

The Representation of the Algerian War of Independence in the Musical Discourse: A Case Study of Souad Massi

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ABSTRACT: *This paper explores the intricate details embedded within the musical repertoire of Souad Massi, a famous Algerian singer-songwriter, to illustrate the artist's distinct portrayal of Algeria's War of Independence. This investigation provides a qualitative analysis of some songs, like "Yawlidi," "Raoui," and "Houria," which means; "O my son", "Storyteller", and "Freedom" respectively, to identify the different layers through which the author engages with the historical background of the Algerian war of independence using content analysis and adopting an interdisciplinary approach to investigate the poetic and musical aspects that express common emotions associated with conflicts and wars, such as sadness, hunger, and a search for freedom. This work examines the complexity of the author's artistic choices, exploring how her works function as an instrument for preserving and distributing shared memories. Additionally, it looks into the connections between Massi's music and the socioeconomic and cultural structure of post-independence Algeria, taking into consideration the importance of artistic manifestations in defining and sustaining the narratives concerning the country's campaign for freedom. This paper, based on a cultural and historical analysis, offers a scientific debate about the relationship between songs and shared memories. It aims to reveal the multifaceted aspects that comprise Massi's compositions, emphasizing her role as a cultural conservator and the tremendous influence of what she creates on the socio-cultural chronicle of Algeria's troubled past. Furthermore, it emphasizes the importance of artistic expression in developing and expressing a nation's historical and cultural awareness, especially during a liberation war.*

KEYWORDS: liberation, independence , war , struggle , music

تستكشف هذه الورقة البحثية التفاصيل المعقدة المتضمنة في الذخيرة الموسيقية لسعاد ماسي؛ المغنية وكاتبة الأغاني الجزائرية الشهيرة، لتوضيح الصورة المتميزة التي قدمتها الفنانة عن حرب الاستقلال الجزائرية. ويقدم هذا التحقيق تحليلاً نوعياً لبعض الأغاني مثل "يا ولدي" و"راوي" و"يا ولدي" و"الحكواتي" و"الحرية" على التوالي، للتعرف على الطبقات المختلفة التي تتعامل من خلالها المؤلفة مع الخلفية التاريخية لحرب الاستقلال الجزائرية باستخدام تحليل المضمون واعتماد منهج متعدد التخصصات لاستقصاء الجوانب الشعرية والموسيقية التي تعبر عن المشاعر المشتركة المرتبطة بالصراعات والحروب، مثل الحزن والجوع والبحث عن الحرية. أهمية التعبير الفني في تطوير الوعي التاريخي والثقافي للأمة والتعبير عنه، خاصة أثناء حرب التحرير. يبحث هذا العمل في تعقيد الخيارات الفنية للمؤلفة، ويستكشف كيف تعمل أعمالها كأداة لحفظ الذكريات المشتركة ونشرها. بالإضافة إلى ذلك، يبحث في الروابط بين موسيقى ماسي والبنية الاجتماعية والاقتصادية والثقافية لجزائر ما بعد الاستقلال، مع الأخذ بعين الاعتبار أهمية المظاهر الفنية في تحديد واستدامة السرديات المتعلقة بحملة البلاد من أجل الحرية. تقدم هذه الورقة؛ استناداً إلى التحليل الثقافي والتاريخي، نقاشاً علمياً حول العلاقة بين الأغاني والذكريات المشتركة. كما تهدف إلى الكشف عن الجوانب المتعددة الأوجه التي تضمها مؤلفات ماسي، مع التركيز على دورها كحافضة للثقافة والتأثير الهائل لما تبذعه في التأريخ الاجتماعي والثقافي لِمَاضِي الجزائر المضطرب. علاوة على ذلك، يؤكد على أهمية التعبير الفني في تطوير الوعي التاريخي والثقافي للأمة والتعبير عنه، خاصة أثناء حرب التحرير.

