

Decolonizing the Discourse of Coloniability from the Algerian Intellectual Mind: Coping with Algeria Pre-colonial Past

Décoloniser le discours de coloniabilité de l'esprit intellectuel algérien : Faire face au passé précolonial de l'Algérie

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Abstract

Post colonial theorists (Frantz Fanon, 1952, 1963; Edward Said, 1978; Homi Bhabha, 1994, among others) observed that despite the ceremonial departure of the colonizers, some independent states still adhere themselves to the colonial discourse, which tend to persuade them about its superiority over them and their inferiority in everything, and thus their inability to manage their lives without their colonizer. Like many postcolonial states, in Algeria, this form of adherence can be seen today through many aspects of life, in which dismissing the own local language and culture as backward, due to the internalization of the colonial ideology, and preferring everything that is Western are a subject of this psychological complex. In explaining such phenomenon, concepts like mimicry, imitation, and otherness popularized by Frantz Fanon, Homi Bhabha and others are widely used. However, the important point to be discussed here is that if 'the way the colonizer constitutes knowledge about the colonized' has been termed as 'colonialism discourse' because it was achieved through 'military and institutional powers', what proper term can be used for 'the adoption of colonial discourse in the identification of the self'? Reducing the problem to imitation or mimicry has become irrelevant. An alternative term need to be articulated. I use the term "Discourse of Colonisability" to refer to the acceptance and application of the old colonial discourse on the self-presentation, which used to be useful in

time of colonialism and has become useful for today's imperial powers. Therefore, this paper attempts to discuss the issue of colonisability and definitions of the self that emerged in Algeria after the departure of the French colonialism. In this paper, we argue that this self-presentation discourse has to do with the French colonial policies in Algeria and has to do with the lack of knowledge about Algeria's pre-colonial cultural and intellectual past that had been deliberately destroyed and wore off from the Algerians' memory after the French arrival. To diagnose the issue, this research used an inductive and analytical approach by relying on collecting some historical and philosophical documents that dealt with subject and related them to the context being treated.

Key Words: Algeria, French Colonialism, Colonial Discourse, Coloniability, Decolonization

Résumé

Les théoriciens post coloniaux (Frantz Fanon, 1952, 1963; Edward Said, 1978; Homi Bhabha, 1994, entre autres) ont observé que malgré le départ cérémoniel des colonisateurs, certains États indépendants adhèrent toujours au discours colonial, qui tendent à les convaincre de sa supériorité sur eux et de leur infériorité en tout, et donc de leur incapacité à gérer leur vie sans leur colonisateur. Comme de nombreux États postcoloniaux, en Algérie, cette forme d'adhésion se manifeste aujourd'hui à travers de nombreux aspects de la vie, dans laquelle le rejet de la langue et de la culture locales comme arriérées, en raison de l'intériorisation de l'idéologie coloniale, et préférer tout ce qui est occidental sont un sujet de ce complexe psychologique. Pour expliquer ce phénomène, des concepts comme le mimétisme, l'imitation et l'altérité popularisés par Frantz Fanon, Homi Bhabha et d'autres sont largement utilisés. Cependant, le point important à discuter ici est que si « la façon dont le colonisateur constitue la connaissance des colonisés » a été qualifiée de « discours colonialiste » parce qu'elle a été réalisée par des « pouvoirs militaires et institutionnels », quel terme approprié peut-on employer pour « l'adoption du discours colonial dans l'identification du soi »? La réduction du problème à l'imitation ou au mimétisme n'est plus pertinente. Il faut formuler un autre terme. J'utilise le terme « Discours de colonisation » pour parler de l'acceptation et de l'application de l'ancien discours colonial sur l'auto présentation, qui était utile à l'époque du colonialisme et est devenu utile aux puissances impériales d'aujourd'hui. Par conséquent, ce document tente de discuter de la question de la

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colonisation et des définitions de soi qui sont apparues en Algérie après le départ du colonialisme français. Dans le présent article, nous soutenons que ce discours d'auto-déclaration a à voir avec la politique coloniale française en Algérie et avec le manque de connaissances sur la situation le passé culturel et intellectuel colonial qui avait été délibérément détruit et effacé de la mémoire des Algériens après l'arrivée des Français. Pour diagnostiquer la question, cette recherche a utilisé une approche inductive et analytique en s'appuyant sur la collecte de certains documents historiques et philosophiques qui traitent du sujet et les relient au contexte traité.

Mots clés : Algérie, colonialisme français, discours colonial, colonisation, décolonisation

Introduction

As it is known, colonialism was not only occupation of people' land and control of theirs material, but also an attempt of controlling the soul and the mind. With the passage of time, the colonizer attempted to transform everything surrounding the colonized people by wearing off any pre-existing reference or sign to their previous rich tradition of culture, language administration, education, agriculture, literature, art, etc.). Then, in order to maintain their power over the colonized, the colonizer constituted knowledge about them.

