

Symbols of Belonging In Mouloud Feraoun's *Le Fils Du Pauvre* (1950)

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Summary: The fiction of the Algerian writer Mouloud Feraoun has always drawn criticism for being a literature that is loyal to colonial aspirations. Our work; however, draws on Anthony Cohen's ideas illustrated in *The Symbolic Construction of Community* to reread Feraoun's *Le Fils Du Pauvre* (1950) from a new perspective. In other words, this paper is concerned with the ways Feraoun's discourse fosters empowering symbols of belonging that refute the erroneous stereotypes made by the colonizer against the Algerian people and that assert his Algerian identity and agency.

Keywords: Mouloud Feraoun; *Le Fils Du Pauvre*; Identity; Agency.

Résumé: la fiction de l'écrivain francophone Algérien Mouloud Feraoun a toujours été critiqué pour son caractère de littérature fidèle aux aspirations coloniales. Notre travail ; cependant s'appuie sur les idées d'Anthony Cohen illustrées dans la construction symbolique de la communauté pour relire *Le Fils Du Pauvre* de sous un nouvel angle. En d'autres termes, cet article s'intéresse à la manière dont le discours de Feraoun encourage des symboles d'appartenance qui réfutent les stéréotypes erronés créés par le colonisateur contre le peuple algérien et qui revendiquent son identité et son autorité.

Mots Clés: Mouloud Feraoun ; *Le Fils Du Pauvre* ; Identité.

Introduction:

The implementation of strategic and well structured colonial education in African countries had profound

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consequences for the ways in which African people, especially the educated elites, were to be established in post colonial period. Indeed, the supposedly philanthropic mission that the colonizer ascribed to himself ‘was based explicitly on racist premises’ (Phillipson, 1992: 44). For example, in endorsing wholeheartedly the policy of assimilation, the French advocated the superiority of French ideals, norms, and above all the French language (Irele & Jeyifo, 2010: 102). To attain this goal, the French schools strove to form passive educated people who would be submissive to the aspired goals of the colonizers.

As a consequence, the African authors who celebrated colonial education in their writings are viewed with outmost skepticism in postcolonial time, and are, often, excluded from the anti-colonial narrative. The problem lies in the conviction shared by many Algerian intellectuals that acceptance of colonial education cannot be equated with anti- colonial commitment. One prominent example of those authors is the Algerian writer Mouloud Feraoun whose early writings were dismissed by the nationalist critics and who was seen as Lynda Chouiten notes: ‘a “successful” product of colonial school’ (2010: 352).

It is true that colonial education had a strong hold over Feraoun’s literary imagination, but, this does not mean that he was by no means an agent. Even if Feraoun did not condemn colonialism and colonial education explicitly in his early writings, this does not mean that colonial education stripped him of his loyalty towards his community. In theorizing agency, Giddens contends that knowing the social rules is the key to transforming them because they are never fixed and they are movable (Tucker, 1998: 81). Giddens believes, as explained by Tucker, that ‘people are rule following and rule creating creatures who are knowledgeable about their actions’ (1998: 81). These ideas apply well on Feraoun who had been subject to colonial education. As a creative writer, he is an empowered agent because he managed to rethink the old traditional approaches and use new techniques to communicate with his readers. In talking about his society and decoding his culture in the French language, he gave voice to the

silenced people. Glyn argues: ‘the fact of speaking, of employing words, of using the words of others (even if it means returning them), words that the others understand and accept (and possibly, return from their side) – this is in itself a force’ (2010: 141).

Hence, we believe that Feraoun was an agent who was capable of answering back the colonizer’s discourse, and who could assert his cultural identity by subverting the stereotypical accusations made against the Algerian people. In fact, Feraoun was so much attached to his community to the extent that he resorted to representing symbolically that very community to emphasize his connection to it. This is shown in the way Feraoun in *Le Fils Du Pauvre* transforms the boundaries that define his community into symbols of belonging that celebrate his cultural identity and foster his agency. In this article we shall examine Feraoun’s use of symbolism as a medium for the affirmation of his identity and belonging. In so doing, we intend to revise the criticism which stresses his alienation from his community and negate his agency.