الكلمات المفتاحية: التحرير – الاستقلال – الحرب – النضال

Introduction

The Algerian War of Independence, also known as the Algerian Revolution, had a profound and enduring impact on both Algeria and France, shaping the course of history and leaving an indelible mark on the socio-political landscape of both nations. However, it is crucial to note that previous scholarly examinations have tended to neglect the significance of personal experiences and cultural representations in understanding the complex dynamics of this transformative period. One fascinating aspect that is only now starting to gain attention is the role of music during the war. Algerian music, with its evocative melodies and profound lyrics, represents a rich tapestry woven from diverse traditions, blending to form a powerful symbol of resistance, resilience, and identity. By delving into the experiences and perspectives of musicians who lived through this tumultuous time, this paper can unravel the intricate threads

that connect their music to the conflict itself. This work, driven by a commitment to scholarly rigor and a deep appreciation for the cultural import of music, seeks to undertake a comprehensive analysis of the experiences, inspirations, and creative processes of Algerian musicians during the war. Through a multidisciplinary approach, encompassing historical research, musicology, and cultural studies, it aims to shed light on the transformative power of music as a form of expression and resistance.

By immersing oneself in the memories, emotions, and artistic representations that were cultivated during this period, this paper aims to analyze how the Algerian War of Independence hopes to unearth a culturally grounded understanding of the Algerian War of Independence that transcends traditional narratives. It aspires to capture the deep pain and enduring resilience that characterized this tragic event in both Algerian and French history, documenting its tremendous impact on individuals, communities, and societies at large. Ultimately, this research seeks to provide a comprehensive examination of the Algerian War through the lens of music, connecting diverse strands of scholarship and personal testimonies to offer a nuanced perspective on this pivotal chapter. By acknowledging the transformative power of music and its ability to convey the hopes, fears, and aspirations of a people united in their struggle for liberation, it aims to elevate the discourse surrounding the war and ensure that future generations appreciate its formative nature and historical significance.

2. Historical Background

Following a war that had cost the lives of 25,000 French troops and more than a million Algerians, Algeria's independence marked the end of the French Empire in North Africa. Algerian history tells us of this intense and brutal war which lasted nearly eight years; Algerian representatives of their culture had to assert their nationalism in a destitute climate. French measures to dismantle the movement included the creation of a new Arab and Islamic Assembly, which in effect replaced the old MTDL (Movement for the Triumph of Democratic Liberties) and co-opted Algerian traditional and religious leaders. On

June 16, 1956, the PCF (Parti Communiste Français) and SFIO (Section Française de l'Internationale Ouvrière) called for a free determination of the Algerian people's fate. This, in turn, led at first to economic and political crisis, signaling the end of an era for the French left in Algerian politics (Garner et al., 2020). Developments within Algeria put pressure on both the French government and the public. Algerian Muslims, who had suffered the revocation of the Crémieux Decree in 1943 and faced growing disparity between themselves and Algerian Jews, demanded political equality with the colons. Algerian *pied noirs*' popular culture and political history to create a vivid and detailed portrait of their collective mind during the Algerian revolution.(Sivan, E. ,1979). The *pieds-noirs* who were the original settler community coming from northern Mediterranean countries after 1848 wanted to preserve the way of life they had carved out for themselves in North Africa and were not willing to negotiate the political and social advancements that would harm their livelihoods.

By 1956, many French army officers had begun to view an Algerian independent state as inevitable and later sought how it could be achieved on the most advantageous terms for France. Evidenced by The creation of the organisation de l'armée secrète (OAS) in the final years of the war testifies to the belief that a French Algeria was both possible and necessary. The Algerian liberation front (FLN), which had continually sought an armed confrontation with the French, found that diplomatic insurrection was no longer a viable method for change. A series of events between 1958 and 1959 created a political climate in which both nations were compelled to confront the war that had been ongoing for several years.

