar to the rebellion of the Algerian freedom fighters, the progressive women and men of Algeria must initiate a transcendence of the restrictions of traditional Maghrebian society including the repression of women and wholeheartedly strive for advancement. When Lemdjad attempts to apply for a patent for his loom, he immediately encounters an opposition borne of postcolonial inherited bureaucracy and stoic and immovable traditions of Islamism and the Maghreb. His request for a patent is immediately rejected by the secretary-general of the town hall:

Surely you know that in our sacred religion the words creation and invention are sometimes condemned because they are perceived as heresy, a questioning of what exists already, that is to say, of the faith and the prevailing order. Our religion objects to creative people because of their ambition and their lack of humility; yes, it objects to them because its concern is to protect society from the torments that innovation brings. (Djaout 34)

The tension between the pull of tradition and the allure of progress, mired and immovable in the depths of bureaucracy, is shown by Djaout to be Algeria's current challenge. It is no less dire than the oppression which was faced by Algerians during French rule. Ziada, a symbol of the old guard, is motivated to put an end to the sinister pastime of the inventor Lemdjad, and provides

information to the authorities in order to halt his nocturnal efforts. Lemdjad in turn, is equally invigorated by the drive to bring advancement to the oppressed masses. For Ziada, an unchanging, albeit bureaucratically burdened, system is preferable to the invalidated promises of the inventor. Ziada's trepidation is not without merit when viewed in light of the promises offered by the French to modernize and westernize. However, Djaout's thrust is to argue that a retreat to tradition is tantamount to a social and cultural regression, which itself was rife with the evils of domination, oppression, and intolerance of established practices of Islam and Berber tradition:

Aren't we rather running the risk of being carried back centuries in time and losing the values that people have created with their sweat and blood, such as democracy, sexual equality, individual freedom, freedom of expression, and religious freedom? (Djaout 59)

Djaout allows the tension to increase. Lemdjad is consistently thwarted in his efforts to get his loom patented. Menouar in turn, is lauded by his peers for identifying this threat to the peace and consistency of the town. Ultimately, Lemdjad succeeds in getting through the bureaucratic obstacles and wins an international prize in a well known European convention. Upon his return, Lemdjad is finally recognized for his achievements. However, due to his admission that his idea was almost stifled in the bureaucracy, the town leaders decide that a scapegoat is needed to amend for the delays. Menouar, the old and childless instigator of the initial suspicions regarding Lemdjad's activities is chosen by the city planner to be the one who is sacrificed for the greater good:

The loss of Menouar will be a pruning, not an amputation; it is a loss that will affect no one. He will disappear like a letter in the mail. I actually believe everyone will benefit from it. (Djaout 154)

Menouar is tossed out by the very system he fought so hard to create. In this Djaout creates a victory of sorts, but also hints at the tragedy of an absolute adherence to tradition. Neither Menouar nor Lemdjad are guilty of serious crimes. Certainly, neither ever deserves the degree of scrutiny and bureaucratically-sourced frustration they endure in the book. The legacy of colonialism, for Djaout manifested in a crumbling and overbearing bureaucracy that combines the worst of French government and the rejection of progress found in a blind adherence to Maghrebian tradition, is portrayed in a universally negative light. Djaout champions a progressive view of the Maghreb that is neither limited by tradition nor halted by bureaucracy.

The manhood of the Maghreb was given its sternest test for more than a century as the French empire sought to dominate the region. The source for many of the works involved in this study is easily identified: it is the outcome of the predictable cycle of domination, oppression, and exploitation, followed by the necessarily chaotic reorganization and search for identity in the postcolonial era. The imperial drive of France to dominate the Maghreb as the cornerstone of Africa was nothing more than the effort to secure economic and geopolitical power for the French homeland. This in itself is unremarkable and not the first time in history that an empire has risen to the detriment of its neighbors and its colonies. However, the man of the Maghreb was traditionally oriented and

unwilling to yield once he comprehended the emasculating outcome of French imperialism.

The tortures and rapes described by Yacine mirror the experiences of Djamila Boupacha. When considered in light of the male reaction, the legacy of damage initiated by every incident of rape and torture becomes more apparent. The androcentric traditions of the Maghreb were discounted by the French as they pushed their geopolitical goals forward. A valid understanding of traditional honor and pride was rarely sought and seldom gained. This honor was logically the product of many generations of Maghrebian existence. It was no doubt shaped by the physical environment and perhaps less influenced by the influx of foreigners than a similarly sized region in Europe. The geographic barriers posed by the oceans, deserts, and mountains that surround this region resulted in a degree of compartmentalization and isolation that is evident in varied customs that developed in Berber culture. Arab expansion in the 7th century delivered to the region a religion and reinforced androcentricism with increased organization. The intrusion of the French can be compared to a cold water dousing and the resulting shock, particularly among the men of the region, was bound to provoke reaction.

Mammeri's work demonstrates the initial aspects of the reaction to French. The optimism of his character, Arezki, is evident when he seeks an escape from tradition and pursues the glory to be found in achieving a proud French status. His failure to attain equality results in a revelation that French civilization offers no sanctuary for the Maghrebian man. Memmi's character Alexandre, a

Tunisian-Jew, embodies a related sense of rejection found when he is unable to find common ground with Muslims and wealthy Europeanized Jews. The rejection described by Mammeri is complemented by the isolation of Memmi's work. The initial optimism with the French dissipates in a cloud of disappointed exclusion and solitude that when combined with aggression, provide the most fertile ground for long-term violence.

Wattar and Djaout complete the Maghrebian commentary dealing with French imperialism. Wattar's brand of postcolonialism reveals a man who is torn by the recognition of the accomplishments of Maghrebian man during the colonial era and the knowledge that not all of the traditional ways were superior. Instead of providing another account of the need for a progressive outlook in the manner of Memmi, Wattar provides one with a glimpse of the anger of frustration. His character Boularwah is trapped in a miserable existence. He is alternately pious and nostalgic for traditional culture and French colonialism respectively. He is highly critical of the postcolonial society that has emerged in the aftermath. His fury towards his fellow countrymen and women, and their unsophisticated existences that neither bow to the past nor possess the grandeur of the west, is shown by Wattar to be a uniquely evil offspring of colonial experience. Djaout directly attacks postcolonial bureaucracy which is a disastrous mix of traditional oppressiveness and the most burdensome and inefficient institutions of the west. The resulting hypocrisy is shown to be a detrimental force preventing modernization in the region.

