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Women projections and self-perceptions in shashi deshpande's "the dark holds no terrors", Ahlem Mostaghanemi's "chaos of the senses" and ahdaf soueif's "in the eye of the sun".

Thesis Submitted to the Department of English in Candidacy for the Degree of "Doctorat" in Post colonial woman writing- literature

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DEDICATION

To my family, for their love and support underpinned my persistence in the postgraduate career.

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Chasing dreams, like pursuing a Doctoral research, would not have been possible without the blessing of Allah Almighty manifest on earth in the form of wonderful people whom I came across at various points in my academic career: indeed should I say that these wonderful people made sure that my experiences remain as sweet memories that shall stay engraved in my memory.

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DECLARATION

I, **Mira HAFSI**, do hereby solemnly declare that the work and ideas I present in this thesis are my own, and have not been submitted before to any other institution or University for a degree.

I assert that all information in this thesis has been obtained and presented in accordance with academic conventions and ethical conduct. I also assert that I have fully cited and acknowledged all materials that are not original to this work. Besides, this work is conducted and completed at the University of Sidi Bel Abbes, Algeria.

Signature,

ABSTRACT

This Doctoral thesis enhances the contributions of postcolonial women writers in the field of third world feminist literature. It is a literary study that is concerned with the dilemma of identity and its relation to women projections and self-perceptions. It explores the process of fulfillment and self-actualization of the female identity in three novels written by women who belong to different cultures, namely, India, Algeria, and Egypt. Therefore, our investigation relies on psychoanalytical, feminist and postcolonial criticism. It examines the way women stereotypes are imposed and resisted in Shashi Deshpande's *The Dark Holds No Terrors* 1980, Ahlem Mostaghanemi's *Chaos of the Senses* 1997, and Ahdaf Soueif's *In the Eye of the Sun 1992*. It explores the frames of representation of the Indian, Algerian, and Egyptian woman in in the postcolonial era, as well as the impact of gender roles and the dialectics of tradition and modernity upon the female protagonists' psyche, leading to an identity crisis at both the individual and collective level. This study argues that the mechanism of transgression is an organic necessity and a rite of passage for the female subject to reclaim her self which has been violated sexually, economically and ideologically. It is also a subversive strategy of self-empowerment and self-actualization in a world where her projected gender roles inhibit an autonomous development of identity. Additionally, this research maintains that confrontation with the unconscious flux of the female protagonists' past repressions plays a pivotal part in the progress towards self-emancipation from the confining attitudes as well as self-reconciliation with their past traumas. It concludes that the female authors have creatively pursued the female's quest for an autonomous identity through a gradual process that deconstructs the prescribed gender roles and Imperial egocentrism in order to achieve self-actualization through resistance and self-reflection.

Key words: Identity construction, cultural feminism, psychoanalysis, transgression, self-actualization.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS/ACRONYMS

ALN: Armée de liberation nationale (National Liberation Army)

AIS: Armée Islamique du Salut (Islamic Army of Salvation)

EFU: Egyptian Feminist Union   (L'union Egyptienne féministe)

FIS: Front Islamique Du Salut (The Front of Islamic Salvation)

FLN: Front de Libération Nationale (National Liberation Front)

GIA: Groupe Islamique Armée (Islamic Armed Groups)

MIA: Le movement islamique armée   (Armed Islamic Movement)

RND: Le rassemblement national démocratique   (Democratic National Rally)

WWII: World War II

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GENERAL INTRODUCTION

> I think the hardest lesson for me to learn-and I have not learnt it, one attempts to learn it everyday- is that the word 'woman' is not after all something for which one can find a literal referent without looking into the looking glass (70).
>
> Gayatri C. Spivak, *The Post-Colonial Critic.*

Life is full of surprises and with rigorous work, unique and convenient opportunities open up for people. The year was 2015, when I was blessed with the exceptional offer to continue my postgraduate studies for a Doctorate degree in Women Writing and Cultural Studies just at the end of my Magister dissertation defense. Being caught by the core theme of my research, which is the journey of the female subject towards self-fulfillment in an inhibiting environment, coupled with my genuine interest in pursuing further research in the field of postcolonial women fiction, the University Professor who examined my work expressed her readiness to supervise my Doctoral thesis. She insisted on the fundamental principle that the researcher has to scrutinize the transgressive ways that the female subject undergoes in order to reach her self-fulfillment and eventually, to reconstruct an authentic and autonomous selfhood. This illuminating remark and the precious opportunity she provided had such a deep impact on both my academic and personal endeavors. Therefore, this research grew out of the preliminary reflection on the ongoing research for a postcolonial feminist epistemology to inform literary critical analysis.

Therefore, the study of selfhood has been one of my main academic interests being also the central and appealing issue in philosophy, the humanities as well as the feminist discourse when it concerns the female subject. For centuries, a great number of renowned academics, researchers and intellectuals such as René Descartes, William James, Sigmund Freud, Simone de Beauvoir, and Julia Kristeva, have explored in their studies the concept of self from different angles. Yet, we cannot conflate between selfhood and its related notions of identity and

subjectivity. While the concept of identity denotes both sameness and distinctiveness referring to the manifest aspects of one's social and individual identification, subjectivity stands for the cognitive aspect of self-reflection that makes sense of one's behavior in relation to the cultural and political frameworks. Notably, the scholars Donald Hall (2004) as well as Murfin Ross and Supryia Ray (1997) contend that subjectivity does not imply full knowledge and control on the manifestation of one's identity. Rather, there are various latent and unknown forces and constraints that may limit or goad the process of identity formation and self-actualization. Moreover, they agree that the self is the ground on which identity and subjectivity interact and negotiate the identitary practices of the subject. In this respect, the self entails the consciousness about the *Other* that aims at critically analysing and evaluating subjectivity before its manifestation in identitary practices.

Besides, taking as a starting point Gayatri Spivak's statement about the realization of the female selfhood through "looking into the looking glass", this Doctoral research argues that the autonomous identity of the female subject cannot be found in a socio-cultural environment where an ideal of womanhood is predetermined and imposed. Rather, it has to be revisited and reconstructed through self-reflection and negotiation with those socio-cultural projections, which have confined her to her body. These projections, which are inherently male constructions, are confined to the basic physiological and reproductive features of the female corporeality. Notably, this enmeshment in corporeality and materialism was also attributed to colonized bodies and the lower classes (McClintock 1995, Alcoff 2006), referring to the subsequent identitary categories of race, ethnicity, and class in the social hierarchies. In order to challenge those projections, third world women or postcolonial women have to undertake an existential endeavor in which they confront their corporeality and deconstruct their prescribed gender roles and stereotypical representations. In doing so, the female subject's consciousness blossoms, rejecting her limiting gendered stereotype. She eventually would act

according to her reconstituted convictions as a self-ruling agent and subject. The reclaiming of the female self has to go through a critical assessment stage that relies on the primacy of her humanist existence that is neutral and gender free over her embodied essence that is materialistic.

In this regard, the issue of subjectivity is pertinent to the discourse of power relations. The discussion of racial, ethnical, gendered and religious relations implies present issues of tension and structural violence both at the abstract and concrete levels. Of the major systems of domination, which aimed at enhancing and securing its hegemony over individual and collective relationships, is Western Imperialism. It exploited large areas and peoples of the world under the colonial rule. Fundamentally motivated by materialistic interests of territorial expansion and economic exploitation, it is rooted in the logic of *othering* (process of making the *other*) and subjugation, which stigmatizes and delegitimizes difference through the imposition of superiority and Western colonial culture onto the colonized. The Eurocentric logic of binaries prioritizes the in-group (Western) norms over the out-of-group (non-Western), of *self* over the *other*, and of the West over the East through a one-directional relationship sustained by political, economic, military and technological supremacy. This supremacist ideology about self/other is based on ontological and epistemological distinction, and is orchestrated in a multilayered structure that encloses various categories including ethnicity, race, gender, and sexual orientation. As this research traces the development of a feminist thought in selected literary corpora through the portrayal of the female protagonists' journey to self-fulfillment, the covered themes are related integrally to the nexus of many categories including gender, race, and class.

The postcolonial world has witnessed the rapid urbanization and the need for the female contribution to economy and the public sphere following independence. However, as the society was not well prepared to deal with the gendered implications of modernity, the female

subject has inevitably faced an identity crisis through the constant feminist consciousness of both her self and the *other*, i.e. patriarchal order. As such, the female subject experiences the dilemma of either passively assuming her dependence and subjugation to the patriarchal and Imperial projections that have been legitimized and perpetuated through cultural and political institutions, or dynamically assessing these conceived models of femininity through her lived experience. In her journey for self-knowledge away from the inhibiting social conventions, the conscious woman questions and deconstructs the androcentric and Imperialistic projection of femininity, revealing its blind spots, and demonstrating its paradoxes. She transgresses the inner frontier of self-discovery and explores her self and the world with a critical mind. Therefore, we shall investigate the way the selected women authors explored transgression of patriarchal norms leading to the reconstruction of their protagonists' selfhood.

The understanding of transgression is of outstanding importance to this Doctoral study. Taken etymologically, transgression indicates crossing over the limits of law and order that are of cultural, social, moral, or civil frameworks. Many theorists and philosophers throughout history have discussed this issue such as Marquis de Sade, Friedrich Nietzsche, Georges Bataille and Michel Foucault, as a reactionary rebellion where the constraints are embedded in the dialectics of the self/other, individual/collective, and center/margin thought within an infinite cyclical process of deconstruction and reconstruction of the dominant/subordinate ideology.

Moreover, this process of self-discovery to re-establish an authentic identity in a quest for self-fulfillment has been the center for critical analysis by many psychoanalytic feminists, such as Melanie Klein, Juliet Mitchel, and Julia Kristeva, whose ideas have had a great impact on the development of the feminist thought. Their theories have unveiled the way society frames knowledge, and subverted the psychoanalytical critique of femininity into the critique of patriarchy itself. Psychoanalytic feminism advocates gender as a socio-cultural construct,

which the American feminist Judith Butler theorized as gender performativity, arguing that reality is a social construct that is reproduced and maintained through continual enactment by its subjects in a world that is governed by heteronormative standards.

When this pursuit concerns the postcolonial female subject, the intersectionality between race, gender, class, nationality, and cultural diversity, must reflect a unique experience. In this regard, it is argued that the feminist discourse, which has developed in the Western world, homogenizes the female experience and disregards related questions as race, ethnicity, politics, economy, sexual orientation, and culture. The complex situation within which femininity exists led to the creation of more inclusive *sisterhoods* (female solidarity and cooperation in the women's movement) that prioritize the culture through which it is understood. It is widely accepted that the diversity of issues has led to the development of feminisms that are historically, culturally, and geographically specific. The postcolonial feminist Chandra Talpade Mohanty (1991) maintains that the postcolonial feminist study is heterogeneous, historically specific and dynamic. Henceforth, we seek to explore the challenges facing a distinct woman-centered experience that comes from the postcolonial world by tracing the development of a feminist consciousness towards achieving female fulfillment as portrayed in selected fictional corpora. This research study is set up on the assumption that women's liberation discourse is of heterogeneous origins and aims. Thus, this study includes three selected novels from India, Algeria, and Egypt, namely Shashi Deshpande's *The Dark Holds No Terrors* 1980, Ahlem Mosteghanmi's *Chaos of the Senses* 1997, and Ahdaf Soueif's *In the Eye of the Sun* 1992. The thematic analysis is based on the original version of *The Chaos of the Senses* that is written in Arabic in order to grasp the beauty and flavor of the original text. However, the English translation is also considered in order to share reading experiences with a larger audience beyond the Arabic linguistic boundary.

We have chosen texts that are produced during the second half of the twentieth century because this period has witnessed the challenge of notions of identity and an increase of voices that have traditionally been silenced in critical and intellectual discourse. The three literary works reflect a female postcolonial experience of alienation, transgression, and healing. Our literary corpora is selected according to the common issues that are related to the double load of burden that is put upon women by the political and economic program for national development, which contradicts the cultural norms and attitudes of their respective societies, leading to an identity crisis. Although the selected authors are from different geographical and socio-cultural backgrounds, they intersect in common points, such as their stream of consciousness, mode of narration and their thematic concerns about women rights in climbing the ladder of self-fulfillment. Moreover, they are full of geographical, historical, cultural, and social markers that make the experience of reading attractive and rewarding.

Given the fact that female self-fulfillment is a universal concern in feminist discourse, the primary purpose of this research is to explore and exhibit the process of self-fulfillment and the development of an autonomous identity through transgression in a socio-cultural androcentric context. We shall investigate the extent to which these female authors' protagonists challenge dominant conceptions of Indian, Algerian, and Egyptian gendered identity, either at home or abroad. Moreover, we shall reflect upon the way heterogeneous issues of feminism have been engaged in these literary corpora. The study, thus, offers an exploration of postcolonial women writing that focuses on the dialectics of women projections and self-perceptions. The aim by conducting this literary research on women projections and self-perceptions from Indian, Algerian and Egyptian postcolonial contexts, is to prove the rapprochement between the concerns of these women writers and their means of identification through their aspirations by transgressing the distinct, yet, universal patriarchal norms and

conventions. It aims, additionally, at raising consciousness about the differences underlying Indian, Algerian and Egyptian feminist concerns, under the light of culture.

Preoccupied with how the protagonists of the three literary texts resist their patriarchal culture, assert their agency over their life, and subvert power relations, we shall investigate the transformations brought on by their transgression on the identity of the female protagonists as well as their relationship with the society. On the one hand, these female characters proclaim their marginal positioning and inhibiting gender norms. On the other hand, their determination in transcending this marginalization and predicament in a quest to reconstruct an autonomous identity for themselves while protecting their close relationship with their male counterparts is cherished. This statement is rather a provocation to pose a series of questions that will be investigated along this Doctoral research:

1-How did the conceptualization of the self develop in pre-modern thought and post-Freudian theories?

2-What is the status of women in the Indian, Algerian, and Egyptian societies and how did political and literary feminism develop in the respective cultures and shape the authors' feminist concerns, as expressed in their writings?

3-How does female subjectivity respond to the hierarchies of power relations through manifest identities that show either conformity or resistance, and how they are perceived?

4-How is the journey of the female protagonists' towards self-fulfillment and reconciliation achieved?

The hypothesis is based on our reflection upon the events and circumstances that led to the production of the three literary texts, the portrayal of the feminist consciousness in the texts, and the exploration of the process of the postcolonial female subject to her self-fulfillment in an inhibiting social environment. Relying on what has been noted, the lack of familial and national security, political unrest, and ascribed gender roles are repercussions of the patriarchal

order which automatically impinges the female protagonists psyche and inhibits an autonomous identity construction and self-actualization. Yet, as the protagonists are career-oriented women, their critical questioning of the norms and resistance lead them to transgress the prescribed roles and rules of conduct. Eventually, they realize that the struggle is ongoing against the patriarchal, white supremacist, Imperialist, and capitalist order. They reach their self-reconciliation after their transgressions, and condemn the conditions that confine their potentiality as equal human beings.

Henceforth, this study is located at the intersection between discourses of psychoanalytic feminism and postcolonialism in an attempt to do justice to the complexity of identity construction and power negotiations in a transnational world. As such, this research investigates the cross-cultural patterns in the perpetuation of a coherent patriarchal authority that impedes women from achieving self-fulfillment in the respective Indian, Algerian and Egyptian societies during the second half of the twentieth century. As to the qualititative methodology that is descriptive, thematic, and synthetic, the choices of the critical theories of psychoanalysis, feminism and post-colonialism will be eclectic.

This thesis is divided into five interrelated chapters. In addition to the general introduction and conclusion, three chapters will be devoted to the theoretical background as well as the cultural and literary synthetic chapter for a better understanding of the problematic. The analysis of the literary corpora is not made on a chronological basis, but on thematic issues. In doing so, we contend that the process of self-fulfillment follows the thematic order discussed by the women authors. Although resistance, transgression of the gender roles, and determination to reach one's self-actualization are common themes throughout the selected literary corpora, the overarching theme unveiled in these novels follows the chronological process to female self-fulfillment that is constructed by our hypothesis. The Indian author Shashi Deshpande, in her novel *The Dark Holds No Terrors*, deals with the theme of trauma

resulting from the inflicted guilt of femininity. The Algerian author Ahlem Mostaghanemi, in her novel *Chaos of the Senses*, refers to the realization of the illusionary reality created by androcentric and materialistic interests. The Egyptian Ahdaf Soueif, in her novel *In the Eye of the Sun,* considers woman self-assertion both at the local and global level. We eventually decided to order the analysis of our literary corpora in accordance to the progressive, yet, cyclical nature of this process.

The first chapter traces the epistimological underpinings of the conceptualisation of the self in philosophical and scientific disciplines. It is divided into two main sections: pre-psychoanalysis, and post-psychoanalysis. The first section briefly reviews the early philosophical thought about the self, concentrating on issues directly related to the establishment of psychology as a scientific discipline. The aim is to study the philosophical work that preceded modern psychology. Then, we shall look at the ideas and schools of thought as well as the contextual conditions that had an impact on the development of the conceptualisation of the self. The second section starts with the investigation of the formal beginnings of psychology with its distinct methods and concerns. Our interest starts with the review of Freud's groundbreaking theory of the unconscious as the impetus that led to the blooming of subsequent theories that relate the human's predicament to the pressure of the materialistic order. These theories cover the diversity of identities in the social hierarchy including object relations theories, social psychological theories, humanistic psychology, psychoanalytical feminism and postcolonial theories about the self/other dichotomy. Henceforth, the construction of female selfhood is channeled to the human evolution of personality through negotiation and adjustment between the acquired identity and the critical cognitive and affective reflection. The chapter also explains postcolonial thought through intellectual and literary expression beside the acquired consciousness about one's socio-

cultural norms and attitudes and its interaction with one's critical assessment of this reality to yield a synthetic identity.

The second chapter presents the cultural background of our literary corpora. It is divided into three main sections that go along with our arranged thematic order. Each major section starts with tracing the development of women's status in the Indian, Algerian, and Egyptian societies. These initial sections include three sub-sections starting with her position in the early and Middle Ages up to the Western colonization and post-independent period. The second section briefly reviews the development of the Indian, Algerian, and Egyptian women writing and its contribution to their respective cultural feminism. The last section investigates the development of the feminist thought in the writings of Shashi Deshpande, Ahdaf Soueif, and Ahlem Mostaghanemi. The aim is to create a comfortable ground for the literary works to be studied.

The last chapter is concerned with the synthesis of our research aims through our literary corpora. It involves three main sections following the journey of the female protagonists towards their self-actualization in the Indian, Algerian, and Egyptian novels. Each section is arranged according to a tripartite structure. The first stage examines the early enculturation of the female protagonists into their society through the internalisation of socio-cultural norms (habitus), leading to their feelings of confinement, repression and alienation. The second stage explores the critical consciousness that makes the female protagonists experience anxiety and tension between their projections and self-perceptions. Moreover, this consciousness serves as a filter that displaces their acquired subjectivity and leads them to transgress their gender norms and confront their repressed guilt that is inscribed on them for their femininity. The last stage focuses on the freedom that follows their transgressions leading up to their self-reconciliation, healing and self-actualization. This chapter also offers a

synthetic evaluation on the thematic analogies and contrasts that exist in our selected literary corpora as well as a conclusion that summarizes the findings.

Last but not least, a general conclusion will be drawn to clearly assert the answers to the main research questions, reflect upon our research hypotheses, make recommendations for further work on the topic, and show how our findings can enrich the field of postcolonial literary feminism.

It is worth noting that we have relied on the 8th edition of the MLA style as the basis of all resources cited in-text and reflected in the Works Cited section.

CHAPTER ONE:

THE CONSTRUCTION OF SELFHOOD

I- 1 Introduction

This chapter presents the theoretical and conceptual framework for the analysis of our literary corpora. It is a descriptive study that aims at tracing the conceptualization of the self in both pre-modern and modern epistemology. It is divided in three sections; the first one explores the chronological development of the concept of self in philosophical and scientific disciplines. The second part reviews the psychological development of the concept of selfhood the development of the feminist thought and movement history and influences that post-colonialism has had on literature, particularly with regard to the context of Algeria, Egypt and India. The third part relates the major findings of both of the psychoanalytical and postcolonial sections to the movement of feminism in the cultural context of North Africa, the Middle East and South Asia. Although the critical approaches discussed in this chapter; mainly psychoanalysis, postcolonialism and feminism, have different ways of addressing our problematic, they intersect and form a mutual threshold that offers a foundational dynamic web for understanding the main concern of this research, and which addresses the complex processes of women resistance to construct an authentic identity against the hegemonic systems.

In our investigation, we aim at situating the tenets of feminist thought which transformed the society through an investigation on the psychological developments of the concept of selfhood within its historical, socio-cultural, political, and economic context, taking into account the rising discourse of nationalism, and modernization. The understanding of the experience of becoming a woman and female selfhood is of philosophical underpinnings. Indeed, it is largely through an engagement with philosophical reflection that we come to appreciate the self and gender related concerns as a fundamental approach to the understanding of the dilemma of female identity. It is with this that we have aimed at the philosophical inquiry of selfhood. In addition to the philosophical consideration, the psychoanalytic, feminist and

postcolonial theories would enrich our reading of our literary corpora through a thorough analysis, which would provide multidimensional insights of ontological, scientific, and political nature. Feminists insist on the importance of the placing all knowledge in its peculiar social setting in order to establish the ground upon which research is undertaken. Our enterprise, then, is a philosophical, psychoanalytic, feminist, and postcolonial inquiry that highlights pertinent concepts to the study of female selfhood.

I-2 Tracing the Development of the 'Self' Conceptualization in Human Thought

For millennia, the issue of identity has engaged human's intellect across the world. There is ample historical evidence from ancient texts that man has considered the issue of existence and identity from the beginning of mankind, a fact that reflects the mind's capacity for self-reflection and perception of identity. Fundamentally, Aristotle's first statement in his book *Metaphysics* declares: "All men by nature desire to know" (980a). This statement discerns that the desire to know is an innate human drive that urges intellectuals to explore nature and ultimately oneself, leading to the pleasure of understanding both one's self and its relation to the world. The quote also implies that the intellectual delight is the impetus for which this quest is sought. While the output of seeking knowledge satisfies the intellectual drive, the realization of this satisfaction, through attainment, fulfills the human's 'will to power' of the world. Moreover, Aristotle insists that understanding nature and oneself are dependent on each other. In this section, the comparative analysis of the origins of psychological knowledge in different disciplines and cultures is not our goal. We focus, instead, on the contributions of distinct civilizations to the understanding and construction of knowledge about the self.

The investigation of the human self is one of the oldest scholarly endeavors that began with philosophy and was gradually appropriated by the psychological studies. Understanding

the self is scrutinized through two approaches. The former considers the self as an abstract entity responsible for our behaviour, and the latter perceives it as a concrete entity that is reflected through one's behaviour. Moreover, the self acts through its interaction with the *other*'s perceptions that are inscribed in culturally defined standards. Therefore, it is in society that one can grasp the full meaning of the self. The individuals' self-conception of who they are, and how they relate to others, is best understood inside the interpersonal and intergroup context, which is constitutive of their identity. The latter incarnates itself has a double sense (two aspects). The first is about one's personality, i.e. individuality. The question to this type of identity is: who am I? The answers can vary as personalities do in accordance with intelligence, motivation, and self-efficacy. The last refers to a certain group orientation or identification. Questions related to this type range from: To what group of people do I belong? Does the group acknowledge my membership? Does the group membership affect how society classifies and values me? So, this type of identity is about ethnic and/or racial group, first language, gender, nationality, socio-economic status, etc. Generally, one's identity is the combination of both approaches at once.

Interestingly, in the process of identity formation, the self undergoes a private experience in its interaction with the society. This experience is so personal that expecting the *other* to comprehend it is nearly impossible in our postmodern age. Therefore, the intellectual delight in attaining this very realization about the relationship of self/other and the dominance of nature upon one's life is of important significance to one's sense of being. The German philosopher Emmanuel Kant considers that self-knowledge is not completely gained through observation or perception, but is significantly formed through the subject's authority in framing it within its conceptual structure, i.e. becoming aware of one's own being and thoughts while interacting with society without direct influence on performativity. Thus, the subject would

attain a higher state of being which Aristotle indicates in his former statement about the intellectual desire connoting wisdom and self-control.

Investigating the self entails its study within the psychology, which is defined as the scientific study of mind and behaviour. Taken literally, psychology comes from Greek with *psyche* denoting life and *logos* denoting explanation. It has become an integral part in our life. Because of the diverse and rapid growing body of psychological research, we have to limit our scope to the study of *self* simultaneously from different psychological perspectives. In fact, psychology did not become an independent discipline till the late 19th century. Historically, psychology was closely related to the branch of philosophy known as epistemology, which studies the nature of knowledge, its foundations, extent, and validity. In the beginning, it had been a three-way synthesis of physics, physiology and mental philosophy. Gradually, it evolved out of the fusion between philosophy and the natural sciences. The study of psychological thought comprises three complementary concepts, knowing, feeling and acting.

I-3 Conceptualization of the 'Self' in the Early Civilizations

Considering the history of psychology, its development as an academic discipline has evolved through many stages in human civilization. Despite the conflicting opinions about the origins of psychology as dating back to the Greek or Egyptian civilizations, contemporary research has proved that it is as ancient as the survival of written accounts of the early human civilizations. In fact, contemporary research found out that the wheel of science began to run with Ancient Egypt and Mesopotamia as their surviving written accounts and manuscripts were not translated and understood till recently by archaeologists and Egyptologists. These two early civilizations are among the first civilizations to develop a written language and produce manuscripts, the most famous of which encompass ethical values and teachings such as *Hammurabi's Code* in Ancient Mesopotamia, and the *Instruction of Ptah-Hotep* in Ancient

Egypt. According to George James (1954) and Henry Olela (1981), it is the Egyptians who led the foundation for scientific knowledge. Moreover, the American historian Martin Bernal (1987) argues that Greek knowledge shows many fragments of earlier traditions such as the Ancient Egyptian knowledge, especially after the conquest of Egypt by Alexander the Great, and the seizure and looting of the Royal Library at Alexandria. These historical sources have demonstrated that early civilizations entertained the idea of separation between the material and the spiritual world to the understanding of human nature.

With the ancient Greeks, Western philosophy flourished through the works of its thinkers such as Miletus, Pythagoras, Hippocrates, Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle, among many. According to Eric Shiraev (2014), the Greeks emphasized reasoning and naturalistic observations and recognized the body and soul. With their interest in the physical world, their bodies, and certainly their psychological experiences, the Greeks considered the soul as the seat of consciousness. The Greek epic poet and philosopher Homer developed a four-aspect theory to the soul: *menos*, *thymos*, *noos* and *psyche* (Greek words). The latter serves as the origin behind the naming of psychology. Moreover, Shiraev documents that two schools of thought were prominent during the Greek period: the former is materialism, which holds the view that the human soul and body have the same material origins. The latter referred to as idealism argues for the non-material nature of the soul (34). The Greek's early scientific and philosophical thought was primarily metaphysical and qualitative as quantitative attitude lacked measuring instruments at that time. The qualitative approach grew out of observations and their critical discussion. Overall, this stage was important is setting the scientific methodology that is based on forming hypotheses of causality and relying on analysis of natural phenomena into meaningful descriptive classifications.

It is worth mentioning that Plato's teachings have been a rich well of influence for many generations of thinkers. Eric Shiraev (2014) reports that Plato developed a three-aspect theory

of the world: "The first dimension is the world of ideal forms (which is the primary reality). The second is the material world created by God. The third is psychological, which is a reflection of the ideal through the material" (36). Plato's thought-provoking 'Allegory of the Cave' discusses the dualistic division of the world. Inside the underground cave, human subjects are imprisoned, shackled to some seats with heads robustly braced facing a blank wall, they can only see projections of objects passing in front of a fire behind them onto a large wall. The shadows are merely projected duplicates of reality, but those prisoners mistakenly interpret those projections as reality. Plato describes what would happen if one prisoner manages to get free from one's bondage and realizes that those projections are just manufactured forms of reality by the input of the senses. Immediately, this ex-prisoner would have a psychological conflict following the revelation of being a victim of his limited sensory experience. This allegory implies that beyond the imperfect reality of the world that is perceived by our senses, exists a reflection of immaterial ideas that constitute the true reality. More to the point, the anxiety that this freed subject experiences may threaten his well-being and lead one to reject this reality through self-deception. Plato's theory shall significantly serve our study for if we consider those projections as our reality that is constituted by our socio-cultural gender norms and conventions, our perception, then, is unmistakingly astray.

In the case of the East Asian approach to psychological knowledge, Eric Shiraev (2014) reveals that the Indian and Chinese ancient traditions developed a unique way to the study of behavior, emotion, and mental activities. While the Indian tradition within *Hinduism* (The oldest religion in the world, Indian) and *Buddhism* (An Indian religion) devoted their study on cognition and meditation, the Chinese tradition of *Confucianism* and *Taoism* (A Chinese religions) considered man and society as their main focus. According to Gavin Flood (1996), the *Hindu* tradition holds that human cognition is illusory and true knowledge can be achieved through *transcendence* (knowledge beyond empirical experience) with the discipline of *Yoga*

(physical, mental and spiritual *Hindu* practices). It is through restraining the collaboration of the senses with the mind that the limited experience of the sensory self can be transcended. Ultimately, one's true self can be experienced (94).

Similar to the Idealistic school of thought, *Buddhism* separates between the physical and mental activities. Proponents of this line of thought consider feelings and mental actvities as reactions to physical sensory contact that end with its cessation. However, they maintain that when the body dies, the mental processes are reborn in a new body (Collins 114). This reflects the *Hindu* approach towards life understanding as a cycle of birth, death and rebirth. The latter tradition is centered over the holistic thought with the concepts of *yin* (dark side) and *yang* (bright side), which represent the entities that are opposed to one another and yet they are unified as a whole in time and space (Peng & Nisbet). The holistic thinking of the East Asian tradition is also referred to as Naive Dialectical thinking; it emphasizes the context and circumstances surrounding the object being perused. Hence, it considers objects dependent on field (Choi & Nisbett).

Interestingly, the East Asian dialectical mode of thinking is also stressed in Western philosophy through the discussion of the Greek philosopher Heraclitus (536-470 B.C) about the constant change which is born out of the conflict or strife of contradictory forces (Paul D'Amato). The dialectical thought is also found in the work of the German philosopher Friedrich Hegel who emphasizes the idealistic observation that human experience depends on perceptions. In fact, Friedrich Hegel mentions *Buddhist* concepts in his work (Weiss 97), but he adopts Heraclitus's logic in suggesting a further stage of negotiation and integration of opposites in what is being referred to as *sublation*[1] that is governed by rational control or *Logos* (reason). On the other hand, East Asian dialectics tolerate and embrace contradiction rather

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[1] Sublation or *Aufhebung* represents the dynamics of the dialectics of preservation and change.

than settling a middle ground between the opposites (Susannah Paletz et al). According to Donald Phillip Verene, Hegel's german expression *Aufhebung* can mean two things at once, ' to cancel or transcend' and 'to preserve'" (18). Hegel's *Aufhebung* also carries the meaning of speculative thinking which transcends the limitations of bifocal modes of thinking to constructively develop the Absolute and Ultimate reality. Truth, in Hegel's sense, is the correspondence between the concept and its objectivity. Hegel explains his conceptualization of the truth in his *Lectures*: " the development of the spirit's consciousness of its own freedom and of the consequent realization of this freedom " (138), implying that truth is a continuous process of discovery which entails negation, preservation and most importantly, elavation. In other words, truth entails the negation of the claim to completeness, the preservation of partial truths of both oppositions and elevation.

I-4 Conceptualization of the 'Self' in the Middle Ages (5th-late 15th century) up to the Age of Enlightenment (17th-18th century)

Prior to moving to the *Renaissance* era (From French, referring to revival, lasted from 15th to 16th century), it is worthy to mention that in addition to the clear legacy of the Greek philosophy on the medieval one, there are also traces of both Christian and Muslim theology on the development of psychological knowledge. Interestingly, the reveiw of literature on knowledge about the self shows that Hanning (1977) reveals that the medieval period (11th to12th centuries) began "to use devices based on the idea that different characters in a drama had different perspectives on the action" (qtd. in Roy Baumeister 165). Moreover, Persian and Classical Islamic civilization flourished during this period. Influenced by Greek philosophy, the Persian physician Ibn Sina, known also under the Latin name Avicenna (980-1037), was a prominent philosopher, physician and astronomer. He developed the Greek metaphysical framework with his innovative theory of sense-perception, imagination, and the intellect

(Rahman 83). He argues in his *Kitab al-nafs* (Book of the Soul) that the soul is independent and separate from the body and that concrete observable body is connected to the abstract immaterial soul through the senses. He adds five *internal senses*[2] (cognitive faculties) to the five physical senses, which represent the gradual mental processes to the construction of ideas (Rahman 83-84).

It is until the end of the fourteenth century that Western philosophy witnessed the revolution of the European *Renaissance era*, which emerged as a reaction against *Classicism* (Greek and Roman tradition). Starting in Italy and spreading all over Europe, the *Renaissance* marks the transition from classical to modern philosophy. Literally, it denotes rebirth of reason and intellect from subjective metaphysical inquiry to objective observation and experimentation. Folllowed by the *Age of Enlightenment* (age of reason, 17th to 18th century), this cultural and intellectual movement has emphasized political philosophy, humanism and the philosophy of nature. The Canadian academic Fred Wilson in the *Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy* reveals that the French philosopher and psychologist René Descartes (1596-1650) made significant contributions to the intellectual field with his Cartesian logic (A form of rationalism that is based on innate ideas and deductive reasoning), he is often considered as the pioneer in inaugurating the modern intellectual inquiry. Being a competent mathematician, Descartes maintains that scientific inquiry through observation and experimentation is the basis of modern science and philosophy. He advocates independent and skeptical thinking that is based on scientific discipline and analytic rigor to question the authoritative, rigid beliefs and norms in order to use the brain's capacities to its fullest extent. His famous principle to the theory of knowledge is summed up in his Latin slogan: "Cogito*, ergo sum"* or "I *think, therefore I am"*, which reflects his actualized concept of the *self* as a thinking entity. The

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[2] Avicenna internal senses: common sense, retentive imagination, compositive imagination, estimation, memory (Kärkkäinen 1)

essential existence of an individual's *self* relies in being self-conscious about one's self-identity. In other words, being engaged and aware of one's mental processes and states constitutes the fundamental part of existence (Wilson). Hence, the physical self with all its attributes of appearance, gender, race, ethnicity, age, and so on, is secondary and subordinate to one's self-identity. Moreover, Descartes believes in the intermingling of the self as mind/body through the *pineal gland (tiny organ)*, which is situated in the brain (Fred Wilson). Thus, we can identify the influence of the Greek metaphysical framework of Aristotle and Plato on Descartes.

The physiological research has had a direct influence on psychological studies in relating sensory experience to mental processes and states, and eventually to products of behavior and beliefs. The *Empiricist* movement persisted in Britain and was centred on the primary role of the process of sensation on knowledge acquisition. Francis Bacon (1561-1636) insisted that scientific methodology must be followed with the inductive logical reasoning in order to maintain the reliable validity of psychological study. Bacon also contends that research has to maintain an unbiased perspective. The British Empiricist tradition holds that mental knowledge is built through mechanical associations between the sensory experiences and mental processes such as perception, memory, and thinking.

Among the significant contributors to the British tradition of Empiricism is Thomas Hobbes (1588-1679) who is considered as the founder of this school of thought. Working as the secretary to Bacon for a short moment in his life, he established the principle of 'material psychology'; that knowledge is mentally derived from possible experience devoid of bias. Unlike Bacon, he believed in the necessity of oppositional representations for knowledge, thus, advocating deductive reasoning. Moreover, Hobbes also maintains the hedonistic logic of desire, which constitutes the motivational impetus that directs mental processes to attain pleasure and avoid pain through internal mechanisms.

Hobbes' *Materialist* theory paved the way for other psychologists to develop the *British Empiricist Tradition*. John Locke (1632-1704) developed the empirical theory in his *An Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (1690). With his concept of *Tabula Rasa* (A Latin phrase denoting a blank slate), Locke maintains that the human mind is blank or clean at birth, and that past experience and the surrounding environment determine the individual's selfhood, insisting that there is no innate knowledge. He has established the concept of ideas as self-reflected sensations and that the mind is the reflections of mental operations, thus, creating limits to our knowledge (Shultz 36). Locke has distinguished between the primary and secondary qualities of an object. The primary qualities are intrinstic and inseparable aspects that are independent from our sensations such as size, shape and so on. On the other hand, the secondary qualities of an object are the ideas and sensations produced in us such as smell, odour and so on. Thus, Locke considered the subjective nature of human experience (Duane and Sydney Schultz 38).

Talking about *Empiricism* and self-reflections leads us to consider the work of George Berkeley (1685-1753): the Irish philosopher who developed the theory of *Immaterialism*, also referred to as Subjective Idealism, which refutes matter or physical substance. Berkeley's famous phrase *'esse set percipi (aut percipere)'* sums up his theory of *Mentalism* (the doctrine that considers that all knowledge is a function of mental phenomena), which states that the existence of bodies and sensible objects (physical objects) that constitute the natural world depends on human perception, i.e, perception is the only reality. He also distinguishes between real and imaginary things; the former exists in collective minds and the latter exists only in an individual's mind. Furthermore, Berkeley contends that the distinction between the perceived aspects of an object as primary and secondary qualities is innate, illusory and occurs only inside the mind. In doing so, Berkeley has extended the relationship between ideas and the sensory experiences.

The *Empiricist* Tradition reached its peak with David Hume (1711-1776) who established the first cues to *Naturalism* (Morris and Brown). Like Berkeley, he refuted the existence of matter independent of sensation, and argues in his magisterial *A Treatise of Human Nature* (1739), better explained in *An Enquiry concerning Human Understanding* (1748), that the mind is the sum of the ongoing sensory and perceptual processes. He explains that humans' behaviour is determined by the immediate collection of impressions and habit. This entails that freewill is an idealistic construct and that humans do not have the freedom to act in accordance with their motivation. The *Empiricist* tradition that holds the fundamental belief that knowledge is acquired passively through observation and experimentation has played a major role in shaping modern psychology.

The German philosopher Immanuel Kant (1724-1804) established the doctrine of *Transcendental Idealism* (The subject cognizes the objects according to their appearance for one's sensibility). In *Critique of Pure Reason* (1781), one of his major works, Kant argues that human sensory experience shapes our limited view of the world, drawing a line between appearance and reality. Kant advances that self-knowledge is not completely gained through observation but it is formed partly through the subject's authority in framing it within the conceptual structure of time and space (Jankowiak). In his attempt to resolve the riddle of the self, Kant distinguishes between empirical apperception and transcendental apperception. Apperception is different from perception. In 1902, the German philosopher Theodor Lipps (1902) defines perception as the perception of the psychic occurrences of the outer world and apperception as the attentive perception of one's own perception (6-7). Empirical apperception is a routine of reflections or "the consciousness of the concrete actual self with its changing states", the so-called "inner sense", and transcendental apperception is "the pure, original, unchangeable consciousness that is the necessary condition of experience and the ultimate foundation of the unity of experience" (Otto F. Kraushaar in Runes). In very simple terms,

transcendental apperception refers to the experience of becoming aware with one's thought processes before they can affect one's state, thus, limiting their performative activity. Consequently, the subject's actual position would be to look at one's own being, or just in a state of awareness without objectivity, which is a higher state of being united with universal one.

I-5 Conceptualization of the 'Self' in Modern Epistemology (19ᵗʰ century)

Moving to the modern period, the Scientific Revolution coupled with the Industrial Revolution of the nineteenth century had a dramatic impact on the development of philosophy and psychology. The focus in knowledge inquiry has shifted from the rationalist qualitative research to the Empiricist quantitative one (based on sense experience). By the middle of the nineteenth century, the French philosopher Auguste Comte (1798-1857) had a major and significant influence over Western thought with his theory of *Positivism* (the doctrine that recognizes only observable phenomena). The positivistic approach in science, also known as *Materialism* (the doctrine that considers the universal facts as sufficiently explained in physical terms), rejects metaphysical thinking. It is based solely on the objective analysis of observable data to explain natural phenomena. This approach became the dominant spirit of the late nineteenth century, as Edward Reed (1997) asserts, "Everyone was a positivist, or at least professed to be" (156) referring to the fame positivism has received at that age.

There is a historical background that helped in the consolidation of the modern approach towards the study of human's mind and behaviour. This period witnessed an overreaching turbulence of traditional beliefs, norms, and attitudes towards life. The major strife in Western societies grew up in parallel with the general dissatisfaction about the stagnating intellect and environment for human advancement and self-fulfillment, in addition to the oppressive regimes. The *Zeitgeist* (German word, denoting the intellectual and cultural

climate of the times) of this new era expressed the relentless struggle that focuses on breaking the ties that grew up historically at the moral, political, and economic levels. This intellectual revolution aimed at the overthrow of dogma and authority figures, and paved the way for political revolutions of the 18th and 19th century to promote freedom and individuality. The French and American revolutions which argue for the necessary liberation from orthodox norms and oppressive systems gave rise to the secularization ideology which is centered on the separation of church and state, and holds the optimistic belief that self-fulfillment can and should be achieved in actual life rather than the after-life. Stressed individualism affirms the value of the common person, self-expression and well-being, but also insists on individuals to act as members of the society. Moreover, the Industrial Revolution and the widespread of machinery allowed for the motion of people and ideas all over the world.

The three traditions that helped in shaping the modern approach in psychological research are Empiricism, Materialism, and Positivism. British Empiricism emphasizes the sensory experience; the materialist theory holds that matter is the fundamental substance that creates consciousness; and positivism focuses on the objective knowledge collected from sensory experience through experimentation and observation. The scientific spirit reigned over Western intellect during the nineteenth century and helped in shaping modern psychology. It began with the Germans' interest in experimental physiology and inductive approach to research, which provided an ideal context for the development of scientific research. The German philosopher, physician and physiologist, Wilhelm Wundt (1832-1920), is considered as the founding father of modern psychology (Mcleod). Working as an assistant to Von Helmholtz (1821-1894), a mechanistic and deterministic psychologist, Wundt wrote an influential book *Contributions to the Theory of Sensory Perception* (1862), where he first expressed his interest in sensations, ideas and feelings. In 1874, he published *Principles of Physiological Psychology* arguing that psychology is a separate science from philosophy and

biology and that the mind is a process. Heavily influenced by the experimental principle to measuring mental phenomena of Gustav Feshner (1801-1887), Wundt established the first laboratory at the University of Leipzig in 1879; started the first journal *Philosophical Studies* to publish and promote new psychological research in 1881; and set up experimental psychology as an independent discipline from philosophy studying the mind through experiments (Duane and Sydney Schultz).

According to Duane and Sydney Schultz (2011), Wundt attracted and inspired many students to the laboratory research of psychological processes as a consequence of his popular fame across the globe. He was interested in the idea that the mind could be broken down and analyzed on a deeper level and still upholds its properties. He primarily focused on three areas of mental functioning in order to understand mental processes: thoughts, images and feelings. Wundt described the mental processes in two major categories. On the one hand, *The Immediate experiences* took his concern with the experimental introspection of sensations as the raw data of mental experiences. *The Mediate experience* or *stimulus error[3]*, on the other hand, refers to the conceptions and brain analysis of data gathered from experience. Furthermore, Wundt establishes a three-way hypothesis to the mental processes: Apprehension, Apperception, and Voluntarism.

1-Apprehension: admission of sensory impressions into consciousness (passive process);

2-Apperception[4]: focusing attention on the impression process of attending to particular perceptions, i.e. what is attended to is apperceived (the concept is shaped by Wilhelm Wundt,

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[3] Confusing the mental process under study with the stimulus or object being observed (Duane and Sydney Schultz 94).

[4] According to George Frederick Stout (2009): "apperception is a general term for all mental processes in which a presentation is brought into connexion with an already existent and systematized mental conception, and thereby is classified, explained or, in a word, understood, e.g., a new scientific phenomenon is explained in the light of phenomena already analysed and classified. The whole intelligent life of man is, consciously or unconsciously, a process of apperception, inasmuch as every act of attention involves the appercipient process " (book II, Ch.VIII)

but introduced by Gottfried Wilhelm Leibnitz). According to Merriam Webster, apperception refers to "the mind's perception of itself as the subject or actor in its own states; perception that reflects upon itself; sometimes, intensified or energetic perception. *Leibnitz. Reid"* (apperception);

3-Voluntarism: the power to organize contents of mind into higher levels of thought processes (Duane and Sydney Schultz 377).

Throughout the nineteenth and twentieth century, various schools of thought contested to explain the human mind and behaviour in a scientific way. A school of thought, according to Duane and Sydney Schultz (2011), is "a group of psychologists who become associated ideologically, and sometimes geographically, with the leader of the movement" (17). The rich and various field of psychology has allowed for a better understanding of human psychology to consolidate. It began with two major schools: *structuralism* and *functionalism* that had significant impact on the development of modern psychology.

Edward Titchener (1867-1927), one of Wundt's graduate students, established the school of *structuralim*. He was deeply influenced by Wundt's theory of Voluntarism, Association, and Apperception. Duane and Sydney Ellen Schultz (2011) reveal that Titchener focused his study on the conscious human experience and its structural elements, using introspection (94). He established the Structuralist school to psychological research in the United States, which gained significant impact upon psychological studies. According to Titchener's theory, psychological research focuses on reducing consciousness into its structural components, detecting the laws of association, and linking these associations to psychological states (94-5). While Titchener's theory gained fame and appraisal, it also faced harsh criticism arguing that its scientific methods are subjective (98).

The scientific spirit in psychological research flourished in the United States during the second half of the eighteenth century. A new school of thought emerged under the leadership

of William James (1848-1910) as a reaction against the principles of Structuralist psychology. His book, *The Principles of Psychology,* serves as the primary reference for Functionalist psychology. The American academics Duane and Sydney Schultz (2011) explain that *Functionalism* holds that psychological research should be based on the empirical, and rational method of analyzing human conscious experience over the experimental one. As the name suggests, it is concerned with the function of the mind rather than its structural components, highlighting the pragmatic principle of the American philosophy (Duane and Sydney Schultz 103). Proponents to this school of thought include William James, James Rowland Angell, John Dewey, among others.

It is worthy to mention that William James' theory of the self proposes that the mental perception of the self takes two images; the 'me' and the ' I '. According to Wayne Pomerleau in *The Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, the ' me ' refers to the self as the object of thought, and the ' I ' as the subject of self. In his books *Principles* (1950) and *Psychology*, William James contends that the empirical self *'me'* is comprised of: the material self, the social self, and the spiritual self. The subjective self or the *'I'* represents the pure ego and the personal identity that undergoes the ongoing process of identification. (291-294, 296, 319, 343-344, 348, 350; 176-181, 194, 196, 198, 200, 202-203, 215-216). Moreover, his theory of the realms of reality is significant to the study of the spaces a person can inhabit. William James (1950) argues against monism and singularity of the world and specifies seven worlds to the human conscious experience. William James (1950) asserts that one can occupy more than one realm and consciously identify its nature" (292-299). Wayne Pomerleau reports these realms in his article *William James* as follows:

1- The first realm is the physical world experienced by the senses;

2-The second realm is the world conceived through scientific perspective and physical laws;

3-The third realm concerns the abstract and ideal world explained by philosophy;

4-The fourth realm is subject to human distortions of feelings and prejudices;

5-The fifth realm is subject to cultural beliefs and norms;

6- The sixth realm is about individual opinions;

7-The seventh realm concerns the pathological world of madness, which separates one from reality.

I-6 Freud's Psychosexual Theory and the Unconscious

As both the structural and functional psychology focus on the conscious part of the human experience, there grew an interest to the study of the unconscious mental processes. It is the Austrian physician and psychologist Sigmund Freud (1856-1939) who is the founder of psychoanalysis. His innovative sex-based theory shocked the reception of analytic circles with his radical proclamation that logic and rational thinking play but a small role in determining our actions, feelings and thoughts. In Freud's perspective, it is the unconscious mind that represents the major driving force behind humans' behaviour. Although the idea of the unconscious had precursors such as the underworld, Freud's theory has had a significant impact on the humanities (Duane and Sydney Schultz 288). Working with the Austrian physician and physiologist Josef Breuer (1848-1925) on *hypnosis* (trance-like mental state with increased attention, concentration, and suggestibility), Freud elaborated his theory of psychoanalysis. Both physicians noticed that neurotic patients have been relieved after talking freely about the source of their anxiety when under hypnosis (Duane and Sydney Schultz 296). Freud then observed that certain painful feelings, mainly those that are related to infantile sexual disturbance, were repressed from conscious awareness. Unlike Breuer, he was convinced that "sex was the sole cause of neurotic behavior" (Duane and Sydney Schultz 298), arguing that the cause of anxiety *neurosis* (mental disorder causing distress) is sexual frustrations. Much of

Freud's thinking is directly influenced by his infantile experiences of orphanhood that gave rise to his dreams and fantasies (Duane and Sydney Schultz 301).

