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Beyond Dangers and Damages

in Ahlam Mosteghanemi's

Chaos of the Senses

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of Magister in Post-Colonial Woman Literature Written in English

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DEDICATION

إلى الذي ظل طيفه وما زال يدفعني إلى آفاق المعالي...

إلى شمسي التي لا تغيب...

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ABSTRACT

Researches as Mehrdad Darvishpour's *Islamic Feminism: Compromise or Challenge to Feminism?* (2008) on the image of women in religion and in literature are often a sensitive topic in Islam. The literary image of women is created by male authors because the Orient, the birth place of Judaism, Christianity and Islam, was dominated by patriarchy for a long time. Most male authors as Abbas Mahmoud Al-Akkad, were writing patriarchal oriented stories, where women are degraded to second class beings. This brought about stereotypes, prejudices and à priori condemnation of women, and men placed themselves in the centre of leading stories as well as in the literary canons.

On the one hand, men were writing about what they thought about women; their image of women, however, hardly corresponds with what women thought about themselves. On the other hand they were abusing the religious feelings of women and exploited them. This work deals with further research on the concept of women in Islam and on their fictional portraits in Ahlam Mosteghanemi's *Chaos of The Senses*. The goal of this work is to find out the efforts of men, women writers who continued to produce novels after colonialism. In some of these novels, such as Nawal El Saadawi's *A Daughter of Isis* (1997) and Ghada al Samman's *Beirut Nightmare* (1997) female characters are already liberated from oppressive male authority. Women impose their bodies as a fact and live with their discovery of new stories written by and about them.

Ahlam Mosteghanemi is the voice of a writer who dares deconstruct the hopes and *clichés* of women and femininity found in the traditions of Islam, while woman is placed under the man's authority and excluded from any kind of authority over men. Indeed male priority prevails as a religious requirement, but both genders are said to have complementary roles. Besides, the "different" interpretation(s) of the sacred Book: the Qur'an, there is probably "objective" evidence to support women's increasing roles and status in different walks of life, notably politics, arts, to name but a few. Indeed, women are associated within sets of authority but remain equal to some extent. And woman written literature contributes to a better understanding of female experiences and voices, crossing borders in time, space and language, thus counteracting harmful "negative" messages.

RESUME

L'image de la femme en religion et en littérature, tout comme les recherches portant sur ce sujet, voire l'étude, de Mehrdad Darvishpour, intitulée *Islamic Feminism : Compromise or Challenge to Feminism?* (2008), est un thème sensible dans l'islam. L'image littéraire de la femme est créée à l'origine par des écrivains. En effet, l'orient, berceau du judaïsme, christianisme et islam, a toujours été patriarcal. Par ailleurs, la plupart des écrivains, à savoir Abbas Mahmoud Al-Akkad, ont écrit des histoires à tendance patriarcale où les femmes sont réduites à sous-être. Chose qui a bel et bien engendré des stéréotypes, des préjugés et une condamnation des femmes à priori. En outre, tout comme les canons littéraires, les hommes se donnaient toujours de l'importance. Par surcroît, les hommes exprimaient ce qu'ils pensaient des femmes or cette image ne correspond, en aucun cas, à celle faite par ces dernières elles-mêmes. En fait, les hommes ont abusé du sentiment religieux chez les femmes et ils les ont exploitées par la suite.

La présente recherche, qui traite, principalement, du concept de la femme dans l'islam et de son portrait fictif dans le roman *Le Chaos des Sens* de Ahlam Mosteghanemi, vise à mettre en évidence les efforts des femmes qui ont continué à produire des romans après le colonialisme. Dans certains de ces romans, citons entre autres *A Daughter of Isis* de Nawal El-Saadawi (1997) et *Beirut Nightmares* de Ghada Essaman (1997), les caractères féminins se sont émancipés de l'autorité masculine étouffante. Les femmes présentent leurs corps tel un fait et s'adaptent aux nouvelles histoires écrites par/pour elles-mêmes.

Ahlam Mosteghanemi, c'est la voix d'une écrivaine qui ose dé/construire les espérances et les clichés, des femmes et de la féminité, existant dans l'islam au moment où les femmes se soumettent à l'autorité des hommes en se privant de toute autorité sur eux. La priorité masculine domine par le biais des besoins religieux ; cependant, les deux sexes se complètent. En outre, vu les différentes interprétations du livre sacré *le Qur'an*, il est une preuve « objective » qui appuie les statuts et les rôles que joue la femme dans divers domaines et notamment : la politique et l'art. En fait, les femmes sont soutenues par un nombre d'autorités mais dans un cadre si limité. La littérature féminine écrite nous aide à mieux comprendre les expériences, à bien entendre la voix des femmes, tout en franchissant les barrières spatio-temporelles et langagières, et à neutraliser les messages « négatifs ».

تعتبر صورة المرأة في الدين والأدب - بما انصبّ حولها من بحوث ودراسات كتلك التي أجراها "مهرداد دارفشور" عام 2008، والتي عنونها بـ: "تسوية أم تحد للحركة النسوية؟ - موضوعا حسّاسا.

إنّ الرّجال هم من شكّلوا صورة المرأة في المشرق - مهد اليهوديّة والمسيحيّة والإسلام- الذي تسوده السّلطة الأبويّة منذ زمن بعيد؛ فجلّ الكتاب الذّكور من أمثال محمود عبّاس العقّاد كانوا يؤلفون قصصا كرّست السّلطة الأبوية، وصنّفت المرأة بموجبها كائنا ثانويّا، ممّا ولّد أفكارا مبتدلة عنها وإجحافا وإدانة لها، في الوقت الذي احتفظ فيه الرّجال لأنفسهم بأدوار البطولة في القصص تماما كما كان الأمر في الأدب الكنسي قبلا.

وكثيرا ما كتب الرّجال عن رؤيتهم للمرأة، غير أن تصوّرهم ذلك لم يكن يتطابق مع الصورة التي ترسمها النساء لأنفسهن، ثمّ إنّهنّ قد أفرطوا في الحسّ الديني للمرأة واستغلّوها به.

تتمحور هذه الدّراسة حول المرأة في الإسلام وصورتها الخيالية في رواية "فوضى الحواس" لصاحبته أحلام مستغامي، وتهدف أساسا إلى إبراز جهود الكتاب "النساء" الذين استمروا في تأليف الروايات بعد الاستعمار. ونجد في هذه الروايات التي نذكر من بينها: "ابنة إزيس" لنوال السّعداوي (1997) و "كوايس بيروت" لغادة السّمّان (1997)، شخصيّات متحرّرة من السّلطة الذّكوريّة الخانقة، حيث تستعرض النسوة أجسادهنّ ويتعايشن مع اكتشافهنّ لقصصهنّ من كتبها عن أنفسهن.

إنّ أحلام مستغامي هي صوت الأديب الذي يجرؤ على تفكيك الآمال والصّور السلبية للنساء والأنوثة عموما - الموجودة في الإسلام- في حين تستمرّ المرأة في الخضوع إلى سلطة الرّجل مستبعدة تماما فرض سلطة عليه.

والواقع أنّ أولويّة الرّجل مفروضة بمقتضيات دينيّة، بيد أنّ كلا الجنسين متكاملين. وبالنظر إلى تفسيرات القرآن المختلفة، تتجلّى لنا حجة موضوعيّة تدعم المرأة فيما تلعبه من أدوار وتحتلّه من مناصب خاصّة في السياسة والفن. وبالرّغم من دعم المرأة ومساندتها بمجموعة من القوانين، فإنّ هذه الأخيرة تنحصر في حدود معيّنة.

ويساهم الأدب النسويّ المكتوب في فهم تجارب الأنثى وسماع صوتها و تذليل العقبات الزمكانيّة واللّغويّة وبالتالي إبطال الرّسائل السلبية المؤذية.

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GENERAL INTRODUCTION

For several centuries in most societies of the world, historically and traditionally, women and men have never been granted equal rights. Women's conditions have been marked by harsh and hardly manageable constraints. They have been mostly deprived of most of their individual rights and liberties. Home has been a prison for the majority of them, and the centre of all their activities. Oppression is the word that comes to mind: the dominance of men over women in a given society has been justified and reinforced by the idea and *clichés* that women are emotional, subordinate, intellectually inapt and physically weak and therefore they can be only inferior to men. Based on such premises, some tasks and functions in society have always been reserved for and dominated by men. As the feminist scholar Sheila Ruth succinctly puts it:

“They all say that women as human beings are substandard: less intelligent; less moral; less competent; less able physically; physiologically; and spiritually; small of body, mind and character.” (Ruth, 2001)

This reductive position pushes modern women to appeal to the principles of human rights to defend theirs. They began reconsidering their beliefs about patriarchy. They realized that the inferior and backward position that they have long occupied was not at all naturally but culturally and socially programmed.

One crucial criticism leveled by non-western women is that Western feminism does not see beyond Western borders, and this ignores and does not adequately recognize the complexities, specificities, experiences and the differences of other women. Furthermore, it places all women's history under white women's history and experience. Thus, many definitions have been coined to best suit the needs of racial groups in general, Arab women in particular.

As for postcolonial theory, it contains an intellectual discourse that holds together a set of theories which are reactions to the cultural legacy of colonialism. As a literary theory it deals with literature, produced in countries that once were colonies of other courtiers especially of the European colonial power: Britain, France and Spain.

It deals also with literature written to resist imperialism which is not practiced only by power, domination and imposing rules on the colonizer but also practiced by

culture. “Imperialism” is a continuous phenomenon that still exists in different forms and new contents to a greater extent.

Even though the colonized nations as India, Algeria... are freed from the power of domination, they are still in a state of « otherness » and considered to some extent “inferior races”. The political and the economic operations of imperialism are supported and maintained by the power of culture and the culture of defense and resistance is the only way through which the dominated nations can respond to imperialism. Thus the culture of resistance is made through “writing-back” (Ashcroft et al., 2004) to the empire without the need of power and arms in order to destroy their stereotyped images through the world.

Furthermore, the very heart of literature is the search for and recapturing of identity, notably individual and national. They are crucial components of post-colonial literature. After all, how can an author get their thoughts across the audience if their voice seems inauthentic?

Love and death are the great themes for novelists. And in certain settings they loom larger still. In Algeria female emancipation has a long way to go, which means illicit liaisons are unusually precarious. Meanwhile, during the early 1990s the political violence there was especially bloody, bitter and prolonged; *Chaos of the Senses* (1997) puts all of this raw drama to good use and adds some more of its own. At the centre of the novel is an escape from these repressive realities into the world of fiction.

Bearing in mind the preoccupations of women writers in a postcolonial context, the research study inspires from a realistic situation concerned with the constraints Arab women in general and Algerian ones in particular, face in finding their way to emancipation, social equality and freedom.

To make the intended contribution as outlined above a possibility, a related problem statement needed to be formulated to direct the research. The problem statement is formulated as follows:

- To what extent can cultural transgression through education lead to women emancipation?

The process of research is best done with knowledge of some basic guidelines. Creswell (2003) recommends that researchers reduce their entire study to a single, overarching question and several sub-questions. Hence, inherent to the above research question, the following sub-questions may be formulated:

- Is it easy to reach transgression without transgressing religion?
- Is transgression a problem for modern Algerian feminist writers?
- How could an Algerian post-colonial feminist writer make her voice heard?

Given credit to the above stated problem and sub-problems, the researcher envisages to hypothesize the following:

- Education brings “prise de conscience” to women in knowing their rights.
- Transgression eliminates to a certain extent social, gender and sexual boundaries.
- Transgression may occur through mother tongue (cultural transgression)
- A translated work/text can tell us about both the culture it was written in and the culture it was produced in. it can be viewed as both educational and entertaining because reading and analyzing translated novels can offer significant insight into the world at large.
- Dialect awareness in literature and life and the importance of its use in the novel. This can come from the writer’s cultural background who realizes the difference between the casual way most people converse and compares it to more formal, standard Arabic, and understands when each is acceptable.

As to the main objectives of the present research study, they are worded below:

- To examine and evaluate, with reference to the novel *Chaos of the Senses*, the intermingling of the personal and the national, the presentation of national history; the roles of citizens and government, post-colonial issues and the role of literature in national life.
- To focus on different periods of the history of independent Algeria.
- To critique the novel from three broad angles: the personal and the National, Documentary National history and the Artistic Perspective.

- To examine critically the fiction of Mosteghanemi in the light of man-woman “human” relationship.
- To distinguish the inner and outer life of the characters.
- To focus on the way the man-woman relationships are depicted in the society.
- To identify the role of education as it operates through the novel from the writer’s family background, history, religion and culture.
- To identify the role of transgression in eliminating social and gender boundaries.
- To explore the emerging trends of feminism such as woman identity, masculinity versus femininity, displacement, cultural hybridity...etc.
- To focus on the reconstruction of women through education, work, social equality, sexuality and transgression (transgression through education).
- To delineate the image of woman as reflected in the work of a North-African Arab writer and analyze this image in historical as well as social context.

All the above formulated objectives help in the structure of this Magister dissertation.

This study also attempts to shed the light on a translated literary work relying on the source in its most original form, with regard to Arab literature. Reading a translated text aims at knowing about the cultural and historical context of both the author and the translator. The latter remains sometimes neglected. Thus, important questions could be asked about the translated work and if the writing is influenced by that author or/and the translator, about the period they lived in, where they come from and also about the author and the translator’s educational, cultural, historical and political backgrounds. Additional interests would focus on how the political, cultural and social situations might have influenced, helped, or hindered both the writing and its translation.

Moreover, some research might be necessary in order to know, for instance, about the current political regime in the source country, learning about how people live and behave there; and most importantly, to know if any changes, deletions, additions, shifts, and so forth have happened when comparing the language of the original work to the translation. Many books do not always have the same title after translation, as the ones mentioned in this dissertation, notably the title of Mosteghanemi’s novel *Dhakhirat al Jassad* [ذاكرة الجسد] translated first to *Memory in The Flesh* (2000) then to *The Bridges of Constantine* (2013).

The present study is a research in life, concerned basically with books, library and web references. The study considers a qualitative approach/ technique to evaluate women's characterization as portrayed by Ahlam Mosteghanemi in her novel selected for this dissertation. The research goes through the English and French translated text, as well as the Arabic text as a primary source.

The study of the research would be analytical, socio-cultural, historical and psycho-analytical. It would be descriptive taking into account the primary sources such as the original works of the writer with the French and the English translation as well as the secondary sources available in the form of criticism.

The researcher uses triangulation and mixed methods as approaches to her study beside many other data collection tools specific to field experimentation study. Both qualitative and quantitative methods are alternately used. Hines (2000) asserts, there is no one best method for conducting survey research. Qualitative research is valuable for describing events, circumstances, and other areas of human understanding, including people's experiences and meanings in a normal social setting, as well as processes and structures (Skinner, Tagg, & Holloway, 2000).

Similarly, Bryman (1993) believes qualitative research is best defined in studies of the social world; as it analyzes and describes human behavior from the point of view of those being studied. However, quantitative research too has value due to its ability to measure data, generalize findings, and make predictions. These research strategies would not be thought of as incompatible, but complementary (Malterud, 2001).

The present research has inevitably certain limitations. It is a study, which concentrates mainly on novels of Arab North-African women writings in Algeria. It focuses on representation of the female gender. It has linguistic boundaries. The study remain confined to a few women writers whose experiences may not cover the total problems of Arab women at large. But this novel is representative of Arab women literature to a greater extent. It is a sample survey on feministic approaches in literatures in Arabic, translated first to English then to French.

Then the research is conducted primarily with a review of selected literature on the issue. The whole study embraces three interrelated chapters divided

progressively from a top down perspective in order to help the reader follow the sequences of events as they are stated.

Chapter One situates the work in the context of the new regulations of postcolonial studies. It deals with the meaning and background of Postcolonial Women Literature. It also further explains the historical developments that led to the evolution of the feminist movement, throwing light over Arab and Islamic Feminisms. Later it elucidates upon Post-Colonial Arab Women Literature.

Chapter Two, through an intensive critical focus on "Transgression" and "Freedom", examines the salient thematic variation that can be seen in transgression in relation to tradition and patriarchy. It also includes probing the western views on Freedom and Muslims' perception of it.

Chapter Three is a view on Ahlam Mosteghanemi and her works on Arab Algerian literature with the sociological literary criticism. It firstly takes up the life history of the author. Then it deals with further research on the concept of women in Islam and on their fictional portraits in Ahlam Mosteghanemi's *Chaos of the Senses*, taking into account language issue and the literary translation. It treats in some details such sub-themes as: love, sexuality and gender, as well as the Algerian historical background of Colonialism.

The conclusion opens avenues of research, notably to examine the woman's question in different literary works belonging to postcolonial contexts, in Asia and Africa.

CHAPTER ONE

POST-COLONIALISM: DEFINITION AND SCOPE

"The final hour of colonialism has struck, and millions of inhabitants of Africa, Asia and Latin America rise to meet a new life and demand their unrestricted right to self-determination"

Che Guevara, "Colonialism is Doomed"(1964)

Introduction

European colonialism began to end in the mid-twentieth century. By its end, the concept of post (-) colonialism¹ started to grow in different parts of the world, namely Africa and Asia. Settler colonies of America and Australia knew the development of similar concepts too. Particular focus

will be laid on the contributions to postcolonial theory from African and Asian postcolonial writers and how they had been influenced by European thinkers and philosophers.

1.4. Post(-)Colonial Theory

The concept post-colonialism is to be defined by different scholars as from the spelling to its definition tackles controversial interpretations.

¹ Ashcroft et al write: "While this distinction in spelling exists, the interweaving of the two approaches is considerable." (Ashcroft et al, 2007)

1.4.1. Defining Post-Colonial

It goes without saying that colonialism as a negation of a nation leads to the formation of resistance groups with different labels namely anti-colonialism, post-colonialism and nationalism. Unlike anti-colonialism and nationalism which are specific designations for the independence movements, post-colonialism refers to the work of scholars and artists whose concern is to analyze the effects of colonization on cultures and societies:

“Post-colonialism (or often postcolonialism) deals with the effects of colonization on cultures and societies. As originally used by historians after the Second World War in terms such as the post-colonial state, ‘post-colonial’ had a clearly chronological meaning, designating the post-independence period. However, from the late 1970s the term has been used by literary critics to discuss the various cultural effects of colonization.” (Ashcroft et al., 2007)

Besides, Rachel Bailey Jones discusses the spelling of the term (post-colonialism) and whether a “hyphen” is used or not:

The term postcolonial (post-colonial) has been the subject of academic debate in recent years. Some scholars (Appiah, 2004; McClintock, 1994) have questioned the use of the prefix “post” in describing the current era. Does “post” imply a break with the past and the entrance into a new era that has eliminated colonialism in its many forms? Does postcolonialism rely on a standard, linear view of time and progress that is based in colonial hierarchies and modernity? (Ibid, 2007)

And obviously she answers her questions:

It has been suggested that the long and complex processes of decolonization have occurred inconsistently and in some case have not yet occurred. (Ibid, 2007)

The influence of poststructuralism on the main postcolonial theorists led them to:

“focus on the material effects of the historical condition of colonialism, as well as on its discursive power, to insist on the hyphen to distinguish post-colonial studies as a field from colonial discourse theory per se, which formed only one aspect of the many approaches and interests that the term ‘postcolonial’ sought to embrace and discuss” (Ashcroft et al., 1996)

Hence, the field of post-colonial studies concerned with the description of what happened/happens to the colonized by the colonizer during and after colonialism is referred to as Post-Colonial Theory. According to Bailey Jones, it is:

“a diverse field of inquiry that explores the physical, psychological, and cultural effects of the colonial systems on the colonizer and the colonized. Scholars working in this field also explore the structures of continued imperial systems that effect global relationships of power and the multiple forms of resistance to historical and current colonial and imperial systems.(Bailey Jones, 2011)

Additionally, it has to be taken into account that post-colonialism not only deals with political issues but comprises also social, economic and cultural sides affected by colonialism. Hans Bertens describes the theory stating:

"Postcolonial theory and criticism radically questions the aggressively expansionist imperialism of the colonizing powers and in particular the system of values that supported imperialism and that it sees as still dominant within the Western world." (Bertens, 2000)

1.4.2. European Background

One of the European thinkers who influenced postcolonial theory was the European philosopher Karl Heinrich Marx (1818-1883). Another philosopher who contributed to the development of this theory was the Italian Marxist Antonio Gramsci (1891-1937). He wrote about 'hegemony', which means "the domination of a person or a group by another", according to the Webster. Gramsci suggests that hegemony could be domination through mutual consent as well as a top-down one. He refers to those groups under hegemonic domination as 'subalterns'. The word subaltern means a person or a group of low status(Webster definition).

"Subaltern, meaning 'of inferior rank', is a term adopted by Antonio Gramsci to refer to those groups in society who are subject to the hegemony of the ruling classes. Subaltern classes may include

peasants, workers and other groups denied access to 'hegemonic' power." (Gramsci,29-35)²

According to Gramsci's concepts of the subaltern and the hegemon, one could "consent" to be dominated by another of a superior position. These concepts have been used extensively in postcolonial theory.

Postcolonialists were also influenced by post-structuralists Ferdinand de Saussure (1857-1913) and Claude Levi-Strauss (1908-2009) who viewed text analysis beyond its linguistic and anthropological dimensions. In other terms:

"The reader replaces the author as the primary subject of inquiry. This displacement is often referred to as the "destabilizing" or "decentering" of the author, though it has its greatest effect on the text itself. Without a central fixation on the author, post-structuralists examine other sources for meaning (e.g., readers, cultural norms, other literature, etc.). These alternative sources are never authoritative, and promise no consistency." (Critical Theory, Wikipedians)

Another eminent philosopher whose theories and concepts have had significant influence on postcolonial studies is the French Michel Foucault (1926-1984). His thoughts were described by his colleague Pierre Bourdieu (1930-2002) as *"a long exploration of transgression, of going beyond social limits, always inseparably linked to knowledge and power."*(Eribon, 1991)

² - For details, see: Gramsci and Hegemony, <http://www.powercube.net/other-forms-of-power/gramsci-and-hegemony/>

Foucault's concept of 'discourse' consists in that it is linked to power and knowledge. They are represented as: power – discourse – knowledge. He argues that power creates discourses, as he explains:

“All manifest discourse is secretly based on an 'already-said'; and that this 'already said' is not merely a phrase that has already been spoken, or a text that has already been written, but a 'never-said', an incorporeal discourse, a voice as silent as a breath, a writing that is merely the hollow of its own mark. It is supposed therefore that everything that is formulated in discourse was already articulated in that semi-silence that precedes it, which continues to run obstinately beneath it, but which it covers and silences. (Foucault, 1969)

And so discourse, in turn, creates knowledge, as he states further:

The manifest discourse, therefore, is really no more than the repressive presence of what it does not say; and this 'not-said' is a hollow that undermines from within all that is said. The first theme sees the historical analysis of discourse as the quest for and the repetition of an origin that eludes all historical determination; the second sees it as the interpretation of 'hearing' of an 'already-said' that is at the same time a 'not-said'.” (Ibid, 61)

It is conventionally known that knowledge gives power. However, Foucault gives a new shape to the relationship between power and knowledge. Hence, he talks of "a certain code of knowledge" meaning that knowledge is somehow limited. (Ibid, p31)

Another European to be cited in this work and to have influenced post-colonialism was the French Jacques Derrida (1930-2004). His theory was based on the presence of social binaries. The word 'binary' means 'twofold'. In post-colonialist criticism, the word stands for a pair of opposites with one of its terms dominating the other and also suppressing the ambiguous and in-between spaces. (Derrida, 1976)

Both colonizers and the colonized have used binaries but not in a similar way. For instance, “white/coloured” and “modern/primitive” are binaries which have been used by the colonizers whereas the colonized used binaries like “indigenous/foreign” and “traditional/new”. Surprisingly, the relation between two or more binaries can be complex in that sense that a binary matrix may be read downwards, i.e. colonizer-colonized, white-coloured and civilized-primitive; as it is read across, i.e. colonizer-white- civilized vs. colonized-coloured- primitive. This would imply that the colonizer who is white and civilized as opposed to the colonized who is coloured and primitive. (Ibid, 64).

The matrix below is a clear illustration of binary opposition :

colonizer – colonized

white – coloured

civilized – primitive

There were other Europeans who wrote on postcolonial theory, like Roland Barthes (1915-1980), and Americans too such as the linguist Noam Chomsky

(1928 -). However, the Asian and African contributions remain tremendously significant too.

1.4.3. African and Asian Contributions

The world of post-colonialism has provoked many researchers to investigate issue as in Africa and in Asia. While with a worldwide influence, the “*Discours sur le Colonialisme*” [*Discourse on Colonialism*] is a French essay which was written by Aime Fernand David Césaire (1913-2008) and published in 1950 and later translated into English. This essay gave birth to African postcolonialism. Césaire argues that the relationship between different continents was not horizontal but rather a vertical one, where the colonizer was mostly in the roles of a classroom monitor, an army sergeant, a prison guard or a slave driver. (Césaire, 1950)

Césaire accuses Europe of giving birth to problems in the African continent and affirms that Africa was not uncivilized before colonialism. He writes:

A civilization that proves incapable of solving the problems it creates is a decadent civilization.

A civilization that chooses to close its eyes to its most crucial problems is a stricken civilization.

A civilization that uses its principles for trickery and deceit is a dying civilization. (Césaire, 1950)

[Une civilisation qui s'avère incapable de résoudre les problèmes que suscite son fonctionnement est une civilisation décadente.

Une civilisation qui choisit de fermer les yeux à ses problèmes les plus cruciaux est une civilisation atteinte.

Une civilisation qui ruse avec ses principes est une civilisation moribonde.]

One of the students of Aime Cesaire in the school where he used to teach was Frantz Fanon (1925-1961). In 1952, Fanon wrote *Peau Noire, Masques Blancs* [*Skin Black, Masks White*], later translated into English as *Black Skin, White Masks* (1967). The book narrates the experiences of a black man in a white world. Being black was synonym to hatred, segregation and inferiority. Fanon regrets the Whites symbolizing the Superior Other and rejecting the Blacks even when they master their language. It is a feeling of dehumanization that is to hear a white saying to another white: “*Look, a Negro!*”, whenever they come in front of a black. Fanon writes:

“I was responsible at the same time for my body, for my race, for my ancestors. I subjected myself to an objective examination. I discovered my blackness, my ethnic characteristics; and I was battered down by tom-toms, cannibalism, intellectual deficiency, fetishism, racial defects, slave-ships, and above all else, above all: “Sho' good eatin’.”