The description of a region plagued by anger, aggression, torture, frustration, isolation, and oppression, does not bode well for a progressive future and a satisfactory outcome. When these factors were superimposed on the men of the Maghreb, the result was an explosion whose fire and fury were felt throughout the colonial world and whose smoking remains should serve as a lesson of history. The writers and male characters analyzed in this brief survey of the literary record demonstrate that the French miscalculated the roles of both Berber and Muslim tradition and ignored basic issues of decency. This miscalculation resulted in a period of exceptional violence and destruction, particularly in Algerian, during which the men of three nations struggled violently and angrily to ascertain a male identity. This struggle, which was engaged in intermittently over a period of more than a century, resulted in the collapse of the French empire and a worldwide skepticism concerning the validity of French claims of civility and universalism. The postcolonial reality in the Maghreb is that the male identity, while it has recouped a percentage of its pride in the victory over the French, still struggles to be recognized.

CHAPTER SIX

PAX-FERAOUN: COMPARISON OF DIARIES

Having gained a basic understanding of the geopolitical background, as well the colonial and postcolonial experiences of the men and women of the Maghreb, one logically is bound to compare past experience to present. The journals of Mouloud Feraoun and Salam Pax, although separated in time by over four decades and physically by more than 2000 miles of varied geography and tempestuous politics, together weave one story among many detailing the impasse between the West and the Muslim world. Furthermore, these accounts both assert that this rift is greatly exacerbated during conflict and concurrently, that the marginalization of the man and woman results in a crisis concerning the fundamentals of pride and identity. The two works are replete with the fundamentals and outcomes of culture clash, imperialism, anti-colonialism, globalization, and Islamism. Prominent colonial-era Algerian writer, teacher, and intellectual Feraoun eloquently describes seven years of war (1955-1962) that represented the climax of North African anti-colonialism in a nation that had been the cornerstone of African expansionism, termed *Eurafrique*, by the French since the early 19th century. Conversely, Pax, an Iraqi architect and intrepid web blogger, is a product of modern experience who fitfully describes life in Baghdad during the Coalition invasion of Iraq. Although differences between the two individuals and geopolitical circumstances exist, an analysis of the two works

reveals a readily discernable connection in the story of anti-colonialism, particularly evident in these two works detailing Western enterprise in Muslim lands.

In the study of Feraoun's and Pax's work, certain experiential congruencies become apparent. Both of these men journals depict nations under siege. In the eyes of France, Feraoun's Algeria had long since transcended its status as a colony and was considered French soil. The French government, jockeying for international prominence, was not about to allow the crown jewel of the empire and the staging ground for the penetration of Africa (the *Eurafrique* concept) crumble and fall into the hands of an upstart rebellion of Algerian nationalist, Islamist, insurgents. Pax's Iraq, suffering at the hands of a cruel and corrupt regime and stifled by nearly 15 years of international sanctions, was in 2003 experiencing an invasion by a coalition bent on changing the regime. The thrust of these powerful, developed western nations into Muslim homelands resulted in a series of similar effects on the population. Chief among the affects was to throw the already precarious sense of identity of the populations of the two nations into complete disarray in the form of culture, religious, and language displacement. In both Feraoun's and Pax's cases, certain loyalties are shown to be transitional, particularly an erratic sense of optimism regarding the idea that these powerful and civilized nations might actually bring about some degree of beneficial change. This puts both writers into a precarious balance in that they never wholly align themselves with either side. Though far from fully supporting their invaders, these two well-informed, western-educated individuals are savvy

enough to see that some good will come about in the merger of cultures, particularly in the areas of modernization and advancement that were often restricted by traditional Islamic-based governments. This occasional dislocation of loyalty, combined with the fact that neither of them were combatants, led to feelings of shame, guilt and betrayal that are consequently intensified by the violence and tragedy of war. Ultimately, both writers are critical of all sides in the conflict and pessimistically contemplate likely outcomes. In both cases, this is sadly judged to risk a regression to restrictive Muslim leadership and continued isolation from the developed world. These salient themes, displaced identity, questions of loyalty, shame and guilt, and a critical assessment of likely outcomes, are shown to be consistent in both Feraoun's and Pax's experience.

The failure of the French in the Maghreb, and particularly in Algeria, has contemporary relevance beyond the legacy of post-colonial violence and disorder. Feraoun's journal documents many of the same issues, thoughts, and feelings as Pax's account. A study of these journals allows one to make multiple connections between the experiences of the French Algerian war and the invasion of Iraq nearly fifty years later. In many respects, these works demonstrate that the ramifications of imperialistic geopolitics, though altered in form and less overt, still exist to the detriment of the marginalized noncombatant. It further supports the consistency of evidence found throughout the available body of literature and should serve a catalyst for examining and perhaps improving the outlook of the ongoing campaigns of the west in the Muslim world. It is hoped that lessons learned in an analysis of Feraoun's French-Algerian War,

when compared to the Pax's invaded Iraq, has the potential to spur thought and provide one with an accurate and applicable understanding of the forces involved as well as a degree of foresight regarding outcomes.