Freud's sex-based theory was influenced by the changing *Zeitgeist* of late nineteenth century Vienna where the Viennese society witnessed "a breakdown of the Victorian sublimation od sexuality. Passion, prostitution, and pornography flourished" (Duane and Sydney Schultz 293), Additionally, Duane and Sydney Schultz report that the scientific *Zeitgeist* at the beginning of the twentieth century was influenced by Darwin's evolutionary theory that enabled for the objectification of human beings for scientific study and the positivist approach to human studies (292-293). Moreover, the mechanistic outlook is well docummented in Freud's theory (293). Many researchers turned to the scientific study of sexuality. Sexologists' purpose is to "bring a naturalist's cold eye to matters long thought indecent, immoral, disgusting, and sinful. Sexologists were encouraged to study varieties of human sexual experience not as vices, sins, or crimes, but as an integral part of the natural world" (Makari 93). Hence, Freud's focus on sexuality in his psychoanalytical theory originates from the interest in sexuality studies of of his time. Researchers such as Adolf Patz, and Albert Moll have undertaken research on childhood sexuality; Alfred Binet and Krafft Ebing worked on sexual perversions; neurologist Moritz Benedikt also has related women's problems in their sex lives to their hysterical behaviour (Duane and Sydney Schultz 294). Moreover, Freud (1915) contends that aggression is an expression of frustration in his psychodynamic theory. Many psychoanalysts share this view (Miller 1941, McClleland and Apicella 1945, Dollard et al 1939). Additionally, Aronson et al (2005) argue that the feelings of goal-inhibition increase agression.

I-6-1 Sadism as a Sexual Perversion

It is worth noting that one category in the list of sexual perversions that the sexologist Kraft-Ebing has constructed; sadism is the category that is significant to our analytical study. The German sexologist coined the term 'sadism' as a category of perversion in his graded scale of normality and abnormality of sexual deviation. The etymology of this term originates from Marquis de Sade (1740-1814), the libertine writer who celebrates the pleasures of sexual cruelty. Kraft-Ebing delineated a list of sexual perversions in his landmark catalogue *Psychopathia Sexualis* (1886): sadism, masochism, fetishism, bestiality, sexual inversion in men and women, rape, nymphomania, onanism, pedophilia, exhibitionism, necrophilia, and incest (Hovey). Sexual perversion refers to sexual activities considered outside the norm of heterosexual sexual desire and activity. The American academic Jaime Hovey explains that Kraft-Ebing (1886) defines "sexual perversion as a disease of the sexual instinct, as opposed to sexual perversity, which is defined as a vice rather than a pathology" (*Kraft Ebing, Richard 1840-1902*).

Remarkably, Krafft-Ebing (1886) explains that sadism is inherent in normal male and female sexuality in active behaviour. He contends that this behaviour is far from romantic love that is "based on intimacy, equality, reciprocity and psychic communication" (Oosterhuis). Krafft-Ebing associated pervert sexual acts with abnormalities of thought and feeling. He argues: "even if people were not aware of them; discussing sexual desire, he —as well as some of his clients—frequently used the psychological terms 'unconscious' and 'latent' " (Oosterhuis). The French anarchist philosopher Michel Onfray (2013) opposes sadism and sexual perversion with his concept of *ethical hedonism* (seeking pleasure with an ethical approach)[5]. He remarks on glorifying Marquis de Sade approach in sex and life, "it is

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[5] According to Michel Onfray, ethical hedonism is "as an introspective attitude to life based on taking pleasure yourself and pleasuring others, without harming yourself or anyone else." (qtd. in Caspar

intellectually bizarre to make Sade a hero (...) Even according to his most hero-worshipping biographers, this man was a sexual delinquent" (qtd. in Lichfield). Arguing that Sade's libertine approach and total freedom took hedonism to its negative extreme in attaining sexual pleasure over the pain of the partner through unethical practices.

Furthermore, sexual sadism is a pathology belonging to paraphillic disorders. Paraphillias are "sexual interests, preferences, fantasies, urges and behaviours outside the norm, but they are considered symptoms of a disorder only if they are acted upon in ways that have the potential to cause distress or harm" ("Sexual Sadism Disorder"). It is based on attaining sexual pleasure from inflicting extreme pain and humiliation on the partner whether consenting or non-consenting. The American academic George Brown defines it as:

> [The] infliction of physical or psychological suffering (eg, humiliation, terror) on another person to stimulate sexual excitement and orgasm. Sexual sadism disorder is sexual sadism that causes significant distress or significant distress or significant functional impairment or is acted on with a nonconsenting person. ("Sexual Sadism Disorder")

Clearly, the sadistic patient derives his satisfaction and significantly one's self-esteem from the sexual perversion of terrorizing and humiliating the non-consenting partner. Psychiatric literature on the causes of sexual sadism report many theories. Research in psychology reveals that sexual sadism originates from the patient's non-coherent sense of self and the painful feeling of inferiority resulting from the overwhelming social standards (Dhar); a coping mechanism to survive his ego and and reflective expression of flight from an oppressed reality to an oppressive sexual act in the dark, an urge to assert oneself and having a pathological sense of self through violence; It can also develop from the release of repressed fantasies ("Sexual Sadism Disorder"). Treatment of this disorder is carried out over a prolonged period of time

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Melville) Hence, the term ethical was associated with his conception which is based on obtaining pleasure but not at the expence of the other.

through the help of clinical psychiatry and medications, such as anti-depressive and anti-androgenic drugs that suppress the sex drive ("Sexual Sadism Disorder").

I-6-2 Freud's Conceptualization of Femininity/Masculinity

Freud's psychosexual theory is constructed upon the libidinal binary of activity/passivity, which were initially discussed by Kraft Ebbing in his Masochism/Sadism theory. In Freud's essay on femininity (1933), he uses biological cues to prove his theory:

> When you say 'masculine', you usually mean 'active', and when you say 'feminine', you usually mean passive' (…) The male sex cell is actively mobile and searches out the female one, and the latter, the ovum, is immobile and waits passively. This behaviour of the elementary sexual organisms is indeed a model for the conduct of sexual individuals during intercourse. (qtd. in Minsky Rosalind 217)

This statement reveals the tenets upon which Freud based his thought about masculinity and femininity. It seems that Freud understands that biological determinism has justified the cognitive, behavioural, social and political gendered order. Sarah Kofman, a feminist deconstructivist, studies Freud's theory and his concept of '*penis envy*' (female jealousy based on her realization of her lack of a phallus), in addition to his whole account of femininity and female sexuality, and notes that Freud's account of femininity "allows him to blame nature for the cultural injustice by which man subordinates woman's sexual desires to his" (208), highlighting Freud's conception of masculinity and femininity, which are unconsciously shaped by psychic inferiority and lack, as socio-cultural constructs.

I-6-3 Freud and the Unconscious Dynamics in Dealing with Anxiety

According to Freud, the unconscious represents a deep well for the memories, feelings, and thoughts that are inaccessible to the conscious mind. Although Freud declares that *free*

association (A psychotherapeutic technique in which the patient says whatever comes to mind) is a significant technique to bring into light the unconscious content, he later found out that there are certain instances when the patients report that they could not or would not proceed. He argues that these forms of resistance indicate that the memories are being concealed to protect emotional disturbance. Hence, Freud developed his concept of repression of the unpleasant feelings, which is central in constructing the unconscious part of human mind, and in orientating the conscious behaviour (Duane and Sydney Schultz 307).

It has been helpful to represent the unconscious and conscious part of the human mind to an iceberg, the observable part shows the conscious part, and the unobservable part is the unconscious part which is greater in size than the observable part. He also holds that the unconscious part accommodates the human basic instincts of life (*Eros*) and death (*Thanatos*) drives that have polar concerns; the first with self-preservation and the latter with self-annihilation. Freud maintains that the rational mind filters the received data composed of feelings, urges, desires and thoughts and represses all what logic and rules of conduct consider as threatening. He suggests that these repressed thoughts make themselves known through dreams, jokes and parapraxes (Freudian slips), and he developed (1892 to1895) the technique of *free association* through encouraging his patients to report about the random flow of ideas without necessary relevance. Freud's technique of *free association* is related to the practice of *catharsis*[6]*,* which was popular in the analytical circles of his time. Sulloway reports that by 1890, there were more than 140 publications about *catharsis*. Furthermore, Freud's technique of *free association* stems originally from Aristotle's conception of *catharsis* that is "a way of treating emotional difficulties by having the patient recall and describe unconscious conflicts" (Duane and Sydney Schultz 294).

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[6] According to Duane and Sydney Schultz (2011), catharsis is defined as the process of reducing or eliminating a complex by recalling it to conscious awareness and allowing it to be expressed.

Freud has analyzed his patients' records about their inner conflicts and has conceptualized his understanding of anxiety. According to him, anxiety operates as an alarm that signals that the ego is losing its balance. According to Duane and Sydney Schultz (2011), Freud categorized three types of anxiety. The first type refers to the concrete dangers that threaten one's being, i.e. objective anxiety. Neurotic anxiety is about one's realization of the potential dangers of fulfilling the demands of the *Id*. Moral anxiety, as the name suggests, points out to the conscience work of blaming the ego at performing, or thinking to perform, an act that contradicts one's morals and rules of conduct (311). Freud (1933) found out that his patients unconsciously use a different set of mechanisms to protect their ego from high levels of anxiety, and he referred to them by defense mechanisms.

Moreover, Freud notes that patients have difficulty in reporting repressed painful experiences especially the ones that are related to the unconscious conflicts such as repressed infantile *libido*[7]. Freud then hypothesized the importance of sexual energy in motivating adult life and that repression is a defense mechanism that results from the anxiety caused by buried memories of infantile sexual energy, as well as the unacceptable ideas and desires. Freud (1933) holds that the human ego often uses defense mechanisms to prevent disturbing feelings and thoughts from rising to consciousness and causing anxiety leaving them to function in the unconscious mind. He holds that repression is "the cornerstone on which the whole structure of psychoanalysis rests" (qtd. in Boag 74). Freud elaborated in his essay *The Uncanny* (1919), that the uncanny denotes the *Id*'s repressed impulses when faced with the uncertainty of infantile beliefs. It also represents a threat to the societal norms due to its nature that is abject to the super ego ridden with the Oedipal guilt (Bate).

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[7] Helen Fisher (2006) explains the libido as "The sex drive evolved to motivate individuals to seek a range of mating partners; attraction evolved to motivate individuals to prefer and pursue specific partners; and attachment evolved to motivate individuals to remain together long enough to complete species-specific parenting duties. These three behavioural repertoires appear to be based on brain systems that are largely distinct yet interrelated, and they interact in specific ways to orchestrate reproduction, using both hormones and monoamines." (2173)

According to Paulhus et al (1979), a defense mechanism refers to "the process of regulating painful emotions such as anxiety, depression, and loss of self-esteem" (543). In other words, it is a strategy that the human mind uses unconsciously to protect the self from anxiety caused by the ego rejection of disturbing thoughts and feelings. In fact, the idea of defense mechanism as self-deception was early discussed by the Greek orator Demosthenes in 349 B.C. when he explains: "Nothing is easier than self-deceit. For what every man wishes, that he also believes to be true". This quote shows that self-deceit is desirable in certain cases where the mind avoids negative feelings by deceiving the ego. Moreover, the Genevan Enlightenment philosopher, Jean Jacques Rousseau (1712-1778), in his treatise *Emile; or, Concerning Education,* advocates the notion of 'noble savage' where he condemns the societal institutions for the limitation of humans' essential goodness and freedom. He states: "Nature never deceives us; it is always we who deceive ourselves" (Book III 150), alluding to the innate goodness of humans and the deteriorating civil society with its demands that suppress individuality and calls for conformity to standardized norms and rules of conduct.

Nonetheless, it is Sigmund Freud who firmly established the concept of *defense mechanism* into psychoanalysis in his paper *The Neuro-Psychoses of Defence* 1894 ("Defense Mechanism"). His daughter, Anna Freud, listed ten defense mechanisms that her father identified in her book *The Ego and the Mechanisms of Defence* (1936): repression, denial, projection, displacement, regression and sublimation, reaction formation, undoing, introjection, and isolation. His subsequent researchers later extended the list to more than 44 defense mechanisms (Bibring, Dwyer, Huntington et al.), such as fear, fantasy, humour, altruism, and avoidance, among others. The following table briefly describes and explains the main ones:

Mechanism	Description
Denial	Denying the existence of an external threat or traumatic event; for example, a person living with a terminal illness may deny the imminence of death.
Displacement	Shifting *Id* impulses from a threatening or unavailable object to an object that is available, such as replacing hostility toward one's boss with hostility toward one's child.
Projection	Attributing a disturbing impulse to someone else, such as saying you do not really hate your professor but that he or she hates you.
Rationalization	Reinterpreting behavior to make it more acceptable and less threatening, such as saying the job from which you were fired was not really a good job anyway.
Reaction formation	Expressing an *Id* impulse that is the opposite of the one that is driving the person. For example, someone disturbed by sexual longings may become a crusader against pornography.
Regression	Retreating to an earlier, less frustrating period of life and displaying the childish and dependent behaviors characteristic of that more secure time.
Repression	Denying the existence of something that causes anxiety, such as involuntarily removing from consciousness some memory or perception that brings discomfort.
Sublimation	Altering or displacing *Id* impulses by diverting instinctual energy into socially acceptable behaviors, such as diverting sexual energy into artistically creative behaviors.

Table I-6-3 : Freud's Defense Mechanisms (Duane and Sydney Schultz 311**).**

I-6-4 Freud's Levels of Personality

Freud's research on free associations allowed him to develop a unicursal theory to the human personality: the *Id*, ego, and superego. This structural model of the psyche is constructed through their distinct functions yet close interrelation. According to the Freudian conception of the human personality, the *Id*, or its German term *Es*, represents the mass of the instinctual drives and physical needs that is called the libido. The *Id* operates according to the pleasure principle which motivates behavioural action to gratify the instinctive impulses. Freud (1933) explains:

> It is the dark, inaccessible part of our personality, what little we know of it we have learned from our study of the dreamwork and of course the construction of neurotic symptoms, and most of that is of a negative character and can be described only as a contrast to the ego. We approach the id with analogies: we call it a chaos, a cauldron full of seething excitations. ...It is filled with energy reaching it from the instincts, but it has no organization, produces no collective will, but only a striving to bring about the satisfaction of the instinctual needs subject to the observance of the pleasure principle. (105-6)

In his view, the *Id* represents the unconscious and primitive part comprised of the instincts[8], which comprises the basic mass of urges, needs and desires that feed it. Freud contends that the study of dreams and neurotic behaviour mirrors one's *Id* and describes it as disorganized. A dream is defined as a subjective experience during sleep that shows complex, organized imagery and temporal progression (Farthing).

In his book *The Interpretation of Dreams* (1900)*,* Freud argues that the purpose of dreams is to provide a free outlet for the repressed desires and wishes from the constraints of the conscious reality. As such, Freud holds that dreams are manifestations of the unconscious

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[8] To Freud, mental representations of internal stimuli (such as hunger) that motivate personality and behavior (Duane and Sydney Schultz)

content that create emotional disturbances. He adopts the method of *dream analysis*[9] and

divides the contents of the dream into the manifest part, which is the surface matter, and the

latent part, which represents the deep meaning behind the manifest matter (Storr).

The *Ego,* or its German term *Ich*, (Laplanche 130) is the second part of personality that

operates pragmatically according to the reality principle; it seeks to regulate the *Id*'s drives

based on the demands of reality and of the superego. As Freud (1933) argues:

> [The ego] attempts to mediate between *id* and reality, it is often obliged to cloak the
>
> [unconscious] commands of the id with its own preconscious rationalizations, to conceal the
>
> id's conflicts with reality, to profess (...) to be taking notice of reality even when the id has
>
> remained rigid and unyielding. (110).

Thus, the ego serves to organize our thoughts and make sense of them and the world around us

(Snowden 105-7) through cognitive and executive functions. Accordingly, Freud (1933) infers,

"the ego, driven by the *Id,* confined by the super-ego, repulsed by reality, struggles (...) [in]

bringing about harmony among the forces and influences working in and upon it," and readily

"breaks out in anxiety—realistic anxiety regarding the external world, moral anxiety regarding

the super-ego, and neurotic anxiety regarding the strength of the passions in the *Id*" (110-11).

In its attempt to balance the three aspects, the ego seems to be inclined towards the *Id*'s urges

neglecting reality and the socially appropriate norms.

The superego, in its turn, detects such transgressions and expresses its discontent

through anxiety, inferiority and guilt. In its attempt to deal with the threats of such negative

feelings, the ego mechanically and unconsciously employs defense mechanisms to protect the

psyche in a resistant act against foreign threats. In the structural topographical model of Freud's

theory of the personality, the analogy of the iceberg is used to describe the three levels of the

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[9] According to Duane and Sydney Schultz (2011), dream analysis refers to a psychotherapeutic technique involving the interpretation of dreams to uncover unconscious conflicts that is struggling for expression.

mind (see fig. 1). On the surface is the conscious part that consists of all thoughts that one is aware of. The preconscious is the part that is in-between the visible and the invisible part of the iceberg, and consists of the thoughts that can be easily retrieved from memory. The third and most significant part is the unconscious part that serves as the black box, which keeps all primitive desires and impulses and controls one's behaviour. Concerning the propotional constituents of the ego, it is presented as having half of its entity in the conscious part, a quarter in the preconscious part, and the last quarter in the unconscious part as shown in the following illustration.
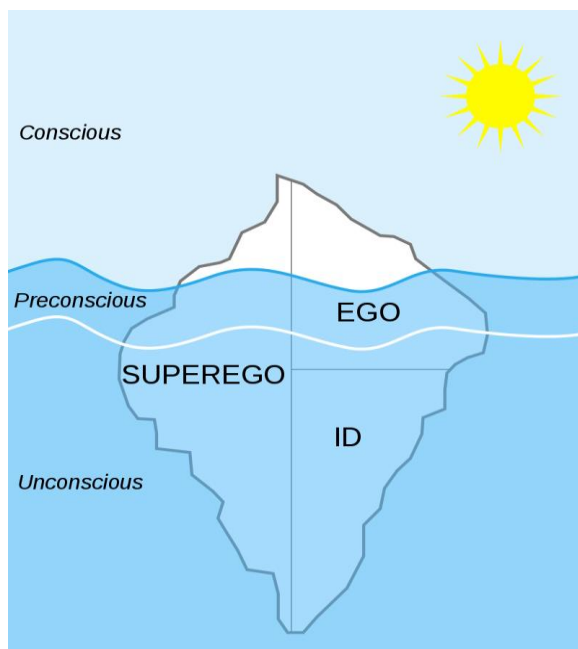
Figure I-6-4: Illustration of the Iceberg Metaphor Commonly Used for Freud's Levels of Personality from: Mayo, Rob. "The Myth of Dream-Hacking and 'Inner Space' in Science Fiction, 1948–2010." Scientific Figure on Research Gate. https://www.researchgate.net/figure/Illustration-of-the-iceberg-metaphor-commonly-used-for-Freuds-model-Public-domain_fig2_335868841. Accessed 12 Sep. 2019.

The superego, or its German term *Über-Ich* (Laplanche 435), is the third component of Freud's model of personality that represents the internalized ideals acquired from our

environment including our parents and the society. The American academic David Meyers (2007) explains that the superego thrives for perfection, hence, it represents the supreme master of our being. The super-ego seeks to control the *Id*'s drives in terms of morality and relevance to the socio-cultural norms and rules of conduct. In Freud's theory of personality (1933), he clarifies that "a child's super-ego is in fact constructed on the model not of its parents but of its parents' super-ego; the contents which fill it are the same and it becomes the vehicle of tradition and of all the time-resisting judgments of value which have propagated themselves in this manner from generation to generation." (95-6), alluding to the inherited and collective nature of superego. As the structural topographical model of Freud's psychological theory shows, the superego is primarily but not absolutely unconscious. It is composed of the ego ideals that are the norms and rules of conduct passed on from generation to the other through *enculturation* (learning one's culture) by authority figures. These ideals can be thought of as a perfect image that conforms to the socio-cultural modeled roles. The second component of the superego is the conscience or psychic agency, which acts as a judge promoting appropriate social behaviour through the feeling of contentment. On the other hand, it limits the immoral and taboo behaviours and aims at their prohibition through the feeling of guilt. As Snowden (2006) argues, the superego and *Id* objectives are contradicted. While the *Id* seeks immediate gratification to urges and needs, the superego filters those urges to a right/wrong dichotomy. Thus, it promotes social consistency for the subject.

I-6-5 Transgression: Towards a Logic of Reconstruction and Negociation through the *Id*'s Impulses

Speaking about taboos and transgression, it is important to investigate the impetus that drives one to transgress the rules and the resulting feelings of such acts. In the twentieth century, the French philosopher Georges Bataille, in his book *Eroticism: Death and Sensuality,*

explores the notion of transgression through its function with the socio-cultural prohibitions and limits. He argues that it is of a rebellious and individualistic nature and that, "there exists no prohibition that cannot be transgressed. Often the transgression is permitted, often it is even prescribed" (63), implying that it is an inherent neccessity in the dynamics of society. He also asserts that transgression of taboos makes the subject "feel more free" (26), referring to its desirable feature. Michel Foucault, on the other hand, in his essay *A Preface to Transgression,* expands Bataille's notion of transgression to arguing that not only is transgression basic, but is able at maintaining and recreating social order through cyclical recurrence. In doing so, Foucault contends that the prevailing dogmas fundamentally reproduce themselves through normative arrangements. In addition to being a reactionary rebellion, transgression and the limits are embedded in the dialectics of the self/other, individual/collective, and center/margin thought. In doing so, transgression, according to Foucault, is an infinite cyclical process of deconstruction and reconstruction of the dominant/subordinate ideology.

Significantly, the Algerian academic Fewzia Bedjaoui (2005) explains in her unpublished Doctorate thesis that human values at any given society have been constructed by individuals within a religious and moral framework to assure law and order, and this includes duties, rights, and conduct of each member of society. Any transgressions of these religious laws have been severely punished to maintain the social order and its dynamic institutions. She analyses Foucault's idea of the profanation and links it to Nietzsche's phrase 'God is dead' to highlight their advocacy of transgression in order transcend limits towards "a positive vision of human emancipation" (168). She adds: "The destruction of standards and restrictive moral principles valorizes transgressions or the will to transgress. Beyond all reason nature has an infinity of forms and any individual is to be free, be himself or herself crossing the lines set by limits" (169). In this sense, transgression advocates critical thinking through questioning

dogma and deconstructing traditional norms for both self-advancement and collective modernization.

I-6-6 Role of the *Oedipus* Complex in the Internalization of Socio-Cultural Gendered Standards

Indeed, Freud founded the concept of the *superego* upon the symbolic power of the father figure. In particular, the *Oedipus complex* is central in Freud's psychoanalytical thought. As Tabitha Freeman (2008) notes, the *Oedipus complex* develops with the absence of the father from the pre-oedipal stage, perpetuating authority legitimated by both the absence from and difference to the naturalized field of the mother-infant relationship (113). Thus, the infant's internal crisis caused by the appearance of the father figure, representing the gendered moral order, is a rite of passage to the formation of the superego and internalization of socio-cultural standards and rules of conduct. It is also a significant factor in Freud's psychosexual development, which is built upon the instinctual libido that develops in five stages that are fixated to different erogenous zones; the oral, the anal, the phallic, the latent, and the genital. Freud argues that after the resolution of the *Oedipus complex* by the identification to the father figure and internalization of the standards of morality, the infant boy realizes that he cannot hold the mother as a love-object out of fear of castration from the father or the castration complex for his incestuous desire. Thus, the boy-child resolves his forbidden incestuous desire and enters to the symbolic order through his identification to the father, i.e. the *phallic* (that which is symbollically and socially dominant) order. This moment, for Freud, represents the birth of the unconscious. Freud (1933) describes the superego through its relation to the father figure and the *Oedipus complex*,

> The super-ego retains the character of the father, while the more powerful the Oedipus complex
> was and the more rapidly it succumbed to repression (under the influence of authority, religious

teaching, schooling and reading), the stricter will be the domination of the super-ego over the ego later on—in the form of conscience or perhaps of an unconscious sense of guilt. (33-4)

Moreover, Peter Gay suggests in his book *The Freud Reader* (1989) that the *Oedipus complex* is universally experienced by both boys and girls but differently: boys in the form of castration anxiety, and girls in the form of *penis envy* (664-5). Noteworthy of mention is the fact that Freud's concept of the *Oedipus complex* has faced criticism from feminists for his apparent sexist attitude. Consequently, Freud revised his concept later on to articulate in his essay *On Sexuality* a new perspective that "the majority of men are also far behind the masculine ideal and that all human individuals, as a result of their human identity combine in themselves both masculine and feminine characteristics, otherwise known as human characteristics" (342), referring to the socio-cultural enculturation of gender.

Freud's constructed his theory of human personality in parallel with his topographical model of the mind. This can be illustrated in the metaphor of the iceberg that visually relates the *Id*, Ego and Superego to the conscious, preconscious, and unconscious elements. The conscious represents one's field of awareness, consisting of those psychic contents that one has knowledge of, preconscious is about the psychic contents in the process of becoming conscious, and the unconscious concerns the psychic contents which one is not aware of (Carlson 435). Moreover, the interaction between the *Id*, Ego, and Superego, has to be balanced to maintain a healthy personality (Churchill et al). Freud argues that a strong ego is able to control the dueling forces of the *Id* and Superego. He contends that failure to maintain this balance creates a maladaptive personality. An individual with an overtly dominant *Id*, for instance, might become impulsive and uncontrollable due to the absence or lack of ego control. On the other hand, an individual with an excessive superego might lead an idealistic personality, which is extremely moralistic and judgmental (Cherry).

It is agreed that Freud's theory has established the psychoanalytical studies, and provided a significant lens to investigating the human psyche relying on the unconscious processes of the human mind. Some of his students have expanded his theory such as his daughter Anna Freud and the object-relations theorist Melanie Klein. Some others have questioned some of his ideas and deviated from his line such as Carl Jung, Alfred Adler. Yet, it is acknowledged that Freud's ideas are a rich well that has inspired many psychologists in the twentieth and twenty first century.

1-7 Neo-Freudians and Ego Psychology

The neo-Freudian movement was led by Freud's daughter, the psychoanalyst Anna Freud (1895-1982). Inspired by her father's line of thought, Anna Freud devoted her life to expand his psychoanalytical theory and earned her position at the *Vienna Psychoanalytical Society*[10]. Unlike her father's idea that the ego derives its energy from the *Id*'s impulses, Anna Freud (1936) holds that the ego is independent from the *Id* and its conflicts. She undertook her research on child analysis, and developed experimental investigation through observation of the child at home and the technique of play materials (Duane and Sydney Schultz 323). As noted earlier, Anna Freud also developed the list of her father's defense mechanisms (see Table 1).

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[10]According to Gay Peter (1989), the association was formerly known as the 'Wednesday Psychological Society', the oldest psychoanalysis society in the world. In 1908, reflecting its growing institutional status as the international psychoanalytic authority of the time, the Wednesday group was reconstituted under its new name with Sigmund Freud as President, a position he relinquished in 1910 in favor of Alfred Adler. During its 36-year history, between 1902 and 1938, the Society had a total of 150 members. (177)

I-8 Socio-Cultural Aspect to Personality Formation and Object-Relations Theory

Melanie Klein (1882-1960) developed her object-relations theory from Freud's notion of the *object,* which refers to "any person, object, or activity that can satisfy an instinct. In his view, the first object in an infant's life that can gratify an instinct is the mother's breast" (Duane and Sydney Schultz 323). For Freud, the instinct gratifying objectification of persons, objects and activities becomes a fundamental habit that functions throughout the human's life.

While Freud holds that human relationships are based on biological motives, Klein's theory considers that it is the socio-cultural factors that shape one's personality during infancy and within the mother-child interaction. She argues that parent-child relation is of paramount significance to personality development. Unlike Freud who focuses on the sexual aspect of mother-child relationship, Klein shifts her analysis to the social and cognitive aspects. She explores the mother-child relationship at the first six months of a child's life. As Duane and Sydney Schultz (2011) explain:

> The mother's breast is the first part-object for a baby, who judges it as either good or bad, depending on whether it has satisfied an *id* instinct. Thus, the infant's environment, as defined and represented by this good or bad part-object, is perceived as either satisfying or hostile. As the infant's world expands, he or she relates to whole objects the same way he or she had defined the breast; that is, as satisfying or hostile. (324)

Clearly, Klein argues that the nature of this relationship predetermines one's perception and identification of the outer world. One's initial social experience of the *Id*'s first instinct with the mother as an *object* shapes one's personality.

I-9 Inner-Growth Aspect of Identity Construction

Of significant contribution to the psychological analysis of our literary corpora is Jungian psychology. A student of Freud, Carl Gustav Jung (1875-1961) deviated from Freudian thought and established his own line of thought that he named *analytical psychology* (Jung's theory of personality). Unlike Freud, sex is considered as insignificant for Jung. According to Schultz (1990), Freud's frustrations and anxiety about his thwarted desires made sex play the central role (148). Jung's life experiences have shaped his ideas to a great extent. His solitary and introverted childhood is reflected in his theory, which is based on inner growth rather than social interaction. He holds that one's personality is not only shaped by the early childhood experiences, but one's aspirations and goals in life. Moreover, Jung considers libido as "a generalized life energy of which sex was only a part" (Duane and Sydney Schultz 327), implying that it expresses the energy that drives one's life whether its nature is physical or non-physical. Jung explains his concept of *libido* as "a desire or impulse which is unchecked by any kind of authority, moral or otherwise. *Libido* is appetite in its natural state. From the genetic point of view it is bodily needs like hunger, thirst, sleep, and sex, and emotional states or affects, which constitute the essence of *libido*. ["The Concept of Libido," CW 5, par. 194.] Additionally, Jung went further in his exploration of the human unconscious mind to argue for the existence of the 'collective unconscious', which is the mass of inherited experiences of the human species.

Jung outlined two levels of the unconscious mind. The personal unconscious refers to one's memories, impulses, perceptions and other experiences in a person's life that have been suppressed or forgotten. As Jung explains:

> Everything of which I know, but of which I am not at the moment thinking; everything of which I was once conscious but have now forgotten; everything perceived by my senses, but not noted by my conscious mind; everything which, involuntarily and without paying attention to it, I

feel, think, remember, want, and do; all the future things which are taking shape in me and will sometime come to consciousness; all this is the content of the unconscious' (CW8, para. 382). 'Besides these we must include all more or less intentional repressions of painful thought and feelings. I call the sum of these contents the "personal unconscious"' (CW 8, para. 270).

Clearly, Jung's account of the repressed contents is wider than Freud's with the voluntary suppression of painful experiences. Jung adds that the contents of the personal unconscious have the potential to reappear and be developed. These experiences manifest themselves through various complexes such as inferiority or power, which drive one's behaviour. Ann Hopwood explains:

> Complexes are determined by experience but also by the individual's way of reacting to that experience. A complex is in the main unconscious and has a tendency to behave independently or autonomously so that the individual may feel that his behaviour is out of his control (…) This sense of autonomy is perhaps most marked in abnormal states of mind, and can be seen most clearly in people who are ill; whom we sometimes think of as possessed, but complexes are parts of the psyche of us all. ("Jung's Model of the Psyche")

As elucidated, these complexes have the capacity to take control over one's behaviour making the subject helpless to their command. Moreover, Jung contends that complexes exist within all individuals and are part of the 'collective unconscious', and would inevitably manifest themselves into consciousness. It is the incapacity of the ego to deal with them that creates a noticeable problem. However, Jung believes that the psyche is equipped with the ability to use those complexes as helpful material to balancing one's conscious behaviour, thus, facilitating self-advancement. ["The Structure and Dynamics of the Psyche" CW 8]

The 'collective unconscious', on the other hand, refers to the blueprint of human life. It contains the deeper experiences and knowledge that have cumulated over time in the human species' collective unconscious. It is Jung's distinctive addition to analytical psychology

rejecting the conception that man is born with a *Tabula Rasa* mind without innate knowledge. Jung holds that it is the task of the environment to cultivate and develop those innate aspects,

> This is particularly true of religious ideas, but the central concepts of science, philosophy, and ethics are no exception to this rule. In their present form, they are variants of archetypal ideas created by consciously applying and adapting these ideas to reality. For it is the function of consciousness, not only to recognize and assimilate the external world through the gateway of the senses but to translate into visible reality the world within us. ["Structure & Dynamics of the Psyche". CW 8, par. 342]

Thus, Jung believes that the collective unconscious contains knowledge that when retrieved consciously and worked at, it would yield profitable outcome for the concerned subject.

I-10 Psychic Drives to Identity-Formation in Jung's Archetypes

Of significant relevance is Jung's notion of archetypes, which are a set of inborn tendencies that influence human behaviour. These are universal patterns and models that are located in the unconscious and associated to life. Jung holds that archetypes are hereditary, innate, and universal. He argues:

> The term archetype is not meant to denote an inherited idea, but rather an inherited mode of functioning, corresponding to the inborn way in which the chick emerges from the egg, the bird builds its nest, a certain kind of wasp stings the motor ganglion of the caterpillar, and eels find their way to the Bermudas. In other words, it is a "pattern of behaviour". This aspect of the archetype, the purely biological one, is the proper concern of scientific psychology'. (CW 18, para 1228).

Jung holds that we come to this world conditioned with a mode of funtioning to fit in according to predetermined roles and patterns of behaviour. As noted, this has been the biological and determined aspect of Jung's theory. In addition, Jung maintains that there is another aspect

which is totally opposing to the biological one, and that is the *numinous*[11] (derived from Latin term for deity: *numen*) aspect. The latter has a significant impact on human life when taking shape in the image of deities and gods. He outlined many archetypal figures such as the mother, father, child, and archetypal events such as birth, death, separation, as well as archetypal objects such as the sun, moon, water, and snakes, among others. In his investigation of the archetypes, he discovered universal symbols in the artistic productions of ancient civilizations in different cultures and myths separate in place and time. He also found out that these common symbols are reported in his patients' dreams. Henceforth, Jung outlined four major archetypes to the human psyche.

The first archetype is the *persona* (in Latin, a mask worn for theatrical performance), which refers to the good and virtuous way we consciously project ourselves to the world. The concept is derived from Latin referring to the mask worn by an actor on stage. We wear and perform different personas in this world according to the situation we are put in. Personas are prisms of the self but with different facets of our personality responding to the interests and expectations of the situation. The aim of adopting a *persona* is to protect the ego from uncomfortable circumstances. Hence, they function to adapt the subject into a particular situation with the expected role conduct of common-held standards.

Nevertheless, over-identification to the persona has unrewarding results for the subject who acts as the teacher, doctor, or boss outside the realms of their desirable function. This misuse of the persona might not only bring irritation for people around, but disillusionment and an impoverished personality for the subject. The persona is developed early with the

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[11] Jung (1963) defined numinous experience as "inexpressible, mysterious, terrifying, directly experienced, and pertaining only to the divinity" (416).

process of socialization and responding to the desirable expectations of the society, thus, leaving those undesirable qualities repressed.

However, Jung (1938) argues that man is less good than he imagines and develops the second archetype that is the *shadow.* It refers to the darker entity that possesses the repressed traits and impulses as well as the inferior characteristics that are primitive and wild. It is constructed through the process of socialization and adaptation to the socio-cultural norms and rules of conduct. Thus, it comprises of the repressed and relinquished desires, ideas, and emotions that are unaccepted not only by the society, but also by one's conscience. Henceforth, it lies beyond the threshold of human consciousness. Jung holds that we all possess this dark side and that we deny its existence through the mechanism of projection. Moreover, Jung notes that the shadow manifests itself through dreams in the presence of snakes, beasts, demons, and other wild and dangerous animals. Yet, the shadow also contains the instincts that have the relative good to exhilarating one's full potentiality. As Jung notes:

> If it has been believed hitherto that the human shadow was the source of all evil, it can now be ascertained on closer investigation that the unconscious man, that is, his shadow, does not consist only of morally reprehensible tendencies, but also displays a number of good qualities, such as normal instincts, appropriate reactions, realistic insights, creative impulses, etc. ["Conclusion," CW 9 ii, par. 423.]

Some of these repressed impulses are talents, and innate abilities that have the potential to transform the subject into a more effective person. For instance, some people with oppositional defiant disorder question the very legitimacy of authority and challenge it in many ways. These anti-authoritarians' skepticism and strong personality create in them an anxiety that rejects being compliant and passive to the norms. Henceforth, socialization and *indoctrination*[12]

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[12] According to Funk and Wagnalls (1972), indoctrination is the process of inculcating a person with ideas, attitudes, cognitive strategies or professional methodologies. According to Wilson J (1964), one should not conflate between indoctrination and education, because indoctrination presupposes non-

(ideological learning) play a vital role in repressing one's full potentiality. ("Carl Jung and the Shadow")

Jung maintains that although the subject is frightened at the idea of realizing one's shadow, further relegating it to the depths of one's psyche, the shadow would react unconsciously through asserting its control over one's behaviour in destructive ways. As Jung declares: "The psychological rule says that when an inner situation is not made conscious, it happens outside, as fate" ["Aion", CW 9 ii. Par. 126]. Many people are not aware when their shadow controls their attitudes and conduct, and this can be detected through their psychological projection, in which a perceived personal inferiority is unknowingly triggered and recognized as a perceived moral deficiency in someone else. Henceforth, Jung argues that one needs to make the *shadow* an ally by bringing it to one's consciousness and accept one's rejected qualities/defects through assimilation and self-reconciliation. This necessitates conscious efforts to embrace one's shadow and realize that one's task is not to become perfect but to be a whole. This wholeness entails the process of self-actualization, which Carl Jung defends in his theory of venturing in one's darkness in order to reach the light.

The next archetype is the *anima*/*animus* duality, which represents the presence of features of the other sex in the human psyche. While the *anima* is the feminine image in the male subject, the *animus* is the masculine image in the female subject. Ann Hopwood (2019) notes that despite the fact that Jung lived in an age where sexist thought reigned, "he recognized that the "masculine" aspects of the psyche such as autonomy, separateness, and aggression were not superior to the "feminine" aspects such as nurturance, relatedness, and empathy. Rather, they form two halves of a whole, both of which belong to every individual, and neither

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questioning of the doctrine they have learned. Henceforth, indoctrination has often a negative connotation, because it is so enmeshed in ideology.

of which is superior to the other." ("Jung's Model of the Psyche") implying Jung's humanistic thought and departure from Freud's sexist theory.

Moreover, Jung holds that it is the socio-cultural gender roles that shape one's identity, which can lead to impoverished and disenchanted subjectivities. He argues that the social norms impede one's psychological development in exploring one's opposite sexual aspects. These images are constructed through the accumulation of the common experiences of gender roles over the years in the collective unconscious of the human psyche. As his wife Emma Jung (1957) clarifies: "life is founded on the harmonious interplay of masculine and feminine forces, within the individual human being as well as without (...) Bringing these opposites into union is one of the most important tasks of present-day psychotherapy" (87), alluding to the present task of psychotherapy which is to work for human advancement and betterment of life.

Jung considers the *self*[13] as the most significant archetype. Its role is to unify and synthesize the unconscious and conscious parts for a balanced psyche highlighting its aim for reaching completeness and self-fulfillment. Jung called this developmental psychic process for self-fulfillment as *individuation*[14], in which conflict and tension between opposites is necessary for growth. The *self* is the mastermind responsible for not only constructing one's personality, but also bringing adjustment in life responding to the demands of the circumstances. In the Jungian therapy tradition, joining the contents of the unconscious with the interpretation of dreams brings one's full potential by resolving inner conflicts. Significantly, Jungian theory is centered on the concept of *self* within which the ego is developed. As Ann Hopwood contends: "the *Self* is rooted in biology but also has access to an infinitely wider range of experience, including the whole wealth of the cultural and religious realms, and the depths of which all

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[13] Self according to Jungian conceptualization.

[14] In Jungian psychology, individuation refers to the process of integrating the innate elements of personality that are immature to the self.

human beings are capable. It is therefore capable of being projected on to figures or institutions which carry power: God, the sun, kings and queens and so on." ("Jung's model of the Psyche")

Furthermore, the *self* manifests itself in one's dreams through a superior figure such as a king or a prophet. With symbols, the self appears as a circle, a square or any other geometric indication. The *yin-yang* diagram, for instance, represents a unified duality that symbolizes a superior unity of the self. In Jung's view, the experience of realizing the self is also called *self-actualization*; it resembles that of a religious revelation. The *self*, for Jung, is considered as a deity. In case one identifies one's ego with the *self*, he or she may experience *ego inflation*, in Jung's words, "a sort of nebulous superman with a puffed-up ego" ["On the Nature of the Psyche", CW 8, par. 430] Moreover, he believes that *self-actualization* could not be reached until middle age (30-40) years. As Duane and Sydney Schultz (2011) note: "to Jung the significant stage in personality development was not childhood (as in Freud's life and system) but one's thirties and forties, the time of his own personal change" (328). It is noteworthy that Jung's life experience is reflected in his theory; in the fact that Jung did not achieve *self-actualization* until the resolution of his neurotic crisis in his middle age.

Jung's theory has had an impact on the humanities including psychology, sociology, history, religion, art, and literature. Although his approach was found to deviate partially from the scientific outlook due to the spiritual tendency of his thought, Jung's approach has anticipated the humanistic psychology with his notion of 'middle age crisis'. With the turn of the century, research in the humanities considers that much of human behaviour is conditioned by the socio-cultural factors. The following psychologists absorbed the *Zeitgeist* of the era and detached from the orthodox psychoanalysis of Freud that is characterized by biological determinism. Among the psychologists who hold on the promise that human behaviour is much influenced by the environment are Alfred Adler and Karen Horney.

I-11 Social Approach to Identity Formation and Self-Fulfillment

As a previous student of Freud, Alfred Adler (1870-1937) deviated from Freudian thought and established his approach of social psychoanalysis, which he names as *individual psychology*[15]. Similar to Freud and Jung, his theory has flourished from his own life experiences of suffering from inferiority. Adler (1933) coined the concept of *social interest*[16], which refers to an innate capacity to cooperate with others for better personal and social interests. This social component of the personality develops early in childhood. For Adler, sex plays but a minor role in his theory, which focuses on the conscious determinants of behaviour. He holds that one's conscious goals are responsible for one's behaviour, and that the components of one's psyche work rather in a unified goal that is the fulfillment of one's full potential towards advancement. Strikingly, Adler rejects Freud's claim that women have the complex of *penis envy*. Instead, Adler argues that such concepts, among many, are androcentric[17] myths that are constructed to buttress the male's ego as inherently superior. Notably, Adler's view on women gave him recognition from the feminists as he not only believes in the equality of sexes, but also supports their emancipatory movements.

Adler's major contribution to psychology is his notion of 'inferiority'. He (1956) maintains that human behaviour is driven by the impulse to advancement and power. Adler developed his theory from his observations of children having physical defects or weaknesses.

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[15] Adler's theory of personality; it incorporates social as well as biological factors.

[16] Adler's conception of an innate potential to cooperate with other people to achieve personal and societal goals.

[17] According to Lorraine Code, "Androcentrism (Greek, *andro*/male) refers to entrenched practices that base theory and practice on men's experiences masquerading as 'human' experiences and counting as unquestioned sources of knowledge 'in general'. Androcentrism permeates ideals of reason and rationality defined by exclusions of the 'feminine'; research that is based on allegedly 'standard' male situations or studying only male subjects; normative standards that are achievable principally in circumstances available to men. In such inquiry, women's experiences and concerns are simply invisible." (2000: 20)

As Duane and Sydney Schultz (2011) note: "A child who stutters may, through conscientious speech therapy, become a great orator; a child with weak limbs may, through intensive exercise, excel as an athlete or dancer" (331). Adler develops his theory to cover not only the physical defects, but also the mental and social ones. He (1930) holds that inferiority feelings develop as early as the child becomes aware of his dependence and insufficiencies, and continue progressively throughout one's life as an innate striving force for further advancement and superiority in the ladder of power and competency.

Nevertheless, Adler (1917) argues that these inferiority feelings that occur at infancy lead the child to respond to such feelings with *compensation*[18]. However, these feelings of inferiority might develop into a complex when inhibited, implying that parents have to pay attention and allow for an appropriate resolution of such feelings. As Murray (1938) contends: "Inferiority complex is a magnification of natural feelings of inferiority and results when strivings to overcome inferiority are greatly hindered. Anything in the individual that is below the average, that provokes unfavorable comment or gives him a feeling of impotency or ineptitude leads to inferiority complex" (qtd in. Kenchappanavar 1). If ever the child faces the failure to compensate for such feelings, he or she would develop an inferiority complex that hinders one from advancement and self-fulfillment.

In parallel, Adler (1927, 1964) develops his concept of the drive for superiority or the superiority complex, and maintains that it is universal and relative, i.e. each one responds to it differently in the pursuit of achieving one's goals. The pursuit to perfection determines one's style of life that is composed of the set of behaviours performed to compensate for the feelings of inferiority. According to Richard Watts (2015), Adler's concept of the drive for superiority or the teleological movement is present in the works of "various personality theorists including Kurt Goldstein, Karen Horney, Carl Jung, Abraham Maslow, Otto Rank, Carl Rogers, and

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[18] A process by which one overcomes the feelings of inferiority by developing one's weaknesses

Robert White" (126). Also, Ryan and Deci (2001) explain the relationship of development and optimal functioning as "the striving for perfection that represents the realization of one's true potential" (144) implying that fulfilling one's potential is a striving force that originates from the hedonistic logic of attaining pleasure and avoiding pain.

Adler's optimistic theory that humans strive for achieving one's full potential suggests that one's personality is determined not only by biology, but also by one's reaction to physical and environmental inhibitors. Adler further suggests that humans hold responsibility over their fate in being consciously involved in the shaping of their destiny through constructing suitable lifestyle behaviours. Adler's ideas have had a considerable impact upon the humanities.

I-12 Evolution of Personality Theory: Humanistic Psychology and Maslow's Theory

The theoretical explanation of human personality that is founded by Freud's psychoanalytic aspect and Wundt's experimental aspect, has led to the proliferation of theories of modern psychological research that both revise and adapt Freud's theory of the unconscious to their analysis. The humanistic psychology, on the other hand, shifts from the Freudian tradition and its deterministic aspect. Instead, it focuses on the individual's free will, personal fulfillment and the conscious experience. The humanistic psychologists grew out of the dissatisfaction with the limiting and mechanistic ways of psychoanalysis and behaviourism. Among the best theorists who expressed the tenets of humanistic psychology is the American psychologist Abraham Maslow who focused on human motivation and achievement.

Of pertinent relevance to our study is the theory of hierarchical needs that is proposed by Maslow in his paper "*A Theory of Human Motivation*" in 1943. Maslow established his classification upon stages about the universal physiological needs of humans evolving to more spiritual and psychological ones (Dekers 2018). His theory of the gradual development of

human motivation is analogous to a pyramid-like illustration where the bottom represents the basic physiological needs (long term, unchanging demands), to the safety needs (physical and economic safety), belonging and love needs (friendships, intimacy, family), esteem needs (social value, status, recognition), and at the top, self-actualization needs (see fig. 2). Yet, Eaton Sarah Elaine (2002) reveals that the pyramid analogy does not exist in Maslow's original work. Maslow used the term "meta-motivation" to describe the motivation of people who go beyond the basic physiological needs (Goble 62). Maslow maintains that each stage of the hierarchical needs must be fulfilled in order to move to the next one (Deckers 2018). The goal is to reach self-actualization (McEwen and Wills 2014). Maslow's theory gained popular recognition and success in sociological and psychological studies, as well as management training, among other fields.