On that day, completely dislocated, unable to be abroad with the other, the white man, who unmercifully imprisoned me, I took myself far off from my own presence, far indeed, and made myself an object. What else could it be for me but an amputation, an excision, a hemorrhage that splattered my whole body with black blood? But I did

not want this revision, this thematisation. All I wanted was to be a man among other men. I wanted to come lithe and young into a world that was ours and to help to build it together.” (Fanon, 1952)

The next year, Frantz Fanon's second book was published by the name *L'An Cinq de la Revolution Algérienne [Year Five of the Algerian Revolution]*, later translated into English as *A Dying Colonialism* (1965). It was about the Algerian Revolution which started in 1954 and led to independence from French colonialism. In 1961 Fanon published his third book *Les Damnés de la Terre [The Damned of the Earth]*. The book tells about a “Negro” psychoanalyst's study of racism and colonialism. It was translated into English as *The Wretched of the Earth* (1963), and has a preface by Sartre himself.

Fiction too contributed to the birth of postcolonial theory. For instance *Things Fall Apart* (1958) by the Nigerian writer Chinua Achebe (1930-2013), is a novel about how things fall apart in a West African village on the arrival of British colonialist. In 1965, Chinua Achebe wrote an essay titled *The Novelist as Teacher* in which the novelist became a pedagogue who wants to teach the unknown history of pre-colonial Africa through his novels. Ten years later, Achebe wrote an essay titled “*Colonialist Criticism*” (1974), in which he was skeptical and inquires about the practice of literary criticism to investigate for so-called universal qualities in literature. He denies this universality and writes:

“I should like to see the word universal banned altogether from discussions of African literature, until such a time as people cease to

use it as a synonym for the narrow, self-serving parochialism of Europe". (Ashcroft et al. 2003)

Additionally, there were many other figures who helped in the development of African postcolonialism like Leopold Sedar Senghor (1906-2001) from Senegal, Wole Soyinka (1934-) from Nigeria, Edward Kamau Brathwaite (1930 -) from Barbados and Wilson Harris (1921-) from Guyana.

"Together with Edward W. Said, Gayatri C. Spivak and Homi K. Bhabha make up what Robert Young describes as "the Holy Trinity" of postcolonial critics who have achieved the greatest eminence in their field (1995: 163)." (Moore-Gilbert cited in Schwarz and Ray, 2005)

Although European philosophers as Foucault, built the background of postcolonial theory, many authors have talked about the effect of imperialism around the globe, from Africa, the Americas, and Australia. But the major contribution remains from Asian theoreticians: Edward Wadie Said (1935-2003) from Palestine, Homi K. Bhabha (1949-) and Gayatri C. Spivak (1942-) from India, to quote just a few.

Edward W. Said is often considered the founder of post-colonial theory. Said had a long career as an English professor at Columbia university. He was born in Palestine before the State of Israel came into being in 1947. At that point, his family who were Arabs and Protestants moved to Egypt. Said was educated in the Middle East and in America.

Said's work will be identified as very important and influential, in particular his book *Orientalism*, published in 1974. The book significantly contributed to the development of postcolonial theory by analyzing the relationships between the Western world and the Middle East, India, Africa and other parts of the other world. Such relationships were all shaped by the imperial colonialism.

Orientalism is a profound study of the "Other". Said argues that the Western powers engaged in colonialism, particularly Great Britain and France, created the version of the Orient for Western consumption that had little to do with the actual orient. This is the time period when they used to say "The sun never sets on the British Empire".³

The word "orientalism" has its definition in the Webster as "*something (as a style or manner) associated with or characteristic of Asia or Asians/ scholarship or learning in Asian subjects or languages)*".⁴

By "Orient" Said makes it clear to some extent what he means the Middle East. His main concern in *Orientalism*, his book, is the Arab world. Said writes that:

"The Orient is not only adjacent to Europe; it is also the place of Europe's greatest and richest and oldest colonies, the source of its civilizations and languages, its cultural contestant, and one of its deepest and most recurring images of the Other..." (Said, 1978)

Said says that culture and ideology as a mode of discourse, and that:

³ First written in 1829 by King Georges IV

⁴ Definition of 'Orientalism':

http://www.merriamwebster.com/dictionary/orientalism?utm_campaign=sd&utm_medium=serp&utm_source=jsonl

“None of this Orient is merely imaginative. The Orient is an integral part of European material civilization and culture. Orientalism expresses and represents that part culturally and even ideologically as a mode of discourse with supporting institutions, vocabulary, scholarship, imagery, doctrines, even colonial bureaucracies and colonial styles.” (Ibid, 78)

Said describes as a style of thought based on distinction made between “the Orient and “the Occident”. He argues:

“The phenomenon of Orientalism [...] deals principally, not with a correspondence between Orientalism and Orient, but with the internal consistency of Orientalism and its ideas about the Orient [...] despite or beyond any correspondence, or lack thereof, with a "real" Orient.”
(Ibid, 78)

Thus, the idea behind the book *Orientalism* is to seek out the origins and the coherence of the description of the Orient that began to appear in Europe in the middle of the 18th and early 19th centuries, provoking the deconstruction of the interpretations and images forged by the Occident.

Said mentions that the Orient is a “place”, a site of colonies, civilizations and languages, but also one of the deepest and the most recurring “images” of the “Other”. The Orient and the people who live there are “Other”, different, separate from the West and Westerners. *Orientalism* is about the manufacture of the “Other”.

“Arabs, for example, are thought of as camel-riding, terroristic, hook-nosed, venal lechers whose undeserved wealth is an affront to real civilization. Always there lurks the assumption that although the Western consumer belongs to a numerical minority, he is entitled either to own or to expend (or both) the majority of the world resources. Why? Because he, unlike the Oriental, is a true human being. No better instance exists today of what Anwar Abdel Malek calls “the hegemonism of possessing minorities” and anthropocentrism allied with Europocentrism: a white middle-class Westerner believes it his human prerogative not only to manage the nonwhite world but also to own it, just because by definition “it” is not quite as human as “we” are. There is no purer example than this of dehumanized thought.” (Said, 1978)

Over centuries, Western writers as Joseph Conrad (1857-1924), have generated and reinforced an image of the East by creating libraries and museums full of writings and images and shaping a version of the Orient for the Western world. Said argues that the process of building this massive archive began in the 16th century and took on a decidedly imperial tone in the 18th and 19th centuries. He makes the point that knowledge leads to power. In this case, Western knowledge of the East leads to the Western control over the East. The writing and painting were done first along with map-making and the study of Eastern languages and cultures. That academic and artistic knowledge was highly useful in the economic, military and political control the West began to exert over the East in the 18th century. Representation also leads to power. The West represents

the East in a thousand ways. All of them add up to create a version of the East. There is a strange, exotic, sensual, barbaric, and cruel place... the opposite of the rational, just, normal, civilized West. (Said, 1977)

Orientalism revolutionized the study on the Middle East and helped to create and shape entire new fields of study such as Postcolonial Theory as well as influencing disciplines as diverse as English, History, Anthropology, Political Sciences and Cultural studies.

As previously mentioned, relationships between the Western world and the Middle East, Asia and Africa were relationships between the colonizers and the colonized ones. These were not equal relationships. As such, it was the main concern of Homi K. Bhabha, an Indian theorist and critic.

Bhabha was born in India. He received his undergraduate degree from the University of Mumbai before going to Oxford for his Ph.D. He has started several institutions in Britain and the US. He is currently the director of the Humanities Center at Harvard where he is also an English professor of reputation.

One of Bhabha's central ideas is “mimicry”. This concept is related to what is commonly known as multiculturalism in a rough sense (1994). Bhabha argues that mimicry is the effect of the doubling that takes place when one culture dominates another. Some of those dominated will attempt to mimic those in the dominant culture. Members of the dominant culture will encourage mimicry among those they dominate. This applies to the colonial situation obviously in

that sense that the colonizer is often mimicked by the colonized. In his book *The Location of Culture* published in 1994, Bhabha writes:

If colonialism takes power in the name of history, it repeatedly exercises its authority through the figures of farce. For the epic intention of the civilizing mission, 'human and not wholly human' in the famous words of Lord Rosebery, 'writ by the finger of the Divine' often produces a text rich in the traditions of 'trompe-l'œil', irony, mimicry and repetition. In this comic turn from the high ideals of the colonial imagination to its low mimetic literary effects Mimicry emerges as one of the most elusive and effective strategies of colonial power and knowledge. (Bhabha, 1994)

Hybridity⁵ takes the colonized away from his or her own culture and identity, shaping of people who are neither themselves nor their colonizers, people without a really usable effective identity. Bhabha argues further:

"It is significant that the productive capacities of this Third Space have a colonial or postcolonial provenance. For a willingness to descend into that alien territory may open the way to conceptualising an international culture, based not on the exoticism of multiculturalism or the diversity of cultures, but on the inscription and articulation of culture's hybridity." (Bhabha, 1994)

By "hybridity", Bhabha refers to:

⁵ "Hybridity" is another postcolonial concept which H.K. Bhabha is also associated with.

“[T]he revaluation of the assumption of colonial identity through the repetition of discriminatory identity effects. It displays the necessary deformation and displacement of all sites of discrimination and domination. It unsettles the mimetic or narcissistic demands of colonial power but reimplicates its identifications in strategies of subversion that turn the gaze of the discriminated back upon the eye of power.” (Ashcroft et al. 1995)

Bhabha sees ways in which mimicry challenges the dominant culture which may seem like it is a “performance”. Then, *“Colonial mimicry is the desire for a reformed recognizable other”* (Bhabha, 1994). The discourse of mimicry is constructed around that ambivalence. In order to be effective, mimicry must continually produce its slippage, its excess, its difference. In other words, the colonizer wants to colonize subject to mimic the dominant society, but wants that subject to get it a little bit wrong, ridiculous in its performance or failed performance of Englishness or Frenchness or whatever it is.

However, hybridity as a fusion of certain elements of the colonizing and colonized peoples may lead to the reaffirmation of the colonizer’s domination. This concept of the differences within the colonized peoples is discussed by Gayatri Spivak.(1998)

Born in India, Spivak was educated there and in the United States before taking a position at Columbia University. She published a long complex essay with the title: *Can the subaltern speak?* It has received an enormous amount of attention since its first publication in 1998. Spivak’s title refers to the least

powerful in society: the subaltern. Subaltern is a term for those of a lower economic and cultural status, the masses who exist outside of the power structure of a given society. It is an important term in the writings of Gramsci, a Marxist thinker and was taken from his prison notebook by a group of Indian intellectuals who formed the “Subaltern Studies Group”. Spivak’s question is a direct response to work by this group. She particularly focuses on subaltern women. The term “speak” is not entirely literal for Spivak. She means: “Can the lowest members of society express their concerns, enter into dialogue with those who have power? And also, if they do speak, write, or otherwise communicate their concerns, will they be heard?”

“What we mean by attending to the subaltern classes is what they do, speak... and they resist, they form collectives... but there is no infrastructure for - again to go back to the metaphor - them to have their speech act completed... In other words, those around them with the power, State power or Non- State power, do not have the infrastructure... to be able to attend to these things...” (Spivak, 1998)

On the way to answering this question, Spivak shows awareness of heterogeneity among the colonized. She identifies four class positions in Indian society. The first named ‘dominant foreign groups’ include colonial powers such as the English and French international powers as the Americans and Russians and international corporations. The second called ‘dominant indigenous groups’ at the national level. This includes Indian politicians and business interests of the national government and national companies in India. The third position is

for ‘dominant indigenous groups’ at the regional and local levels. And finally, ‘the people’ and particularly the “subaltern classes”. (Spivak, 1998)

Spivak answers her question in the last paragraph of her essay. She writes:

“The subaltern cannot speak. There is no virtue in global laundry lists with ‘woman’ as a pious item. Representation has not withered away. The female intellectual as intellectual has a circumscribed task which she must not disown with a flourish.” (Spivak, 1998)

Spivak argues that female intellectuals must speak for the subaltern. She does not like this answer since she sees it as a kind of ventriloquism. Just as Said's theory on the importance of representation in maintaining colonial control (Said, 1978), Spivak is also referring to representation. But in her case, it is not just the colonizers who represent the colonized. There are layers of representations. The female intellectual sympathetic to the plight of the subaltern are representing them. She would agree with Said that every representation is a misrepresentation. A picture, in other words, no matter how perfect, is not the “thing” it represents. Nevertheless, Spivak thinks that until the subaltern is able to develop a political consciousness and to express it, this representation is the best option available.

1.4.4. Post-Colonial Feminist Theory

The role of women in colonial times seems to be controversial for postcolonialism. On the one hand, postcolonial theorists dealt with the issue from a male point of view. Bailey writes:

Early well-known scholars [working] in the field [of post-colonial theory] (Césaire, 1972; Fanon, 1967; Said, 1978, etc.) articulated the psychological, academic, and cultural effects of colonialism from a male point of view. In this work, the colonizer and colonized were assumed to be male and the effects on women and their important roles in the resistance movements were marginalized or ignored completely. Since the 1990s, many scholars have used the tools of feminist critique to engage with the ideas of postcolonialism; this work connects the effects and continued legacy of colonialism to the power and conditions of patriarchy. (Jones, 2004:23)

Lewis and Mills also denounce the exclusion of women theorists who immensely contributed to the exploration of the actual historical role they played in anti-colonial struggles. They write:

“we note that the dynamism that feminism provided for the early development of critical studies in colonialism, imperialism, race and power has often been overlooked. It is far more common to see allegiances proffered to the line of male greats (for example, Frantz Fanon, Edward Said and Homi Bhabha) than “to acknowledge the contributions of women scholars and activists (such as Angela Davis,

Adrienne Rich, Audre Lorde or bell hooks, although it must be noted that Gayatri Spivak tends to be very visible as the exceptionally cited female voice).” (Lewis and Mills, 2003)

On the other hand, postcolonialism charged white women of complicity in colonialism. Bailey argues that:

While postcolonial theory generally assumed a universal male subject, feminist theory has assumed a universal white, western female subject. Western liberal feminism that gained immense attention and popularity in the 1960s and 1970s carried with it a sense of universal womanhood. Generally led by white, middle-class women in Europe and the United States, this movement claimed to speak for all women and a universal critique of patriarchal systems of power and privilege. Speaking from a central, western cultural position afforded these women a form of privilege over both women of color in the west and women in the derisively labeled “third world” (Jones, 2004)

Even more, Sara Mills reinforces the argument of her colleague Jones, stating that:

Whatever be the role of white women in colonialism, the role of their coloured sisters has been less controversial though. Both postcolonialism and feminism agree that coloured women were victimized on two counts, their colonized status as well as their gender. (Mills, 1997)

Influenced by the theory of Foucault (1963) on power, Feminist theorists' recent *“work has moved away from viewing women as simply an oppressed group, as victims of male domination, and has tried to formulate ways of analysing power as it manifests itself and as it is resisted in the relations of everyday life.”* (Ibid, 1997). In the same vein, Mills comments on McClintock in the following:

“[Foucault argues that] analysis would see class concerns integrated with concerns about gender (Cliff, 1984). People are not oppressed because of their class separately from their oppression because of race or gender, although one of those factors might feel dominant at any particular moment. In her discussion of the impossibility of separating gender, race and class when describing relations of power under imperialism, Anne McClintock puts it in the following way:

[i]Imperialism cannot be understood without a theory of gender power. Gender power was not the superficial patina of empire, an ephemeral gloss over the more decisive mechanisms of class and race. Rather, gender dynamics were, from the outset, fundamental to the securing and maintenance of the imperial enterprise. (McClintock, 1995: 6.7)” (Ibid, 1997)

Post-colonial feminist theory is a subject of interest with implications on the situation of women both in colonial and post-colonial societies where they seek equal justice and reject marginalization and exclusion. The following focuses on feminist and postcolonial issues:

“revisit some of the early feminist hopes, dreams, angers and conflicts that inspired scholars, activists and artists in their attempts to make sense of and ultimately to change the oppressive power relations encoded in the name of race, nation and empire, as well as those of gender, class and sexuality, and, in other cases, to trace a path of feminist postcolonial concerns.” (Lewis and Mills, 2003)

1.5. Feminist, Female, Feminine

From a long time, women have suffered injustice and male dominance. They have been considered as second-class citizens. Seeking out equal rights and opportunities in societies, they organized in movements and associations to make their voices heard. In so doing, women have used the terms 'feminist', 'female' and 'feminine' in various ways. Hence, it is necessary to define each of the three terms and distinguish between them.

According to Toril Moi, *“The words 'feminist' or 'feminism' are political labels indicating support for the aims of the new women's movement which emerged in the late 1960s.”* (Belsey and Moore, 1998). Moi suggests that ‘feminists’ are women who believed that western civilization is patriarchal⁶, male-dominated and women are subordinates to men in all fields like family, religion, society, politics, and economics. As for “female”, she points out that considering ‘feminism’ “a political commitment to the struggle against all forms of patriarchy and sexism, it follows that the very fact of being *female* does not necessarily guarantee a feminist approach.” (Ibid, 98). In other terms, it is

quite possible for men to be feminists for such a humanistic struggle. Moi argues:

“If feminists do not have to work exclusively on female authors, perhaps they do not need to be females, either? In principle, the answer to this question is surely yes: men can be feminists - but they can't be women, just as whites can be anti-racist, but not black.”

(Ibid, 98)

To sum it up, 'feminism' is a political position, 'femaleness' is a matter of biology and 'femininity' is a set of culturally defined characteristics.(Code, 2000)

*“We owe the concept 'becoming woman' to Simone de Beauvoir. She begins the second volume of *The Second Sex* (1949) with the now much-cited phrase, 'one is not born a woman: one becomes one'. Second-wave Anglophone feminists have most commonly construed this statement to mean that being 'a woman', or being 'feminine', is not a natural attribute. Having a female sexed biological body does not automatically make one a woman; rather one becomes a woman through a process of initiation into a socially constituted identity. In short, sex (anatomical differences between women and men) and gender are not synonymous.*

Although Beauvoir did not use the term gender, the distinction between sex and gender is implied in her observation that 'every female human being is not necessarily a woman' ([1949] 1989:xix). Beauvoir sets out

to describe what she calls 'the lived experience' of becoming a woman."

(Ibid, 57)

Through the terms female, feminine have to some extent, clear definitions following a cultural context, feminist, nevertheless, could include both women and men who are for equality and recognition of women's qualities and abilities.

1.5.1. Defining Feminism

Feminism is rather a recent word which first appeared in France in the 1880s as *femini.sme*. It spread through European countries in the 1890s and to North and South America by 1910s. The term is an association of the French word woman, *femme*, and *—isme*, meaning an ideology.(Freedman,2003).

bell hooks⁷, of her name Gloria Jean Watkins (1952-) is an American feminist and social activist. She completed her doctorate in literature at the University of California in the United States of America. In 2000, she published "*Feminism Is For Everybody*" which describes itself as "*a vision of a beloved community that appeals to all those committed to equality, mutual respect, and justice.*"

hooks gives a definition of "feminism" – that she loves . She says:

"I have wanted them to have an answer to the question "what is feminism?" that is rooted neither in fear or fantasy. I have wanted them to have this simple definition to read again and again so they

⁷ bell hooks put the name in lowercase letters "to distinguish [herself from] her great-grandmother." She said that her unconventional lowercasing of her name signifies what is most important is her works: the "substance of books, not who I am." [Heather Williams. "bell hooks Speaks Up". *The Sandspur* (2/10/06).]

*know: "Feminism is a movement to end sexism, sexist exploitation, and oppression." I love this definition, which I first offered more than 10 years ago in my book *Feminist Theory: From Margin to Center*. I love it because it so clearly states that the movement is not about being anti-male. It makes it clear that the problem is sexism. And that clarity helps us remember that all of us, female and male, have been socialized from birth on to accept sexist thought and action."* (hooks, 2000:viii)

As to Estelle B. Freedman, she sees feminism in the way that:

"women and men are inherently of equal worth. Because most societies privilege men as a group, social movements are necessary to achieve equality between women and men, with the understanding that gender always intersects with other social hierarchies." (Freedman, 2002)

Broadly speaking, to attain an adequate definition of feminism, we should come first through concepts like 'gender', 'sexism', 'patriarchy', 'masculinity', 'subaltern', 'others' and all that relates to the history of woman's struggle against oppression, male domination and more precisely social inequality. Indeed, capitalism reinforced the hole between men and women due to the increase of the markets and the specialization of labour, the issue that condemned women to domestic work and thus be "eternally" dependent on men economically.

1.5.2. Marxist, Liberal, and Radical Feminisms

Different branches of feminism embrace Marxist, liberal and radical feminisms.

Marxist feminism rises against exploitation of women in capitalist societies. Marxist feminists claimed their exclusion from the public sphere and their subordination not only to the capitalist world but also to the capitalist mode of life characterized by all kinds of preventing women from emancipation.

Saint Simonians stated that, "with the emancipation of the woman will come the emancipation of the worker." (Fourier, qd in Bell and Offen, 1983). Although Marxist philosophy inspired feminist movement all over the world such as Simone de Beauvoir in France, Doris Lessing in England and liberal feminist Betty Friedan in the United States, Marxism did not succeed in recognizing both capitalist and gender oppressions within the "labour power". Women were underpaid and resumed to domestic labour where home was the best place for them. Beauvoir explained in her work *The Second Sex* (1949): "*We must fight for an improvement in woman's actual situation before achieving the socialism we hope for.*" In addition, Betty Friedman in *The Feminine Mystique* (1963), criticized the male-female division of labour and asserted women who spent their life in insignificant housework would never achieve life challenges outside home as wife and mother.

As to the Liberal feminist movement, it was generated by two main world events that took place in America and France. They are the American Revolution against British colonial rule in 1776 and the French Revolution against

aristocratic rule in 1789. Not only women but also men fought for their political rights. Women claimed for education, mainly, and property rights and suffrage.

Liberal feminists believed that sex equality could be obtained only by education and a fair legal system and an efficient political reform. Many scholar names appeared around the world, influenced by the call for liberty, equality and fraternity.

In France, Olympe de Gouges gave out *The Declaration of the Rights of Woman and the Female Citizen* in which she incited women to ask for their rights.⁸ In England, the groundwork for education for women and suffrage was built by Mary Wollstonecraft, author of *A Vindication of the Rights of Women* (1792), Harriet Taylor who published *Enfranchisement of Women* (1851) and John Stuart Mill who wrote *Subjection of Women* (1861).

Yet, Radical feminists' concern is on patriarchy. They believe that the difference between sexes is not economic or social but rather biological and psychological. One of the central figures of radical feminism was Shulamith Firestone. In her book *The Dialectic of Sex* (1974), she argues that gender inequality has its origin in the patriarchal structures imposed on women on the basis of their biology and the social and psychological disadvantages provoked by childbearing.

Moreover, Radical feminists focus on the subordination of women caused by a sex class system in which male power is exercised and reinforced through such

⁸ See at : <https://chnm.gmu.edu/revolution/d/293/>

practices as sexual harassment, rape, pornography, prostitution, as well as pregnancy, love and marriage. Biology gives rise to those psychological characteristics linked with women: nurturance, warmth, emotional expressiveness, endurance, practical common sense.⁹

French radical feminist Christine Delphy denies the subjection of women for biological reason and developed an analysis of gender arguing that gender precedes sex. Her theory constitutes a landmark in the process of denaturalizing sex, which is a marker of gender.¹⁰ With Monique Wittig, they see that child bearing is not a biological natural process but a social/historical construction of 'forced production'. More precisely, women are forced to behave in ways that are seen as natural, and this makes of them a distinct biological sex.

Feminism emerged as an important force in the Western world in the 1960s. Charlotte Bunch (1981) points out: *“Sexual, racial, gender violence and other forms of discrimination and violence in a culture cannot be eliminated without changing culture.”*

Feminism is not struggling for women's rights only but also about transforming society by teaching to the child virtues of modern life, of justice, equality and collective interest. These values are taught in family for “there is no issue that is not a woman’s issue”. (Bunch, 1981)

⁹[Theory, Feminism, and Feminist Theory](#)

¹⁰https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Christine_Delphy#cite_note-7

1.2.3. Arab and Islamic Feminism

In reviewing literature that is linked to the objectives of the present study, we notice that the two terms Arab Feminism and Islamic feminism are used interchangeably by some western intellectuals like in Jennifer King's thesis entitled *Islamic Feminism Versus Western Feminism* (2003).

Such a combination puts forward to question whether the two terms refer to one exact notion of feminism. Meanwhile, Middle Eastern feminism is another subtitle which disregards the interests of feminist writers from North Africa and the Gulf countries. Interestingly, most Arab countries form their constitutions on the basics of Islamic legislations which do not have the synonymous equality of the western or the non-Arab standards. In this study, the selected western feminist novels assert equality of status between males and females to reach studies, work, salary and inheritance.

On the other hand, Islamic feminists ask for equality to reach studies, work and payments. The latter are the already rights that Islam called for. In this light, the questioning is how can Islamic feminism different from the western and the non-Muslim Arab feminism in terms of equality?

Throughout this research, two questions need to be answered: is it feasible for a Muslim woman to demand equality of status while the Qur'an clearly states that "*and the male is not like the female.*" (03: 36)¹¹

¹¹ Holy Quran: <http://www.oneummah.net/quran/>

Furthermore, is it reasonable for a Muslim woman to demand equal inheritance to that of men while the Qur'an states: "*the male has double the share of the female.*"? (04:11). Margot Badran who is an Islamic feminist writer points out that the prejudices that Muslim females may face do not stem from religion in itself; rather, they stem from the faulty way that religion is conceived and interpreted.(Badran, 2006)

Nawal al-Saadawi too emphasizes this view and claims that authorities and politicians quote from Islam just what serve their interests. (08 mar 2014). For example, Islamic feminists may reword the Koranic verse that says: "And the male is not like the female." (24:36). Absolutely, the verse denotes that men and women are not the same; yet, none of them is superior or inferior to each other, bringing to mind that Islam is a religion of fairness.