Mouloud Feraoun was born on 8 March, 1913, in Tizi-Hibel, a village in the mountainous Kabyle region of Algeria. He was born and raised a Berber Muslim and endured a strict upbringing that endowed him with a lifelong dedication to hard work, the importance of family, and his Berber heritage. A skillful and disciplined student, he was educated in the best French schools in Algeria, and went on to a distinguished career as a teacher, writer, and intellectual. He was active in French literary and philosophical circles and counted among his friends and peers Frenchmen Emmanuel Robles, Pierre Bourdieu, and Albert Camus. He was executed, with five fellow instructors, in his schoolhouse in 1962 by the extreme Right-wing group, *Organisation Armée Secrete*. This occurred just three days before the signing of the 18 March Evian Accords cease-fire which in turn led to the French acceptance of defeat and Algerian Independence on 5 July, 1962. During his life, Feraoun constantly assessed the realities of the French-Algerian relationship from dual perspectives as a highly adept product of French schooling and culture and, more deeply, as a disciplined yet tolerant Berber Muslim who feared the rise of strict Islamic (Arabic) traditionalism almost as much as he did violent French oppression.

Feraoun's experiences during the seven years encapsulated in his diary can best be termed a masterful balancing act as he was caught between sides in an insurgency that engulfed Algerian existence. Initially, one is witness to the

historic tension between the Arabic Algerian and the Berber Algerian, an essential separation within the Algerian nation. The origin of the Berber people is difficult to place, but most sources agree that the Berber people have inhabited North Africa since at least twelve thousand years ago in the Paleolithic age (Gunther 67). Thus, Arab (Muslim) expansion in the 7th and 8th century resulted in a region divided by two dominant cultures who maintained a cultural separation that continues, albeit less dramatically, to this day. Feraoun, a Kabyle from the mountainous north of Algeria, proudly maintained cultural and linguistic ties to his Berber origins. This cultural loyalty was complemented by his dedication to teaching and an education at the behest of the French government. This duality resulted in an intelligent, tolerant man who was fiercely loyal to his principles, his family, and his profession. Alternately, this background presented him with a noteworthy ability to objectively view and contemplate the events of the French-Algerian War. One fundamental question that is shown in his journal to disturb him deals with his identity as a French-speaking, French-educated, Algerian Kabyle Berber. During a heated conversation with several *pied noir* ("black feet" a term used to describe Algerian of European descent) peers, his background, beliefs, and loyalties as a French-schooled, Kabyle intellectual are called into question. His retort is defiant yet inquiring and ultimately points to a disturbing feature of over one hundred years of colonial reality:

When I say that I am French, I give myself a label that each French person refuses me. I speak French, and I got my education in a French school. I have learned as much as the average Frenchman. What am I

then, dear God? Is it possible that as long as there are labels, there is not one for me? Which one is mine? Can somebody tell me what I am? Of course, they may want me to pretend that I am wearing a label because they pretend to believe in it. I am sorry, but this is not enough. (Feraoun 65)

Feraoun's critical assessment of the situation leads one to question the concept of *Eurafrique*. Further, it challenges the ability of imperial goal-making and Algerian cultures, religions, and languages to effectively merge and complete (or at least not hinder) the intended outcomes of planners and decision-makers in Paris and the Fourth Republic. Feraoun, born in 1913, had at least three generations of ancestors who had known French rule, three generations who had existed in a state of near-constant French culture and language dominance. For Feraoun, this predicament was one that, when combined with the horror and violence of the war, demanded a resolution that preserved the rights of the Algerian. He reacts with optimism, respect, and admiration for French writer Francois Mauriac who critically addresses French leadership regarding the need to return to the Algerian people "the other protagonist, a people of eight million men" (Feraoun 73) their identity. Mauriac's castigating letter to Guy Mollet (1956-1957 French Premier) was published in French news magazine L'Express and was cheered by Algerian intellectuals as well as French liberals. Feraoun's journal entry dealing with the letter lauds Mauriac's honesty and forthrightness:

This people of eight million is not French, and on its soil the French, who disagree with one another, are battling for the sole purpose of deciding the manner in which they are going to continue to impose their will upon it, to continue to live there, to continue to exploit and despise it,

in the name of imperishable principles, in order to fulfill a highly civilizing mission. (Feraoun 73)

In addition to Feraoun's accurate analysis of the rending of French public opinion concerning Algeria, he points to the need for French honesty and achieving a unifying sense of shared destiny. Feraoun's concept of imperial honesty rests on a logic that is as supremely simple and fundamental to international dealings as it is overlooked in the case of roughly 130 years of French aspirations in Northern Africa. It would seem sensible that a nation which usurps the cultural primacy of another nation in its inevitable struggle for increased financial and geopolitical strength would include in its strategy a fundamental goal to instill a sense of shared destiny (or at least profit) with the conquered nation. Feraoun's preoccupation with the inability to achieve a common destiny between two nations, as well as a consensus among the multitudes of internal groups within those nations, is relevant in that it portends the geopolitical failure of France. One might examine Feraoun's contemplation of the validity of the shared destiny concept and consider it integral to any merger (forced or not) of nations simply by conducting a quick review of the growing unease in modern Chinese-Taiwanese relations, the ongoing struggles in the post-Yugoslav war zone, and especially in the recent campaigns of the west in the Muslim world. The ultimate failure of the French in Algeria, admitted by the government just a few months after his execution, validates his premise. One result of this failure, beyond the many thousands of lives lost and the physical and cultural displacement of the population was a highly detrimental impact on Algerian identity.

Pax's diary complements Feraoun's journal in that it provides a firsthand account of the "invasion" phase. The Clandestine Diary of an Ordinary Iraqi in many ways presents one with an opportunity to witness certain ideas, thoughts, and feelings that may well have existed in early 19th century Algeria as the nation withstood the early encroachment of French power. The study of the two conflicts does reveal definitive differences in the cases of Algerian and Iraqi experience. More importantly however, it provides one with valid instances of trends, common despite nearly two hundred years of separation, in colonialism, empire building, and especially in the circumstances involved in the initial western encroachment into a Muslim homeland. This idea is supported in an early twentieth century history of North Africa that describes certain dubious geopolitical auspices and unfortunate outcomes:

A shady financial affair in which French politicians of doubtful honesty were mixed up with Algerian Jewish financiers, a trivial incident provoked by an untrustworthy diplomatic agent; a military expedition ill-conducted by a general of unenviable reputation and a victory received with public indifference and followed immediately by the fall of the reigning dynasty which claimed credit for it – such were the very singular origins of the French conquest of Barbary [North Africa]. (Nickerson 97)

Objectively viewed, this account portrays a period of North African history that is worthy of examination; alternatively the likeness and antithesis of the situation found in the twenty-first century between Iraq and those involved in the US-led coalition. Ultimately, it is the discernable similarity between the involvement of the French in Algeria and the coalition advance into Iraq, pending outcome

notwithstanding, that has the most relevance. Pax's diary might therefore be considered both a glimpse into the realities endured by Feraoun's nineteenth century ancestors as well as a warning that a western power has once again chosen to walk a well-trodden path into the Muslim world.