3. The Algerian War of Independence in Music

In today's Algeria, the dominant interpretation of the War of Independence is that of a morally justified struggle for national liberation. It is claimed that through the process of decolonization, Algerians were able to gain control of state power, freeing themselves from the oppressive and racist rule that they experienced under colonial rule. It was widely believed that France had no rightful claim to the territory of

Algeria, and this particular theme of failed colonial usurpation is one that Algerians feel is often overlooked by historians. These themes are reflected in the music of contemporary Rai artists, who see their musical role as an extension of the oral tradition of *meddahates*, whereby they act as modern-day 'griots' recounting stories and passing on collective memory. Often they used the technique of *samri*, a form of pre-war satire to recount their versions of truths about the endeavors of colon and moudjahid alike.

After the end of French occupation in Algeria in 1962, Algerian society had to grapple with which cultural and political elements they wished to retain in their newly independent country. The struggle for the country's cultural and political direction was marked by an intense and often a violent conflict between different factions. For many historians, the Algerian War of Independence was a culmination of many of the defining elements of 20th-century conflict, namely questions over decolonization, the status of technological warfare and its effect on civilian populations, as well as the attempts by both sides to control memory and representation of their actions and goals. This paper will seek to illustrate how music from or related to the war has served to act as a vehicle for the expression and dissemination of ideas on these and other aspects of the conflict. Music has a firm place in Algerian national identity and has often been used as a tool to pass on cultural or political messages. This was especially the case during the War of Independence where music was used to mobilize support and raise morale in both the civilian population and military personnel.

4. Souad Massi: A Brief Biography

After years of social unrest, the situation in Algeria had only worsened. An increasing number of citizen 'disappearances', inflation, and a government that was struggling to keep itself afloat left the people of Algeria in a state of hopelessness. The January of '99 saw Algerians in a state of panic and confusion. A group of Islamic fundamentalist terrorists wanted to take over the town of Tizi Ouzou, and it was at this time that Souad's family decided to leave Algeria for good. This

experience was an extremely hard and painful one for Souad, and she will never forget it.

With the ban on music, and her parents' constant confinements, Souad immersed herself in reading, especially Arabic literature and poetry, as an adolescent. By the age of 10, Massi had written her first song. Her work with musician and producer Jean-Pierre Bameyl allowed her to prepare a complete artistic project: an album. This album was *Debx*, a project at the heart of which Souad set her sights high, for she had a message to convey to the youth of Algeria. This message was and always will be one of hope—an appeal to her people to identify with their roots and to reach out for a future. Due to the political situation in Algeria at the time, the album could not be realized. This was Souad's first disappointment, yet she never thought of giving up her dream.

Souad Massi was born and raised in Bab El Oued, a city in Algiers, the daughter of a well-known baritone singer. Massi's father recognized her singing ability at an early age, and so she was exposed to a wide range of music, including chaabi, classical, jazz, and flamenco. Her father encouraged her to listen to music and being extremely self-disciplined, Massi trained herself in music.

5. Souad Massi's Musical Style

Throughout her musical career, Massi has expressed her love for a diverse range of musical influences. Her journey started at a young age when her parents supported her enrollment at the Algiers Music Conservatory. She dedicated herself to the study of guitar virtuosity and music theory.

Massi's musical interests span various styles and genres, including Algerian chaabi, Egyptian singer Oum Kalsoum, American rock band The Eagles, and Greek music. The fusion of these influences creates her captivating and unique style, full of depth and resonance.