Within a system of knowledge and belief, according to Frantz Fanon, 1952, 1963; Edward Said, 1978; Homi Bhabha, 1994, etc., the colonized people were described a nothing except those negatives that describe them, 'the Other'; Viz., inferior, uncivilized, underdeveloped, immorality, blackness, etc., which came to contrast the positive things the colonizer embodies; Viz., modernity, civilization, advancement, technology, literature, morality, values, etc. Accordingly, in lieu of such description, the Algerian people, for instance, became nothing than objects, things, and who had no purposes except those negative things the French colonizer prescribed for them. ,i.e., uncivilized, slackers, evil, primitive, and all the negative traits.

In order to enforce that constitution of knowledge and make it official, the colonizer intervened to create for the oppressed a new model of life,

thought, values, beliefs, ideas, assumptions, and etc, and as the time passed by the individuals of the colonized land begun to gradually accept the borders drawn for them by their oppressor - thinking within such borders, and drawing their personality according to them.

However, the underlying problem, as observed by Frantz Fanon, 1952, 1963; Edward Said, 1978; Homi Bhabha, 1994, is that despite the ceremonial departure of the colonizers, some independent states still keep thinking within the borders drawn for them by their oppressors - dismissing their own language and culture as backward due to the internalization of the colonial ideology.

Simply put, due to mistrust and discontent that affect the postcolonial person, this form of adherence is seen today through various aspects in some independent states' daily life. For instance, the language, customs, clothes, education and the like are a subject of this psychological complex that makes Muslims, in general, and the Algerians, in particular, prefer everything that is Western over all that is local. Suffice to remind about the moments it is heard that there is no hope in the Arabs, and that migration to the Western countries is the solution!

What is more, this inferiority complex extends beyond the public social comparison to reach the intellectual and educational dependency, by which importing ready made western thoughts and educational programmes and applying them in our settings is seen as a magic solution to all our-ill social and economic problems and be the miracle of salvation that can throw us into the vast seas of modernity without even stubbornness or diligence in building the foundations of that modernity. In Algeria, for instance, in every ongoing process of educational reform there is a struggle regarding the second language. For ideological or other reasons, some defend the French language as a better as a language of scientific instructions; whereas, others favor the replacement of French with English for the same reason. However, in the midst of this continuous struggle, the Arabic language is perceived as a backward and wrong to be a language of scientific instructions and thus for Algeria's interests.

Within this self-presentation, it seems that, as Fanon (1963) observed more than a half century ago, the average Algerians still assimilate themselves

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to the realm of the old colonial discourse, which used to be useful for France in time of colonization.

In explaining such phenomenon, concepts like mimicry, imitation, and self presentation popularized are widely used. However, the important point to be discussed here is that if 'the way the colonizer constitutes knowledge about the colonized' has been termed as 'colonialism discourse' because it was achieved through 'military and institutional powers', what proper term can be used for 'the adoption of colonial discourse in the identification of the self'? Reducing the problem to imitation or mimicry has become irrelevant. An alternative term need to be articulated. In this paper, I use 'Discourse of Colonisability'¹, which will be elaborated hereinafter, to define the way the postcolonial individuals kept discoursing themselves in a way that have continuously begun to resemble the colonial discourse, which was achieved through military and institutional powers.

Finally, it should be noted that by examining previous studies on the issue of inferiority complex and imitation, the researcher intends to know if the current research can either be complementary, clarifying or renewing. Thus, our research aims at adding contribution to the topic.

The Significance of the Study

The early Algerian, before the arrival of the French colonialism, was keen on the independence of their cultural and intellectual personality. However, after the departure of the colonialism, Algeria, like many colonized countries, has begun to show instances of dependency in various aspects of life, i.e., political, economic, educational, cultural, etc. That is, imitating the western principles and ideas and applying them to the local context has become a subject to a psychological complex.

Therefore, this issue imitating the western principles and ideas and attempting to apply them on the Algerians provokes every jealous person

¹ The term 'colonisabilité' was first used by the Algerian scholar Malek Bennabi in his book 'les conditions de la Renaissance, 1949' to refer to people who have the ability to be colonized due to their internal and psychological acceptance of inferiority.

to look for a way out of this painful reality, so that the Algerian personality returns to its roots and independence.

Objectives of the Study

The aim of this study is to achieve the following three major objectives:

- 1) To highlight the concept of the colonial discourse and how it was used to achieve the colonial purpose
- 2) To discuss the reasons behind such colonisability and definitions of the self that emerged in Algeria after the departure of the French colonialism.
- 3) Demonstrate the independency of the Algerian personality before the arrival of the French colonialism

The Research Problem

The major problematic question that guides the current research is "How was this psychological "complex» formed among the postcolonial individuals in general and the Algerians in particular, and how can be battled?"

In an attempt to understand the phenomenon being examined, the following three questions were formulated:

1. How did the French colonial discourse portray the Algerians?
2. Referring to research evidence, what is the relationship between the colonial discourse and the problem of colonisability and inferiority?
3. How can the Algerian people get liberated from their state of colonisability and inferiority complex and gain their self esteem?