Theoretical Framework:

In *Le Fils Du Pauvre*, Mouloud Feraoun uses symbols of belonging to maintain his attachment to his country and reinforce his belonging to the Kabyle community. One of the prominent books written on the significance of symbolism in asserting one’s sense of identity is *The symbolic Construction of community* (2013) by Anthony Cohen. The latter defines community as the ‘entity where [...] one learns and continues to practice how to ‘be social’ [...] it is where one acquires ‘culture’ (15). Therefore one’s agency is tied to one’s reactions and practices vis à vis his/her culture. In other words, defending or denying one’s culture determines to a great extent the acculturation or the loyalty of an individual to his/her community.

Andrew Mason writes that ‘community in the ordinary sense is constituted by a group of people who share a wide range of values, participate in a comprehensive way of life, and strongly identify with the group, so much so that their identities might be partially constituted by their group membership’ (quoted in Snow

1996: xii). Community has the power to craft, to a large extent, the individual's identity that has much in common with the identities of the other individuals of the same group. Simply put, it teaches them that there is no identity outside their cultural space that is defined by multiple set of codes and standards. In the same vein, Cohen stresses the fact that community 'implies both similarity and difference'. In other words, people share some elements that unite them together and which, at the same time, mark their difference with other communities. The element that marks the difference between various communities is referred to as a boundary.

Cohen argues that whenever a group of people feels that the 'boundaries' that define their own community are being threatened by some extrinsic danger, be it a falsified representation/ interpretation of that community or an effort to blur its boundaries, they respond assertively through making of that very boundary a symbol of their belonging. Unlike other scholars and researchers who have sought to approach community by asking 'what does it look like to us?' and 'what are its theoretical implications? Anthony Cohen wonders 'what does it appear to mean to its members?'

This is the case of Mouloud Feraoun who through the representation of his community as unique and in opposition to other communities has asserted it over the colonial society of the French settlers. His fear, that the boundaries of his community might be blurred by false interpretation and wicked representations, pushed him to represent that community through the use of a number of significant symbols.

In so doing, his main objective was to revise the unpleasant images of the natives, and to answer the French writers such as Albert Camus and Robles whose writings rarely included Algerians and featured them, in most cases, as backward. In one of the letters sent to Camus Feraoun explains:

Si je parvenais un jour à m'exprimer sereinement, je le
devrais à votre livre— à vos livres qui m'ont appris à me
connaître puis à découvrir les autres et à constater qu'ils

me ressemblent. Ne puis-je donc me payer ce ridicule: tenter à mon tour d'expliquer les Kabyles et montrer qu'ils ressemblent à tout le monde? A tous les Algériens, par exemple? Ce fossé qui s'élargit, ne faudrait il pas essayer de le combler? (Feraoun, 2011: 66).

The reading of Camus' works helped Mouloud Feraoun understand and identify himself with other people who are referred to as 'tout le monde' or 'tous les Algériens'. It must be noted that the word 'Algériens' includes even the French people born in Algeria like Camus and Emmanuel Roblés. Feraoun in one of his letters addressed the latter writers as such: 'Vous êtes algériens [Camus, Roblés, and Audisiau] tous trois et vous n'avez pas à nous ignorer (2011: 67). He declared in a different occasion: 'Bien qu'on sache que les kabyles sont des hommes comme les autres. je crois, voyez vous, que je suis bien placé pour le dire' (quoted in Achour, 1985 : 352). Perhaps, this analogy is meant to uplift the status of the natives to that of the colonizer but never to dissolve boundaries between the natives and the colonizers for Feraoun is quite aware of the uniqueness of his community. Cohen in speaking of the homogeneity between communities and the similar treats they, supposedly, share argues:

This homogeneity may be merely superficial, a similarity only of surface, a veneer which masks real and significant differences at a deeper level. Indeed, the greater the pressure on communities to modify their structural forms to comply more with those elsewhere, the more are they inclined to reassert their boundaries symbolically by imbuing these modified forms with meaning and significance which belies their appearance (2013: 44).

In another letter sent to Roblés, Feraoun declared : 'Je n'avais jamais cru possible de faire véritablement entrer dans un roman un vrai bonhomme kabyle avant d'avoir connu le docteur Rieux et le jeune Smail. Vous les premiers vous nous avez dit: voilà ce que nous sommes. Alors nous vous avons répondu: voilà

ce que nous sommes de notre côté' (Feraoun, 2011 : 198). This oppositional character of Feraoun's assertion of identity is reinforced by the symbolic construction of the Kabyle community and according to Cohen:

Since the boundaries are inherently oppositional, almost any matter of perceived difference between the community and the outside world can be rendered symbolically as a resource of its boundary. The community can make virtually anything grist to the symbolic mill of cultural distance, whether it be the effects upon it of some centrally formulated government policy, or a matter of dialect, dress, drinking or dying. The symbolic nature of the opposition means that people can 'think themselves into difference'. The boundaries consist essentially in the contrivance of distinctive meanings within the community's social discourse. They provide people with a referent for their personal identities. Having done so, they are then themselves expressed and reinforced through the presentation of those identities in social life. (2013: 118).