Souad Massi's music style is unique and transcends real boundaries. Her music mixes the folk music of her native Algeria with many influences, including Spanish, Flamenco, Eastern, French, and American music. Souad Massi's music does not fit into a fixed category; her albums have

been placed in the world music, folk music, and even pop categories. This liberal attitude towards music stems from her belief that music must have the freedom to grow. Her musical style is supported by her melodic eloquence of voice, her guitar playing (which she learned to play left-handed on a right-handed guitar transformed), and the cross-cultural nature of her backing music. Many of the instruments used in her music are traditional and influenced by the cultures she has been exposed to. This was done to create a basic, unrefined, and authentic sound. Her music exhibits a dreamlike, enchanting and timeless quality. It is therefore advisable to allow oneself time to reflect on it and to avoid the temptation to appreciate its depth and meaning too hastily. (Ben Labidi, 2021)

6. Souad Massi's Lyrics and Themes

Souad Massi's music covers a variety of topics, and it would be inappropriate to suggest that she sings solely about the War of Independence, yet it is clear that the war and her parents' experiences of the war and its aftereffects have greatly influenced her work. Several themes recur, and these are often also visible within the lyrics of other music examined in this study. The themes that attracted the audience most frequently when discussing these songs of Souad included the notion of innocence lost, home and exile, the pain of the war, and issues of identity and memory. Some of these themes are interrelated, and this is evidenced by the fact that she has represented them in more than one song.

When discussing the theme of innocence lost, Souad explained that the young generation of Algerians had lost their childhood in the war. This notion is also represented in her song 'Bladi' from her first album, which means 'My Country'. (El-Shahawy, 2020)

7. The Representation of the Algerian War of Independence in Souad Massi's Music

The songs in which Massi sings about the war have been composed post-Civil Strife and reflect what she thinks of Algeria now that she is in a foreign country and what Algeria turned out to be compared to her childhood hopes and dreams.

The following part of this paper aims to analyze the representation of the Algerian War of Independence within the songs of Souad Massi to determine if Massi's representation of this era is representative of Bourdieu's habitus. Her family, who were particularly active against the French colonists, suffered greatly, with members of her family going missing and her family being split up. This has had a major effect on Massi and has provided her with a musical narrative, memory, and a snapshot of the time.

8. Musical and Lyrical Analysis

Massi's primary instrument is the guitar, which she plays during concerts. However, for the song, she is accompanied by a wide range of Arabic instruments, with a keyboard and electronic beat used in place of the original Arabic instruments. The song begins with a soft arpeggiated guitar solo and then moves on to the keyboard. An electronic beat is then introduced, and the verse begins with the accompanying Arabic Saz, a long-necked fretted lute on drones, and the dissonant sound of the Wailing Ney or flute. This creates a mystic feel, defining the coincidence that Massi has witnessed. The beat then becomes faster, and the bass, and triangle Oud come in, the verse continuing from this point. The chorus is separated only by a change in beat. A different form of the song can be heard in the second link where Massi plays live. This is an acoustic version with just the guitar and two-part vocals, giving the song a very different feel.

The song structure is based on typical Arab music with a repeated sequence of verses and a distinct chorus separating different movements. This is to accommodate an element of storytelling as the singer describes to the person she is talking to what she has experienced, a common feature in Arab "*Kahani*" meaning story music. Typical Arabic songs are also based on lengthy instrumental interludes. However, this is a modern song and thus the interludes are much shorter in length.

8.1 Analysis of Souad Massi's Songs

Souad Massi is a brilliant young singer from Algeria who has become an international artist after releasing two successful albums. Her

songs are a mixture of different genres from rock to folk to Spanish guitar, and her soft and graceful voice is both soothing and gripping. Many of her songs speak of the time of the Algerian War for Independence and a few are for the people who were affected by it. Her songs combine poetry and messages within them and are portrayed as a way of reaching out to people. The political messages of her songs show that she respects and takes responsibility for her country and that it has been a factor throughout her life. Souad grew up in a politically active family.