The difference between the western jurisdiction and Islam in terms of equal inheritance is effortlessly assimilated. Both western feminist writers and Arab ones struggle to call for equality with men. Meanwhile, Islamic feminists' reference to Islam was the scholar Al-kortobi who explained that God qualified men with a considerable share of inheritance since they have more responsibilities and charges, and not due to a higher status.¹²

However, some Arab feminist writers avoid linking whatever religion from the dispute of human rights (Helen Rizzo 24 Aug, 2012). The latter view signals that not all Arab feminist writers are Muslims and apply Islamic legislations. Al-

¹² islamqa info, 25 Nov 2015

Saadawi, a prominent Egyptian writer, calls for separating women's concerns from religion, and argues: *"When you have increasing power of religious groups, oppression of women increases. Women are oppressed in all religions."* (Saadawi, 2011)

Besides, not all Arab feminist writers are Muslims. Instances encompass the Lebanese Christian author, Alice Al-Bustani and the Palestinian Christian, Asma Tobi. All in all, the two terms, Arab and Muslim feminisms should not be expressed as equivalent synonyms.

Despite the fact that the majority of the Arab society is Muslim, there exist certain religious minorities that do not come in line with some of Islam's legislations. Some Arab non-Muslim men state their dissatisfaction towards Islamic laws and principles.

In this context, Egyptian women keep calling for altering the law in order to get equal inheritance along with men. Yet, the constitution built on Islamic legislations discarded such an act. (Badran, 1996: 133-134)

Historically speaking, the origin of the expression Arab feminism is linked back to the 1940s while the term Islamic feminism is currently used by Badran in 1999.(Sabah, 2012) However, the timing is not so important since the principles of Islamic feminism have existed before the term was used.

According to Arab people, literary feminism is any created art, written by Arab writers or about women calling for their rights, whatever the writer's religious background and the language used. Nevertheless, Islamic feminism is

any work produced by Arab or non-Arab writers who try to enhance women's well being within Islam's boundaries, such as the Iranian feminist writer, Nina Ansary and the Pakistani feminist, Mukhtaran Mai. (Sabah, 2012)

Besides, those varieties of Arab, Islamic and secular feminist writers denote that the term: Arab does not mean Islamic and vice versa. In other words, the Arab and Islamic cultures are not consequently the same. The misuse of the above terms is a result of lacking knowledge about Arab and Islamic cultures. Globally, western feminists have a mistaken idea about women in the Arab Muslim world and then exemplify them wrongly and perpetuate stereotypes.

Sometimes, the majority of Arab, Muslim and third world women are not only unwelcomed by male discriminated societies, they are furthermore, depicted wrongly by western feminism's criteria. In actual fact, western feminists categorize and portray third world women as one kind regardless of the individual historical, cultural and social variation that is typical to every single woman. (Sabah, 2012). For instance, Mary Stange, Karol Oyster and Jane Sloan (2011:79) illustrate that westerners regard Arab women as oppressed females due to Islamic ruling. For that reason, they view the veil as a degrading sign.

In addition, referring to women as 'Haram', deriving from the Arabic word *haram* which means forbidden or sacred, is another kind of persecution since it limits Arab women's rights (2003). It shows, once again, the intellectual misunderstanding.

In response to these general regards of universal patriarchies and the common view of feminism, the Indian scholar Chandra Mohanty argued that westerners consider all women as a homogenous group that is combined by the same historical, social, economic and political standards. Thereupon, a wrong idea has been taken that all women possess universal interests and requests. (2003)

In this regard, Mohanty links the western failure of pinpointing at the homogeneity of third world women to two factors: First, the condition of ethnographic universality in addition to the inadequate self-awareness about the impact western feminism has on women of the third world that is directed by the west (2003). Nevertheless, Mohanty clarifies that third world women are wrongly described through overgeneralizations whereas they have various languages, experiences and origins.

On the one hand, western description of third world women produces a dichotomy within feminism since third world females are viewed as illiterate, weak, sexually exploited, victimized and oriented by family legion. On the other hand, western females are presented as open-minded, liberated, achieved and non-oppressed women. (2003:21)

Additionally, Mohanty (2003: 22-23) backs up her criticism of western eyes on third world feminism through white women's notion of sisterhood. The latter shows men as an entire collective block in terms of interests and goals regardless of their position and geographical boundaries as all females share the literal principles of degrading dictatorship and social patriarchy.

However, Mohanty proposes that the term could be substituted instead by the thought of “solidarity”. In particular, she directs her objective to concentrate on males’ universal power and at the same time taking into consideration the “otherness” of females. That is to mean, the hidden characteristics that are typical to every single woman.

Despite the fact that Mohanty (2003:39-40) admits western feminism’s consideration to third world females, she points out that the descriptions linked to the latter are still overgeneralized and lack some social and cultural points that could lead to inaccurate correlation between first and third world feminisms.

As far as the misinterpretations associated to third world women are concerned, Juliet Mince (1980) is one of the authors who pictured third world women in general. For that, Mohanty criticizes Mince’s claim that “the family and the tribe are the two sole social patriarchal bodies”, that a Muslim woman is accustomed with.

Correspondingly, a Muslim woman recognizes herself either as a mother, sister or spouse only. Besides, Mohanty (2003:34) attacks Mince’s claim since she does not take into account the historical, social and cultural factors as if Muslim females are one unified body, living in one society. Mohanty reinforces her point of view by illustrating that while Mince regards veiling women in Egypt, Pakistan and Iran as a form of dictatorship determined by Islam. History revealed that some Iranian women wore the veil to support the women’s working class and not to accord with the religious denotation of the head scarf. (Mince, 1999)

Despite Muslim women's feminist attempts to achieve and fulfill objectives, a more violent and ironic view towards third world females through western eyes is presented in what is called *Can the Subaltern Speak ?* that is held by the Bangladeshi Gayatri Spivak. (1988)

In this context, Spivak thinks that westerners categorize third world females according to the ethnocentric colonial imperatives. According to Spivak, post-colonial studies show a sense of subaltern class of women who are politically dominated, economically exploited and culturally erased. Hence, Spivak's claim serves as a tool to rebuild the art of third world women, silenced by both: the inequality and the western imperial representations. (2006:34).

In the line of "Voicing the Subaltern", Spivak calls third world females to express themselves instead of looking to be voiced by others. Spivak reasonably affirms that any representation of third world females by external voices will just result in a number of difficulties. She states that if third world females keep relying on westerners to represent them that will just produce a sense of inferiority in society. In addition, Spivak believes that women will be regarded as an indistinguishable group, ignoring the individual cultural differences among women. (2006: 31)

In the end, Spivak raises an alert against the influence of the colonial dictatorial logo that represents women universally and hence the silenced women's voices will be more muted. In the same view as Mohanty and Spivak, the Spanish socialist, Gema Martin Munoz (2002), sees that the "bad" image

that is built on Muslim women is linked to the westerners' prepossessed view that strengthens their negative opinions towards Arab and Muslim females.

Such a reflection is resulted from the unreasonable overgeneralization. Munoz clarifies further that Arab and Muslim females are presented by the west as passive, exotic, victimized, veiled and responding to events instead of participating in. (Muñoz ,2002)

Referring to the western representation of Arab and Muslim women, Jennifer King (2003) emphasizes Mohanty and Munoz's claims and admits that Islam is widely considered as a source of persecution. To say it differently, all what is associated with Islam is oppressive and all what is oppressive is linked to Islam. Also, she adds that all Arab and Muslim males are depicted as offensive and misogynist and that, they oppress women. Consequently, King (2003) attacks westerners' presentation of Arab and Muslim men that neglects the historical and cultural roots that characterize the Arab and Muslim men.

Moreover, King argues that the western image towards the Arab Muslim women does not all the time entail any variation between the Arab Muslim world and the western one. Rather, it further leads to some kind of disagreement. The instance that King concentrates on, presents principally the misunderstanding of certain Quran verses by a large number of Muslim and western people.

King thinks that westerners' negative view towards Arab women is generated from the mistaken belief about some issues like unequal inheritance, male

superiority and polygamy. As stated by King, westerners look at the latter as misogynist deeds followed by the Arab society in the name of Islam. Therefore, an agreement between Arab-Muslim feminism and western-Multi religious feminism is hindered, and as a result Islamic feminism is hampered from being a universal phenomenon. (King, 2003)

According to the above arguments in addition to some other western Scholars, Arab and Muslim attributes are the main causes for the harming effects that are directed to women. Then, important areas of focus for further researches would be devoted to inquire whether or not the western females who follow the feminist thinking live under Arab or Islamic control. Moreover, another questioning continues as: shall we condemn Arab males or Islam for the trouble that Christian, Jewish, Hindu, Buddhist or atheist females are encountering all over the world?

1.2.4. Feminism and Literature

For a long time, women have been denied their talent in the name of maternity or sexual experiences. In his *The Sphinx Without a Secret* (1891) Oscar Wilde wrote “[W]omen are meant to be loved, not to be understood.” Such a patriarchal thought is nurtured by gender concepts of masculinity which attribute all negative qualities to women.

Female consciousness started to rise when women decided to deconstruct that passive image built upon them and to engage in breaking silence and conquer the male dominated world of writing. They realized that unlike sex which is

biological and natural, gender is all what represents social, cultural and psychological boundaries to their emancipation.

Gender issues have for long been conveyed through literature. Does not literature transmit ideology? But even more, it also creates it. Literature is "*a mediating, moulding force in society*". (Hawks,1977). The real world is perceived through fiction and imagination which have the power to move beyond limits and boundaries and, thus shape and reshape the reader's perception of life.

Seen from this angle, feminists have taken over responsibility of creating social, cultural, political and sexual spaces to remove barriers and obstacles and showcase their talent. Gayle Greene and Koppelia Kahn distinguish between two premises related to gender. According to them:

"Feminist literary criticism is one branch of interdisciplinary enquiry which takes gender as a fundamental organizing category of experience. This enquiry holds two related premises about gender. One is that the inequality of the sexes is neither a biological given nor a divine mandate, but a cultural construct, therefore a proper subject of study for any humanistic discipline. (Greene & Kahn, 1986)

As to the second premise related to gender, Greene and Kahn write:

The second is that a male perspective, assumed to be 'universal' has dominated fields of knowledge, shaping their paradigms and methods. Feminist scholarship then, has two concerns: it revises concepts previously thought universal but now as originating in particular

cultures and serving particular purposes; and it restores a female perspective by extending knowledge about women's experience and contributions to culture." (Ibid, 86)

A feminist interpretation of literature implies deconstructing many of the systems constructed for ages. Gayle Greene and Coppelia Kahn argue that:

"Feminist literary critics attend to the collusion between literature and ideology, focusing on the ways ideology is inscribed within literary forms, styles, conventions, genres, and the institutions of literary production ." (Ibid, 86)

So to speak, two different schools of thought of feminist literary criticism have emerged: the Anglo-American and the French.

One of the pioneers of Anglo-American feminist literary critics is Kate Millet (1934-). She is an American writer, educator, artist and activist. Her book *Sexual Politics* (1970) is the inspiration source for many writers as it: *"documents the subjugation of women in great literature and art"*¹³. Kate Millett's analysis:

"targets four revered authors—D. H. Lawrence, Henry Miller, Norman Mailer, and Jean Genet—and builds a damning profile of literature's patriarchal myths and their extension into psychology, philosophy, and politics. Her eloquence and popular examples taught a generation to recognize inequities masquerading as nature and proved the value of feminist critique in all facets of life."(Millet, 1970)

¹³ Book Description at: <https://www.amazon.com/Sexual-Politics-Kate-Millett/dp/023117425X>

Another writer who influenced feminist literature is Mary Ellman (1921-1989) through her book *Thinking About Women* (1968) which analyses patriarchy from the political and historical aspects. She ironically denounces the sexual analogy as a mode of thought in the Western world.

In France, the most famous name in feminist theorist is Simone de Beauvoir (1908-1986). Her book *The Second Sex* (1949) describes itself as a “*masterwork is a powerful analysis of the Western notion of “woman,” and a groundbreaking exploration of inequality and otherness.*”¹⁴ Based on Jean Paul Sartre's existentialist philosophy, her book analyses patriarchal prejudice found in the notion of ‘femininity’ and considering women as negative objects. Being a woman rhymes with emotional, weakness, irrational, subjective, passivity, and dependency. Simone de Beauvoir states that this prejudice dominates all aspects of social, political and cultural life of women. She writes:

"[o]ne is not born but rather becomes a woman...it is civilization as a whole that produces this creature."(De Beauvoir, 1952)

Another figure among the most influential is in French thinking about the feminine, namely Helene Cixous (1937-). She has developed the discourse of feminist theory on advocating for the rights of women. In her seminal article *The Laugh of the Medusa* (1975), she issues women to use their body to communicate their unconscious knowledge and desires:

“I shall speak about women’s writing:

¹⁴ Book Description at: https://www.amazon.com/Second-Sex-Simone-Beauvoir/dp/030727778X/ref=sr_1_1?s=books&ie=UTF8&qid=1477251451&sr=1-1&keywords=The+Second+Sex

. . . woman must write herself: must write about women and bring women to writing, from which they have been driven away as violently as from their bodies. Woman must put herself into the text as into the world and into history by her own movement.” (Cixous, 1975)

Écriture féminine, or female/woman writing is an area of textual production that can be called feminine and which is disruptive of masculine language. For Cixous, the concept of *écriture féminine* is a means for women to claim their identity outside of the patriarchal systems. It is elementary related to *Writing and Difference* (1967), a book written by Jacques Derrida (1930-2004) who has been one of the most influences on her writings.

Julia Kristeva (1941-) is another writer whose writing deals mainly with sexuality, femininity and love. She questions motherhood. In *La Révolution du Langage Poétique*, (1974) ,*[Revolution in Poetic Language]* she argues that woman is not repressed in patriarchal society, but motherhood.

Feminist literary critics deconstruct the constructed patriarchal concepts through language and literature. They create new paradigms for women consciousness and allow them to shape their own identity within a new genre pattern of literary criticism.

1.6. Post-Colonial Literature

During colonization and since the independence of British former colonies, postcolonial literature reflected the issues of women traditionally depicted in a

male dominated context as being passive and submissive to modern women as being independent and empowered.

1.6.1. Definition, Concerns and Characteristics

In a broad sense, postcolonial literature is writing which has been “affected by the imperial process from the moment of colonization to the present day” (Ashcroft et al, 1989). It includes novels, poetry, and drama which were written both during and after colonization.

Postcolonial literatures from formerly colonized countries – such as African countries, Australia, Bangladesh, Canada, Caribbean countries, India, Malaysia, Malta, New Zealand, Pakistan, Singapore, South Pacific Island countries, and Sri Lanka (Ashcroft et al, 1989) have all distinctive features, yet they share some significant concerns and characteristics, as deconstructing the images forged by patriarchy and the colonizer.

The semantic basis of the term ‘postcolonial’ might seem to suggest a concern only with the national culture after the departure of the imperial power. It has occasionally been employed in some earlier work in the area to distinguish between the periods before and after independence (‘colonial period’ and ‘post-colonial period’), for example, in constructing national literary histories, or in suggesting comparative studies between stages in those histories. Generally speaking, though, the term ‘colonial’ has been used for the period before independence and a term indicating a national writing, such as ‘modern

Canadian writing' or 'recent West Indian literature' has been employed to distinguish the period after independence.

We use the term 'post-colonial', however, to cover all the culture affected by the imperial process from the moment of colonization to the present day. This is because there is a continuity of preoccupations throughout the historical process initiated by European imperial aggression. (Ashcroft et al, 2002.)

We also suggest that it is most appropriate as the term for the new cross-cultural criticism which has emerged in recent years and for the discourse through which this is constituted. In this sense this book is concerned with the world as it exists during and after the period of European imperial domination and the effects of this on contemporary literatures.

The concerns are numerous including spaces and places, language and culture beside literature to name a few. (Ibid, 2)

Colonialism was, above all, a means of claiming and exploiting foreign lands, resources, and people. Enslavement, indentured labor, and migration forced many indigenous populations to move from the places that they considered "home". Postcolonial literature attempts to counteract their resulting alienation from their surroundings by restoring a connection between indigenous people and places through description, narration, and dramatization.

During colonization, the indigenous cultures of those countries subjected to foreign rule were often sidelined, suppressed, and openly denigrated in favor of elevating the social and cultural preferences and conventions of the colonizers.

In response, much postcolonial literature seeks to assert the richness and validity of indigenous cultures in an effort to restore pride in practices and traditions that were systematically degraded under colonialism.

Colonizers often depicted their colonial subjects as existing “outside of history” in unchanging, timeless societies, unable to progress or develop without their intervention and assistance. In this way, they justified their actions, including violence against those who resisted colonial rule. Revising history to relate issues from the perspective of those colonized is thus a major preoccupation of postcolonial writing.

Postcolonial literature is described through numerous characteristics related to the concept of resistance, the appropriation colonizer’s language and reworking colonial art-forms.(Ibid, 2)

Postcolonial writers use detailed descriptions of indigenous people, places, and practices to counteract or “resist” the stereotypes, inaccuracies, and generalizations which the colonizers circulated in educational, legal, political, and social texts and settings.

Although many colonized countries are home to multiple indigenous languages, in India, for example, more than 12 languages exist alongside English, many postcolonial writers as Ngugi wa Thiong'o choose to write in the colonizers’ “tongue”. However, authors such as Arundhati Roy deliberately play with English, remolding it to reflect the rhythms and syntax of indigenous

languages, and inventing new words and styles to demonstrate mastery of a language that was, in a sense, forced upon them.

Similarly, authors such as Arundhati Roy rework European art-forms like the novel to reflect indigenous modes of invention and creation. They reshape imported colonial art-forms to incorporate the style, structure, and themes of indigenous modes of creative expression, such as oral poetry and dramatic performances.

Among the most known postcolonial novels are Arundhati Roy's *The God of Small Things* (1997), Khaled Hosseini's *A Thousand Splendid Suns* (2007) and Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* (1958) though from different cultural backgrounds.

1.6.2. Post-Colonial Novel

The post-colonial novel tends to be a literary genre that addresses the problems of the colonized people and the consequences of the colonization of a nation submitted to all types of imperial domination, racial segregation and denials of cultural, social and political rights. In such a literary genre, the protagonist usually struggles with questions of social, cultural and national identities.

Although countries such as France and Spain are name listed among the former colonizing ones, English seems to be the language through which the post-colonial novel is written regardless the fact that it is the ex-colonial

language. “Ngugi Wa Thiong’o devoted his latter writing to a Gikuya cultural revival.” as cited in Fewzia Bedjaoui’s Doctoral thesis (2005)

“The language and the use to which language is put is central to a people’s definition of themselves in relation to their natural and social environment... continuing to write in foreign languages, paying homage to them, are we not on the central level continuing that neocolonial slavish and cringing spirit”. (Wa Thiong'o, 1981:26)

Bedjaoui argues that colonial education inevitably intervenes in the cultural transformation of the writer formerly colonized as well as changing the reading patterns worldwide. She writes:

“Certainly, the poor quality of translation compels so many writers to choose English over their native tongue. The intervention of the colonial educational system and language on cultural productions is a fundamental element in a post-colonial literature. The very success of numerous post-colonial writers evokes the possible insertion into a canon. It would be interesting to know how the new literatures may be influencing and changing reading patterns worldwide.” (Bedjaoui, 2005)

So for whom does the post-colonial author write and in whose name does he/she speak? Probably, s/he feels confined to a somewhat foreign language and thus the post-colonial person experiences a cultural estrangement, a sense of being nothing at all or at least of doubts about the authenticity of his/her relationship to the culture defined from the outside. Alienation is the abstract

term to convey this sense of being an *other* to oneself. The mirror provided by the other culture provokes self-reflections and the breaking up of his identity. The issue of cultural identity moves beyond one's own national borders in regarding the role of the other in defining the Self. In other words, there is no need to draw the borders of identity as they are never clearly defined. (Ibid, 05)

In his *The Contemporary Post-Colonial Novel in English*, Thomas Bonnici takes up the claim that post-colonial novels

“have been with us for the last forty years and at present they are foremost in any program of Literature in English. Perhaps the most interesting thing is that the current literature in English is heavily relying on the literature coming from post-colonial topics and post-colonial writers living in British ex-colonies or living in Britain or the United States but were born and bred in colonized countries.”(Bonnici, 2004)

The political novel could probably be emotional and exciting if one considers it as a work rather than a means of achieving political goals. Howe questions the differences between the political and non political novel

“by a political novel I mean a novel in which political ideas play a dominant role or in which a political milieu is the dominant setting... Perhaps it would be better to say: a novel in which we take to be dominant political ideas or the political milieu (Howe 987:17)

Thus, there are differences between the literacy and political uses of language. Howe attempts to describe the political novel in a purely literary way, neither emphasizing, precise, but ambiguous definitions as something for rigid scholastics to think over, nor providing specific insight about why such a novel could be harder to define than other literary genres.

Probably literary criticism includes to resort to life, affirming principles and respecting one's inner lives.

“...politics demands that we risk taking a position, that we stand somewhere, that we decide, and that we accept as part of the political process or possibility that our positions, stances many go horribly wrong, nowhere or miraculously right. This is the only form of arbitrariness, favourite term of skeptical criticism, worth taking about and with which it is important. (Siebers, 1933 156-157)

Such a recommendation involves to build a home in the world, for readers who are seduced by story-telling and “beauty”. Language and human communication cannot feel completely astray in the world in which they live. So, how can the self-conscious attention to post -colonialism affect the impact of a literary work? (Siebers, 1933 156-157) (Ibid, 93)

1.6.3. Post-Colonial Arab Literature

Post-Colonial Arab writings have been totally ignored in cotemporary post-colonial studies, as shown in a research carried out by Mohammed Abdu Al-Gabali from the University of Hyderabad titled *Identity, Culture, and Politics in*

Contemporary Arab and Arab-American Women's Literature, (2014). He argues that despite the fact that countries such as Yemen, Palestine and Sudan have suffered British colonial influence and hegemony up to the second half of the twentieth century. And despite the fact that

*“[W]riters from such places have addressed issues such as the quest for identity, nationalism, modernization, hybridity, mimicry, resistance, the clash between tradition and modernity and the encounter between the colonizer and the colonized. Unfortunately, such writings have been mostly neglected if not totally ignored in contemporary postcolonial studies. This sense of marginality, nonetheless, is not only confined to postcolonial studies, but also extends to the whole Arab world... This lack of status becomes sufficiently evident, when we examine some relatively recent postcolonial publications such as *The Empire Writes Back: Theory and Practice in Post-colonial Literatures* (1989), *The Post-Colonial Studies Reader* (1995), and *Postcolonialism: Critical Concepts* (2000). Whereas many other “national” literatures such as the Caribbean, Indian, Australian, Irish as well as the African (even the African-American) have been established and recognized as postcolonial, the case is not the same when it comes to Arabic literature.”(Abdu Al-Gabali)*

Meanwhile, the Arab world itself has largely focused interest in the novels produced in the Arabic literary centres such as Cairo and Beirut.

“Many critical studies have been conducted on the novel genre in contemporary Arabic literature; however, the majority of these studies concentrate on the Egyptian novel in general and on the Mahfouzian style in particular. This sense of “Egyptiocentrism” has marginalized the status of the Arabic novel outside the Egyptian literary and cultural sites. Furthermore, the Arabic novel in Western literary circles has become synonymous with Naguib Mahfouz. There is some truth in this claim for no one can deny how much the Arabic novel owes to Mahfouz for its domestication and indigenization into the Arabic literary tradition. Nevertheless, there are many other “new” novelistic voices in the Arab world that suffer serious marginalization in literary and critical studies.” (Ibid, 14)

The novel is a European literary genre adopted by the Arabic world in the 19th and early 20th centuries within the colonial era.

“one result of colonization- when societies and cultures intermingle- that the literary forms, like the languages, of the colonizers have been adopted” (Walder 12). (cited in Abdu Al-Gabali, 2016)

Conclusion

Although The Arabic novel is a “newly” established genre in the twentieth century, it has known a significant concern from writers who rose against colonialism and tried to describe an Arabic society ravaged by war and imperial dominance. It has been painted by political, religious, cultural and national

identities, which makes of this genre a result itself. To have a substantial understanding of the literary work, it is interesting, to some extent, to examine the theoretical and conceptual background which is the main content of the following chapter, notably the concepts of freedom and transgression are studied.

CHAPTER TWO

TRANSGRESSION AS A QUEST FOR FREEDOM

“Borders are set up to define the places that are safe and unsafe. . . . A border is a dividing line, a narrow strip along a steep edge. A borderland is a vague and undetermined place created by the emotional residue of an unnatural boundary. It is in a constant state of transition. The prohibited and forbidden are its inhabitants... those who cross over, pass over or go through the confines of the 'normal.'”

Gloria Anzaldua, *Border Lands, La Frontera: The New Mestiza* (1987)

Introduction

Society has always been defined and governed by certain (un)codified rules. Yet there are always those who suffered the tension between resisting convention and embracing innovation, and thus willingly who transgressed communal norms. Throughout history, up to the present day, these transgressors have met with either praise or disapproval. Some have been heralded as heroes, great thinkers or revolutionary artists, while others have been branded as exiles, sinners or outcasts. In Greek mythology, Prometheus was punished for defying the Gods and gifting humanity with fire; Christianity, Judaism and Islam condemn Adam and Eve’s transgression of divine command.

Pertinent questions have arisen on the violation of laws, traditions and conventions in the political, religious, social and cultural domains. Among these questions: Who breaks the rules? To what extent is an act of rule breaking a confirmation of the existence of certain rules? Is transgression identification, protest or innovation? How has transgression been perceived through the ages? Is the rule breaker punished or praised? What role does gender play in rule breaking? How do various cultures define transgression?

2.1. Concept of Transgression

Transgression may occur in different domains. Politically, it concerns social taboos, the ethics of rule breaking, revolt, emancipation, disobedience, and identity through rule breaking. In the religious field, it may deal with cultural perspectives on the various aspects of religious rule breaking, such as sin, religious taboos and forbidden pleasures. Transgression may also have an aesthetic aspect and focus on boundaries of what is considered to be art by changing perceptions of beauty and/or ugliness into art.

2.1.1. Defining Transgression

According to the Webster's definition, 'transgression' is an act, process, or instance of transgressing as an infringement or violation of a law, command, or duty. To transgress, then is to do something that is not allowed, to disobey a command or law. To transgress may also mean to go beyond a limit. In fact, the word *transgress* comes from the Latin *transgredior*—*trans* meaning *beyond*, and *gredior*, meaning *to pass*.

The term transgression is concerned, as the name says, with the non-respect of rules and orders. Inciting to go ‘beyond the borders’, the word assumes the existence of pre-established norms and standards which bring to light transgressions.