To foreground the symbols of his community, and thus assert the identity of his community itself, Feraoun brings those symbols to bear on his society, tradition, and culture. Three symbols emerge in his work as outstanding identity markers: the family, Tajmaat or the village assembly, and the Kabyle proper and common names.

1. The Family:

Cigoli & Scabini define family as 'an exceedingly complex living organism, a social entity and psychological subject that both mirrors and meshes with its environmental/ social context and the cultural history it is steeped in' (2007:1). Family constitutes one of the most important elements in any given community. It is actually its cornerstone; the storehouse of knowledge that permits the individuals to adjust and mingle with the community as it provides its members with the tools and the necessary materials that enable them to be social.

The family inculcates in the mind of its members the symbols which build their cultural identities that are congruent with the other members of the community. David B Wong sees family as 'the appropriate domain for the ethic of care' (1996: 91) which pays a particular attention to the relationship that governs the individual and the other members. He, further, states that 'family members frequently see their relationships as important goods that may be essential to their identities, much of what we do in the family is directed toward sustaining or mending our relationships with very particular others' (1996: 91). That is, family enhances people's commitment to each other and fosters their sense of belonging that cannot flourish outside the locus of their community.

In the work of Mouloud Feraoun, family is portrayed and explored as a symbol of belonging that has the virtue of attaching its members to their community. Feraoun depicts the Kabyle community as a community that glorifies family and family connections and that follows her own rules which are based on tradition. Family connection is actually a theme that is carried out throughout the whole novel. For example, in the first part entitled, 'la famille' 'the family', Feraoun describes in an ample way the nature of relation that binds the characters all together and that ties them at the same time to the outside world. Each person in the family of Menrad works for the benefit of his blood relatives. It is the latter idea which is at the heart of Wong's argument that 'Family is the appropriate domain for the ethic of care' for care is the principle which makes family relationships extremely important. This fact is confirmed by Fouroulou who stresses: 'mon père, en effet, avait beaucoup de soucis pour faire vivre sa famille' (Feraoun, 2014: 79), and in another passage he affirms: 'Néanmoins, comme on en charge toujours le plus vieux ou le plus respectable de la famille, on est généralement tranquille sur le sort des autres et l'on est certain qu'il remplit son devoir avec le souci constant de l'intérêt commun' (ibid : 33).

To have a family on which one can lean is projected as a sacred grace that the individual must be so proud of. Despite the

misunderstandings that occur occasionally between the family members, it is the idea of the family that one has to cherish above all. Feraoun explains that the father of Fouroulou and his uncle, despite being orphans, are called by their family 'Sons of Chabaane' to perpetuate the name of their father and remind the people of the village of their origin:

On aurait du les appeler les fils de Tassadit, ma grand – mère. Leurs oncles et leurs cousins préférèrent, sans doute, perpétuer le nom de Chabane pour bien montrer aux gens que les orphelins avaient de qui tenir et qu'à deux ils remplaçaient en fait et en droit celui qui n'était plus (Feraoun, 2014 : 24).

Moreover, understanding well one's duty and limits in a family constitutes the basic idea of family. As a result, in *Le Fils Du Pauvre* the habits, the food, and the different social roles ascribed to each individual are portrayed in details. Feraoun explains how the well being of the family is the task of both men and women: women in the private sphere of the home and men in the public sphere of business, politics (djemaa), and sociability. Fouroulo, the protagonist, portrays his grandmother as a vigorous woman who is in charge of the economy of the house:

Chaque famille se soumet à un responsable. Le responsable dispose des provisions, fixe les rations à son gré, décide de l'utilisation des économies, des achats ou des ventes à effectuer. On l'accuse quelquefois de se servir mieux que les autres, mais c'est toujours par envie. La coutume a consacré les vertus du maitre ou de la maitresse de maison. Des proverbes indiscutables rendent justice à leur mérite. Chez les Menrad, c'était ma grand' mère qui était chargé de la subsistance. [...] Certes, voila un travail qui exige de grandes qualités car on sait que les kabyles ne nagent pas dans l'opulence' (Feraoun, 2014 : 31-32).