Study Hypotheses

Because we argue that this colonisability discourse has to do with the French colonial policies in Algeria and with the lack of knowing enough about the culture of Algeria's pre-colonial past that had been deliberately attempted by the French colonialism to be erased from the Algerians mind, it has been hypothesized that:

- 1) The French colonial discourse depicted a method for the indigenous, in which their personalities were regarded inferior.
- 2) The phenomenon of colonisability is a kind of inferiority complex that resulted from the internalization of the colonial ideology that was based on the fixed ideological construction of the indigenous inferiority versus the western superiority.

The Research Methodology

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To provide a comprehensive understanding to the problem being treated, the research follows an inductive and analytical approach, relying on collecting some historical and philosophical texts that dealt with the subject of imitation and inferiority complex (Frantz Fanon, Edward Said, Homi Bhabha among others), identifying them and then trying to relate them to the context being examined. The research relies also on some local historical documents (Aoudjit, 2010; Ammar Hella, 2016; Abou-El- Kacem Saadallah, 1991, and others) that examined the history of Algeria before and during the French colonialism. Gathering data from historical and philosophical texts, allows social scientists to analyze events and data within a specific context and move beyond the observable to explore inherent meanings.

The Limitations of the Study

It should be noted that dealing with the issue of dependency, imitation and inferiority complex is a very broad topic that embraces many historical, social and psychological philosophies. Therefore, the researcher has confined himself to highlight the issue from a postcolonial perspective.

The Analysis

In order for things to be made explicit, it should be noted that each section below attempts to answer one of the hypothesis. Therefore, the paper begins with providing an overview about the notion of discourse of colonialism, which explains the first hypothesis. The second hypothesis is answered through providing an overview of the concept of discourse of colonisability, and finally the third section, which deals for the decolonization and Algeria's pre-colonial educational and cultural past, attempts to answer the third hypothesis.

Discourse of Colonialism: Maintaining Power and Control through Discourse of Civilization Mission

Talking about the implication of colonialism discourse is useless without having a basic knowledge about the term discourse and its relation with power that brought about by Michele Foucault.

In his definition to discourse, Foucault (1972) views that discourse is more than saying and producing meaning. Instead, discourse is *'Ways of constituting knowledge, together with the social practices, forms of subjectivity and power relations which inhere in such knowledge and relations between them'*

(quoted in Weedon, 1987: 108). What is confirmed by Foucault here is that discourse fuses power and knowledge. In other words, as Foucault views, our knowledge and perception about things is instructionally guided by those who possess power (i.e., political, educational, cultural institutions), which makes them to have an exclusive control of what is true and what is not and thus to have power over those who do not. As Foucault (1977: 27) states:

“Knowledge linked to power, not only assumes the authority of ‘the truth’ but has the power to make itself true. All knowledge, once applied in the real world, has effects, and in that sense at least, ‘becomes true.’ Knowledge, once used to regulate the conduct of others, entails constraint, regulation and the disciplining of practice. Thus, ‘there is no power relation without the correlative constitution of a field of knowledge, nor any knowledge that does not presuppose and constitute at the same time, power relations”

In this vein, as Foucault suggests, knowledge does not operate in vacuum. It is rather brought into effect through certain powerful institutional regimes, education, sciences, technologies and strategies of application, which defines what can be intelligibly thought and said about the world and what cannot.

Thus, drawing on Michel Foucault's theory, studies examined the colonialism discourse (Frantz Fanon, 1952, 1963; Edward Said, 1978; HomiBhabha, 1994, etc.) confirmed that the way the colonizer maintained power over the colonized was basically based on the way they constituted knowledge about them. Within a system of knowledge and belief, the colonized people were described a nothing except those negatives that describe them, ‘the Other’; Viz., inferior, uncivilized, underdeveloped, immorality, blackness, etc., which came to contrast the positive things the colonizer embodies; Viz., modernity, civilization, advancement, technology, literature, morality, values, etc.

To be more illustrative, getting a useful insight on how colonialism domination associated with such kind of discourse can be better

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understood through Edward Said's work 'Orientalism' (1978)². Drawing on Foucault's knowledge and power, Edward Said (1978) understands that discourse is that way of constituting knowledge about the colonized 'the Orient/the Other', and it is that way of maintain power over it. Said's main arguments lays more stress on how colonialism occupation of the Orient (the East) was fundamentally associated on how the people of the East were conceptualized, researched, viewed and talked about in Europe. In other words, the militarily and economic conquest of the Orient was associated with the 'discourse' that described them³. In this description, a conceptual thought about the Orient (the East) has become contrasted with the Occident (West), which is an "*ineradicable distinction between Western superiority and Oriental inferiority*" (Said, 1978: 42). For example, according to Said, the Occident created a fixed image (discourse) about the Orient (others) as an unusual strange place, primitive, lazy people, the murderous Arab, less seriousness and lack of moral ethics, etc., and then they (the west) present this image as scientific truth.