8.2 Song 1: [houria]

"Houria" (Liberty) is the name of a lady who left a strong impression on Souad and whom she met in France. She recalls "She was 56, but spoke as if she was 20." This woman had left her country and her sons in search of a better life. The song is both sadness and an expression of respect for this woman who was forced to leave her country. In this song, Souad speaks of a time when the old has to leave and the young may never return and that the happy are the ones who are ignorant

The song "Houria" opens with the words "j'ai peur" (I'm afraid) and typifies modern nostalgia for the moments of freedom and the future that the war seemed to promise. The word "Houria" means 'freedom' and it is an attribute of a female name. This is a very symbolic and poignant idea because while it is true that colonial rule plunged its victims into a life with very little freedom. Algerians born after the war are thus nostalgic for something that they never really experienced, and this has been a central factor in causing the unrest of the last decade. There are complaints about the behavior of the current generation who are unable to understand the sacrifices made during the war and who have "sold la belle vie pour un aller simple" (exchanged the good life for a one-way ticket), a reference to economic migrants who have gone abroad.

8.3 Song 2: [Raoui]

This song concluded from the above testing that even songs not explicitly about the war have a link to the war in the emotions that people felt and the situation that was the state of the people of Algeria. This praised a lot

by the Algerian community, who saw it as a parable to Souad's life and similar to the recent events of a famous rai singer who got assassinated. This song is captivating because people still recognise Souad for her songs from many years of war and come to her to say that the country still needs her and that she should continue to play, just as the *raoui* comes to the musician to say that the songs are for him and that he should continue to play.

Through coding the comments on the lyrics, we were able to come to a theory that some songs written after the war for different reasons all have an emotional link to the past, even if the song itself is not about the war. This we can see through the emotion in Souad's voice and the fact that she wrote specifically about wanting someone to remember her in the event of her death, with the fear that she would pass away before ever having her cause acknowledged. This is also linked to a prominent figure in the war, so it is assumed that this song was linked to the war in a roundabout way. An example of this was the comment "Observe en moi cette enfant/ Qui s'endort doucement" [Look at the child in me, who falls asleep so softly].

This song was tested within one of the focus groups, and as a result, it is a song written after the war and is not relevant to the independence. But the unique aspect of it is that it is a nostalgic song. The emotional undertones in it, and the fact that it was written before she had gained fame and was still trying to make her break in life, make it relevant to the war.

8.4 Song 3: [Dessine Moi un Pays]

Souad Massi's third song from her debut album, "Dessine moi un pays" ("Draw me a country") examines the Algerian society post-war. The French colonial period has had profound effects on the current culture of Algeria, and this song directly addresses the period. The overall message of the song is that the French have left, abandoning the Algerian people with no identity or direction. Massi portrays this with an image of a child who has been given a drawing of a country from his ancestors. She compares the child putting the pieces of the drawing together to rebuild the country, to Algeria trying to piece together its post-colonial identity.

She uses symbolic language in referring to the pieces of the country as "broken glass" and "an alphabet". This symbolization of the country would suggest that Massi feels the French have destroyed Algeria and left it for the Algerian people to find a new identity. This song is significant in that it expresses post-war sentiment without drawing upon graphic imagery of the war itself. In using the child and the drawing, Souad Massi cleverly avoids mentioning the war at all. Yet the imagery depicts a clear message that the war was a disaster for Algeria. The song also draws on previous themes of disillusionment through its suggestion that Algeria will never recover its previous national identity. The use of a lullaby tune serves to reinforce this sense of hopelessness.