It is true that in Feraoun's work we can find some passages that speak about the importance of the male character in

the Kabyle community. Fouroulo, being the first male in his family, enjoys an important position, and is cherished by all the members of the family. He has the right to beat his sisters, eat their food, and they have no right to complain about his offending behaviour. The mother who is most of the time aware of his attitude reacts with the most marked indifference when she receives some complaints, and her typical answer to her crying daughter is 'N'est pas ton frère? Quelle chance pour toi d'avoir un frère! Que dieu te le garde! Ne pleure plus, va l'embrasser' (Feraoun, 2014: 35).

The male is considered to be the center of the family in the Kabyle community because he is seen as the heir that can carry on the hard work of his father, and the one who represents his family in the public meetings of the 'Tjmaat'. Women were thought to be weak and their anatomy determined their destiny. As men and women were by nature different in capacity, it was obligatory for them to play distinct social roles. The Kabyle believed that 'La supériorité du garçon dans le foyer kabyle est justifiée comme un droit légitime car seul le garçon est capable d'assumer les grandes responsabilités' (Tibani, 2003 : 46). This fact is stressed in *Le Fils Du Pauvre* ; Fouroulou explains: 'Mon oncle qui savait la valeur d'un home à la djema et pour lequel je représentais l'avenir des Menrad m'aimait comme son fils'. He further declares : ' j'étais l'unique garçon de la maisonnée. J'étais destiné à représenter la force et le courage de la famille' (2014 : 34)

The realities about social roles, mentioned in *Le Fils Du Pauvre*, bring to light an important evidence of Feraoun's agency. In other terms, the lengthy description of the Kabyle social life which regulates the individual's social life and assigns to him specific roles, according to his gender, age, and position proves that in spite of Feraoun's inscription in colonial education, he had obviously assimilated the social system and code of his culture. By narrating the daily stories of his childhood within his family, Feraoun asserts his belonging to that very family, and to his

community. Because as Smith Judith, though in a different context, explain:

While stories of families may appear private and personal, images of what constitutes a family have public and political significance. Recognizable membership in an 'ordinary' family is a maker of public respect and civic inclusion, living outside that privileged realm leaves one suspect, unprotected by basic citizenship rights and excluded from national belonging' (2004: 02).

1. Tajmaat:

Another important symbolic anchor that is apparent in Feraoun's fiction is 'Tajmaat'. Bessah explains that

Tajmaat renvoie, dans son sens le plus large, à l'assemblée générale des hommes ayant l'âge de la majorité et qui ont le droit d'assister aux assemblées générales du village. En outre, *tajmaat* inclut une autre structure restreinte qui « renvoie aux personnes choisies par consentement social conformément au système de valeur de cette communauté villageoise afin de gérer le village ». Cette structure, dans sa définition ancienne, inclut le chef du village l'*amin* et un ou plusieurs représentants de chaque famille (chefs de familles ou *temmans*) (2014 : 282).

The quote above defines literally the *tajmaat* described by Mouloud Feraoun in *le Fils Du Pauvre*. *Tajmaat* in its larger sense, is described as: 'de larges dalles de schiste sur cinquante centimètres de maçonnerie indécise, contre les pignons des maisons, forment les bancs de la 'tadjmait' sur lesquelles viennent s'asseoir les hommes et les enfants' (Feraoun, 2014 : 16). Furthermore, *Tajmaat* refers to the micro political structure that governs each village in Tizi Ouzou. It includes the elders of the village who meet regularly to settle the affairs of the people. Simply put, it is a comity that organizes people's lives according to the law and order of Kabyle tradition.

A telling incident that emphasizes the importance of *Tajmaat* in its restricted sense is when the family of Fouroulou,

has quarreled with the family of Ait amer. L'amin, who appears to have the most determining influence on the people of the village, could wisely settle the dispute. His words could silence the outrageous voices of the fighting families who have been engaged in a bloody fight.

La djema se remplit de plus en plus de spectateurs et de lutteurs. Aucun spectateur n'est indifférent. Les vieilles inimitiés se réveilleront ; d'anciens comptes qui n'attendent qu'un prétexte peuvent se régler. Mais voilà l'amin. IL monte sur une dalle. A coté de lui, un marabout déploie un étendard de soie jaune.