Self-actualization:
Achieving one's full potential

Esteem needs:
Social value and recognition

Belonging and love needs:
Friendships, intimacy, family

Safety needs:
Physical and economic safety

Physiological needs:
Food , water, warmth, rest, sex…
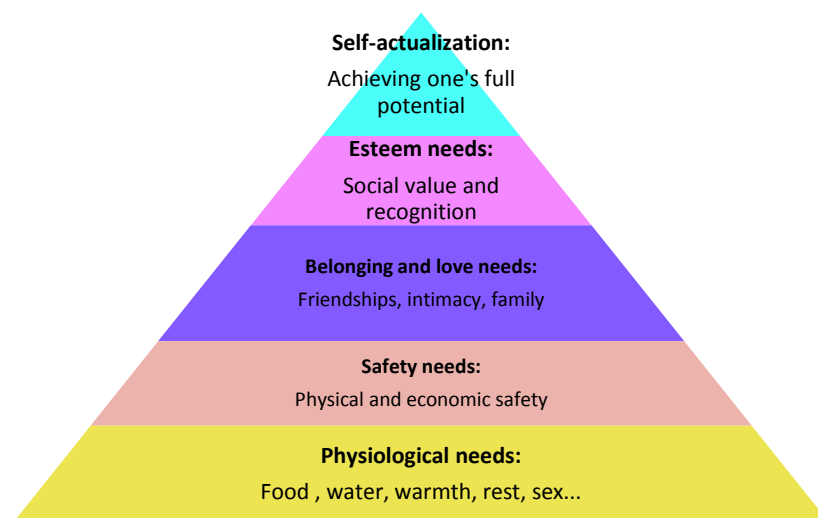
Figure I-12: Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs (Adapted from the above explanation, self-arranged).

I-13 Identity Formation and Self-Fulfillment in the Feminist Thought

Among the feminists who are trained in the Freudian tradition is the German psychoanalyst Karen Horney (1885-1952). Similar to the aforementioned psychoanalysts, her life experiences of parental neglect and belittling have shaped her ideas and psychological theory. Dissatisfied with Freud's psychoanalysis and suffering from depression and inferiority complex, Horney's quest to her self-analysis led her to develop her own theory. She questioned Freudian concepts such as the *Oedipus* complex, *libido*, tripartite model of the personality, and his biological determinism. Subverting Freud's concept of *penis envy*, Horney (1926) developed the concept of 'womb envy' stating that men are deeply jealous of the woman's ability to give life, and that their envy is reflected through using their physical power to harass and belittle women. Horney (1945) writes on her conception of human nature in contrast to Freud's:

> Freud's pessimism as regards neuroses and their treatment arose from the depths of his disbelief in human goodness and human growth. Man, he postulated, is doomed to suffer or to destroy. My own belief is that man has the capacity as well as the desire to develop his potentialities and become a decent human being. I believe that man can change and go on changing as long as he lives. (19)

Being a feminist, Horney disagrees with Freud's androcentric concepts, but she holds the belief that human behaviour is driven by unconscious content that is internalised in early socialization.

Horney's major contribution to psychoanalysis is her concept of *basic anxiety*[19]. She (1945) defines it as: "the feeling a child has of being isolated and helpless in a potentially hostile world" (41). According to Duane and Sydney Schultz (2011), this definition carries the meaning of the child's feelings of rejection, lack of love, as well as parental dominance and

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[19] Horney's conception of pervasive loneliness and helplessness, i.e, feelings that are the foundation of neuroses.

erratic bahaviour. Thus, 'basic anxiety' is shaped by the child's interaction with his parents and his environment, yielding the need for love and protection from a threatening world. She also holds that the human personality develops progressively throughout life and is determined by socio-cultural and environmental factors.

Notably, Horney suggests that the parent-child interaction determines the child's coping strategies with the feelings of insecurity. When these coping behaviours are maintained for a long time, they become a personality acquired trait into what Horney labeled as a 'neurotic need', which works as a defending mechanism against anxiety. Horney (1945) classified three types of personality according to neurotic needs which are: *the compliant personality* who moves toward people seeking approval and affection; *the detached personality* who moves away from people seeking independence and perfection; and *the aggressive personality* who moves against people seeking power and exploitation.

Moreover, Horney (1950) developed the concept of 'idealized self-image', which refers to the idealized version one projects to the outer world. In adopting this projection as one's identity, the subject denies the existence of inner conflicts, thus, furthering the way to self-understanding in an arrogant attempt to assert one's superiority. Horney argues for the possibility to avoid such neuroses through affection, love and understanding. Her work is given credit because, as the neo-Freudians, she focuses on the socio-cultural and environmental factors that shape one's personality instead of the innate qualities. With the proliferation of feminist criticism in the 1960s, Horney's ideas gained popularity and fame.

I-13-1 Psychoanalytic Feminism: The Journey to Female Emancipation through Feminist Thought and Activism

Before delving into psychoanalytical feminism, one should trace the development of the feminist thought and delineate between the various feminisms that have existed so far. The

following part offers both a chronological development of the feminist movement and a systematic classification of the main forms that constitute it.

Feminism has been one of the global movements that started in the late eighteenth century and continues to function to the present world. With the human society being governed by power and androcentric interests for millennia, women suffered marginalization and oppression ever since. Feminism is both a theory to be studied at the academic level and a political movement that retains changing the real world. It is a voice that speaks women's exasperation at her unequal status to men and deconstructs the patriarchal institutions and thought exposing the male's egocentrism and lust for power and prestige. Thus, it aims at exploring the root causes of gender inequality and revisiting the values that formed the constructions of ideal femininity taking into account diverse contextual aspects such as race, class, ethnicity, sexual preference, among others. On the other hand, it aims at establishing justice through legal reforms. The feminist thought has had a far-reaching impact on the social, political, and cultural aspects of life.

It is worth mentioning that agreeing on a universal definition or understanding of feminism among theorists has generated a controversy due to the dynamic and multifaceted nature of the movement that thrives in diversity. However, a basic understanding of feminism can be conceptualized. The British Feminist critic Sarah Gamble (2001) provides a general definition for feminism as follows:

> It is the belief that women, purely and simply because they are women, are treated inequitably within a society which is organized to prioritize male viewpoints and concerns. Within this patriarchal paradigm, women become everything men are not (or do not want to be seen to be): where men are regarded as strong, women are weak; where men are rational, they are emotional; where men are active, they are passive; and so on. (Editor's introduction)

This definition, which presents certain common features in all types of feminism, addresses the core problem of feminist thought which is the long-held belief in the male's superiority and

women's subordination. This shows the *Zeitgeist* of the dualistic division of the world with men appropriating control over the production of knowledge and its resources. This mode of dominance is referred to as patriarchy, which is defined by Chris Weedon in *Feminist Practice and Poststructuralist Theory* (1987) as: "The term 'patriarchal' refers to power relations in which women's interests are subordinated to the interests of men. These power relations take on many forms, from the sexual division of labour and the social organization of procreation to the internalized norms of femininity by which we live. Patriarchal power rests on social meaning given to biological sexual difference" (qtd in. Hodgson-Wright 3). Thus, it indicates an expression of imposing male's interests that are reflected in all aspects of life. As Sylvia Walby (1990) elaborates on the meaning of patriarchy:

> I shall define patriarchy as a system of social structures and practices in which men dominate, oppress and exploit women (...) the use of the term social structures is important here, since it clearly implies rejection both of biological determinism, and the notion that every individual man is in a dominant position and every woman in a subordinate one... patriarchy is composed of six structures: the patriarchal mode of production, patriarchal relations in paid work, patriarchal relations in the state, male violence, patriarchal relations in sexuality, and patriarchal relations in cultural institutions. (20)

Walby (1990) explains that the patriarchal mode of production refers to the gendered division of labour and the inferior value ascribed to household chores and child rearing, classifying women and their gender role to a second position. The second structure further suggests that the roles ascribed to women represent the inferior jobs in the ladder of androcentric value. The third structure reveals the bias that the state has towards patriarchy and androcentric interests in all aspects of life. Male violence is the fourth structure, which indicates that patriarchy is imposed by systematic violence and legalized by the state and public view. A patriarchal relation in sexuality refers to the imposed heterosexuality and many other traditional norms such as polygamy and widow unmarriage. The last structure, which is patriarchal relations in

cultural institutions, is constituted of the set of ideological conventions in all human interaction and social order that reflect the androcentric projection of an ideal femininity and its perpetuation and institutionalization in all aspects of life.

I-13-2 Early Feminism

Speaking about the inception of feminist thought and tracing its evolution in history, it is commonly held that it had begun long before the development of the emancipatory discourse of Western liberalism in the twentieth century. The Greek philosopher Plato in his *Republic* (375 BC) maintains that women have equal capacities with men for governing and defending Ancient Greece. Simone de Beauvoir asserts in her book *The Second Sex* (1949) that "the first time we see a woman take up her pen in defense of her sex" was Christine de Pizan who wrote *Epitre au Dieu d'Amour* (*Epistle to the God of Love*) in the 15th century (105), and protested for misogyny (hatred of women) and women status in the Middle Ages. Hodgson-Wright explores early English feminism and holds that "feminism (…) is any attempt to contend with patriarchy in its many manifestations between 1550-1700" (3). She argues that despite the fact that women status improved during this period in Western society through receiving some formal education, women did not enjoy equal legal status with men in terms of economic independence and the rights over their children. She discusses English feminism of the period 1550-1700 as follows:

> The feminism engendered under such circumstances was inevitably one which had to change attitudes before it sought to change conditions. Most feminist writers of the period sought to challenge the prevailing idea that women were an inferior branch of the human race, tainted by Eve's transgression in the Garden of Eden (Genesis 3) with fewer capabilities than men for moral behaviour and rational thought. The events of the period 1550-1700 presented women with grounds upon which to challenge the inevitability of patriarchal authority. (4)

The above passage refers to the Golden Age in English history when the rule of Queen Elizabeth I (1558-1603) facilitated the path for women to flourish in the arts and politics. Moreover, Hodgson-Wright adds that many historical events such as the English Civil War, the Interregnum and the Glorious Revolution have successfully established the belief that power of the King can be contested and resisted by both males and females. With the Restoration of Charles II, women have been granted the rights to access the theatre as well as the public of religious and political proclamations through their writings and preaching through which they expressed the early feminist ideas about the plight of women in patriarchal societies.

Notably, Hodgson-Wright (2006) divides the history of early feminism into three phases. The first is identified as 'Revisionism'. It traces the root causes of Western patriarchal rule, which stems from the Judeo-Christian texts. The author investigates the early feminist voices in English history as belonging to the Renaissance era (14C-17century). She states that some humanist actors defended women's right to education, albeit confined to the domestic sphere (5). English women began to have access to revisonist history in the late sixteenth century with Jane Anger's polemic essay *Her Protection for Women* (1589) in which she expressed her feminist view on *Genesis* (Hebrew word meaning the generations of heaven and earth). Hodgson-Wright reports that Anger (1586) states that the fact that women are created last proves the contrary to the common-held belief that women are inferior to men; Eve is created after Adam, thus, best by consequence of her being created from his flesh (6). Other early feminists such as Rachel Speght in *A Muzzle for Melastomus* (1617), Aemilia Lanyer in *Salve Deus Rex Judaeorum* (1611), Esther Sowernam in *Ester Hath Hang'd Haman* (1617), Margaret Fox in *Women's Speaking Justified* (1667) and Sarah Egerton in *The Female Advocate* (1686) expressed their revisionist views on *Genesis*, and argued that Adam is to be blamed even more than Eve for the transgressive act of eating the forbidden fruit due to his

supposed superiority and strength (6). Moreover, many women writers who were inspired by the *Scriptures*[20] and classical mythology subverted the image of the naturally sinful woman and produced fictive works where women characters are described as virtuous models (7).

The second phase is referred to as 'material realities'. It is about the texts that advocate a better position of women within the domestic and public spheres in seventeenth century England. The Protestant *Zeitgeist* of the period reflected the changing attitudes towards women to a more humanistic one. Being aware of their relegation to a slave-like position, women began to emphasize their role of nurturing motherhood to justify their legal right over their children such as Constantia Munda in *The Worming of a Mad Dog* (1617) and Elizabeth Joceline in *The Mother's Legacie to her Unborn Child* (1624). On the other hand, some women writers argued for the diminishing effect mothering has on the development of a woman's intellectual advancement such as Mary Oxlie *Poems* (1656) where she contends that women's intellectual inferiority is not a inert fact of nature but man-made via the perpetuated culture. The critic Bathsua Makin in *An Essay to Revive the Ancient Education of Gentlewomen* (1673) elaborates on Oxlie's claim:

> Custom, when it is inveterate, hath a mighty influence: it hath the force of Nature itself. The Barbarous custom to breed Women low, is grown general amongst us, and hath prevailed so far, that it is verily believed (especially amongst a sort of debauched Sots) that Women are not endued with Reason, as Men; nor capable of improvement by Education, as they are. It is looked upon as a monstrous thing, to pretend the contrary.
>
> (...) I verily think, Women were formerly Educated in the knowledge of Arts and Tongues, and by their Education, many did rise to a great height in Learning. Were Women thus Educated now, I am confident the advantage would be very great (...)

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[20] Defined by Merriam Webster as the books of either the Old or the New Testament or of both.

> Were a competent number of Schools erected to Educate Ladies ingenuously, methinks I see
>
> how asham'd Men would be of their Ignorance, and how industrious the next Generation would
>
> be to wipe off their Reproach. (qtd. in. Hodgson-Wright 10)

Makin maintains that women education is a significant means to her empowerment. Effectively, she established the school for gentlewomen to carry out her ideas into action.

The last phase is identified as 'communities of women', where early feminists started to support each other both on the textual and practical level against the patriarchal oppression. On the textual level, Aemilia Lanyer's collection of poems *Salve Deus Rex Judaeorum* (1611) is addressed to women solely, thus, creating a feminine space. Other poets carried out Lanyer's fashion in creating a textual space for women such as Katherine Philips who described her female friendships. Towards the end of the seventeenth century, mutual support among women gained fame among the early feminists in their writings. A female literary tradition has been established with the works of Katherine Philips and Aphra Behn, who sought to publicly support each other and gain recognition within the male literary scene. The early feminists' efforts at establishing a literary reputation of their own in which they used their pens to change the attitudes of the society in a hostile environment have paved the way for the coming feminists of the century to change women legal status. As Hodgson-Wright (2006) maintains:

> The 'feminism' of the period 1550–1700 fought its battles in cultural and social arenas.
>
> However, the change in attitudes that they helped to shape was crucial in laying the foundations
>
> for more radical changes in the centuries to come. It is hard to imagine how the suffragettes
>
> could have argued that women should have the vote, because of their naturally moralistic,
>
> civilizing influence, without the precedents set by the women writers dealt with here. (13-14)

As explained, the work of the modern feminists could not see the light without antecedent efforts that established the foundation with the pedagogic efforts of changing attitudes and then moving forward to the militant work at changing the legal status.

I-13-3 Modern Feminism

Modern feminism has been argued to be shaped by the intellectual revolution of the Enlightenment in addition to the political upheaval of the French Revolution in 1789. The ferment of new ideals such as reason, liberty, progress, fraternity, and equality had an overreaching impact on the political, economic, social and the cultural aspects of life. Subsequently, greater attention to issues of *sexism*[21] was raised by significant women voices against the system of patriarchy, and they began to organize themselves and question their marginalized position. They had to face the tradition that is shaped by the religious beliefs as well as the economic and political barriers.

As maintained by Valerie Sanders (2006), modern feminism began with Mary Wollstonecraft's book *Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1792), which was inspired by the French Revolution. In her book, Wollstonecraft argued that tradition limited women's intellectual capacities and relegated them to the domestic sphere. Wollstonecraft emphasized that women should have purposeful education to become active citizens rather than passive ones, to direct women self-perception to their self-centered interests, and not as mere performers of male interests and desires.

However, the Victorian period during the first half of the nineteenth century witnessed the reactionary attempt to the revival of the stereotypical image of woman as the *The Angel in the House* (1854), which is a popular poem at that time. Far from the new women images, the poem portrays the ideal social construct of femininity: "Man must be pleased; but him to please/ Is woman's pleasure; down the gulf/ Of his condoled necessities/ She casts her best, she flings

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[21] According to Lorraine Code (2000), "sexism is a term coined in the late 1960s to refer to social arrangements, policies, language, and practices enacted by men or women that express a systematic, often intitutionalised belief that men are superior, women inferior. Its cognitive and political force derived initially from its association with practices that women and men had learned to recognise as racist, in a period of increasing awareness of oppressions suffered in affluent western societies by people other than white men.

herself" (Patmore, lines 1-4). This passage describes the role model Victorian culture inscribed to women as the self-sacrificing, chaste and modest object for male pleasure and service at the household. She was to be protected and enshrined within the household. This feminine ideal, also referred to as *"*The Cult of Domesticity", had previously been perpetuated largely in the European culture with the *Napoleonic Code* [22]1804 in France and adopted by other European countries. This feminine ideal was perpetuated through prescriptive literature and pedagogy in books, sermons, and magazines. For England, women were denied to own property or to have legal rights over their children. Additionally, the ideology of *separate spheres[23]* between the sexes which dominated the socio-cultural, religious, economic as well as the political life reinforced the dualistic vision that men are superior, rational and active whereas women are subordinate, emotional and passive beings.

Nevertheless, the ideology of separate spheres between the private/public dissolved as women established networks where they organized informal meetings and discussed political issues. Doing so, they have reversed the dichotomy of public/private spheres with the transformation of the private sphere into an active space where political consciousness is spread. June Hannam (2014) illustrates:

> Women who were active in the anti-slavery movement in Britain and America, met in each other's homes, made articles for sale at bazaars and then went on to boycott goods produced using slave labour. Such activities remind us that women could be inspired by contemporary definitions of femininity, in particular, their caring and moral qualities, to attempt to make a difference in the world and could use their distinctiveness from men to justify a role in social and moral reform movements, such as temperance and philanthropy. (14-15)

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[22] The Code "gave a husband full legal powers over his wife, her property and her children and there were harsh penalties if she committed adultery. It was widely adopted in countries other than France, including Italy, Belgium, Holland and the German States" (Hannam 13).

[23] A sphere is a space that determines one's relation with the others. Separate spheres refers to the separation between the private sphere which is limited to the domestic concerns and the public sphere is reserved for public concerns mainly politics.

The quote demonstrates the way women at eighteenth century United Kingdom and United States contributed through active efforts to resisting the White racist ideology in the emancipatory struggle of the Blacks. Their involvement in political issues and human rights started with the excluded groups, which anchored their strife for the emancipation of women.

The period after Wollstonecraft's *Vindication* has witnessed a considerable feminist debate about women rights in the 1860s with the polemical opposition between John Ruskin (1819-1900) and John Stuart Mill (1806-73). While Ruskin advocates the traditional positioning of women in the domestic sphere, Mill argues for the repressive implications this positioning has on women intellectual capacities. Mill explains that the subordination of women is based on "the fact that men are physically stronger" (qtd. in Valerie Sanders 18), which implies that the human lust and strife for power has caused hierarchies of dominance supporting power relations. Mill's writings are dedicated to improving women status through legally adopting equal rights between the sexes.

The legal preoccupation with equal rights for women coupled with the enormous changes of the nineteenth century have paved the way for the emergence of what later theorists consider as 'first wave Feminism'. The feminist activists have questioned the existing legal system that perpetuates male dominance such as Caroline Norton (1808-1877) in the UK over the custody of her children. With the technological advances and the flourishing of publication and reading, Caroline Norton's campaigned with her pamphlets and letters arguing for the right of custody for 'innocent women'[24]. Preoccupied with "the woman question", the court issued many reforms taking a better account of women needs and rights including the legislations of

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[24] Innocent woman refers a wife whom adultery had not been proven.

The Custody Act[25] (1839), *The Divorce and Matrimonial Causes Act*[26] (1857) and *Married Women's Property Acts*[27] (1870).

With the end of the nineteenth century, the feminist activity has witnessed a growing resurgence of the political strife for the basic rights including women suffrage, equal education and working rights. This movement for political equality and power extended from the end of the nineteenth century to the beginning of World War II. In Europe as in America, the Suffragists' campaign succeeded to gain women voting rights including Canada (1917), Britain and Germany (1918), Austria and the Netherlands (1919), and the United States (1920). However, some exceptional European countries have granted women voting rights later such as France (1944), Greece (1952), and Switzerland (1971). The United Nations Human Rights Commission introduced voting rights for women into international law.

With the outbreak of the World Wars, European women found themselves automatically participating in the war either directly or indirectly. This participation has contributed to their growing consciousness about their rights in other areas of public life. The feminist movement would mature with broadened concerns and interests from the feminism of equal rights to a new strand of feminism.

Remarkably, the pioneering work of the French philosopher Simone de Beauvoir (1908-1986) who is associated with *existentialism*[28] has significantly contributed to change the history of feminist thought and practice in Western Europe. She argues that gender is not innate

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[25] The Custody of Children Act granted the right for legally separated or divorced wives, provided they had not been found guilty of criminal conversation, to custody of their children up to the age of seven, and periodic access thereafter.

[26] This Act reformed the law on divorce, amongst others making divorce more affordable, and established a model of marriage based on contract.

[27] This Act gave the right for married women to inherit property and take court action on their own behalf.

[28] Existentialism "is a form of philosophical enquiry that explores the nature of existence by emphasizing experience of the human subject—not merely the thinking subject, but the acting, feeling, living human individual" (Macquarrie 14-5).

but constructed to maintain social order. In her treatise *The Second Sex* (1949), de Beauvoir articulated her famous phrase "One is not born but becomes a woman", which translates the existentialist Sarterian slogan *existence precedes essence,* and which turns the traditional Cartesian view of the self into something which is not discovered but created through reflection. By asserting that gender is becoming, de Beauvoir suggests that it is a process. In Sartrian terms, becoming means 'purposefully assume or embody', suggesting the existence of a choice for the subject to either being passively subjected to the rule of the patriarchal system or actively reproducing and reconstituting one's authentic self.

Since one's sense of self can only be understood through identification to the other, De Beauvoir (1949) contends that man has ever claimed the privilege of subjectivity to himself, identifying the woman as his opposite and projecting upon her all that he rejects in his self. Thus, the subjectivity of the woman has been systematically appropriated and manipulated to internalize the myth of femininity through many institutions that perpetuate those male projections upon women conduct and role in life. The Algerian academic Bedjaoui (2014) explains that these projections are constructed representations whose main interest "lies both in their decriptive and prescriptive values" (84). De Beauvoir (1949) argues that even knowledge reflects the patriarchal rule such as biology, Freudian psychoanalysis and Marxism. She reveals that even with the recent reforms at the economic and political realm, the patriarchal system has given just half of the economic, social, and political emancipation because the market has imposed its interests. Thus, she calls women to seize this opportunity to reappropriate her subjectivity that has been violated. She insists that the woman subject has to exist for herself beyond the patriarchal and androcentric interests.

In her article *Feminist Perspectives on the Body* (2019), the British academic Kathleen Lennon (2019) reports that according to Simone de Beauvoir, the *phenomenology* (unbiased description of immediate experiences) of the body's lived experience goes through different

stages in women's life. During childhood, the female subject's entry to the feminine world is initiated through getting disciplined to inhabit her body in a delicate and self-enclosed way, thus, limiting her interaction with the world outside. In this way, de Beauvoir (1949) describes this female as "a passive object (…) an inert given object" (306–307). On the other hand, the male counterpart is encouraged to totally take the opposite way; to explore and experience the outside world with his body. Thus, de Beauvoir (1949) argues, the female's spontaneous intentionality is inhibited and "the exuberance of life (…) restrained" (323). Subsequently, the female' sexed body develops a "lack of physical power", as well as "general timidity" (355).

During puberty, the female subject experiences the anxiety resulting from the negative implications of her maturing body. As de Beauvoir (1949) indicates: "This new growth in her armpits transforms her into a kind of animal or algae" (333), relating to the female's consciousness of her body's scornful implications that extend throughout her life in sexual initiation, marriage, and motherhood. De Beauvoir describes the cultural implications of the maternal body as "ensnared by nature the pregnant women is plant and animal (…) an incubator, a conscious and free individual who has become life's passive instrument (…) not so much mothers (…) as fertile organisms, like fowls with high egg production" (513), which is situated in a specific context. She (1949) clarifies the specifity of the lived experience of female body as follows: "if the biological condition of women does constitute a handicap, it is because of her general situation (…) It is in a total situation which leaves her few outlets that her peculiarities take on their importance. (356–357), and she aims to highlight and subvert it through her critical works.

With the rising debate over nature versus nurture, the feminist critique sprung up and embraced the distinction between biological sex and the social construction of gender. Theoretical writing on feminism flourished with British feminists such as Germaine Greer's *The Female Eunuch* (1970) and Eva Figes' *Patriarchal Attitudes* (1970). In the USA, feminists

wrote extensively such as Kate Millett's *Sexual Politics* (1970)*,* Shulamith Firestone's *The Dialectic of Sex* (1970) and Robin Morgan's edited collection *Sisterhood is Powerful* (1970).

The British psychoanalyst and socialist feminist, Juliet Mitchel (1940-), argues in her seminal book *Psychoanalysis and Feminism: Freud, Reich, Laing and Women* (1975) that Freud's *phallocentric* theory is an inevitable product of the cultural determinism of patriarchy at his age. In her groundbreaking book, Mitchel unveils the way society frames knowledge and subverts Freud's critique of femininity into the critique of patriarchy itself. Her theory advocates gender as a socio-cultural construct, which the American feminist Judith Butler (1956-) theorized as 'gender performativity', arguing that reality is a social construct that is reproduced and maintained through continual enactment by its subjects in a world that is governed by heteronormative standards.

The feminist *geist* (German word, denoting the spirit) of the 1950s till the 70s expressed the widespread discontent of women with their lives due to the conflicting situation in which they found themselves in-between conforming to tradition or pursuing further advance for self-fulfillment. In this regard, the American feminist Betty Friedan (1921- 2006), in her nonfiction book *The Feminine Mystique* (1963), argues that women discontent is related to the new realization of her equal potentiality and of her intellectual capacity as opposed to the long-held belief in its limitation. Friedan rejects the traditional idealized view of domestic femininity and that a woman's happiness lies in her biological and sexual fulfillment through motherhood and wifedom. In *The Feminine Mystique*, Friedan criticizes Freud's concept of '*penis envy'* and accuses his work of burdening psychoanalysis with patriarchal attitudes. Significantly, Friedan notes that women have been trapped at the physiological level of Abraham Maslow's hierarchy of needs, and expected to realize their identity only through their sexual role. She maintains that it is necessary for women to invest in her intellectual potential through education and meaningful work in order to achieve self-actualization just as men do. Additionally, Friedan

(1963) offers examples of women who transgressed the 'feminine mystique' in their quest for self-fulfillment and the different challenges that they have undergone, both their own fears and resistance to society.

Furthermore, Friedan insists on "a drastic reshaping of the cultural image of femininity that will permit women to reach maturity, identity, completeness of self" (318), referring to the gradual process of eradicating patriarchal thought from the socio-cultural norms. In her book, Friedan (1963) elaborates on the internalization of the patriarchal norms that cause women discontent with their life despite having received education:

> The feminine mystique says that the highest value and the only commitment for women is the fulfilment of their own femininity (...) It says that this femininity is so mysterious and intuitive and close to the creation and origin of life that man-made science may never be able to understand it. (...) The mistake, says the mystique, the root of women's troubles in the past is that women envied men, women tried to be like men, instead of accepting their own nature, which can find fulfilment only in sexual passivity, male domination, and nurturing maternal love. (43)

In this excerpt, the author reveals the causes of US women discontent with their life. In fact, her book *The Feminine Mystique* is based on quantitative analysis through questionnaires distributed to educated housewives who were her classmates at college, thus, giving her arguments an authentic foundation. She holds that this frustration is due to the internalized attitudes about ideal femininity and fulfillment, which is confined to the domestic and private interests. Yet, Sue Thornham declares that both Friedan and De Beauvoir put the responsibility upon women for their frustration and subordination, for their position is "an effect of the focus of both writers on individual self-transformation as the way forward" (30). Henceforth, Friedan advocates the full participation and integration of women in the public sphere through

administrative and political measures. Friedan's thought revolves around consciousness-raising and bears the tenets of *liberal feminism*[29].

Indeed, Friedan's *The Feminine Mystique* identified the "problem that has no name" about the complexity of women's oppression and drawing a line between the previous and current concerns of the feminist movement. Sheila Rowbotham maintains in her book *Woman's Consciousness, Man's World* (1973) that "women's liberation does have strands of the older equal rights feminism, (…) It is something more" alluding to the development of the economic, social, and political aspects of the second half of the twentieth century. In the United States, the debate over the concerns of new feminism sprung up. The American women's liberation movement grew out of the consciousness that American women from *left-wing* movements (supporting social equality against hierarchies) developed about the deeper oppression that lies in the political and social levels. As Anne Koedt asserts in her speech at the Free University of New York City in February 1968:

> As these problems began being discussed, it became clear that what had at first been assumed to be a personal problem was in fact a social and political one (...) and the deeper we analyzed the problem and realized that all women suffer from this kind of oppression, the more we realized that the problem was not just confined to movement women" (1973).

Koedt's speech reveals the realization of the feminists about the deeper hegemony of patriarchy that is embedded in political and social institutions and conventions. Clearly, Koedt calls for a heterogeneous movement that expends its concerns to various forms of patriarchal rule by reforming the administrative, economic, political, and social aspects of life. The US feminist spirit of *left-wing* politics reached Britain and European countries and the *Marxist-socialist* strand (challenging capitalist machinery and women's oppression) developed as a reaction to the *liberal* strand (advocating liberalism and capitalism) in the USA. The British feminist Juliet

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[29] Liberal feminism advocates freedom through guaranteeing individual authonomy and gender equality in the public sphere.

Mitchel reflects upon the commonality between American and British forms of feminism in 1970 during the first National Women's Liberation at Ruskin College: "In 1970, at Ruskin, we felt we had one goal, we were unified (...) [We] could have one feminism. One "women's liberation"" (qtd. In Michelene Wandor). The common concerns are equal education and pay, right for contraception and abortion, and providing nurseries for working mothers. As such, feminism sought to embrace the diversity of women needs to reach their self-fulfillment. In this regard, African-American women voiced the double burden of gender and race oppression that they experience. Influenced by the Black Movement, they developed a radical movement that maintains that the existent women's liberation movement defends middle-class white women disregarding race and other classes in the social hierarchies.

Significantly, Kate Millett's *Sexual Politics* (1970) is a groundbreaking book on feminist theory with a radical character. Millett holds that patriarchy is "the rule of the dominant elder male within a traditional kinship structure, to mean the institutionalized oppression of all women by all men" (qtd. In Sue Thornham 31), implying that patriarchal rule extends the patronizing position of the elder in a primitive-like community over all women. As such, sex is at the core of power relations that extend to race, class, and ethnicity, among other identities. As Millett (1970) elaborates:

> One is forced to conclude that sexual politics, while connected to economics and other tangibles of social organization, is, like racism, or certain aspects of caste, primarily an ideology, a way of life, with influence over every other psychological and emotional facet of existence. It has created, therefore, a psychic structure, deeply embedded in our past, capable of intensification or attenuation, but one which, as yet, no people have succeeded in eliminating. (qtd. In Sue Thornham 31)

 Thus, Millett delves deeper into the nature and implications of patriarchy on human life, and maintains that it is deeply engrained in the human psyche due to its persistence in all aspects of life. Accordingly, gender roles of femininity and masculinity are ideologically perpetuated

and maintained in social structures. This ideology of power relations based on master/slave dialectics and exploitation extends to race, class, ethnicity, caste, sexual orientation, and Imperialism, among many. Contrary to de Beauvoir and Friedan, Millett does not consider women as having a share of responsibility over their subordination. Rather, she (1970) justifies their victimhood as follows:

> Like all persons in their situation (slaves are a classic example here) they identify their own survival with the prosperity of those who feed them. The hope of seeking liberating radical solutions of their own seems too remote for the majority to dare contemplate and remains so until consciousness on the subject is raised. (*38*)

This analogy explains the effect of the *indoctrination* of women to embrace inferiority as a latent cultural convention. Psychologically speaking, as the women's class firmly embraces its subordinate positioning as the norm, we can say that they have *false consciousness*[30] in Marxist terms. Accordingly, Millett's account of patriarchal authority operating is based on ideological underpinnings.

In France, the feminist thought developed during the 1970s out of the turmoil in French politics of the time, mainly the Paris Student Revolt of 1968 where female students realized that they were confined to traditional roles as compared to their male counterparts. Following their frustration, the French Movement de Libération des Femmes was established in order to compaign for women rights. In theory, French feminism emerged with Simone de Beauvoir as a radical movement and continued with her followers such as Luce Irigaray, Hélène Cixous and Julia Kristeva who relied on psychoanalytical theories in their analysis. They also set up their thought upon de Beauvoir's notion of woman as the 'other', and extended their research

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[30] False consciousness denotes a Marxist conceptualization of people's inability to recognize inequality, oppression, and exploitation in a capitalist society because of the prevalence within it of views that naturalize and legitimize the existence of social classes. (Britannica Encyclopedia)

on the mechanisms that both language and culture shape sexual distinction. The work of the French psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan is strongly present in their theories.

I-13-4 Lacan's Impact on the Feminist Thought

In fact, feminism drew much of its theories and concerns from psychoanalysis. The close relationship between the two can be summarized by Jacqueline Rose who asserts in *Sexuality in the Field of Vision* (1986) that 'psychoanalysis becomes one of the few places in our culture where it is recognized as more than a fact of individual pathology that most women do not painlessly slip into their roles as women, if indeed they do at all' (91). Women identity crisis is the major concern for feminists as an impetus for political struggle against structural violence at the sexual level. Psychoanalytical feminism starts from Freud's and Lacan's theories to develop its tenets.

Speaking about the French psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan (1901-1981), he is considered as "the most controversial psycho-analyst since Freud" (Macey xiv) for his universal influence upon psychoanalytic studies, post-structuralism, feminism and critical theory, among other fields. He based his theory on Freud's construction of sexual difference and the self. His concepts of the Imaginary, the Symbolic and the Phallus have had a significant influence on French feminism.

Interestingly, Lacan links the acquisition of language to Freud's notion of the Oedipal crisis in his theory that gradually developed from his conceptualization of the Imaginary (1936-1953), to the Symbolic (1953- 1963), and the Real (1963-1981) as Hoens and Pluth (2002) explain. The Imaginary stage is the primary phase where the child sees itself as attached to the mother and to the world. The Oedipal crisis where the child realizes that he cannot hold the mother as a love-object, and gives up to the father's rule, is for Lacan the moment where the child enters into the 'Symbolic Order'. This moment indicates the child has identified a subject

position and learns about being separate from the bliss of mother-child relatedness and the desire of the mother's body. For Freud, this moment is considered as the birth of the unconscious. For Lacan, however, it is the moment of eternal repression of a desire that is considered incestuous by 'the law of the father'. Moreover, the phallus or *penis envy* is a symbolic reference to patriarchal or masculine rule. In his *Book IX*: *L'identification*, Lacan (1960-1) postulates that the Phallus is symbolic and attainable only through the *other*'s desire. As such, it represents the illusion of power that women are less deceived by, thus, confirming that masculinity is cultural construction that needs the validation of femininity.

Julia Kristeva (1941-), a Bulgarian linguist and feminist, based her theory of subjectivity on Lacan's notions of the Imaginary and the Symbolic. In *Revolution in Poetic Language* (1974), Kristeva has taken his notion of the Imaginary and named it the Semiotic. It is a phase where the child experiences its first body impulses. The second phase is the Symbolic in which the child enters the 'repressive political structures' and functions in the society according to the norms. Her basic contention is that the masculine and feminine distinction is a myth that is culturally constructed.

The Belgian born French feminist psychoanalyst and psycholinguist, Luce Irigeray (1930-), starts from Freud's psychoanalyst theory and accuses it of *phallocentrism*[31] and criticizes Freud's assumption about femininity in her dissertation *Speculum of the Other Woman* (1974). In her later work, *Women on the Market* (1985), Irigeray used Marx's theory of capital to contend that the female self is taken as a commodity for exchange, and that her exchange value is what makes her desired. In her analysis (1985), she postulates that the patriarchal system creates three commodity values of the woman: the mother as an all use value; the virgin as an all exchange value; and the prostitute as both use and exchange.

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[31] Phallocentrism considers the masculine (symbolic) as the source of power and meaning in cultural, ideological, and socio-cultural systems.

The Algerian-born French feminist, writer, poet, playwright and philosopher Hélène Cixous (1937-) is one of the founding figures of French post-structural feminism. She (1986) lists a series of four binary opposition terms that are embedded in patriarchal hierarchy: activity/passivity, father/mother, head/heart, and culture/nurture (115). Being influenced by the French deconstructuralist Jacques Derrida, Cixous maintains that binary thinking is never neutral, but based on what he calls 'violent hierarchy'. Her most famous work, *The Laugh of the Medusa* (1975) presents her notion of *écriture féminine* (feminine writing), which argues that there is a language, a style of discourse that is within the pre-Symbolic Imaginary phase. As she (1986) describes: "the voice, a song before the Law, before the breath was split by the symbolic, reappropriated into language under the authority that separates the deepest, most ancient and adorable of visitations" (qtd. In Ramsey 140). As such, Cixous postulates that a woman is different both sexually and linguistically, and her ultimate role is to speak and represent femininity in a positive way. Doing so, Cixous insists on shifting the masculine and symbolic language from the center to the periphery. Furthermore, Cixous (1986) discussed in her work the notion of *jouissance* (a French word which denotes enjoyment), and explains that it is a feeling of pleasure that is beyond the frames of signification. She contends that this feeling is experienced primarily during the Imaginary phase through the pleasure of giving. Cixous maintains that the activity of feminine writing through establishing a symbiotic relationship with the pre-Oedipal feminine sexuality would lead to experiencing *jouissance*. Kristeva, on the other hand, considers that *jouissance* is a female feeling that is beyond signification and symbolic order.

I-13-5 Elaine Showalter's Theory about the Development of the Feminist Thought in Women Writing

Notably, the American critic Elaine Showalter (1941-) has critically contributed to the understanding of the development of feminist thought in women writing. In her essay *Feminist Criticism in the Wilderness* (1978), Showalter maintains that a woman's writing is distinct from a man's due to the female's distinct lived experience that sets up a specific tradition. Later in her influential work *The New Feminist Criticism* (1986), Showalter supports her claim by arguing that in tracing women literature, one finds recurrent themes, patterns and images (14). She justifies this recurrence to the commonality of the material conditions of their production. Following the cultural construction of gender, Showalter holds that the tradition of women writing is influenced by the material conditions of its production. In 1977, Showalter published her pioneering book *A Literature of Their Own: British Women Novelists From Brontë to Lessing,* and asserts that the development of women writing follows a three phase process: '*imitation* of the prevailing modes of the dominant tradition; '*protest* against these standards and values'; and '*self discovery,* a search for identity' (qtd. In Jill Lebihan 105). She names these phases as feminine, feminist, and female, with the last as the most privileged or individuated self. Moreover, Showalter holds that women literary works, overall, is 'a literature of their own'. In this sense, the female literary traditions across the globe have matured in the same process, from a suppressed subjectivity to self-assertion.

I-13-6 Feminism and Ethnocentrism

Admittedly, the feminist discourse that developed in the Western world claims its universality through its emphasis on gender and reclaiming the female self as a subject and not a male's object. However, other identitary categories such as the Africans, Arabs, Third world women and the *lesbian (*female homosexuality*)* community found the White Western discourse

totalizing and too narrow as it homogenizes the female experience and disregards *ethnocentrism*[32] and its issues such as race, ethnicity, politics, economy, sexual orientation, and culture, among others. The complex situation within which femininity exists led to the creation of more inclusive sisterhoods that prioritize the culture through which it is understood. The feminists of colour such as bell hooks and Audre Lorde condemn the bias and generalizations of Western feminism. In her critical essay of Mary Daly's *Gyn/Ecology* in *Sister Outsider* (1984), Audre Lorde denounces the negative way Black women are portrayed, contending that although "the oppression of women knows no ethnic nor racial boundaries (…) that does not mean it is identical within these diffrences" (97). bell hooks in her *Feminist Theory: From Margin to Center* highlights this argument when she writes: "white women may be victimized by sexism, but racism enables them to act as exploiters and oppressors of black people" (16). Thus came the conception of 'womanism' through the African-American writer and social activist Alice Walker's quotation: "womanist is to feminist as purple is to lavender" (1983 xii), which implies that womanism encapsulates feminism, and goes beyond it. The womanist theory acknowledges that what constitutes the Western culture's understanding of femininity in some issues is different from other cultures and that people of Western and Third world cultures may hold different conceptions about oppression. Contrary to the feminist discourse which has been criticized for its anti-man sexism, womanism advocates the consideration of gender issues without separating between men and women. In fact, this aspect is adovocated by Cultural feminism which maintains that "it is very important to make the society appreciate the female essence and use women's special gifts to be active members in the society and the world" (Belabdli 110). Currently, it is widely accepted that the diversity of issues has led to the development of feminisms that are historically, culturally, and geographically specific.

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[32] The propensity of a group (in group) to consider its members and values as superior to the members and values of other groups (out-groups) (see Jean-François Staszak 2008)

I-13-7 Postcolonial, Arab, and Third World Feminisms

Postcolonial or Third world feminism is a category of feminism which considers feminist issues through postcolonial concerns such as representation, hybridity, agency, migration, and resistance, among others. Its emphasis relies on the sexist, racial and Imperialist experiences of postcolonial subjects who still suffer from the legacy of violence, subjugation, and distortion. The South African novelist Lauretta Ngcobo (1986) insists on the need to remodel feminism for the particular concerns of African women. Furthermore, Carol Boyce Davies, in her *Ngambika; Studies of Women in African Literatures* (1986)*,* maintains that African feminism is hybrid in nature as it mixes between African and feminist concerns. She cites Molara Ogundipe-Leslie's statement (1986) that "women are shackled by their own negative self-image, by centuries of the interiorization of the ideologies of patriarchy and gender hierarchy" (8). The postcolonial feminist Chandra Talpade Mohanty, in her essay *Under Western Eyes (*1991)*,* evokes the problems that emerge with the association of Third world women to stereotypical images of "underdevelopment, oppressive traditions, high illiteracy, rural and urban poverty, and religious fanaticism " (5). She insists on the necessity of addressing the experiences of these subordinated women from a native perspective and not from foreign lens. She maintains that the postcolonial feminist study is heterogeneous, historically specific and dynamic.

Significantly, it is the Martinican psychiatrist and philosopher Frantz Fanon (1925-1961) who initiated the postcolonial cry for resistance with his ideas. His most significant contribution to the postcolonial thought in his de-colonial theory is his concept of 'violent resistance' and of 'self-assertion'; which eliminates the *inferiority complex*[33] from the native's

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[33] Fanon proposed his notion of the 'inferiority complex' in his book *Black Skins, White Masks (*1952), it refers to the anti-Black racism internalized by Blacks and how it causes them psychological pathologies in addition to the colonial oppression.

psyche, and recovers its self-esteem. Fanon affirms that the oppressed has to take back the control of his subjectivity and his land through the same violent form and process that they have been appropriated from him. In addition, the African American intellectual W.E.B Du Bois (1903) argues that the subjectivity of the non-white individual is problematic due to what he refers to as 'the double consciousnesses[34] that the African American subject has to look at himself through the 'contemptuous and pitying' lens of the racially prejudiced society.

In this regard, the Indian feminist and literary theorist, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (1983) maintains that the postcolonial female subject has to hold the agency over her own intellect and body in order to represent authentically her needs, interests and concerns and speak back to the Western discourse. Crucial to the critique of the stereotypical images of Eastern people and of the colonial discourse is Edward Said's seminal book *Orientalism* (1978). As the founder of postcolonial studies, Said argues that the construction of the Orientalist discourse is a systematic misrepresentation that stems from the concept of race and that is aimed at political dominance. In her critique of the gender politics of Orientalist writing and art, Rana Kabbani (1994) argues that the depiction of Eastern women in the Orientalist discourse objectified them as exotic creatures associated to the delights of the Orient. In doing so, she shows the extent to which the Oriental discourse is based on the patriarchal one in constructing erotic stereotypes of Eastern women, peoples and lands, which need to be symbolically penetrated and impregnated.

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[34] W.E.B. Du Bois (1903) defines it as: "It is a peculiar sensation, this double-consciousness, this sense of always looking at one's self through the eyes of others, of measuring one's soul by the tape of a world that looks on in amused contempt and pity. One ever feels his two-ness, an American, a Negro; two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings; two warring ideals in one dark body, whose dogged strength alone keeps it from being torn asunder. The history of the American Negro is the history of this strife – this longing to attain self-conscious manhood, to merge his double self into a better and truer self. In this merging he wishes neither of the older selves to be lost (…) He simply wishes to make it possible for a man to be both a Negro and an American without being cursed and spit upon by his fellows, without having the doors of opportunity closed roughly in his face" (2-3)

Turning to the Middle East and Arab feminism, the movement started in Egypt and Lebanon through fiction and press articles at the end of the nineteenth century along with the nationalist movements for emancipation from the Imperial rule (late eighteenth to the first half of the twentieth century). Arab feminists hold that the improvement of the status of women is a prerequisite for the reform of social life. The Egyptian reformist Qasim Amin (1865- 1908) expressed the first and major concern for early Arab feminism, which is the need for the abolition of the practice of veiling declaring that it is a threat to modernity. He argues in his two works *The Liberation of Women* (1899) and *The New Women* (1901) that the veil is not of Islamic origin but rather a recent ideological tool for women subjugation in order to maintain the patriarchal rule. The feminist academic Joseph T. Zeidan, traces in his book *Arab Women Novelists: The Formative Years and Beyond* (1995) the development of Arab feminism. Zeidan identifies in his historical account the two major issues initiating the struggle of Arab women for equality and emancipation that are veiling and education. Accordingly, both critics recognize in their works the significant importance of of Arab women education and their integration into the workforce. Huda Sha'rawi, the famous Egyptian feminist who founded *Al Ittihad al Nisai al Misri* (The Egyptian Feminist Union) in 1923, expanded its activities from its alliance for women's sufferage to publishing periodicals that express the Arab feminist concerns in relation to their unique social, economic, and political aspects. The Egyptian feminist Doria Shafik, one of the principal leaders of the Women's Liberation Movement in the 1940s and an ardent activist for women rights, campaigned for the full equality between men and women in political representation and rights, and as a result of her efforts, Egyptian women were granted the right to vote in 1956 ("Doria Shafik"). In 1972, Nawal Al-Saadawi radicalized the Arab feminist thought with the publication of her book *Women and Sex*. As Abdel Wahab Al-Afifi et al (1996) contend, Al-Saadawi denounces the socio-cultural practices that use religion to justify their objectification and oppression. Her non-fiction and fiction

works evoked strong resentment from the religious *Fundamentalists* (those who adopt Islamic *Fundamentalism*) and the state regime due to her outspoken radical views against all forms of gender oppression. Often described as "the Simone de Beauvoir of the Arab world" (Encyclopedia Britannica), Nawal Al-Saadawi's controversial views about women and religion continue to excert their influence on recent Arab feminism.

Furthermore, new possibilities on thinking about identity in the recent postcolonial theory, literature and criticism, have been engendered by the postcolonial intellectuals who have undergone the experience of migration and diaspora. The pioneer studies of Edward Said (1979), Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (1988), Homi Bhabha (1994), Dussel (1995), Chakrabarty (2000), Mbembe (2013), Paul Gilroy (1993), and Stuart Hall (1990, 1996) have explored in their works issues related to the diasporic identity such as hybridity, borders and cultural diversity. These recent notions, which go beyond the *essentialist* cultural theories and prove the cultural relativism of the Western model of subjectivity, relate experiences of migration with the discourse of post-structuralism. Interestingly, hybridization is an ongoing process that occurs at many levels including the cultural, racial, political, and linguistic forms. Standing at the border is considered as a privilege that provides the subject with the opportunity of actively negotiating distinct cultures. In doing so, the hybrid subjectivity would refashion and customize ideas beyond the exclusionary binary discourse on identity. On the other hand, this hybrid subject would play the role of an agent of change in taking idealized conceptions and giving them new and unexpected meanings.

Homi. K Bhabha's essay *Locations of Culture (*1994) is about people who live in border spaces that are in-between contrary homelands. For him, borders are significant thresholds, which are characterized by ambivalence and contradictions. Moreover, borders are intermediate locations where one contemplates moving beyond a barrier. As John McLeold (2000) highlights, Bhabha's notion of "the border is the place where conventional patterns of

thought are disturbed and can be disrupted by the possibility of crossing" (217). As such, the border is a place of possibility and agency for new and innovative ideas. Moreover, it is argued that the crossing of these borders can be considered as a transgression that is both physical and metaphorical. These trangressive crossings are against conventional notions of identity that are fixed, and binary defined such as male/female, and native/foreigner. In doing so, Bhabha (1994) insists that we must rethink identity beyond the limits of conventional discourse and positioning. In our late millennium, global dynamics between the center and periphery have become an inevitable outcome of the phenomenon of migration and globalization.