In a manner similar to Feraoun, Pax is a well-informed and articulate writer who makes use of his understanding of the multiple cultural, linguistic, and social mores of the forces involved. Pax, an Iraqi Muslim of mixed Shia and Sunni heritage who lives at home with his respected and influential (although not powerful) family, was ideally situated to witness the invasion and create an effective account by blending both the realities on the ground with a surprising amount (given pre-assault Iraqi government censorship and assault/post-assault destruction of communications infrastructure) of international news reporting from multiple sources. Furthermore his background, in a certain respect similar to Feraoun's Kabyle heritage, places him squarely within the Iraqi minority, particularly in the heavily Sunni Baathist enclaves of Baghdad:

One more correction, neither I nor Raed [his friend and co-blogger] are 'regular Joes'. Actually, most regular Joes would look at us suspiciously. I have spent half of my life out of this country and had to be taught how to re-grow my roots by someone who isn't even Iraqi by nationality, he just loves the place. We both have a distrust of religion and have read the Tao Te Ching with more interest than the Koran. And we both have mouths which have gotten us into trouble. The regular Joe would be more inclined to beat the shit out of us infidels. (Pax 27)

In Pax's discernibly proud admission that he differs somewhat from the Iraqi norm, he allows the reader to coexist within a chaotic environment caught

between insurgents and invaders. Occasionally, Pax fancies himself an outsider who embraces western culture and both fears and hates the Muslim insurgents who occupy the city in the days leading up the American entry into Baghdad:

Fedayeen. It has become a swear word. Dirtyfilthy. And always followed by a barrage of verbal abuse. Syrian, Lebanese, and, of course, Iraqi sickos who are stupid enough to believe the 'Jannah-under-martyr's-feet' rubbish. They want to die in the name of Allah, so what do they do? Do they stand in front of 'kafeer infidel aggressor'? No they don't, because they are chicken shit. (Pax 151)

In contrast to any intended response to a “hearts and minds” campaign by either the Fedayeen or the coalition troops, Pax is highly critical and assesses the forces that have coalesced in his home city based on his personal experience as a beleaguered civilian possessing a simple need for stability and peace. The Fedayeen are despised as foreigners who conduct crude attacks, often in the midst of civilian crowds and neighborhoods, on coalition forces. Pax disdains these attacks which invariably result in an equally uncivilized retaliation that is often more detrimental to the civilian population than it is for the fleeing Fedayeen. Despite this, Pax is not narrow-minded and seeks to learn for himself some truths about the invading coalition and the type of individuals that existed within it:

I was marginally involved in something that had to do with twenty-four pizzas and twice as many American soldiers...It is difficult – a two-sided coin. On one side they are the US army, invader/liberator (choose what you like), big guns, strange sounds coming out of their mouths. The other side has a person on it that in many cases is younger than I am, in a

country he wouldn't put on his choice of destinations. But he has this uniform on, the big gun, and those dark, dark sunglasses, which make it impossible to see his eyes. Difficult. (Pax 182)

Feraoun's description portrays an existence of oppression in a space alternately dominated by FLN rebels and French troops. Ultimately, this experience equates to a risky balancing act that is endured by the general Algerian Muslim population. Following a number of attacks, the French troops announced to Feraoun's village that they must "cut all the cacti around the houses, the leafy trees, and the bushes all around the village to remove any possible hiding place that might be used for an ambush" (Feraoun 79). The predictable result is a neighborhood that is considerably safer for the French patrols. However, soon thereafter, the rebels issue the order to kill every dog in the village. This was ordered so that the rebels could have increased reliance on a village support network of nighttime redoubts without risking French notice due to barking dogs. This very tactically sound decision by the rebels resulted in a quandary for the villagers. "They had to do this with stones and handmade cudgels because the French had taken away all of the guns, and the rebels had also taken the hidden guns" (Feraoun 83). In these examples, the villagers are caught between the rebels and the French troops, weaponless, with their dogs killed by hand and all vegetation removed, resulting in an organically denuded landscape that is reduced to man and things of man's own construct.

During this sad fasting time, here is what it is like in Kabylia: there are maquis [rebels] on the one hand and on the other, there is the army. Between the two, there is the population, which gets beaten up. Just like

a punching ball between two boxers. The [French] army severely rations, sweeps, destroys, and kills. The rebels force themselves on the population, demanding lodging and protection. They also ransom and kill. Healthy men flee, go to jail, or join the maquis when they can escape death. The children, the women, and the old ones stay behind as punching bags. (Feraoun 201)

This cycle of uprooting engaged in by both sides leaves the population isolated, devoid of optimism, and lacking any degree of confidence in the outcome. Another area that is adversely affected deals with the traditional roles and identity of the man and consequently, the woman.

Pax readily identifies a potentially severe shortfall in the plans of the invading coalition forces as they publicize portions of the reconstruction plan. The failure to comprehend the attitude of the men within the Iraqi population, Sunni and Shia, is predicted by Pax to be a disaster in waiting. On discussing a news report that female former US Ambassador to Yemen, Barbara Bodine, would administer Baghdad, he relates:

You can imagine the fear of castration the Iraqi males are going thru at the moment. Don't expect this to be swallowed very easily. And to divert this unease they would say something along the lines 'She doesn't look very pretty, does she?' One person who doesn't actually work here, but was dragged by a colleague to see the picture [of Bodine] said 'You know, it is their intention to destroy the pride of the Muslim man.' Tread carefully, is what I say. (Pax 111)

Pax's omen indicates a familiarity with the widely held view that the role of the Muslim woman does not include national leadership, and to have a foreign woman designated to administer to Iraq largest city would be seen as an insult.