In providing some examples, Said (1978) found that such kind of discourse occurred in regular conversation - drawing on written and spoken historical discourses by some Western historical and political figures like Napoleon, Arthur James Balfour, Henry Kissinger and other literary figures like Chaucer, Shakespeare, Victor Hugo, T.S Eliot, Joseph Conrad, and others. For him, they all intentionally created a tangible split between the East and the West by enforcing the image of the "East" as being weaker, less civilized, undesirable, underdeveloped, inscrutable, wicked - both "other" and "inferior'. Within this constructive view, The 'West' and 'Other' became two sides of the same coin.

Thus, according to Said (1978), based on such ethnocentric beliefs that their morals and values were superior, the western colonizers deliberately and intensively created a concept 'Otherness' to maintain their military, political, economic and linguistic dominance over the indigenous.

² Said defines Orientalism as discourse about the Orient associated with the militarily and economic domination of the Orient by Europe. His book has become also associated with postcolonialism theory of literature.

³ It is this discourse about the orient that said refers to as 'Orientalism'.

Therefore, during the heading of European colonialism, according to Said (1978), such discourse, which uses a binary (civilized versus inferior), enjoyed special relevance, and it mutated itself as an 'academic discipline'. That is to say, there is an inherited connection between the military conquests of the orient and the emergence of the orientalism as an academic discipline, as object as '*something one judges (as in a court of law), something one studies and depicts (as in curriculum), something one disciplines (as in a school or prison), something one illustrates (as in a zoological manual*' (Said, 1978: 40).

Along the same thought, Bhabha (1994) argues that colonists were informed by a series of assumptions which planned to justify their view of other lands and cultures. Thereafter, this discourse, which depends '*on the concept of 'fixity' in the ideological construction of other-nesses*' (Bhabha, 1994: 18), became politically useful when imperialists countries such as France, England, and other Europeans ones colonized the Eastern countries like Algeria, Egypt, India, and others African and Asian countries.

Accordingly, in lieu of such description, the Algerian people became nothing than objects, things, and who had no purposes except those negative things the French colonizer prescribed for them, and accordingly, it is misleading to associate French colonization to Algeria with that ostensible silly excuse of the 'Fly Whisk Incident' of 29 April 1827 between the Dey of Algiers and a one of the French king Charles X's diplomatic representative. Due to the many attempts had been made by the French⁴ to colonize Algeria, their colonization, beside the imperial agendas of course, was based on how we were conceptualized and viewed by them - home of the 'other': Savage, les Arabs, inferior, dirty, etc.

Thus, Lorcin (1999) confirms this by stating that the military administration of Algeria had begun years before the French colonization took place. According to Lahouari (1996), Algeria, for the French, was far-flung alien colony, nurtured by stories, scientific expeditions, reports, and travel, describing it as '*either a hostile country, enemy populations, an inhuman climate and geography, or else a quaint Version of indigenous daily life, elements of fantasy, camels, the desert*' (Lahouari, 1996:2). Later, when the French

⁴ For instance, based on the order of the king Louis XIV, Abraham Duquesne attack to Algiers between 1682 and 1683, and Jean II d'Estrées attack between 1685 to 1688

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military occupation was achieved, this form of discourse continued to be used was used to oppress the Algerian people and to create another identity to them by imposing a series of social and educational policies. The Algerian personality was defined negatively by those in a position of power- violated, imprisoned, humiliated.

What can be noted here is that the power of description, of naming, cannot to be underestimated. As Foucault indicates power is central in discourse when presenting an idea (how the Algerian was conceptualized and viewed was a fundamental tool of the French control).

In short, the colonial presence is greatly implicated through the idea that the West - as a civilized project - has to save the nations that are uncivilized by helping them rise to the level of the modernity in its public manifestations. This is how the French claimed that they came to spread civilization and urbanization among the backward Algerians (Hallouch, 1999)⁵. Also, one has to remember that terms like the 'Third World' and the 'Underdeveloped World' are still largely used to mark a division between the 'West' and the 'Rest'.

The Colonisability Discourse: Presentation of the Self from the Eye of the Colonizer

Coloniability (*colonisabilité*) is a term used by the Algerian scholar Malek Bennabi in his book 'Les Conditions de la Renaissance, 1949'. Bennabi (1949) identifies two coefficients that define the colonized person: an external factor and an internal factor.

The "external factor" is the colonial factor which refers to the colonial policies imposed on the indigenous by creating a specific model of life, thought and movement. When the creation of this model is completed, the "internal factor" appears from the inside of the indigenous individuals. This internal factor is the factor that makes the individuals of the colonized land internalize the concepts of the colonizer about them and accept the borders, which the colonialist drew for their personalities, and more than that, they may become defending it and fighting against its removal. Therefore, Bennabi views that that 'colonisability' emerges from the internal factor's response to the colonial factor. In other words,

⁵ عبد القادر حلوش، 1999، ص6

colonisability refers to a deep internal submission to the factor of colonialism that consolidates colonialism and makes it difficult to get rid of it due to the colonial mental effect that conquered the colonized mind.

In this vein, the "colonisability discourse" is used here to refer to the adoption of the colonial discourse in the self-presentation, and how we continue conceptualize and constitute knowledge about ourselves, which is inherently stems from the colonial desire to make the indigenous people dependent and, worst, to always believe the worst about themselves: to make them identify themselves with what the colonizer seeds within themselves.