-que la malédiction soit sur celui qui ajoutera un mot ou fera un geste, dit ce dernier, d'une voix forte et grave. Les hommes se séparent. Les femmes s'envoient traitreusement le dernier coup (Feraoun, 2014 : 47).

Tajmaat is a symbol that every one starts to cherish from a very young age: 'Tous les marmots du village apprennent de bonne heure qu'ils ont leur place à la djema. le moindre rejeton male y a autant de droit que n'importe qui. Cela, nous n'hésitions jamais à le rappeler aux grandes personnes avec autant d'impertinence que d'à- propos' (Feraoun, 2014 : 44). Having a place in the Tajmaat is a right that every individual must defend, and to be excluded from this place is a sign of cultural estrangement. Feraoun, being an educated person, is often, as previously indicated, seen as an alienated person who was expelled from the cultural life of the kabyle community. As a result, he celebrated the Tajmaat as a symbol of belonging to defend his place in the Tajmaat and to re-inscribe himself into his community. This re-inscription is confirmed at the end of the novel when Feraoun re-integrates his protagonist in his own community despite being educated:

Au village, on ne le considérait plus comme un enfant. Son père, à tout propos demandait son avis ; les oncles et les cousins l'invitaient aux réunions ; des gens venaient le consulter ou se faire écrire des lettres difficiles. On lui donnait de l'importance mais Fouroulou n'en tirait aucune vanité (Feraoun, 2014 : 177).

The fact that Fouroulou is consulted and trusted by the people of his village is a proof that his education has not been viewed as a process concomitant to acculturation for the people of the village are most of the time skeptical when it comes to things that require the interference of the French. This fact is made quite clear in *Le Fils Du Pauvre*: L'amin, while trying to settle the dispute between the quarreling families, remarks that 'il est inutile d'aller a la justice française qui compliquerait tout' (Feraoun, 2014 : 55-56). The latter quote, which marks emphatically the border between Tajmaat and the French justice qualifies Tajmaat as not only a symbol permitting Feraoun to integrate himself into his community but also as a place from which he can cast a critical eye upon French laws and administration. In so doing, Feraoun attributes to the system of Tajmaat a higher position. This suggests that the agency of Feraoun resides in the fact that his perception and interpretation of the world cannot be done outside the parameters set by his cultural values.

Moreover, Tajmaat has contributed to the self-construction of Feraoun as an individual within his community. Cohen in explaining the relation that governs the individual with his community writes:

It is that the community itself and everything within it, conceptual as well as material, has a symbolic dimension, and, further, that this dimension does not exist as some kind of consensus of sentiment. Rather, it exists as something for people 'to think with'. The symbols of community are mental constructs: they provide people with the means to make meaning. In so doing, they also provide them with the means to express the particular meanings which the community has for them (2013: 19).

The structure of the Tajmaat that entrusts the most respectable people of the village to settle its affairs provided Feraoun with the tools to play the role of l'amin whose chief duty is to work for the communal interest. In other words, Tajmaat as a symbol inspired Feraoun to be the spokesman of his community.

The collective welfare pushed Feraoun to speak about social problems such as poverty and immigration. The latter, were considered to be the plague of all Algerians during the concerned era. Misery was the threat that all the natives had to live with because of the rigid colonial policies. Hocine qualifies *Le Fils Du Pauvre* as ‘une autobiographie qui ne parle pas de l’auteur comme personnage, mais plutôt du paysage kabyle qui devient ainsi un personnage qui « parle » des conditions d’une humanité souffrante.’ (2009: 265). Feraoun’s novel is the attic window through which the reader can see those atrocious realities. He tells the story of his father who, like thousands of Algerians, was obliged to leave his country and immigrate to France for a better quality of life. In the second part of the novel the narrator speaking for the author declares:

Quelques temps après, laissant sa famille aux soins de son frère, Ramdane quitta, un matin, son village pour aller travailler en France. C’était l’ultime ressource, le dernier espoir, la seule solution. Il savait très bien que s’il restait au pays, la dette ferait boule de neige et emporterait bientôt, comme sous une avalanche, le modeste héritage familial (Feraoun, 2014 : 137).

Feraoun was conscious of this suffocating truth, and the suffering of his father as well as other Algerians tortured him. Transmitting this ugly truth to the whole world seemed to be an alternative cure for his troubled consciousness.