I-14 Postcolonial Writing

Postcolonial literatures are also often variously termed as 'new literatures', 'commonwealth literatures' or 'world literatures', and as these names indicate, they focus on the recent status of their history and the global spread of colonialism in its different forms. The origins of this branch of literature are plural and borrow from different disciplines, which gave it an interdisciplinary nature and a diverse study according to its different societies, cultures, and contexts.

It is worth noting that colonialism refers to a form of Western Imperialism that existed in human history throughout the 15th to the 19th century. Ellecke Bohemer, in her book *Colonial and Postcolonial Literature* (1995) defines colonialism as the "settlement of territory, the exploitation or development of resources, and the attempt to govern the indigenous inhabitants of occupied lands" (2). Bohemer highlights material exploitation that lies at the core of colonial power relations.

I-14-1 Imperialism and the *Other*

In the *Dictionary of Human Geography,* the Scottish academic Dan Clayton (2000) defines Imperialism as "the creation and maintenance of an unequal economic, cultural and territorial relationship, usually between states and often in the form of an empire, based on domination and subordination" (373). The maintenance of this unequal relationship depends on the subordination of an *Other* (distinct group or peoples), from which resources can be taken and land can be exploited.

The process of *Othering* refers to the systematic construction of the *Other* through the hegemonic indoctrination of its positionality within the periphery and justifying its subordination. This construction is based upon power relationships of the strong/weak representation, which justifies the dominance of the stronger upon education, culture, and discourse. Indeed, *Othering* is a term, promoted by Edward Said in his theory, to refer to the act of constructing and perpetuating superior/inferior identities. *Othering,* thus can be done with any racial, ethnic, religious, or geographically defined category of people.

In order to grasp the full meaning of postcolonial literature, it is important to peruse the etymology of the term 'postcolonial'. Taken literally, it denotes the period after the dissolution of colonial occupation with the premise that the previous era of colonial control is over for good, and a humanistic stage is beginning. As Hafsi (2017) explains: "while most nations involved in the traumatic experience[35] of living under colonial rule are nominally independent, they are, in fact, still under economic, political, ideological, and cultural dominance to their former European colonizers" (97). Anne McClintock (1995) blames the concept of post-colonialism for celebrating independence too prematurely (294). So, the opponents to this term

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[35] Trauma is what blocks and gives birth to myriads of "walking wounds", a trauma is; "that which disrupts these particular human lives, but no other" (Caruth Cathy 101). Trauma for Allen Jon (1999) is what creates a violent outburst in one's self and it is not without harming consequences. He explains: "It is the subjective experience of the objective events that constitutes the trauma (...) Psychologically, the bottom line of trauma is overwhelming emotion and a feeling of utter helplessness. " (14).

propose a more proper term: neo-colonialism/imperialism instead. It is worthy to mention the difference between colonialism and Imperialism. Colonialism refers to "the constant of world history", the large and "still incomplete project of globalization of capitalism" (Peter Childs and R. J. Patrick Williams 5), denoting the European practice of planting and securing colonies for economic exploitation. Imperialism, on the other hand, is the sum of the attitudes, ideologies, and structures, which sustain the practice of colonialism. Imperialism changes its form progressively, but the essence is the same.

I-14-2 Anglophone Postcolonial Literature

The status quo of the English language as the global one, being the language of the British Empire, implies that the English language and its literature became as a site of contest for the colonized, a means for them to challenge the cultural and ideological structures of the Empire. This is evident in the postcolonial writings of the mid twentieth century onwards, with the new assessments of the Empire's legacies. Postcolonial writers from Indian, Caribbean, and African descent such as Mulk Raj Anand and Arundhati Roy, of Wilson Harris and Pauline Melville, of Chinua Achebe and Ama Ata Aidoo, often use hybridized forms and structures of English as a means to articulate their concerns and reprpresent authentically their cultures to the global readership, and also to deconstruct the English language and its usage by infusing the markers of their native culture and language.

Despite the great controversy over the various reservations to the term 'postcolonial', the critical theory has gained academic recognition and widespread currency as a set of theories entailing a huge bulk of geopolitical relations of power and the heterogeneous cultural legacy of colonial supremacy. It is an academic discipline featuring methods of intellectual discourse that analyze, explain, and respond to the cultural legacies of colonialism and Imperialism. In

order to understand the diverse tenets of this school of thought, it is important to shed light on the ideas that provoked the birth of postcolonial theory and literature.

I-14-3 Postcolonial Theory and its Historical Development

Postcolonial theory is a *post-positivist* [36]theory set of different theories as it has developed out of four European traditions of thought: Marxism, psychoanalysis, post-structuralism, and feminism. It is an academic discipline featuring methods of intellectual discourse that analyze, explain, and respond to the cultural legacies of colonialism and Imperialism. Indeed, postcolonialism is based upon aspects of colonialism and its effects which have persisted remarkably even after the dissolution of colonial dominance.

Furthermore, Hafsi (2017) describes postcolonialism as a school of critical thought that primarily deals with ex-colonized peoples and cultures that face the dilemma of personal, national or cultural identity in the postcolonial period, which is generally labelled as an 'an identity crisis' (96). The reason behind this crisis is the confusion resulting from the clash between native and Western culture and the hegemony of Western epistemology and power relations. In this part, the development of postcolonial theory is divided into two major waves: criticism of the colonial practice as reflected in the works of Frantz Fanon, Aimé Césaire, and Albert Memmi. The second wave represents the criticism of the colonial discourse as reflected in the works of Edward Said, Gayatri Spivak, and Homi Bhabha.

It is the publication of Edward Said's *Orientalism* in 1978, which is generally recognized as the very moment that triggered the massive rise of the discipline of postcolonial studies. It is the anti-colonial movements, however, which form the fountainhead of

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[36] While positivists emphasize independence between the researcher and the researched person (or object), postpositivists argue that theories, hypotheses, background knowledge and values of the researcher can influence what is observed (Robson 624).

postcolonialism with their outlined campaigns for freedom. Postcolonial theory draws upon concepts developed by the anti-colonial struggles.

1-14-3-1 Criticism of the Colonial Practice

Among the leaders who generated anti-colonial movements is Frantz Fanon whose pineering ideas are important in postcolonial theory. Strongly influenced by the dialectical and materialist traditions of Hegel and Marx, Fanon looked in to the psychopathology of colonialism, that is, the analysis of the psychological effects of colonial domination and disempowerment on the natives. His significant book *The Wretched of the Earth* (1961) reveals that under colonial conditions, the objective realm of material oppression involves the subjective realm. In his influential book *Black Skins, White Masks* (1952), Fanon presents the concept 'inferiority complex', and argues that the colonized subject is made to feel inferior (the colonization of the mind). As a result the native feels that wearing the white mask (adopting Western value system and culture) is the only way of dealing with this psychological inadequacy. Fanon's most controversial contribution to postcolonial theory was his argument concerning 'self-assertion'. In order to assert oneself, he offers "cultural nationalism", which is respecting one's native culture and literature as a remedy to the colonized existence.

Frantz Fanon is the first intellectual figure who initiated the ground thought for postcolonial theory. He was born in the French colony of Martinique and as a black intellectual, he was known for his analysis of the relationship between colonialism and racism. His medical and psychological practice enabled him to focus on the harmful psychological effects of colonial dominance and racist policies conducted under colonial rule. However, Fanon was not only concerned with the psychology of the colonized people but also with their colonial masters. As a psychiatrist, Fanon defines colonialism as a source of violence, and focuses on its psychological effects on human conscious and disempowerment on the natives.

Aimé Césaire was also an influential figure in shaping the ideas of postcolonial theory. In *Discourse on Colonialism* (1955), he argues that colonization decivilizes and degrades the colonizers. Césaire quotes a number of colonial officers recounting some of their actions against colonized peoples. Colonel de Montagnac, one of the conquerors of Algeria writes: *"In order to banish the thoughts that sometimes besiege me, I have some heads cut off, not the heads of artichokes but the heads of men"* (40). Yet another colonialist, Saint-Arnaud, gallantly declares: "We lay waste, we burn, we plunder, we destroy the houses and the trees" (40). Césaire's point is to show the barbarity of the colonial practice, which claims its civility and humanism as propaganda to influence the public view and justify its rule.

Influenced highly by the ideas of Karl Marx, Césaire supposes that the Western civilization created two problems: "the problem of the proletariat and the colonial problem; that Europe is unable to justify itself either before the bar of reason or before the bar of conscience; and that, increasingly, it takes refuge in a hypocrisy which is all the more odious because it is less and less likely to deceive" (*Discourse on Colonialism* 31). Césaire argues that the Westerner's big excuse for colonization as a 'civilizing mission' is a lie. It is "neither evangelization, nor a philanthropic enterprise, nor a desire to push back the frontiers of ignorance, disease and tyranny, nor a project undertaken for the greater glory of God, nor an attempt to extend the rule of law" (31). Thus, Césaire reveals the constructed myth of civilizing mission that relies almost on religious grounds to dominate minds, and claim superiority and auspices bestowed from heavens.

Western colonization is designed on economic interest for exploration, expansionism, exploitation, and domination of the lands and its people. Thus, colonialism under the shadow of 'civilizing mission' is hypocrite in nature and aims at delusion and deception to the natives and to the European people. It also aimes at, as Césaire notes, the 'thingification' of the colonized subjects, i.e. natives become not human beings worthy of human rights or respect,

but things or objects merely to be used, driven around, beaten and, when the need arises, killed in the name of a law and order rooted in injustice and barbarism.

Albert Memmi, another influential writer of the first wave of postcolonial theory, wrote a book in 1957, "*The Colonizer and the Colonized*". As a Tunisian whose native country was embracing emancipatory movements, Memmi studies the psychological effects of colonialism on both the colonizer and the colonized. His status as a native Tunisian and a non-Muslim nourished his ideas of 'twofold rejection' and 'twofold liability'. He maintains that the colonizers do not worry about their dehumanizing colonization as much as maintaining their dominance and keeping the interest flowing from the colony where they reside.

1-14-3-2 Criticism of the Colonial Discourse

It is known that the study of postcolonial literature has emerged almost entirely by the publication of *"Orientalism"*, the critical work of Edward Said in 1978. In her book "*Post Colonial Theory. A Critical Introduction",* Leela Gandhi argues that Orientalism is regarded as the starting point of the first phase of postcolonial theory (64). Edward Said made a revolutionary revelation in his seminal book *Orientalism* (1978) by revealing that the crucial power of the British Empire is cultural Imperialism, through which it acquired political and economic power in the colonized territories. Based on Foucault's thesis that knowledge equates power, Said explains that via creating and violating the *episteme*, i.e. via cumulating and manipulating knowledge about the colonized, the British Empire could easily subjugate and dominate it. At the same time, however, the colonial system was reinforced as it silenced the colonized subjects by diffusing the English culture and language in the colonies. English cultural values were exported and promulgated as superior to the putative primitivism of the indigenous people. Robert Phillipson (1992) identifies this complex phenomenon as English linguistic Imperialism and defines it as follows: "The dominance of English is asserted and

maintained by the establishment and continuous reconstitution of structural and cultural inequalities between English and other languages"(47).

According to Edward Said (1994), 'Orientalism' refers to the Imperialist discourse in which cultures "make representations of foreign cultures the better to master or in some ways control them"(100). These representations "developed and emphasized the essentialist positions in European culture proclaiming that Europeans should rule, non-Europeans be ruled" (100). Said's concerns are representations and their place within discourse. Therefore, *Orientalism* deals with the representation of Eastern cultures in Western thought. The "Orient" is a Western construction, designated to differentiate and dominate the Eastern cultures. The 'Orient' is one of the West's deepest and most recurrent images of the *Other* who is separate ans different from the West. The Western Orientalist artists and writers have generated and reinforced this image of the East such as Rudyard Kipling, Jean-Leon Gérome, and Gustave Flaubert.

One of the most striking gestures of abandoning the hegemony of cultural Imperialism was and has been casting off the colonizer's languages. However, a lot of African, Indian and other postcolonial writers have embraced English, which proves the fact that the English language continues to be a highly valuable asset for both leading powers, the United Kingdom and the USA. English with its status as the *lingua franca* (from Italian, Frankish language or common language) of the contemporary world is not just a means of communication, but can be transformed into a dynamic site of resistance when used in a purposeful manner not only to represent native cultures, but to subvert the traditional discourse and break its standards to convey a creative language use with distinct content to the global readership.

It is important to mention the central issues common to the multidimensional concerns of postcolonial literature, among which are the dilemma of identity and the ways in which writers articulate their protagonists' national consciousness after the collapse of colonial

dominance. Moreover, postcolonial studies are engaged with place and displacement and the tremendously complex phenomenon of culture and multiculturalism, while being inherently attached to the postcolonial crisis of identity. The discipline also addresses other issues related to gender, race, ethnicity, language, etc.

Together with Edward Said, Homi Bhabha and Gayatri Spivak form what Robert Young describes in his book *Colonial Desire* (1995) as 'The Holy Trinity' of postcolonial criticism. Both Bhabha and Spivak develop substantially the work initiated by Said. Being influenced by Michelle Foucault's ideas, Said (1978) highlights the colonial discourse used by Westerners to subjugate and impose their power and superiority towards total control and disempowerment of native minds and lands. Said (1978) also explains how the Oriental silence and passivity has paved the way for the Western Imperialism to take controm through its ideological hegemony.

On the other hand, Spivak focuses on the gendered colonized subject whose agency is apprpriated by both the native and foreign authority during the colonial and neocolonial era. Spivak uses Antonio Gramsci's notion of the 'subaltern' (marginalized social group in Italy) and extends it to the Indian female subject in her essay *Can the Subaltern Speak?* (1988), she contends that the subaltern position is worse than the oppressed because its voice is denied and muted by both patriarchal and Imperial authorities. Later on, the subaltern classes came to cover inferior social ranks such as the peasants, workers and other groups disagreed to access to a hegemonic power. In addition to other discussed issues in her essay, Spivak insists on women to resist the double hegemony, reappropriate her agency, and articulate her interests and concerns through authentic representation in the dominated male sphere. She defined the subaltern as any social group that is in any way outside of the hegemonic power structure. Hegemony refers to a manner of ruling in which the upper class manipulates the culture into adopting upper class principles as the social norm (similar to Fanon's idea of Blacks having to

wear the white mask). In order for the subaltern to be recognized and exercise some power, it must in some way adopt hegemonic performances (in this case, of the West culture and language).

As Spivak is more concerned about the gendered politics, she discusses the subjectivity of the female subaltern because it reveals greater degrees of economic, cultural and political marginalization than her male counterpart. In her essay *Three Women's Texts and a Critique of Imperialism* (1985), Spivak gives a great weight to the agency of Western women within colonialism; she also sympathizes with the symbolic roles which Western women are forced to perform in colonial discourse, as in *Imperialism and Sexual Difference* (1986). She argues that female intellectuals must speak for the subaltern. Like Said, Spivak also speaks about representation, but in her case, it is not just the colonizers who represent the colonized, there are layers of representations. The female intellectuals sympathetic to the plight of the subaltern are representing them. She agrees with Said that every representation is a misrepresentation. Yet, Spivak thinks that the subaltern is able to develop a political consciousness and to express it, that this representation is the best option available.

Like Spivak, Homi Bhabha acknowledges the vital importance of Edward Said in initiating his own project to extend aspects of *Orientalism*. One of the considerable improvements to postcolonial studies is his argument in the distortion of the colonized subjectivity by the weight of the Western cultural hegemony. Unlike Said and Spivak, Bhabha questions the effectiveness of Western hegemony on the colonized subject through the latter's resistance during the process of psychological *acculturation* (learning the *Other*'s culture). Being deeply engaged with place and displacement, Bhabha (1994) contends that when two cultures intermix, the process yields hybrid identities. Bhabha challenges the homogeneous Western discourse and introduces cultural and identitary heterogeneity through his concepts of hybridity, mimicry, third-space, and ambivalence. In his *Of Mimicry and Man* (1984) Bhabha

introduces his concept of 'mimicry', which comes from the verb to mimic or to imitate. Bhabha asserts that the colonized subject is made to imitate the white man and his culture in order to be recognized. However, mimicry is embedded in resistance as it entails the strategy of *camouflage* (purposeful coverage of one's identity) in order to distort the colonizer's gaze and avoid the recognition of diffrerence, creating an instance of ambivalance or unclear identity, sometimes threatening. Bhabha extends his concept of ambivalence, which literally means the coexistence of contradictory feelings or impulses toward the same object. Bhabha uses the term to account for the difficult situation of the subaltern subject torn between the material benefits authoritative institutions sometimes brings (recognition, appraisal, etc.) and the crushing weight of the loss of gegemonic frames of reference. Bhabha goes on to introduce the concept of hybridity in his essay *Location of Culture* (1994) to stress the interdependence of the colonizer and the colonized and to argue that one cannot claim a purity of racial or cultural identity. All identity, he maintains, is produced in a kind of 'third-space', which is "in-between" the subject and their idealized other, a liminality. As such, the hybrid identity is foregrounded in difference, and is resistant to all the imposition of fixed and unitary identification.

I-14-4 Aspects of Postcolonial Literature

Preoccupied with the common aspects of postcolonial literature, one has to identify the range of concerns and characteristics of this field to have a better understanding of its specificity. While it is agreed that postcolonial literatures portray the repercussions of the violence of colonialism upon the native individual and collective subjectivities institutions, it also expresses a challenge against the hegemonic forms of knowledge and its production, as well as against all for all forms of subjugation and oppression. In the book The Empire Writes Back (1989), Bill Ashcroft et al describe these concerns and characteristics as follows:

I-14-4-1 Concerns

a) **Reclaiming spaces and places:** Indeed, the violence enacted by the colonial machinery has had negative effects upon the native lands, cultures, and peoples. As postcolonial literature reflects upon the socio-cultural, political, and psychological image of the relevant context, it attempts at confronting the traumas and alienation resultig from the violence to restore the conncetion between people and their land through narrative dramatization.

b) **Asserting cultural integrity**: One of the strategies of the colonial practice is suppressing and degrading native cultures and heritage and replacing it with their supposed to be superior culture. Henceforth, one of the key resistant acts is by writing about and documenting native cultures to preserve them from perishing. This represents an act of self-assertion and showing pride in one's native culture and traditions.

c) **Revising history**: As Edward Said maintains in his book Orientalism, the colonial discourse misrepresented the native subjects and cultures as backward, degenerate, timeless, and efeminate. Postcolonial literatures aim at the authentic representation of the experience of the native people with the silencing and terrorizing efforts of the colonial rule. They attempt to revise the history that was written by the victors who portrayed themselves as heroes and saviors and natives as barbarians and savages.

I-14-4-2 Characteristics

a) **Resistant descriptions:** In order to resist the stereotypical images and misrepresentations perpetuated through legal, educational, political and social writings, postcolonial writers write about their cultures, places and traditions in details to counter the colonial discourse.

b) **Appropriation of the colonizers' language:** Postcolonial writers sought to appropriate colonial languages and remold it through the incorporation of native syntax and rhythms, and

creative usage to subvert the hegemony of linguistic imperialism and to write back to the colonial metropolis with individualized version of colonial language.

c) Reworking colonial art-forms: Additionally, postcolonial writers rework European art standards such as the novel in incorporating native ways and content in their narratives. The aim is to deconstruct Western epistemology and creatively reflect local culture in the production of hybridized forms and language.

I-15 Conclusion

In this chapter, we have traced the development of the conceptualization of the *self* from the early ages with the Eastern and Western philosophical underpinnings to the ferment of positivist ideas and the experimental approach leading up to Sigmund Freud's groundbreaking theory of the unconscious and the tripartite levels of personality, as well as the role of the sexual aspect in the internalization of socio-cultural gendered standards, and shaping human personality. We then have explored the proliferation of psychoanalytical studies of the neo-Freudians with ego psychology and object-relations theory. Of significant relevance to our study of selfhood is Carl Jung's analytical psychology and his notions of the collective unconscious and archetypes. Moreover, Adler's social approach to psychoanalysis and his notions of inferiority/superiority complex, social interest, as well as his rejection of Freud's concept of *penis envy* are pertinent to our analysis of the individual aspect of psychology. His theory highlights the social forces and individualistic creativity in shaping human personality. In investigating the individualistic aspect to identity formation, we have examined the humanistic psychology through Maslow's theory of motivation and the hierarchy of needs to achieving fulfillment and self-actualization.

Regarding identity formation and self-fulfillment in the feminist thought, we have considered Karen Horney's subversion of Freud's androcentric theory through her notion of

male 'womb envy'. Similar to the neo-Freudians, Horney highlights the socio-cultural and environmental factors that shape one's personality. In order to investigate the feminist approach to the study of selfhood construction and psychanalysis, we have traced the development of feminist thought and activism up to the modern age with European, American and French feminism. The latter was influenced by the Jacques Lacan's psychoanalytic theory and his concepts of the Imaginary, the Symbolic, the Real and the Phallus. The feminist thought insists on the socio-cultural aspect of constructing gendered identities and on the violent aspect of patriarchal indoctrination that annihilates female subjectivity, and inhibits her fulfillment and self-actualization beyond the androcentric projection of ideal femininity. To contextualize our feminist study, we have examined the development of ethnocentric feminisms and its concerns through the proliferation of postcolonial and Arab feminisms.

Speaking about postcolonialism, we have inspected the development of postcolonial theory from its concern with the criticism of colonial machinery and practice to its criticism of the colonial discourse and essentialist assumptions and misrepresentations. We have relied in our investigation of the construction of identity on Fanon's concept of 'inferiority complex', Said's theory of Orientalism, Spivak's notion of 'agency' and the 'subaltern', and Bhabha's theory of hybridity. Additionally, we have investigated the concerns and characteristics of postcolonial literature to lay the ground for our literary corpora that is taken from the vast field of postcolonial women literature. In doing so, we have provided the theoretical background to our analytical study; the next chapter shall investigate the cultural background for a thorough reading of our literary corpora.

CHAPTER TWO:

THE PROJECTIONS OF FEMININITY

II-1 Introduction

Taking as a starting point the assumption that literature is an artistic reflection of life with a didactic function, it is imperative for us to fully investigate the first half of this assumption in order to fairly grasp the second half of it. To pursue this aim, we find ourselves compelled to explore the contextual background laying behind the production of the literary work for a thorough understanding of the author's concerns. Henceforth, the review of the web of biographical, historical, socio-cultural, political, economic, as well as the literary aspects operating at a given period of time in a given geographical zone is necessary for the analysis of our textual corpora. Taken the fact that these novels are written by women during the late decades of the twentieth century, it is important to relate the workings of their inherent discourse within the feminist and postcolonial framework. Knowing that women writing is essentially distinct from men's writing due to the differences in the psychological, biological, historical, creative, as well as the socio-cultural levels, this study investigates this gendered specificity through its cultural background.

Drawing from the selected literary works of Shashi Deshpande, Ahlem Mosteghabemi, and Ahdaf Soueif, which exemplify women postcolonial writing of the late twentieth century, we intend to build cultural bridges between their geographical areas on the basis of their common concerns regarding the representation of the effect of androcentric hegemony on women self-fulfillment and an authentic development of identity. Taking as a starting point that fact that each of the Indian, Algerian and Egyptian societies is unique, a product of its own history in a distinct context and with its own characteristic economies and cultural values, we shall investigate the cross-cultural patterns in the perpetuation of a coherent patriarchal authority that impedes women from achieving self-fulfillment in the late twentieth century. In doing so, we shall divide this chapter into three major parts; each consists of relevant points related to the authors' context.

Of pertinent relevance to our study is Sophie and Michael Tharakan (1975) statement that the "study of the status of women in any society must examine the social organization of that society, which in turn is based on primary economic relations" (115). It is generally taken that the foundation of any power relations in a given society is based on the value of labour performed by its members. Henceforth, primitive society did not differentiate between the two sexes at the dawn of human civilization since its nature was characterized by "society of clones" (Kuper 1988) that is maitained by mechanical relations of reproduction. Moreover, contemporary anthropologist research has shown that primitive societies relied on the logic of marriage and descent for the continuity of their homogeneous lineage, and on identifying the child to his father rather than to his mother. From this standpoint, the patriarchal feature automatically came to characterize the structure of forthcoming extended societies with their heterogeneous and complex quality, giving birth to the notion of political identities as a consequence of population growth and displacement of people and goods. (Robertson 2001). As the constituted social groups sought mutual exchange and cooperation, their markets expanded making way for automatic evolution. The concept of 'social evolutionism' is considered by the American anthropologist Julian Steward (1955) to take distinct pathways in accordance to the specifity of the given environment in terms of its local conditions.

Ruminating on the evolution of Western civilization towards industrial and technological progressive advances, it seems clear that their development has consumed the human and material capital of the African and South Asian continents. The latter, ecologically being self-sufficient societies, have lagged behind due to the ongoing Imperialistic exploitation through institutionalized dominance and systematic violence. The anti-colonial movements for independence, which revealed the barbarity of the European colonial system in the African and South Asian context, have ripened in the twentieth century and culminated in the armed struggle and eventual emancipation of colonized territories. Considering the Indian, Algerian and

Egyptian contexts, we shall investigate the way Western paradigms of culture and globalization have had a significant impact during and after independence on the native cultures, drawing them necessarily into modernization. Henceforth, the study of the dynamic changes of the economic and political aspects is required for an elaborate examination of the status of women within each distinct socio-cultural context.

The status of women in postcolonial countries has evolved in the second half of the twentieth century with the colonies' independence and the establishment of their own constitutions in which women earned many rights, such as equal opportunity to education, voting, and standing for political office. In fact, the female's exposure to the violence of the anti-colonial struggle and her direct/indirect military involvement in the war prove the general realization about the equal necessity of her participation in the emancipatory strife against colonization. However, the traditional ethnic and gender hierarchies based on male power and superiority persisted in the postcolonial era as the socio-cultural norms and gender roles. After independence, women were expected to return to the domestic and familial sphere and leave the economic and political arena to their male counterparts. However, the scientific and economic advances, as well as the development of international relationships have opened the world to a globalized culture and exchange. Additionally, the *bourgeois'* (From French, a social class primarily concerned with property value) female education and participation in the postcolonial realm of professional and economic activity led to the necessary and gradual undermining of the traditional norms in order to enable the female population to contribute to the new economic demands of their developing countries. This urgent transition from colonized traditional societies to independent modern societies created political, socio-cultural and psychological dilemmas at both the individual and national levels in what is referred to as the 'dialectics of tradition and modernity'.

As these former colonies, namely India, Algeria and Egypt initiated their pursuit in establishing their nation-states and ensuring their national autonomy and authority, many necessities and challenges appeared in terms of economic, social, political, and cultural interests. The society reflected this transition that has shaken the stability of traditional social norms and constructs. The effects reveal a state of tension and incompatibility due to the political decisions that were born out of the needs and concerns of the ruling authorities and then enforced on the majority of the traditional population. This pressure at social development and reform was not gradually brought about as in the Western world but is rather premature, leading to a complex and multifaceted crisis that affected many levels.

In an academic quest to peruse this crisis in the produced literary texts of that era, this research study examines the effects of modernization urges at both the individual and national levels. It is a literary investigation that seeks the repercussions of the political reforms and socio-cultural norms on women advancement in the three selected novels: the Indian writer Shashi Deshpande's *The Dark Holds No Terrors* 1980, and the Algerian writer Ahlem Mostaghanemi's *Chaos of the Senses* 1997, and the Egyptian writer Ahdaf Soueif *In the Eye of the Sun*. Our literary corpora is based on women writing and selected according to precise issues regarding the double load of burden that is put upon women in the postcolonial efforts at development which is contradictory and confusing. On the one hand, women face the urging duty of participation in developing their newly independent nation with the granted rights that encourage them to pursue educational, professional and political careers. On the other hand, the younger generations of these postcolonial nations find themselves confronting the discriminatory attitudes resulting from the hegemony of the patriarchal and caste systems that impinges the progressist advances of modernization. Although our selected authors come from different geographical and socio-cultural backgrounds, they intersect in common points such as

their stream of consciousness, mode of narration and their concerns about women equal rights in climbing the ladder of self-fulfillment.

Because the aim of the present study is to provide a detailed and well-structured investigation and argumentation of the status of women in each society, this chapter contextualizes the nexus between the historical, economic, political, cultural and biographical aspects that constitutes the impetus behind the production of our selected corpora. By offering a detailed and focused historical sketch of the development of women status and the feminist movement in each nation, we intend to present the cultural framework on which further criticism and analysis of the corpora would be built. Moreover, this chapter shall investigate the development of feminist thought and concerns for each selected author to explore the lenses through which 'the postcolonial woman question' has been identified, defined, and dealt with.

II-2 Status of Women in the Indian Society

This section traces the trajectory of the status of Indian women throughout history through the sacred beliefs and texts of Indian people as well as the impact of foreign colonization and the mobility of ideas and values across cultures.

II-2-1 *Vedic* Age (1500- 1200 BCE)

In discussing the position of women in Indian society, it is important to trace a chronology of the historical evolution of the Indian culture at different epochs. According to Mina Galbraith Cowan (1912), a British academic and political activist for Indian women education, the Indian society has developed through three main cultures, namely the *Vedic* (relating to the *Vedas*, its language and history), the Muslim and the Western one (29). The history of India begins with the early Indus Valley Civilization (early civilization in the northwestern regions of South Asia), lasting from 3300 to 1300 BCE in a time when the ancient

Egyptian and Mesopotamian civilization flourished. Little is known about the *Indus* culture, as living scripts are not fully deciphered. After the collapse of the latter civilization, the *Aryans* who are Indo-European peoples moved southward from Central Asia, and constituted what is known as the period of the *Vedic* age (1500 up to 500 BCE). It was named after the *Vedas*: the oldest sacred texts of *Hinduism*. According to Sophie and Michael Tharakan (1975), "the Aryans had established their suzerainty over the various non-Aryan tribes in the Gangetic plain. Incorporation of the dasyus into the emerging varna or caste system as inferiors in effect created a master-slave relationship" (118). In other words, the *Vedic* society is established on power relations based on *varnas* (Sanskrit word, denoting the four major social classes), which created asymmetric relations and norms. The purpose is to divide the responsibilities of life order of each group to keep the interaction between them harmonious and eternal.

Concerning the early status of women in the early *Vedic* tradition, the ancient *Hindu* teachings show that women had a crucial position for their important role in society. *Vedic* women were not confined to the domestic sphere; education and religious participation were allowed for them. Regarding education and learning, women enjoyed equal respect and rights to the access of educational, intellectual and spiritual endeavours. As this *Vedic* passage reveals: "girls should train themselves to become complete scholars and youthful through Brahmcharya and then enter married life" (*Atharva* 11.5.18). It seems clear that the ancient *Hindus* were aware of the importance of women education for a better construction of a family and society in general. The study of the *RigVeda* (ancient Vedic Sanskrit hymns) demonstrates that women were divided into two groups; the *Brahmavadinis* and the *Sadyodvahas*. The former term refers to the women who pursued the scholarly and spiritual quest without seeking marriage, and the latter term denotes the women who studied till they got married. Worth mentioning is the fact that the institution of marriage was desirable but not obligatory for both sexes. The Indian academic Roma Chaudhuri (1993) asserts in her research about ancient Indian women

education that many women at the *Vedic* period preferred a life devoted to the scholarly and spiritual pursuits, making their place among "the best ascetics of the world" (95) memorable. The Indian academic also mentions that "the acquisition of supreme philosophical realization on the part of women, at the very dawn of human civilization, was unparalleled in the history of the world", referring to the degree of importance and gender equality the Ancient *Vedic* society is characterized by. Moreover, women pioneered not only in the fine arts but also in the martial arts as noted in *the hymn of the female seer Ghosha* (10.39, 40) and the *Shashiyasi* (5.61.6, 5.61.9) where we identified references to women warriors fighting along with their male counterparts in wars.

As for women and family, the *Vedic* society emphasizes monogamy and nuclear family, which allows women to enjoy a basic social status with men. Additionally, the newly wed woman is regarded as a blessing to the household and occupies the position of the mistress to her house (Pusulkar 392-3), and an equal partner to her husband (Indra 69). Moreover, the bride should not be under seventeen or eighteen, and she had the right to choose her partner equally with men under the system of *Gandharva Vivaha* or love marriage (Tharakan 118). The Indian scholar Kanailal Motilal Kapadia argues in her book *Marriage and Family in India* that the *Vedic* wives accompanied their husbands to attend religious ceremonies and assemblies. The widow also enjoyed the right for remarriage as revealed in the funeral hymn (10.18.8 R): "The widow who lay on the pyre by the side of her dead husband was asked to come to the world of the living" (Kapadia 59).

II-2-2 Declining Shift of Indian Women Status: Later *Vedic* Age (1100-500 BCE)

Worth noting is the fact that *RigVedic* society assumes the stratification of its society into tribal divisions which gave the burgeoning seeds for the development of the caste system.

Interestingly, the *Vedic* caste system holds that one's social status and occupation is eternally transmitted through birth. Nevertheless, the acclaimed historian Dwijendra Narayan Jha, author of *Ancient India: An Introductory Outline*, argues that compartmentalization between castes during the early *RigVedic* period (1500-1200 BCE) is not strict as inter-caste marriages were common and caste mobility through ones qualities. He adds: "In one case, the father was a priest, the mother grinder of corn, and the son a physician, all three lived happily together" (Jha 11). Initially divided into two major groups; the *Arya Varna* (noble people) and *dasa Varna* (subordinate peoples), the caste system developed with time to incorporate four caste distinctions; the *Brahmins* (priests and scholars), *Kshatriyas* (kings, governors, and warriors), *Vaishyas* (cattle herders, agriculturists, artisans, and merchants), and *Shudras* (laborers and service providers). The fifth group, the Untouchables or *Dalits*, is hostorically documented to have been excluded from the caste system, denied the basic human rights, subjected to the worst prejudice, and performed the undesirable work. The Dalits "had to undergo atrocities in the Brahman dominated culture and have been victims of exploitation and marginalization since ages" (Boussebha and Bedjaoui 110). Thus, their plight extends in history to the present day.

Economically speaking, Sophie and Michael Tharakan (1975) argue that the development of the caste system is linked to the evolution of the economic system to "the consolidation of private property and commodity production" (118), in addition to the discovery and use of copper and iron in the agricultural activities, which favoured the male interests in gaining more property over the land and its natural wealth. As such, the value of female's role in the productive society decreased as her male counterpart had the control over the wealth. Moreover, the advent of the lower castes and their employment relegated women to the household prioritizing her natural reproductive abilities. Besides, the *Aryans* brought with them their polygamic culture into the Indian society and took wives from the *dasyu* tribes. In doing so, polygamy worsened the status of women where they previously reigned as the mistresses of

their houses. The authors also report that the restrictive attitudes towards women started to develop with the "advocacy for reduction of the age of marriage which eventually ended possibilities for girls' education" (119). The advocacy of young girls' marriage reached its peak around the second century AD, when girls were encouraged to marry even before puberty (119).

II-2-3 *Manusmitri* **Teachings**

During the *Manusmriti* rule (ancient legal text adopted in the period 1250 to 1000 BCE) that followed the *RigVedic* period, the status of women further declined with the *Law of Manu* (Sacred *Vedic* text) that insisted on the notion of women chastity and the institution of monogamous marriage. However, Percival Spear contends that "while monogamy was generally practiced there were conspicuous exceptions in the case of Brahmins, Rajas and higher nobles" (qtd. in Tharakan 119), alluding to the double standards of this society which tolerated polygamy, adulthood, and remarriage for men and condemns it for women. The *Manu code* declares: "in childhood a woman must be subject to her father, in youth to her husband and when her lord is dead, to her sons. A woman must never be independent" (qtd in Tharakan 119). As noted, Indian women during this period were strictly restrained by the patriarchal system of lordly male guardianship stripping them of autonomous subjectivity. The Indian woman is reduced to an object of the patriarchal authority and expected to perform her biological role as a mother and wife and be confined to the domestic sphere.

II-2-4 Emergence of the *Sati* **Practice**

The academics Sophie and Michael Tharakan (1975) explain that the *Sati* code (*Hindu* practice of widow sacrifice) was first discussed by the *Smriti* writers (from Sanskrit, referring

to the tradition that is remembered) in the fifth century AD through the widow of Goparaja[37] and Yasomati, the mother of King Harsha instances[38]. It is until the eight century that the *Sati* (or Suttee) is clearly advocated as a practice that is based on the extremist premise of the wife's eternal chastity, devotion and salvation. The practice reveals the extreme degeneration of women's status in the *Hindu* society through the self-immolation of the widow at her husband's funeral pyre. It also shows the degree to which *Hindu* women had to blindly worship their husbands, and the patriarchal laws to death. Her role was confined to the obedience of her father who takes the decision of her marriage, and service to her husband and children.

II-2-5 Muslim Conquest (11th -15th Century)

It is generally maintained that the advent of Islam in the eleventh century did not improve the situation for *Hindu* women as some of the Quranic instructions about the conduct of women were misused to justify those of the previous *Manu code*. As Sophie and Michael Tharakan report, "women were denied any place in religious organizations and legal affairs. Neither did they enjoy effective property inheritance rights. The Muslim period saw the popularization of the *durkha* (*purdah*) and seclusion of women, polygamy and unilateral right of divorce for men" (120). The *Hindu* distrust and prejudice held towards women capacities is embedded in the *purdah* practice which prevents women from taking part in a meeting or assembly, i.e. equal right to freedom of expression. Henceforth, *Hindu* women during the Muslim conquest did not enjoy social equality. The myth of gender equality is suspected in many areas such as marriage, inheritance, religious participation, divorce, and social activities.

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[37] The 510 CE inscription at Eran mentioning the wife of Goparaja, a vassal of Bhanugupta, burning herself on her husband's pyre is considered to be a Sati stone (Majumdar and Altekar 190)

[38] Yasomati is an ancient Indian queen who burnt herself alive at her husband's funeral pyre. (Pigoń 126)

II-2-6 Western Liberalisation Impact (19th century-)

During the age of the European colonial expansion, the Indian subcontinent that was ruled by the *Mughal Empire* (from *Mongols* of Mongolia, their dynasty lasted from 1526-1761) and the East India Company (British trade company with the East Indies, operated from 1600 to 1873) fell under the British Imperial rule after the unsuccessful Indian Rebellion of 1857. Almost all present day India, Bangladesh, and Pakistan became parts of the *British Raj* (from Sanskrit, it means direct rule of the British from 1858 to 1947) under the Crown of Queen Victoria in 1858. Being aware of the ills of the *Hindu* society and especially the inhumane treatment of widows and the "untouchables", the British administration aimed at prohibiting the *Hindu* rite of *Sati* by declaring it as an illegal act and a crime. As Sophie and Michael Tharakan (1975) state: "towards the beginning of the nineteenth century, Indian public opinion and British liberal reformism were both in favour of putting an end to at least some of the previously unjust traditions and practices" (120-1), alluding to the mutual accord between unorthodox *Hindu* groups and the British in prohibiting some of the *Hindu* barbaric rites which are deeply rooted in religious belief. Significantly, the regulation by William Bentick in 1829, which condemns the *Sati* practice, is considered as one of the reform efforts initiated by the British government. However, though the practice of *Sati* is prohibited and does not anymore exist, the attitudes sustaining it still persist as Pratima Ashana is reported to explain in *The Wrongs of Indian Womanhood* the *Hindu* widow's strict norms in the Legislative Council of India on 17 November 1855:

> Not only must she see no man, she must also avoid every approach to ease, finery and pleasure. She must neglect the care of her person, must wear no ornaments; her hair must be shaved or at least must be worn disheveled. She must not see her face in a mirror, nor use perfume or flowers, must not anoint her body; and her dress must be coarse and dirty. The use of any kind of convoyance is prohibited. And she must not rest in bed. Her food is limited as to quantity and quality. She must not take more than a single coarse meal a day. Besides other facts perhaps a

dozen in a year, a Hindu widow is required to abstain absolutely from food and drink from

which not even severe sickness can give her dispensation. (qtd. in Norvell 14)

We note the strict tone of obligations imposed on the *Hindu* widow to merely exist in a rugged, poor and dirty way. She is regarded as selfless woman who must give up on life because her cause for it, i.e. husband, is dead.

Worth noting is that the Reform movement during nineteenth century India aimed at attacking religious superstitions and dogmatic beliefs and attitudes. The advent of British rule and the impact of the European culture exposed the decadence of many *Hindu* social institutions especially those having a relation to gender and ethnicity segregation. Through Westernized education, there emerged among the Indians a class of elite people who questioned the culture of their own society. Influenced by the rationalist thought and critical inquiry, many Indian activists and intellectuals such as Mahadev Govind Ranade, Ram Mohan Roy Ishwar, M.G. Ranade Dayanand Saraswati and Chandra Vidyasagar, among many, denounced the caste system, idolatry and the oppression of women by the *Hindu* tradition. Sophie and Michael Tharakan (1975) report: "a compaign against early marriages also gathered strength. As a result, by 1929 legislation was passed fixing 14 as the minimum age for marriage of girls" (121). Moreover, *Hindu* widows were granted with their property rights in 1937 to inherit the husband's property.

In addition to the change in political economy towards industrialization and the rise of a *bourgeois* class of Indian individuals who received Western education and sought professional careers at the administrative sections, the status of Indian women improved gradually towards their liberation. The elite class of intellectuals acted as mediators between the rationalist thought of the Western civilization and the traditional attitudes of their native people. Their efforts at the reform of popular *Hinduism* and the disapproval of segregation, ignorance, and oppression yielded positive results in changing gradually the attitudes and issuing laws protecting women education, widow remarriage, and raising the age of marriage

for both sexes. In doing so, women could get their access to the public sphere and participate in the social, economic, and political areas.

Moreover, the charter of the United Nations signed in 1945 reaffirms its faith in the fundamental human rights, and in the equal rights of men and women as a proclamation for its promotion of women advancement and self-fulfillment. The nationalist movement for the independence of India from the British control supported the cause for women emancipation. Mahatma Gandhi (1869-1948) expanded his campaigns for women rights and declares: "I am uncompromising in the matter of women's rights. I have always had a passion to serve the womankind (…) My experience has confirmed me in the view that the real advancement of women can only come by and through their own efforts" (Aloo and Usha 18). Gandhi also refuted purdah practice, child marriage, dowry and *Sati* (Norvell). Sophie and Michael Tharakan (1975) highlight the fact that the nationalist movement and Gandhi's appeal encouraged many women for the struggle of their own rights and resulted in the *Hindu* Code Bills of the 1950s in post-independence India, and other educational and proprietary measures (122). The independence of India from the British Empire in 1947 urged the new nation to pursue development in the direction of Westernization and modernization. As Rupert Emerson (1967) elaborates in his book *From Empire to Nation: The Rise to Self-assertion of Asian and African Peoples* on the significant impact of Western culture on the native cultures:

> Education on western lines for both the elite and the masses was eagerly sought. This education plus economic and other pressures brought a swing toward acceptance of individualism and a far greater measure of egalitarianism in social and political life. The Indian caste system was undermined by the conditions of factory work and of travel on train and bus. (11)

As elaborated in this excerpt, the Indian nation and its elite embraced the Western based values of respect for the individual and the common man, as well as the boons which the Western civilization can provide for them with the machine industry and productive facilities. The Constitution of India enacted several progressive legislations in the second half of the twentieth

century safeguarding women's interests including the *Hindu* Marriage Act in 1955, the *Hindu* Succession Act 1956, the *Hindu* Adoption and Maintenance Act 1956, Special Marriage Act 1954, and Dowry Prohibition Act 1961, which provide women with equal rights to divorce and remarriage, as well as the adoption of kids for childless wives, and to inter-caste marriage. Regarding education, health and employment, the number of women pursuing education gradually increased especially after the government granted them with many facilities and opportunities. Indian women have also been provided with opportunities for recruitment in all fields of life. Nonetheless, the awareness of Indian women about their rights is influenced by their background, and economic status. The government also set up plans of action and programmes for women advancement and welfare.

However, this advance towards modern progress is a direct revolution against the old ways of life of the Indian heterogeneous culture. It posits an external menace for the large base of the social pyramid which is made up of the masses who are generally illiterate, poor, and have little consciousness about the global concerns of life. Such urge for development initiated by the crust of elite individuals to go through a sudden shift against their deeply rooted societal norms leads to an identity crisis and cultural dilemma. The African and Asian nationalists found that their post-independent nations are still under new forms of Imperialism at the economic and cultural level. Their current efforts are aimed at denunciating the subordination to the Western model of development and independently generate their relevant and effective models to progressive advancement in a process that is convergent to the Western one.

II-2-7 Indian Women Writers and their Contribution to Feminism

Indian women have been documented to writing about their concerns and interests as early as the *Vedic* age. The Indian scholar Shruti Jain (2017) reports in her Ph.D. thesis *Redefining Feminism-Going beyond Waves; a Study of Select Indian Women Writers*:

> Therigatha is one of the first Indian women writings, which demands freedom from both sexual and physical bondage. For instance, Sumangalamata, in one of her poems brings out the frustrations of leading an oppressive domestic life. She expresses her desire to be free from the toil of household chores and domination of men. (4)

However, their works have been devalued by the coming generations that held suppressive and discriminatory attitudes towards women. Moreover, Indian women were confined to the domestic sphere and their subjectivity was violated reducing it to their biological attributes and procreative responsibilities. They were objectified to mere servants for the service of men, and stereotyped in male writings as either blessed and docile or damned rebels.

By the end of nineteenth century, nonetheless, the first recorded female text appears with Rassundari Devi's autobiography *Amar Jiban* published in 1876. The self-educated author expresses her concerns as a woman trapped to the household chores and needing a personal space for education and studies. As she expresses her thoughts

> I was so immersed in a sea of housework that I was not conscious of what I was going through day and night. After some time the desire to learn grew very strong in me. I was angry with myself for wanting to read books. Girls did not read (...) People used to despise women of learning (...) In fact older women used to show a great deal of displeasure if they saw a piece of paper in the hands of a woman. But somehow I could not accept this. (qtd. In Tharu and Lalita 199)

She depicts the *Zeitgeist* for women education in the Bengali society, which was averse to any change at that time. The author also insists on the importance of women education for their empowerment. Likewise, the Indian author Haimabati Sen deplores the restriction of education

for women in her autobiography *The Memoirs of Dr. Haimabati Sen* through her exploration of the journey of a widow child struggle to become a doctor in rural East Bengal. These two memoirs were originally published in the writer's native language, which is Bengali. The Indian academic Shruti Jain (2020) reports Barbara Southard research on the struggle for Indian women's rights that has begun with the suffrage campaigns in Bengal:

> Reformers like Raja Ram Mohan Roy and Ishwar Chandra Vidyasagar, for instance, argued against the ideas of sati, polygamy, early marriage and permanent widowhood. Further, the Brahmo Samaj gave impetus to mass education of girls and women. The movement for education and social reform was largely led by upper-caste Bengali Women. The reformist movement, as a result, led to various social gains such as the legalization of widow remarriage in 1856 and the abolition of sati. The later part of the struggle remained preoccupied with the issues on property and inheritance, limiting the composition of the movement to upper-caste and elite class women. (qtd. in Shruti Jain 2020)

In the first place, education receives the greater focus for women's struggle towards their equal rights. Yet, the National Policy on Education 1986 declares: "57 per cent of the illiterate population, and 70 percent of the non-enrolled children of school stage are girls" (qtd. in Shruti Jain 19), alluding to the persistence of traditional attitudes towards women in modern India. Alarmingly, the struggle to put an end to the attitudes maintaining the practice of *Sati* is still present as the practice firmly persists among some minority of *Hindu* Orthodox groups.

During the postcolonial era, the economic and political changes, which granted women with their equal rights to education and employment in the new nation, evoked the growing awareness of middle class women. The Indian government granted equal political rights for women and this is reflected in instances where Mrs. Indira Gandhi occupied the position of the prime Minister, Jay Lalita as Chief Minister and Madhuri Shah as Chairman of U.G.C, among many. This feminist consciousness, which gives them the opportunity to take back the control over their life and participate in their nation's reconstruction, created a challenge against

tradition and patriarchy. As the Indian society was not ready to the repercussions of modernization and industrialization that came with independence as a necessity in the course for national development, women faced the double load of identity crisis between tradition and modernity. In the realm of literature, Indian women writers have articulated this dilemma and its psychological effects on the protagonists who are seeking self-fulfillment and advancement under the plight of patriarchy and the Western distorted representation of their victimhood.