Whoever transgresses is inevitably subversive, rejecting the rule or the norm itself. The concept of transgression is always related to the fact of ‘bypassing’. Indeed, whether in the social, philosophical or political domains, norms previously established can now be challenged, broken or transgressed.

A norm is legitimate only if it is accepted by a social group. In other words, to be considered as behaving in conformity with social rules depends on the validity given by those who accept it.

Chris Jenks in his book *Transgression*, addresses the conduct that goes beyond the limits in a society which has become a “metaphor of excess” (2003). He refers to transgression as an excessive behavior and thus defines it as “that conduct which breaks rules or exceeds boundaries.”(2003). He emphasized that:

“To transgress is to go beyond the bounds or limits set by a commandment or law or convention, it is to violate or infringe. But to transgress is also more than this, it is to announce and even laudate the commandment, the law or the convention.” Thus, transgression becomes “a deeply reflexive act of denial and affirmation” (Jenks, 2003)

Although transgression involves the concept of exceeding limits or boundaries, it is through transgression that limits are determined and norms are given a shape. In fact, Jenks states further:

“Transgressive behaviour does not deny limits or boundaries, rather it exceeds them and thus completes them. Every rule, limit, boundary or edge carries with it its own fracture, penetration or impulse to disobey. The transgression is a component of the rule” (Ibid, 2)

In light of these definitions, what then is

“... the character of the cultures that provide for this excessive behaviour and what are the contexts that provide for the appreciation or receptability of such behaviour? Does transgressive behavior deny limits and boundaries or does it exceed and thus complete them? And doesn't every rule, limit, boundary or edge carry with it its own fracture, penetration or impulse to disobey? If transgression and excess thus become an important component of the rule, they would neither be “an abhorration nor a luxury” but rather “dynamic forces in cultural reproduction preventing stagnation by breaking the rule while simultaneously ensuring stability by reaffirming the rule” (Ibid, 3).

If so considering transgression not as simply breaking a rule, but as a co-construction between a person and situations, political, cultural and linguistic transgressions would be addressed from a perspective that allows to seek out the “rich” value of transgression in the constructive dimension of the concept.

Moreover, attention should be drawn to the fact that in any institution where language and culture are taught, from school to university, we are subject to limits, boundaries and norms. The fact of the presence of an ‘Other’, makes us constrained to norms and boundaries; the ‘Other’ itself confronting a limiting, also encounters boundaries. For instance, for a stranger, the acceptance of the standard ‘Other’ is not obvious. Yet, each brings with him/her, his/her own cultural capital and his/her singular habit, his/her legacy and what defines him/her as a unique individual.

“As John Jervis succinctly argues: The transgressive is reflexive, questioning both its own role and that of the culture that has defined it in its otherness. It is not simply a reversal, a mechanical inversion of an existing order it opposes. Transgression, unlike opposition or reversal, involves hybridization, the mixing of categories and the questioning of the boundaries that separate categories. It is not, in itself, subversion; it is not an overt and deliberate challenge to the status quo. What it does do, though, is implicitly interrogate the law, pointing not just to the specific, and frequently arbitrary, mechanisms of power on which it rests— despite its universalizing pretensions— but also to its complicity, its involvement in what it prohibits.”

(John Jervis qd in Stefan Horlacher, 2010, 15)

From a philosophical perspective, Foucault views that transgression is close to the limits. They depend on each other in that sense that a limit could not exist if it were absolutely uncrossable and reciprocally, transgression would be

pointless if it merely crossed a limit composed of illusions and shadows. In his essay *A Preface to Transgression*, published in 1977, Foucault states:

“Transgression is an action which involves the limit, that narrow zone of a line where it displays the flash of its passage, but perhaps also its entire trajectory, even its origin; it is likely that transgression has its entire space in the line it crosses. The play of limits and transgression seems to be regulated by a simple obstinacy: transgression incessantly crosses and recrosses a line which closes up behind it in a wave of extremely short duration, and thus it is made to return once more right to the horizon of the uncrossable.” (Foucault, 1977)

According to Foucault, transgression opens a new zone of existence by affirming limited being. He addresses questions like: Can the limit have a life of its own after the act of transgressing? Does transgression not exhaust its nature when it crosses the limit knowing no other life beyond this point in time? He further clarifies:

“Transgression does not seek to oppose one thing to another, nor does it achieve its purpose through mockery or by upsetting the solidity of foundations; it does not transform the other side of the mirror, beyond an invisible and uncrossable line, into a glittering expanse. Transgression is neither violence in a divided world (in an ethical world) nor a victory over limits (in a dialectical or revolutionary world); and exactly for this reason, its role is to measure the excessive distance that it opens at the heart of the limit and to trace the flashing

line that causes the limit to arise. Transgression contains nothing negative, but affirms limited being-affirms the limitlessness into which it leaps as it opens this zone to existence for the first time.” (Ibid, 77)

Seen from this perspective, thus, transgression carries the limit right to the limit of its being. Transgression forces the limit to face the fact of its imminent disappearance, to find itself in what it excludes.

Transgression is also seen from an educational angle as a means of a revolutionary shifting away from the traditional understanding of a single norm of thought and experience of a West-centered patriarchal imperialist hegemony, to approaching a subject multiple ways with multiple references.

In 1994, bell hooks, a Black American writer, teacher and activist, wrote her book *Teaching to Transgress: Education as the Practice of Freedom* in which she approaches freedom through education. She offers strategies for enacting change and concrete methods for how to revolt traditional understanding of education.

The theory of education is brought out through the liberation of minds rather than the transmission of information. hooks advocates:

“All of us in the academy and in the culture as a whole are called to renew our minds if we are to transform educational institutions-and society-so that the way we live, teach, and work can reflect our joy in cultural diversity, our passion for justice, and our love of freedom.”

(hook, 1994)

hook addresses important questions like: How can teaching be achieved without reinforcing domination, sexism and racism already existing? How can teachers address diversity in the classroom and issues such as race, sex, language, class backgrounds, levels of understanding, and concerns?

In answering these questions, hook argues that racial, class and gender boundaries can be transgressed despite the tensions that both teachers and students might be confronted with. She writes:

“Those of us who wanted to make racial equality a reality in every area of our life were threats to the social order. We were proud of ourselves, proud of our willingness to transgress the rules, proud to be courageous.” (Ibid, 94)

In this line of thought, hook describes the classroom as a radical space of possibility in which teachers with the active engagements of students enact progressive values of diversity. Then, she explains how teaching is a means of enacting progressive values of diversity, openness of mind and ways to move beyond boundaries. Indeed, hook advocates transformational pedagogy. She states:

“The academy is not paradise. But learning is a place where paradise can be created. The classroom, with all its limitations, remains a location of possibility. In that field of possibility we have the opportunity to labor for freedom, to demand of ourselves and our comrades, an openness of mind and heart that allows us to face reality

even as we collectively imagine ways to move beyond boundaries, to transgress. This is education as the practice of freedom.” (Ibid, 94)

According to hook, education is the key to freedom and thus everyone should have the right to learn and come to school with the will to transgress boundaries and to be more powerful than any will to intellectual. Education is personal and political growth.

“To enter classroom settings, colleges and universities with the will to share the desire to encourage excitement, was to transgress [...] To these students, transgressing boundaries was frightening. And though they were not the majority, their spirit of rigid resistance seemed always to be more powerful than any will to intellectual.” (Ibid, 94)

The "engaged pedagogy" she refers to in her book entitled *Teaching to Transgress*, brings to light her experiences in the academy as a feminist and anti-racist. She denounces many of the “dictators” (to mention her own words) for whom education is a means of domination to force students into conformity. On the contrary, the teachers who most affected her are the ones she describes as such:

“Throughout my years as student and professor, I have been most inspired by those teachers who have had the courage to transgress those boundaries that would confine each pupil to a rote, assembly-line approach to learning.” (Ibid, 94)

Indeed, hook emphasizes this idea of those teachers that most touch the spirit of their students by evoking in her book an essay published in an issue of

Tricycle, a journal of Buddhist thought, in which Pema Chodron talks about the ways teachers function as role models. She writes:

“My models were the people who stepped outside of the conventional mind and who could actually stop my mind and completely open it up and free it, even for a moment, from a conventional, habitual way of looking at things.... If you are really preparing for groundlessness, preparing for the reality of human existence, you are living on the razor's edge, and you must become used to the fact that things shift and change. Things are not certain and they do not last and you do not know what is going to happen. My teachers have always pushed me over the cliff...” (Ibid, 94)

Following her reading of the text, she declared that limits are barriers to individual growth:

Reading this passage, I felt deep kinship, for I have sought teachers in all areas of my life who would challenge me beyond what I might select for myself, and in and through that challenge allow me a space of radical openness where I am truly free to choose - able to learn and grow without limits.” (Ibid, 94)

2.1.2. Sin and Taboo

The words ‘sin’ and ‘transgression’ are thus used synonymously on many occasions, yet there is also a difference in their meanings. ‘Sin’ means an offense against religious or moral law, a transgression of the law of God. To sin

is to break the moral code; to transgress could be to violate a law without sinful intent.

In a sexist misogynic society, as in Saudi Arabia and Yemen, or many other African countries such as Congo, disrespecting women and treating them as possessions is the norm, and most the time considered as a religious act.

Stating that feminism is about the eradication of patriarchy, and that patriarchy is expressed through men and masculinity, the answer to why feminism absolves women of sin becomes “obvious” then. From a feminist point of view, patriarchy is sin personified. And if it is expressed through masculinity then women cannot sin.

“If the premise of feminism is that patriarchy is evil incarnate, then women sinning either proves that all women have ingested patriarchy, which is absurd, or that patriarchy is not the root of all evil. If patriarchy is not the sole cause of evil in the world, then feminism is wrong. In order for feminism to be “right,” women must be free of sin.” (Butler, 2014)

Another form of transgression is described by James Miller in his *Dante & the Unorthodox: the Aesthetics of Transgression*, (2005), as “Excess is beautiful”. He refers to the Freudian and atheist, Georges Bataille who “conflated “spiritual overflowing” [...] with “physical immoderation” [...]: both kinds of excess were equally transgressive from his psychoanalytic viewpoint.”(Bataille qd in Miller,2005).

Miller points out the “volatile border between taboo and transgression” (Miller, 2005). In his point of view, taboo and transgression need each other in that way that the ugly is made beautiful through excess then transgression. Taboo which may symbolize obscenity of the violated body:

“Dante sings of skin subjected to a wide array of exquisite torments. It is flayed, bitten, incinerated, bloated, ripped, twisted, scourged, pocked, scarred, scraped, boiled, frozen, gnawed, sliced up, weighed down, grafted onto reptiles, and grotesquely metamorphosed down the scale of being.” (Ibid, 2005)

Noting the oscillation of cultural pressures between the poles of taboo and transgression, Mills reflects further:

“Taboo requires transgression to assert the sacredness of things, including its own repressive laws. Transgression, in turn, requires taboo to give ritual meaning and aesthetic form to its otherwise senseless and ugly violence.”(Ibid, 05)

Thus, to some extent sin and transgression are closely related to each other.

2.1.3. Transgression and Tradition

Identity may be linked to tradition, which in turn may be understood as a system of long-established beliefs and customs, which plays an essential role in creating identity. Tradition, however, has other definitions as well. According to

Webster, tradition is "*any unwritten religious teachings regarded as coming from the founder or earliest prophet of a religion.*"¹⁵

In a patriarchal society, most of the exploitation and oppression that women are subjugated to finds its root in what is labeled as 'tradition and culture'. Women hardly go in an act of rebellion because the traditional values make them individuals with no clear identity.

Tradition has been portrayed as a negative force when it comes to the Third World. Fatma Müge Göçek considers that:

"[Western] studies on the Third World often contain Orientalist elements that treat social processes in cultures and societies other than itself as static or, at best, as derivative" (Göçek, 1995).

Besides, Raymond Williams reveals the reasons tradition is such an important element of so-called "traditional societies," as many of the Third World societies are labeled by Western critics. This label is the result of a homogenization of the so-called peripheries embedded in the Western mind. Williams notes that tradition legitimates hegemony, thus reproduces power and keeps power relations intact: "*Tradition, as an active coping agent, is the most powerful means of societal incorporation*". (Williams, 1983)

However, it may also be a form of resistance by enhancing the difference between postcolonial and Western societies, as it does not encourage non-Western societies to fall prey to consumerism, dictated by the endless appetite of

¹⁵ <http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/tradition>

the economies of the so-called Industrialized World. In gender relations tradition keeps patriarchy alive, and women in postcolonial societies may not escape the "double" or even "triple bind." (Shiva, 1994)

Women in general and those brought up in middle-class families in particular are trapped between tradition and modernity. On the one hand, they fight for their emancipation and liberation, and on the other, they feel instinctively or ultimately stuck to traditional and conservative practices. It goes without saying that whether women be educated, professional or housewives, they are always suppressed with the weight of imposed traditions in male dominated society, perpetuated by rather "absurd" rituals.

In their quest for identity, women should use education to affirm themselves and demand for more freedom and independence, be it political, social or sexual. They have to overcome the "agony" they experienced by both men and women in a tradition-bound society to assert their individuality.

The picture of such women who have grown from 'self-surrender' and 'self-abnegation' must disappear with newly emerged identity, claiming an assertion of themselves.

2.1.4. Transgression and Patriarchy

The oppression of women by men can be traced as far back as the Biblical times where it is asserted that women should be subordinate to men. Men were by nature superiors and rulers while women inferiors and subjects. These views continued throughout human history and as such, the oppression of women

became part of human existence. Males as a group have and do benefit the most from patriarchy, from the assumption that they are superior to females and should rule over us.

In the 20th century, women's conscious awareness has led them to realize that they were also participants in perpetuating sexism and thus needed to change their minds and hearts in order to end patriarchy, sexist thought and action and create a society free of exploitation and marginalization of women.

Patriarchy literally means 'the rule of the father'. Its origin came from the Greek 'Father of a race' or a 'chief of a race'. The term implies male domination, male prejudice against women. Patriarchy thus, is the rule of a male head in a social unit (family, tribe...). The most commonly accepted definition of 'patriarchy' is a social system in which society is organized around male authority figures. In this system, fathers have authority over women, children, and property. Patriarchy, in fact leads to gender inequality and women's subordination, to some extent.

Not only patriarchy idealizes motherhood and thereby forces women to be mothers, it determines the conditions of their motherhood as well. Patriarchy restricts women's mobility and reproduces male dominance.

The socialist feminist Heidi Hartmann defines patriarchy as follows:

"It is a set of social relations between men which have a material base, and which though hierarchical, establish or create

interdependence and solidarity among men that enable them to dominate women.”(Hartmann, 2015)

Another close definition comes from Michael Mann who says that:

“The patriarch society is one in which power is held by male heads of households there is also clear separation between the public and the private spheres of life. In the private sphere of the household, the patriarch enjoys arbitrary power over all between junior males, all females, and all children. In the public sphere, power is shared between male patriarchs according to whatever other principles of stratification operate.” (Mann, 1986)

Women are marginalized all over the world, but Africa and the rest of the Third World top the list of patriarchal societies. Patriarchy bestows absolute power on the male through their customs and traditions which are tailored to favor men (Ibid, 86).

Merun Nasser (1980) believes that something is not quite right there because the traditional role of the African woman has always been complementary to that of the man. She notes that African male novelists have failed to depict that complementary role of the African woman in society, which led readers later on to come up with the impression that the role of the African woman is restricted and rather marginalized. Rose Acholonu advances this argument further by stating that:

“In Things Fall Apart, we see Okonkwo playing his role as the traditional head of the family. He is a typical tyrant. He rules and directs his wives in the manner of a cattle herdsman. He roars like ‘the thunder’ and administers physical blows to his wives at the slightest provocation. The wives live in awe of him. Achebe, true to tradition and the precepts of Igbo custom, seems to condone this inhuman treatment of Okonkwo's wives.” (Acholonu, 2003)

Chinua Achebe, the famous African author who has been acclaimed for having restored a sense of pride to Africa through his novels as *Things Fall Apart* (1958) is at the center of this criticism for, critics contend, creating back-house, timid, subservient female characters, particularly in his historical novel *Things Fall Apart*. Feminist critics were questioning the consistent pattern in this novel in which women have been portrayed as voiceless and in which the actions solely revolve around the male.

Since the early 20th century, feminist writers have used the term patriarchy as a concept to refer to the social system of masculine domination over women. For that reason, women did not fold their arms and remain dormant. They rather began to organize themselves into pressure groups. They wanted to liberate themselves from all this torture and pressure. They struggled to have a say in their society. They wished to prove that they deserve to be acknowledged of as human beings rather than just “things” or “objects”.

African female writers have dared to challenge the status quo of male domination by redirecting the course of the female character in the African

novel, such as *Surbenia's Day* (2006) by Chuks Iloegbuna and *The Devil That Danced on Water* (2003) by Aminatta Forna. This new breed of women writers are determined to entrench feministic sensibilities in the African novel by casting the African female character in a new light and in ways that did not exist before. They have changed the status quo of male domination in the African novel by empowering women in various ways and mainly through literature. This can be achieved by casting the female character not as subdued and voiceless but as positively assertive, resilient and resourceful, and encouraging women to resist any form of literature that encourages them to accept their subordination.¹⁶

Women need to cross those boundaries of patriarchy in order to be able to live the truth that men and women are equal. bell hooks draws a “beautiful” picture on a world of justice, peace, equality and possibility. In her book *Feminism Is for Everybody*, she writes:

“Imagine living in a world where there is no domination, where females and males are not alike or even always equal, but where a vision of mutuality is the ethos shaping our interaction. Imagine living in a world where we can all be who we are, a world of peace and possibility.” (hook, 2000)

And later she declares:

“Feminist revolution alone will not create such a world; we need to end racism, class elitism, imperialism. But it will make it possible for

¹⁶ <http://essaymonster.net/english/26754-female-presence-in-early-novels.html>

us to be fully self-actualized females and males able to create beloved community, to live together, realizing our dreams of freedom and justice, living the truth that we are all 'created equal'." (Ibid, 2000)

Such desires and requirements have inevitably to give the space for freedom as opposed to barriers.

2.2. Concept of Freedom

Various women writers have dealt with their desire and need for freedom. Virginia Woolf, in *A Room of One's Own* (1929) invited us to;

"Lock up your libraries if you like; but there is no gate, no lock, no bolt that you can set upon the freedom of my mind." (Woolf, 1929)

Charlotte Brontë, in *Jane Eyre* (1847) wanted too such an imaged freedom for women:

"I am no bird; and no net ensnares me: I am a free human being with an independent will."(Brontë, 1847)

When an individual in a society cannot choose his/her own course of conduct or is compelled to act as s/he would not himself /herself choose to act, or prevented from acting as s/he would choose to act, this individual is said to be "oppressed". The will to put an end to this oppression is the starting point of freedom. But what is freedom? To what extent are we free? Can we all be free? Do we have the choice to be free or are we forced to? Before answering these questions, it seems necessary to define the key concept of freedom.

2.2.1. Defining Freedom

In *Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, the term ‘freedom’ is defined in three distinct ways: (a) as the absence of external restraint; (b) as the capacity to do what one wishes; and lastly, (c) as the capacity to do what one ought to. (Paul Edwards, 1967). According to the Webster’s definition, *freedom* means “the absence of necessity, coercion¹⁷, or constraint in choice or action”. *Oxford Dictionary* reads the meaning of freedom as: a) the power or right to act, speak, or think as one wants; b) the absence of subjection to foreign domination or despotic government; c) the power of self-determination attributed to the will; the quality of being independent of fate or necessity, and d) the state of not being imprisoned or enslaved.

So, the term ‘freedom’ is frequently used with ‘liberty’ interchangeably. Although they both mean the power or condition of acting without compulsion, ‘freedom’ has a broad range of application from total absence of restraint to merely a sense of not being unduly hampered or frustrated. Liberty suggests release from former restraint or compulsion. Hence, ‘freedom’ stresses the complete absence of external rule and the full right to make all of one's own decisions while ‘liberation’ implies the releasing of a person from subjection or domination.¹⁸

Yet, ‘Freedom’ is a very ambiguous term, for it is employed from various points of view. It has a more philosophic connotation and has a specific use as a

¹⁷ The technical term of philosophers to refer to “constraint”

¹⁸ Merriam-Webster Dictionary at <http://www.merriam-webster.com>

moral and a social concept. Philosophers have approached the concept of freedom from diverse views. Zygmunt Bauman (1925-), in his book *Freedom* (1988) defines 'freedom' as a privilege marking the contrast between the best and the rest, the good and the bad. He states further:

"Freedom was born as a privilege and has remained so ever since. Freedom divides and separates. It sets the best apart from the rest. It draws its attraction from difference; its presence or absence reflects, marks and grounds the contrast between high and low, good and bad, coveted and repugnant". (Bauman, 1988)

The Turkish philosopher Ioanna Kuçuradi (1936-) offers a different definition to 'freedom'. In her article *Freedom and Social Freedom*, published in the book *Freedom, Progress and Society* in 1986, she writes:

"... an enchanting word. Innumerable fights have been fought in its name; and blood, too much blood, has been shed for its sake. Blood is still shed. And in the name of freedom, the most unbelievable things are being done" (Kuçuradi, 1986)

In a specific sense, it can be said that no adequate definition of freedom can be given. However, in the history of philosophy, the concept of freedom seems to be what Benjamin Gibbs explains in his book *Freedom and Liberation*.

He reflects that:

"Freedom never means anything other than this is an axiom of most forms of liberalism, libertinism and libertarianism. But often freedom

does mean more than this. The principle linking the various extensions of the original concept of freedom is the idea of power (not necessarily legal power) of circumventing obstacles (not necessarily legal obstacles) to the achievement of good. The highest, completest freedom is the power of avoiding the greatest evils and achieving the greatest goods". (Gibbs, 1976)

2.2.2. Types of Freedom

Saying that an individual is free implies that he has freedom of thought, speech and action and also the absence of external coercion from other individuals. This is what is referred to as positive freedom. Besides, freedom can have a negative aspect in case of total absence of restraints from the state as rules of law. Freedom should be the warranty of social progress.

So speaking, there are many kinds of freedom, mainly: (a) Freedom of Thought, (b) Freedom of Speech and Action, (c) Freedom of Association, (d) Freedom of Assembly, (e) Freedom of Worship, (f) Freedom of Choice, and so on.¹⁹

It is commonly known that thought is free. Freedom of thought leads to freedom of speech. Yet, there must be limitation to these kinds of freedom for they may lead to social conflicts.

Additionally, freedom of choice implies individuals have the right to decide and act independently according to their own will. They must choose the course

¹⁹ <https://www.ukessays.com/essays/philosophy/why-is-freedom-important-philosophy-essay.php>

of their conduct and control aspects that concern them directly, politically, socially, economically and at the spiritual and religious levels.

Political freedom refers to the ability of citizens to take part in decisions of public interest. For example free vote, freedom of political opposition, freedom of political action in local private organizations.²⁰

Indian activist Gandhi (1869-1948) spent his life struggling for the independence of India. He resisted the domination of British Government over his country. According to him, political freedom is as birthright not only of the people but of the nation as well. He reflects: *“As every individual is fit to eat, to drink and to breathe, even so is every nation fit to manage its own affairs, no matter how badly.”*(Ghandi, 1931). For Ghandi, priority must be given to the social freedom of man.

As to social freedom, according to Francophone Genevan philosopher Jean Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778), it is achieved when an individual obeys the desires of the “General Will” to be the ruling factor of a government. In order to enter into Rousseau's social contract, personal freedom must be alienated. By disregarding the state of nature, the powers of each individual is directed towards a common interest. Rousseau notes that social freedom is superior to a state of nature, and that in a state of nature people are not completely free because they are ruled by their desires instead of by reason. The “General Will” is rational and should then be the ruling. (Amezquita, 2003)

²⁰ Webster definition of freedom.

If all people are born free, they should live in a society free of prejudices, gender inequality, racism and intolerance. This is stipulated in Rousseau's *On The Social Contract*:

At the very least, the social contract provides individuals with a formal equality of respect, allowing them to develop a sense of themselves as citizens equal to any another in the eyes of the society at large. (Rousseau, 1762)

Yet, individuals can obtain economic freedom only if the exploitation of the poor by the rich is ended. Every body in a society must be able to earn his bread by his own labour. The community must provide help and necessities of life to those unable to maintain themselves in an ideal world, to some extent.

Considering that man is born free, and that man is a social animal, he has free will to act and to judge. For J.J. Rousseau, personal freedom comes from humans' basic instincts and natural selfishness. An individual acts only if he benefits. Rousseau also called this freedom a state of nature. This does not prevent the individual to allow social quality in the society he belongs to. (Amezquita, 2003)

Gandhi also points out that man must enjoy socio-economic and political freedom in order to attain spiritual freedom. He maintains that:

“What I want to achieve, what I have been striving and planning to achieve these thirty years is self realisation to see God face to face is to attain moksa. I live and move, and have my being in pursuit of this goal.” (Ghandi, 1931)

It should be mentioned that religious freedom does not imply the right to persecute others, “*nor the right to take away their humanity and equal treatment before the law.*” (Ibid, 31)

2.2.3. Western Views

In European conception, freedom primarily refers to the possibility that every individual is free from any kind of coercion or constraint imposed by another person. In other terms, he has the right to choose his course of conduct from a variety of options, and this does not mean denying the right of others.

This perception of respectful freedom stems from the fact that freedom is not physical but rather a spiritual creation. Freedom implies freedom of thought, opinion, belief, speech and action. Social and civilizational conflicts are centred on the issue of the freedom of speech and action. For that reason, there must be limitation from the state by some coercive rules of law.

The American philosopher and political theorist B. Talisse (1970-) reports Rousseau’s writing in his book *Democracy and Moral Conflict* (2009) on the protection of individuals within a “General Will” that Rousseau defines as the will of the group. Talisse argues:

“Liberals tend to hold that among the individual rights are rights to a certain level of economic and social support that must be provided by the state [and] that political justice is fundamentally a question of how to protect individuals and recognize their rights.” (Talisse, 2009)

Talisso raises questions such as: Why should politics begin from the recognition of the rights of the individual? And what is the source of these rights? He states that, in defending *Liberalism*, Montesquieu, Rousseau, Hume, Smith, Jefferson, Kant and Mill, are united in thinking that there is some abiding moral justification for liberalism. Talisso writes:

“Typically, that there is some philosophical defenses of liberalism claim that liberal political arrangements are entailed by some moral fact about human beings as such. In John Locke and Thomas Jefferson it is the fact of divinely conferred natural rights that entails a liberal political order. For Immanuel Kant, it is the unique value of the human capacity for rational agency, what Kant called “dignity”. In the thought of John Stuart Mill, the intrinsic value of pleasure, and the corresponding moral requirement of maximizing it, entails a politics based in individual liberty.” (Ibid, 09)

Talisso concludes that according to the philosophers he has mentioned, only a liberal political order is just.