Akin to this androcentric pride, both Pax and Feraoun address central issues dealing with the treatment and consideration of women amid Islam, colonialism, and invasion, and the contributing effect that it has had on the men. Feraoun's Algeria is an environment that is shown to be exceptionally harsh to women. Kabyle Berber tradition of Feraoun's day, although soft-pedaling certain strict Muslim rules, nonetheless resulted in a degree of oppression of women, especially at home. Even a compassionate intellectual such as Feraoun adheres to conventional practice. He customarily married his cousin, Dehbia, who had no formal education, spoke only Berber, and whose life was centered on raising children and running the Feraoun household (Feraoun 8). Despite this, Feraoun relates with immense sadness and anger at the situation of the Algerian woman as one of complete marginalization and victimization, caught between the struggling fellagha (rebels) and the machine-like efficiency of the French counter-insurgency:

When there were not any men left to help the rebels, they [the FLN] called on the women to take the men's place and forced them to take on all tasks and responsibilities. The [French] army infiltrated these women's organizations, and that is why prisons and camps are now filling up with women. The fellagha slit the throats of women who betray them; the army shoots, arrests, or tortures the women who work for the organization. Both sides rape the prettiest ones and make bastards with young girls as well as widows. (Feraoun 261)

The offense of rape is shown to be tragic on many levels. The most understandable tragedy is the pain endured by the woman and the immense difficulty of reentering normal life given the prevailing attitudes regarding rape

that can at best be termed rejection and at worst, outright blame. This depersonalization of the raped woman is further emphasized by the shame felt by the dishonored males. A complex matter of male pride, the honor of a Muslim family rests on the honor of the women within the family and one's ability to maintain and preserve that honor. When this has been stripped away by an act of rape, whether by Frenchman or Algerian insurgent, there is incredible shame. Feraoun contemplates the magnitude of such catastrophic dishonoring and describes the prevailing sense of hopelessness that remains following incidents of rape:

This [rape] is now common practice, and the Kabyles have nothing left to covet in the West. Up to now, the basic objective of their social life, manners, and customs has been to jealously safeguard the sex of their women. They believe it is their inalienable right to possess this, for their honor has been buried in the vagina like a treasure more precious than life itself. But now, they value their lives more than their wives' vaginas. So when the soldiers take the men from their homes and confine them outside of their village while they ransack their houses, they know that their wives and their daughters will be violated as well. (Feraoun 262)

Feraoun's description of these horrors, remarkable for its candor, demonstrates the incongruity of the attitude of the Algerian man towards women and his anguished impotence in the face of French aggression. This attitude gives rise to an assemblage of negative emotions, including guilt, betrayal, and jealousy. The attack on a prime foundation of the Algerian family, the woman, does not contribute to optimism concerning *Eurafrique* and a vision of France and Algeria walking side by side toward a prosperous and happy future.

By the start of the French-Algerian war, Algeria had endured well over a century of abuse that culminated in an outburst of anger that led to a concerted, dedicated, and violent drive for independence. Such anger was not without a complementing emotion: shame. Feraoun acknowledges feelings of shame throughout his journal, and one is given a sense of the guilt and remorse felt by those Algerians who managed to survive despite the violence.

My candor has led me to give in to anger, to argue rather than bear witness, to betray my duty as a man, to trample on noble sentiments, to abuse the trust of my friends and neighbors, and to wreak destruction on the superior interests of a noble cause. Herein lies my shame and my torment. I know how difficult it is to be fair, I know that a noble soul will accept injustice in order to avoid being unjust, and, finally, I know that silence is a heroic virtue. My people, I could have died. But for almost ten years now, I have staved off threats ten times and found shelter so that I could bear witness to those who were taken by death. Those who have suffered and those who have died had the potential to say a lot of things. My goal has been to say, with some timidity, a few of those things in their place. What I have said has come from the heart and is as insightful and honest as I can make it. (Feraoun 295)

Feraoun's sense of guilt is present in many journal entries, initiated by his close proximity to the war and intensified by his understanding of both the good and bad of the two sides involved in the conflict. The combined weight of balancing his uncertain professional position as a teacher (a position constantly threatened by the French-dominated administration), viewing the multi-faceted emasculation of the Algerian male, identity, and the coinciding plunder of Algerian womanhood, together culminate for Feraoun in an overwhelming desire for action. This need

to rebel, to attack the attackers, to validate a loyalty to the Algerian independence is likely the mechanism that provided an unending source of Algerian volunteers to the rebellion. Feraoun, however, does not take up a rifle or even offer support (at least he prudently does not admit to this in his journal) and a haven to the rebels. Feraoun instead grasps his pen and creates a journal documenting the experience. While history has shown and will doubtlessly continue to show that the individuals who contribute such written accounts are as valuable as the fighters who engage directly in the violence, Feraoun nonetheless experiences misgivings and wonders if his actions are sufficient. Feraoun endures a harsh trial in his witnessing of the French onslaught and the counter-attacks of the rebels that together destroy much of what he prizes most in Algeria.