Furthermore, one of the concerns of postcolonial Indian writers is to address larger masses of readers all around the globe and to write back to the Imperial metropolis representing authentically the Indian culture and the challenges towards modernity. To reach this goal, they chose writing in English as the *lingua franca* of the contemporary world in addition to translating fiction that is written in the Indian regional languages. Henceforth, language is not merely a means of communication but a strategic tool for a counter discourse on the complex nature of Indian culture. In doing so, Indians have appropriated the English language and added to it some of their local colour, i.e. integrating or blending the native country's rich languages with the English language such as the incorporation of Native regional turns of phrases, expressions, and word-to-word translations. As Salman Rushdie elaborates:

> Language, like much in the newly independent societies, needs to be decolonized, to be made in the other image, if those who use it from positions outside Anglo-Saxon cultures are to be mmore than artistic Uncle Toms. And it is this endeavour that gives the new literatures of Africa, the Caribbean and India much of their vitality and excitement. (qtd. in Dissanayake 233)

This way, Indian writers succeeded in subverting the Western cultural hegemony by hybridizing their literary texts. This usage of the English language with different cultural, rhetorical, and literary norms retains the typical idiomatic structure of the Indian regional colloquial languages such as Hindi, Bengali, and Marathi, among others. The dialogues transferred from Indian into English abound in cultural characteristics of Indian people, such as Indian names, expressions and turns of phrase, metaphors, *Vedic* verses, greetings and forms of address. This fusion of

Indian thinking and English formulation confers a unique quality to their literary style, which allows their bilingual readers to hear the dialogues in Indian in their heads.

Anglophone Indian women writing has been a significant part of the larger canon of literature in English. It began during the British rule in India and flourished after independence. In fiction, writers such as Anita Desai, Jhabvala Jhumpa Lahiri, Kamala Markandaya, Arndhati Roy and Manju Kapoor, among many, have received popular attention and appraisal from the reading public for their social commentary, the realism of their fictional world, narrative art, and the thorough exploration of the inner life of their female protagonists under the plight of patriarchy. The common themes vary according to the contextual preoccupations; for instance, writers of the 1930s were interested in innovation and bringing Western techniques to Indian literature to reflect the rapid pace of changes in the world. Moreover, the rising consciousness about the necessity of independence and nationalism characterized the writings of that era. The political changes that occured later, namely the independence and the partition which followed as well as the Second World War, led to the inward treatment of the social life in India, namely corruption, ideological positioning, and the socio-cultural issues. The latter have received considerable attention during the post-independence era through the preoccupation with the complex nature of Indian culture and the issues related the caste system, religion and the conflict between tradition and modernity. Women writers have reflected upon the latter conlict through the exploration of man-woman relationship which wavers between the need for familiarity and the desire for change and innovation, hence, paving the way for the development of Indian feminist thought and the psychological novel.

The juxtaposition of tradition and modernity in the Indian post-independence era has had significant psychological consequences on both individuals and communities. The paradoxical nature of this cultural phenomenon in independent India led to the conflicting predicament of identity quest, especially that of the female subject. The related issues that are

embedded in the process for change and progressive development involve identity crisis, alienation, resistance, and self-fulfillment. The growth of the feminist consciousness that reflects women-centered perspective on these issues has become a distinct feature in Indian women fiction.

II-2-8 Indian Women Fiction and the Rise of New Concerns of Indian Feminism (40s – 70s)

Many female writers have tackled the clash between tradition and modernity and its impact on women and her self-fulfillment through a feminist lens. The literary works of the renowned female novelist and journalist Kamala Markandeya (1924-2004), including *Nectar in a Sieve* (1954), *A Silence of Desire* (1960), and *The Coffer Dams* (1969), among others, reflect the alienation resulting from the juxtaposition between native traditional values and Western materialistic modernity, in addition to the opposition between life in the rural and urban societies. The female novelist also explores global issues related to alienation, racial discrimination and displacement in her novel *The Nowhere Man* (1972).

The theme of alienation is strongly present in Anita Desai's (1937-) works, a successful Indian female novelist and winner of many literary rewards such as *Sahita Akademi Award* and *British Guardian Prize*. Known as the pioneer of the psychological novel, Desai delves into the inner life of her female characters' psyche, reveals its disturbed state caused by the clash of cultures, and externalizes their social condition. In her interview with Jasbir Jain, Desai declares: "It is depth which is interesting, delving deeper and deeper in a character, a situation, or a scene rather than going round about it" (5). As the Indian scholars Ishita Pundir and Alankrita Singh argue in their article *Portrayal of Women in Indian Fiction*, Desai's first novel, *Cry, the Peacock* (1963), narrates the story of a rebellious woman who resists patriarchy and tradition through three main figures; the authority of her husband, the stereotypical image that

her female friends adopt, and her own religious views in *karma* (Sanskrit word, denoting the principle of cause and effect) and detachment. The protagonist's struggle to assert herself in an inhibiting environment creates within herself a *neurosis,* alienating her from reality. The striking feature of Desai's fiction is the tragic predicament of women holding feminist sensibility in a patriarchal society. This feature appears throughout her novels such as *Voices in the City* 1965, where the female protagonist is frustrated in her marriage and seeks suicide to save herself from a life of unhappiness and subordination. The novelist explores further the theme of desperation and madness in her novel *Where Shall We Go This Summer?* 1975, in which she traces the melancholy of the Brontë sisters.

Other female writers who expressed their straightforward protest to male rule are Kamala Das (1934- 2009) and Gita Hariharan (1954-). Reflecting upon the position of Indian women in a patriarchal society, their literary works clearly present a feminist agenda. The Indian poet, short story teller, and novelist Kamala Das expresses the female's authentic voice as a revelation and a revolt against patriarchal authority. Both of her novel *Alphabet of Lust* 1980 and the short story *A Doll for the Child Prostitute* 1977 are a direct attack to marriage as a patriarchal institution that causes physical and psychological harm to married women. Through the portrayal of the internal conflicts of the female protagonists, the author articulates the frustration and agony in their quest for identity and happy marriage. In doing so, Kamala Das paved the way for the coming generations to voice their predicament in being women in the Indian patriarchal society without inhibition. Likewise, Gita Hariharan condemns male authority over women in her novels. In *The Thousand Faces of Night* 1992, Hariharan advocates women to free themselves from male bondage and denounce the tragic predicament of subservience and docility. As the Indian scholar and critic Abha Shukla Kaushik elaborates on the early phase of Indian feminism:

> Indian feminism is essentially a by-product of Western feminist movement. It has evolved a
> veritable, unifying force in the present day literature, especially Indian English literature. As far

as the Indian feminist writers are concerned, the Indian woman caught in the flux of tradition

and modernity and bearing the burden of past and aspirations of future, forms and crux of their

writing. (237)

This excerpt highlights the double load of burden put on Indian women who are caught between

the desire for advancement and the need to maintain the comfort of tradition. Thus, Indian

feminism is a hybrid form that blends the values of Western liberalisation with the local colour

of Indian condition. Moreover, we can deduce that there is a chronology of the feminist

movement in Indian context, which is related to the concerns and aims of each generation. The

first generation or wave aimed at securing the basic rights, namely education, and the abolition

of certain social evils such as *Sati*, property and inheritance, and widow plight, among others.

The second generation Indian feminism is led by women aiming at criticizing and revealing the

evil effects of the traditional attitudes that hinder women's self-fulfillment in spite of the civil

rights granted to them. Moreover, these attitudes do not only cause problems for women, but

also for men and the man-woman relationship. They destroy men's ego, and blind them to see

evil effects of patriarchy that is rooted in the social order.

II-2-9 Development of Shashi Deshpande's Feminist Thought in her Fiction

One of the prominent Indian female novelists is the contemporary writer Shashi

Deshpande (1938-). Her concerns are distinct from the previously mentioned authors as

Deshpande's focus is on the educated and urban woman who struggles for adjustment as a

daughter, wife and mother in a patriarchal milieu. As the Indian scholar Meena Shirwadkar

states in her book *Image of Woman in the Indo-Anglican Novel*: "writers appear not to have

paid much attention to the recent phenomenon of the educated earning wife and her adjustment

or maladjustment in the family" (45). Deshpande stands among her contemporaries with her

carved niche, which is about the process of adjustment without surrendering one's selfhood to the authority of tradition.

Deshpande was born in 1938 in Dharwad, Karnataka, India, into a family of intellectuals. Her father is the renowned Kannada writer and *Sanskrit* (classical South Asian language of the sacred *Hindu* texts) scholar Adya Rangacharya, also known as Sriranga and Sharada Adya. Shashi Deshpande received her education in Mumbai and Bengalore, and graduated in economics and law. Later on, she took a diploma in journalism in 1970 and an M.A. in English. She married Dr. Deshapande, a neuro-pathologist in 1962, and devoted the initial years of her marriage to the bringing up of her two sons before delving into writing.

With eleven novels, five volumes of short stories, a play, and four children books, Deshpande elaborates on her becoming a writer in her essay *Of Concerns, Of Anxieties* (1996): "There are three things in my life that have shaped me as a writer. These are: that my father was a writer, that I was educated exclusively in English and that I was born a female" (5). Inheriting the love of literature from her father, Shashi Deshpande read British literature and got inspired by many female English authors, especially those having a feminist consciousness namely the Bronte sisters, Jane Austen, Margaret Drabble, Dorris Lessing, and Simone de Beauvoir, among others. She reveals to her interviewer Vanamala: "When I read them, they stimulated me" (9). Talking about the influence her father had on her, she reveals in her latter interview: "He was dominant, never domineering" (9), implying that though her father occupied the position of the house's head, he never imposed his authority on his daughter. This is what enourages her to pursue her studies, and be an agent of change through her writings which reflect upon the position of women in her society.

Speaking about Deshpande's major concern in her writings, her protagonists are middle class women who are educated and seeking self-fulfillment in a repressive environment. As tradition and patriarchal norms and attitudes are still rooted in the Indian society of her times,

Deshpande constructs her protagonists as nonconforming characters to the burden of gendered identity, but as human beings and full characters who are trapped in a confining space inhibiting their advancement. This position creates within her female protagonists an identity crisis, which is the central concern of their lives. Deshpande explores the feminine voice within the androcentric environment through her concern in the daily struggles of middle class, urban, and educated women. Thus, her feminist sensibility calls for the attention of feminist studies in the canon of women Indian resistance and the quest of identity. She writes against the hegemonic patriarchal positioning that deny and repress the feminine agency. Her vision acknowledges the women who participate in the struggle against the patriarchal culture. Therefore, Deshpande is actively engaged in sketching a counter discourse that subverts both of the patriarchal and Western feminism, and allows her protagonists to assert their identity and resist both the psychological burden of the dogmatic norms and the ideological currents that stereotype the Indian woman. As Deshpande elaborates in her interview with Lakshmi Holmstorm:

> But to me, feminism isn't a matter of theory; it's difficult to apply Kate Millet or Simone de Beauvoir or whoever to the reality of our daily lives in India. And then there are such terrible misconceptions about feminism by people here. They often think it is about burning bras and walking out on your husband, children, etc. I always try to make the point now about what feminism is not, and to say that we have to discover what it is in our lives, our experiences. And I actually feel that a lot of women in India are feinists without realising it. (22-23)

Clearly, Deshpande denounces the application or relevance of Western feminism in the Indian context. She insists that a gradual development of an Indian version of feminism is what needs to be explored and theorized. She regrets the scornful reputation feminism has in the Indian society and declares that many Indian women are actually feminists, but due the lack of theorizing and realization of an Indian version, these women are not aware of being feminists.

Deshpande's published her first collection of short stories in 1978, entitled *The Legacy and Other Stories*. She also authored other collections namely, *It Was Dark* 1986, *The Miracle*

1986, *It Was the Nightingale* 1986, and *The Intrusion and Other Stories* 1993, *Collected Stories Vol.-1* 2003, *Collected Stories Vol.- 2* 2004. All these short stories contain the essence of her feminist thought, which reflects the recurrent themes of the inner strife and identity quest of her female protagonists and the strained relationship between man/woman. In her novels, however, Deshpande develops these themes and extends her concerns for the parent-child relationship, the institution of marriage, sexuality, and gender norms and attitudes.

Although our selected novel for analysis is *The Dark Holds No Terrors*, published in 1980, Deshpande is known for nine following novels, namely, *If I Die Today* 1982, *Roots and Shadows* 1983, *Come Up and Be Dead* 1985, *That Long Silence* 1988, *The Binding Vine* 1994, *A Matter of Time* 1996, *Small Remedies* 2000, *Moving On New* 2004, and lately *In the Country of Deceit* 2008. The themes revolve always around the man-woman relationship, gender inequality, the subordination of the wife's position, and the protagonists occupy a privileged position with their education and employment. Deshpande discusses the perpetuation of the patriarchal rule by mothers in her portrayal of the mother-daughter relationship. Her protagonists are usually thoughtful characters who ruminate upon their fate and seek reconciliation and adjustment rather than rebellion. She tells her interviewer Viswanatha Vanamala (1987): "My characters take their own ways. I've heard people saying we should have strong women characters. But my writing has to do with women as they are". Henceforth, Deshpande reflects the essence of feminism and reflects upon the evils of patriarchy and tradition without condemning men or individuals. Rather, she aims at unveiling the evil dormant in social order. As such, she aspires to break free from the gendered identifications and encourages women and men writers to transcend gender in the attempt to write about human beings. In this spirit, Deshpande (1987) tells her interviewer Viswanatha Vanamala that she still belongs to the generation of women writers who are "trapped in this woman's world from which she hopes to emerge, so as to be able to write about human beings and not about women

and men". Deshpande is a realistic writer who explores the socio-cultural and the psychological aspects of her characters, and portrays their everyday experiences. Her fiction is rich with *Hindu* cultural markers as she depicts *Hindu* customs that make the act of reading attractive and didactic at the same time.

II-3 Status of Women in the Algerian Society

Historically speaking, Algeria had successively been under permanent foreign control. Even after its formal independence from the French colonial rule in July 5th, 1962, the post-independent nation got trapped by the hegemonic authority of its so-called legitimate heir: the National Liberation Front (FLN), and its military right wing: National Liberation Army (ALN), which constituted a totalitarian regime. Until the 90s, the state was occupied by people who played games of power under the official national proclamation of the People's Democratic Republic of Algeria. The Algerian centralized system kept the population not only clumping eternally at the bottom, but also abstaining their voice from having access to political agency by false representation behind the claim of adopting a democratic approach to power. Among the socio-cultural transformations that resulted from this political shift into liberalization were changes at the level of the woman question, an issue that has been reflected in literary texts as the identity crisis that occurred in reaction to the clash between tradition and modernity in the second half of the twentieth century. Henceforth, this section examines the impact of socio-political and economic dynamics on womanhood and femininity as portrayed in Ahlem Mostaghanemi's novel *Chaos of the Senses* 1997. The objective is to provide evidence of the relationship between these changes and the portrayal of women in our selected novel. It is also a desire to interpret freshly the creativity of this author as her novels are considered to have a significant impact on Algerian, Arab and non-Arab readers. In fact, her novels explore and portray the social, ideological and ethical issues in the midst of the crises that the Algerian society and politics have experienced after independence. Her sentimental and poetic style in writing contributed not only in shaping the modern Arabophone women concerns, but also in establishing a distinct form of feminism.

This section aims at providing a historical background to the study of the complex status of women in the Algerian society during the twentieth century. It is crucial to have a brief look

at the past society because some of the norms and values affecting contemporary women have their roots in the past. The study of women in Algeria is based on the religious, cultural, political and economic paradigms. In this section, we shall shed light on each paradigm to understand the predicament of women and their status in the post-independent era. Yet, the lack of documentary evidence on the status of the North African women in ancient history leads us to consider this study into three periods; pre-coloniality, during colonization, and post-coloniality.

II-3-1 Position of Women in Algeria up to the 20th Century

When tracing the status of women in the Algerian society, it is worth noting that the Revolutionary War (1954-1962), which led to emancipation from the French empire in 1962, divided the history of Algeria into three main periods, pre-French colonization, during colonization, and post-independent Algeria. Pre-French colonization Algeria has permanently witnessed successive occupation and ruling by foreign empires and dynasties, from ancient times by (Numedians, Phoenicians, Carthaginians, Romans, Vandals, Byzantines Umayyads) to the Midieval ages by Muslim conquests (Abbasids, Idrisid, Aghlabid, Rustamid, Fatimids, Zirid, Hammadids, Almohads, Zayyanids, Spaniards) to the Ottoman dynasty which fell down with the French colonization. Algeria had been a French colony since 1830, and people suffered from oppression, injustice, and violence with the French Imperialist rule. Thus, the Algerian nature of the cultural, linguistic features is hybrid taking mainly from the late Arabo-Muslim and French-European heritage. The position of the Algerian woman was relegated to the domestic sphere, with limited to indirect interference in the public sphere.

Indeed, women in Algeria and the Maghreb region in the pre-independence age and even during French colonization were generally identified with the stereotypical image of the second-class subject whose biological role and feminine reproductive abilities are essentialized and exploited. Accordingly, women are considered as subordinate, irrational, and passive

beings who are to be domesticated and controlled by the systematic institutions of patriarchy. The female experience with patriarchy varies according to the historical, cultural, political and economic aspect of a given setting. According to Larbi Yousef (2017), the first feminist writer who denounced the plight and exploitation of women in the Algerian traditional society is Hubertine Auclert, a French writer and feminist campaigner who settled in Algeria during the last decade of the nineteenth century and remarked that colonialism and patriarchy worsened the status of the Algerian woman. Auclert campaigned for the rights of Algerian women against the French colonial system through her legal activism and her writings, notably her book *Les femmes arabes en Algérie* (The Arab Women Of Algeria) published in 1900. The Algerian feminist movement, however, started in the twentieth century and primarily aimed at granting social and political equality, education, and property rights to women.

II-3-2 Intervention of the French during Colonization (1830-1962)

In her article *Gender and Politics in Algeria; Unraveling the Religious Paradigm*, the Algerian academic Marnia Lazreg (1990) documents the dialectical relationship between the French colonizers and the colonized Algerian. She states that the religious paradigm is the ground on which this relationship is based, and this is due to the religious conviction the French colonization had realized about the Algerian identity after its conquest from the Ottoman Empire (1515-1830). The French colonization policy aimed at acculturating the Algerians into French subjects, and this was referred to as the "assimilation policy". This is due to the fact that the religious aspect of the Algerian society is the distinguishing feature of this Mediterranean and North African territory, which was once a Latin territory that fell under the Islamic conquest. Lazreg (1990) emphasizes that the French identified Islam as the main feature that characterizes the Algerian identity and thus, the Algerian revolutionary struggle is based upon the preservation of this very aspect of cultural identity.

Concerning the colonizer's policy towards women in Algeria, Lazreg (1990) maintains that the French did not encounter shocking customs as the British did when they colonized India; referring to the *Sati* rite. Contrary to their expectation, the French found some customs which go against the *Sharia* (Islamic Law) such as marrying the girls before puberty in some rural areas; and women being deprived of their right to inheritance in the Kabylie. In an attempt to introduce reformist measures, the French legislators passed a regulation that fixes the minimum age of marriage for both genders; fifteen for girls and eighteen for girls. Then, the French adopted a violent way towards assimilation through the naturalization laws in the late 1800s, which aimed at making Algerians denounce the *Sharia law* in order to become French citizens and be granted with citizenship rights. However, this violent measure to convert Algerian to French culture further repelled them to strengthening the Islamic feature of their culture.

By the turn of the century, Marnia Lazreg (1990) reports that the French changed their strategy by proposing a secular reform project carried out by Algerians who are educated by the French. This class of Algerian citizens is used as a mediator between the French and the natives who serve the cultural project of "assimilation policy". They were referred to as the "Young Algerians because they modeled themselves after the Young Turks who brought about reforms in Turkey under Kemal Ataturk's leadership in the late 1920s" (761) as Lazreg reveals. Despite the efforts of the "Young Algerians" for progress at the socio-cultural and political levels, their Western orientated ideology that is influenced by the Young Turks and Kamal Ataturk secular ideology was faced with rejection from the Algerian public. As a consequence, the general public turned to the Islamic movement, which is known as *Ulema* (religious scholars) who emphasized the Islamic component and traditional customs of the Algerian society. The movement considered Egypt and the Arabo-Islamic ideologies as their source of inspiration that preached the revival of puritanical Islam. Women were encouraged to follow

the model of the prophet's wives and daughters emphasizing chastity, religious faith, and the sense of duty and self-sacrifice (Lazreg 763). In sum, pre-revolutionary war politics towards women do not show any serious address to the improvement of women's rights from the nationalists.

II-3-3 Transgressing the Boundaries through Women Participation in the Independence War

The participation of the Algerian women in war is documented in all liberational movements as a gendered revolutionary act in the quest for freedom. During the Algerian War of Independence (1954-1962), women fought side by side with men, and participated in the militant force by joining the FLN and the ALN in their militant struggle to free Algeria from the French occupation. Although this revolutionary contribution subverted the patriarchal order of the Algerian society at that time, with the premise to improve women condition in the post-independent era, the social and political *Zeitgeist* aimed at reapropriating a national identity that is based on the rejection and eradication of Western legacy through the ideological adoption of Arabization and Islamic culture.

Regarding the participation of women in the emancipatory war, the Algerian academic Lazreg Marnia (1994) asserts that the involvement of women in the War falls into two categories; urban and rural. Urban women are the category that received some basic education and joined the forces by their own will. The rural category, on the other hand, constitutes the rest of the women force who generally found themselves involved with the Front armies almost without their persistent intention. The French FLN activist, historian and militant writer for the cause of Algerian independence Djamila Amrane Minne (1993) notes that the urban category constitutes 22 percent of the women force, whereas the 78 percent represents the rural category

(231). Both of these categories are labelled as the *Mujahidat* or *Fidaiyat*[39], which is an Arabic

title for the female-armed combat against colonization. The rural women who joined the FLN

and ALN are usually young and unmarried.

Furthermore, the British scholar Meredeth Turshen (2002) reports that Algerian

"women participated actively as combatants, spies, fundraisers, as well as nurses, launderers,

and cooks" (890). The Algerian academic and scholar Zahia Smail Salhi (2003) elaborates on

women's role during the war: "Women were active agents in the revolution. Their contributions

ranged from fighting beside men, planting bombs, and carrying weapons, to nursing the sick

and wounded in the *maquis*[40], and above all, keeping the revolution moving forward (27). Thus,

the female participation, which is actively present through direct or indirect involvement, is a

breakthrough for the status of women as equal subjects in the nationalist struggle for

independence. Amrane Minne Djamila (1993) further documents that some of the educated

Mudjahidat served as educators for rural women about the reasons for the independence war,

and that while they were raising their awareness about national issues, they have encountered

'shocking' norms of man-woman relationship in rural villages, complicating their role in the

effort to make them participate in the struggle for independence (83). The historian also

contends in her studies in 1993 and 1994 that the actual rate of women participation in the war

is underestimated by the authorities as many women survivors did not document their efforts

until recently.

The Algerian academic Ryme Seferdjeli (2012) argues that while oral testimonies have

been the only means of documentation about the significance of women participation in the

FLN and ALN armed forces, they also stand as a proof for the patriarchal relegation of women

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[39] Mujahidat: An Arabic word denoting a female who undertakes the risk of losing one's life for noble purposes, such as the emancipation of one's nation from colonization.

[40] The maquis were rural guerrilla bands who escaped to the mountains.

into the margins and devaluating their participation and sacrifices from the memory of the struggle of independence as they were denied the registration as veterans in the post-independent era. Recently, however, their accounts caught the interest of many women editors who encouraged them to publish their experiences as memoirs such as, "*Une Moudjahida* 2001; *Ighilahriz* 2001; *Entretien* 2001, *La Moudjahida 2000*" (qtd.in Turchen Meredith 891). Ryme Seferdjeli (2012) reports that the reason that discouraged the *Mudjahidat* from narrating their accounts publicly is due to the trauma they experienced from the sexual violence and rape in the *maquis* (the rebel forces operating in the mountains), which is considered as a taboo in the Algerian culture. Thus, issues related to women discourses on man-woman relationship during the war remain unaddressed by the historically muted subaltern woman.

Concerning women participation in the independence war, it is documented that women had a better opportunity to carry out undoubtful clandestine tasks especially in the urban sphere. In the Italian-Algerian historical war film *The Battle of Algiers* (directed by Pontecorovo in 1965), women are recorded performing revolutionary and brave operations along with men. Significantly, we notice that women combatants are not subjects of distrust to the French army soldiers' checkpoints as compared to men. They moved freely and carried weapons without provoking the slightest doubt at French checkpoints because of the way they are perceived as innocent women, and also because French soldiers knew that Algerian men did not like their women to be touched and checked.

Remarkably, women performed their clandestine tasks in two ways: first by wearing the religious garb which is seen as beyond suspicion, and second by adopting the French appearance as a *camouflage* (disguise) hiding their true intentions and carrying explosives in their bags to be put in places where the French settlers assembled. Yet, as the academics Gerard de Groot and Peniston Bird Corinna (2000) state, the FLN did not recognize women participation as equal partners to men in the independence war, and avoided promising rewards

for them in any form (244), highlighting the conservative nature of the Algerian culture and the rejection of the Western model of women advancement and liberation as a foreign threat to Islamic culture and social order. The English historian and academic Natalya Vince (2010) summarises this patriarchal attitude in a statement by an FLN commander Si Allal: "It is forbidden to recruit djoundiates (female soldiers) and nurses without the zone's authorization.

In independent Algeria, the Muslim woman's freedom stops at the door of her home. Woman will never be equal to man" (467). Clearly, this quote reflects the perception of women in the Algerian context as well as their manipulation and exploitation by patriarchy at all levels. There was a general lack of trust in women doubting their ability to keep secrets especially if the French army catches them, as Lazreg Marnia asserts in her book *The Eloquence of Silence* (127). Vince Natalia (2010) adds another measure that was taken against women who express their willingness to join the force army; the *Mudjahid* men used to inspect women who want to join the force army before admitting them in the army by investigating any instance of adultery in their life as to avoid any future suspicion of betrayal. Furthermore, Neil Macmaster reports in his book *Burning the Veil* that the involvement of literate women with proactive tendencies represented a threat to men and made them uncomfortable (320).

II-3-4 Status of Women in the Post–Independent Era (1962-)

After independence, the progressist project for the improvement of women rights was impaired by the patriarchal desire to maintain its power and to restore the societal relations of power that are fundamentally gendered. As such, women were expected to maintain their marginalized position through returning to the domestic and familial sphere, leaving the economic and political arena to their male counterparts. Nonetheless, Natalia Vince reveals in her book *Our Fighting Sisters: Nation, Memory, and Gender in Algeria, 1954-2012* (2015) the

lack of assistance from the rural women in documenting their post-independence experiences with patriarchy:

> To argue that the war years were a period of relative freedom for rural women (…) in which they had more opportunities to enter into the public sphere and mix with men, which in turn led to either a permanent change in attitudes or a return to male dominance and separate spheres once the war ended, is to adopt an analysis that rural interviewees would not use themselves. (97)

This is indicative of the passive victimhood that rural women maintained in the post-indpendence era. They have clearly accepted their subservient position due to the firm conviction in the traditional aspect of the social, religious, and cultural norms. Moreover, there is a lack of documentation available about the situation of the surviving women combatants after independence. The American academic Sondra Hale (2001) suggests that the majority of veteran women were rejected by the society and that their reintegration was difficult especially when it comes to marriage and establishing family life. Messaoudi (1995) reports that the *Mudjahidat* got bitter in the post-independent era. She (1995) documents in one of her interviews with a Mudjahida who told her that "[in the maquis], we were all equal in the war- it was afterward that our citizenship was taken away from us" (Interview, Algiers, 26 April 2001). Likewise, a *Mudjahida* informed Messaoudi (1995) that "our domestication didn't start in 1962, it happened before independence; even during the war, the FLN started eliminating women from the maquis, sending us to the borders or abroad. That's when our role was defined, when we were excluded from public life" (94-5). These testimonies stand for the fact that not only patriarchy is deeply rooted in the Algerian social order, but also that males are not ready for the recognition and acknowledgment of a shared militant struggle. Moreover, this political gesture suggests that Algerian women, removed of a subjectivity and adopting a false consciousness, coerced against their will.

Furthermore, the economic condition of the nation in the following decades of the post-independence era suggest another reading for the relegation of women into the domestic sphere emphasizing the conceptualization of femininity as a wife and mother. The British academic Meredeth Turshen (2002), in her interview with Khalida Messaoudi, elaborates that the small percentage of women in the paid labor work in 1980s is due to the socialist economy that relied on nationalized oil industry revenues. Consequently, the middle class families did not need to allow their daughters to pursue paid work especially that there was no capitalist competition in the market. Therefore, the socialist program of the post-independent politics further pushed women to the domestic sphere.

Regarding Algeria's post-independence policy towards women, it is documented by Meredeth Turshen (2002) that the decision making bodies, during their discussions about granting women with equal rights to paid jobs, have objected to the progressist proposition arguing that Algerian women are content with the Arabo-Islamic values which value obedience and submission to men as the responsible for the public sphere. As such, men have justified the subordination of women to religion by representing household duties in a sacred and appealing manner. They used religion as a ploy that enables them to maintain their superior position and escape the radical threat of female equality to the masculine fragile ego. She reports the wrong turn in Algeria's policy towards the woman problematic:

> In April 1964 at the party congress of the Economic and Social Commission, an UNFA spokeswoman called for equal responsibilities for women militants at every level of the party, an end to polygamy, regulated daycare for children, new adoption laws, and new laws concerning legitimacy. None of this was taken into account, and neither the FLN nor the UNFA returned to these problems at the meeting. At the end of the congress, when the list of central committee members was announced, women were allowed to choose a woman representative; the selection was to be made on the basis of being a woman, not on the basis of being militants with their own identity and their own program. (893-94)

Obviously, this move marks the downward turn for women advancement and self-fulfillment, which contributed to the coming problematic of religious dogma and tradition vs. modernity and secular values. Notably, we note the presence of an agitated women's voice against the patriarchal authority, a female figure who represents a feminist voice, which is suppressed and rediculed by the patriarchal post-independent project. Thus, the activists for women's rights have become a subaltern voice, and the relationship between them and the policy makers grew more and more distant. The patriarchal perspective is obviously stronger to that of the Union Nationale des Femmes Algérienne UNFA (National Union of Algerian Women) activists.

II-3-5 Shift from Reformism to Conservatism

The 1980s witnessed significant resistance from Algerian women against the patriarchal politics and androcentric interests. For instance, women protested against the 1980 ministerial order, which forbade women from travelling abroad without a male with a demonstration that led to its annulment. In 1981, Algerian women and the *Mudjahidat* demonstrated against a code order about the law to regulate family life that had been proposed in 1966. They wrote an open letter protest to President Chadli Bendjdid listing six demands: "same legal age of majority for women and men ; unconditional right to vote ; equality in marriage and divorce ; an end to polygamy ; equal inheritance rights ; legal status for unwed mothers and protection of abandoned children" (qtd.in Meredeth Turshen 894). In 1984, however, the legislature adopted the controversial family code which adopted the *Sharia* or Islamic law and made all women minors at all levels of life, justifying the adoption of superior/inferior gender relations in politics from the religious teachings of the holy Quran in an attempt to satisfy the androcentric interests of the Islamic opponents to the regime. As Marnia Lazreg (1990) declares: "the Algerian government's flight into Islam can only be explained as an attempt to retain its power in the face of a dysfunctioning economic program and mounting political opposition" (777). In doing

so, issues related to marriage, divorce and property laws inspired by the *Sharia* placed women under the authority of men.

The dynamics of the perpetuation of sustainable androcentric interests in politics stems from the successive politics preceding the adoption of the Family code 1984 and its policies, namely the military, socialist, and pan-arabist regime of President Houari Boumedienne as well as the coersion of President Chadli Bendjdid to the Islamic agendas of his opponents. President Chadli Bendjdid supported the arabization and Islamization policy that President Houari Boumedienne started during his rule (Turshen 895). As such, the status of women in the 80s did not witness a promotion in gender equality and an empowerment of women following the androcentric interests of the ideological regime.

The traditional model, which is justified by Islamic teachings, presented the ideal femininity which confines women in the domestic sphere highlighting household skills and child rearing on the Islamic values. Turshen (2002) contends that the Algerian "women's movement existed but was not organized" (895), alluding to the difficult conditions that inhibited the development of a feminist *renaissance* in Algeria. In an interview conducted by Meredeth Turchen (2002), Nasera Merah argues that "not until 1987 when a law was passed authorizing the creation of NGOs did the women's movement really take off" (895). This statement highlights the role that non-governmental organizations have on orienting change towards an empowerment of the status of women and marginalized classes. However, by August 1989, a new degrading law was issued giving the right for men to vote by proxy for up to three women of his family. It seems clear that patriarchy has had a strong effect on the nation's policies, appropriating women's voice and subjectivity. Progressist women had to protest for that electoral law to repeal it. In 1991, the law was modified to prohibit men from voting for the female members in his family. In 1992, however, the breaking out of the Civil War changed the course of Algeria's politics for the coming generations. In order to understand

the causes that led to the breaking out of the Civil War, one has to track the chronological developemnt of Algeria post-independent politics as well as the fundamental schism between the ruling class and the people.

II-3-6 Algeria's Post-Independent Politics Leading up to the Turmoil of the 90s

This section offers a refreshing perspective and understanding of the complex challenges of the political transition from colonization to independence and the dynamics of authority and governance through an exploration of the crises that the Algerian nation has experienced politically, culturally and ethically under an oppressive system during the 1990s. For this purpose, it relies on a multidisciplinary critical and analytical framework, combining socio-political approaches as well as economic ones. Needless to say, the objective understanding of the aforementioned concern requires a historical overview on the evolution of the Algerian state and form of government from independence to the outburst of the Civil War.

After the bloody decolonization war that lasted for seven years against the French colonization (1954-1962), the Algerian national independence was earned in July 05th, 1962. This led to the formal proclamation of the Democratic and Popular Republic of Algeria at the opening session of the National Assembly on September 25th, 1962. Algeria's independent nation was first ruled by Ferhat Abbas as the President of the constitutional assembly till September 15th, 1963, when Ahmed Ben Bella had gained the first presidency of Algeria. As as Martin Evans and John Philips report (2008), President Ben Bella's almost 'dictatorial' regime led him to face political opposition from former leaders in the FLN. With a bloodless coup led by Ben Bella's defence minister, Colonel Houari Boumedienne, the government was seized in 1965.

Under Boumedienne's presidency (1965–1979), the state adopted the populist regime and the socialist development strategy that strengthened the leftist aspect of his administration in the 1960s and 1970s. Many accomplishements were realized such as the nationalization of natural resources in 1971, the creation of employment, and the promotion of the educational system and welfare. However, the state that was governed by the bipolar nationalistic institutions, namely, the FLN and its military ally, the ALN, served as the commanding force of economy and politics. Dirk Vandewalle (1992) contends: "Although Algeria managed impressive economic growth for almost two decades, by the end of the 1970s much of the earlier optimism about the ability of the state capitalist experiment to manage and direct economic development has proven unfounded (707)". In this view, the author expresses the economic discontent of the public expectancy with the progress of President Boumedienne's reform policy. His rigid socialist revolution that aimed at achieving rapid economic growth proved inefficient due to the fact that it is economically based on a heavy dependence to hydrocarbons export revenues, which are affected by market unstability. In regards to the industrial power, President Boumedienne's economic policy relied mainly on capital heavy industry and disregarded labor light industries.

With President Boumedienne's sudden disease and death in 1978, his program to adapt changes for his visionary reforms was aborted and a power vacuum in the executive power has followed leading the military, the ultimate political actor, to select Colonel Chadli Benjdid as a compromise candidate (Vandewalle 708). Under his presidency (1979–1991), politics and power evolved through adopting liberalization (*infitah:* open market) policy to revitalize the stumbling economy by diversifying the state's incomes. Hugh Roberts (1987) remarks: "If Boumediène's attempted transition to socialism had been consistent with the fundamental character of the Algerian state and its constitutive principles, it would have continued after his death, with only secondary modifications in style or form or tempo" (51). Therefore, President

Boumedienne's authoritarian regime could not last and a shift in power realms was inevitable. However, the complex nature of Algeria's politics and economy in addition to the demands of the society led to a critical wrecking status that needed serious reform at many levels.

At the economic sector, President Bendjdid's decentralization reforms that are triggered by the economic needs have permitted the privatization of state enterprises and the creation of free-markets by providing autonomy in economic investments. Moreover, the Algerian economy was reoriented towards developing alternatives such as: light industries, agricultural production, consumer goods, as well as promoting welfare and living conditions. Nonetheless, as the Algerian academic Kada Akacem (2004) contends, a shift from the public to the private sector proved unsuccessful due to the absence of regulatory conditions that liberate the market-based system from the government's intervention and non-competitive behaviour, i.e. firm grasp of state-centered structure. However, Akacem (2004) explains that the sharp drop in the hydrocarbon revenues in 1986, as well as the increasing debt burden sank the country's economy. During the late 1980s, President Benjdid implemented the austerity policies that worsened the living conditions of people. In the view of Dirk Vandewalle (1992), the decision of the Algerian government to self-impose the austerity plan stems from ideological reasons (710), in other words, to shorten the external control of the International Monetary Fund intervening conditionalities on the nation. Thus, the economic *Zeitgeist* of the era contributed to the sustainment of the relegation of women into the domestic sphere.

Socially speaking, many aspects are significant to the creation of the disiquilibrium of the 1990s. In the view of Said Chikhi (1991), high demographic growth and the tripling of urban population led to the social unrest of the late 1980s. The young class moved from rural to urban cities seeking jobs in the industries. By the mid 1980s, however, the allure of urban labour dissipated due to the reducing of employment by the government's rigid adjustments policies of de-industrialization and selective education. Hence, unemployment increased

(658,000 in 1985, 1,200,000 in 1987) to a rate of 19,2% (Chikhi 59), and the youth class who were not socially active in labour and education, found themselves confined to the periphery. This state of affairs, in return, created by the problem of marginalization and exclusion would, in the view of Said Chikhi, amount the feeling of rage and dissatisfaction with the political system.

The Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, which is one of most prominent Western journals, reports that the consequences of the economic crisis, unemployment and political corruption during the 1980s has increased leading up to the general feeling of anxiety and marginalization among the youth ("Algeria: Riots of October 1988"), in addition to the shared dissatisfaction with the regime and the FLN government. The state of affairs sparked social unrest and youth anger leading up to the October 1988 Riots, especially in the northern large cities. Initially started by unemployed youth, the Islamists took profit by absorbing the popular anger and shaping this opposition with an ideological character (Vandewalle 710) leading up to violent demonstrations and the tragic death of at least 200 protestors by the Army fires (Vandewalle 710).

With the political motivation in 1989, President Bendjdid's liberal regime reduced the firm grip of the state on power by introducing limited democratization innovations through the possibility of political competition in a multi-party system and the creation of civil society. Yet, these innovations that opened way to anti-state expressions could not challenge the policies of the Algerian system as they were quickly supressed and tactically conciliated to maintain the regime. The campaign for national elections began in 1991 with more than 40 opposing parties; the most popular is the Islamic Liberation Front.

Regarding the efficiency and success of President Chadli Bendjedid's management policies at the political, social, administrative, economic and foreign affairs realms, much has been reported on their wrecking status. Vandewalle (1992) contends that "the reforms came too

late and led to a guerre des clans that has marked Algerian politics since the war of independence began in 1954" (711), alluding to the ongoing conflict inside the army and the latter's grip on the political life of post-independent Algeria. The turbulent period that came after the riots created crises inside the army, and Major General Khaled Nezzar was the dominant figure in the military hierarchy at that time. He was appointed chief of Staff of the Armed Forces after the October Riots, and also the Minister of Defense in July 1990. Remarkably, the army did not oppose the pluralistic system or the recognition of the FIS (Islamic Salvation Front) as a political party. Rather, it aimed at using it as a "safety valve" for the Islamic groups and political tendencies of the society; especially as the right wing FLN party adopted Islamic conservatism that was reflected in the Family Code of 1984 (Mortimer 22). Nonetheless, the FIS party grew further extremist tendencies that opposed the FLN grip on political life, and aimed at politicizing Islam for ideological purposes. Mortimer (1996) adds: "as the FIS gained momentum, it broke the old mold by putting forward an imported theocratic vision of society that went far beyond many Algerians' view of the cultural role of Islam in Algerian life" (22-3), alluding to the importation of ideological Islam that is new for the Algerian culture that has adopted apolitical Islam as a way of life for a long time.

Concerning the popularity and appeal of the FIS ideology among the youth, Mortimer (1996) argues that it is due to the general distrust in the national state of affairs and the economic crisis which constituted a gap for the Islamists to take profit through the romantic perspective of the masses towards their religion. The FIS activists started their *indoctrination* of the youth who have already been saturated with pan-Arabist values during President Boumedienne's rule. Through their preaching in mosques, the FIS activists succeeded in attracting the masses to the conception of the "straight path" of Islam through sacred *Jihad* (from Arabic, denoting the holy war of Muslims against non believers); seizing power from the regime and replacing it with Islamic divine rule. The FIS party, which was led by Abassi Madani and Ali Bil-Haj, insisted

on taking control over the nation either by legal elections or by force. The latter group who used violence represented the dangerous group who are constituted of previous veterans from the Civil War in Afghanistan, and the Bouyali Band (led by Mustapha Bouyali, a guerrilla group operating against the government from 1982-1987). The proponents of the FIS ideology condemned democracy as a Western foreign policy and advocated the Islamic ideology of *Sharia* (religious law derived from the holy Quran and Hadith, i.e, tradition), in addition to their advocacy of extremist logic on social, economic, and political order. To illustrate their ideology, proponent Ali Bil-Haj is quoted saying: "There is no democracy because the only source of power is Allah through the Quran, and not the people" (Dawud 126). Worth noting is that Sharia is a divine law reflected in the holy Quran and Prophet Muhammad's (Peace and Blessings Upon Him) teachings that encourages people to conduct their affairs with consultation and aims to preserve five widely known entities; religion, wealth, progeniture, soul and mind (The Higher Objectives of Islamic Law).

The quick spread of the Islamists' premises to reconstruct the nation on the basis of Arabo-Islamic tenets and achieve full decolonization from the Western grip at the economic, political, and cultural levels is due to the narrow scope of the post-independent reforms and also to the general disappointment and distrust towards the regime. It is worth mentioning that the political Islam which spread the ideas of *Sharia* in Algeria is due to the government decisions of bringing ideological Islamic scholars to Algeria such as Mohammed al Ghazali and Yusuf al Qaradawi who belong to the *Muslim Brotherhood*[41] which promotes the "Islamic awakening". The organization is supported by the Gulf monarchies and Saudi Arabia as the French political scientist and Arabist Gilles Kepel argues in his book *Jihad; The Trail of*

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[41] Muslim Brotherhood, Arabic al-Ikhwān al-Muslimūn, is a religio-political organization founded in 1928 at Ismailia, Egypt, by Hassan al-Banna. Islamist in orientation, it advocated a return to the holy Quran and the Hadith as guidelines for a healthy modern Islamic society. The Brotherhood spread rapidly throughout Egypt, Sudan, Syria, Palestine, Lebanon, and North Africa. (Encyclopedia Britannica)

Political Islam (2002). The first free elections in Algeria took place in June 1990, and the FIS party won with 54% of votes cast. Once in power, the FIS administration won appraisal from the public for their measures towards islamisation of the nation. However, these measures alarmed the progressist secular wing that is pro-Western as well as the international community for the party's radical ideas regarding world politics especially when it comes to economic issues. Dirk Vandewalle (1992) argues: "Not surprisingly, the main rationale put forward by the military during the January 1992 takeover was precisely this economic argument: that the Islamists would make it impossible for the Infitah to succeed" (712), alluding to President Benjdid's economic reform policy.

The tumultuous period, which followed the formal elections of 1990, witnessed the growing adversity between the oppositional ideologies of the *ruling pouvoir* (military rule) and the FIS proponents, leading up to the Guemmar (Saharan oasis in Algeria) attack by the armed Islamic extremists against the government. Soon, the legislative elections of December 1991 in which the FIS won most of the cast votes affirmed to the *ruling pouvoir* that the FIS would win the majority of votes in the elections of January 1992. Fracesco Cavatorta (2008) maintains that the threats that the FIS agenda has on the nation's process towards democratization led to the army's intervention and the cancellation of the electoral process. Following this military coup, President Chadli Bendjedid was forced to resign and the authoritarian rule was enforced, excluding the FIS and imprisoning its leaders and members. The military pouvoir brought the once exiled independence fighter Mohammed Boudiaf to serve as the President of the new period with the hope of reconciling the schism between the *ruling pouvoir* and the people. His reputation in fighting in the independence war along with the main leaders earned to him respect among the general population.

President Boudiaf set a plan that is, in Robert Mortimer's description, "promising a radical change of the old order and criticizing the corruption which had characterized the

Bendjedid years. At the same time he admonished the Islamists for their politicization of the mosques, and insisted that Islam must respect the rules of pluralism and civil liberties" (27), highlighting his genuine intentions in conflict resolution and reconciliation between the opposing parties. However, President Boudiaf was assassinated by one of his bodyguards after less than six months of his presidency on June 29th 1992, during a televised public speech. Despite the conspiracy theories surrounding his murder by the military officials who brought him, the government took many measures after his death to cover the murder, among which the death sentence to his assassinator which has never been carried out, as well as the arrest of the FIS members and sympathizers. Gilles Kepel (2002) declares: "bearded men feared leaving their houses lest they be arrested as FIS sympathizers. The government officially dissolved the FIS on March, 4th and its apparatus was dismantled" (174), implying the general distrust that characterized the period after President Boudiaf's assassination.

The Civil War officially sparked with the FIS members adopting the Jihadist ideology in taking up the mountains and forests as their centers, and initiating their violent attack on the national security forces. Soon, their attacks developed gradually to terrorism against the progressist elite including journalists, intellectuals, artists, and civilians. Gille Kepel (2002) reports: "a steady succession of university academics, intellectuals, writers, journalists, and medical doctors were assassinated" (262), because they were just French speaking, thus, associated to the despised image of the French colonizer (262). The Islamist guerrilla groups are divided into several groups, including the Islamic Armed Movement (MIA) based in the rural areas, and the Armed Islamic Group (GIA), which is based in the urban areas and refuses negotiations with the government. In 1995, General Liamine Zeroual won the elections as the army's candidate, and the GIA continued its attack against the government and those people who adopted a truce, the (AIS) or the Islamic Salvation Army. As a consequence, the government adopted a massacre policy that targeted entire neighborhoods and villages that

peaked in 1997, and led to mass desertions of those rural areas and splitting within the GIA. In 1997, the AIS declared a unilateral ceasefire with the government while the parliamentary elections were won by the newly established party which is pro-army, the Democratic National Rally (RND) led by Ahmed Ouyahia (1952-). The following elections of 1999 in which Abdelaziz Bouteflika (1937-) won the presidency witnessed the period of decline in violence and the reconciliation between the people and the previous insurgents.

Last but not least, it is crucial to comment on Frantz Fanon's assumption in his book *L'An Cing de la Révolution* (1959) that women participation during the independence war is a great leap for her status improvement in future measures. His predictions proved to be optimistic and idealistic considering the ideological nature of the nationalistic/Imperialistic relationship, in addition to the complexity of related aspects. After 130 of colonial rule, and 30 years of post-independent politics, the materialist greed still controls the political realm. As David Gordon (1968) contends in the conclusion of his book on Algerian women, the war of national liberation was "to bring into being a modern nation along socialist lines (…) to resurrect and restore a culture (…) that was essentially Arabic and Islamic" (qtd.in Alf Andrew Heggoy 454), highlighting the burden of tradition and religious dogma on Algerian identity politics. During the 1990s, Algerian women were at stake after the coming of the multiparty system and the freedom to establish associations which would provide the burgeoning seeds for the development of a feminist rights' movement. The enhancement of women status would eventually lead to national sustainable development through promoting women education and skill development; insuring equal access to employment, the labour market and social security systems; as well as taking appropriate measures for the elimination of violence and discriminatory practices.

II-3-7 Algerian Women Writers and their Contribution to Algerian Feminism

The second half of the twentieth century witnessed the renaissance of Algerian literature, since the latter stretches back historically to oral and written forms. This body of erudite and literary productions is characterized by its unique blend of Berber, Arabic and French traditions resulting from the permanent foreign control that the region of North Africa -namely *Al Maghreb* (Northwestern Africa)- has encountred (Bois and Bjornson 103). Hence, modern Algerian literature reflects the hybrid identity of this postcolonial nation that struggles to establish itself in the midst of its paradoxical references. The hybrid nation's character is a cultural mosaic of *Berber*[42] origins in the north African region, Latin remnants of the Greek and Roman invasions up to the sixth century, Islamic culture stemming from the Arabic and Ottoman conquests of the Maghreb (648-1830), and the Western culture resulting from the French colonization (1830- 1962). As the Algerian academic Benrabeh Mohamed asserts: "The idea of cultural mixity was an aberration" (qtd. in Croisy 86). This hybrid identity did not get promotion due to the ideological resistance against the French colonization, which is reflected in postcolonial Algerian politics.

