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Assia Djebar's Fiction: Negotiating Independent Space and Identity of Women in Algeria

Abstract

Assia Djebar (1936-2015) is a pivotal female voice from the Algeria who explores the identity struggle of Algerian women. Through her writing she advocates women's rights and highlights the plight of the Algerian women battling the double burden of patriarchy and colonialism. She uses her writing as a tool to combat the social and patriarchal injustice meted out to women. Djebar in her writing addresses the issues affecting women such as restricted freedom, women's long-term silence and the suppression of identity. To free them from the stereotypical images of submission and passivity, Djebar challenges the oppressive mechanisms of patriarchy. Quest for identity is a central concern for her protagonists whose bodies and minds are imprisoned by walls and veils enforced by patriarchy.

Djebar's writing questions the entrenched gender inequality and patriarchal hegemony and exposes its manifestations. She examines the women from the perspective of 'herstory' of self-discovery and re-assertion of her identity. She struggles for the right of women, gives voice to their protest and in the process attempts to reclaim their identity. The female voice often submissive and silenced in the patriarchal society is placed at the centre in her narratives. She has contributed effectively to liberate the voices and gaze of Algerian women