“In all cases, the claim is that only a liberal regime can recognize, secure, realize, respect, or manifest this basic moral fact about humanity; the conclusion, then, is that only a liberal political order is just.” (Ibid, 09)

Thinkers like German philosopher Immanuel Kant (1724- 1804) who is considered the central figure of modern philosophy, as well as English philosopher and political economist John Stuart Mill (1806-1873), emphasized

that the freedom of an individual is limited by the recognition of the freedom of the others (Mill, 1959). His seminal text *On Liberty*, published in 1859, provides explanation on freedom, in that sense that the individual ought to be free to do as he wishes unless he harms others. Individuals are rational enough to make decisions about their well being. Government should interfere when it is for the protection of society. Mill explains:

“The sole end for which mankind are warranted, individually or collectively, in interfering with the liberty of action of any of their number, is self-protection. That the only purpose for which power can be rightfully exercised over any member of a civilized community, against his will, is to prevent harm to others. His own good, either physical or moral, is not sufficient warrant. He cannot rightfully be compelled to do or forbear because it will be better for him to do so, because it will make him happier, because, in the opinion of others, to do so would be wise, or even right...The only part of the conduct of anyone, for which he is amenable to society, is that which concerns others. In the part which merely concerns him, his independence is, of right, absolute. Over himself, over his own body and mind, the individual is sovereign. (Mill, 1959)

Some would say that absence of coercion is the necessary and sufficient condition for defining *freedom*. Others would like to widen the scope and meaning of “freedom” providing some positive content to freedom. They argue that freedom is dependent on natural conditions and not on will or power of other man.

Kant in his *Critique of Practical Reason* (1788), introduces the categories of freedom, in analogy with the categories of understanding their practical counterparts. Kant's categories of freedom apparently function primarily as conditions for the possibility for actions (i) to be free, (ii) to be understood as free and (iii) to be morally evaluated. For Kant, although actions as theoretical objects are constituted by means of the theoretical categories, actions as practical objects (objects of practical use of reason, and which can be good or bad) are constituted by means of the categories of freedom. Only in this way can actions, as phenomena, be a consequence of freedom, and be understood and evaluated as such. (Kant, 1788)

From another perspective, Zygmunt Bauman maintains in his book *Freedom* (1988) that freedom implies several possible ways of conduct. He stresses on the universality of the concept of freedom and not only an individual right proper to human. He says:

“Modern society differs from its predecessors by its gardener-like, rather than game keeper - like, attitude to itself. It views the maintenance of social order as an ‘issue’ something to be kept on the agenda, considered, discussed, taken care of dealt with, resolved. Modern society does not believe it can be secured without consciously and deliberately taking measures to safeguard its security”. (Bauman, 1988)

Bauman further reflects on human acting and abstaining from action by arguing that:

"there are some contemporary meanings of 'freedom' in which all humans are inescapably free, even if they do not know about it, do not think of it or flatly deny it when asked. Humans are fundamentally free as agents who act rather than abstain from action, or refrain from acting rather than act in a certain way".(Ibid, 88)

Yet, British contemporary philosopher, logician, mathematician, historian, writer, social critic, political activist and Nobel laureate Bertrand Russell (1872 –1970), adopts the opposite view taken by Socrates on freedom (Freedom means that a person is not ruled by ignorance and that he does not do what is not required by the intellect), and observes that *"Freedom in general may be defined as the absence of obstacles to the realization of desire."* (Russell, 1940)

However, Russell realizes that under this definition no human being can be completely free. For *"freedom from desires being the only freedom. [...] That is, resigning oneself to the impossibility of obtaining what one desires."* (Rosenthal, 2015)

In light of what has been discussed, it appears that in a democratic state as France or England, individual development can be attained only through personal freedom. In a free and open society, prosperity would be shared and each individual can enhance his social and political status, as well as developing personal talent and skills.

But, the existentialist conception of freedom has a larger perspective:

"The refusal to belong to any school of thought, the repudiation of the adequacy of any body of beliefs whatever, and especially of systems, and a marked dissatisfaction with traditional philosophy as superficial, academic, and remote from life - that is the heart of existentialism (Kaufmann, 1975)

Many existentialist thinkers such as Kierkegaard, Heidegger, Sartre, Marcel, Jaspers etc, adopted a conception of freedom different from the traditional one. They reject what traditional philosophers call as 'freedom of the will'. Existentialist philosophers address questions like: To what extent are we free? What are we really free to choose? Why we ought to choose one thing rather than another?

French philosopher, Jean-Paul Sartre (1905-1980), playwright, novelist, political activist, biographer, literary critic and one of the key figures in the philosophy of existentialism, tried to answer all these questions in his philosophy. He said:

"We are free to be what we choose to be, and there is nothing else which we are. Even our feeling, as much as our actions, one freely chosen, for they are to themselves attempts upon the world, just as actions are" (Sartre, 1946)

Sartre (1946) has paradoxically assumed that human beings are both free and unfree. But then came to the conclusion that not only man is free but "*Man is condemned to be free*". This statement both in his seminal philosophical work,

Being and Nothingness (1957) and his famous talk, *Existentialism is a Humanism* (1946) has profound implications for all human beings.

By rejecting the traditional philosophical concepts of 'freedom', Sartre reflects:

“Man cannot be sometimes slave and sometimes free; he is wholly and forever free or he is not free at all.” (Sartre, 1957)

Existentialist philosophers also think that freedom is creativity besides being identical with human existence. In his book *Existentialism* published in 1972, Scottish philosopher John Macquarrie (1919-2007) has noticed that:

“If freedom is almost identical with existence itself, there is no humanity without freedom. Freedom may be dangerous, but there is no human dignity without freedom, and the risk of increasing freedom must constantly be taken. [Freedom is linked] with creativity. The highest reach of humanity is creativity, a sharing in the power of God the Creator. 'Creativity is the mystery of freedom. Man can indeed create the monstrous as well as the good, the beautiful, and the useful'.” (Macquarrie, 1972)

Probably, for Sartre freedom is the basis for all human activity. Man is free to create his own world with his actions. Surely it is better to be "*condemned to be free*", than "*condemned to be a slave*"(Sartre, 1957). Sartre more than many other philosophers, has probably been the most influential in the West.

2.2.4. Muslim Thought

Philosophy theorists have approached freedom from two different concepts, either individualistic or collectivistic. The question to be asked is: Does freedom in Muslim conception adopt the individualist theory or the pluralist one?

According to the Qur'an, God did not create man as an individual but as a couple, or created man as spouses. One of the verses says:

“That He did create in pairs,- male and female, From a seed when lodged (in its place);”. (53:45-6) ²¹

وَأَنَّهُ خَلَقَ الزَّوْجَيْنَ الذَّكَرَ وَالْأُنثَىٰ مِنْ نُطْفَةٍ إِذَا تُمْنَىٰ (النجم 45-46)

The Qur'an uses the Arabic word (Zawj) which means spouse. The male is a 'zawj' and the female too; that is, the Qur'an does not differentiate linguistically between the male and the female in as far as creation is concerned. This is asserted in the saying:

“And among His Signs is this, that He created for you mates from among yourselves, that ye may dwell in tranquility with them, and He has put love and mercy between your (hearts): verily in that are Signs for those who reflect.” (30:21)

وَمِنْ آيَاتِهِ أَنْ خَلَقَ لَكُمْ مِنْ أَنْفُسِكُمْ أَزْوَاجًا لِتَسْكُنُوا إِلَيْهَا وَجَعَلَ بَيْنَكُمْ مَوَدَّةً وَرَحْمَةً ۗ إِنَّ فِي

ذَٰلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ لِّقَوْمٍ يَتَفَكَّرُونَ (الروم 21)

²¹<http://www.oneummah.net/quran/>

Besides, the Qur'an does not say who was created first: the male or the female, but says that each was created from the other. This means that the female and the male are of the same origin, and both of them are organically connected. (Kassem, 2012)

All have the same creation origin:

“He created you (all) from a single person: then created, of like nature, his mate; and he sent down for you eight head of cattle in pairs: He makes you, in the wombs of your mothers, in stages, one after another, in three veils of darkness. such is God, your Lord and Cherisher: to Him belongs (all) dominion. There is no god but He: then how are ye turned away (from your true Centre)?” (39:6)

خَلَقَكُمْ مِنْ نَفْسٍ وَاحِدَةٍ ثُمَّ جَعَلَ مِنْهَا زَوْجَهَا وَأَنْزَلَ لَكُمْ مِنَ الْأَنْعَامِ ثَمَانِيَةَ أَزْوَاجٍ ۚ يَخْلُقُكُمْ فِي بُطُونِ أُمَّهَاتِكُمْ خَلْقًا مِّنْ بَعْدِ خَلْقٍ فِي ظُلُمَاتٍ ثَلَاثٍ ۚ ذَلِكُمْ اللَّهُ رَبُّكُمْ لَهُ الْمُلْكُ ۚ لَا إِلَهَ إِلَّا هُوَ ۚ فَاتَىٰ تُصْرَقُونَ (الزمر 6)

The ‘zawj’ or the spouse is not a separate individual, but an integral to another. He or she isn’t qualified naturally to stay alone or separate, and he/she cannot easily do that because of his/her natural creation. (Ibid, 2012)

The question of plurality isn’t limited to pairs or spouse-ship, but extends to mankind. The Qur’an says that ‘an-nass’ (mankind in general) are made peoples and tribes:

“O mankind! We created you from a single (pair) of a male and a female, and made you into nations and tribes, that ye may know each other (not that ye may despise (each other)). Verily the most honoured of you in the sight of

God is (he who is) the most righteous of you. And God has full knowledge and is well acquainted (with all things). (49:13)

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِنَّا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ مِنْ ذَكَرٍ وَأُنْثَىٰ وَجَعَلْنَاكُمْ شُعُوبًا وَقَبَائِلَ لِتَعَارَفُوا ۗ إِنَّ أَكْرَمَكُمْ عِنْدَ اللَّهِ أَتْقَاكُمْ ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلِيمٌ خَبِيرٌ (الحجرات 13)

This verse assures that man is naturally pluralist; he/she is created a spouse and an integral part of a people or a tribe. In this assumption, Islam differs completely from so many philosophers who assumed that societies develop due to need or necessity, and agrees with Aristotle who said that society as an idea is precedent to the individual, and the individual is created to fit into the application of the idea. This is a crucial point in constructing the Qur'anic theory of freedom. (Ibid, 12)

This does not exclude Islam from being also individualist because responsibility is individualist not pluralist. Everybody is responsible for his/her actions and doings both in this life and the life here-after. The Qu'ran says:

“Every soul will be (held) in pledge for its deeds”. (74:38)

كُلُّ نَفْسٍ بِمَا كَسَبَتْ رَهِينَةٌ (المدثر 38)

And also mentions:

“Namely, that no bearer of burdens can bear the burden of another. That man can have nothing but what he strives for.” (53:38-9)

وَأَنْ لَيْسَ لِلْإِنْسَانِ إِلَّا مَا سَعَىٰ وَأَنَّ سَعْيَهُ سَوْفَ يُرَىٰ (النجم 38-39)

That is why the Qur'an establishes rules of earth punishments, and describes recompense and punishment on the Day of Judgment.

"Every man's fate We have fastened on his own neck: On the Day of Judgment We shall bring out for him a scroll, which he will see spread open. (It will be said to him:) Read thine (own) record: Sufficient is thy soul this day to make out an account against thee." (17:13-4)

وَكُلَّ إِنسَانٍ أَلزَمْنَاهُ طَائِرَهُ فِي عُنُقِهِ^ط وَنُخْرِجُ لَهُ يَوْمَ الْقِيَامَةِ كِتَابًا يَلْقَاهُ مَنشُورًا اِقْرَأْ
كِتَابَكَ كَفَىٰ بِنَفْسِكَ الْيَوْمَ عَلَيْكَ حَسِيبًا (الإسراء 14-13)

This means that Islam does not dissolve the individual into the society but preserves the individual entity that does not separate itself from the whole. Dissolving the individual into society or tribe negates the personal responsibility, and personal freedom is consequently negated. The person is pluralist and individualist at the same time according to the Qu'ran. Is this combination of two contradictories or antonyms logically possible?²²

The first Islamic premise for religious freedom is Islam's acknowledgement of the fact that by its own nature, the human family is inescapably pluralistic and heterogeneous. This plurality is evident in many respects. The Qur'an makes it clear that God has deliberately created people in different sexes and also in different nations and tribes so that they would understand one another. (Abubakar, 2013)

"O mankind! We created you from a single (pair) of a male and a female, and made you into nations and tribes, that ye may know each other (not that

²² Ibid

ye may despise (each other). Verily the most honoured of you in the sight of Allah is (he who is) the most righteous of you. And Allah has full knowledge and is well acquainted (with all things).” (49:13)

يَا أَيُّهَا النَّاسُ إِنَّا خَلَقْنَاكُمْ مِنْ ذَكَرٍ وَأُنْثَىٰ وَجَعَلْنَاكُمْ شُعُوبًا وَقَبَائِلَ لِتَعَارَفُوا ۗ إِنَّ أَكْرَمَكُمْ
عِنْدَ اللَّهِ أَتْقَاكُمْ ۗ إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلِيمٌ خَبِيرٌ (الحجرات 13)

God has also created people with various colours and languages out of His wisdom.

“And among His Signs is the creation of the heavens and the earth, and the variations in your languages and your colours: verily in that are Signs for those who know.” (30:22)

وَمِنْ آيَاتِهِ خَلْقُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَاخْتِلَافُ أَلْسِنَتِكُمْ وَأَلْوَانِكُمْ ۗ إِنَّ فِي ذَلِكَ لَآيَاتٍ
لِّلْعَالَمِينَ (الروم 22)

The purpose of these diversities is not for the human society to fight belittle or disrespect one another, but to have variety in the human species so that people can, on the basis of those differences, seek to understand one another and to try to promote mutual respect and trust. (Ibid, 13)

When analyzing the Holy Qur'an, we may distinguish two types of verses emphasizing the concept of freedom in Islam. The first type stressing upon the Omnipotence of God, and the other stating that man is free and has full responsibility upon his acts.

On the one hand, it is stated in the Holy Qur'an that:

“To Allah belongeth all that is in the heavens and on earth. Whether ye show what is in your minds or conceal it, Allah Calleth you to account for it. He forgiveth whom He pleaseth, and punisheth whom He pleaseth, for Allah hath power over all things.”(2:284)

لِلَّهِ مَا فِي السَّمَاوَاتِ وَمَا فِي الْأَرْضِ وَإِنْ تُبْذُوا مَا فِي أَنْفُسِكُمْ أَوْ تُخْفُوهُ يُحَاسِبِكُمْ بِهِ اللَّهُ
عَلِيمٌ غَافِرٌ لِمَنْ يَشَاءُ وَيُعَذِّبُ مَنْ يَشَاءُ وَاللَّهُ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ (البقرة 284)

“It is never the wish of those without Faith among the People of the Book, nor of the Pagans, that anything good should come down to you from your Lord. But Allah will choose for His special Mercy whom He will - for Allah is Lord of grace abounding.” (3:105)

مَا يَوَدُّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مِنْ أَهْلِ الْكِتَابِ وَلَا الْمُشْرِكِينَ أَنْ يُنَزَّلَ عَلَيْكُمْ مِنْ خَيْرٍ مِّنْ رَبِّكُمْ
وَاللَّهُ يَخْتَصُّ بِرَحْمَتِهِ مَنْ يَشَاءُ وَاللَّهُ ذُو الْفَضْلِ الْعَظِيمِ (آل عمران 105)

“Say: "O Allah! Lord of Power (And Rule), Thou givest power to whom Thou pleasest, and Thou strippest off power from whom Thou pleasest: Thou enduest with honour whom Thou pleasest, and Thou bringest low whom Thou pleasest: In Thy hand is all good. Verily, over all things Thou hast power.” (3:26)

قُلِ اللَّهُمَّ مَالِكُ الْمُلْكِ تُؤْتِي الْمُلْكَ مَنْ تَشَاءُ وَتَنْزِعُ الْمُلْكَ مِمَّنْ تَشَاءُ وَتُعِزُّ مَنْ تَشَاءُ وَتُذِلُّ
مَنْ تَشَاءُ بِيَدِكَ الْخَيْرُ إِنَّكَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ (آل عمران 26)

“He forgiveth whom He pleaseth, and He punisheth whom He pleaseth: and to Allah belongeth the dominion of the heavens and the earth, and all that is between: and unto Him is the final goal (of all)” (5:18)

يَعْرِفُ لِمَنْ يَشَاءُ وَيُعَدِّبُ مَنْ يَشَاءُ ۗ وَلِلَّهِ مُلْكُ السَّمَاوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا ۗ وَإِلَيْهِ

الْمَصِيرُ (المائدة 18)

These selected Qur'anic verses show that all man's actions are ruled by an All powerful Will. They define the Absolute Power of Allah, meaning as well 'the Law of nature'.

Shaikh Saleh al-Fawzan writes in *Mujmal Aqeedah* as-Salaf, that many groups have been mistaken (misled in Islamic terminology) in their understanding of 'Qadar' (Predestination or Divine Decree). (al-Fawzan, 2009)

One group²³ claims that the individual is forced in his actions and he has no control, ability or will. This group affirmed the Divine Decree and thus robbed the individual from his will. They argue from the Holy Qur'an:

"It is Allah, Who has created the seven heavens and the earth the like thereof. His Command descends between them that you may know that Allah has power over all things and that Allah comprehends all things in (His) Knowledge." (65:12)

اللَّهُ الَّذِي خَلَقَ سَبْعَ سَمَاوَاتٍ وَمِنَ الْأَرْضِ مِثْلَهُنَّ يَنْزِلُ الْأَمْرُ بَيْنَهُنَّ لِتَعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ وَأَنَّ اللَّهَ قَدْ أَحَاطَ بِكُلِّ شَيْءٍ عِلْمًا (الطلاق 12)

"With Him are the keys of the Ghayb (unseen), none knows them but He. He knows whatever there is in (or on) the earth and in the sea; not a leaf falls, but he knows it. There is not a grain in the darknesses of the earth or anything fresh or dry, but is written in a clear record." (6:59)

²³ Group of Shaikh Saleh al-Fawzan's scholars.

وَعِنْدَهُ مَفَاتِحُ الْغَيْبِ لَا يَعْلَمُهَا إِلَّا هُوَ وَيَعْلَمُ مَا فِي الْبَرِّ وَالْبَحْرِ وَمَا تَسْفُطُ مِنْ وَرَقَةٍ إِلَّا
يَعْلَمُهَا وَلَا حَبَّةٍ فِي ظُلُمَاتِ الْأَرْضِ وَلَا رَطْبٍ وَلَا يَابِسٍ إِلَّا فِي كِتَابٍ مُبِينٍ (الأنعام 59)

*“Know you not that Allah knows all that is in the heaven and on earth?
Verily, it is (all) in the Book (Al-Lawh Al-Mahfoodh). Verily! That is easy
for Allah.” (22:70)*

أَلَمْ تَعْلَمْ أَنَّ اللَّهَ يَعْلَمُ مَا فِي السَّمَاءِ وَالْأَرْضِ إِنَّ ذَلِكَ فِي كِتَابٍ إِنَّ ذَلِكَ عَلَى اللَّهِ يَسِيرٌ
(الحج 70)

*“No calamity befalls the earth or yourselves but is inscribed in the Book of
Decrees (Al-Lawh Al-Mahfoodh) before We bring it into existence. Verily,
that is easy for Allah.” (57:22)*

مَا أَصَابَ مِنْ مُصِيبَةٍ فِي الْأَرْضِ وَلَا فِي أَنْفُسِكُمْ إِلَّا فِي كِتَابٍ مِنْ قَبْلِ أَنْ نُنزِّلُهَا إِنَّ
ذَلِكَ عَلَى اللَّهِ يَسِيرٌ (الحديد 22)

*“To whomsoever among you who wills to walk straight and you will not
unless (it be) that Allah wills, the Lord of the Alameen (mankind, jinn and
all that exists).” (81:29)*

وَمَا تَشَاءُونَ إِلَّا أَنْ يَشَاءَ اللَّهُ رَبُّ الْعَالَمِينَ (التكوير 29)

For this group, human actions thus occur by the Will of God (Allah).

On the other hand, another group²⁴ went to the other extreme and declared that every man creates his own actions. Allah has no will or control in his action. Man performs his actions by his choice and power that is independent of the Will of Allah. This group exaggerated affirmed the individual's will until they

²⁴ Ibid

denied the Will and Decree of Allah. Many Qur'anic verses say that God (Allah) has given man freedom and power. The Holy Qur'an says:

Allah does not change a people's lot unless they change what is in their hearts. (13:11)

إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُغَيِّرُ مَا بِقَوْمٍ حَتَّىٰ يُغَيِّرُوا مَا بِأَنفُسِهِمْ ۗ (الرعد 11)

“And if any one earns sin, he earns it against His own soul: for Allah is full of knowledge and wisdom.”(4:111)

وَمَنْ يَكْسِبْ إِثْمًا فَإِنَّمَا يَكْسِبُهُ عَلَىٰ نَفْسِهِ ۗ وَكَانَ اللَّهُ عَلِيمًا حَكِيمًا (النساء 111)

“Those who receive guidance, do so for the good of their own souls; those who stray, do so to their own loss: and I am not (set) over you to arrange your affairs.” (10:108)

فَمَنْ اهْتَدَىٰ فَإِنَّمَا يَهْتَدِي لِنَفْسِهِ ۗ وَمَنْ ضَلَّ فَإِنَّمَا يَضِلُّ عَلَيْهَا ۗ وَمَا أَنَا عَلَيْكُمْ بِوَكِيلٍ (يونس)

(108)

According to Shaikh Saleh al-Fawzan (2012), both groups are greatly mistaken and misguided. He provides the Islamic law (Sharia) on that matter which states that:

“The Ahlus-Sunnah wal-Jama'ah is on the middle path – they affirm ability, choice and will for the slave but it is subservient to the Will and Power of Allah and the slave cannot do anything except by the Will of Allah.”²⁵

²⁵ Ibid

The Messenger of Allah, Prophet Muhammad (Peace and Blessings Be upon Him) established an example by his conduct and with a vast Hadith literature to affirm that man is judged by his works, though all his actions are ruled by the Divine Will.

One of the innumerable examples in Islamic history that claim for freedom is that of Umar Ibn Al-Khattab, the Second *Khalifa* of the Muslims on 23 August 634 . Umar always favored individual freedom and self-respect. By word of mouth and through his writings he made it very “clear” that every human being was born free and no one should have to abase himself in front of others. Once, the son of Amr bin As abused and beat up a Copt Christian. On hearing this Umar ibn Al-Khattab had son of Amr punished publicly by the hand of the victim Copt Christian. Then Umar ibn Al-Khattab addressed both father and son and said: “*Since when have you enslaved the people though they were born free?*”²⁶ [متى استعبدتم الناس وقد ولدتهم أمهاتهم أحرارا]

Conclusion

In the light of the previous quotation, it may be held that the conception of human responsibility is so strongly developed and emphasized in the Muslim thought. Destiny and responsibility are not contradictory but constitute the basic foundations of the religion of Islam. Furthermore, any religion and any society set up their own limits to human behaviour so as to avoid any societal conflict but also to perpetuate, to some extent, the male / female cultural patterns. These various cultural definitions and practices of transgressions and freedom nurture,

²⁶ <http://www.islamicity.org/4031/umar-ibn-al-khattab-among-the-most-influential-people-in-history/>

once more, the controversial and debateful issue of individual identity related to the do's and don'ts of any society. The following chapter examines an illustration of woman freedom in a specific cultural context where traditional norms are transgressed.

CHAPTER THREE: BEYOND “CRAZYNESS”

Introduction

Even the first president, Ahmed Ben Bella (1962-1965) congratulated her:

“Ahlam Mosteghanemi is an Algerian sun which enlightens Arabic literature. She has carried Algerian literature to a stature which befits our national history. We are proud of her Arabic word as Algerians pride in their Arabness”.

Besides, Nizar Qabbani reveals his involvement in the woman writer’s work: *“The novel [Memory in the Flesh] got me dizzy, and I don’t usually get dizzy because of a novel. The reason of that dizziness feeling was that the novel was so much like me; crazy, tensed, Intrusive, cruel, human, lustful, and against the law, just like me”.* (Nizar Qabbani, *Mirror Mirror*)

1

Mosteghanemi confesses that: *“A human being spends his first years learning how to speak, and the Arab regimes teach him silence for the rest of his life”* (Mosteghanemi, 2008, 15).

Indeed, perceptions and understanding of our “reality” is dependent on our socio- religious and educational background. Probably our linguistic abilities and degree of imagination and desire for freedom or confinement to rules impact on our behaviour. As such, any act has a direct consequence on our life, and Mosteghanemi among other post-colonial women writers as Assia Djebar or Arundhati Roy, depicts a world where the woman protagonist is torn between her individuality or inner self and the image she is conformed to give embodying a submission to socio-religious rules. Challenging the norms means transgression and the woman protagonist in *the Chaos of Senses* dares then re-create her own world where she can find some kind of fulfillment and peace.

3.3. Woman Writer's Life and Literary Work

Mosteghanemi is a hybrid woman writer who lived in different cultural contexts, where her mastery of both Arabic and French allow her to shape her “in-between” world where the woman protagonist's transgression emerges.

3.3.1. Biographical Features

Ahlam Mosteghanemi was born in Tunis in 1953. When the Algerian War of Independence broke out in 1954, her family had been forced into exile as her father Mohammed Cherif was a political leader and activist. Her family home in Tunisia became a central meeting point for resistance fighters allied to the Algerian People's Party including her father and cousins.²⁷

After the Independence, they returned to Algeria in 1962. Mohammed Cherif sent his eldest daughter Ahlam to one of the first Arabic schools in Algeria. In the early 1970s her father suffered a breakdown and she had to support her family. She began broadcasting her poetry by hosting a national radio show, *Hamassat* [همسات] (Whispers). Later in 1973, she earned a B.A. in Arabic Literature from the University of Algiers, and also published her first poetry collection, *Ala' Marfa Al Ayam* (*The Harbour of Days*, 1973).