8.5 Song 4: [el mutakalimun]

This song, "El Mutakalimun," on Souad Massi's album 'Deb' is another important source of evidence in the context of a dissertation as an expression of the aftermath of the Algerian War of Independence. The song's title, when translated to English, means "those who speak." Massi sings of how "ils brisent leur silence" (those who broke their silence) and of "those who speak" to describe the people who were directly affected by the war and its outcome. This directly links to modern-day Algeria, as was mentioned previously, that the war is still fresh in the memory of Algerians today; many of whom lost loved ones, witnessed atrocities, or were actively involved in the battle for independence. These people represent the "moudjahidine aux yeux tristes" (moudjahidine with sad eyes), referring to Algeria's war veterans, and also the "les communicants éloquents" (the eloquent communicators) and "intellectuels amers" (bitter intellectuals) as Algerians who want to tell their story of the war but are finding it increasingly hard to communicate the tragedy and horror that they lived through to the younger generations of Algerians. This links to the dissertation's theme of an identity being passed through generations, as an identity to be proud of but also one of great sorrow. These people are described by Massi to be living in a state of "limbes" (a state of limbo), suggesting that they are struggling to find a place for themselves in the annals of Algerian history as witnesses to the darker side of their society. This can be interpreted as a metaphorical

reference to their desire to communicate their memories of the war, yet without a voice in a society overly focused on the new and brighter Algeria. The use of an oud-based melody coupled with electric guitar riffs gives the song a feeling of melancholy and sadness. The feeling of sadness also comes from Massi's vocal delivery, which exudes despair at the subject of the song. This gives the listener an idea of the pain and sorrow the people Massi is singing about have felt and still feel today. The song is also played in a minor key, another indication of the sadness it represents.

8.6 Song 5: [oumniya]

The main connection to the war in this song can be made with the generation that endured the hardships of the war. What they went through was not desirable, and the people of that generation wished for a better life for themselves and the future generations to come. This can be seen in the memorable chorus of the song where Massi repeats "koul oumniya", meaning "every wish" in Arabic. This short phrase is a very powerful one, and it echoes the pain and wishes of the people of a time long gone. This was a generation that wanted to change, but the continued hardships of Algeria's history prevented any significant change.

The song focuses on the general theme of disillusionment towards the unchanging nature of the world and the frustration felt by many towards their hard lives. This is very much the way Souad Massi sees the current status of her nation. The name "Oumniya" translates to "wish", and the song is basically about the wishes of people from Algeria for justice, hope, and a peaceful end to the suffering that has occurred in their country throughout its history.

The last song we will be discussing in this essay is the song "Oumniya" which appears in Massi's album "Mesk Elil". This song has a strong connection with the Algerian war and resonates with the people of Algeria. Even though no ideas surrounding the war have been mentioned in this song, its tone is a very strong, somber, and thought-provoking one. Many Algerian people belonging to the war era state that this song brings back memories of the hard times that they had endured and almost feels like a form of outlet for them to express their feelings.

9. The Role of Souad Massi in Shaping Collective Memory

Souad Massi has entered Algerian collective memory as one of the most powerful voices in the representation of the war and the trauma that followed. Her experiences resonate with most people of her age or older in Algeria, and she has become the figurehead of a generation who has longed to articulate and express the trauma of the war and the subsequent period. Having touched upon issues of the war and the status of women in her time with the band Atakor, Massi only truly gained attention with her solo career in France, where she has been the voice of a disillusioned and diasporic generation who can both criticize the lot of their parents' generation but also feel a deep sense of loss for Algeria that they never knew.

The representation of the Algerian War of Independence is an inalienable part of the Algerian collective memory. The representation of the war and the trauma it involved was centered around the silencing of the war in French history and the way it was negatively remembered in Algeria itself. While the representation was primarily left to the visual arts and literature (by writers), the 1990s signaled a shift as musicians took on the task of expressing and representing the trauma of the war and its continued effects in Algeria. Music is a form of expression that has an immediately visible reaction, and it is clear that as time goes on, generations will look to the music of the 1990s and 2000s as the primary basis for understanding the traumas of the 1990s.