Ruminating in the development of the Algerian literature throughout history, we note that the roots of this body of written productions date back to the Numidian and Roman African era with writers such as the Numedian writer and philosopher Apuleius (124 c- 170AD) from M'daourouch, Souk Ahras, and his picaresque novel *The Golden Ass*; Augustine of Hippo (354-430 AD) and his theological and philosophical writing; as well as Nonius Marcellus and Martianus Capella for their encyclopedic works (De Compendiosa Doctrina, De Nuptiis

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[42] Berber, self-name Amazigh, plural Imazighen, are any of the descendants of the pre-Arab inhabitants of North Africa. The Berbers live in scattered communities across Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Libya, Egypt, Mali, Niger, and Mauritania. They speak various Amazigh languages belonging to the Afro-Asiatic family related to ancient Egyptian.(Encyclopedia Britannica)

Philologiae et Mercurii). The medieval era, however, is characterized by revolutionary Arab literature such as the *Epic of Banu Hilal* in the 11th century; *The Muqaddimah* of Ibn Khaldoun (1332- 1406); the remarkable accounts of Andalusion civilizations by Al Maqqari (1579-1632); and the didactic essays of the religious and military leader Emir Abdelkader *Al Mawaqif* (Bois and Bjornson 103-4). After the French conquest of Algeria, literature began to reflect its patriotic spirit with oral poetry reciting the resistant battles of Emir Abdelkader, El Mokrani and other leaders against the French colonization (Bois and Bjornson 104). Additionally, Bois and Bjornson (1992) report that this oral poetry mirrors the social life and concerns of the late nineteenth century colonial period in Algeria. The trajectory of the burgeoning of pure Algerian literature is not an independent literary endeavour but rather the outcome of the political forces that shaped it. Thus, authentic Algerian literature is born out of the nationalist struggle for independence from the French colonization.

Moreover, the academics Bois and Bjornson (1992) contend that it is during the first half of the twentieth century that the Algerian literary renaissance gave birth to the reformist movement *Ulama* or 'the Association of Algerian Muslims' in 1931, which emphasized the Arabo-Islamic feature in its nationalistic spirit. Led by Ckeikh Ibn Badis (1889-1940), it provided a space for writers and intellectuals to make their works available for the Algerian reading public. Poets such as Tayib El Okbi, historians like Mubarak El Mili and short story writers such as Ahmed Reda Houhou found an outlet to publish their works in its journals and newspapers. It is worth noting that Ahmed Reda Houhou is considered as the pioneer of the Algerian short story genre, he used its appeal to make readers ponder on the Algerian social life with themes such as the clash between classes and the women condition. The latter genre has developed with the writings of many authors such as Zhour Ounissi, Abouleid Doudou, Tahar Ouettar, Laaraj Ouassini and Merzak Bagtache whose main and common theme is patriotism and the struggle of liberation.

II-3-8 Francophone Algerian Women Writing

With the colonizer's policy of erasing the native culture through the 'assimilation policy', modern Algerian prose grew simultaneously with the promotion of nationalistic aims and the exposure of the conflict between the Amazigh-Arab heritage and the imposition of the French culture. The literary and intellectual productions of the French tourists and settlers in Algeria led to the emergence of a new school of Franco-Algerian writers who developed the Algerian Francophone literature during the 1950s. The Algerian scholar Zahia Smail Salhi (1991) reports that Sheila Collingwood Whittick, in her Ph.D. thesis *The Colonialist Situation in Algeria and its Literary Reflection,* denies the availability of any Francophone Algerian writing prior to the 1950s and quotes her: "despite more than a century of colonization and fifty years of an Algerian-based French literature, there had been little or noevidence of indeginous Algerians expressing themselves in writing in the French medium" (120). Among the first representatives of this school are Mouloud Feraoun, Mohamed Dib, Mouloud Maameri, Kateb Yacine, Malek Haddad and Assia Djebar. This literature appeared after World War Two (WWII) and depicted the colonial violence inflicted upon Algerian people, in addition to their struggle for independence. More interestingly, these writers subverted the dichotomy colonizer/colonized by placing the Algerian subject at the center and the colonized at the periphery, revealing the concern of Algerian Francophone literature in resistance. Regarding the Algerian writers' adoption of French, it is due to the French education that these writers have received, their aim behind using the colonizer's language is to counter the French discourse and raise the concern of the French humanistic elite and disclose the cruelty of the colonizer's practices towards indigenous people and their culture. According to Mohamed Bensemmane (2013), the Francophone Algerian writers believed that using the French language " is an asset, rather than a handicap" (1). The appropriation of the colonial language by

Francophone Algerian writers represents a subversive resistant act. The Algerian Francophone literature of the postcolonial era not only deals with the colonial experience, but also depicts the struggle of the construction of the Algerian nation and the oppression of the authoritarian political system in the early post-independent era.

The Francophone Algerian writing is expressed both in poetry and prose. In poetry, we have Anna Grek, which is the penname for the Algerian writer Colette Grégoire who published many poems such as *Algerie Capitale Alger* and *Temps Forts* in 1966. The French academic Jean Dejeux (1975), who has spent more than thirty years on his research about the origins and development of Francophone Algerian literature, considers her poems the best in representing Algeria at that time. A number of female poets followed on the path of Anna Grek, namely Nadia Guendouz with *La corde* 1974, and Assia Djebar with *L'Algerie Heureuse* 1969, in which she expresses the opposite of her title. Algerian women poets of that period started expressing their feelings such as Zohra Rabhi known as Safia Ketou with her collection *Amie Gitar* 1979, Nadia Ghalem with *Exil* 1980, Anissa Boumediene with *Le Jour et la Nuit*, Nadjet Rehma with *A l'Ombre D'un Vie* 1980, Kheira Abbas with *Le Reflet des Larmes* 1981, among many others. The common characterizing feature of these poets' texts is the expression of their pains and hopes for a better Algeria. Numerous poets followed on the same path, namely, Aicha Bouabaci with *L'Aube est née sur Nos Lèvres* 1985 and Fatima Bellahcene's poem *Non je n'ai pas changé/ J'ai Seulement Appris à Parler* 1987, which echoes women reappropriation of their voice. According to the statistics that Jean Dejeux (1975) has made about Francophone Algerian women writing from 1963 to 1991, there are 48 poetry works that are published either by them or by houses of publications. Henceforth, Algerian women writing in the genre of poetry challenged the norms and the difficulties in publishing their works and expressing their worries in a language that reflects their alienation and existential concerns.

When it comes to the genre of short stories, the Palestinian American academic Aida Adib Bamieh (1971) reports that the number of short stories that are published in the period prior to WWII does not exceed 60 short stories, and the number increased to 150 by 1967 (qtd. In Samra Djebaili 28, my translation). Bamieh (1971) argues that the causes behind this delay in the production of Francophone Algerian short fiction is because the novel was seen as the appropriate means for the expression of the nationalist concerns and interests and the lack of the availability of Algerian journals interested in publishing Francophone short fiction. (Djebaili 28, my translation). Henceforth, most of the published short stories are inspired from the authors' own novels such as Assia Djebar's short stories *Le Retour de la Maquisarde* 1966 and *Au Hammam* 1991 which are inspired by her novel *Les Alouates Naives* 1967. Additionally, Djebar's collection of short stories *Oran Langue Morte* 1997 expresses the chaos and disillusionment that Algerians experienced at that time, in addition to the themes of violence, love, and resistance. Moreover, we have many other Algerian Francophone short fiction writers such as the renowned Leila Sebbar with her collection of short stories *Ma Sœur, Etrangère* 1994, where she chronicles her painful childhood memories. As such, the Algerian Francophone short fiction discusses the themes that are related to their painful experiences with poverty, inhibiting norms and customs, marginalization, isolation, alienation, among others. In doing so, the Algerian women writers sought to change the evils of their societies, especially those related to women, through their pens.

Algerian Francophone fiction represents another genre through which women expressed their protest against political and social injustices, in addition to the colonial and patriarchal oppression. Therefore, it is a window to the gendered concerns coupled with the nationalist spirit. The Algerian novelist Djamila Debeche is considered one of the first writers who depicted the alienated state of the Algerian woman from her patriarchal society. Leading a struggle for women's right to education, Debeche expressed her feminist ideas in many

periodicals such as *Dialogues* and *Méditerranée*. Her novel *Leila* 1947 expressed the female protagonist's struggle with her patriarchal society. Yetiv Isaac considers her among the first feminist voices in the strife for North African Muslim women rights (181). Her second novel *Aziza* 1955 depicts the double alienation of the protagonist from both her society's gender norms, and her Westernized milieu. In this novel, Debeche encourages women not to escape from their problems and to face them and impose their will. Thus, the theme of rebellion is strongly present in this novel. Another female novelist who explored women rebellion against their social norms is Marie Louise Amrouche with her *Jacinthe Noir* 1972, which narrates the story of a Tunisian young woman and relates it to themes of norms and taboos.

Francophone Algerian women writing developed with Assia Djebar (1936-2015) who is considered as one of the most influential North African writers and an ardent defender for women rights from the oppressive patriarchal norms and traditional roles. She is known for her feminist fearless stand against the patriarchal and colonial opression through her exploration of the status of North African Muslim women in her writings. Her real name is Fatima-Zohra Imalayene, and Assia Djebar is her pen name. In her first two novels *La Soif* 1957 and *Les Impatients* 1958, Djebar explores the inner life of her female protagonists through their quest for self-discovery and liberations and their experiences with love, marriage, divorce, freedom, pleasure, defiance, among others. In her novel *Les Enfants du Nouveau Monde* 1962, she discusses the interests of Algerian women through the theme of love. *Les Alouettes Naives* 1967 is her next novel in which she reflects her contempt towards patriarchy. In 1980, she published her novel *Femmes d'Alger dans leur Appartement*. As Gabrielle Stiller Kern documents, *In L'Amour, la Fantaisie* 1985 which is the first sequel of her trilogy, Djebar discusses her autobiography through the historical events of the French occupation in 1830 and the Algerian Independence war. Djebar published her second and third sequel, *Ombre Sultane* 1987, and *Loin de Medine* 1991, in which she reflects upon the role of women in the prophet's life. In the

following literary work, Djebbar addresses the Algerian Civil War through accounting for her own losses oof her friends and other intellectuals in *Le Blanc de L'Algérie* 1995. She continued her literary endeavor in expressing her concerns in the coming works, and she is generally known for her courage in creatively addressing salient issues related to women and history with the greatest sensitivity and awareness.

Notably, there are other Algerian Francophone women writers who address issues related to women experiences about exile, identity, and belonging, such as Leila Sebbar (1941-) with her novel *Parle mon fils parle Avec ta mère* 1984 and Nina Bouraoui (1967-). In addition, Malika Mokaddem (1949-) is a rebellious writer who addresses women education, patriarchy, tradition and norms in her works. Later on, there appeared a new class of women writers who adopted Arabic in the literary expression of their national and personal concerns.

II-3-9 Arabophone Algerian Women Writing

Concerning the development of Arabophone fiction, it did not go through the same prosperity as the Francophone one due to the French linguistic nationalism. After independence and the quest for a national identity, Algerians got exposed to the Arab literary productions as a consequence of the arabization policy. Despite the modest attempts of Mohamed ben Ibrahim, Abdel Majid El Shafii, and Noureddine Boudjedra in writing novels in Arabic, it is until the 1970s that this genre began to seriously flourish with Abdelhamid Benhadouga's published novel *Rih al Djanoub* (Wind from the South) in 1971. This historical novel does not only mirror the social concerns of the first decade of postcolonial Algeria such as feudalism in one of the Algerian villages, but it introduces the oppressed woman condition as a metaphor for the usurped land. As the writer Ahlem Mostaghanemi (1985) elaborates on the development of Algerian Arabic fiction that deals with 'the woman question':

Wind of the South marks not only the birth of the Arabic-language Algerian novel, but also the emergence of the Algerian woman in Arabic-language literature. It is no longer a question of depicting militant or traditional women in a discreet fashion, but of considering the body of the woman, her social and sexual oppression! Nafissa is the first Algerian young woman in Arabic-language literature to have been accorded the right to have a body. And for the first time as well, this body is not mistreated or sullied or abused by the author. Nafissa is a young woman like those who can be found everywhere in Algeria as well as in other Arabic countries. Benhadouga avoided exaggeration by posing the sexual problem as it was experienced by his heroine. He succeeded in steering the middle course between provocation and false modesty. (qtd.in Bois and Bjornson 105)

Nafissa is the first female character who epitomizes the tenets of feminist thought and is inhibited by the situational context. She suffers from the internal conflict of modernity versus tradition. Being educated in the urban city and returning to her rural village, Nafissa found herself incapable to be adapted to the traditional gender roles and norms.

Algerian women writing developed in a time of crisis due to the political, economic and social turmoil that preceded the civil war. Among the women writers in Arabic who depicted the status of women during the post-independent era up to the Civil War, we have Zoulikha Essaoudi (1944 -1972) who started modern women writing with brilliant short stories in the 1960s. She addressed several issues such as the Algerian revolutionary war, the misery during colonisation, social problems, as well as the woman question and her plight in a patriarchal society. She insisted on women equal rights and her emancipation through many works such as her collection of short stories *Ahlaam Erabii* 1963 (Spring Dreams) in addition to her novel *Aarjouna* 1970. In poetry, the first published work is Mabrouka Bousmaha's compilation *Baraîm* (Buds) in 1969.

Another pioneer in Arabophone Algerian writing and who experimented with all genres starting with short fiction is Zhour Ounissi (1936-) with her collections of short stories "*al-*

Rasîf al-nâ'im"(The Sleeping Sidewalk) in 1967, *Alaa Shatii El Akher* (On the Other Beach) in 1974, *Edhilal el-moumtada* (Extended Shadows) 1982, and *Azaiz elkamar* (Moon Wives) 1996. Subsequently, Ounissi published her first novel *Min yawmiyât mudarrisa* (From the Diary of a Female Teacher) in 1979, and later her second novel *Loundja wel-elghoul* (Loundja and the Ogur) 1994. Notably, Zhour Ounissi is the first Algerian woman who stood as the Minister of Social Affairs in 1982, the Minister for Social Protection and later on the the Head of the Department of Education in 1986. Her literary works have received recognition in Arab states and also around the world (L'Expression). In her book *Arab Women Writers: A Critical Reference Guide, 1873-1999*, the Egyptian academic and novelist Radwa Ashour contends that Ounissi is remarked as using striking content and form to shore up morale and criticize social ills. She addresses issues related to the predicament of women in a traditional society, the strife of the revolutionary war against colonization, and the social ills of her times.

Worth mentioning is the fact that the loaded political atmosphere, the instability and alienation during the 70s and 80s, in addition to the general discontent and distrust among intellectuals and writers, presented a double load of the obstacle to writing. Many writers and intellectuals escaped from the turmoil and exiled themselves; others were either killed or received death threats during the 90s. Among the pioneers of Algerian women writers in Arabic during the 80s, we have Rabia Djelti, Zineb Elaawadj, Fadila Farouk, Fatima Aagoun, Chahrazad Zagher, Yasmina Saleh, Djamila Zenir, Fahima Twil and Ahlem Mostaghanemi. For the purpose of this research paper, we have chosen Ahlem Mostaghanemi because of her wide fame, visibility and success.

II-3-10 Development of Ahlem Mostaghanemi's Feminist Thought in her Fiction

Ahlem Mostaghanemi (1953-) is a prolific Algerian author writing in Arabic. She is considered as the most successful female writer in the Arab world by the American economic magazine Forbes in 2006 as well as "one of the ten most influential women in the Arab world and the leading woman in literature ("Biography"). She was born in Tunis after her father, Mohamed El-Cherif, a militant political activist, was forced into exile due to his engagement with the resistant activities against the French colonial occupation during the Revolutionary War. After independence, her family returned to Algeria, where her father occupied high positions in the first Algerian government. As the eldest child, Ahlem Mostaghanemi grew up in a charged political atmosphere. This aspect appears to have been decisive in her intellectual development and literary writings. Her father, an important source of inspiration for her, was the first who encouraged her to pursue her dreams as a writer in Arabic, which was an uncommon practice at that period. As documented from Ahlem Mostaghanemi's own website page, her father insisted that she receives her former education in Arabic, and she was among the first graduates from the Faculty of Letters in Algiers. Her education shaped her love for the Arabic language and the pan-Arabic nationalism (the ideology of uniting Arab countries) that flourished in her time through the ideology of President Houari Boumedienne and President Djamel Abdel Nasser. The nationalist and pan-Arabic concerns are reflected in her literary works as she addresses the issues related to the Arab countries. In doing so, the main reason behind her adoption of writing in Arabic for the Algerian as well as for the Arab public reflects the acquired resistant ideology against the Imperial legacies, and its concern in decolonizing the minds through the medium of language.

As documented from Mostaghanemi's own website, Ahlem Mostaghanemi experimented with radio hosting before delving into writing. At the age of 17, she got her initial fame with the poetic daily show "*Hammassat*" (Arabic word, denoting whispers) on the national radio station. This experience helped her to publish her first compilation of poetry

entitled *Ala Marfa Al-Ayam* (To the Day's Haven) in 1973, and later with another compilation *Al Kitaba fi Lahdat Ouray* (The Writing in a Moment of Nudity) in 1976. As the title of her second compilation suggests, Mostaghanemi attracts attention towards her writing by expressing her ideas in a free and bold language. As her biography on her website reveals: " [the public's general expectations] was not prepared to see a girl express herself freely on subjects such as love and women's rights. It was even less prepared to see her do it in the sacred Arabic language. This is where Ahlem's battle begins against sexism" ("Biography"). As such, Mostaghanemi declares her resistance by transgressing the patriarchal norms and expectations, which have relegated women to the margins and appropriated their voices after independence in the name of conservatist tradition. Mostaghanemi uses the same language that implies attachment to tradition and religion to articulate her mind through the body language. Her biographer states that Mostaghanemi was rejected by the board of directors of the University of Algiers to enroll for a Master's degree because of the loud expression of her liberational ideas and for being too modern to settle for a traditional model of womanhood. In addition to her rejection at the academic realm, Mostaghanemi was eliminated from the Union of Algerian Writers due to her oppositional views towards the politics of her time.

The antagonist atmosphere alienated Mostaghanemi from her Algerian peers. In 1976, she married Georges El Rassi, a Lebanese journalist and historian whom she met during his stay in Algiers when he was preparing his thesis on 'Arabization and Cultural Conflicts in Independent Algeria'. The couple initially settled in Paris where Mostaghanemi pursued her Ph.D. degree on a research study about the misunderstanding and discord between men and women in the Algerian society. Mostaghanemi spent the following years raising her children, writing in magazines, in addition to writing fragments that later constituted her first novel. On her literary transition from poetry to fiction, Mostaghanemi explains: "When we lose a love, one writes a poem, when we lose our homeland, one writes a novel" ("Biography"), referring

to the deep effect her displacement had on her psyche and writing career. Obviously, her displacement positively affected her career as a writer.

After fifteen years in Paris, Mostaghanemi and her family settled in Lebanon in 1993 where she published her first novel *Zakirat El-Jassad* (Memory of the Flesh) in the same year. The editor foresees its success after reading it by declaring: "this is a bomb", and the novel had an outstanding fame among the reading public throughout the Arab world (Mosteghabmi's website). Mostaghanemi receives the Naguib Mahfouz literary prize in 1998 for it. As stated in her website biography, a number of successful Arab artistic figures praised her debut novel; the great contemporary Arab poet Nizar Kabbani describes his experience of reading her novel: "this novel gave me vertigo; had I been asked, I would have signed it", implying the strong affinity between their poetic writing style. Additionally, the famous Hollywood director Mustafa Akkad expressed his desire to adapt the novel into a movie. Soon, the director Youssef Chahine, winner of the *Palme d'Or* (the highest prize awarded at the Cannes Film Festival), purchases the rights to the movie. The Algerian President Ben Bella expressed his admiration and appraisal: "Ahlem is an Algerian sun that illuminates the Arab world". These testimonies reflect the wide success that her debut novel had. It is estimated by her biographer that more than one million copies have been sold across the Arabic-speaking world, without mentioning the outnumbered-pirated editions that circulate in the Arab world. To date, Ahlem Mostaghanemi won many rewards and titles for her literary works that are translated to many languages and are studied in universities throughout the world.

The author continues her literary success by giving two sequels to her novel: *Fawda el Hawas* (Chaos of the Senses) in 1997 and *Aber Sareer* (Bed Hopper) in 2003. Each part of the trilogy, now a classic, is a bestseller in its own right throughout the Arab world. In 2010, *Nessyan* (the Art of Forgetting) is published. It is a break-up manual for women, which brought Ahlem Mostaghanemi closer to the female readership. In 2012, Ahlem's latest novel, *El Aswad*

Yalikou Biki (Black Suits You So Well) is published. The novel confirms Ahlem's status as a major Arab novelist. She offers a more nuanced interpretation of the psychological, corporeal, and political experience of gender in Algeria. In her fiction, she uses a poetic language and explores the life of middle/upper class women with a special emphasis on the Algerian postcolonial struggles, desire, religion, and politics. Concerning her feminist thought, Mostaghanemi affirms that she defends the woman question against the patriarchal norms which make both sexes victim to its culture as she explains in her interview with Philippe Douroux in 2018. Overall, she earned literary acclaim for her brilliantly poetic novels that are still capable of offending those whose political or religious convictions are conservative. Her characters take great risks, resisting authority and making sacrifices.

Our selected novel for this dissertation is *Chaos of the Senses* (1997), which is the translated version by Nancy Roberts published in 2007. Written in seductive prose, this sensual novel is inspired by the human senses. It is a narrative about erotic love, memory, historical events, political resistance and the woman question. The novel is one of the most notable and famous works of fiction that deal with the period of the 1990s and the theme of betrayal at many levels. Ahlem Mostaghanemi dared to write about such a painful historical period and incorporated into it the erotic aspect as well as many taboo issues such as national betrayal and female sexuality. Her consciousness about the circumstances circulating around the years of the Algerian Civil War led her to produce such a work that gained wide popularity. The story is told through the voice of an Algerian female writer, which represents the voice of those suppressed, subjugated, and marginalized women writers in Arabic.

II-4 Status of Women in the Egyptian Society

This section investigates the historical, cultural, political, economic, biographical, and literary paradigms to the study of the developmental trajectory of the status of women in the Egyptian society during the twentieth century. We shall shed light on each paradigm to understand the predicament of women and their status in the Egyptian post-independent era.

II-4-1 Women during Ancient Egypt

Unlike other ancient civilizations of its time (such as the Greeks and the Romans), women in the ancient Egyptian society are reported to have enjoyed nearly equal rights with men. Radwa Khalil et al assert in their article *How Knowledge of Ancient Egyptian Women Can Influence Today's Gender Role; Does History Matter in Gender Psychology* (2017), that social status is the distinguishing feature for ancient Egyptian conceptualization of dignity rather than gender. In fact, the Egyptian society was based on a hierarchical structure in a pyramid-like shape which is constituted of six levels from bottom to top as follows: the farmers, artists and craftsmen, scribes and officials, priests, physicians and engineers, government officials and the Pharaoh at the top (see appendices). Concerning the status of Ancient Egyptian women, Radwa Khalil et al (2017) contend that "women held many important and influential positions in Ancient Egypt and typically enjoyed many of the legal and economic rights given to men within their respective social class" (2), and this is demonstrated by royal women like Hatshepsut, Nefertiti and Cleopatra VII who occupied the position of Pharaoh. Yet, the Egyptologist Kara Cooney (2018) denounces the claim that royal women held the same power and importance as men. She explains that these female Pharaohs were only placeholders for the next male heir, in order to ensure their conceptualization of the continuity of homogeneous divine kingship. Notably, the Czech Egyptologist academics Renata Landgráfová and Hana Navrátilová report that "the research difficulties lie in the idealised pictorial sources and the absence of sufficient

corrective information" (34), referring to their study of the public/private life of ancient Egyptian women. This lack of resources to investigate the private life of these women leaves a blank space as the pictorial evidence is considered as an idealized reflection.

Interestingly, ancient Egyptian women are documented to have distinct roles from men. Women were confined to the domestic sphere, and were denied the opportunity to becoming scribes (Landgráfová and Navrátilová 5) as scribe education was restricted to boys (Vymazalová and Coppens 31-34) and administrative positions were resitricted to men (Markéta Preininger 5). However, ancient Egyptian women could own land and property, transmit it, and undertake lawful proceedings (Graves-Brown 4) which refers to the fact that ancient Egyptian women held equal rights in social life (Nardo).

Concerning marriage, Graves-Brown (2010) contends that ancient Egyptian girls got married after their puberty by their fathers in a ritual that Toivari Viitala (2013) describes: "marriage in ancient Egypt was predominantly rendered as a male engineered process expressed by the phrase rdj X Y m hmt, "to give X to Y as wife" used from the Old Kingdom onwards" (4). Interestingly, ancient Egyptian women could choose their husbands, and within marriage, they were not expected to be subservient to their husbands (Jacobs 1996; Hunt 2009). Moreover, divorce is reported by Graves-Brown (2010) to be initiated by either husband or wife (4) through articulating a specific oath in a temple (43). Concerning heritage, Radwa Khalil et al (2017) assert that "several Papyri indicated the capacity of Ancient Egyptian women to gain wealth independently from their husbands. On the other hand, a husband could lawfully treat his wife as his legal child, if he did not want to give any of his riches to his relatives" (2), which alludes to the principles on which Egyptian familial union is based, suggesting equality, freedom, and happiness. When it comes to education, Radwa Khalil et al report that ancient Egyptian women enjoyed the right to education unlike women in Greece:

From the age of four, they were trained in instructive establishments, where they were taught science, geometry, and the essentials of hieroglyphic and conversational hieratic. Eventually,

they would gain a certificate, the title of ink put holder, and would be authorized for full practice in any of the branches of knowledge they chose. For instance, Egyptian women could attend remedial schools along men or attend a female-only school. One of the greatest examples of the remarkable success of ancient Egyptian women in science is the one of Tapputi-Belatikallim, who workd with chemicals utilized for aroma generation as a part of Mesopotamia around 1200 B.C. (3-4)

As illustrated in this quote, the status of ancient Egyptian woman reveals the values of equal opportunity to education and certain areas of employment. Therefore, the understanding of the priviledged status of the ancient Egyptian woman is suggestive of the fact that gender roles are generally a civilizational construct of social relations rather than a fixed fact of nature.

II-4-2 Women during the Greco-Roman Conquest and Christianization

Following the Roman conquest of Egypt in 30 BCE, which was previously under the rule of Marcus Antonius and Cleopatra VII (the Macedonian dynasty of the Ptolemics), a heterogeneous society developed with the interaction and mixing between the Egyptian, Roman, and Greek cultures. Concerning the status of women during the Greco-Roman rule in Egypt, the scholar Ada Nifosi contends in her book *Becoming a Woman and Mother in Greco-Roman Egypt: Women's Bodies, Society and Domestic Space* (2019):

Women enjoyed a much better social status in ancient Egypt and the cultural, moral and legal changes that came with Greco-Roman rule were not for the better. For instance, before the Greeks ruled Egypt, Egyptian women could exercise their legal rights freely and independently. However, after the Greeks introduced their laws into Egypt, most women living there needed a male guardian for legal acts such as marriage. Egyptian women also gradually lost control over their bodies and their offspring. For instance, the power to recognize children was entirely in the fathers' hands and mothers had little or no say in this choice. Sometimes children were even

abandoned and left to die or be raised as slaves. This doesn't seem to have happened before in ancient Egypt. (qtd. In Sandy Fleming)

The elaborate quote shows that Egyptian women were relegated to the confines of the domestic sphere after the Greco-Roman conquest. They occupied inferior position in social life following the Roman model of femininity that emphasized chastity, faithfulness, and self-sacrifice. Egyptian women followed the Roman rules due to the life transformations in world dynamics dominated by Western interests. Yet, the American academic James C. Thompson (2010) reveals that generalizations about the status of Roman cult of femininity cannot be firmly held as Romans emphasized the value of family, marriage and home. Although Roman women were not allowed to hold public office or give suggestions during the early days of the Roman Republic, they could privately affect the decisions of their husbands or sons in office.

Interestingly, it is reported by Joshua J. Mark in his article *Women in Ancient Egypt* that the status of Egyptian women declined with the advent of Christianity in the 4th century CE with the perpetuated idea that Eve was responsible for the original sin and that silence and submission of women are due to Eve's act of tempting Adam to eat the forbiden fruit from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil through her deception by the serpent (Cross and Livingston 994). Furthermore, the Islamic conquest of Egypt in the 7th century CE officially ended the Pharaonic culture that is based on gender equality.

II-4-3 Women during the Arabo-Islamic Conquest

The status of Egyptian women during the Arabo-Islamic conquest has witnessed some changes with the advent of Islamic teachings and culture. Islam, as an integral religion, provides a way of life rather than just a theology (Gibb). The prophet Mohammed paid a significant attention to the woman question and introduced major changes. He "sought to transform the tribal basis of Arabian society by substituting a more family oriented pattern based on a

partnership between the sexes, albeit one in which the woman was the junior partner" (Halim 81). By securing some legal rights for women, such as the right to own property and receive a share of inheritance, Islam improved Arab women status. Moreover, Quranic principles ended the practice of female infanticide, and gave women equal rights in the spiritual, social, and economic aspects, such as giving her equal rights in moral and spiritual judgement, education, and holding property. The prophet Mohammad insisted on the good treatment of women, and their right to reject or accept marriage proposals. Taking into consideration the polygamous nature of the Arab society at that time, Islam recommended that men should limit themselves to one woman, insisting on monogamy. Yet, it allowed polygamy up to four wives in certain circumstances. Yet, Islam did not grant women with the same equity in inheritance and testimony.

Islam's view towards gender roles emphasises men and women complementarity of functions. Murata Sachiko (1992) contends that the Islamic cosmological thought is based on harmonious binary relationships and that humanity has been created in a pair (14). In the *Encyclopedia of Women and Islamic Cultures*, Suad Joseph et al (2004) state that Islamic law recognizes gender disparity and assigns obligations to separate spheres; a woman's life is confined to the marital and maternal responsibilities in the private sphere, and a man's life is dedicated to financial and administrative responsibilities in the public sphere. According to Sayyid Qutb, an Egyptian Islamic theorist, the holy Quran "gives the man the right of guardianship or superiority over the family structure in order to prevent dissension and friction between the spouses. The equity of this system lies in the fact that God both favoured the man with the necessary qualities and skills for the 'guardianship' and also charged him with the duty to provide for the structure's upkeep" (qtd. in Yazbeck Haddad and Esposito 37-8). This division clearly privileges biology and physiology in socio-cultural relationships and sustains the patriarchal dominance.

Furthermore, the Arab culture is known for its ideal of honour at the individual and communal level. This ideal together with the family-oriented society and its sexual attitudes towards women is responsible for the deteriorating status of women. Wahyyudin Halim (2015) states that Arab male honour depends on the virtue of the family's female members. He elaborates that Arabs perceived women as sexualized beings, weak and irresponsible. Thus, contact to women would lead to sexual affairs. Interestingly, the concept of *fitna* (Arabic work denoting temptation, trial and conflict) for the Arabs has the connotations of *femme fatale* (French word, denoting a seductive woman who attracts men by an aura of charm and mystery), or the woman who makes a man lose control, thus, provoking sexual disorder or chaos as Qasim Amin explains in his book *The Liberation of Women* 1899. In order to put a limit to the sexual gaze upon women and their weakness, seclusion and veiling of women were adopted in order to prevent sexual transgressions of their women. Smock and Youssef (1977) report:

> Although the veil became a symbol of respectability, the very logic of seclusion reflected negatively on the character and value of women. Ultimately, women were kept apart from men to shild men from the temptations that women, who were inherently untrustworthy, inevitably offered. (qtd. In Halim 82)

Clearly, this thought implies that Arab men admit that they have a strong sexual urge or weak control over their sexuality in front of women. Therefore, they project their weakness and sexual temptation onto the woman, reducing her to a sexualized entity. This gaze justifies their practice of female infanticide, polygamy, veiling, women seclusion and their imposed relegation to the domestic sphere.

Nevertheless, Wahyyudin Halim (2015) argues that the nature of the Egyptian society is different from that of the Arabs (83). Women have been documented to enjoy priviledged status in pre-Islamic status. The advent of Christianity deteriorated their early position, but the society relatively retained moderate attitudes towards women. The same happened with Islam

as society resisted the conservative efforts of Arabization and Islamization. Smock and Youssef (1977) elaborate:

> Many classical Egyptian Arabic sources describe women as shopping, even buying clothes from their husbands. Ibn al-Hadj, a fourteenth century Egyptian jurist, inveighed against many of the practices of women which he perceived as contrary to Islamic laws, such as the use of henna, the tattooing of the body, the wearing of many jewels, and the removal of unwanted hair from the face; he would not have been aware of the manner in which women dressed if they had been veiled and secluded. (qtd. In Halim 83)

This excerpt testifies the fact that though Egyptian culture embraced Islam, it resisted the conservative attitudes and maintained seemingly its ancestral progressist attitudes towards women especially that the economic and demographic aspects impose an alternative reality.

In sum, the research on the status of Egyptian women during the middle ages is scarce and the available one presents different views considering the background of the researcher whose distinct ideological stance, political agenda, personal preference, and even gendered attitude is relatively reflected. Yet, there is a general concensus that Egyptian culture did not lose its essentialist attitude that cherishes women. Thus, the Arabization efforts that came along with Islamization had relative impact upon the large culture.

II-4-4 Women during the Western Rule

Although the French invasion of Egypt lasted only for three years (1798- 1801), it had introduced significant implications for both the Egyptian society and the European Imperial interests. Led by Napoleon Bonaparte in 1798, the French imported their culture into the Egyptian society. The Sri Lankan author of *Feminism and Nationalism in the Third World*, Jayawardena Kumari, maintains that the French occupation "caused a rapid flow of European ideas into Egypt including the ideology of the French Revolution", referring to the ideals of liberty, fraternity and equality which are fundamental rights for the emancipation of the

individual, and legal equality. Yet, the majority of Egyptians, being deeply socialized in adopting traditionalist norms, denounced the French occupation and its ideals. The historian al Jabarti reports that the "pernicious innovations and corruption of women caused by the French occupation" (qtd. In Kumari) is due to the emergence of a class of women who started to imitate the conduct of French women expeditors (Abdel Wahab Al-Afifi and Abdel Hadi).

The Egyptian people conducted a series of riots against the French colonization on national and religious grounds. As Ben Vick documents in his article *The French Ocuupation of Egypt* (2014), the Egyptian riots were led by the *Ulamas* (Arabic word) who were religious scholars regarded as political leaders. The *Ulamas* condemned the foreign occupation of the French and fought them on religious motives. Moreover, the Anglo-Ottoman cooperation to expel the French from Egyptian territories reached its goal in 1801. The British army supported the Ottoman rule over Egypt, and as soon as they guaranteed their sovereignty, they departed from the area.

Following the French expulsion from Egypt, the Ottomans appointed the Albanian general Muhammed Ali in authority over Egypt in 1805. He started in implementing modernization measures by introducing reforms at the military, economic and cultural spheres including those at the educational sector for both men and upper class women. Jeyawordena Kumari (1986) asserts that in 1832, Mohammed Ali built a school for girls to teach them how to become midwives. His successor Ismail Pasha followed the same path of education reforms. According to Kumari (1986), Ismail Pasha's wife, Jashem Afet Hanim, started the 'Suyliyya Girls School' in which girls were taught many subjects such as history, religion, and arithemtic.

Despite these reformist measures initiated in modern Egypt by Mohammed Ali's policy, his successor Said Pasha led the country to economic bankruptcy due to the construction of the Suez Canal. The economic conduct of the late successor imposed European intervention and Egypt fell under the control of the British in 1882. The foreign rule was rejected by Egyptians,

which led to the development of nationalist consciousness to end the British rule during the beginning of the 20th century. With the nationalist spirit of the late nineteenth century and beginning of twentieth century, a new concern for women's rights rose up leading up to the burgeoning of Egyptian feminism, which aimed at challenging the patriarchal rule and negotiating new roles for women. As Thomas Philips describes: "Since the end of the nineteenth century Egyptian Nationalists have claimed that there can be no improvement of the state without improving the position of women" (278), further emphasizing the importance of women participation in the revolutionary struggle against foreign rule. The growing hostility and anger towards the British occupation led to the 1919 Revolution which resulted in the participation of all classes of the Egyptian society in violent demonstrations. Notably, women participation is believed to initiate the feminist struggle along the nationalist one. As Marsat (1986) states, "The veiled gentlewomen of Cairo paraded in the streets shouting slogans for independence and freedom from foreign occupation. They organized strikes and demonstrations, boycotts of British goods and wrote petitions protesting British actions in Egypt" (45), alluding to the challenge of Egyptian women to the conservative norms.

II-4-5 Development of the Egyptian Feminist Movement

The Egyptian feminist movement is part of the Arab one; it started in Egypt and Lebanon through fiction and press articles at the end of the nineteenth century along with the nationalist movements for emancipation from the Imperial rule. Arab feminists hold that the improvement of the status of women is a prerequisite for the reform of the social life. The Egyptian feminist movement started with the foundation of the Egyptian Feminist Union (EFU) in 1923 by Hoda Shaarawi (1879-1949), a pioneer feminist who led the movement's quest for women voting rights, reforms to personal status laws, and equal education rights. The movement published periodicals that expressed the Arab feminist concerns in relation to their unique social,

economic, and political aspects. Upon her return from the International Feminist Conference in Rome along with Nabawiyya Musa and Ceza Nabarwi, Shaarawi caused polemic controversy and public outrage with her rebellious gesture performed in a train station to express her rejection of the Egyptian patriarchal norms by throwing her veil into the sea. Despite the scandal she experienced for her act, she inspired other women to cast off their veils as Jayawardena reports in *Feminism and Nationalism in the Third World* (1986). Her act was read as a rebellious reaction against the norms of her times where women of the upper class were secluded in homes or what is called *the harem*[43], and could not go out only after permission and with a male relative, and fully veiled. This norm reflects the Arab culture of women seclusion that has been embedded in the Egyptian culture.

In addition to the EFU's concern for gender equality and improving the legal status of women through granting them with equal opportunities for education, employment and voting, the movement condemned the state's neglect of the lower class people which led to social evils, namely poverty, prostitution, poor health condition, and illiteracy (Keddie and Baron 1993). The movement published many journals such as *l'Egyptienne,* which is written and published in French and addressed to upper class women. In 1937, the movement founded another journal called *el-Masriyyah* (The Egyptian women) for their Arabic readers.

In 1923, the movement reflected its preoccupations through its publication of its nine principles: "the right to higher education for girls, a change in marriage customs, prohibition of polygamy and divorce without the woman's consent, implementation of a minimum marriage age, and the promotion of public health and hygiene." (Mokalled 41-42), reflecting the liberal character of the movement's ideology. In 1924, the government passed a new constitution in which the raising of age for women to 16 was considered a minor change considering the EFU

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[43] Harem, Arabic ḥarīm, in Muslim countries, the part of a house set apart for the women of the family. The word ḥarīmī is used collectively to refer to the women themselves. (Encyclopedia Britannica)

demands. The general discontent among the feminists is reflected in Shaarawi's lectures at the American University of Cairo on the position of Egyptian women. Shaarawi condemned unjustified polygamy and called for its abolition (Quawas 229). Although Shaarawi's demands faced the rejection of the conservative community and the Azhar Sheikhs (Reigious men of Al-Azhar University), the women elite sided with her and supported her demands. Her speech was printed in written form as an expression of support and enthusiasm in a leading journal across the Arab world as Woodsmall documents in Jeyawordena Kumari's book (1986).

The reaction of the general public towards the movement's radical demands varied between those who condemned its demands on the ground that this urgent project to emancipating women is a form of cultural Imperialism. Tallat Harb, a prominent economist and nationalist, contends in his book *Tarbiyat Almaraa wel-Hidjab* (The raising of women and Hidjab) that "the emancipation of women was just another plot to weaken the Egyptian nation and disseminate immorality and decadence in its society" (qtd. In Tiffany Wayne 345). His view reflects the hegemony of the conservative tradition, which firmly maintains that women's role is limited to the private sphere. On the other hand, others welcomed the movement's demands to the improvement of women's rights and integrating them in the public sphere. Yet, they agreed that the application of the Western model of women emancipation should not go beyond the Islamic law and its principle of gender disparity and the separation of spheres. Ahmad a-Sayyid maintains that "Our issue is not that of equality of men with women with regard to voting and positions. Our women, God bless them, do not put up such demands, which would disturb the publisc peace (…) they only demand education and instruction" (qtd. In Thomas Philip 287). This view reflects the rooted attitude that is held towards womanhood and gender roles, and the structure of the society which rejects individual rights where the subject spends one's life either oppressing or being oppressed. This attitude would lead to injustice and in societal interactions.

After WWII, Egypt experienced a tumultuous period with its economic and political issues which led to urgent debate on radical changes in politics. Likewise, new classes of Egyptian women found that the EFU does not address the diverse concerns of Egyptian women as it reflects fundamentally those of the upper class women. In 1942, the Egyptian Feminist Party was founded by Fatma Neamat Rashed, and it advocated gender equality in education, employment, political representation, and the right of paid leave for working (Nadia Abdel Wahab Al-Afifi and Amal Abde Hadi). In 1948, the *Bint el-Nile* (Daughter of the Nile), a feminist association, was founded. The latter campained for the full political rights of women as the scholar Nadje al-Ali (2000) reports, in addition to working on introducing women to the decision making leadership. Its creator, Doria Shafik (1908-1975), is one of the leaders of women liberation movement in the mid 1940s and an ardent activist for women rights. She embraced the liberal ideology of modern feminism and reflected them in her militant stand to ensure their social and political rights from the government, and against British foreign occupation and authoritarianism. Her efforts yielded the granting of the right to vote under the constitution of 1956, with the prerequisite that they be literate: a condition which was not necessary for men. In 1957, Shafik confronted President Abdel Nasser with her hunger protest against the occupation of Egyptian territories by Israeli forces.

Following Doria Shafik's feminist activism in the 1950s, the movement experienced recession due to political measures. Following the seizure of the monarchy by the army, all political parties including women's movements got dissolved and banned. During this period, the feminist movement was appropriated by the state in what is known as 'state feminism'. Interestingly, President Gamal Abdel Nasser's (1956-1970) policy guaranteed the right to vote for women and the labor laws were changed to ensure women's employment and the legal protection of her right to maternal leave (Mervat 232).

After the decline of Nasserist regime, the feminist movement symbolically resurged from nearly twenty years of imposed inertia with Nawal Al-Saadawi's (1931-) non-fiction book *Women and Sex* in 1972. The book discussed many issues related to women sexuality and strongly condemned female genital mutilation. Her book brought her discord with the political and theological authorities, in addition to her dismissal from her job as physician at the Ministry of Health. The general public faced her ideas with rejection especially that religious *Fundamentalism* (Islamic Fundamentalism which advocates conformity to sacred texts and context) flourished at that time. Mervat Hatem (1992) clarifies that President Anwar Sadat's political policies limited women participation in public and economic life through his cooperation with the Islamists and their ideological agenda behind religious *Fundamentalism*. The Constitution of 1971 bears the premise that the improvement of women's status should not go beyond the laws of the *Sharia*. It declares in article 11: "The state guarantees a balance and accord between a woman's duties towards her family, on the one hand, and towards her work in society and her equality with man in the political, social, and cultural spheres, on the other, without violating the laws of the Islamic Shariaa" (Constitution 1971).

In the late 70s, however, Sadat began to encourage women's rights as a prerequisite for the international relations that his Open Door policies (Open market policies) entails. It is worth noting that the efforts of his wife Jehan Sadat are significant in promoting gender issues and women's rights. Nadia Abdel Waahab and Wahab Al Afifi (1996) report that the 1980s witnessed the emergence of the 'New Woman' group which is concerned with establishing a suitable feminist program with the new concerns, and the Committe for the Defence of Women and Family Rights to support the campaign for the amendment of the Personal Status Code (early 1980s).

Notably, Anwar Sadat's regime departed from Nasser's at the economic and political levels. Sadat opened the market for private market and investment and allowed for the

establishment of multi-party system as well as organizations and associations. He gained wide

fame and respect after he led Egypt in the Yom Kippur War of 1973 to regain Egypt's Sinai

Peninsula from the Israel after six years of foreign occupation since the Six Day War of 1967.

He was also engaged in negociations with Israel that led to the Egypt-Israel Peace Treaty in

1979, for which he was nominated as a laureate for Nobel Peace Prize. It is reported by the

Congress library that though there was a general approval among Egyptians towards Sadat's

treaty with Israel which led to the return of the Sinai to Egypt, the country's Muslim

Brotherhood and the left strongly denounced his act and considered it as a betrayal and

abondonment to the Palestinian cause (Peace with Israel). The political ideas of the Muslim

Brotherhood spread not only among the Egyptian youth at that time, but all over the the Middle

East, North African countries, and even in Europe, South Asia, and the United States later on.

II-4-6 Egyptian Women Writers and their Contribution to Egyptian Feminism and its Concerns

The historical contribution of women in the artistic and literary field is limited due to

the ban imposed by traditional culture. History testifies that men monopolized the fiels of

writing as well as the linguistic and cultural thought to themselves, and left storytelling to

women who were denied many rights including education and participation in the social life.

Thus, the woman subject was placed outside language and the linguistic culture transforming

her into a cultural issue rather than a cultural or linguistic subjectivity. This extended to

representing her thoughts and concerns, appropriating her voice and conducting her life

according to his desires. Womanhood and femininity became an object; a construction; and a

projection of the male's gaze and his desire. The feminine body became the organic level which

gives rise to the masculine writing and its location is determined by his needs to satiate his

sexual desire. Thus, the feminine beauty is defined around submission, silence and passivity. As such, a woman's existence is defined by the *Other* and not by her self, i.e. she acts as a reflecting mirror to man's will. Women could not face their enforced marginalization without intellectual and economic independence. It is till the modern age when education and employment rights were granted to them that they led their struggle against their gendered oppression through political activism and also through writing.

The feminist academic Joseph T. Zeidan traces in his book *Arab Women Novelists: The Formative Years and Beyond* (1995) the development of Arab feminism. Zeidan identifies in his historical account the two major issues initiating the struggle of Arab women for equality and emancipation, which are veiling and education. Accordingly, both critics recognize in their works the critical importance of of Arab women education and their integration into the workforce.

Indeed, male writers and activists are a significant part of the first feminists who joined the discourse on women's rights and discussed the plight of women by tradition and the patriarchal system. Egyptian reformist Qasim Amin (1863- 1908) expressed the first and major concern for early Egyptian and Arab feminism which is the need for the abolition of the practice of veiling in his book *The Liberation of Women* (1899), arguing that it is a threat to modernity. He maintains that the veil is not of Islamic origin but rather a recent ideological tool for women seclusion in order to maintain patriarchal authority. Another male writer who supported women rights and education is Rifaa al-Tahtaoui (1801-1873), also considered as a renaissance intellectual. In his works, he stressed upon the idea of Muslim modernity and that the principles of Islam are compatible with European modernity. His book *The Honest Guide for Education of Girls and Boys* (1873) discusses his precepts upon educational thoughts that are progressive. Salama Musa (1887- 1958) in another pioneer for the cause of women rights. He urged the Egyptian society to embrace European culture and compained against traditional religion

(Meisami and Starkey 554-55). His books *The Woman Is not the Plaything of the Man* (1956) and *Open the Door for Her* (1962) are dedicated to the woman question and express his revolutionary and feminist ideas about the liberation of the woman at that time.

Following early feminism that was started by male writers, women entered the literary realm and displayed their artistic creativity through fiction and non-fiction works. They considered the act of writing as an emancipatory act to reconstruct and assert their identity in a quest for self-definition and reappropriation of subjectivity, challenging the inhibiting norms and attitudes. Women feminist writing does not reflect their concern about the debate over the levels of ascribed womanhood but rather the expression of their plight and struggle for self-fulfillment in an inhibiting culture, and transgressing their marginality through making their discourse as the headline of their crises with their family, society, the surrounding political and social environment, as well as with men through their role as mothers, wives, daughters, sisters and lovers. Women feminist writing is read as an outburst of taboos and accumulated silence using their corporeal and symbolic writing as a means to negotiate their conflict with men. Women feminist writers write about men, and in doing so, they have ended a long history of guardianship, patriarchy, and authoritarianism, reducing his virility and authority, and transforming him from subject to an object. Their style varies between creatively rebelling against patriarchal rules, to criticizing the overall system that affects economy, politics, and ecology, among others.