She moved to Paris to carry on her studies and spent fifteen years there. In 1982, she obtained her Ph.D. in Sociology from the Sorbonne in Paris, and her thesis was published as “*Algérie: Femmes ET Critique*” (1985) in L' Harmattan.

In 1974, Ahlam Mosteghanemi married Georges El Rassi, a Lebanese Christian journalist. Despite her silence about the circumstances of this union (difference of religion and nationality), marriage can never happen unless it is the result of a love story. (Karism, 2010) They moved to Beirut where she is now living with her husband and three children.

²⁷ See Mosteghanemi's Website at <http://www.ahlammosteghanemi.com>

Dhakirat al Jassad [ذاكرة الجسد] (*Memory in The Flesh*, 1993) marked the beginning of Mosteghanemi's acclaimed trilogy of novels, the second of which is *Fawda al Hawas* [فوضى الحواس] (*The Chaos of the Senses*), published in 1997 and the third, *Aber Sareer* [عابر سرير] (*Bed Hopper*), published in 2003.

3.3.2. Synopsis of the Novel

Fawda al- Hawas or *The Chaos of The Senses* by Ahlam Mosteghanemi, first appeared in Arabic in 1998. It was then translated into English by Baria Ahmar in 2004 and published by The American University in Cairo Press. It is the second novel in the international bestselling trilogy from 'the literary phenomenon' (Elle).

The beginning of the novel is most unusual:

"Unlike the others, he wanted to test loyalty through her, to enjoy with her the pleasure of love's fidelity through its very starvation, to infuse passion amidst the deep mines of the senses. She doesn't know how her femininity submitted to him". (Mosteghanemi COS, 1)²⁸

عكس الناس، كان يريد أن يختبر بها الإخلاص. أن يجرب معها متعة الوفاء عن جوع،
أن يربي حباً وسط ألغام الحواس .. هي لا تدري كيف اهتدت أنوثتها إليه. (9)

So begins *The Chaos of the Senses* which continues the story of *Memory in The Flesh* from the perspective of the female character Hayat. However, *Chaos of the Senses* is about to be a separate novel standing alone in terms of events, protagonists and scenes and we think, as readers, that it is moving in parallel with *Memory in the Flesh* like two railways that never meet. Gradually, we find ourselves holding the umbilical cord that connects *Memory in the Flesh* as the "mother-novel" to her new born *The Chaos of the Senses*, or perhaps the opposite is true, to some extent.

²⁸ COS stands for Chaos of the Senses.

The Chaos of the Senses seems to be different in form from *Memory in the Flesh*. If the latter had been divided into chapters from first to sixth, *The Chaos of the Senses* was divided into five parts: *The Beginning - Always - Naturally - Absolutely - Definitely*.

Mosteghanemi accompanies her reader in a world where borders between dream and reality become confused. Hayat, the narrator, is a novelist who lives in Algeria. After two years of silence, she manages to write the beginning of a novel in which she creates the perfect man. And yet because of the intensity of her feelings, this man comes out of her imagination and becomes real. In this relation, which has become loving and adulterous, the narrator reviews her life and realizes the conformity in which she is locked up. Married to a high rank military officer, she lives a loveless life and only obeys the traditional social rules. Algerian events of the 1990s still reinforce this patriarchal structure already established after the independence. Preoccupied by political scandals and future of the nation, her husband has no time for her. Lacking love, affection and interest, Hayat, (meaning "life" in Arabic), takes refuge in fiction. At first, the narrator succeeds in defining the boundary between reality and fiction and imposes her supremacy on the protagonist. She remains the writer and the creator of her own invention.

However, her imaginary story takes concrete and palpable dimensions. Her protagonist breathes and lives in her world.

3.3.3. Language Issue

Paris is the setting of Mosteghanemi's first novel *Dhakirat al Jassad* (*Memory in the Flesh*), which was published in 1993. It is the first novel written by an Algerian woman in Arabic, dedicated to both the author's father and to her literary father, Malek Hadad (1927-1978).

“Mosteghanemi’s decision to write in Arabic and the themes of her novels are directly informed by this history and as such can be seen as both a statement of independence from the Eurocentric homogenization of language and discourse, and as a feminist political statement.”(Baqeel, 2015)

The novel was awarded the Naguib Mahfouz Medal for Literature in 1998 in recognition of its distinction. She closed her address as:

“My thanks go also to the panel of judges, one by one, for honouring me, as through their tribute to me they offer moral support to Algerian writers writing in Arabic who confront unarmed the onslaughts of Francophony and its diverse temptations, while they stand patriotically against the dubious and divisive tendencies to which Algeria is exposed. Glory to our beautiful language!”

(Mosteghanemi, 1998)²⁹

Shaden M. Tageldin describes this closing as *“nothing less than a declaration of war”*; she further argues:

“Mustaghlিনি counters two tendencies that have made the vocation of the arabophone writer “tragic.” The first is the notion that Arabic is a language not quite “fit” for the modern novel, that the Arabic novel lags behind its European counterpart. That notion, internalized by many writers across the Arabic-speaking world, owes its durability to the traumatic legacy of European colonialism.”(Tageldin, 2009)

²⁹ See Appendix 1

Mosteghanemi's decision to write in Arabic is considered as a linguistic challenge to colonization. When interviewed by Nuha Baqeel (2015) on reasons behind choosing the Arabic language in her writing, she affirms that Malek Haddad, the Francophone Algerian novelist and poet whom she considers as a second father, has given up writing as a form of protest against colonialism. Mosteghanemi says that he is "*a martyr to the Arabic language*" and that he "*would never write in French henceforth, saying, 'French is the cause of my exile and I will never write in it from now on as long as we have our independence'*". Mosteghanemi describes Haddad's silence as over writing in the language of the coloniser "another language too" and carries on showing her tight relationship to the one to whom she has dedicated her first novel. She says:

"I used to say that he died of cancer as a result of his silence, because to a writer silence is a gradual death. Malik Haddad's tragedy also represents my father's tragedy; he was also not good in Arabic and for this reason directed me to study it on his behalf. It was with this in mind that I dedicated the novel to Haddad." (Ibid, 15)

It is no surprise that Mosteghanemi declares the Mahfouz Medal she won, "a tribute to *"colleagues of the pen, to brothers in sorrow, who persist in the tragic vocation of writing in Arabic, those who are steadfast"*, confessing that "*some of them are more entitled than [her]*" (Mosteghanemi, 1998).

According to S. M. Tageldin (2009), two tendencies have made Mosteghanemi's vocation of the Arabophone writer "tragic". The first is the notion that Arabic is a language not quite "fit" for the modern novel, that the Arabic novel lags behind its European counterpart. That notion, internalized by many writers across the Arabic-speaking world, owes its durability to the traumatic legacy of European colonialism. The second concerns the Algerian *woman* as Arabophone novelist. Tageldine argues:

“For Mostaghanmi's breakthrough text both joins and challenges the male-dominated canon of modern Algerian Arabic literature by using Arabic not only to reinscribe Algerian nationhood outside francophonie (as Mostaghanmi's Arabophone male counterparts equally do), but also-as Ellen McLarney has suggested-to rewrite women into the nation in realist rather than fantasist terms.” (McLarney, 2002 qd in Tageldine 2009)

When Mosteghanemi declares she is one of those "who confront unarmed the onslaughts of Francophony and its diverse temptations,"³⁰ she clearly asserts that francophone Algerian women's writing is not capable of repairing the damages caused by either colonial or gender oppression.

In her Ph.D. dissertation published in 1985 as *Algérie: femme et écritures* [Algeria: Woman and Writings], Mosteghanemi notes that it was Arabic-language Algerian Muslim male writers who first took up the liberation of women in the 1920s and 1930s, at a time when

"la littérature de langue française ne s'intéresse pas au problème de la femme mais s'en sert plutôt dans un but exotique"

[French-language literature was not interested in the problem of Woman but used her, rather, to exotic ends]³¹.

Yet, Mosteghanemi further notes that if French becomes the language of Algerian resistance literature, perhaps because resistance could "talk back" to the French colonizer in no language *but* French?³²

³⁰ See Appendix 1

³¹ The translation is Baqeel's.

³² Mosteghanemi, Dissertation p 288.

Mosteghanemi's "autobiography of the father" parallels and opposes Djébar's. Like Djébar's father, Mosteghanemi's was a teacher of French, compelled by the colonial system both to learn and to earn in the colonizer's tongue. And both Djébar and Mosteghanemi acquired their languages of writing thanks to the decisions of their fathers. But the similarity ends there. (Tageldine, 2009). While Djébar's father encouraged her to see French as the pathway to freedom, Mosteghanemi's placed her future in Arabic. Mosteghanemi's father authorized her to transgress gender and sexual taboos and to write of eros in ways that the francophone Djébar could not. He rose to Mosteghanemi's defense when others attacked her, insisting that she is free "to write her feelings" (Mosteghanemi, "Writing," 83).

Therein was born Mosteghanemi's conviction that:

"... the bodies of both Algerian women and men can move more freely in Arabic than in French and that if, as Djébar would insist, Algeria could never have won its revolution without women and men fighting side by side, so too will Algerian women never win liberation within "a male-dominated society" without "a man by [their] side" (Mosteghanemi, "Writing," 84).

Born 1936 in Cherchell, near Algiers, Djébar acquired French thanks to her father, a teacher of French who enrolled her in his school. An Arabic speaker of Amazigh ethnic origins, Djébar's father himself had learned French and pursued a career in the colonial system to save his family from poverty. By sending Djébar to French school, the father is said to have "saved" her, in turn, from the cloistered lives of many Algerian women of her generation. In a 1996 interview, Djébar notes that she chose to begin the story of *L'Amour, La Fantasia*, her story, "main dans la main" ["hand in hand"] with her father because, she says :

"Au fur et à mesure que j'ai commencé à écrire, j'ai progressivement découvert que si, à onze ans, je ne me suis pas voilée comme mes cousines, c'est grâce à la langue, grâce à mon père. J'en arrive à la conclusion que cette langue que je n'utilise pas dans le désir et dans l'amour, cette langue m'a donné surtout l'espace" (Djebar in Gauvin, 1996, qd in Tageldine, 2009)

[“As I began to write, I gradually discovered that if, at age eleven, I was not veiled like my cousins, it was thanks to the language, thanks to my father. I arrive at the conclusion that this language that I do not use in desire and in love, this language has given me, above all, space].”³³

Through her work Mosteghanemi continues what her father started in the 1940s, namely the process of decolonization.

According to Murad Mosteghanemi “the liberation of the land was the beginning of decolonization, not the end of it”³⁴

By writing in Arabic, Ahlam Mosteghanemi accomplishes another victory over the system of colonization. Her use of the Arabic language helps erase the barbarian marks of colonialism.

3.1.4 Literary Translation

The first two novels in the trilogy *Dhakirat al Jassad* (1985) and *Fawda al Hawas* (1998) were translated into English by Baria Ahmar Sreih and published by the American University in Cairo Press as *Memory in the Flesh* (2000) and *The Chaos of the Senses* (2004) respectively. With the selling of millions of copies in Arabic, Mosteghanemi was named in 2006 as the most successful woman writer in the Arab world. Nevertheless, she remains largely unknown and unread in the English-speaking world. Hence, a new translation of *Dhakirat al Jassad* by Raphael Cohen was published in December 2013 under the new title of *The Bridges of Constantine*. (Baqeel, 2015)

³³ Tageldine’s translation

³⁴ Mosteghanemi’s Biography by her brother Mourad, <http://www.ahlammosteghanemi.com/about>

When it comes to translation, many questions arise, such as: Why does the writer resort to more than one translation to his literary work? Is the cultural equivalence achieved and to what extent is it modified? Karima Bouziane asserts that translation fails to achieve a faithful cultural equivalence (in this case the English version), and gives two reasons for that. First, the translator often adopts “excessive inappropriate omissions”, and the second is that the translator tends “to use alterations”. In doing so, s/he modifies the specific cultural concepts and figurative terms which lead to cultural loss and misrepresentation of the original culture. (Bouziane, 2015)

In the same line of thought, both the writer and the translator are addressing an intercultural audience, and are trying to convey material from one culture or language to another. Hence these cultural differences have to be bridged. The translator has recourse to footnotes, glossaries and prefaces to help fill the void between the source language and target language. This does not appear to be the privilege of the creative writer, but it can be seen as part of the narrative strategy of many novels.(Ibid, 15)

As for Mosteghanemi, she states that the translation of a literary work must “reflect the work’s literary sensibility.” (Baqeel, 2015). In fact, in an interview with Mosteghanemi carried out by Nuha Baaqeel and published in “*Women: A Cultural Review*” in 2015, the writer argues that:

“The main problem I find is that all translators bring their own mood and method of linguistic composition. That is why I really wanted the translator to be a poet, so that he or she would have expertise in translating poetry and not just translating at the level of word for word, not just a text translator but a more precisely literary translator. The beauty of a text gets lost in a word for word translation and as a result, it loses much of its meaning.”(Ibid, 15)

Mosteghanemi also refers to readers of two languages who can differentiate between the original text and the translated one. She says that those "readers can sense and understand that there is something missing in the translation. The most striking example of this for me was the poet and publisher Nizar Qabbani, may Allah have mercy on him, who used to say to me 'Whenever I read a translated text, I feel like going crazy'." She adds that for her, "the translator must be a poet because when the text impresses him, he can translate it wonderfully" and thus "puts his spirit in the text"³⁵. She has chosen "an experienced translator", the native English speaker Raphael Cohen, who has already translated her book *Nessyane.com* [نسيان.كوم] (2009) to English as *The Art of Forgetting* (2011). The title plays a major role in arousing the curiosity of the recipient, specially the foreign reader. This is why Mosteghanemi chose the title *The Bridges of Constantine*, in English, for her novel *Dhakirat al Jassad* instead of the initially proposed title *The Dance of Oblivion* for the same novel. (Ibid, 2015)

3.4. Controversial Issues of Woman Freedom

As the first Algerian woman writer to publish a novel in the Arabic language, the work of Mosteghanemi marks a new chapter in the history of Algerian literature. Mosteghanemi's *Chaos of the Senses* brings up the revolt of a woman against the violence that devastated Algeria in the 1990s. The genius of Mosteghanemi lies in her way of presenting love as a feminine cause and in associating public affairs with family and married relations.

3.4.1. National Memory

³⁵ ibid

On Mosteghanemi's official Arabic website is an "autobiography," written by her brother Mourad, which tells her life story as an echo of her father's.³⁶

The English version of that autobiography invokes a memorable pun that dramatizes the intimate relationship between father and daughter and by extension, between the story of the Algerian nation and both Mosteghanemi's personal story and her novelistic art:

*"Ahlam," writes her brother-biographer, "is a writer who hides through her novels a fantastic father who 'haunts' her feather. While he does not actually hold the key to her novels, it is clear that he has completely transferred to her the immense burden of his personal history, which merges in its magnitude with the history of Algeria."*³⁷

At first blush, Mosteghanemi appears trapped in patriarchy; we cannot extricate an autonomous subject named "Ahlam" from the jaws of father, mother country, and their intertwined histories.

The July 1965 *coup* of Houari Boumediène and the rise of dictatorship in Algeria unhinged Mosteghanemi's father, who was committed to a mental hospital in Algiers. After his daughter left for Paris in the late 1970s, he began to write her long letters in French, retelling his memories of resistance on each anniversary of the key events in Algerian national history.

Through national memory father bonded daughter:

«أريد أن يقال إنني "أبو أحلام" أن أنسب إليها.. كما تنسب هي لي.»³⁸

³⁶ Mosteghanemi's Biography by her brother Mourad, <http://www.ahlammosteghanemi.com/about>

³⁷ Ibid

³⁸ Ibid

[I want it to be said that I am "Abi Ahlam" (Ahlam's father) so that I might be attributed to her ...as she is attributed to me].

Renaming himself for his daughter, Mosteghanemi's father permitted her to "father" *him* in posterity.

Her husband, as her father, represents the national authority. His father resisted Frenchmen for the independence of Algeria and her husband, by her military rank, represents this state order searched by the Algerian people during the long years of struggle against colonialism. Her husband is an extension of the venerated paternal picture.

"As for him, he probably thought like a military man in this matter too. When one of them reaches a position of power, he insists on occupying all the key positions in the state and all the important ministries, thinking that no one else is worthy of occupying them." (Mosteghanemi COS, 20)

أما هو، فمن الأرجح أنه كان في هذا المجال أيضا، يفكر بمنطق العسكر الذين، عندما يصل أحدهم على السلطة، يصر على شغل كل المناصب الرئيسية في الدولة، وكل الحقائق الوزارية الهامة، معتقدا أن لا احد غيره جدير بأن يشغلها، بل وأن وجود شخص غيره فيها هو احتمال دائم للإطاحة به. (38)

3.4.2. Love, Sexuality and Gender

In *The Chaos of the Senses*, Mosteghanemi shows the influence of politics on human relations notably those within a couple. In ordinary time, the woman is considered as an inferior being who, after so many years of mistreatment, believes in her inferiority. In times of war, practices for her subjugation are even more severe and married relation is transformed into a military report where the man conquers / dominates the woman.

Mosteghanemi cannot help noting the role of the woman in this type of excessive relation, notably that of the mother, protector of tradition. Indeed, if the men are so, it is partly because the traditional mothers brought them up in a manner that they become the absolute masters. Mothers, thus, are responsible of perpetuating male dominance over their daughters and the coming female generations.

At the beginning of the novel, the narrator appears as to be conformist and submissive, and speaks about her relation with her husband in military terms. Fortunately, when she involves in writing and her new loving affair, the narrator's consciousness begins to rise and she starts to question and analyze the world around her. She realizes how abusive the social structure is. She finds refuge in writing and in her new imaginary love story. She compares the right to love to national struggle. For her, to fight in the name of a nation is also to fight for a better treatment.

The narrator gives a banal description and stereotyped behaviours of the man and of the woman:

“She thinks that he wanted to humiliate her to prove that he owned her. Perhaps he thought that if a man wants to keep a woman, he has to make her feel that he is capable to leave her at any moment”. (Mosteghanemi COS, 4)

ما تعتقده، هو كونه أراد إذلالها، كي يضمن امتلاكها . وربما ظن أن على الرجل إذا أراد الاحتفاظ بامرأة، أن يوهمها أنه في أية لحظة يمكنه أن يتخلى عنها. (13)

“She, on the other hand, always believed that a woman has to be capable of giving up anything and everything to keep the man she loves.” (Mosteghanemi COS, 4)

أما هي، فكانت دائماً تعتقد أن على المرأة أن تكون قادرة على التخلي عن أي شيء

لتحتفظ بالرجل الذي تحبه. (13)

Their relation is described in terms of power, of property and of humiliation. It looks as if they were following a guide instruction of human relation where the woman is preprogrammed to think that the man must humiliate her before getting her.

Hayat already shows warming signs of confusion. Although she is married and educated in a traditional way, she cannot help enjoying, as a sexual pleasure, the new love story she is embarked in. She is very pleased not to be as this woman, submitted and conventional (Mosteghanemi, 26), she goes even to the point of making fun of her.

“She believes with a feminine foolishness, that those we love were made to share only pleasure with us, not pain.”(Mosteghanemi COS, 12)

وهي تعتقد بحماقة أنثى، أن الذين نحبهم، خلقوا ليتقاسموا معنا المتعة (26)

Hayat is therefore happy to distinguish herself from this wife of ink whom she considers too naive. She wants to escape the military regime her husband imposes on her, and in which she feels suffocated. She even describes the sexual relation in her couple in military terms, as a military assault where her husband throws himself over her to guarantee a quick triumph:

“He was always an officer who enjoyed quick victories, even in bed, and I was a woman who loved the beauty of defeats and raids of passion, unannounced by sirens of warning and not followed by ambulances. The kind that left the lovers' corpses behind, scattered across the land. I had a

passion for random shelling, where innocents died of love, within arm's reach of desire, before they

have time to ask why". (Mosteghanemi COS, 53-54)

دوماً، كان ضابطاً يحب الانتصارات السريعة حتى في سرير.

وكنت أنثى تحب الهزائم الجميلة، والغارات العشقية التي لا تسبقها صفارات إنذار.. ولا

تليها سيارات إسعاف، وتبقى إثرها جثث العشاق أرضاً.

بي افتتان بقصف عشوائي، يموت فيه الأبرياء عشقاً.. على مرمى اشتها، دون أن يكون

لهم الوقت ليسألوا: لماذا؟

The narrator does not hide her fascination by the military uniform, and wishes her husband could unlock her body to

see her as a lover not as his property. She further declares:

"I sometimes wished he would make love to me without taking off his uniform. Perhaps with that

uniform he might have forced a way open into my body. I was always fascinated by his strength

but tonight as well, he would not do it, because he's afraid it would wrinkle, and perhaps just

because he is a man with no imagination. He spent all his imagination and intelligence outside of

this bed". (Mosteghanemi COS, 53-54)

تمنيت أحياناً، لو أنه مارس الحب معي دون أن يخلع بذلته. ربما كان ببذلته تلك، فتح له

طريقاً إلى جسدي بالقوة.

فقد كنت دائماً مأخوذة بقوته

وربما فقط لأنه رجل بلا خيال. بل بالأحرى هو ينفق خياله وذكائه خارج هذا السرير.

Hayat links the intelligence of men to their understanding of women's emotions and desires. She asks herself how important can any achievement be compared to some moments of happiness shared between a husband and his wife. To some extent, she is seeking sympathy of the reader towards the unethical, even condemned behavior she is enterprising an adultery relation.

"In the end, men who were born to fill positions of power were not necessarily born to do so in bed." (Mosteghanemi COS, 53-54)

في النهاية، الرجال الذين خلقوا لكرسي، لم يخلقوا بالضرورة لسرير. والذين يبهروننا
بثيابهم ليسوا الذين يبهروننا بدونها. (97)

Hayat's husband thinks of her as of a property to be possessed, as a victory to be attained, as a good wife, who heals his pains and justifies all his misbehaviours.

"My husband was born with a military temperament, I suppose, - for him, to unintentionally break my spirit, exactly the same way he seduced and broke me years before, with no effort? Isn't power like wealth, making us seem more beautiful and more desirable? Aren't women like nations, always falling prey to the charm of the military uniform and its authority, before they realize that its power stems for their own awe of it?" (Mosteghanemi COS, 19)

أتوقع أن يكون زوجي قد ولد بمزاج عسكري , وحمل السلاح قبل أن يحمل أي شيء .
فأين العجب في أن يكسرني أيضا دون قصد، تماما، كما أغراني قبل ذلك بسنوات،
دون جهد؟ أليست السلطة كالثراء، تجعلنا نبدو أجمل وأشهى؟

أو ليست النساء كالشعوب، يقعن دائما تحت فتنة البذلة العسكرية وسطوتها . قبل أن

ينتبهن إلى أنهن بانبهارهن بها، قد صنعن قوتها؟(37)

However, the narrator admits having been mistaken. She left the memory of her father, the picture of national struggle and its dream of worthy Algeria to deceive her. And it is thanks to the writing and to its creation of the perfect man that she realises her error.

“I realized that his fatherliness meant the most to me, and that the prestige of his military rank and political position only mattered to me insofar as it kept alive the memory of struggle I had grown up with, and the pride of an Algeria I dreamed of used to see my country in his stature, in his strength and loftiness. In his body that had experienced fear, cold, and starvation during the long years of liberation, I saw what justified my desire, and for the sake of memory I honored it. A long time went by before I realized how foolish it was of me to mix up the complexity of the past with the opposite reality. characters of ink that would never leave the world of paper. ” (Mosteghanemi COS, 20)

تنبهت بعد ذلك، إلى أن أبوته هي التي كانت تعني لي الأكثر . وأن مهامه السياسية ورتبته العسكرية لم تكن تعينني بوجاهتها . وإنما لكونها استمرارا لذاكرة نضالية نشأت عليها , وعنفوان جزائر حلمت بها .كنت أرى في قامته الوطن، بقوته وشموخه . وفي جسده الذي عرف الجوع والخوف والبرد، خلال سنوات التحرير، ما يبهر اشتعائي له.ز واحتفائي به إكراما للذاكرة.

كم مر من الوقت، قبل أن أكتشف حماقة خلطي عقدة الماضي..بالواقع المضاد.

Hayet also criticizes those women with cold feelings and describes them as the “queens of boredom”:

“They were bored women – women of extravagantly furnished houses, extravagantly complicated cooking, polite lies, luxuriously cold bedrooms, and bodies that hid underneath extremely expensive dress everything no man had ever inflamed”. (Mosteghanemi COS, 70)

كن نساء الضجر, والبيوت الفائقة الترتيب, والأطباق الفائقة التعقيد, والكلمات الكاذبة
التهذيب, وغرف

النوم الفاخرة البرودة, والأجساد التي تخفي تحت أثواب باهضة الثمن.. كل ما لم يشعله

رجل. (124)

Unsurprisingly, the relation man-woman is far from what it is expected to be, the true love and mutual respect.

Rather, it is a relation that grows in a society which teaches dominance to men and submission to women. Since then, these two categories cannot meet except under the links of power and of weakness. Violence is another crucial factor that has deepened the gap between sexes and reinforced the dominant / dominated status among them. As a result, men have no more time to love their women under the pretext of political obligations and national duty. Facing her loneliness, the narrator jumps into the world of invention. His main protagonist appears there to become a reality. She embarks in a risky adventure to meet her man. She wears a veil and not to be recognized, and here again she points out her contribution to the hypocrisy of a society which is meant to be pure and religious.

“...passing by that same café , disguised in garments of piety. Once more, women have discovered that pious garments might conceal passionate women within, hiding under her abaya a body booby-trapped with desire”.(Mosteghanemi COS, 100)

أمر بهذا المقهى نفسه. متنكرة في ثياب التقوى بعد أن اكتشفت النساء- هذه المرة أيضاً -

أن ثياب التقوى قد تخفي عاشقة. تخبئ تحت عباءتها جسداً مفخخاً بالشهوة. (171)

Each time she leaves on her meeting, she puts on the pious dress of religion, and takes it off after she returns from her meeting.