Pax faces a similar dilemma to Feraoun in that he finds himself at odds with the invading force, yet he is not one to take up arms (although it is possible, for the purpose of this study the premise that either Pax or Feraoun led a dual life of insurgent and diarist is not examined). Pax describes various methods of seeking refuge from the barrage of information and the physical chaos raging throughout Baghdad: “Best way to hide from the news is to live in your headphones” (Pax 143). He does attempt to disguise his guilt. When he agrees to accompany his friend and co-blogger Raed on a fact-finding civilian war-casualty mission for a non-profit organization, he is torn between his fearfulness and facing further horrors:

I am a bit of a coward. I am not dealing too well with all the bad things around me in Baghdad. I move through the city with a wince. And what he has been telling me about his trip last week made me just want to crawl deeper into my cocoon. (Pax 165)

The Vienna-schooled and dedicated noncombatant Pax openly expresses a sense of guilt:

The feeling of betrayal comes from somewhere else. There was a time when I thought that one of the best things that has happened to me is that I have not been 'rooted' anywhere. I felt that I could feel at home wherever I go. Culture, as in my cultural heritage, was not something I could betray, because it was not part of how I saw myself. But this has changed. In this day I am forced to identify myself with something I don't fully believe in. They see a name, a passport and I am lumped with people and things I don't think I belong with. (Pax 63)

Statements such as this contribute to the sense that Pax acknowledges certain differences between the average Iraqi and himself. Pax, while discernibly proud of being an Iraqi and of a respectable Iraqi family, does not share feelings of aggression and jihad driven reprisals that are popular among many of his compatriots. His primary aim is to question and analyze the situation that surrounds him, adopting a "wait and see" attitude. This to a degree dissociates him with a standpoint of Iraqi nationalism, yet provides him with a temporary, a necessary, respite from the violence. The resulting isolation compounds the tragedy of the invasion: he is at once a virtual stranger and a full-fledged Iraqi voice, but shares nonetheless in the violence that engulfs his country, his city, and his neighborhood. "I feel like the embodiment of cultural betrayal. The total sell-out – and this is making me contradict myself all the time" (Pax 54). Even in

his own home, which he refers to as the “Pax Hotel” due to the large number of displaced relatives who have sought a place of relative safety therein, he is placed at odds with various expressed sentiments regarding the Iraqi and coalition positions. Ultimately, Pax confesses “to the sin of being an escapist. When reality hurts, I block it out – unless it comes right up to me and knocks me cold” (Pax 163).

Pax and Feraoun, sharing occasional pangs of guilt, alternately find themselves in a state of complete frustration that leads them to contemplate the irrationality of the fighting from a militarily practical, yet politically and humanitarily unacceptable standpoint: the endorsement of total, unrestricted war. Feraoun’s epiphany arrives after considering a friend’s account of an event during which several battalions of French troops conduct a mission to surround ten Kabyle villages in order to capture insurgents. The information regarding the location of the insurgents was provided by an Algerian traitor who sought refuge in the French barracks and provided information after he was threatened by insurgents. The recounting of the suffering and indignity endured by the Kabyle villagers causes Feraoun such grief and sadness that he is led to conclude the following: “From then on, one simple question can be asked: Why do they hesitate in massacring everybody, in truly cleaning up the country, and, at the same time, in eradicating the problem posed by these `bandits’” (Feraoun 95)? This surprising desperation, a departure from his normally measured analysis of similarly horrid scenes, offers a glimpse of one man who witnessed a situation that exceeds his capacity to contend with wartime atrocity. For Pax, the

threshold is much lower. He reaches a short-lived nadir of hopelessness and endorses total warfare as he reads a draft of the US-British Resolution on Iraq: "Peace and security, ha. Bomb us already, Stop pussyfooting" (Pax 23). In the case of both Feraoun and Pax, the arrival at this apex of defeatism indicated an anti-reactionary stance. However, given the large numbers directly fighting against the French, it is likely that the exposure to French aggression motivated a completely opposite approach for many in Algeria. It is at once intriguing and chilling to contemplate the ramifications of such resigned decision-making if it were to occur on a national level (or merely among key leadership) and begs a critical analysis of the validity of adhering to a policy of total unrestricted warfare.

Feraoun's more predicable response is a critical analysis of the involved policies. He is exceedingly well-versed in the language, history, geography, and political organizations of both Algeria and France. This allows him to consider multiple viewpoints concerning the situation in Algeria. Although born in the Kabyle strongholds surrounded by a nearly homogenous Berber population, Feraoun's journey through the French education system allowed him to have close interpersonal relations with pieds noirs and French nationals alike. By and large, his experiences with the French left an indelible impression of a certain degree of advanced sophistication, especially regarding social development and supporting organizations (the French education system itself is highly lauded by Feraoun). Many of his closest friends, Camus included, are French or of French descent. However, his admiration for certain aspects of French civilization does not include the suppression of Algerian culture. It is often with a sense of grim

acquiescence that he questions policy decisions and attitudes displayed by the French:

So, according to you, gentlemen, do all these men who die on your side and on ours die only so that we can vote freely? That is what it is all about right? The prime minister of the French Republic finally recognizes that we have never had the right to vote freely and now that we claim this right, they are sending soldiers to kill us. Is this how you apply the Great Principles of which you are so proud? Gentlemen of Le Journal d'Alger, do you know what a horrendous pleonasm you have spread across your front page? To vote freely? It is horrendous and tragic at the same time. Tragic for us. Tragic for you. Poor young Burgundians, Picards, Bretons, Alsatians who have died on Algerian soil to prevent the Algerians from "voting freely." Do you really know for whom you died? (Feraoun 82)

The death of the French troops, whom he often refers to throughout the journal as youths or children, (not unlike the *pieds noirs* that populated his classes) represents an overwhelming pity to Feraoun. The irony of France's violent aggression toward its "own", Algeria, provokes Feraoun to question logic, morality, and ultimately denounce it as the rash and hypocritical acts of a duplicitous democracy.