2. Kabyle Names:

Part of the assimilation process, colonial authorities from 1882 onward implemented a new way of naming the Algerian people that was completely different from the traditional one. The aim behind the enacted law was to organize and control the Algerian population as Ould ennebja states: ‘l’objectif était clair, individualiser les personnes pour pouvoir les dominer facilement et les responsabiliser dans le domaine des impôts et la circonscription militaire et autre devoirs d’assujettis’ (2009). Furthermore, The French knew that the traditional way of naming

which necessitated the inclusion of the father and the grandfather's names was meant to guarantee the ancestral continuum and had the virtue of attaching the Algerians to their land as it reminded them of their origin. Indeed, Madubuike explains that 'indigenous names' can affirm one's 'world-vision, identify, [...]philosophy and view of life and can be a secret to [one's] raison d'être' (1976: 49).

As a result, Imposing new patronymic names was meant to erase the Algerian identity. The plan was to give the Algerian people names that were not only random and meaningless but also obscene, insulting, and ridiculous in a way that assured the destruction of family connection. Mustapha Lachref states that 'les patronymes imposés à nos compatriotes n'étaient pas seulement bizarres, drôles comme tous les sobriquets paysans, mais odieux, obscènes, injurieux, marqués au coin de l'offense dépréciative et de l'humiliation caractérisée' (quoted in Hocine & Marin, 2012: 16). In the same vein, Feraoun offers an explanation of the random distribution of names the Algerian people received in each village:

Dans le premier village on alla de A à D: tous les noms commencent par A, par B, C ou D. Dans le village suivant ce fut E, F, G et H. dans le troisième K, L, M, N. Dans le quatrième R, S, T, Z. il n'y eut ni P ni V. On se demande pourquoi...

Il arrive que des frères reçurent des noms différents parce que sans doute ils ne se présentèrent pas en même temps devant l'officier d'état civil. Une vraie salade.

Mon père et mon oncle s'appelèrent Feraoun mais leur cousins devinrent Fedani, Ferguene, Dormane, Ghanes... (quoted in Lenzini, 2016 : 20).

In *Le Fils Du Pauvre* there is an attempt from the part of the author to denounce the colonizer's altering of Algerian names through glorifying the Kabyle original and proper names as a symbol of belonging. In different occasions, Feraoun stressed the fact that his original name was not Feraoun. He told Roblès in a letter sent to him in 1955: 'Inutile de dire que je ne m'appelle pas

Feraoun et de démolir ma réputation d'écrivain ou d'éducateur' ou vice versa' (Feraoun, 2011: 111). Likewise, in another letter he explained to Camus: 'Mon nom est aussi officiel que ma date de naissance [...] pour les gens du village je ne suis pas Feraoun. Notre famille est Ait-Chabane parce que nous eûmes un Chabane pour ancêtre' (Quoted in Lenzini, 2016 : 20). In his first novel, *Le Fils Du Pauvre*, Feraoun tends to remind the reader of this fact because the story of Fouroulou is the story of Mouloud Feraoun. This fact is made clear by the author himself in a letter sent to Landis-Benos : 'Vous savez bien que Fouroulou c'était à peu près moi. Un moi enfant tel que je le voyais il y a dix ans' (2011 : 139). In the novel the narrator explains : 'mon oncle et mon père se nomment l'un Ramdane, l'autre Lounis mais dans le quartier on pris l'habitude de les appeler « les fils de Chabane » (2014 : 24). Loyalty to ancestral names is an identity indicator. That is, original names are of equal importance to the family and Tajmaat that are considered to be markers of identity.

As a result, Feraoun explains the origin of Kabyle people according to their names: 'Le quartier d'en bas, par exemple, est issu de Mezouz. Mezouz avait cinq enfants males qui donnèrent leurs noms à chacune des cinq familles de la karouba. C'est pourquoi la karouba comprend les Ait Rabah, les Ait Slimane, les Ait Moussa, les Ait Larbi, les Ait Kaci.' (Feraoun, 2014: 18). Actually this longing to emphasize and trace the lineage of Kabyle people through their names is an act of resistance against the coercive rules of the French that imposed on the Kabyle people as well as all the Algerians new names that were in conflict with the traditional order of things.