“Spending two hours alone in a car driven by a military chauffeur who is escorting you home from a date, following the streets of anger and the alleys of death, was a tortuous descent down to reality – more than enough time for regrets. The pious dress I was wearing encouraged that train of thought. It was wearing me, making me think against myself. I took off that abaya as soon as I got home and gave it back to its owner, hoping to reconcile with my body”. (Mosteghanemi COS, 110-111)

سائق عسكريّ يعود بك من موعد حبّ، سالكاً شوارع الغضب وأزقة الموت، ليس

سوى سقوط مفجع نحو الواقع، ووقت كافٍ للندم.

يساعدك في ذلك زيّ التقوى الذي تلبسه. وإذا به يلبسك. وإذا بك تفكر ضدّ نفسك!

ولذا ما كدت أصل إلى البيت، حتى أسرع بخلع تلك العباءة، واعدتها إلى صاحبته.

عساني أتصالح مع جسدي. (189)

Ellen Mclarney (2002), in her article *Unlocking the Female in Ahlāḡ Mostaghānami*, elaborates on the image of the veil,

stating that:

“Moving undetected in the garb of piety, she passes by the Milk Bar, the café that Jamila Bou Hayred famously bombed. This incident, and others like it, is one of the most celebrated images of the war of independence, described and analyzed in Franz Fanon's essay "Algerian Unveiled" and portrayed in the film The Battle of Algiers. The "disguise" was European clothes, as Bou Hayred infiltrated enemy territory, leaving a bomb behind (Fanon, 1965: 58). Mustaghanami uses the same image, but virtually inverts it, as Hayat moves through the enemy territory to carry out her mission, to visit her lover.”³⁹

So, by the description of the narrator as an activist for love, Mosteghanemi attributes to love the dimension of a cause for which it is an honor to die. Referring to the famous Arab poem of Abou El Kacem Chebbi (1909-1934), the narrator maintains that the women, as the people, have to show a desire to live so that destiny would respond.

“Women, too, are like nations. If they want life, then destiny must respond, even if a high officer rules its fate, or a small dictator disguised as a husband” (Mosteghanemi, COS, 148).

النساء أيضاً كالشعوب؛ إذ هنّ أردن الحياة فلا بدّ أن يستجيب القدر . حتّى إن كان الذي يتحكم في أقدارهنّ ضابط كبير، أو دكتاتور صغير في هيئة زوج (253)

3.4.3. Tradition Regulation

Hayet's new love story allows her to better understand the causes of her conjugal problem. It is about the education guaranteed by traditional mothers but also about the political context which puts the women at the mercy of the men

³⁹ Unlocking

which reinforces patriarchy. In such a context, the women have to struggle, not only for better national future, but also for the right to love.

Regarding traditional education, the narrator refers to her mother. Having been an orphan at youth age and a widow since the age of twenty, her mother finds refuge in religion and in the perpetuation of traditions. Pious, she spends her time through numerous pilgrimages to Mecca.

“My second visit would be to my mother to bid her farewell before she went off to the hajj pilgrimage for the third or fourth time; I didn't know exactly. No one here knew any more the exact number of times anyone had been on the hajj since the phenomenon of showing off one's piety has spread.” (Mosteghanemi COS, 70)

أما مشواري الثاني، فسيكون لزيارة أمي وتوديعها، قبل ذهابها إلى الحج، للمرة الثالثة..
أو الرابعة.. لا أدري بالتحديد. فلا أحد يدري هنا عدد حججات الآخر. مذ شاعت ظاهرة
المزايدة في كل ما له علاقة بمظاهر التقوى (123).

The mother very lives alone in her flat and waits unnecessarily for the return of her son, disappeared in the ranks of the Islamists. Throughout the novel, the narrator reveals details of this strict education, the most revealing stage being that of the Turkish bath : the Hammam⁴⁰. According to the narrator, the Hammam is a place of meeting and of gossip, of claim and of lie.

“Why, ever since my childhood had I always hated sitting in these halls, naked except for the steam and water, and furnished only by the nude bodies of women? Was it out of respect for femininity

⁴⁰ Hammam :

that I had expected to be more beautiful than these shapeless bodies that had lost all semblance of their natural curve? Or was it because from the beginning, I was just born to be a figure of ink and paper, diluted by all that water and steam?" (Mosteghanemi COS, 136)

لماذا منذ طفولتي الأولى، كنت أكره الجلوس في هذه القاعات العارية إلا من البخار
والماء، والتي لا تؤثتها سوى أجساد نساء عاريات؟
ترى احتراماً للأوثنة، التي كنت أتوقعها أجمل من أجساد لم تعد لها من حدود، ولا
تضاريس "طبيعية"؟
أم لأنني منذ البدء، خلقت لأكون كائنًا من ورق وحب، تلغيه هذه الكميات الهائلة من الماء
والبخار؟

It is the only place where the nakedness of the woman is acceptable. It is the place where the woman tortures her body in a desire of cleanness, depilates and ponces to meet the high expectations of men.

"It was put under the lights and the curious scrutiny of other women, the object of hands rubbing and scrubbing and rinsing, pouring over it huge amounts of water, as if to purify it of its femininity. Was femininity unclean? Or did these women, who lived and died without ever being totally naked in front of a man, have some sort of lascivious relationship with those huge amounts of water? They poured it over their bodies, one bucket after the other, for hours nonstop, with some sort of vague pleasure, completely preoccupied with their feminine details. It was as if they came here for a rendezvous with their bodies". (Mosteghanemi COS, 136)

الحمام هو المكان الذي تنتهك فيه حرمة الجسد وحيأؤه. تسلط عليه الأضواء، والنظرات الفضولية للنساء. تتالى عليه الأيدي حكاً ودلگاً وتشطيفاً، ساكبة عليه كميات هائلة من

الماء. وكأنها تريد أن تطهره من أنوثته. فهل الأنوثة نجاسة؟ أم هل لهؤلاء النساء اللاتي يولدن ويمتن غالبًا، دون أن يتعرين تمامًا أمام رجل، علاقة شبقية ما بهذه الكميات الهائلة من الماء، التي يسكبها على أجسادهن سطلًا بعد آخر، ساعات بأكملها دون توقف، بلذة غامضة ما، وبانشغال تام بتفاصيلهن النسائية، وكأنهن جنن هنا، ليكنّ على موعد مع أجسادهن لا غير؟

Hayat describes the Hammam as the trap of womanhood, where the women learn to be unaware of their bodies, not to look but to present themselves with regard to the men:

“Rightly or naively, they all believed that after every bath, they returned home as queens to the throne of the conjugal bed. They would wear its crown for a few glorious moments in the dark before retreating to their mundane existence”. (Mosteghanemi COS, 136)

يعتقدن، عن صواب أو عن سذاجة، أنهن بعد كل حمام يعدن إلى بيوتهن ملكات، على عرش ليس سوى فراش الزوجية، عرش سيحملن تاجه لبضع لحظات في العتمة_ ويعدن بعدها لحياتهن العادية. (232)

In fact, the narrator went further to the insistence of her mother there. She tries to protect her nakedness and refuses to undress completely.

“I wrapped the towel around my body again and tied it around my breast. My mother's voice startled me, repeating words I had heard so many times before in this same place, since the time I was a young girl shy of showing my femininity and hiding insistently inside a towel, like someone deflecting an accusation. There one learned from others' looks how to renounce one's own body, suppress one's desires, and deny one's femininity. They taught girls that not only was sex

something to be ashamed of, but femininity as well and everything that revealed it, even in silence." (Mosteghanemi COS, 136)

فألف حول جسدي تلك الفوطة من جديد، وأعيد ربطها حول صدري تلقائياً.
ولكن صوت أمي يباغتني، يعيد كلمات أعرفها تماماً، لفرط ما سمعتها في هذا الحمام
نفسه، مذ أصبحت صبية تستحي من أنوثتها، وتختبئ داخل الفوطة بإصرار من يبعد عنه
تهمة.

هنا أنت تتعلمين من عيون الآخرين، كيف تنكرين جسدك، وتضطهدين رغباتك،
وتتبرأين من أنوثتك. فقد علموك أن ليس الجنس وحده عيباً. وإنما الأنوثة أيضاً.. وكل ما
يشبهني ولو صمماً. (231)

Her mother reprehends her and orders her to get rid of the protecting rag. It is about a symbolic act by which the mother, protector of traditions, imposes a ritual on her daughter.

"Take off that towel" my mother shouted, and her words led me to more questions." (Mosteghanemi COS, 137)

تصرخ أمي بي كعادتها "انزعي عنا هذه الفوطة!" تقودني كلماتها إلى أسئلة جديدة. (231)

According to her mother, it is natural to suffer to become nice for her husband. The narrator refutes this logic and feels sorry for these women who prettify for their husbands, for a night of sex in the darkness of a sad room.

"The darkness!"

I discovered at that moment one of the blessings of darkness, as I watched those bodies with their deformed femininity, their sagging bellies and breasts. I understood that God in His infinite wisdom had created darkness to give all his creatures the right to make love in the dark. What man, no matter how filled with lust or how drunk he may be, would lie down with one of these women in broad daylight?" (136-137)

العنمة..!

أكتشف الآن إحدى نعم العنمة. وأنا أتفرج على أجساد مشوهة الأنوثة، مترهلة البطون،

متدلّية الصدور. وأفهم أن يكون الله، بحكمته تعالى، قد خلق العنمة أيضاً ليمنح كل

مخلوقاته حق ممارسة الحب في الظلام.

وإلا.. فمن من الرجال، مهما جمحت به رغبتة الجنسية.. أو حالته المتقدمة من السكر،

سيقدر على مضاجعة نساء على هذا الشكل.. في عز النهار؟ (233)

In this respect, the narrator reminds of Helen Cixous in Linda R. Williams's *Sex in the Head* (1993) in which she asks the women to give up thinking of their bodies as "the empire of the own" empire where the man is considered as clean while the woman, the nasty.

Commenting on a similar Hammam scene in Assia Djebar's work *Femmes d'Alger dans Leur Appartement* [*Women of Algiers in Their Apartment*], Brenda Mehta "describes the Hammam as a feminine kingdom of mythical proportions, an atemporal female space vitalized by the dynamics of solidarity, fluidity of expression, and the physical uncensoring of the body" (Metha 2007). Contrary to Mosteghanemi, Djebar introduces the Hammam as the only place where women can meet with complete freedom and relaxation. In the same train of thought, Hanadi Al-Samman (2015) illustrates this idea of freedom in her work *Anxiety of Erasure*, in which she says:

“Nowhere is the female body’s freedom more expressed than in the hammam scene. No place is more private, yet no other place is more suited to give the multitude of naked female bodies of different ages and sizes a much-needed dose of affirmation and spatial grounding.” (Al-Samman, 2015)

Al-Samman focuses on the different sounds women hear and produce in the hammam, as described by Djébar. She adds that:

“The scene in the hammam is full of signs even of non-verbal modes of expression that do not conform to the demands of a rationalized or linear narrative. Cries, whispers, echoes and shouts convey a singular language where the link between signifier and signified is not convention-bound but more immediate, closer to the rhythms and movements of the body. The scene is constantly interrupted by ‘chuchotements’, sons creusés’, the brouhaha des voix entrecroisées and “conversations ou monologues déroulés en mots doux, menus, usés, qui glissent avec l’eau.” (Ibid, 15)

Hayat describes two other conformist women, that of her sister-in-law Farida, and that of her rival, the first wife of her husband. Farida is divorced, thus condemned to live with her brother. She represents the submitted woman who allows to the society to dictate her behaviour. She suffers silently, but finds no objection in the disloyalty of her brother to his wife. She considers that it is his right since he is a man, especially a Statesman.

“What could she possibly say, when deep down inside she believed that her brother had the right to do what he pleased, not only because he was a man, but also because he was a statesman.”(Mosteghanemi, COS, 96)

وماذا عساها تقول وهي تحتفظ في أعماقها أن من حق أخيها أن يتصرف كيفما يشاء،

ليس فقط لأنه رجل بل لأنه أيضاً رجل دولة. (164)

Concerning the 'first woman', the spouse of her husband, Hayat describes her as a being a woman without will. Left and rejected by her husband after twenty years of common life, with their three children, she can make nothing to oppose to the second marriage.

"I pitied that woman who was fifteen years older than me and had shared twenty years of my husband's life. She had given him three children before he became such an important officer, at which point, like all the other officials around him, he was "forced" to reconsider his married life. [...] After some time, a sort of silent feminine complicity grew between us, after each of us realized that she could not cancel the other or possess that man alone."(Mosteghanemi, COS, 182)

كنت أشفق على تلك المرأة التي تكبرني بخمس عشرة سنة والتي شاركت زوجي

عشرين سنة من حياته وأعطته ثلاثة أولاد قبل أن يصبح ضابطاً، على قدر من

الأهمية بحيث كان لابد له ككل المسؤولين من حوله أن يعيد النظر في حياته الزوجية.

[...] ثمّ مع الوقت ولد بيننا شيء من التواطؤ النسائي الصامت، بعد أن أدركت كل

واحدة منا، أنها لا يمكن أن تلغي الأخرى، أو تنفرد بامتلاك ذلك الرجل. (311-310)

From what has preceded relating to the women, the narrator considers that they are partly guilty in the crime of masculine oppression. Her mother educated her to obey and to please the men, as well as she attributes absolute rights to her husband over her. Farida and the first spouse, the name of whom is unknown, probably to stress her marginalization, approve their

situation set by social norms and are cautious to preserve through their silence. For all that, the narrator describes as cowardly a woman who is unable to speak to a man:

“I am a cowardly woman who never started a conversation with a man”. (Mosteghanemi, COS,35)

أنا المرأة الجبانة التي لم تبادر يوماً رجلاً بالكلام. (66)

The situation of women is worsened with political events which are going to follow, notably the assassination of the president Boudiaf on June 29th, 1992. The walls of imprisonment of the women are reinforced and their freedom reduced to the private sphere. The woman, as the nation, remains a plan for construction, in the expectation of love and equal treatment. Facing the silence of other women and also the increase of violence, Hayat decides to give up writing and by such, putting an end to her dreams. She declares:

“My mother was too busy with her hajj, my husband too occupied with his concerns, my brother with his cause, and the country with its confrontations. When I had simply sought myself an imaginary man, my illusions had been shot down”. (Mosteghanemi, COS,78)

أمي كانت مشغولة عني بحجتها. زوجي مشغول عني بمسؤولياته. وأخي بقضيته, والبلد بمواجهاته. وعندما أردت أن أجد لنفسني رجلاً وهمياً , أطلقوا الرصاص على أوهامي.

By giving up writing, Hayat, the narrator, does not succeed in her loving relation and thus joins the long feminine list of protagonists deceived in love. Although Hayat attempts to transgress some social norms and traditions, Mosteghanemi affirms in her interview with Baqeel (2015) that she has not meant to make the protagonist transgress any tradition but rather obey them. She states that Hayat is:

“a symbol of Algeria itself... that she was written as a flirt who concedes this and that. She represents an Algeria that got married to the corrupt military though her heart was with the cultured and artistic Algerian man.”(Baqeel, 2015)

And yet, Mosteghanemi contests the capacity of Arab writers such as Nawal El Saadaoui (1931-) or Hanan Al-Sheikh (1945-), who have been more successful in Great Britain than her own, to change the reality of the Arab world through provocation and transgression. She declares that:

“We cannot change Arabian society nor send it any message by provocation... I am writing in the first instance for their sake without considerations of translation or a global market in my mind. Writers are free to choose between pleasing the West and reforming the East through their ideas. Or they can choose to direct their words to the Western and Eastern reader at the same time. I choose to serve my nation and Arabism as the first priority. It is my pleasure and it is sufficient to me that I am considered the leading Arab woman writer, and an advocate for Algeria with its whims, modesty, defects, courage, history and massacres. I believe that the Arab reader” (Ibid, 15)

The previous quote reveals once more, the eternal debate on modern/post-colonial writers who transgress the norms of their original culture to please the western mind and thus, reveal their commitment to western values of freedom.

3.4.4. Behavioural Impact

Ahlam Mosteghanemi exposes, with a postcolonial awareness, the disappointments, deviations and displacements of revolutionary ideals, using a narrative framework represented in a passionate affair between her protagonists.

Mosteghanemi's works are specifically Algerian in the. However, their significance could be felt anywhere in the Arab World or in the Third World. In her novels, Mosteghanemi takes the reader on a trip through the ravages of colonialism and its consequences in Algeria. The complexity of her novel reflects the complexity of the Algerian experience during and after colonization. *"Mosteghanemi is too ambivalent in her characterization to be claimed by feminists and that this 'compels us to work harder at enriching our definition of feminine characters'"* (Valassopoulos, 2007).

Mosteghanemi is remarkable in her ability to embody convincingly a male voice who constructs this extraordinary tale of passion, and as Abdel-Moneim Tallima commented, "Ahlam Mosteghanemi goes beyond the common notions of the masculine and the feminine to present a humane horizon." As she said in an interview, she opted for a male narrator, partly because she did not want to be classified under the label of "womanist writing", and partly because she wanted to cover episodes in the political history of Algeria in which men were instigators. (Ghazoul, 1998)

Mosteghanemi is remarkable in her ability to go beyond the common notions of the masculine and the feminine to present a humane horizon. As she said in an interview, she opted for a male narrator, partly because she did not want to be classified under the label of "womanist writing", and partly because she wanted to cover episodes in the political history of Algeria in which men were instigators. (Ghazoul, 1998)

Ellen McLarney in her study on *Memory in the Flesh* argues that the novel is 'not only a reflection on but a reflection of the modes of representation that have come to dominate the field of contemporary Algerian literature, dominated by male writers' (McLarney 2002)

As to gender issue, Mosteghanemi, as Baqeel (2015) asserts, is positioned as a female Arab writer. Mahmoud Saeed (2000) in a piece for *Al Jadid Magazine* argues Mosteghanemi is part of a commercially successful new generation of Arab women novelists who have broken down barriers previously placed around the work of female writers and who are now re-writing the history of the colonial period in Arab countries (Saeed 2000).

Besides, Anastasia Valassopoulos (2007) suggests that as the novel deals with colonialism and post-colonialism, there is a need to 're-examine and reconsider the unequivocal link between politics and personal' (Valassopoulos 2007).

Mosteghanemi destroys one of the pillars of the system of colonialism, by allowing her protagonist, not the colonialists, to present Algeria's story. She rebels against the notion that "history is written by the victor",

To illustrate the complexity of colonization and decolonization, Mosteghanemi creates complex characters that embody within themselves many contradictions. The characters resemble Algeria with its wounds, pains and dilemmas, a country represented by the protagonist Hayat who holds the desire to start a cultural revolution, to continue fighting for decolonization directed at the Algerian mind and also to throw out all the remains of colonialism and create a new identity.

Conclusion

Mosteghanemi's work has focused on explorations of the impact of colonization particularly on women and gender issue.

The historical and political aspects of her work and the novel particularly, are an assessment of personal response to the Algerian revolution. In doing so, she has presented a reflection on issues that have been dominated by male writers, using an explosive cocktail where politics, religion and sex are intermingled. No doubt, Mosteghanemi is that type of woman who dares counteracting religious and social barriers of behavior and love. Consciously, she attacks in a subtle way patriarchal hegemony where women remain submissive and silent. Through her novel, she shows that women can create their own world both real and imaginary to protect themselves at least, as survive in a more dignified way, to some extent, following their own desires and needs.

GENERAL CONCLUSION

The period after the independence marked a new turn in the Algerian novelistic landscape. What was obvious in that period is the massive debate on whether it is morally and culturally acceptable to continue writing in French language. Novelists like Mohammed Dib, Malek Haddad, Kateb Yacine are Algerian writers with French education but with pure sense of belonging to Algeria; the motherland. These novelists exposed a number of subjects notably: the Algerian Revolution, life and death, society with all its contradictions, love, and women. The Algerian novelists of this era found themselves in a reshuffling position when they entered the period of new choices.

Preoccupations got changed, political speech was gone and new literary horizon emerged after the coming of writers of an Arabian tongue. Algerian novel has, thus, becomes more and more mature and healthier than other literary forms. It is emerged as a reaction to the Algerian literature written in the language that is, for a long time, accused of being a means of stereotyping. The Algerian novel written in Arabic passed through evolutionary phases and witnesses a new significant development due to its imaginative expansion, thematic and technical maturity.

Women's literature raises a number of issues: gender, linguistic, moral, historical and social. Most importantly, it tackles two main problematic questions. The first one is linguistic and the second existential. Linguistically, the question of labeling emerges. Is it women's literature, feminist literature or feminine literature? Existentially, questions are asked on the recognition of this

literature and its criticism, its existence and its relevance. Then, what is this literature? And what are its semantic and aesthetic properties? Is everything women write called feminine literature?

The closest to the correct term is feminine literature. It is a literature that the woman writes as a female, trying to prove her existence and humanity and to dismantle the discourse of the man who painted a picture that deprives her from her humanity and limits her freedom.

Not everything the woman writes is feminine literature; it is the literature she takes as an expressive and aesthetic way to express her own specificity, her problems and her collision with the community in her bitter struggle to achieve her humanity and femininity . The woman may write a literature that has other topics: political, social, existential and historical. However, this literature is not feminine literature because it does not deal with the clash between the woman's discourse and the man's discourse.

Another problematic related to the existence of feminine literature concerns its acceptance or its rejection. On the one hand, feminine literature has become as an overflowed river that no one can stop, as long as the woman, different from the man by characteristics such as her nature and constitution, has an independent existence in a literature in which these characteristics are reflected. The woman writer provides a new vision of reality distinct from the traditional one in terms of language, significance and relevance, reflecting the feminine sensitivity with the uniqueness of the female world.

On the other hand, literature could be seen from a general humanitarian view. It is a human linguistic accomplishment that offers insights and carries general visions and ideas of humanity.

Thus, a special feminine woman's literature emerged as a Female, that talks about her femininity and the desire to wrestle her suppressor community and that this produced a language which is instinct from the language based on the language of the man. It was femininity versus masculinity language. It has called in the beginning to uncover the curtain on the woman's world and her human existence and to produce a destructive woman's discourse that destroys the centrality of men and the woman's subordination to him, as Helen Cixous says, addressing the woman / writer: "Write your Self. Your body must be heard." (*The Laugh of the Medusa*, 1975).

Writing has become the woman herself and a weapon for her liberation and emancipation from the male-centered society and its rules on masculinity that makes the woman only a subordinate to the man. Although female protagonists deal with different scenarios, their story has always been the same, that of the oppressed woman, victim of men and society.

Every society civilized or uncivilized has its own laws which define the borders and boundaries. It is commonly said that laws are meant to be broken and boundaries to be transgressed. In literature, female protagonists generally fight either to occupy their own territory, physical or mental, or to free it from male domination. They are considered to be law-breakers and transgressors. Some of the characters, especially the female ones, break laws and transgress the

boundaries because they seek out safety, equality and acceptance in order to be able to produce a different order that constitutes a threat to beliefs, values and culture.

Cultural transgression is generally represented through issues like love, sexuality, gender, tradition and religion. These elements paint a picture on the culture of a society and the norms within that culture governs these aspects.

Love, the noblest and the most sacred of all feelings and passions, becomes a curse when practiced beyond the accepted notions set by social norms. Harmful consequences would affect both the lovers and those connected with them. As the society is governed by patriarchal traditions, it becomes the women's role to move away from the stereotype of self-effacing, submissive and without a mind of their own, to strong liberated beings who take their own decisions and assume the full responsibility of their actions.

From a review of our Arab literature, like Ghada Al Samman, Colette Khoury Ahlam Mosteghanemi and others, we can see how important the female point of view is. We can even see a difference in literary and feminine language from the Other, and their attempt to provide a feminine discourse different from the discourse of the Other, the men.

Ahlam Mosteghanemi brought to the Arab World what no one else could bring before. For the first time, the art of Arabic Novel has become purely Arabic. For the first time novels in the Arab world are read and appreciated, and extensively and controversially reviewed. What Mosteghanemi has brought was a brand new

spirit for the Arabic Prose. Her influence on the Arabic Language and Arab World is no less great than names such as Nizar Quibani and Mahmoud Darwiche.

Indeed, the woman writer selected for this Magister dissertation portrays women in a traditional and postcolonial context, i.e. Algeria. The fundamental queries are strongly related to man power and authority to which women are un/consciously but un/willingly submitted too. It remains true sometimes that Ahlam Mosteghanemi's style and images seem a bit crude, as they refer to socio-religious taboos. But they are done on purpose as they may affect the inner self of wo/man. Once more, as a woman writer belonging to her cultural hybrid context, she provokes sympathy at times, but anger too or at least dislike on the part of most men wo/men who feel that she exaggerates in her way of describing wo/man intimate and private relationships. The recurrent themes of love and suffering or freedom and frustration are among those which remain fundamental in her novel, as they reflect her specific vision of life. Yet, probably as a writer who creates her own world with her prolific imagination, the portrayal of women lacks authenticity or needs a more modernized society which could understand women's wants or impulses and transgressions.

Yet, many western readers assume that post-colonial literature is merely literature created by members of native societies. However, post-colonial literature is in actuality the recapturing of culture, ideas and power by the oppressed from the oppressor. Although it may seem of concern to only a small group of literary schools it would in fact concern anyone who cares about

equality as it utilizes several methods to respond to and reclaim the imbalance of Imperial power encountered by the native culture.

Thus, authenticity is a required component to making personal connections with literary characters. If the reader does not trust the author or relate to the character, then the audience will not care what happens to the character.

Besides and to a larger extent, research could occur through multiple methods of gathering data for the purpose of drawing a robust conclusion. In fact, incorporation of both qualitative and quantitative designs in research could yield results that would not have been identified through use of one method or the other. So, mixed methods have their advantages in research on the one hand, and remain often the answer to the debate over which type of research is best, on the other hand, and particularly in woman literature and its reception at home and outside the confines of the motherland.

Thus, it will be interesting to study the stereotypes of women created and perpetuated in different cultural contexts and compare them in postcolonial woman writing issued from different geographical spaces and cultural backgrounds.