When we think in term of Foucault's discourse/power relationship, it might be said that the problem of colonisability is no more than a behavior because it lacks power and it is not officially institutionalized. However, it can be viewed as quite the same as any institutional discourse as it continues to be publically circulated as truth without institutional serious efforts to decolonize it from public imagination and academia.

What is worst within this discourse is that it gives the colonial discourse legitimacy and, even worst, producing stronger effects. While the colonial discourse has to be supported by military power to maintain the wanted political and economic benefits, the colonisability discourse has become more useful for the colonizer as it reduces the cost of military interventions and thus raising their economic gains. Within this, the colonizer presence remains ambivalent, split between its physical appearance as authoritative and its postcolonial attachment. Thus, this colonisability discourse has become like a legitimate colonial baby that the colonized should take care of, and a colonial foot print that guides their path.

Perhaps, Frantz Fanon, black man born in the French colony of Martinique and working in Algeria, provides invaluable scientific insight into the intricacies of the relationship between the colonized and the colonizer during and after the colonialism. Fanon's study of sociology and psychology makes him to conclude that the colonized people continue their condition by striving to imitate the culture of their oppressors. Did the French colonialism end with the "handing back" of a country?, Fanon (1952, 1963) wonders. Drawing primarily on discourse of colonialism produced during French rule over Algeria and Martinique, Caribbean, Fanon delves into the contentious dichotomies of colonizer/colonized,

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civilized/primitive. The upmost most important area of his study was the dichotomous definitions of self that emerged after the departure of French colonialism.

Through his book *Wretch of the Earth*⁶, which criticized the French basic interpretations of psychosomatic illnesses the Algerian people endure, Fanon (1963) used psychiatry to scrutinize how the French colonization and its butchery over the Algerians people had mentally affected the Algerians' self-identity and mental health. Among the characteristics that allegedly attributed to the Algerian people by the French colonialism was their violent and criminality. The Algerians were born violent a criminal, as affirmed by the French colonialism, '*they were born slackers, born liars, born robbers, and born criminals*' (ibid, 295). Later, according to Fanon (1963), this was elaborated as a scientific truth to suggest that the Algerian people were primitive because of their mental illness and brutal behaviors. This French alienation seriously backfired the Algerians.

Yet, this is only where Fanon analysis begins; as he moves deeply through this discourse, Fanon unmasks the effect of such discourse despite the dismemberment of the French colonialism. For instance, in terms of the colonized responses to the colonial identification, ironically, as Fanon observed, the Algerian medical students who received this education in France came also to hold the same French colonial discourse after the independence. He remarked that average Algerians have become to perceive and then openly allowing this French colonial discourse to define them- dismissing their own culture as backward - which is due to the internalization of French colonial ideology, which results in a destabilizing existential conflict within the colonized culture.

Because it is a systematized negation of the other, a frenzied determination to deny the other any attribute of humanity, colonialism forces the colonized to constantly ask the question: "Who am I in reality?" (ibid: 182).

⁶ In *The Wretched of the Earth* (French: *Les Damnés de la Terre*), published in 1961, Fanon used psychiatry to analyze how French colonization and the carnage of the Algerian War had mentally affected Algerians' self-identity and mental health.

Admittedly, a question like 'who we are', though used sarcastically, can be interpreted as a reflection to the issue of the Algerians' identity in its current state. This does not come from nowhere, as we know. This has brought the mechanism of the French colonialism which drastically affected the Algerian culture and society by its 130 years of military, linguistic and cultural imperialism. Profoundly, the Algerians had to face a series of cultural problems relating to their national identity- caught between two opposites: their loyalty to their tradition and their attractiveness to the western modernism. Concomitantly, within this internal conflict, Fanon (1952: 21) observed that the oppressed have become "*forever in combat with his own image.*"

Undeniably, one cannot also dismiss the fact that some Algerians people oftentimes accommodate themselves to such French colonial allegation. In our society, we often hear that there is no hope with the Algerians, they are useless, and etc.in contrast to the west as 'superior, civilized, polite, etc.), making them prefer any western product over the local one. Culturally speaking, one may also notice the way some Algerian people tend to view their language and culture as a backward and preferring any thing that is western (festivals, clothes, for instance).

In his analysis of such phenomenon, Fanon (1952) comments, the colonized are kept under the influence and direction of their colonizer, and it seems that colonized people can never free themselves from their acceptance of the colonizer's view towards them as being inferior, adding that the more they identify with Western values, the more they reject their owns.