Pax's critique of the situation in Iraq is similarly well informed. Following two stints in Viennese schools for architecture schooling and work, Pax is quite accustomed to European ways, customs, and standards. His appreciation of certain aspects of European culture is in most respects similar to any young European. He is a big fan of European music, Coldplay, David Bowie, The Deftones, etc. and stays well-informed reading the Economist. Further, he is well

acquainted enough with Western culture to both direct sarcasm and find a certain humor in the hypocritical behavior of “human shields” during the days prior to the coalition invasion:

There is another good bit: “The activists accused the Iraqi authorities of trying to use them as pawns in the war with America.” Oh shockhorror! What a surprise! Back to where you came from. Don’t wait for thank-you speeches – Out! Out! Out! “The bitter flight from Iraq follows a showdown with the Iraqi authorities who demanded that they decamp from their hotels in central Baghdad and take up their self-assigned roles as civilian protectors.” No, no, just stay in your hotels, buy souvenirs and make fun of the backward ways of these Iraqis. Hope you sent all of your friends postcards telling them about the pitta and tahini you have been eating while strolling around Baghdad, you tourists. Did you take enough pictures of children begging in the streets to show your friends back home how much you care about the plight of the Third World? Bet they were all shaking hands and promising to see each other at the next ‘worthy cause’ party. (Pax 109)

While Pax perceives certain aspects of his nation that the western world would consider “third-world”, he often considers Iraqis anachronistic himself, this does not detract from a definite measure of respect for his country and countrymen and disdain for critically minded outsiders. In his journal, he demonstrates that he is likely to blame the outside world for the current state of the nation. He is especially condemning of the 1991 30-nation US-led coalition invasion:

Do you know when the sight of women veiled from top to bottom became common in cities in Iraq? Do you know when the question of segregation between boys and girls became red-hot? When tribal law

replaced THE LAW? When `Wahabi' became part of our vocabulary? It only happened after the Gulf War. (Pax 121)

Pax suffers in the realization that despite the brisk post-colonial march toward an interconnected, globalized world engaged in by many nations of the world, Iraq stands isolated, embargoed, and now under assault by members of the culture he understands, admires, and one that has provided him with a portion of his worldly outlook. However, his ire is undiminished and the lessons of history are not lost as he denounces the continued march of colonial forces:

Excuse me, but don't expect me to buy little American flags to welcome the new colonists. This is really just a bad remake of an even worse movie. And how does it differ from Iraq and Britain circa 1920? The civilized world comes to give us, the barbaric nomadic Arabs, a lesson in better living and rid us of all evil (better still, get rid of us Arabs since we're all evil). (Pax 13)

Pax's frustration with the latest push into Iraq from a western power is reinforced by his knowledge of history. Further, with his knowledge of British experience in the Middle East during the earliest 20th century, he is doubtlessly agitated by the fact that this latest intrusion will not result in a solution that benefits Iraq.

Ultimately, the journals of Pax and Feraoun stand together as a reference of the continuation of domination of the Muslim world by the west. In Feraoun's case, French imperialism is in the process of being forcibly ejected from the region following seven years of brutal war and well over a century of colonial oppression. Pax's situation differs in that the 2003 advance into Iraq by Coalition forces is intended to remove a geopolitically troubling regime that had failed to respond to international embargo and to reestablish western dominance in the oil

rich Middle East. These differences, however, do not manifest themselves so clearly at the experiential level. The rebel fighting in Algeria against a French paratrooper likely endured a situation that differed little from a *Fedayeen* fighter facing an American or British infantryman. Similarly, the plight of the Algerian villager whose field is ruined as it is used by a contingent of French tanks is not far removed from that of an Iraqi whose fields are the site of a battle between a group of *Fedayeen* and a squad of US troops. The political goals of the nations and organizations involved are lost at the level of the direct participant and the experience is decidedly limited to the individuals involved. Traditions, political allegiances, and religious arguments fade away when the fight is in progress. Pax and Feraoun, although not known to be combatants, experience the violence firsthand and in their journals, provide a record of that experience.

In retrospect, one is left with regret that despite great progress in many areas, geopolitical systems and actions have changed little over the past when it comes to the point of enacting the very utmost expressions of political will embodied in war. The journals of Feraoun and Pax, two highly educated and perceptive individuals who benefited from a European education, reveal that much of the damage that occurs during the conflict is in the secondary effects on noncombatants. Despite their relatively developed understanding of the large-scale objectives and politics involved, both Pax and Feraoun dedicate most of their journaling effort to describing the impact of the conflict on their own day-to-day well-being and how the conflict affects other individuals. Both identify certain feelings of shame or guilt in this process of documenting the history of the

fighting they witness and this is due in no small part to their inability to directly impact or improve the situation. For Feraoun and Pax, defining the problem is a far different thing than solving the problem and at a certain point, one must act.

The journals are most valuable in that in each case they provide one with an understanding of the experiences of one man in the midst of conflict. This fact alone warrants the recognition of both Feraoun and Pax for their action which in both examples caused a vastly more effective and far reaching impact than had either instead fired a shot from a rifle or the bombed a convoy. Moreover, the potency of the lessons to be learned from their accounts grows over time with every reader whereas the effects of the attack are often as swift and fleeting as the attacks themselves and tend to dissipate with time. The objectivity of the two writers is also noteworthy. Both Pax and Feraoun assess both sides in the conflict with a fair degree, given their predicaments, of impartiality. In fact, both are shown on occasion to demonstrate as much frustration with their countrymen rebels as with the invaders. In this, one is witness to the account of the individual, largely devoid of politics and nationalism, and therefore very effective in the transmission of accurate information regarding the violence and outcome which is ultimately the source of most every colonial and postcolonial example.

CHAPTER SEVEN

CONCLUSION: A LEGACY OF IMPERIALISM

But let those who fall into transports of righteous indignation at the tale of burnings and confiscations which caused the death of an uncounted number of Algerian women and children from starvation, and the merciless shooting down of native rebel troops always remember the dealings of the early American colonists with the Red Indians, which are certainly no basis on which to criticize French methods in North Africa. (Nickerson 100)

The literary, historical, and geopolitical record detailing the experience of the Maghreb with French imperialism provides one with an expansive opportunity to assess the outcome of the West in a Muslim land. Whether one is reading the journals of Pax or Feraoun, studying the role of traditional governments as they attempt to modernize, or analyzing the outcome of brutal insurgency during which torture and rape were endorsed by all sides involved, the failure of colonialism is as apparent as it is historically commonplace. Albert Memmi dedicates considerable energy to describing the essential relationship between the dominant and the oppressed and concludes that in order to transcend this oppression, a new means of assessment is required. This study approached two key friction points, one focused on the woman and one on the man, which arose when the French established themselves in the Maghreb and miscalculated the outcome of colonialism. The motivation for this approach was to employ several

types of texts to attain a working understanding of the issues involved and conclude with a comprehension of the failed pretexts of the French. Simply put, the goal of the study was to approach the failure of the French from multiple angles in order to properly apply it, if this was indeed possible, to ongoing and future instances of geopolitical dominance and oppression. The success of this study resides in the abilities of the writers to relay their experience in a way that allows one to draw conclusions. Specifically, almost every writer, whether a fiction novelist, political scientist, poet, anthropologist, or feminist scholar arrived in some fashion at a similar conclusion: the impact of the French on the manhood of the Maghreb and the disturbance of traditional womanhood had an effect as adverse as that of the rifles, tanks, and water hoses.