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APPENDIX 1: Ahlam Mosteghanemi's Biography



Ahlam Mosteghanemi (Arabic: أحلام مستغانمي) is an Algerian author and the first female Algerian author of Arabic-language works to be translated into English. By the time she was born, Mosteghanemi's father had already been imprisoned after the 1945 riots. When the Algerian war broke out in 1954, her family home in Tunisia became a central meeting point for resistance fighters allied to the Algerian People's Party including her father and cousins. After independence, in 1962, the family returned to Algeria, where Mosteghanemi was sent to the country's first Arabic-language school. In the late 1960s and early 1970s, she became one of the first Algerian Arabic writers, broadcasting her poetry on national radio to support her family due to her father's ill-health. She earned a B.A. in Arabic Literature from the University of Algiers in 1973, and also published her first poetry collection, *Ala' Marfa Al Ayam (the harbour of days)*. In 1982, she received her Ph.D. in Sociology from the Sorbonne in Paris (her thesis was published by L'Harmattan as *Algerie, Femmes et l'écriture*), where she had moved in the late 1970s. She married a Lebanese journalist and moved to Beirut, where she published her first novel, *Memory in the Flesh (Zakirat al Jassad)* in 1993. To date, it has sold over a million copies across the Arabic-speaking world. It was translated into English by the American University in Cairo Press in 2000, after winning the 1998 Naguib Mahfouz Medal for Literature. Ahlem Mosteghanemi currently lives in Beirut, Lebanon with her husband and has three children.

APPENDIX 2: “To colleagues of the pen”

(translated from Arabic by Ferial Ghazoul and published in Al-Ahram Weekly; on-line 24-30 December 1998, Issue n° 409)

'To colleagues of the pen'

By Ahlam Mosteghanemi

All that may happen to a writer because of a book is splendid. Because of a book, one may be loved, hated, desired, imprisoned, acknowledged, exiled or honoured in a ceremony like this, and awarded an unexpected prize. In all these cases, you will realise that you are a writer, simply a writer, neither an insignificant writer nor a significant writer, neither a progressive writer nor a reactionary writer. To be a writer means that you are ready to have any of the above happen to you in return for a

handful of words



That is why before I thank you for honouring me, I thank all those who sit behind their official desks in the Arab World, honouring writers by banning their books, by deporting them, imprisoning them and assassinating them. And also I extend my thanks to those who, without any guilty feeling, and without taking the trouble of reading books, legitimise the assassination of writers and demand their heads --not because they have differences with them, but simply because they are different from them. I thank them all, since

their tyranny has taught us to stand up for principles, refusing to disavow them, and thus the primal power and awe of the writer are regained. I single out with thanks murderers and assassins for honouring us: the more they take us by surprise with their knives, the more they make our blood one with our ink; and when they shoot us, their bullets raise us to the rank of martyrs. I thank them, because with every crime of theirs, we realise that at times we need death to grasp that we have been writers, and that literary prizes do not always make the grandeur of a writer.

For this reason itself, I accept the Mahfouz prize as a tribute to all the admirable Algerian writers, journalists and intellectuals, who, when sitting to write, draw intellectual support from the 67 graves of their colleagues -- those who died slaughtered and victimised while the homeland stands unaware, those whose only tribute was the flag of my country which covered their dead bodies. Today my heart reaches for them, apologising to them for a tribute to which some of them are more entitled than I. This tribute goes also to colleagues of the pen, to brothers in sorrow, who persist in the tragic vocation of writing in Arabic, those who are steadfast -- with pride there and with patience here. They are like dozens of Arab creative writers awaiting their death in exile, dispersed on the maps of estrangement, dreaming of a revengeful homecoming: their return in boxes exploding with books in the hope that they will produce that bang, the bang of their collision with the homeland.

Tributes to writers are often based on a misconception, making some believe that multiplying medals for writers or raising the financial amount of literary prizes would relieve the guilt complex of Arab regimes towards their creative writers, whereas creative writers continue to emphasise their need; in the words of Gibran Khalil Gibran: "Honouring a writer lies not in giving him what he deserves, but in taking from him what he gives." Perhaps because it is a creative writer's prize before everything else, the Naguib Mahfouz award sees that justice is done to creative writers: his prize does not offer them a fortune spent indiscriminately out of instant joy or, as is more usual, spent by others for them. Instead of wealth, the Mahfouz prize offers creative writers the opportunity to reach thousands of readers all over the world in more than one language. This is a privilege to which no Arab writer can aspire without an extensive network of relations and dozens of recommendations.

Despite our conviction that the real reward of a writer comes from being read by his own people and compatriots, and that the greatest accomplishment for any Arab writer today, in our current situation, is to reach the hearts of all Arabs, with all their differences and oppositions, making us reach a consensus on a writer and agree even if on no more than a book -- despite this, and without any complex vis-à-vis the West which we have experienced for a long time, we are delighted to be granted the Mahfouz prize which will translate our works, with the intention of proving to the

world that the Arabic language has engendered generations of creative writers and has endowed us with a writer of the stature of Naguib Mahfouz whose works in Arabic have been recognized as part of the legacy of World Literature, thus demonstrating that Arabic is able to keep up with each and every epoch, and to continually surprise others.

Thanks, then, to the American University in Cairo and to the AUC Press under the direction of Mr Mark Linz for this truly splendid initiative. My thanks go also to the panel of judges, one by one, for honouring me, as through their tribute to me they offer moral support to Algerian writers writing in Arabic who confront unarmed the onslaughts of Francophony and its diverse temptations, while they stand patriotically against the dubious and divisive tendencies to which Algeria is exposed.

Glory to our beautiful language! And long life and best wishes for our mentor and beloved Naguib Mahfouz.

Translated by **Ferial J Ghazoul**

APPENDIX 3: Interview with Ahlam Mosteghanemi

Nuha Baaquel is a PhD student who interviewed Ahlam Mosteghanemi in July 2015 and emailed the researcher following her request.

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Nuha Baaquel

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Q: Your novel *Zakirat el Jassad*, was translated into English and published with the title *Memory in the Flesh* by the American University in Cairo Press in 2003. It has, however, recently been re-translated and published in a new edition by Bloomsbury with the title *The Bridges of Constantine*. How did this come about? What have been the key issues for you in relation to the translation of your work?

Ahlam Mosteghanemi: Yes, that's right. It was previously translated but there were ways in which the translation did not reflect the work's literary sensibility. The American University in Cairo was in a hurry to publish the translation as it had won the Naguib Mahfouz Award in 1998.

The main problem I find is that all translators bring their own mood and method of linguistic composition. That is why I really wanted the translator to be a poet, so that he or she would have expertise in translating poetry and not just translating at the level of word for word, not just a text translator but a more precisely literary translator. The

beauty of a text gets lost in a word for word translation and as a result, it loses much of its meaning. Those who read in two languages grasp the difference between the original text and the translated. These readers can sense and understand that there is something missing in the translation. The most striking example of this for me was the poet and publisher Nizar Qabbani, may Allah have mercy on him, who used to say to me 'Whenever I read a translated text, I feel like going crazy'. This is because the music of the text has disappeared through translation into English or French, and as such, the writing no longer signifies anything nor motivates anybody. This is why, for me, the translator must be a poet because when the text impresses him, he can translate it wonderfully. For instance, we find that the poet Adonis, who is conversant with French, translates poems into other languages and we find that while translating, he puts his spirit in the text.

Q: Does the new translation *The Bridges of Constantine* then do more justice to the literary sensibility of your novel?

AM: I am sure that it is better than the previous translation because this time it was translated by an experienced translator who is a native English speaker - Raphael Cohen. He has also translated my work before; a book titled *Nesryane.com*, whose English title is *The Art of Forgetting*.

Q: What was the motivation for changing the title on republication? Was *The Bridges of Constantine* considered more enticing to an audience of foreign readers than *Memory in the Flesh*?

AM: The title was changed to differentiate it from the previous translation published by the American University of Cairo Press. It helped us to signal that this is a new translation done by another translator. I was actually asked to choose between two titles - *The Dance of Oblivion* or *The Bridges of Constantine*. I chose the second because I felt *The Bridges of Constantine*, in English, is a title that can arouse and prick the curiosity of the recipient and foreign reader. I hope that I made the right choice.

Q: Will the novels that follow *The Bridges of Constantine* in the trilogy, *Chaos of the Senses* and *Bed Hopper* also be re-translated and published by Bloomsbury?

AM: Yes we have started translating all three works again beginning with *Memory in the Flesh*. Now that is finished, *Chaos of the Senses* and *Bed Hopper* will be translated. There is, though, a problem of time here; it is unfortunate that a translation project needs up to two or three years. However, according to Bloomsbury, the first book usually takes time but the second and third are often faster. So I hope that *Chaos of the Senses* and *Bed Hopper* in their second translation will appear more quickly than *Memory in the Flesh* in its second translation as *Bridges of Constantine*.

Q: The novel *The Bridges of Constantine* is dedicated to Algerian poet Malik Haddad. Does this act as a reference point for the ways in which your decision to write in Arabic might be considered a kind of linguistic challenge from you to colonization?

AM: Malik Haddad was an Algerian writer, from Constantine to be precise. However, he was also a Francophone Algerian novelist and poet. Haddad became a martyr to the Arabic language. He never wrote in Arabic nor was conversant with it, because of the colonization which barred Algerians from learning Arabic. Like my father, he felt the pain of this seriously; not like other writers in Algeria, who did not experience the 'Francophone' as a tragedy and for whom the Arabic language never meant anything. Other writers were satisfied with the French language.

When Algeria got its independence, Haddad conducted a press conference and announced that he would never write in French henceforth, saying, 'French is the cause of my exile and I will never write in it from now on as long as we have our independence'. But he was a martyr because he had no other choice and considered silence as another language too. He said he would remain silent as a gesture of honour towards Algerians to avoid speaking the colonial language or any language other than Arabic. He stopped writing for twelve years and then died of cancer. So, he ended up renouncing his writing completely simply for the sake of his own language and the revulsion against an imposed foreign language. I used to say that he died of cancer as a result of his silence, because to a writer silence is a gradual death. Malik Haddad's tragedy also represents my father's tragedy; he was also not good in Arabic and for this reason directed me to study it on his behalf. It was with this in mind that I dedicated the novel to Haddad.

Q: How would you characterize the intention behind the trilogy as a whole?

AM: The aim is to present a historical epic, in which all Arab readers can find themselves, politically and emotionally, while reading about Algeria. Through this trilogy, I have narrated the entire history of the Arabs over the past half century, with their disappointments, complexity, victories, poetic power and naivety. It is important to me that readers, whether men or women, and from different generations, have found themselves in these books. I also hope adopting these works in school curricula will place them within the reach of future generations. The novels, though, are also intended as beautiful love stories and reflections on life.

Q: Why was did you choose a male narrator for the *The Bridges of Constantine*?

AM: Firstly, because that history can only be narrated by a man; a woman cannot narrate that episode of history. Writing about the particular experiences of the Algerian war gains credibility and value when the narrator Khaled is a man who experienced and suffered its agonies.

As for the female protagonist Hayat, she becomes the recipient of this episode of history. I use her as the symbol of Algeria that was, and still is, the cause of Khaled's torment. She is paramount in this novel as she represents an Algeria that betrayed him and got married to a corrupt military. She represents an Algeria that was desired by the noble warrior and freedom fighter who sacrificed himself for her but the military came, assaulted and took her away with force. Consequently, this woman becomes the symbol of the whole episode and that is why in the novel Hayat's birth is concomitant with the beginning of the Algerian revolution.

I also chose a male narrator to avoid being accused of writing my autobiography or accused of being a feminist writer, as often first novels appear to be or are read as the personal biography of the writer.

Q: So if Hayat is intended as a symbol of the nation, does that mean that Khaled loved her not as a woman but rather as nation?

AM: No. Khaled certainly loved her as a woman, and this is the emotional aspect of the story. Every story needs an emotional dimension that attracts the reader in addition to the political and social aspects. Khaled loved her as a woman but the problem they had was that they were of unlike ages and so of different generations and thought. The only thing that truly connected them then was their love for Constantine. So Constantine becomes a third party in this episode and in all the novels of trilogy. When you finish *Bad Hopper*, you see that signalled directly. The last word in the trilogy is 'Constantine' and thus the trilogy becomes documented and concluded in its final word.

Q: Some people have criticized your representation of Hayat in *Chaos of the Senses*, arguing that she was following her whims and fancies without rationale and not abiding by the Islamic customs and traditions that mark her as an Arab character. Were you intending to convey the Arab woman's voice? Did you want to set her free even if her freedoms opposed her customs and traditions?

AM: My intention was never to put Hayat's freedom in opposition to customs and traditions. The Arab woman is a free woman, there is no doubt of this truth. She obeys her customs and traditions but she also has her honour and pride. She is a woman but half of her is feminine while the other half is masculine. Her masculine half always calls the feminine

half to account. This idea is explored in my most recent novel *Black Suits* *You* through the role of the heroine.

However, as for Hayat in the novel *Chaos of the Senses* it was as a symbol of Algeria itself that she was written as a flirt who concedes this and that. She represents an Algeria that got married to the corrupt military though her heart was with the cultured and artistic Algerian man. So in *Chaos of the Senses* I was representing the game of life and this involves an important dimension of philosophical thought; I wanted to show the ways in which small words are responsible for deciding our fate in life. This was materialized in my selection of the novel's chapter titles, such as 'The beginning' or 'Always' or 'Naturally', etc.

Q: In your view, is there a difference between a novel written by a woman and a novel written by a man?

AM: The difference doesn't come in terms of gender, but the agony and the pain people experience differs. Khaled was anguished and saddened and so the novel was written out of his pains and agonies. All the same, a woman's voice might have been more appropriate to grasp the human soul and its volatility.

Q: Is Ahlam Mosteghanemi a character in any of your novels?

AM: Actually, Khaled, Ziyad and Hayat all represent me. I am distributed among my heroes because as a writer, in the end I am only writing from myself.

Q: You've talked about the influence of your father on your writing. Does Hayat's father Si-Taher represent your own father?

AM: Yes, to some extent. However, my father is also represented in the personality of Khaled, or to be more apposite, he is present in all my characters.

Q: Would you agree that *The Bridges of Constantine* relates to the history of Algeria during colonization and that *Chaos of the Senses* embodies its history after independence?

AM: I'd agree to some extent because the narrated events of *The Bridges of Constantine* begin before the revolution in 1945. During the Second World War, the French people used Algerians as human shields to fight their war for them, convincing them that they would get independence when they returned. Unfortunately, when they returned, they discovered that there was no change. As a result, the 1945 revolution started and the first demonstrations began on May 8, 1945 in three Algerian cities. Forty five thousand Algerians, seven of whom belonged to my family, were killed during this uprising.

Q: What is the significance of bridges in your writing and particularly in *The Bridges of Constantine*?

AM: I wish to clarify a vital point on this issue. The writer may sometimes write a work of fiction but not know how to explain or interpret it. When I wrote *The Bridges of Constantine*, I didn't mean to give the bridge any distinct significance. The idea in the first instance was just spontaneous. When Khaled began learning how to draw, he attempted drawing the most proximate and easiest object to his soul; it is something connected to his memory, so he drew the bridge. Later on, he realized that he was only drawing himself while drawing bridges. He was hanging just as the bridges were hung. He was left to dangle between two edges, between two countries, two continents and two memories. Hence, the bridge acted as a reminder and clarification of his suspended and destabilized situation.

Q: We find in your novels that you give important attention to art, whether in the form of painting as in *The Bridges of Constantine* or in the form of writing as in *Chaos of the Senses* or in the form of photography as in *Red Hopper* or even singing as in *Black Suits You*. What does art mean to you in your novels?

AM: Well, this is a very good question which shows that you are a critical reader. However, history is connected to art. This is a fact that we cannot ignore. Unfortunately we the Arab nation do ignore and avoid art. With my role as a writer, I believe that there are always beautiful messages about different kinds of art that I can convey through my writings. This is because a narrative must give the reader more than just a story, so I want to communicate the essence and appeal of the different arts through my novels.

Q: At the end of *The Bridges of Constantine*, why did Khaled leave all his paintings to Catherine, his French girlfriend, and not take them with him? Particularly when he knew that these paintings represented his homeland, history and memory. One reading of this might be that Algeria would be better remaining in the hands of the French colonial masters rather than getting back to Algerians themselves? Are you condemning the contemporary Algerian situation and hinting that there are ways in which the French are more honest than the Algerians themselves?

AM: That is a factual analysis but I didn't intend that in my novel, although in some ways what you say reflects a reality. We trust France or the West more than Algerians despite ourselves. We observe that the West maintains and keeps things while we leave them to waste or lose them. In the novel Khaled tells Catherine the reason he leaves her his paintings is that France appreciates art, but Algeria doesn't. He says 'I know you appreciate art. With you my painting won't get lost'. So, Khaled believes that France has created him as an artist and therefore it is

the home of his art; France values his talent and his art while Algeria does not. That is why Khaled leaves his paintings for France because it appreciates and values them more than Algerians do.

Q: Does the political context of your novels resonate with the kinds of upheavals we see today in the Arab world?

AM: Yes, of course it does. Unfortunately, the Arab world is at present repeating the histories written in my novels. For instance, we find that Tunisia is experiencing terrorism, which we experienced in Algeria for ten years in the nineties, where journalists are exposed to threat of assassination. Likewise, Egypt, Syria and other countries are all experiencing a tussle with terrorists. So much stated in my novels has become a reality that is repeating itself in a number of Arab countries.

Q: Why do you think the novels of other Arab writers such as Hanan As-Sheikh and Nawal El Saadawi have been more successful in Britain than your own, despite your huge following in the Arab world?

AM: In the case of Hanan As-Sheikh's novels, I actually have some reservations about them despite her being one of the Arab writers whose writings are most widely read in Britain. These are similar to my concerns about Nawal El Saadawi, who is a great novelist, but I think depicts the wrong images in her writings about the Arab woman or the Arabian homeland. I believe that El Saadawi for instance writes what the Western reader likes to read about Arabian society, particularly when she makes major heroes out of marginal situations in her novels: where the hero becomes a pimp or gay or the Arab woman turns out to be a prostitute. This is something I would never attempt in my writings because it feels like a forgery of reality under the canopy of literature. I know that Arab society is not absolutely pure but it is also not corrupt to the extent this writing suggests. We cannot change Arabian society nor send it any message by provocation.

Millions of Arab readers who put their trust in me, and on whom my words make an impact, respond to my work because they realize that I am writing in the first instance for their sake without considerations of translation or a global market in my mind. Writers are free to choose between pleasing the West and reforming the East through their ideas. Or they can choose to direct their words to the Western and Eastern reader at the same time. I choose to serve my nation and Arabism as the first priority. It is my pleasure and it is sufficient to me that I am considered the leading Arab woman writer, and an advocate for Algeria with its whims, modesty, defects, courage, history and massacres. I believe that the Arab reader has some sense of modesty, which a writer must respect. In their turn, the readers have the ability to recognize the scope and credibility of a writer.

GLOSSARY

+The following words are characterized by controversial definitions. The ones provided here are usually considered as the most suitable following the selected bibliography.

Assumptions : facts that individuals are capable of representing mentally and accepting as true, they are manifest to an individual that are perceptible or inferable by an individual .

Attributed gender: the gender and sex that one is taken to be by others. This is usually an immediate unconscious categorization of a person as being a man or a woman, irrespective of their mode of dress.

Binary opposition: a concept borrowed by structuralists and post-structuralists identifying a contrasting pair of signs.

Borders: sites of homes and new beginnings, are contested cultural and political terrains where the individual and collective memories collide, reassemble and reconfigure.

Colonial literature: often self-consciously a literature of otherness and resistance and written out of the specific local experience.

Cross-cultural: a comparison of interactions among people from the same culture to those from another.

Crossing the linguistic border: the border-crosser develops different speaking selves that speak for different aspects of his identity.

Cultural identities: there are porous representations and are contingent on the author's singularity. The particular relations of writers to culture, the complex contexts within which they write, are always inscribed in the literature itself .

Culture: a way of life. It might be defined as the ideas, customs, skills, arts and tools which characterize a given group of people in a given period .It is a

repertoire of socially transmitted and intra-generationally generated ideas about how to live, to think and to behave. Cultural models are thus inherited from the preceding generation through socialization and they are learned intra-generationally and through imitation, teaching and from the media

Deconstruction: the tendency of binary oppositions within a text to shift or reverse their valuation.

Discourse: a literary work is rooted in a cultural and rhetorical context in which meaning is a collaborative construction involving author, text, culture and reader.

Exile: like other concepts in post-colonial theory and discourse , has been used to express a certain sense of belonging to a real (or imagined) homeland .Yet , physical spaces are only one aspect of exile . Exile can refer to a sense of loss and displacement from a traditional homeland, particularly through such processes as colonization and modernization. Post-colonial exile invokes not only cultural transformations generated by colonials, but a particular type of consciousness.

Existentialism: denotes things active rather than passive. Sartre said that man can emerge from his passive condition by an act of will.

Feminism: a term commonly and quite indiscriminately used. Some of the currently used definitions are: a doctrine advocating social and political rights for women equal to those of men, an organized movement for the attainment of these rights, the assertion of the claims of women as a group and the body of theory women have created, belief in the necessity of large-scale social change in order to increase the power of women

Feminist writing: to assert a feminine language particularly challenges men literary canon (criteria). *Ecriture feminine* is the focus in the so-called French school of feminist criticism on the existence of a distinctive *woman's language* .

Gender: the cultural definition of behaviour defined as appropriate to the sexes in a given society at a given time. Gender is a set of cultural roles. Unfortunately, the term is used both in academic discourse and in the media as interchangeable with *sex*. In fact, its widespread public use probably is due to it sounding a bit more *refined* than the plain word *sex*... Such usage is unfortunate, because it hides, mystifies the difference between the biological given-sex and the culturally created-gender. Feminists above all others should want to point up that difference and should therefore be careful to use appropriate words. Gender is expressed in terms of masculinity and femininity. It is largely culturally determined and effects how people perceive themselves and how they expect others to behave.

Gender Identity: The gender to which one feels, one belongs, a continuous and persistent sense of ourselves as male or female.

Hegemony: A term used mostly by Marxist critics to delineate the web of dominant ideologies within a society. It was coined by the Italian theorist Antonio Gramsci; this refers to the pervasive system of assumptions, meanings and values that shapes the way things look, what they mean, and therefore what reality *is* for the majority of people within a given culture.

Home: as both the mythic place of desire and no return, of lived experiences (sounds, smells, feelings ...): a place for family to come together in rituals, a place of worship second to the church , mosque or temple , a protective space against isolation and in defiance of the breaking-up of family in modern society and in diasporas .

Hybridity: transgressive, it refers to the integration or mingling of cultural signs and practices from the colonizing and the colonized cultures.

Identity: always in process .It is a word carrying with it connotations of rootedness (to engage in various aspects of being an individual within a world which is plural)

Ideology: dominant values, beliefs, ways of thinking through which culture understands reality. Similar to the phrase *cultural mythology*, it usually represents in tacit fashion the prevailing views of a particular class. Examples of ideology relevant to American culture: gender roles, value of capitalism, constitutional rights protecting individual liberties... But for Marxist, it includes the shared beliefs and values held in an unquestioning manner by a culture. It governs what that culture deems to be normative and valuable .It is determined by economics. Ideology exerts a powerful influence upon a culture. Those who are marginalized in the culture are most aware of the ways in which an ideology supports the dominant class in the society. Those who enjoy the fruit of belonging to a dominant group of the society are filled with what Marx called *false consciousness* and are not interested in the ways in which an economic structure marginalizes others.

Languages can be differentiated into types in terms of their external social functions. Stewart (1968) proposes a typology which depends on four attributes:

1. Standardization-whether or not the language possesses an agreed set of codified norms which are accepted by the speech community and form the basis of the formal teaching of the language, whether as L1 or L2.
2. Vitality-whether the language possesses a living community of native speakers.
3. Historicity-whether the language has grown up or grew up through use by some ethnic or social group.
4. Autonomy-whether or not the language is accepted by the users as being distinct from other languages.

Modernity: appeared first in the 19th century in sociology to distinguish antiquity.

Orientalism: means a system of representations framed by political forces that brought the Orient into Western learning , Western consciousness and Western Empire . The Orient is a reflected image of what is inferior and alien, i.e. other to the West. Said claims that *the Orient* cannot be studied in a non-Orientalist manner but the would-be concerned would focus on the culturally consistent regions and that *the Oriental* is to be given a voice and not be given a second hand representation.

Other: The other is anyone who is separate from one's self. The existence of others is crucial in defining what is *normal* and in locating one's own place in the world .

Patriarchal: An assumption of feminist criticism that culture is rather ruled with its institutions and traditions so structured to promote masculine values and to maintain the male in a privileged position

Patriarchy: In its narrow meaning, patriarchy refers to the system, historically derived from Greek and Roman law, in which the male head of the household had absolute legal and economic power over his dependent female and male family members. Patriarchy in its wider definition means the manifestations and institutionalization of male dominance over women and children in the family and the extension of male dominance over women in society in general.

Perception: Reader's insight or comprehension of a text. From different critical perspectives, the reader's perception of meaning can be a passive receipt, an active discovery or a creative construction.

Post-colonial : began to circulate in the Western academy in the early 1980s and congealed in 1989 with the publication of the Empire Writes Back : Theory and Practice in Post-colonial Literatures edited by Bill Ashcroft. It was most appreciated than the pejorative *third world*.

Representation : has a semiotic meaning in that something is *standing* for

something else. Representations are constructed images that need to be interrogated for their ideological content.

Sex: Women are a separate group due to their biological distinctiveness. The merit of using the term is that it clearly defines women, not as a subgroup or a minority group, but as half of the whole. Men are the only other sex. Obviously, we are here not referring to sexual activity, but to a biological given.

Sexism: defines the ideology of male supremacy, of male superiority and of beliefs that support and sustain it. Sexism and patriarchy mutually reinforce one another.

Sexuality : is a transnational issue .It is regarded as an innate human drive but its expression differs according to cultures . Sexual behaviours have different meanings and outgrowths in different societies .

Socialization: is the dynamic process that brings human beings into the human group, causing an individual to internalize the values, mores, traditions, language and attitudes of the culture in which they live.

Status quo: The class relationships determined by the base and reflected in the superstructure of a society. The ideologies of a culture work to keep those relationships.

Stereotype: when one judges people one *naturally* generalizes, simplifies and categorizes them. The classification is called stereotyping.

Subaltern: Everybody who has limited or no access at all to the cultural imperialism is thus subaltern. G.C. Spivak points that speaking is a transaction between speaker and listener, but it does not reach the dialogic level of utterance.

Third World: is a rather pejorative way to mean post-colonial world. It was first used in 1952 by Alfred Sauvy, the French demographer.

Understanding: understanding oneself, one's action , thought, behaviour , mind , feelings , surrounding , nature , is a process. The natural learning occurs when there is interest, curiosity and enthusiasm.

Women's emancipation: freedom from oppressive restrictions imposed by sex, self-determination, and autonomy.