10. Reception and Impact of Souad Massi's Music

Salhi examines both written reviews of Massi's albums and concert reviews. She stated that it is unsurprising that *El Moudja*, an Algerian feminist magazine, focuses more on the lyrical qualities and content of music, which should go largely unnoticed by the international community. Meanwhile, western critics fail to note the cultural significance of Massi's music. She states that: "A review in the American music magazine *Billboard* compares Massi to Norah Jones. On the other hand, a journalist from the French magazine *Télérama*, which is more likely to be read by francophone North African immigrant communities in France, discusses the album's importance for Algerians." Salhi also

notes the differing focuses of different newspapers within Algeria. She uses the example that *La Nouvelle République* has written a lot about Massi." These variances in focus are important in determining the reception of Massi's music among different audiences. (Salhi, 2023)

11. Comparison with Other Artists' Representations

An analysis of Massi's independent songs was made, placing them into one of three categories: the traditional *dire*, the evolved orchestral *dir*, and the acoustic tradition. The conclusions drawn were that none of these, situated within chapters in terms of date of release, bore any recollections of the War of Independence. A comparison with the works of other popular Algerian singers provided a fruitful study. The most famous traditional *dire* song of the War of Independence is the 'Algeria' of El Anka. Although this song was written and recorded during the time of the war, on request of the physical education inspectors for the provision of a march for Algerian gymnasts, it is illustrative of the spirit of the time and has become a symbol of the war of independence. The dignity and pride of the use of Algeria as a metaphor is reflected in Massi's 'Bab El Oued-Kingston' and visible through the medium of both songs: for the traditional El Anka in his trademark *chaabi* style, and Massi for the acoustic guitar.

12. Critiques and Controversies

A further condition for a suitable war memorial would have been the antiquity and permanence that the event would take in contemporary Algeria. The removal of the flagstones from the mausoleum to use in a school building is taken as a metaphor for the failure of post-independence successive governments to eulogize the events of the war.

The song "Achâneq âyada" has been the subject of considerable controversy and debate. Several interviewees considered that the words were not appropriate for a war memorial, for the conditions were not all in the past tense and so undermined the valor (the term used is *khir*) of the fighters. The century was just concluding, and the forsaking of a Christian name in favor of an Islamic one within the song is viewed as

further evidence of the singer's or composer's contempt for the colonial event that he is singing about. However, this point could be contested.

13. Souad Massi's Contribution to the Algerian Identity

Souad Massi's musical themes revolve around war and post-war effects, including women's emancipation, exile, estrangement, disillusionment, and the means to reconciliation. Her musical influences stem from traditional Algerian music, as well as influences from French chanson and 1970s folk music. These influences have created a diverse discourse within Massi's music that can be inclusive of different aspects of Algerian identity.

Souad Massi presents a revision of Algerian identity from her experience of the Algerian War of Independence and its implications in the following years. It is arguable that music, specifically 'la chanson', contributed to the construction of Algerian identity, for it portrays an interaction of French and Algerian culture and a catharsis of the violence involved. Massi's music pulls away from the paradigmatic war discourse or the identification of victimhood in the portrayal of Algerian identity and attempts to build an acceptable and functional contemporary Algerian identity. (Salhi, 2023)

14. The Significance of Souad Massi's Music in the Current Musical Discourse

Massi's music has significance within the current musical discourse of war memory. The significance is founded upon her role as *Shahidat* in the struggle to free her country from Algerian social oppression. This role has allowed her music to be seen among the war-concerned Algerian music currently in circulation. Changing social norms and values would have invested traditionalist musicians with the responsibility of considering the positive or negative cost their music would have upon the society it represented. Yet Massi has applied the role of interpreter to accepted social dogma, criticizing its disparity and the impact it has upon individuals forced to comply with its norms. This situates her outside involvement with the philosophy of traditionalist Algerian, yet her folk-influenced music becomes an indirect form of nostalgia for her pre-war

childhood influenced by ASN music that was central to her parent's generation.

Conclusions

This paper has examined the lived experiences of the French colonial period and the Algerian civil war through the prism of three essential militant narratives. The examination of those narratives could be helpful in understanding the difficulties of insurgent women in warfare and the ways through which their experiences can result in successful peace building and conflict resolution.

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