The result of French imperialism in the Maghreb was the creation of a region, particularly Algeria, which today continues a struggle to ascertain its own male and female identity. Factors in this identity crisis can be observed in most any geopolitical or literary text dealing with the region from the 1950's to the present day. Any benefits resulting from the *pied noir* influence and well over 100 years of imposed French tradition were irreparably warped in the mass departure that followed the war in Algeria and the following European retreat from the region. In short, any semblance of balance in the Maghreb was thrown awry in the coming and going of the French empire. The concept of *Eurafrique* and the need to maintain French imperial posterity in the mid-20th century cost the Maghreb the loss of well over one million lives and the soundness of a regional identity. Tunisia, Morocco, and Algeria continue to wend their way toward a balance

between integration into the modern world and adherence to tradition with some success and failure. These combined factors lead one to the essential questions of national imperative, war-making, and imperialism in any form. Furthermore, it begs the question whether or not there can be any sense of risk and the acceptable cost regarding failed imperial goals. Ultimately, the French empire declined rapidly following its failure in the Maghreb and it is today merely one among many European nations that can nostalgically discuss and applaud its historic greatness while lamenting the loss of quantifiable international influence and power.

A core challenge posed in this study was the integration of literature, cultural studies, and geopolitical analysis. In order to grasp the scope of the colonial and postcolonial Maghreb, one must attain at least a general familiarity with the Third through Fifth *Républiques française*, the 1954-1962 French Algerian War, the history and geopolitical development of the three Magrebian nations, the cultural norms and traditions of the Maghreb, as well as related studies in religion, anthropology, and women's studies as they pertain to the Muslim world. Once this general grasp has been achieved, then the literature adopts a new meaning. The experiences of a raped Algerian rebel, a Tunisian-Jew of Italian descent who finds himself fighting for the French against the Germans, a Kabyle Berber schoolteacher, to name a few, become notably more comprehensible and relevant. This approach, which is naturally interdisciplinary and lacking in specialization, nonetheless attempts to provide specific lessons that can be compared to ongoing incursions of the West into the Muslim world.

The goal, therefore, is to initiate a method of approaching a geopolitical quandary or challenge that involves the study of multiple aspects of the human record whether historical, literary, and political in nature. The advantages of this approach, which are further compounded by integrating multiple sides involved in tension, disagreement, and/or conflict, reside in the fact that one is gaining knowledge from a variety of sources and is not limited to a particular way of thinking or other narrow focus.

The failure of the French in the Maghreb is of concern because of its relevance when viewed in light of the ongoing conflict in Iraq and Afghanistan. The French failed to acknowledge certain truths of the Maghreb, particularly in their assessment of the men, women, and traditions of the region and their reaction to imperial dominance. In the displacement of traditions, roles, and structure of the family, and therefore much of the government, the men and women were left no alternative but to maintain a determined rebellion against French intent. This is a learning point that should be constantly assessed in light of ongoing and future geopolitical maneuver. History has shown that colonialism is essentially the relationship of dominator and oppressed and is not conclusive unless the dominant force is unrelenting and absolutely committed to maintaining superiority as in various historic cases involving the destruction and/or displacement of peoples such as the Native Americans, Tibetans, Burmese, the Muslims of the Indian Subcontinent, etc. The stated goals of the U.S. coalition in Iraq, chiefly democracy and freedom for the Iraqi people and the reassertion of dominance in order to enhance stability in the region differ significantly from the

French concept of *Eurafrique*. The French had established colonies, named Algeria as French soil and Tunisia and Morocco as French protectorates, and fully intended to establish a southern Mediterranean France in language, culture, and government. No such intent exists in Iraq or Afghanistan, the goal is simply to ensure stability from a perspective that is conducive to the continued success of U.S. policies. Moreover, the goals of the U.S. coalition cannot be easily classed as imperialism. However, certain basic similarities do exist: an armored patrol from a foreign nation moving through a neighborhood is sure to have a similar effect on households whether they be Muslims from the Maghreb in the 1950's or Sunni's from al Kut in Iraq in the current day: such a presence is undesirable and provokes multi-faceted rebellion that tends to grow over time rather than diminish. The presence of a foreign invader, regardless of the nobility of his intent, is almost immediately perceived negatively. Further this foreigner can readily be shown to have an emasculating effect on the indigenous men and a greatly disruptive influence on the role of the women as they are (in reality or merely in perception) brutalized or in some way adversely affected by the foreigner. The experiences of the French in the Maghreb demonstrate this in a multitude of forms and, it is hoped, in the study of these experiences, one might be a component in the avoidance of such a predictable failure as that of the French.

The measure of an empire would seem to have been justified in history by a standard of duration and magnitude of dominance. Thus the Roman, Byzantine, French, and British Empires are well known throughout the world and

studied to this day. However, this pattern of dominance seems to have altogether dissipated or at least become more nebulous in the advent of globalization. The rapid spread of international information very nearly transcends all remaining boundaries of language, culture, and financial status. In the passing of technology and time, it is sensible to conclude that most every informational barrier will have disappeared. It is logical to contemplate that those who can rapidly assimilate and assess information, and in doing so, avoid the mistakes of history, will maintain a tight grip on the duration and magnitude of their manner of existence.

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