Admittedly, sometimes, such kind of self presentation is used discontently as a reaction to some social and economic problems, but it does not dismiss the idea of the West superiority vis-a-vis the East inferiority. Besides, blaming the self for misfortune is only a place that reinforces the view of the colonial prejudice towards our identity. For this, Chomsky (udt) reminds⁷instead of trying to make change, '*the individual auto-desvalida and guilt, which creates a depression, one of whose effects is to inhibit its action. And, without action, there is no revolution!*'

⁷Noam Chomsky, "10 strategies of manipulation" by the media. <http://noam-chomsky.tumblr.com/post/13867896307/noam-chomsky-10-strategies-of-manipulation-by>

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Another phenomenon related to definition of the self is the perception of the local language vis-a-vis the colonial one⁸. As Ngũgĩ (1986: 4) argues “*The choice of language and the use of language is (also) central to a people's definition of themselves in relation to the entire universe*”. For instance, in his ‘Black Skin, White Mask’, working through a series of examples from his Caribbean, Martinique, Fanon (1952) unmasks how some, who have become using the French language not only tried to adopt the culture of the colonizer, but also started building a systematic reject to their own. In lieu of his observation, Fanon (1952) averts that those who were enjoying speaking the French language were nearly like rejecting their collective consciousness which is an identification of blackness with evil. Hence, in order to keep away from any connection with blackness (evil), the black attempts to wear a white mask, by speaking the French, thinking of themselves as a universal people. That is, as Fanon remarks, his black people strive to speak the colonial tongue not because they are able to speak it, but because it shows prestige and superiority. Ngũgĩ (1986) attribute such inferiority to the colonial mental effect that conquered the colonized mind.

Actually, the issue of the oppressed pursuit for emulating their oppressor had been discussed early before Fanon in the writing, for instance, Du Bois (1903). Du Bois used the term ‘double consciousness’ to describe the internal conflict experienced by the African Americans⁹ and their attempt to imitate the white people. In his words, (1903 [1965], p. 215),

After the Egyptian and Indian, the Greek and Roman, the Teuton and Mongolian, the Negro is a sort of seventh son, born with a veil, and gifted with second-sight in this American world – a world which yields him no true self-consciousness, but only lets him see himself through the revelation of the otherworld. It is a particular sensation, this double consciousness, this sense of always looking at one's self through the eyes of others, of measuring one's soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity. One ever feels his twoness – an American, a Negro; two souls, two thoughts, two

⁸ Herein we do not mean to generalize

⁹ Du Bois used the term Negro instead.

*unreconciled strivings; two war-ring ideals in one dark body,
whose dogged strength alone keeps it from being torn asunder.*

Du Bois, here, want to explain that African Americans were forced to view themselves from the eye of the other.

Another useful discussion thereupon is from the post-colonialism theorist, Homi Bhabha. In his book 'the Location of Culture', Bhabha (1994) coined with the term 'mimicry' to talk about the Indians' attempt to imitate the British. For him (85-86), mimicry is "one of the most elusive and effective strategies of colonial power and knowledge", which appears as the result of the colonial need to transform the colonized as 'a subject of a difference that is almost the same, but not quite.' In the light of this presentation, the colonized people are supposed to internalize the colonizer discourse, while however still remaining an 'Other'. Subsequently, mimicry presents a split in the identity of the colonized, allowing for being who are a hybrid of their own cultural identity and their colonizers' cultural identity.

Now, if we scrutinize what hitherto discussed, discourse of colonialism cannot be reduced merely to the way the colonized produced knowledge that defined the colonized- being other, but it is also its continuous post-effects. In this sense, what has been raised by Fanon, Du Bois, and Bhabha is not a matter of imitation and mimicry. Rather, I view, it is an established discourse per se. drawing on the colonial discourse post effects, it has become then a 'colonisability discourse'. When thinking in term of discourse and power relationship, it is true that discourse is not a discourse unless it is institutionalized (i.e.; politically, academically, scientifically, etc.). Yet, when we look at the general goal of any discourse, it is the same. As a means for an end, the goal behind any colonial or totalitarian discourse is to be publically circulated as true knowledge. Based upon this, when the way of self-presentation, discussed above, continues to be publically circulating as a truth without institutional efforts to decolonize it from public imagination and academia, it can then be taken as a discourse rather than merely mimicry or imitation. It is only when we look at it from this angle, it can be decolonized. What nationalism then is, Fanon, Edward Said, Bhabha, and other post-colonial critiques, question, if it is not decolonization of the whole (the physical, psychological, mental, and spiritual aspects of colonization). Probably, this is what is meant by Malek Bennabi' *colonisability*', which means not physical readiness, but mental readiness.

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Decolonizing the Colonisability: Decolonizing Algeria Pre-Colonial Past

Unfortunately, it seems that the issue of colonisability and inferiority goes beyond the language and cultural aspects to reach the philosophical and historical ones.

Suffice to say that many Algerians know a little about their pre-French colonial past. This is simply, according to the French historian Robert Ageron (1964), because the French colonialism employed all the strategies to show the ambiguity of the history of the Algerian people, and the poverty and negativity of its civilizational contribution, in return, it showed its greatness as a European civilization, and the necessity of imitating it and working on its path.

As a result to the French colonial discourse which created serious doubt and uncertainty about our past, suffice to say that in the contemporary Algeria some local historical revolutionary figures, i.e., EL Amir Abdelkader, Ibn Badis, and others of our 1954 revolution figures have become a subject of historical judgments due to and sterile debates that add neither historical nor intellectual contributions to academia. Instead, it is only a place that maintains the French colonial distortion of our true philosophical, intellectual and cultural past.