The beginning of the twentieth century witnessed the growing discourse on the future of the Middle East through enacting reforms at the cultural, economic, and political levels. Among the issues that were addressed in the reformist discourse is the improvement of the status of women in Egyptian society. In addition to the male activists and writers who were the pioneers in supporting the women cause, women started their strife in the intellectual and political discourse on the advancement of Egyptian women. Among the female pioneers in

feminist writing and activism we have Aisha E'ismat Tymuriyya (1840-1902) and Malak Hifni Nasif (1886-1918). Tymuriyya's work in fiction, social commentary and poetry, insists on the necessity of women participation in the process of nation building. She campaigned for women rights in a time of transition from tradition to modernity with the accelerated reforms. She is referenced as "the mother of Egyptian feminism" (Lang Kate). Her writings in Arabic had paved the way for the emergence of Arabic women's writing. Her booklet *Mir'at alTa'mulfi al-Umur* (A Reflective Mirror on Some Matters or, more eloquently, The Mirror of Contemplation) published in 1892 argues that Islam gave rights to women that the patriarchal system has deprived them of. In her allegorical narratives, Taymuriyya purosefully refers to the main subject in a sexless manner by indicating to the human being (insan) rather than using gendered pronouns which, in Arabic language, priviledge the masculine. Thus, she insists on the proliferation of the humanistic discourse.

Additionally, Malak Hifni Nasif contributed to the reformist discourse on women status with her work. In 1909, she published *Al-Nisa-iyyat* (The Feminists), which is a collection of her essays and talks on the advancement of women (Badran Margot 54). She insisted on the premise that a combination between the Western model of developement and the local Islamic beliefs and tradition would yield a suitable and acceptable modernization (Ahmed Leila). For instance, when there was a debate on the veil and many feminists of her time advocated unveiling; Malak Hifni Nasif questioned the debate of unveiling and its association to freedom. She argued that the veil has been a firm tradition and its sudden removal reflects an obsession with European fashion rather than the desire of freedom itself (Ahmed Leila). Thus, she supports Qasim's idea of gradual unveiling (qtd. in Al Qaiwani 81). Concerning marriage, Malak Hifni Nasif called for increasing the age of marriage for women to at least 16, she condemned polygamy and insisted than women must be grant with the right to divorce (Baron and Keddie 278). Moreover, Malak Hifni Nasif advocated for the right to significant education

for women; one that does not have a missionary nature (Yousef Reina 84), but rather a more comprehensive curriculum including the history of Egypt, (Yousef Reina 84) hygiene, childrearing and economics in addition to training women for nursing and teaching professions and providing all women with the right to higher studies (Kader Soha 67).

Another pioneer in Arabic feminist literature is May Ziadeh (1886-1941) who is a Lebanese-Palestinian poet, essayist and translator who wrote both in Arabic and French. She moved to Cairo in 1907 in order to continue her studies in Arabic literature and history. She published many of her essays in Egyptian journals and periodicals such as *el-Mahroussa*. In 1912, she established one of the most famous literary salons in the modern Arab world in Egypt and encouraged women to pursue their freedom through education and employment. She declares: "if you live [like] a slave you would be a heavy burden on your relations (...) but if you live [like] a queen you would be beloved and celebrated by your family and nation" (Rasa'il May 60). In addition to highlighting the fact that women have a significant role in nation building, Ziadeh contends that the way towards women emancipation has to go through tackling ignorance and anachronistic traditions ("May Ziade"). She spoke and wrote in nine languages but found her comfort in Arabic. In addition to her compilation of poems, Ziadeh published essays, novels, and translated many European authors to Arabic. Among her works in which she expressed her ideas on women emancipation, we have *Bâhithat el-Bâdiya* (Seeker in the Desert) 1920, *Al-Musawat* (Equality) 1923, and *Ghayat Al Hayat* (The Meaning of life) 1921.

The second half of the twentieth century witnessed significant economic, political, and social changes that led to the improvement of women status and the rise of middle class educated and intellectual women. Their growing consciousness on the social and national preoccupations in addition to the development of Arabic printed press provided a suitable space for women advancement in the realm of literature. Notable women writers such as Amina Al-Said, Aisha Abd al-Rahman (Daughter of the Riverbank), Saneyya Oraa, Latifa Al-Zayyat,

Salwa Bakr, Doria Rostom, Jadibiya Sidki, Radwa Ashour, in addition to the renowned Nawal Al-Saadawi wrote on the woman cause in their fictional and non-fictional works. Egyptian women fictional writing began with short fiction such as Amina Al-Said's *El-hdaf al-Kabir* (The Biggest Purpose), Jadibiya Sidki's *Mamlakat Allah* (The Kingdom of God) 1954, *Baka Kalbi* (My Heart Wept) 1957, and *Layla Baydaa* (A White Night) 1960. It then developed to writing novels with themes such as Imperialist hegemony, female identity, transcending patriarchy, cultural diversity, historical events, and social and political issues, among many.

Perhaps the leading Egyptian feminist writer and activist in the twentieth century is Nawal Al-Saadawi. Also a Marxist revolutionary, anti-Imperialist, physician and psychiatrist, Al-Saadawi realized at an early age the extent to which the oppressive socio-cultural norms caused neurosis to women. She addressed taboo issues related to the subject of women in Islam, female genital mutilation, virginity, and veiling. She started with a collection of short stories *I Learned Love* 1957, then she published her first novel *Memoirs of a Woman Doctor* 1958, and her personal memoir: *Memoir from the Women's Prison* 1986. Her nonfiction book *Women and Sex* marked her as a controversial radical feminist upon its publication. She also contributed by writing essays in anthologies such as *When a Woman Rebels* in the 1984 anthology *Sisterhood is Global*. She is also known for her outspoken views that caused outrage such as religious *Fundamentalism* and political opposition for which she was jailed in 1981, and used her experience is writing her memoir. Al-Saadawi is a prolific writer and all her books are translated to various European languages.

II-4-7 Anglophone Egyptian Literature

Certainly, Anglophone Egyptian literature belongs to the larger canon of of Anglophone Arabic literature. It is conceived and written in English by writers of Arabic origins (Nash 11),

and living as immigrants in one of the English speaking countries. Dallel Sarnou asserts in her article *Narratives of Arab Anglophone Women and the Articulation of a Major Discourse in a Minor Literature* (2014) that these writers are "either academics and /or intellectuals who migrated to Britain or USA and decided to write in English, or British/American writers who are daughters of the early twentieth century Arab immigrants who settled mainly in the US, and whose mother tongue in English" (66). Thus, Anglophone Diasporic literature is written either by first generation or second-generation immigrants. Ahdaf Soueif stands among the female Egyptian writers in English who write about cross-cultural interaction, sexuality, and politics.

II-4-8 Diasporic Literature and its Concern with Place and Identity

In fact, the origins of Anglophone Arab literature go back to the historically orientalist travel literature which has been inscribed as a colonial discourse that considers the orientalist as an object to be manipulated for Imperialist desires and interests. The postcolonial transatlantic narrative or Anglophone Arab literature, on the other hand, does something deeply different. It sees the same self-objects as subjects who are transformed by their journey.

The phenomenon of displacement is mainly associated with colonialism and its aftermath. Thus, the dialectic of place and displacement has become a central topic in postcolonial theory, and their relation with identity is a feature of all postcolonial literature. Arab, African, or Indian Diaspora is engendered by many conditions such as victimhood, labor, trade, studies, and globalization. As Bill Ashcroft (1989) illustrates in this excerpt:

> One of the major features of post-colonial literature is the concern with place and displacement. It is here that the special post-colonial crisis of identity comes into being; the concern with the development or recovery of an effective identifying relationship between self and place" (8)

Therefore, a valid sense of self may be erased by displacement that follows immigration or the belittling of the native personality and culture by a supposedly superior racial or cultural model.

Disporic Anglophone literature seeks the ways in which immigrant characters have come to identify themselves in a world of linguistic, geographic and psychological displacement, loss and mobility.

The semantic domain of the term Diaspora has had a varied use over the years. Etymologically, the word Diaspora, meaning dispersal, stems from the Greek *speiro* to 'sow', and *dia* 'over'. It connotes a triumphalist migration/colonization. Originally, it was used as a proper noun in the antique tradition of the "dispersion of Hellenic establishments around the Mediterranean Sea" (Gaillard 41). Later on, in the biblical sense, it was used to discuss the dispersal of the Jews. The Jewish expulsion experience and exile from Jerusalem is what provided the use of the term in the modern times, such as the Palestinians and the Kurds, especially in the modern case of African Diaspora created by the transatlantic slave trade.

Over the twentieth century, the term Diaspora has had varied connotations. It covers the migration that was/is "exile" of people fleeing situations of conflict and insecurity by coercion as it also covers essentially the immigration of people living away from one's country of original residence for economic, cultural, and personal reasons either by choice or necessity. So, it has become more inclusive than its preceding usage. In fact, the past century has witnessed the displacement and dispersal of populations across the world as a result of major political and economic upheavals such as the two European wars, decolonization and the Cold War. Followed by the current age of globalization, new technologies of communication, information, and travel, have accelerated the movement of people, commodities, ideas and cultures across the world. Thus, Diaspora has heterogeneous nature to its causes and aims. This transnational mobility of people can be voluntary for personal reasons, or enforced for major political and economic reasons.

As Ferdinand de Saussure pointed out in 1916, no term has its meaning independently, but rather acquires it in its relationship to, and nuanced difference from, related others in the

system (*Course in General Linguistics*) Consequently, since the late 1960s, Diaspora has come to mean what it does in its imbrications with the terms transnationalism, globalization, migration, ethnicity, exile, and postcolonialism, among others. Since the 1980s, the changing meanings of belonging and citizenship have further complicated the conceptual situation.

In our study, we consider displacement as an existential condition and a narrative strategy; it embraces the choice of our literary corpora. Milosz (2002) suggests that some literary genres are simply not appropriate while being displaced and writing about the experience:

> Certain literary genres (the realistic novel, for instance) and certain styles cannot, by definition, be practiced in exile. On the other hand, the condition of exile, by enforcing upon a writer several perspectives, favors other genres and styles, especially those which are related to a symbolic transposition of reality. (15)

Given Milosz's opinion, if one were to assess the genres that writers such as Ahdaf Soueif uses, it is apparent that her fiction is not only realistic but a symbolic transposition of reality. It applies a certain literary and philosophical structure that presents a number of clear oppositions in order to represent reality in terms of binaries.

The immigrant writers carry a truth that needs to be told. Their narratives can be helpful in constructing a bridge between the two cultures as well as conveying personal and cultural experiences of loss and reconstruction of the self. The creative writer Dubravka Ugrešić (1999) describes this situation with insight and clarity. In her essay *The Writer in Exile* she maintains: "An exile's writing is often "nervous", self-ironic, melancholic, subversive and nostalgic. This is because exile is itself a neurosis, a restless process of testing values and comparing worlds: the one we left and the one where we ended up" (1). Ugrešić underlines that the writer explores the theme of exile from a double stand: being a writer of his/her own condition, and as an actual exile and commentator, and this is what makes their diasporic writing hybrid and ambivalent in Bhabha's terms.

II-4-9 Development of Ahdaf Soueif's Feminist Thought in her Fiction

Ahdaf Soueif is an Egyptian novelist, and a writer on political and cultural affairs. She was born in Cairo in 1950 to a family of intellectuals. She lived in England between the ages of four and eight whilst her mother was studying for her Ph.D. She resided most of her childhood years in Egypt. In 1957, the Soueifs went to Britain on study leave; her mother to prepare a Ph.D. in English literature and her father to take up a post-doctoral job, Ahdaf Soueif accompanied them. The mother completed her Ph.D. and the father obtained a diploma in clinical psychology. Ahdaf Soueif has grown surrounded with family who liked nothing more than to talk politics. Her mother, Fatma Moussa (Hamdan), was a professor of English Literature at Cairo University, and her father, Dr. Mustapha Soueif, was a professor of psychology (Evans 2010). As a young child, Ahdaf Soueif, thus, grew up in both Egyptian and English environments; the first language she learnt to read was English, relearning Arabic when her parents returned to Egypt. In her interview with Jamal Mahjoub, Soueif reveals: "when I started to read, I read in English (...) I must have read all of English Literature before I was sixteen. I started reading Arabic fiction and poetry and so on in my teens, but I think my literary language had already chosen me by then" (Mahjoub 58).

This moment of her life appears to have been decisive in her intellectual development. She falls into the typical *third culture kid* (children who are raised in a foreign country for a significant amount of time) categorization. Moreover, the experience of crossing cultures also becomes a major theme in her writings. After she graduated from the American University of Cairo (1971), obtaining her M.A. in 1973, she left Egypt for England. She was 23 when she went to study for her Doctorate in literary stylistics at Lancaster University. Two weeks before she was to return to Egypt, she met her future husband, the poet and biographer Ian Hamilton. Her first marriage to an Egyptian ended, and she later married Ian Hamilton, from whom she

eventually separated. Her marriage experience is one of Soueif's central themes in her fiction. She explores the life of middle/upper class women who are foreign exiles. Since 1984, she has been living in England, except for two years, from 1987 to 1989, when she taught at King Saud University in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. She has kept touch with Egypt through many travels there, mainly to attend literary conferences and meet other women artists.

Additionally, there were many other factors that activated Soueif's political concerns. The political turmoil of the Suez Crisis that Egypt has gone through during the 1950s and the Six Days War with the Israeli troops who gained occupation of Sinai in 1967, have affected her adolescent years so deeply. In 1973, Egypt invaded Sinai and negotiated its return and in 1979, it signed a peace treaty with Israel, resulting in the official return of the Sinai Peninsula.

This charged political atmosphere has made of Ahdaf Soueif a passionately dedicated writer and commentator about political and cultural issues. In an interview with book blogger Ahmede Hussain in 2007, she explains: "I write about the things I care about, the things that I want to explore". Moreover, Soueif genuinely addresses social and political issues in her writings, and she looks for what she calls the *mezzaterra* (middle ground), which she conceptualizes as the bridge that connects between Western and Eastern values. Thus, she performs the role of a mediator between East and West, namely between the Middle East, America and Europe. In her writings, Soueif tries to shed light on the Arab culture and history in order to provide authentic representation of its culture. In doing so, she subverts the cultivated orientalist projection of Egypt and its people by the Western media and discouse. Her countless contributions to various newspapers such as *The Guardian* and *The Observer* reveal her mission of raising awareness for Arab countries and politics in the West.

To date, Ahdaf Soueif has produced four works of fiction; two collections of short stories, *Aisha* (1983), and *Sandpiper* (1996); a dense epic novel *In The Eye of the Sun* (1992), and a second novel entitled *The Map of Love* (1999) which was shortlisted for the Booker Prize

and subsequently translated into 16 languages. These four fictional works are interlinked with characters, episodes, and cross-references that can be considered as autobiographical works whose instigating impulse is to highlight the process of emotional and intellectual growth of its upper/middle class heroines. The recent book is her first non-fiction work entitled *Mezzaterra* (2004), which is a collection of political and cultural essays. In 2000, she also translated the Palestinian poet Mourid Barghouti's *I Saw Ramallah*, an account of his return to the city after 30 years, and a meditation on exile. The main aim of Soueif's literary works was well characterized in the Internet article, aptly entitled *Developing a Euro-Arab Literature* by Shanneik Yafa. The purpose of her writings is to "Focus on the portrayal of Arab-Muslim society and its striving for modernization in a globalized world. She formulates this objective in the context of a specific understanding of culture, cultural identity and intercultural relationship" ("Ahdaf Soueif: Developing a Euro-Arab Literature").

Soueif writes in order to express herself as an artist, but also to express her acute opinions. She writes to speak up for her nation against the Western Imperialist attempts at its domination, to subvert the ideological clichés about Islam, to deconstruct Orientalist discourse and to construct an alternative to it, to save her people from succumbing to their current problems, to be proud of their own achievements, to unveil and get rid of their totalitarian governments and to shake off the shackles of despair. Her political interests are embedded directly in her writings as a proclamation of her progressist agenda.

Accordingly, this study is mainly concerned with the reclaiming the female self in Ahdaf Soueif's novel *In The Eye of the Sun* 1993. The specialist in Anglo-Arab writing Geoffrey Nash (2012) notes that Ahdaf Soueif is " a path-finder in the wave of Arab writers in English of the last two decades of the twentieth century" (24). Given the fact that Ahdaf Soueif is an Egyptian writer who lived both in Egypt and England, her occupation of this interstitial position between two distinct cultures becomes a major characteristic of her fiction. The 'trans-culturality' of her

position, as Ariana Dagnito (2013) describes writers of multicultural backgrounds who embraced their hybrid identity and transcended issues of uprootdness and alienation, enables the author to achieve significant cultural work in deconstructing the binary self/other and offering new ways to think about identity.

II-5 Conclusion

To conclude with, we have investigated the status of women in the Indian, Algerian, and Egyptian context through historical, economic, political, cultural, religious and social lens. It has been noted that the economic interests of the growing worldwide population and its quest foor goods and material exchange trigger women relegation to the domestic sphere in the human social organization. These androcentric interests that are based on power relations, led to the automatic development of patriarchy and man's rule of the world. The female subject found herself overwhelmed in a materialistic world that recognizes her upon the distinctive corporeality as a site of reproductivity to be exploited for male's lineage preservation and domestic chores. The biological distinction between the sexes led the male to assure his superiority based on the value material of goods, agriculture, metal, commodity production and trade that he can possess. On the other hand, the female subject found her value only in her body and its procreative abilities in child bearing and raising. With the evolution of human civilization towards urbanization and the stratification of society into strong/weak groups, the will to power led these civilizations to seek economic resources and impose their rule and systems of reference onto the colonized and controlled peoples to maintain their authority and ongoing exploitation. Ruminating on the female subject in this overwhelming androcentric order, we have noted that regardless her origin, the female subject found herself subjected to the hegemony of the sexist and misogynist system and its discourse, which is perpetuated by systems of indoctrinative power. Notably, religion has been one of the powerful systems that

organized societies ever since history. Although religions differenciate in their level of violating the female subjectivity and the assignement of her role, such as the ancient Pharaonic and early Vedic religious systems, which were characterized by promoting almost egalitarian societies, these texts still retain the androcentric grip over the production of knowledge and the assumption of male superiority.

As have been recognized in the three civilizations (East Asian, Near Eastern, North African), the advent of conquests based on economic and ideological grounds using religions as a justification for colonization, has fixed women's place at the domestic sphere performing her major duty of childbearing and rearing, and this is what explains the norms that allowed and encouraged girl marriage at an early age. Despite the Islamic divine promises of honouring and emancipating her from the firm grip of patriarchy, the prevailing cultural limitations for her access to the public sphere have aborted her divine rights at inception. It seems clear that the patriarchal system is deeply rooted in power relations.

In the modern age, and as the Western civilization has secured its place as the superior architect of power relations, a new system of world manipulation has been engendered thanks to the scientific and technological advances it controls and produces. Although the colonial system has ended, its machinery is still securely operating through newly fashioned economic systems such as the new World Bank and International Monetary Fund. Notably, the female subject who joined her male counterpart in the struggle for military emancipation against Imperial, patriarchal, and social oppression in addition to her contact with the Western liberal thought of the late nineteenth century and twentieth century has contributed to her growing consciousness about the multilayered violence and injustice that reings due to the ignorance and lack of consciousness that her people suffer from. After independence, this postcolonial female subject in the three geographical settings was granted with the rights of education and equal access to employment, voting and standing for political office that require responsibility

from the feamek subject to change her fate. Yet, the latent patriarchal attitudes that limit women from self-fulfillment caused a schism between her projections of the cult of ideal femininity and her aspirations to fulfill herself and reconstruct meaning to her life beyond her procreative abilities and traditional activities. Many writers from Indian, Algerian, and Egyptian origins have articulated their concerns about the status of women during colonization and after independence and her predicament in a patriarchal society that violates her subjectivity through early socialization with the input of traditional norms and attitudes that creates the dialectics of tradition vs. modernity, in addition to the complex issues that their countries suffer from such as corruption, totalitarian regimes, poverty, tradition, political upheavals, among many others. Moreover, the unique cultural context that the authors come from provides us with a complex spectrum of literary themes and motifs from which we can generate a significant reading about postcolonial female selfhood, and this is what we intend to achieve in the next chapter.

CHAPTER THREE:

THE TRIPARTITE STRUCTURE OF

FEMALE SELF-ACTUALIZATION

III-1 Introduction

The selected novels, namely Shashi Deshpande's *The Dark Holds No Terrors*, Ahlem Mostaghanemi's *Chaos of the Senses* and Ahdaf Soueif's *In the Eye of the Sun*, explore the dilemma of constructing an authentic female identity through transgression in a social and cultural androcentric context, This synthetic chapter investigates the extent to which these female authors' voices challenge dominant conceptions of Indian, Algerian, and Egyptian normative gendered identity, either at home or abroad. In doing so, our selected novels are concerned with the shared themes of alienation, transgression, and resistance of their female protagonists' journey to self-fulfillment (personal/social) within their corresponding native or Western (British) liberal society. Notably, the Algerian academic Bedjaoui Fewzia (2005) maintains that "the journey towards negociating a feminine identity is located in the reconciliation between two competitive worlds, embodying the old traditional vs. the modern liberal world" (125), alluding to the hybrid nature of her constructed identity through negociating dynamics between the oppositional binary tradition/modern identity. Knowing that the postcolonial identity is heterogeneous, each one of the Indian, Algerian, and Egyptian cultures has certainly a significant impact on the protagonists' enculturation, leading to distinct dynamics of resistance. Through the intersectionality of race, gender, caste, and class, we shall reflect on the way these aspects contribute to women's inequality and predicament. By engaging with the predicament of these female protagonists *vis-à-vis* their nation, or in relation to a nationally circumscribed space, we shall assess the authors' portrayal of their protagonists' process to self-actualization and self-fulfillment. We shall also investigate the structural process of transformation through which these fictional characters transgress their gender expectations to achieve their liberation and the ways in which they resist their oppression and reclaim their subjectivity.

With this in mind, it is crucial to divide this synthetic chapter into three sections in accordance with the three main stages of the female protagonists' identity construction to self-actualization. The first of which is the *enculturation* (learning one's culture) stage where the female is subjected to the habitus of her society. She undergoes the *indoctrination* and internalization of her society's gender norms and attitudes into an acquired identity. The second phase is about the interstitial space (in-between) where the protagonists' inscribed identity is contested. In this phase, the female protagonists experience neurotic anxiety which comes as a result of rejecting their subjectivity through suppressing their instinctual desires and thoughts. It is a *median* (middle) phase where the rising conflict in the protagonist's psyche leads to self-alienation from one's inscribed meaning to the body and mind. In this stage, the female subject critically questions the patriarchal institution, and transgresses the cultural norms and attitudes by reappropriating her agency over her mind and body. Thus, the female subject needs dislocation and retreat from her persona to an identification with her repressed self in order to confront the unconscious flux of her past repressions, i.e. Freud's conception of the '*the uncanny*'. The last phase represents the female protagonists' healing and reconciliation with their feminine self as well as the patriarchal society through negotiation and resolution of their inner dilemma, asserting the strong aspects of their developed subjectivity, and ultimately reaching an actualized identity. Within each part, we shall examine the way each of the female authors has dealt with the aforementioned concerns according to our preliminary arrangement. The last part is involved in the analogies and contrasts of the authors' thematic concerns in their protagonists' quest for reconstructing a synthetic and autonomous identity.

III-2 Progressive Vector of the Process to Self-Actualization

The following figure sums up the process to self-actualization.
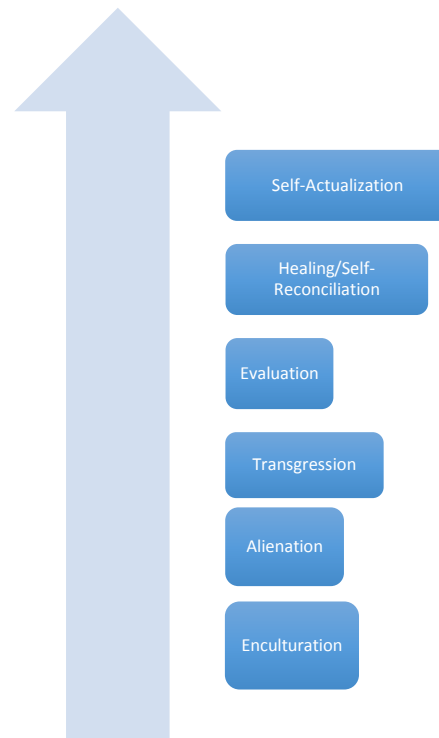
Figure III-2: Vector of the Process of Female Self-Actualization (Self-made).

The progressive procedural vector reveals the six stages that motivate the individual towards self-fulfillment and self-actualization. At the bottom, the individual passively undergoes enculturation within the socio-cultural frames of identification (habitus). When this enculturation turns into indoctrination, the subject either adopts eternal self-silencing or transgressive self-assertion. In the second case, the subject experiences psychological alienation from one's society and its inhibiting norms and attitudes; transgresses the prescriptive limits towards one's self fulfillment; experiences agreeable rewards; evaluates one's acquired values that have violated one's sense of selfhood; heals one's own repressions and traumas; and ultimately asserts one's autonomous selfhood and reaches self-actualization.

III-3 Triangle of Self/Other and the Synthetic or Reconstructed Selfhood

The figure resumes the interdependence of selfhood and reality.

Synthetic Selfhood
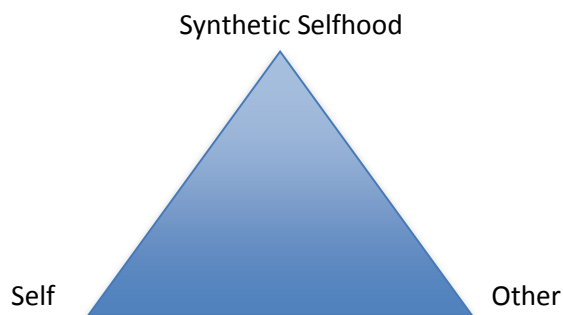
Self   Other

Figure III-3: Triangle of Selfhood Reconstruction (Self-made).

In this triangle, the self/other dialectics form the basis or the screens that structure one's psychic life or the reality, which is opposed to the reconstructed selfhood. In other words, reality resists reconstructed selfhood because the latter represents what is beyond the conceptions that exist in the outer world: the language by which we represent things and issues and the belief in the stability of ordinary reality. While we need this stability which is codified and built up by language, images, and elements that constitute coherent significations that conceptualize the ideal projection of the 'I' or the self, it is also the ground on which we represent the *other* (actual or imaginary). Ultimately, reality is a fiction that is meant to preserve the order of power relations. The reconstructed selfhood represents the ultimate result of the process of self-actualization through one's critical consciousness that symbolizes a yawning of a violated subjectivity that seeks voicing. As one approaches the synthetic singularity of such selfhood, the normal rules and frameworks of reality or identity are transgressed and broken down by the subject in an attempt to reconstruct an individualized selfhood that in its singularity is unknown, and affected by one's actions that are beyond consciousness and logical sense such as one's traumas, neuroses, phobias, etc. This reconstructed and self-actualized selfhood is only achieved through one's constructive confrontation with the unconscious fears,

which would heal the subject towards the reclaiming and assertion of autonomous and authentic selfhood.

III-4 Journey to Self-Actualization and Reconciliation in Shashi Deshpande's *The Dark Holds No Terrors*

Particular issues are revisited in this novel according to the author's fashion. This section shall explore the journey to the fulfillment and self-actualization of the female protagonist in Shashi Deshpande's novel, *The Dark Holds No Terrors* 1980. Starting with a detailed synopsis of the novel, which shall introduce the reader to the general plot, we shall divide our analysis following our tripartite structure of women self-actualization.

III-4-1 Synopsis of the Novel *The Dark Holds No Terrors*

In this novel, Shashi Deshpande explores the journey of a *Hindu* woman seeking a medical career and climbing the ladder of social and financial success in a patriarchal society. The author underscores the fact that the female protagonist, Sarita, is raised in an orthodox *Hindu* society by a controlling mother who represents the major patriarchal figure in this narrative. While Sarita has been put under the socio-cultural *indoctrination* to become a conventional wife and mother who would satisfy the androcentric demands and fantasies, she shifts from this expected image since the day her attention was caught by the perception of a lady who looked so different from the other women in a social gathering in her village, with her distinct air of superiority and detachment. Recognizing that her future would be no different from her mother, Sarita sets forth her goal to reaching the status of the lady whom she soon discovers that she is a doctor. In her journey towards achieving recognition and visibility, Sarita transgresses the patriarchal order and gender norms and conventions.

Considering the aspects that have alienated Sarita from her culture, it is mainly her parents' inferiorizing treatment in favouring their son over her that estranged her from them, as they represent a microcosm of the patriarchal hegemony. Additionally, the accidental death of her younger brother and her mother's insistent accusation of killing him intentionally traumatized her. Henceforth, Sarita starts a series of challenges to defy her mother who represents the patriarchal oppression. She studies hard, excels in school, and aims at going to Bombay to continue her university studies in medicine against her mother's will. Having the support of her father, Sarita feels her first triumph over her mother in succeeding to convince her father about the priority of her studies over marriage. At university, Sarita meets with a devotional and successful man of letters, and falls deeply in love with him. As their relationship develops and he asks her for marriage, Sarita's parents reject him because he is from a lower caste. Yet, Sarita disobeys her parents and marries him in Bombay. Later, she learns from a friend that her mother cursed her of having an unhappy life for her transgression.

As a consequence, the relationship between Sarita and her family became detached. With Manohar's low income and Sarita's educational expenses, the couple's life starts modestly in the slums of Bombay city. Gradually, Sarita discovers the delight in her medical activity, and the supporting respect of people that it entails for being a significant member of society. However, Manohar does not seem to overcome his complex of male superiority. Soon, Sarita masters the skills of a pediatrician, and with the improvement of her financial status, she acquires high-class mannerism. Her transformation from a modest apprentice to a successful lady doctor has been assisted by an extramarital affair with her mentor, Boozie. Although this relationship does not develop into a sexual one, Sarita finds out that Boozie was promoting a fake persona that hides his real impotence at sexual relationships.

With Sarita's racial, financial, and social privilege, Manohar's repression of his frustration and resentment develops into sexual sadism to recompense his lost masculinity and

superiority. Sarita suffers during the nights from his sexual sadism. Nevertheless, her realization that her husband is unconscious about his brutal sexual behaviour surprises and perplexes her. Instead of facing him with his pathology, Sarita reppresses her suffering because she is afraid of assuming the responsibility in deteriorating her husband's ego. Sarita's refusal to confront her problems stems from her insistence to maintain the well-being of her marriage, and defy her mother's curse. Yet, when she learns about her mother's demise after fifteen years of desertion, Sarita seizes the opportunity to go back to her father's home, not only to escape from her husband, as she can no more endure his sadism, but also to seek answers for the roots of her dilemma. In her parental home, Sarita re-assesses her life and the root causes of her predicament through piecing together its complex parts and ruminating on the factors that have shaped her inflated-ego leading to her successful career, yet, declining marriage.

Sarita's need to confide to someone her torturing secret about her husband's unconscious sadism drives her to break her silence and speak to her father about the past and its relation to the present condition. She explains to him the circumstances behind her younger brother's accidental death, and how her mother's accusations caused an extensive damage to her psyche. She also admits her conjugal problem to her father who,in return, insists on her to face her husband with the reality of his pathology and not to flee as she already did with her brother's death. He also tells her that it is necessary to assume her responsibility and face her husband with his sexual behaviour. Eventually, she could solve her dilemma by accepting the fact that her transgressions of gender norms and her chosen path in life have shattered her husband's sense of masculinity. Significantly, Sarita realizes that female identity is reconstructed rather than granted, and that the journey to self-fulfillment is arduous.She could reach serenity and reconciliate with her reconstructed identity with its defects and qualities. In doing so, she abandons her clinging to the orthodox and perfect projections and accepts her imperfect reality.

III-4-2 Gender Norms Debate

The novel begins insightfully with a prologue taken from the *Dhammapada*, which is a book containing the sayings of Buddha in verse. It declares:

You are your own refuge;

There is no other refuge.

This refuge is hard to achieve. (12)

This passage carries an insightful allusion to Shashi Deshpande's aim behind writing this novel, which is about the determined journey of a woman seeking self-assertion and self-fulfillment in an inhibiting socio-cultural environment. The protagonist, a low-class and dark *Hindu* woman, resists the tribulations of her mother's despisal, her brother's accidental death resulting in a traumatic guilt of being helpless to save him, her husband's reversal to an unconscious sadistic partner, and her ambiguous positioning between the tradition-bound woman and the modern lady doctor. Struggling with a sense of self which has been sexually, economically and ideologically impaired by the socio-cultural patriarchal order, Sarita transgresses the acquired rules of conduct in an attempt for self-exploration and reconstruction of an authentic and autonomous identity. Ultimately, Sarita's conflicted sense of selfhood, which wavers between her fragmented repressed *self* and the lucid idealized *other*, creates a psychological neurosis that disturbs her psyche immensely, and she seeks refuge in her father's house to evaluate her condition and reconciliate with her self. Ideally, family is supposed to be a refuge for people in crisis, a space where they restore their selves and where they learn strategies to deal with the hostility of the world. Hence, the journey of Sarita to self-fulfillment is achieved through a process of three stages: assimilation of one's native societal and cultural programs (*enculturation*), alienation and transgression, evaluation and healing. Interestingly, this process, which ends up with self-reconciliation and an authentic and autonomous selfhood,is

driven by the development of the protagonist's relationship with her mother, her husband, and her mentor who are the major patriarchal figures in this novel.

III-4-3 Enculturation of the *Hindu* Gender Norms

In her novel *The Dark Holds No Terrors,* Shashi Deshpande is genuinely concerned with the predicament of the Indian woman amidst the inhibiting androcentric attitudes, system of caste, and the gender codes of conduct towards her self-fulfillment and self-actualization. She portrays the female protagonist's journey in pursuing a successful doctor career, as a Pediatrician, in the midst of the challenges and hardships of the *Hindu* cultural reality that is laden with sanctions, taboos, and prescriptions for gender conduct. The protagonist, Sarita, is a quite self-conscious narrator of her own story. Looking back on her own life at a distance of fifteen years, Sarita has some mature sense of the shape of her story and dilemma. Her childhood strained relationship with her mother, in addition to being disowned by her parents following her marriage with a lower caste man, and learning about the demise of her mother from a village friend, have deeply affected the way she perceives herself as a guilty daughter who is unworthy of love and happiness. More importantly, it is the reversal of her husband's sexuality, from being conventional and romantic to becoming an unconscious and sadistic behaviour, which has amplified her dilemma. Her failure to confide her predicament to a friend, or to confront her husband with his sadism has pushed her to return and take refuge in her father's house in order to seek the roots of her conflicted self.

It is worth considering the fact that part of Sarita's predicament is her parents' upbringing. To emphasize this, Shashi Deshpande starts her novel with a prologue describing the "monstrous" (13) sexual rape that the protagonist is experiencing with her husband. The narrator depicts both her incapability to stop him and her denial of these awful moments. Her mind refuses what has happened to her body, she asserts: "as if my mind had deserted my

shamefully bruised body, disowning it, making it insensate" (14), alluding to the schism between her mind and body. The female protagonist then describes her husband as "no more a stranger, but my husband" (14) who has two opposing identities that are played both at day and night. The narrator juxtaposes the day to the compassionate loving husband, and the night to the monsterious and beastly side of her husband.

The author starts the first chapter with Sarita's displacement from her home to her father's house. The narrator tells us that it is the late news of her mother's demise that pushed her to visit her father after an absence of fifteen years. This long period of detachment from her parents is due to their disownment following her marriage to Manohar without their consent. The narrator affirms the impetus behind her decision of displacement: "It was not to comfort her father that she had come. It was for herself"(50), referring to her need to flee the terror she is experiencing at nights with her husband's sadism instead of conforting her father about her mother's death. Sarita thinks that it is her fault of becoming socially and financially more successful which frustrates her husband's ego, and causes his sadistic sexual behaviour to compensate for his masculinity. Manohar has been indirectly conditioned by Sarita's success to adopt a beastly sexual behaviour, in the Jungian sense, and become an unconsciously sadistic partner who is controlled by his repressed resentment.

From the beginning, the author portrays the traditional attitude towards girls' education through Sarita's contemplation on her past. Her first confrontation of opposition towards her education is with her mother who epitomizes the androcentric order; the embodiment of patriarchal authority who perpetuates the traditional gender norms in deteriorating her daughter's self-esteem from an early age, and obstructing her aspirations to pursue an educational and professional career. Sarita contends on her parents' disregard to her education; "he never took any interest in my school or college (…) and she never really cared, I just didn't exist for her" (37). Instead, Sarita is considered as a burden and a responsibility for her mother

to get her married. Conventionally, girls are raised to become wives and mothers; to perform only their biological roles. Sarita explains: "Everything in a girl's life, it seemed, was shaped to that single purpose of pleasing a male. But what did you do when you failed to please? There was no answer to that. At least, no one had given her an answer so far" (193), pointing out to the inhibiting construction of womanhood that pleases the male's fantasies and expectations, and to stick to the idealized domestic femininity which assumes that a woman's role and happiness depend on how well she fulfills her biological and sexual role. Henceforth, this nurture reveals how gender is socially constructed and not biologically determined.

Sarita's predicament in a patriarchal society creates within her a psychological crisis that unconsciously drives her path in life since childhood. Her return and stay at her father's house allows her to evaluate her past/present, and to contemplate on her relationship with the three main figures in her life: her mother, her brother, and her husband. Significantly, these figures represent the patriarchal sovereignty that causes Sarita's psychological trauma. Shashi Deshpande intelligently depicts the pressure put upon educated and career-oriented women by this institution. Sarita's mother, Kamala, is the embodiment of the woman who has been raised to embrace the inferiority of her sex, and to blindly perpetuate the legacy of androcentrism. She is the symbol of the inhibiting patriarchal system with its norms and attitudes towards women's advancement. The author employs this character to account for the fact that once the institution of patriarchy and the androcentric cultural conventions and attitudes are indoctrinated and justified, even females would convincingly perpetuate it by way of *false consciousness* [44](misleading consciousness about one's predicament). For instance, Sarita's mother attitude regarding gender norms is apparent when she insists that her brother Dhruva is

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[44]Firstly coined by the Marxist Frederich Engels. In this context, it refers to a way of thinking that prevents women to perceive the true nature of their positioning that is based on androcentric power relations.

superior because of his sex. The author conveys the gender discrimination and attitudes towards women in Kamala's dialogue with Sarita:

> Kamala: Don't go out in the sun. You'll get even darker.
>
> Sarita: Who cares?
>
> K: We have to care if you don't. We have to get you married.
>
> S: I don't want to get married.
>
> K: Will you live with us all your life?
>
> S: Why not?
>
> K: You can't.
>
> S: And Dhruva?
>
> K: He's different. He's a boy. (53)

The mother insists upon her daughter to stay away from the sun in order to protect Sarita's skin complexion, which plays a vital role in finding a groom when it is fairer. This passage pinpoints to the fact that girls are considered in the *Hindu* society as a carried burden till they get married, contrary to the boys who are not to be criticised or disgraced for their sex superiority.

The author demonstrates the society's insistence on separation between the feminine and masculine spaces to reinforce the dualistic vision of *Purdah* (religious female seclusion) that men occupy the public sphere, whereas women occupy the domestic one. While Sarita was looking in her mother's almirah (wardrobe) in her room, she found the tools that are used in the *haldi-kumkum*[45]*,* which is an important *Hindu* ritual, such as the attar tray and rose water sprinkler. This event reminds her that it is the only occasion where she felt more privileged than her brother. Sarita describes:

> And Dhruva crying (…) Let me. I want to. Ai, look, she won't let me.

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[45] Haldi Kumkum, or the *Haldi Kumkum* ceremony, is defined by Rege Sharmila, an Indian sociologist, as "a social gathering in India in which married women exchange haldi (turmeric) and kumkum (vermilion powder), as a symbol of their married status and wishing for their husbands' long lives." (148)

Sssh, Dhruva, let that alone. It's not for you. That's for girls. So there!

Putting out her tongue, making a face at him. Trumphant.exultant.

So there! Not for you. Only for girls. (66)

As the *haldi-kumkum* (socio-religious function, exclusive to women) is reserved only for females, the mother reappears as the perpetuator of gender norms when she firmly expulses her son from participation in this feminine activity.

Notably, Sarita's mother believes that dark skinned girls are ugly and, thus, unworthy of love. The narrator affirms Sarita's holding her mother's beliefs and prejudices at an early age, "She could remember saying to herself in the mirror, 'I'm ugly, I'm ugly' hoping the mirror would contradict her (...) for if she wasn't how could, how could it happen to her, the fairytale ending that had to happen (…) of a man falling in love with her and marrying her" (66), suggesting that Sarita does not believe in finding a man who would make her happy as in fairytale stories. On another level, Sarita's mother blindly holds the cruel judgmental perceptions of her society towards women. The protagonist recollects her souvenirs about the common ill-treatment of brides by their in-laws, and her mother's viewpoint about it. Sarita resents her mother's "so hard, so cruel, so merciless in that judgment" (102). This adds to the protagonist's alienation from the traditional patriarchal attitudes, and her further detachment from her mother. It seems clear that the mother-daughter relationship between the two main female characters in this narrative is strained. In one of the instances, when Sarita cleans her mother's untidied room, she finds in her mother's room the ornate and heavy *saris* (an Indian dress) that Madhav, a residing student at her father's house, thinks that she should keep them as a souvenir of her mother. Sarita rejects the offer and reveals: "I don't have any good memories of my mother. I want nothing from her" (69), confirming that the mother-daughter bond is cold and broken.

Furthermore, femininity is regarded as a shame and a disgrace in the *Hindu* culture. The narrator contends on the burgeoning of her feminine body: "It became something shameful,

this growing up, so that you had to be ashamed of yourself, even in the presence of your own father" (72). Sarita's bitter experience of her maturing body indicates her entry into the feminine world that is characterized by its scornful implications. The conception of being a woman is so inferiorizing that Sarita refuses to conform to its implications. When Sarita's menstruation begins, she experiences the horror of its scornful ramifications. It is common for Indian women on menses to stay isolated from the kitchen and the prayer room for three days, and being served in their mealtimes with special silverware. When this form of degradation is practiced on Sarita, she justifies: "for my touch was, it seemed, pollution" (73). The protagonist finds this treatment as a "torture" (72), and strongly rejects the implications of being a woman. The image of the feminine body has inferiorizing implications that Sarita rejects from her early exposure to them. She insists: "If you're a woman, I don't want to be one" (73) referring to the strong rejection and resistance to the androcentric conception of femininity in her adolescence.

It is worth noting that the tradition of women self-denial begins as early as her gender *indoctrination* starts. It is commonly accepted that a woman who gets chosen by a man for marriage is privileged, thanks to her conformism and subjugation to the androcentric conceptualisation of womanhood. Sarita contends about her early perspective towards a woman's needs and aspirations in life:

As a child my fantasies, my dreams, had no relevance to the fact that I was a girl. The fact had not meant to me then what it would later. But as I grew up, they became the dreams of a total female. I was all female and dreamt of being adored and chosen by a superior, superhuman male. That was glory enough (…) to be chosen by that wonderful man. I saw myself humbly adoring, worshipping and being given the father-lover kind of love that was protective condescending, yet all encompassing and satisfying. There was no 'I' then, craving recognition, satisfaction. The craving, which when it eventually came, was always to be accompanied by a feeling of guilt if the 'I' dared to overreach a male, as if I was doing something that took away shreds of my femininity. That came later. (62)

Obviously, Sarita admits that she held the socio-cultural attitude of the feminine's need to be chosen by a superior man who provides her with protection and meaning. The passage also suggests the inevitable feeling of guilt when thinking of an independent selfhood. Eventually, when she meets Manohar, she identifies him as a hero and the master of her life. She describes: "He was the figure I fantasized about (…) Always the the age old feminine dream of a superior conquering male. Sometimes he was a great writer, a poet (…) sometimes I worked with him, for him, subordinating myself so completely to him that I was nothing without him" (62), alluding to her primary desire of being the woman she had been brought up to become; a subordinate, docile wife who exists only under his shadow.

Notably, the narrator sheds light on the perpetuated image of wifedom as total slaves to the demands of their husbands from a *Sanskrit* story that is taught at schools where the wife's dutiful servitude to her husband is of paramount consideration. The narrator conveys Sarita's mature view about it:

> She thought of the omen in the Sanskrit story from her school text. The woman who would not disturb her husband's sleep even to save her child from the fire. A woman so blessed, it was said, that Agni himself came and saved the child. Now she thought (…) who wrote that story? A man, of course. Telling women for all times (…) your duty to me comes first. And women, poor fools, believed him.

The previous excerpt highlights the androcentric construction of the myth of blessed wifedom that is characterized by extreme self-denial to even one's sense of motherly love to one's own children when at danger of death. It also implies that the system of education sustains the traditional norms and attitudes of the *Hindu* patriarchal culture. This extreme bondage and suffering of the *Hindu* mother and wife disturb Sarita who despises such attitudes.

Turning to Sarita's early childhood and the accidental death of her brother, which is a pivotal incident that has deteriorated her relationship further with her mother. Sarita's fear of recalling the painful memory of the accident in which her brother died makes her accept her

mother's scorful accusation. Eventually, she recollects her strength and decides to face her repressed resentment. She declares: "Oh, the agony, the ache, of not knowing, of not being sure (…) the helplessness of trying to go back into that time (…) trying to be definite about what I did and why". (217). Dhruva's accidental death and her mother's accusation, which haunt the memory of Sarita all along her life, is narrated in a tragic tone revealing that she is not responsible for his death, and that she tried to rescue him from drowning in the muddy puddle. It is through recalling these memories that Sarita could, at last, let go of the guilt put upon her by her mother with the recurring stigmatizing sentence: "Why are you alive, when he's dead?" (226), indicating her mother's misogynist attitude toward Sarita as the unwanted child. Sarita questions why her mother never bothered to ask her for the way Dhruva died and her cold treatment after the accident, which confirms the mother's purposeful harm to her daughter's self-esteem.

In the novel *The Dark Holds No Terrors*, the male figures are represented as compassionate rather than oppressive. Notably, it is Sarita's father who convinces his wife to let Sarita pursue her medical studies outside her hometown. Even when Sarita's parents abandoned her for marrying a man from a lower caste, her husband Manohar encourages his wife to continue her studies and supports her towards achieving success in her medical career. Therefore, while the mother figure in this narrative embodies the medium through which *indoctrination* of the oppressive attitudes is perpetuated on same-sex peers, the male figures represent support and understanding that a woman needs for her self-fullfilment, alluding to the patriarchal conceptualisation that the agency is in the hands of men, and they only can change the course of the social order while women are only perpetuators and have no equal opportunity to orientate life.

Deshpande scrutinizes the possibility of the division of one's subjectivity into two opposing identities. This duality is concretely illustrated in the novel during one of Sarita's

Friday regular visits to the temple with her mother. The author shows an aspect of the *Hindu* rituals in the holiness of the *Devi* (goddess) who represents the manifestation of the Divine feminine, the mother goddess. In one of these visits, Sarita witnesses an incident where one of the women dropped her tray, and starts moving in a hysterical manner. The woman seems to have no control over her body in what she is doing, i.e. unaware of what she is doing. Later on, the protagonist realises that "a person could be so divided in herself, into two entirely different beings" (123). This realization will be crucial in her understanding of her own dilemma, and of her husband's.

It is worth noting that the darkness in this novel is a symbol used by Shashi Deshpande to epitomize the unconscious and dark side of the human psyche; the repressed damage of the ego; and the shadow to which confrontation is terrifying. Sarita confesses: "poor little scared boy, who never grew up to know that the dark holds no terrors. That the terrors are inside us all the time. We carry them within us, and like traitors they spring out, when we least expect them, to scratch and maul"(100). She realizes that her brother's hysterical fear of the natural darkness is incomparable to the real darkness which is created when silence and rejection of confrontation with one's shadow lead to its control over one's self. The author earnestly conveys that one should never underestimate the ability of one's inner psychological complexes and repressions that terrorise one's sense of being.