Furthermore, Mouloud Feraoun has worked to make the kabyle names palpable. 'Fatma', 'Helima', 'Chabha', 'Akli' 'Ramdane', 'Lounis' and so on are all names of real people who have their own stories, characteristics, ambitions, and feelings. Behind these names there is an honorable lineage that needs to be perceptible again. All the characters are of equal importance and we cannot identify Fouroulou as the only hero. Bensamaia explains that:

There is no real hero in *Le Fils Du Pauvre*; the hero is the people, the small community of Tizi: Ramdane and Omar, the emigrants; Khalti and Nana, the two women who struggle alone to survive adversity; Fatma and Helima, the mothers who face the difficulties of all poor families; and the others.(156)

Perhaps, Feraoun was well attuned to the fact that the new patronymic names were meant to instill the spirit of individuality and uproot the spirit of collectivity that informs the kabyle community. Ould Ennebia remarks that ‘derrière cet acte officiel de nomination, il y avait un véritable processus d’individualisation qui introduisait un nouvel ordre socioculturel dans lequel était mise en avant la ‘personnalité’ avant la communauté (2009). Making all the characters of equal importance is meant to disturb this notion of individuality that the colonizer tried to disseminate. In other terms, the story of Fouroulou cannot be adequately understood without the stories of the other characters. Each character contributes in a way or another to the maturity of Fouroulou. The first school Fouroulou knows is his family. He learns from his father hard work, from his grandmother reason, and from his aunts almost everything. It is thanks to his aunt Nana that he has learned so much about his cultural heritage, tradition and perception of the outer world. The stories she regularly narrates, has obviously enabled him to develop a better understanding of the world. She could shape his values, beliefs and even choices. Fouroulou declares : ‘Je suis reconnaissant a khalti de m’avoir appris de bonne heure à rêver, a aimer créer pour moi-même un monde a ma convenance’ (Feraoun, 2014 : 70). He further states : ‘c’est ainsi que j’ai fait connaissance avec la morale et le rêve. J’ai vu le juste et le méchant, le puissant et le faible, le rusé et le simple’ (Feraoun, 2014 : 68). In the story of Fouroulou, Feraoun wants us to see how the group works for the individual and how the individual’s main concern is the well being of the group. Nana, Ramdane, Lounis are no longer subaltern, or just names registered in French

administration. They are brave people who deserve respect and honor.

Even the name of the protagonist, Fouroulou Menrad, anagram Mouloud Feraoun, that is in accordance with French ways of naming is an ironical one. Feraoun purposefully transformed his name to give it a symbolical importance. In introducing the name of the protagonist 'Fouroulou', Feraoun links it with a well known Kabyle myth. Fouroulou declares: 'Je suis né, en l'an de grâce 1912, deux jours avant les fameux prêtres de Tibrari qui a, jadis, tué et pétrifié une vielle sur les pitons du Djurdjura et qui demeure toujours la terreur des octogénaires Kabyles.' (Feraoun, 2014 : 33). It is for the latter reason that his grandmother decided to name him Fouroulou: ' (de *effer* : cacher). Ce qui signifie que personne au monde ne pourra me voir, de son œil bon ou mauvais' (ibid: 33). This mythification of the name is meant to disturb the colonial aspired goals of blurring the original names that are a constant reminder of their origin. Hocine and Marin believe that '[le fils du pauvre] prend forme à travers des stratégies d'écriture qui dérangent les notions européennes du genre, et, par conséquent, échappe à l'équation du nom, celui de l'état civil, et de l'identité' (2012 : 23). This means quite precisely that Mouloud Feraoun really was an agent who was capable of maintaining his belonging through the use of onomastic symbols.

Conclusion:

The investigation of symbols of belonging in *Le Fils Du Pauvre* uncovers a new reality about Mouloud Feraoun's agency that has not been aired widely enough. Feraoun's agency is evidenced by the way he explores in his autobiographical novel the complementary work of the three symbols of belonging, which appear to have had the most important determining influence on his identity. In other words, In *Le Fils Du Pauvre* there is an attempt to explain the role of the family in creating an individual who is willing to accept his role in the community and who is willing to be social. More importantly, there has been an

attempt to show how the family ingrains the love of Tajmaat in the heart of its members. In return, the Tajmaat's role is to maintain the values taught by the family through strengthening the links that gather all members of the community. The Tajmaat as a decisive socio-political symbol is a constant reminder of how deep the Kabyle origin is. As a result, Feraoun was interested in exploring the kabyle names as a symbol of belonging reminding the people of his community of their honorable lineage that the colonizer had long tried to negate. Dealing with the symbols of belonging with such fidelity proves that Feraoun was capable of asserting his position and identity which is based first and foremost on traditional values that of his community

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