One has to remember that when the colonial discourse creates statements about the colonized inferiority and culture permissivity, it manages to exclude any pre-existing reference or sign to their previous rich tradition of culture, administration, education, agriculture, literature, art, etc). Colonialism did not take over people lands only; instead it

“Transform everything surrounding it into an object of its domination. The earth, property, production, the creation of people, people themselves, time, everything is reduced to the status of objects at its disposal. ... [and we], the oppressed, as objects, as things, have no purposes except those their oppressor prescribes for them (Freire, 1996 [1970]: 58).

This means that to decolonize is not simply to re-take over control of our land. In order to decolonize, we need to retake, to reclaim, recover, re-establish, restore, and revitalize, with all the associated linguistic and semantic synonyms, our past, our names, our language, our culture, our

heritage, our family structure, our unity, our capacities, and who we once were as individuals and people.

Thus, we believe that decolonization of the discourse of colonisability should begin with knowing about our true past. The past that the French colonialism wanted us to see it as a distant land of non-achievement, which was, in reality, the opposite of what the discourse French colonialism produced.

Most accounts about the Algerian educational system before the French colonization of 1830, confirm the fact that Algeria back then had enjoyed sophisticated educational system. Education as well as culture were reputable in both Urban and Rural areas. According to local historical researches¹⁰ (Aoudjit, 2010; Ammar Hella, 2016; Abou-El-KacemSaadallah, 1991, and others), there were many schools (Medrasa) and Mosques, which played a major role in preserving the Algerian character and fighting illiteracy. For example, Ammar Hellal (2016) mentions that there were two schools in every village.

Recognizing the utility of education, Djabri, (1981: 24) states that *'relying on the Islamic revenues collected from the Algerian population, a quarter of [the] taxation went to primary education. It was estimated that 40% of the population have been awarded their qualification as literate from these Islamic institutions'*. From what it has been said, it appears that the Algerians were literate. In fact, before the French occupation, the illiteracy rate was only 5 % at the beginning of the French colonialism 1830s (Aoudjit, 2010; Ammar Hella, 2016; Abou-El-KacemSaadallah, 1991, and others). Evidence suggests that cities like Algiers, Constantine, Oran, Bejaia and Tlemcen had been a scientific radiation centers before the French occupation.

I might be seen speaking ideologically or in retrospectives vindictiveness when referring to local researches. In fact, many people from within the French colonists testified thereupon. For instance, the General Daumas reported that:

"The primary education was spread enough in the whole of the country, in a way which exceeded our imagination, and our relations with the local people in the three provinces

¹⁰ 1991 أبو القاسم سعد الله: تاريخ الجزائر الثقافي، الشركة الوطنية للنشر والتوزيع، الجزائر، -

(1830 - 1962)- عمار هلال، أبحاث ودراسات في تاريخ الجزائر المعاصرة، 2016، -

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(Constantine, Algiers, Oran) gave us evidence that the percentage of the males who have the knowledge of reading and writing - were at least equal to those in our countryside (Turin, 1971: 127, quoted in Djabri, 1981: 24).

This evidence was supported by the German explorer Moritz Wagner (1813-1887); in his description of the educational system in Algeria back then, Moritz Wagner points out that the Algerian parents send their children to school at the age of six to study Quran and learn arithmetic and science, and continue their studies with their local scientists and scholars, and then when they finish, they either go to Egypt or Tunisia to study *Arabic and Islamic* education, or to Europe to study medicine¹¹. In fact, according to the French historian Benjamin Stora (2001), the Algerian literacy rate was higher than the French. This evidence was also supported by the German voyager and botanist 'Wilhelm Schimper' (1804-1878) during his visit to Algeria in 1831. In his book '*ReisenachAlgier in den Jahren 1831 und 1832*' (*Travel to Algiers in the years 1831 and 1832*), Wilhelm Schimper' stated that the level of literacy in Algeria was far away higher than in Europe.¹²

It was obvious that the Algerians were not illiterate as some of the French invaders had thought, but such situation, of course, was unhelpful for the French colonizer. Thus, soon after their conquest of Algeria in 1830, the French colonial administration pursued a codified policy to achieve its colonial goals, by focusing on education as the most effective way to achieve its policy under the pretext of eliminating illiteracy and ignorance.

Therefore, to achieve its colonial goal and transform Algerian society into a French society and to attach it directly to France, the French administration closed and destroyed all the prosperous cultural centers that existed in that era, including closing thousand of primary, secondary and high schools, converting many mosques into churches (like "Ketchaoua" mosque), closing Quranic schools (Msids), Madrasas, Zaouias and everything had to do with education (Yvonne Terran, 2007: 135). It then fought the Arabic language by all means replacing it by the French language as the only official language of Algeria, under the 1838

¹¹ 1975 أبو العيد، دودو: الجزائر في مؤلفات الرحالة الألمان 1830-1855، الشركة الوطنية للنشر والتوزيع، الجزائر،

¹² Ibid

Chamtemps law (Benali, 2007). Then, the French colonialism imposed educational programs based on misleading details and information to confuse the Algerians' ideas and questioning their Arabism and Islam (Ferkous, 2002)¹³.

This means that the process of barbaric destruction of cultural and Islamic institutions and manuscripts was one of the French colonial plans to spread illiteracy and ignorance among the Algerian people, which appeared by the end of the century when illiteracy rate of the Algerians was nearly 95 %or thereabout.

Now, if we are to accept that language provides dependable paraphernalia for mental operations such as identification and conceptualization, it is rational then to say that when the French colonialism forced their native language onto our people, they were not only trying to strength their military power and national wealth, but more importantly to impose their own culture in order to wear off the colonized cultural heritage and identity. That is, the idea was not to change a language with another. It was rather to end the Algerian culture and thus break them from their past.

What is more, after the land and the identity was occupied, the French colonialism worked on promoting another discourse among the later younger generations that Algeria had reached the lowest levels of ignorance in the past centuries and nearly all the Algerian people were already illiterate before the French colonialism, as if Algeria had never have any organized education or an intellectual life, and so there were no scholars, writers, or poets among them. All this was to justify their educational policy and tyrannical ambitions, deluding the public opinion that it is the duty of high-end nations to save the poor inhabitants of Algeria from the scourge total ignorance, and obscenely backward from the ranks of civilized nations, in the name of truth and humanity.

In fact what has been outlined above is just a few from many examples, including administrative, economic, commerce culture, etc. That is why Fanon (1963 [2004]: 82) reminds us that *'We must remember in any case that colonized people is not just a dominated people'*. In Algeria, for him, it was not

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simply domination but the decision to occupy literary all what present the Algerians (dress of Haiks, the palm groves, the camels, and the like).

However, despite the historical truth that does not agree with that in anything and the reality refutes the French colonialism falsehoods, this colonial discourse has become, unfortunately, circulating as an absolute truth among many Algerian people who lack knowledge about their past. This suggests that the decolonization process begins with time travel to our past, which accepts no less than understanding it as a land of full-achievement, filtering it from the impurities and making connection with our heritage, as the late Algerian philosopher and thinker Abdullah Shureit (1981) suggests¹⁴. This means that we have to stand against those who call for a definite break with our past and heritage, especially those who return from abroad carrying the flags of enlightenment, modernity and rationality (ibid). For Abdullah Shureit (1981), it is so deceptive to borrow the European theories and apply it to our civilizational realities. Theoretically, for him, this will only drive us back towards the reproduction of Orientalist discourse, and methodological, it lacks creativity and creative dialectical thought.

Perhaps the great battle is the battle of decolonizing the mind, as Frantz Fanon, Homi Bhabha and Ngũgĩ assert. In the words of Frantz Fanon (1963 [2004]: 181) imperialism plants '*seeds of decay here and there that must be mercilessly rooted out from our land and from our minds*'. Thus, decolonizing our mind requires changing our way of thinking, freeing the self from the 'colonial mentality' that internalized in our attitude of cultural and language inferiority, which, unfortunately, still subsist. That is to say, we need to consider not only the physical aspects of colonization, but most importantly to consider the psychological, mental, and spiritual ones, which will provide a major prime for positive change (Ngũgĩ, 1986).

In short, what have been outlined above unravel one reality: the mechanism of the colonial discourse does only impact the physical lives, but many aspects of our lives in including the minds, need to be seriously liberated.

Conclusion

¹⁴ 1981) عبد الله شريط, معركة المفاهيم, الشركة الوطنية للنشر, (طبعة رقم

If we link the particular meaning decolonization to the Algerian context, then we are almost inevitably directed towards a certain date and that date is of course 05th of July 1962, the date in which we ceases to be a French colony becoming an independent nation-state. Now if we look at its linguistic and semantic meaning, it does not mean only to be not a subject of control by others, but also to not relying on someone or something else, and not looking to others for one's opinion or guidance, which means intellectual independence.

Therefore, in a world fueled by economic competitiveness, the need to closely examine the ways we identify ourselves will serve as a form of recovery from the dire consequences of the French colonialism. The need to decolonize the self-decolonizing discourse, we tend to use in identifying ourselves, has become a priority to reclaim, restore, and revitalize our culture. Decolonizing our self-colonizing discourse fits understanding how the French colonialism impacted our past and presents times. Importantly, however, is to avoid it impacting our future. These undertakings address in particular the decolonization of the mind, the past, the language, the culture, and the utmost importance is who we are as individuals and people.

We need always to recall what Frantz Fanon ((1963 [2004]: 181) reminds. Imperialism plants '*seeds of decay here and there that must be mercilessly rooted out from our land and from our minds*'. This has become truly necessary to free ourselves from that part of our being already con-taminated by such germs and remove it from our minds. For undoing such,we need to consciously consider not only the colonial physical aftermath, but importantly the psychological, mental, and spiritual aftermaths. Today, with all meanings colonization embodies, one should no more accept to be colonized even in intellectual terms. To surmount such negative vision, we must always picture ourselves positively.

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