Of the cultural markers that Sarita has been deeply influenced by is the *Ganpati* or the *Ganesh Chaturthi Festival* (A *Hindu* festival celebrating the god with an elephant's head), which represents an essential aspect of the *Hindu* way of life. The protagonist recounts her family's tradition in celebrating this *Hindu* festival when her father used to bring home an elephant clay idol in an air of sacredness and owe where her mother would pray to it for granting them with intelligence to overcome life obstacles. On the third day of the festival, her father would take the clay idol of the deity *Ganesha* and go together with Sarita and Dhruva as

they chant the *Vedic* hymns to bring the idol to a nearby well in their village where it would be immersed. After Dhruva's death, Sarita's parents ceased to celebrate this festival. She reports: "everything became bleak and dull" (175). Moreover, as Sarita studies her aging father after her long absence, she expected to find him as a devout religious man, but he was not. The narrator contends:

> At Baba's age most men, even those who had boasted their dislike of religion and rituals, turned devout. Maybe it was something to fill the emptiness of their lives. But Baba (…) Perhaps, the thought struck her, Baba doesn't need god because he has no stake in the future. Maybe that's why he isn't very interested in politics either (…) It is through his children and his children's children that man has a continuing grasp of the world, a stake in it (…) Perhaps when his son died and his daughter deserted him, he faced the fact that his life ended with him. The bleakness of the thought saddened her. (176)

This account shows the extent to which faith in the *Hindu* culture is related to the continuity of family line and the importance of reproductivity. After Dhruva's death and Sarita's detachment from her parents, her father's disengagement with the *Hindu* religious practices implies that he finds them meaningless as a childless father. Sarita painfully feels her father's depressed and grieving mood as he cuts himself from the activities that are significant to a *Hindu* father.

III-4-4 Transgression of the *Hindu* Cultural Norms and Gender Conduct

Sarita' journey of transgression begins as early as she is confronted with the inhibiting socio-cultural norms and rules of conduct that she finds difficulty to accept and adjust to. Her questioning mind filters all the assumptions of the *Hindu* social order concerning race, gender caste, and class. Sarita's character develops with her parents' upbringing in a socially restrictive environment towards women advancement and self-fulfillment. It is her mother's neglect, indifference as well as her accusation of killing her young brother, Dhruva, during Sarita's childhood and adolescence that abused and shaped her conflicted psyche. As a reaction

to her mother's despise and diminishment, Sarita develops an ego that aspires advancement and self-assertion through challenge and transgression.

Admittedly, Sarita is the victim of ego inflation on account of the restrictive way her mother brought her up. The latter causes her daughter's ego to yearn for self-assertion and success through education in an attempt to do not have the same fate of her mother or other similar women in her village. Significantly, Sarita sets up her goal of becoming a doctor following a social occasion that occurred while she was still a child. She recounts being marvelled by noticing a unique woman from the crowd of ordinary, boring women she used to see. She reports:

> I remember her looks with an astonishing clarity; but even more distinct is the memory of her air of detachment; she was set apart in some way from the other women (…) And I, who had always thought it some kind of disgrace to be alone and silent in a crow, envied her detachment that day. I knew, instinctively, that she was somehow superior to all the other women there. Later, as the women talked, I learnt that she was a doctor. And so I put the two together. It was because she was a doctor that she was like that. I had seen other good-looking girls with that same air of superiority. That road, however, was barred to me forever. But I could be a doctor. Yes, that would be the key that would unlock the door out of this life (...) To get married, and end up doing just what your mother did, seemed to me not only terrible but damnable. (165)

Such an insightful passage grants the reader with the opportunity to see Sarita's desire to reach serenity and transcendence over her social norms and gender roles by virtue of superiority in studies and profession. She chose her life conduct both as a challenge and an escape, as well as a way of proving that she is equal to man. It seems clear that Sarita is deeply alienated from the feminine model of her mother, she identifies herself with the distinct woman she saw earlier in a transcendent air of detachment.

Therefore, Sarita sets up on studying hard to earn enough credit and get admission to the medical college in Bombay. She reveals: "All my friends knew about it (…) But I never

spoke of it at home (…) But I worked though, God, how hard I worked! I gave up all pleasure and concentrated on studies" (166). Knowing that her family does not encourage women education out of their small village, let alone a professional career, Sarita disclosed her ambition from her parents, but informed her classmates and friends about it. In doing so, Sarita challenges the well-established norms that a poor girl from a small village cannot get out of her small town to pursue a medical career. Moreover, she keeps her plan secret in order to be not obstructed by her mother who epitomizes the traditional gender norms in mutilating her daughter's aspirations for a professional career; as girls are supposed to be only wives and housekeepers.

With Sarita's perseverance and hard work in her studies, she excelled as the best student in her class. She informs: "I got it at last—the passport to medical college—a first class in my Inter Science (…) but there was no room for jubilation in me (…) there was one more ordeal waiting for me" (166), referring to her anxiety at declaring her ambition to her parents in order to pursue medical studies in Bombay, which she knew would be an unacceptible request. As Sarita opens up the discussion with her parents on joining medical school, her mother's anticipated refusal is faced with Sarita's distress at her mother's antipathy: "I'm not talking to you. I'm not asking you for anything. I know what your answer will be. No, forever a 'No' to anything I want. You don't want me to have anything; you don't want me to do anything. You don't even want me to live"(167), which shows Sarita's breaking her silence and expressing her disappointment about her mother who frustrates her own self-esteem and ambitions. At that point, her father has also broken his silence and subordination to his wife's control over the conversation, and he expresses his approval and readiness to support financially Sarita's study stay in Bombay.

Despite Sarita's feeling of momentary triumph in her battle with her mother to impose her choice to join the medical college with the support and sympathy of her father, her mother

insists that daughters are not allowed to go out of their native town and pursue expensive studies. Instead, she argues that daughters are a financial burden for their parents to get them married and prepare the dowry that they would take with them. This statement confirms Sarita's aforementioned claim about her mother's perpetuation of the patriarchal order. Her father, on the other hand, supports his daughter's choice. At that point, Sarita's mother returns to her old habit of cursing her daughter for killing her brother, Dhruva. The father, again, disrupts his wife's repugnance from further breaking down Sarita's spirit. The narrator contends on her father's critical help in her medical studies, she proclaims:

> It had been a kind of miracle anyway, her joining medical college in spite of her mother. Standing up against her, asserting her will against hers (…) that had seemed impossible. But she had done it. I won that time. But I was not alone then. Baba was with me. He helped me. Without him, I would never have succeeded. (164)

Clearly, Sarita could not succeed in pursuing medical studies in Bombay without the accord and the support of her father. Her fight for her career goals asserts her strong will and non-conformity to the cultural norms of womanhood of her day.

Of significant connotation to Sarita's conflict, is her recurrent dream about the traumatic incident of her brother's death and her mother's accusation of killing him. Yet, Sarita explains her helplessness to save him because of the viscous water in the pond. She recounts:

> He swam away from me, for we were, for some reason, in the water. Water that was bright green with the viscosity of oil. And now it was I who was scared. I turned round but the viscious water would not let me move. I was fighting against the cloying, sticky heaviness that was pulling me down, choking me, drowning me. And Dhruva was swiftly, silently, going away from me. (172)

Obviously, Sarita's unconscious mind tortures her immensely especially with her mother's stigmatizing accusation, and insistence that Sarita should have saved her brother instead of herself, as the *Hindu* norm advocates. She explains:

You killed your brother.

I didn't. Truly I didn't. It was an accident. I loved him, my little brother. I tried to save him. Truly I tried. But I couldn't. And I ran away. Yes, I ran away, I admit that. But I didn't kill him. How do you know you didn't kill him? How do you know?   (172)

Apparently, Sarita feels guiltier with her mother's accusation of running away with her life before the waters of the pond would make her drown too. Moreover, her mother's insistence that Sarita is a small girl implies that she was still immature to realize whether that accident meant being guilty or not, according to her socio-cultural attitudes.

Additionally, Sarita transgresses her parents' rules and the cultural norms in marrying with a man from a lower caste without their consent. This transgression shows her further defiance to her mother who represents the major patriarchal figure in her life. Sarita recounts her mother's reaction when telling her about the man she fell in love with:

What caste is he?

I don't know

A Brahmin?

Of course not. Then, cruelly…his father keeps a cycle shop.

Oh, so they are low caste people, are they? (113)

It seems clear that her mother holds the caste discrimination attitudes of the *Hindu* society. She disapproves Manohar's marriage request because he is a non-Brahmin. Her mother's prejudice towards lower caste people makes Sarita even more compulsive towards defying her. Sarita transgresses the socio-cutural norms by disobeying her parents and marrying a man from a lower caste. She asserts: "after the last confrontation with my parents, I had already detached myself from them. For me, they were already the past and meant nothing" (45), referring to her confident detachment from them.

Nevertheless, Sarita regrets her hasty marriage after she started to suffer from the repercussions of her ethnic, financial and social privilege. She declares in a revealing thought:

"If you hadn't fought me so bitterly, if you hadn't been so against him, perhaps I would never have married him. And I would not have been here (…) hating him and yet pitying him too. For he is groping in the dark, as much as I am." (114). It seems that Sarita admits that her early decision to marry Manohar has brought her into a problematic condition. She also sympathises with her husband who repressed his inferiority complex, and this led to the development of unconscious sexual sadism. As such, the development of a pathological sexual behaviour reveals the abstract violence that Manohar has undergone by his wife's subversion of the binary dominant/subordinate.

Remarkably, Sarita recognizes that her acquired social superiority is due to her fame as a successful doctor, and which has started in the slum village she lived in during the first years of her marriage. She recounts:

> And then, one day, things changed. It was the day there was an explosion in a factory. Burnt mutilated bodies poured in, in a horror so vast that it seemed meaningless. The world consisted of bodies from which I drew blood, bodies on which I transfused blood, (…) at last it was done and we were free to go home. One or two people, I vaguely noticed, smiled at me. It was unusual, for there had been no overt friendly gesture till now (...) I passed a group of women and they stopped their talk and stared at me. As I closed the door of our room, I heard the words, lady doctor, lady doctor…The next evening (…) there was a knock at the door…'Saru, Someone wants you' (…) The next day it happened again. (48)

Clearly, her initial image was that of a conventional and insignificant wife among the many. However, her performance when duty has called for her skill as a doctor brought her social respect. This passage in Sarita's life proves that women privileged image is acquired through assertive performance and not as a given attribute like that of masculinity. The narrator adds:

> And there came a day when, hearing a knock at the door, Manu said, 'open it Saru, it must be for you.' I could not see his face…but his tone was certainly odd. An affected indifference (…) But I did not stop at that time to ponder it. I was too busy, I was too tired, I was too exhilarated

> by the dignity and importance that my status as a doctor seemed to have given me (…) But I can remember how he said, 'I'm sick of this place. Let's get out of here soon. (48-9)

This passage further demonstrates Sarita's delight in her new social status as well as its direct effects on Manohar's ego. Feeling threatened by people's recognition of Sarita's importance as a doctor, Manohar urges Sarita to move to another place to maintain his sense of superiority. Notably, the protagonist was oblivious towards the danger of her husband's behavioural patterns; instead of facing up her problem at the beginning, she was trying to convince herself that the issue is trivial and can be ignored. Although she deluded herself for so long, she later admits: "I know that it was there it began (…) this terrible thing that has destroyed our marriage (…) I know this, too (…) that the human personality has an infinite capacity for growth (…) He has been the young man and I his bride. Now I was the lady doctor and he was my husband." (49), alluding to the subversion of the power relations by her new status of the successful doctor which granted her social and financial superiority.

Consequently, the narrator reports the couple's growing disenchantment. She reports: "It was like seeing a man she had never seen, never known. A man whom, now she knew him, she rather despised" (159), referring that her evolution to a higher social and financial position changed the way she perceives her husband. Sarita confirms: "I wish, she had thought passionately, I had stayed what I was once" (156), affirming her painful realisation of the death of the passion she once had for her husband and their emotional divorce. In addition to her subversion of the common gender roles of husband/wife in its underlying power relations of the binary dominant/subordinate, Sarita admits that it is also her husband's sexual sadism that further alienated her from him. She explains: "Now I was the lady doctor and he was my husband" (49). Her subversion creates in the previously dominant subject, Manohar, an unconscious rejection of his subordinate status. Strikingly, the dislocated subject, Manohar, does not oppose his wife's advancement in her career due to their family's dependence on her

high salary. Consequently, Manohar's enjoyment of his wife's financial support, for the maintenance of their family, leads him to represshis acquired sense of masculinity. Gradually, Manohar's repression has amounted with time, and found its outlet through his sexuality. Conversely, Manohar's sexual fulfillment is attained through rape and pain that explain his unconscious sadism as a way to recompense for his lost manhood, and gender victimization that are both individual and socio-cultural.

It is worth noting that Deshpande employs Sarita's dreams as a window to see through her unconscious side. Sarita recounts her dream as she found herself having and knowing where to flee from her husband's sadism, but she cannot name the intended place. She contends: "There it is, the crossroad. And the signboard painted yellow; with words and figures in black. Here I hesitate. Somehow I feel, I know, that I have to turn right again and take the road leading to (…) the road which will take me to (…) that road" (81). When she wakes up, Sarita has wished her dream lasted longer in order to identify her destination. Later on, however, she relates this dream to her decision to return to her father's house. She proclaims:

> I chose to come back here to this house, an unknown factor when I decided to do it. And even now I don't know why I continue to stay on here as if my children, my home, my practice, count for nothing (…) she knew she had left her husband out of the reckoning. Recklessly she said the words to herself (…) I don't want him. And the relief of admitting it, even to herself, was enormous. (81)

This passage alludes to the protagonist's transgression of her maternal and professional duties to escape from her sadistic husband. The ecstasy she feels in admitting her cause is exhilarating. The author explains the impetus behind her transgression of all of her duties and relates it to her complex dilemma. She justifies:

> No, theirs was not a case of love dying, or even of conflicts. Instead, it was a kind of disease had attacked their marriage. A disease like syphilis or leprosy, something that could not be admitted to others. This very concealment made it even more gruesomely disgusting, so that

she was dirty and so was he and so was their marriage. She wanted no more of it, but there were the children, and she was still hung on to the past, enough to make the word divorce a frightening one. (82)

That narrator describes the cause for Sarita's deteriorated marriage as an unspeakable and disgraceful disease that one cannot cure, as it has secured its control over their marriage. Yet, the feeling of being trapped in an in-between situation, where she can neither ask for a divorce nor go on with him, disturbs her immensely. Sarita laments the old days where wives and daughters had to passively endure their dependence and subjugation to the patriarchal social order, and relate their plight to their conception of fate. The narrator demonstrates: "If only I could say that. My lack. My fate. Written on my forehead. Will that help me to accept (…) No, it could not (…) this wasn't something that had just happened to her! It was something she had helped to happen. If not for the children" (83), confirming Sarira's feeling of guilt towards her conjugal problem.

The protagonist admits that she has learnt to construct the perfect projection of the superior lady doctor from her mentor, Boozie, to fit not only in the medical social circle, but the overall society. She describes him as adopting perfectly elements of his personality that go in harmony with the social values of his days' "women's-magazine hero " (104). She depicts him as:

Dark, rugged, handsome and masterful. Everything about him, his language, his accent (…) contributed to the aura that surrounded him. They were all props, I decided later, to help create and maintain the necessary image. For by then I had learnt it, too, to create an image of myself for the world, to live within it, hiding my real self so resolutely that at times I forgot myself it was just a façade. (104)

This excerpt proves Sarita's embrace of the ideal image of herself and playing the role of the firm, hardworking and self-confident doctor. Hence, the veiling of her true fragmented self is a camouflage that distorts her self-perception, and creates an ambivalent sense of her selfhood.

Moreover, Sarita's confession that she has reached the point of identifying herself with her persona, leads her to be disconnected from the deeper realms of her conflicted psyche.

Interestingly, Sarita explains the reason of her adoption of the social mask of the competent doctor through relating it to the incident when she has been traumatized by her mentor after failing to diagnose a patient's condition at the hospital; a serious medical inadequacy that he had detected and humiliated her in front of her classmates. She depicts her predicament:

> It was like having my clothes torn off me in public (…) my throat hurt with the effort of holding back my sobs, my eyes pricked with unshed tears. I would not, could not, cry now. That would be one more thing against me. I would become, not just an incompetent, disinterested female, but a weepy one as well (…) I had thought, that here, in this place, I was accepted for what I was. Instead, it seemed I had been admitted on sufferance, tolerated as long as I hid my essential female qualities. (106)

Clearly, Sarita's firm identification with the image of the competent doctor led her to reject her sensual and feminine side and adopt the androcentric attitude in order to assert herself in a male-centered domain. As such, Sarita has forcibly transgressed her gender identity in order to be accepted in the patriarchal space of the medical profession.

Significantly, Sarita's relationship with her mentor, Boozie, developed as he showed personal interest in her as a woman. Although Sarita finds it weird and unreasonable that someone with a strong charisma and charm would be interested in a married and modest woman while being surrounded by many single young women, she enjoys his interest and profits from it to learn not only from his professional skill, but his bourgeois mannerism. She associates her relationship with Boozie to the *Pygmaleon-Galatea* story (a Greek myth about a sculptor's love to his own created female statute). She describes:

> I was the raw material to be shaped, moulded, chiseled into something more polished, nearer perfection. Confronted by his urbane sophistication I felt crude, graceless, terribly young and

> unformed. But I picked up. God, fast I learnt things, apart from Paediatrics I mean, from him. It was him who taught me to dress with elegance and simplicity, he who taught me how to speak English, he who improved my accent, he who taught me how to enjoy good food, how to read and what (…) oh everything! (108)

The central idea behind this passage is that in seeking to master her medical profession and to be admitted into the social circle of skillful and professional doctors, Sarita permitted herself to be an object for Boozie to be transformed into the ideal image of the lady doctor. It seems clear that theirs is an unequal power relationship based on the binary superior/inferior. He is an upper class man and a skillful doctor while Sarita views herself as an unsophisticated middle-class woman and an unskillful student doctor. He is described as a great teacher capable not only of educating her about her medical profession but about the androcentric high-class mannerism. What is more ironical and funny is that the purpose of this creation is to make the woman a satisfying pawn for an upper class man. Clearly, Sarita allows Boozie, a major androcentric figure and a patriarchal master, to sculpt her into a model that fits the standards of their respective social circle.

Furthermore, Sarita did not consider the effects of her relationship with her mentor on her marriage. Rather, she thinks that it would be of benefit for achieving a successful career. She declares:

> And Manu? I told myself my relationship with this man couldn't, wouldn't hurt Manu. It was just a teacher-student relationship. If he put his hand on my shoulder, slapped me on my back, held my hand or hugged me (…) that was just his mannerism and nothing to do with Manu and me (…) On the contrary, I told myself, I was helping Manu. (108)

Obviously, Sarita is in denial of her behaviour as she justifies her relationship to not more than a professional one, even Boozie's suspicious gestures would be justifiable as high-class mannerism, she thinks.

Indeed, Sarita's access to the upper class life through her relationship with Boozie led her to strive in reaching the comfortable life conditions. Her life with her husband, Manu, was not financially comfortable enough. She describes: "It is a marvel how we managed to live. Manu's salary, never very much, barely covered our expenses" (109). Consequently, she pursued further studies for a medical specialty. She remarks her husband's contentment of their low financial status, " I had begun to wonder at his acceptance of our shabby way of living. For me, things now began to hurt" (109). Clearly, Sarita aspired to have a better life and climb up from middle-class to upper class status. She declares, "I would not bring up any child to a life of deprivations. I wanted it soon (…) that finale of a middle class dream " (109). Hence, she transgresses the *Hindu* social norm of the wife being subordinate and content with her husband's financial level. Instead, she considers Boozie as:

> The fairy godfather who could, with a wave of his magic wand, make things easier, miraculously, wonderfully, easier for me (…) If only I could please him (…) I did. Within a few months he gave me work in a research scheme that brought in some badly needed extra money every month. (And kept me for longer hours from Manu. He sulked and I was either impatient with him or ignored him) A year later I was his registrar. In less than two years I passed my M.D. Four years later I was an Assistant Honorary at a suburbian hospital. With a consulting room of my own in the midst of other well-known busy consultants. (109-10)

Sarita recounts how her pleasing to Boozie has helped her to reach quickly her aim at securing an honorary position in her medical career. She also admits that she started turning off her husbandas she spent long hours at work. Her transgression of the norms of wifedom is led by her desire to professional fulfillment and advancement. Sarita clings to Boozie as a symbol of hope and success.

Nonetheless, Sarita is getting confused with her husband's insensitivity and acquiescence towards her frank relationship with her mentor, Boozie. Despite her exultation for her accomplishment in the formal event she has organized for the opening of her consulting

rooms, Sarita had paradoxical feelings for her husband's indifference to Boozie's presence and suspected manners towards her that the guests noticed, except for him. She contends:

> He put his two hands on my shoulders and shook me gently, seemingly affectionate. I could feel the stares. Everyone's except Manu's. Who would not look at us. And I should have hated him then, not Manu, for he had done nothing then for which I could hate him, but this attractive, ravishingly masculine man who was doing this deliberately, Attracting attention to the two of us. But funnily enough, it was not him I hated. It was Manu for doing nothing. (111)

This account explains Sarita's conflicted thoughts as she knows she has transgressed the *Hindu* norms of wifedom and everyone suspects her quick climb in her medical career, except her husband who turns a blind eye and represses his resentment at such a relationship. Apparently, his blind love for Sarita conceals his attention to suspect her behaviour. He supports Sarita in her career and cares about her goal of becoming a professional doctor. More to the point, the narrator informs the reader that Manohar is a man of letters, which justifies his affection and attachment to Sarita. The narrator informs the reader about Sarita's fascination with the idealistic side of life epitomized in Manohar and his friends' character. In his literary circle, she finds herself marveled with the world of ideals they live in. The narrator portrays: "They had seemed to her different creatures, far removed from the matter-of-fact people she met in her own profession. She had been utterly fascinated by them and the world they lived in, the world they managed to create for themselves, so much more enchanting than her own " (181). Additionally, Sarita describes their circle's ideology, as "they all seemed charged by some excitement that made them more alive than most people. They were teeming with ideas, wild enthusiasm, and excitement about what seemed to me the strangest things. All of which exploded into words." It seems that Manohar's approach in life justifies his oblivion towards Sarita's frank affair with Boozie. Nonetheless, Sarita feels assaulted by his oblivion, and this has led to the decline of their marriage as she reports: "and they began then (…) the silences that grew between us. Just grew like Jack's beanstalk" (111), suggesting they are being muted

with the absence of communication about issues such as her suspected affair, and their marital disenchantment.

Therefore, Sarita informs the reader that Boozie's projected persona is the opposite of his true self, which he adopts to maintain his privileged position in his community through skill and flirtation. She reveals: "Behind the facade of aggressive, virile masculinity there was nothing at all" (111), pointing out to the insignificance and *impotence*[46] of all his masculine allure in the private space. Sarita explains her futile attempts to confide her conjugal problem to someone such as Prof. Kulkarni or some lawyer to issue a divorce because of her husband's unconscious sexual sadism. At the apex of her puzzle, she thinks Boozie would help her by confiding to him about her conjugal problem.

In an impulse, she goes to his house to find him drunk and surprised by her unexpected visit. To her bewilderment, she reconfirms his impotence when he gives her not more than a firm hug. The narrator depicts: " she soon realized with an emotion close to despair, he had nothing (…) she had seen hairline cracks in the image he had built and presented to the world all these years. It horrified her, like the deterioration in a work of art ". (115) Moreover, Boozie's behaviour infers that there is someone with him in his house, as the narrator describes: " she knew there was someone inside. The way he looked—an uneasy face. An unwilling smile, a wilting, strained joviality—made it more obvious" (116). The narrator adds: "the drama of interest in pretty girls. The facade of having an affair with one of them. Yes, she had been one of those pawns too. When had she realised that she, as a woman, left him cold? But she didn't care. Not by then. For if she was a pawn in his game, so was he in hers" (116), pointing out to the unexpectedness of recognizing his true identity that is veiled with the mask he wears publicly. The narrator also points out to Boozie's visiting guest who forces him to get rid of

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[46]Impotence, as implied in the term, is commonly understood as a loss, not only of sexual function but just as much of manhood and as such of personhood altogether (Tiefer 2004).

Sarita, and depicts Boozie's helpless attempt to make Sarita go. As the latter realises her unwelcome visit, she silently returns with the realization that they are both cowards. At that moment, she remembers her mother's curse that she will never be happy with her husband. Sarita recounts:

> How little her mother knew! We belong to the same caste really. Both of us despise ourselves. What he does to me, he does it not so much because he hates me, but because he hates himself. And I (…) I hate myself more for letting him do it to me than I hate him for doing it to me. (116-7)

Sarita comes to the epiphany that the reason for her marriage's deterioration is their inferiority complex, despising themselves for their lower social status, having to accept whatever it takes for a better life and an ideal projection.

The other extramarital relationship that Sarita considers for marital transgression of chastity is with a previous classmate from college, Padmakar. She meets him after years, and he notices her transformation to a beautiful and self-confident lady. Sarita describes his reaction, as she felt flaunted: "his admiration was so obvious as his earlier disparagement had been. His eyes beamed praise, his lips were pursed as if to whisle admiration, I felt strangely pleased, almost exhilarated by his reaction to me" (150), referring to the transformation Sarita has undergone from an ordinary stiff girl to an attractive woman. Showing his interest in her as a woman, Padmakar frequently invites her for a cup of tea or lunch, and Sarita accepts his invitations and listens patiently to his talks about his medical practice, research, and findings. Sarita admits the reason behind meeting with Padmakar without the knowledge of her husband:

> I had met him, smiled at him, listened to him. And now I knew it had not been thoughtless on my part. I had done it deliberately, coolly, with calculation, because, foolishly perhaps, I had imagined it would give me an escape route, something that would lead me out of my loveless trap. Wasn't it always the solution for a woman who found no happiness with one man to try and find it with another? (157)

It seems that Sarita's interest in meeting with Padmakar stems from enjoying his flaunting of her glaring femininity and professional success. With her strained marital relationship and growing disenchantment, Sarita finds instant solace in Padmakar's interest. However, soon as she notices his flaws, she withdraws from him. Sarita admits: "But looking at Padma's face now, I knew I had miscalculated. He was like a child, able to see no other point of view but his own. Like an adamant child, wanting some thing, refusing to think of the consequences, angry when reminded of them" (157), referring to his constant demands to spend more time with him, while she had responsibilities. She contends: " It was my fault. I had listened to him as, perhaps, no one ever had. I had talked to him, smiled at him, given him that which was most precious to me (…) my time" (154), alluding to her fault of surrendering to his demands of spending time with him. Moreover, she blames herself for expecting to have some kind of sexual romance with Padmakar. She declares: "What had I imagined? Love? Romance? Both, I knew too well, were illusions, and not relevant to my life anyway. And the code word of our age is neither love nor romance, but sex. And for me, sex was now a dirty word" (157), suggesting that sex for her represents terror after her traumatic experience of being trapped like an animal to her husband's sexual sadism.

Furthermore, Sarita's predicament in a patriarchal system mutes her authentic expression on her experience of being a successful lady doctor. When being invited to address an audience of young ladies who are pursuing medical career at the university, she prepared a long rethoric to report the cost of her success and privileged status in a male dominated society. She argues:

> Listen girls, she would say, whatever you do, you won't be happy, not really, unless you get married and have children. That's what they tell us. And we have to believe them because no one has proved it wrong till now. But if you want to be happily married, there's one thing you have to remember. Have you girls seen an old fashioned couple walking together? Have you noticed that the wife always walks a few steps behind her husband? That's important, very

important, because it's symbolic of the truth. A wife must always be a few feet behind her husband (…) that's the only rule to follow if you want a happy marriage. Don't ever try to reverse the doctor-nurse, excecutive-secretary, prinipal-teacher relationship. It can be traumatic, disastrous. And, I assure you, it isn't worth it. He'll suffer, you'll suffer, and so will the children. Women's magazines will tell you that a marriage should be an equal partnership. That's nonsense. Rubbish. No partnership can ever be equal."(161-2)

This prepared speech reveals the extent to which the socio-cultural norms of Sarita's environment clash with her will to defy them and assert herself in a patriarchal society. The outcome turns tragic and traumatic for the family when the wife's success dislocates the husband's position as the dominant unit. Obviously, these androcentric norms continue to impede and suppress women's intellectual potentiality to advancement for the sake of protecting men's egocentrism and their stance of dominance and superiority. Nevertheless, Sarita did not deliver this prepared speech, which authentically expresses her experience. Instead, she had given an ordinary one speaking about medicine as a career for women.

III-4-5 Healing and Self-Actualization

Sarita's next stage to her self-actualization starts with her return after a long detachment with her past, which implies her desire for reconstructing a connection with her inner being, and for the depths from which a new life can spring. She seeks a period of respite where she can truly be herself without judgment. Although Sarita has faced many challenges, she remains hopeful to understand the roots of her distress. This hope gives her a spirit of overcoming, and with her inner strenght, she will be able to survive the abstract violence that has been inflicted upon her.Sarita seeks to heal from her past through evaluating her relationship with her father, mother, and brother, by inhabiting the space she came from, and constructing a genuine communication that her ego seems to abhor. This new and urgent position allows her to commit herself in seeking reconciliation with her past, and to express and experience her self in ways

that are often prohibited by the compromises made by women in the service of social acceptance.

With Sarita's returning to her father's house, she establishes a connection to her childhood distress and psychological trauma in order to find legitimate answers to her dilemma. It is also a transformational leap to rebuild a healthy connection with her father and her past, after a detachment of fifteen years. Through her engagement in constructive dialogues with her father, Sarita could express how her parents' upbringing has shaped her troubled sense of self. The narrator contends about her realization of the need to confide to someone: "The urge to confide in someone, to talk to someone, was growing in her (…) I am alone. Knowing, with a kind of cold hopelessness, that it was not a dream, but real " (50), suggesting that confronting alone her original fear is a necessary condition to get herself out from the dark she is groping in. She is reminded by the *Krishna Sudama* story (a *Hindu* story about friendship and loyalty). The deep relationship between Krishna and Sudama in *Hindu* mythology is that of the eternal bond of brotherly love and concern, which symbolizes Sarita's relationship with her father and with her past. The narrator reports the unexpectedness of her returning to her father: "She smiled slightly to see the look of inquiry turn into a blank looking-at-a-stranger one (…) she felt a faint triumph as if she had scored something" (18), alluding to the regard of her conflicted relationship with her parents. She has returned to her father after many years following her late realization about her mother's demise from Prof. Kulkarni, to find out that he is living with a student whose name is Madhav.

Sarita's awareness about the inner rivalry between her projection as the lady doctor, and her self-perception as the trapped animal and guilty daughter, has created within her psyche a severe neurosis. She describes her projection: "There is this strange new fear of disintegration. A terrified consciousness of not existing. No, worse.Of being just a

ventriloquist's dummy (…) Perhaps my profession functions as my ventriloquist" (26), referring to her helplessness to the command of her external persona which takes control over her being. Moreover, the fear she feels when being self-aware of her fragile inner self profoundly terrorizes her sense of being. She reports on her self-perception: "behind this fear the uneasiness that comes from losing something. No, not losing it, but being unable to find it because I've hidden it to keep it safe. Hidden it so well that I can't find it myself now. And each day the thought (…) I can't go on" (27), referring to the dismissal of her conflicted self in the unconscious part of her psyche. It is her secretary, Nirmala, who notices Sarita's moments of loss. Sarita reports:

> When Nirmala peeps in, wondering maybe at the long pause between an outgoing patient and my bell, she sees me writing (…) but I'm only doodling. And always the same thing. One circle entwined in another (…) Once I found myself cutting a piece of paper, telling myself (…) these are bits of my mind falling on the ground. And there was Nirmala's face looking at me from the door. Saying in an astonished voice (…) What is it, doctor? (…) And then saying in that cold, it's-none-of-your-business voice, 'Send in the next patient, Nirmala' 'yes, doctor' Relief in her voice, as if she knew me again (…) But never any relief for me. Always the fear that one day Nirmala would look in and find no one behind that table. Just a white coat containing nothing. Emptiness. The mounting terror that one day there would be no ventriloquist giving me the right lines to say, the right faces to make. (26-7)

This passage illustrates Sarita's consciousness about the increasing effect of her dilemma. Her neurosis began to attract the concern of her secretary who notices Sarita's moments of loss in the pause time between patients. Sarita's doodling repetitive circles during these moments reveal a coping mechanism to her anxiety. In Jungian psychology, circles "symbolize an individual's soul and it is one of the most essential doodles…circles reveal attempts of trying to clear up conflict." (Qutub). As such, Sarita's doodling circles embody her need to find wholeness and unity.

Significantly, Sarita learns about her mother's demise from Prof. Kulkarni who informs her that she passed away a month ago, and though she acts strong and indifferent on the outside, she is internally broken. She depicts her inner thoughts: "all defences down now. The battle for a while given up, won by a frightened girl who stammered (…) My mother? But I would not give up easily. I struggled until the frightened girl vanished" (29), suggesting that she is an intransigent combatant who has eventually given up the battle with her mother after her demise.

It is worth noting that the protagonist's realization of her mother's death at the peak of her disintegration served as the impetus that led her to return to her father's house. Sarita informs her husband about it, who thinks that her sudden decision to visit her father is aimed at askingfor his forgiveness. Yet, Sarita clarifies to the reader her motives: "Forgiven? I began to laugh while he stared at me in astonishment (…) my wants are simpler. To sleep peacefully the night through. To wake up without pain.To go through apprehension. Not to think, not to dream. Just to live" (32-3), revealing her desire of having a rest from the pains of her sadistic husband. Yet, she wonders whether her pains would cease with her displacement or would continue to chase her wherever she goes. She declares: "But what if I carry my own hell within me? Then there is no hope for me at all. But that, I have to know" (33). This statement expresses a hint of hope and possibility towards the resolution of her inner dilemma.

As her stay at her father's home folds a series of painful memories, Sarita contemplates on the way they have shaped her character. Eventually, on Dhruva's birthday, when Madhav left home to see his mother, Sarita and her father found themselves uneasy and uncomfortable for being together without Madhav. Sarita serves dinner for her father forgetting about her parents' habit of fasting the whole day of Dhruva's birthday. The moment she remembers this habit that her parents used to practise, and the way she transgressed their habit and ate disregarding her parents' grievance and especially her mother's accusation of killing her

brother. In an impulse, she provocatively says to her father: "I've forgotten him completely. I don't ever think of him" (213), which shows her pretense of forgetting about her brother as she declares it in an offensive tone. She even insisted on her father to tell her what he thinks about her, and he declares: "Sometimes, I used to think you took your mother seriously and blamed yourself for Dhruva's death. You know she was not herself when she said that. She was hysterical. But I thought you began to believe in yourself" (214), implying his belief that Sarita succeeded in overcoming the accidental death of her brother.

The above statement of Sarita's father has caused her a loss of composure as she began to question his thoughts about the accident of her brother's death. She recounts: "Why should I blame myself? (...) He was a silly idiot who didn't know better than to get himself in a small puddle" (214). She even informs him about Dhruva's accusations: "every night he comes and accuses me. Yes, Dhruva. He looks at me as if I killed him. Why are you all against me? Why do you all accuse me of something I never did" (214-5), admitting the fact of having tormenting dreams. While her father soothes her emotional outburst, she blames him of never asking her how it happened. She explains how Dhruva went with her that day to the forest without her knowledge or consent:

> I never took him out anywhere. It was him who pestered me, followed me. He fell in himself. And both of you found me guilty without really knowing what had happened. Did you ask me once, just once (…) What happened, Saru? Did you say just once (…) Don't think of it. It wasn't your fault. Don't blame yourself. And it wasn't. Really and truly it wasn't. (216)

This passage reveals Sarita's frustration about her parents who had never tried to understand the circumstances behind Dhruva's accidental death; they have blindly blamed their daughter for his death instead. Their prejudgment implies that it was easy to blame girls totally as they were traditionally considered sinful and inferior. Later on, her father walks away helplessly in an attempt to make her sort things out by herself.

It is at the peak of her dilemma about her involvement in Dhruva's demise that Sarita's unconscious mind responds by unfolding the details on the accident in a dream revelation. Sarita describes her impotent attempts to remember the details the night after her dispute with her father: "Oh, the agony, the ache, of not knowing, of not being sure, of doubting. The helplessness of trying to go back into that time, that state of mind, trying to be definite about what I did and why" (217). Following the dream, the narrator depicts Sarita's paradoxical state of peace and turbulence. On this feeling, the narrator outlines:

> It was one of those moments of truth that come on the instant of waking. No, not just one truth, but the whole of it came to her then with an absolute, unshakable, certainty (…) She felt as if she was standing on a height, with a vintage view of humanity laid out below her. And what struck her most forcibly was the futility of the whole excercise. It seemed idiotic, moronic, meaningless. Like walking onto a lighted stage a smiling, grimacing puppet (…) coming out of the darkness and going into the darkness. What for? (227)

This passage highlights her awareness of the conflicting feelings Sarita has about the unripe resolution of her dilemma. The narrator seems to imply that even with the clarity of details about Dhruva's accidental death and her futile attempts at saving him, she would remain conflicted if she does not humble herself and tell her father about her dilemma. Instantly, she remembers a woman she saw once on a motorcycle while she was waiting at the pedestrian crossing. She describes her:

> The motorbike had gone past her, a man riding it, a woman on the pillion (…) It was the expression of her face that had caught her attention. What had it been? Complacence? Certainly? Confidence? Sure of her place in the world, of her right to exist? And suddenly there had been a sense of shock, as if she was watching the husk of herself, as if she had been hinged on herself, one part of her the woman on the motorbike, the other standing there on the pavement, watching that woman, sardonic, unbelieving, asking the questions (…) am I really like that?

> Now the dichotomy was complete, the hinge had broken off and there were two of her, one part, the woman on the motorbike, misplaced, the other lying here wondering (…) can I survive without that part of me? (227-8)

Obviously, the narrator explains Sarita's epiphany about her liminal position, which is about the standing woman who watches and questions her symbolic projection as the woman on the motorcycle who is serene about her fate being determined by a man.

It is also worth noting that Sarita reached the point where she needs to transcend the liminality of her position to reach her self-actualization. Realizing her need to confront her own fears, the narrator describes her feelings:

> She had a dim realization that something had changed since last night when she had fallen into bed utterly exhausted. Now, waking up, she had the feeling of having done something dreadful, of having disgraced herself in some way. She knew the disgrace, the misdemeanour, would confront her the moment she got out of bed. (228)

The disgrace referred to in this account is about her admission of unhappiness to her father that is contrary to his assumption. In an attempt to soothe his tormented daughter, Sarita's father informs her that he never blamed her for Dhruva's death. Yet, Sarita holds that her mother did, and she treated her as the unwanted daughter especially after her marriage to Manohar. She asks about the way her mother died, and her father replies: "she had accepted the fact of her death; she was reconciled to it. And so when she died, her face was peaceful. There was no struggle, no bitterness" (229). This revelation made Sarita even more frustrated for her mother's negligence of her existence. She asks: "what about me? Did she think of me at all? She died at peace with herself, you say. How could she after what she did to me?" (231), referring to the mother's curse on Sarita's life when she married Manohar. It was Prof. Kulkarni who told Sarita about her mother's curse as he reports: "I always, imagined no mother could ever dislike her own child. But Saru's mother seems to be an exception. She shocked me. Imagine saying (…) I will pray to god for her unhappiness. Let her know more sorrow than she

has given me" (233), referring to her mother's adversity towards her living child, Sarita, which caused Sarita's inner torment and manifested its effects in her neglection of her private issues at the expense of her external image of the successful lady doctor.

In addition to Sarita's proclamation to her father about her unhappiness in her marriage, the letter her father receives from Manohar telling him about Sarita's persistent unresponsiveness to his letters raised his concern for his daughter and he insists that she explains him about the cause of her desertion. The narrator contends on Sarita's thoughts about her father's unexpected concern and about telling him what is wrong with her marriage: "It was a challenge. You've always avoided things. The truth. Facts. Life. Confrontation. Can you now take this from a daughter you thought you'd got rid of?" (234-5), alluding to her father's careless character and his familiarity with Sarita's absence. Yet, Sarita realises that it is the ripe moment to confess to her father about her suffering with a sexual sadistic husband. The narrator portrays her feeling:

> Now she knew. It was for this that she comes home. To see his face as she told him the truth.To have him declare himself on her side as he had once done. She had the words ready. She would recite them, she had thought, as if she was reading out a clinical history of an anonymous patient. Instead she blurted out, baldly, crudely, 'My husband is a sadistic'. (236)

This quote shows Sarita's need for a father figure to stand by her side in her pathological marriage. Yet, all her sophisticated preparations to telling her father about her suffering in a formal way did not work as her deliberate impulses escape her in expressing the unpleasant anxiety about her husband's sexual behaviour into a sadistic one.

Gathering her strength to explain to her father about Manohar's sexual behaviour, Sarita tells him: "There we were, a normal husband and wife. Like any other normal couple. Absolutely like any other couple. And one day (…) A girl came to interview me" (237), referring to her marriage relationship as an ordinary one before the interview she had with a young woman. As Sarita introduced the journalist to her husband, it turned out that the young

woman who was preparing for a special issue journal on career women knew what Sarita's husband was doing in his life, and she asked him the pivotal question that turned his sexual behaviour with his wife upside down, which is "How does it feel when your wife earns not only the butter but most of the bread as well? Do you know what that meant?" (238). The question awakened his sleeping frustration at the switched role Sarita's takes by her priviledged social and financial status. Sarita tells her father: "But it hadn't mattered till then. I swear it hadn't. And even then, when that girl said it, we just laughed, all three of us." (238) She goes on explaining her husband's violent sexual behaviour: "He attacked me like an animal that night. I was sleeping and I woke up and there was this (…) this man hurting me. With his hands, his teeth, his whole body" (238), comparing him to a beast who violently expresses his frustration at his diminished self-esteem. This male sexual brutality could be explained as a consequence of the misogynist "rape culture."

As Sarita continues explaining to her father about her conjugal problem, her body language expresses her deep fears as a child who needs parental protection. The narrator depicts:

> She stopped rubbing at her foot and crosses her ankles, making her body smaller, more compact. She looked so small the way she sat, feet crossed, arms hugging knees close to chest that he had an illusion of seeing the child who had cowered there saying (…) I don't know, I don't know. (240)

This excerpt illustrates an instance of Sarita's body language that expresses her regression to child behaviour when having an immense fear of doing something wrong. The narrator also refers to the father's memory of his frightened daughter after the accidental death of Dhruva when she was denying any involvement of what had happened in the accident. This memory stresses Sarita as she has to further explain a secret that her ego strives to repress.

Notably, Sarita could not confront her husband at first about his act of sadistic sexual behaviour because she finds out in the early morning that he is unconscious about it. She states: "I wondered what we would say. Would he apologize? or explain ? would he look guilty and shamefaced ? But when I went out, there was nothing. He said, as if it was just any day, Morning, Saru. Slept well." (240). On another occasion, she describes her husband's unawareness about his beastly intercourse during the nights: "I was dressing up one day and he said (…) 'God, Saru! Have you hurt yourself? Look at that!' I swear his surprise, his concern was genuine. And if he doesn't know what's the use of talking to him?" (241), referring to his genuine surprise at seeing Sarita's bruises on her body. This quote also refers to her helplessness at communicating to him his sexual sadism, a fact that surprises her father. She informs him: "Maybe I deserve it after all. Look what I've done to him. Look what I did to Dhruva. And to my mother" (242), which alludes to the complexity of her feeling of guilt towards Manohar, Dhruva, and her mother. She resents from facing her husband with his sexual sadism during the night, she explains:

> And there was something more. The fear that by speaking, she would be unlocking the door of a dark room in which someone had been murdered. That by opening that door, she would be revealing to the world the pathetic, lifeless body of the victim, grotesque in an enforced death. (51)

Sarita thinks that she has destroyed his sense of masculinity with her racial, financial, and social superiority, which is due to the orthodox beliefs and attitudes about normative femininity/masculinity. She adds:

> It's because I wronged her that I'm suffering now. And, the more I suffer, the greater the chance, perhaps, of expiating that wrong. Wasn't that what she had always thought, always told herself? Why then, did the words sound so melodramatic, so unreal, when she said them aloud? (242)

The excerpt above points out to Sarita's feeling of guilt towards her disobedience and desertion to her mother. She assumes that all the wrongs happening to her would purify her from her

mother's curse. She is aware about her transgressions through which she has ruined the social order. Thus, she accepts her predicament for the complex and multilayered nature of her guilt.

Nonetheless, Sarita is disappointed in her naive expectations from her father in offering ready solutions and answers to her dilemma. The narrator contends: "Surely he would help her now. Tell her what to do. She imagined him saying (…) don't worry, I'll look after you. Instead he said, 'but how can I answer that question, Saru ? What can I do?'" (242), pointing out to his genuine thought that he cannot offer that help. Sarita describes his negative reply: "She heard not helplessness in it, but mockery. Hostility. She should have expected it" (243), further referring to his firm refusal to interfere in her life decisions. His rejection reminds her of herself in doing the same thing to her little brother when he was afraid of the dark, she confesses: "Now, after so many years, I know, Dhruva, why you came to me to escape from the dark. And how you felt when I told you to go away " (245), pointing out to the *Hindu* law of *Karma*(a Sanskrit word denoting the principle of cause and effect), which holds that one's performed actions, both good and bad, create the same consequences in return. At this point, Sarita realizes the extent to which her past deeds have affected her little brother with his phobia of the dark.

Following the night after Sarita's confrontation with her father about her conjugal dilemma, Madhav's return after his short trip to his home village helps Sarita to resolve her own dilemma. He has been asked by his mother to come back home for family issues. As he tells them about the reason behind his mother's request to look for his runaway brother in Bombay and about Madhav's refusal to sacrifice his studies for the sake of his "irresponsible" (246) brother, his words: "I can't spoil my life because of that boy. It's my life, after all" (246), resonate significantly in Sarita's mind, giving way to the resolution of her dilemma. Notably, the dream she has the following night had a considerable implication for the evolvement of the process of her crisis resolution. She recounts:

> She dreamt she was walking along a road, going on and on, knowing with a sinking feeling that something, somebody awful and frightening, was waiting for her at the end of it. But it was important to go on just the same, not to stop, even though there was doom waiting for her. And then she stumbled and fell. (249-50)

Obviously, the dream translates the deep knowledge she has about the approaching unpleasant confrontation she would have with the ultimate figure she mostly fears from, her unaware husband with what she has done to his ego. The next morning, as she was having a bath, she could regain the sense of her pure body. She describes: "She felt lighter when she came out as if she had washed away the ugly slough of some disease" (251), referring to the terrorizing attitudes that have previously haunted her. As she looked at her own reflection in the mirror, she thinks: "she looked, she thought, younger, and somehow softened. She felt the same tenderness towards herself that she would have felt for some stranger come out of any ordeal. Poor girl, she thought. She had had a bad time" (251), pointing out to Sarita's perception of herself as a woman who has suffered immensely from the patriarchal trails and tribulations, and who deserves self-love and peace. This moment conveys a pivotal and deep meaning of the female's own projection in which the female subject judges one's self according to the androcentric attitudes and norms, and one's self-perception in which the subject looks compassionately at one's self decentring the androcentric egocentrism and relocating the feminine to the center.

Nonetheless, Madhav's remark about Sarita's looking different after her short moment of self-reflection brings back her previous disturbed face. The narrator contends:

> Her cruelty to Dhruva, to her mother, to Manu…she would never be rid of it. She would carry this ugly, unbearable burden until she died. The facade of deception had cracked so completely she could never put it together again. Shafts of the truth pierced her, causing her unbearble pain, Atonement (…)? It was never possible. What had she imagined? What had she thought? (252)

As such, Sarita is described as a condemned subject to her suffering due to her resistance and defiance to the patriarchal figures in her life. The facade of instant peace has quickly cracked implying that Sarita should not expect reconciliation as she is cursed by the major patriarchal figure in her life to live unhappily despite all her career achievement, and this is through her feminine body which refers to the original cause of women predicament.

With the restored mood of suffering, Sarita receives a letter from her husband disguised as from her son. As she starts reading, she cries furiously for Manohar's use of their son to deceive her in order to read his letter. She explains to her father and to Madhav that her husband is coming in few days, and rushes at collecting her suitcase to escape to an unknown destination. Her father objects her method of running away instead of facing her problems, he recommends: "You can't run away, Saru" (256). She responds to her father's attempts at stopping her from going: "Scared of him? Oh god, yes. But not the way you think. It's not what he's done to me, but what i've done to him" (256), highlighting her sense of guilt caused by her privileged success at the social and financial levels. Her father offers her a helping advice: "Give him a chance, Saru. Stay and meet him. Talk to him. Let him know from you what's wrong. Tell him all that you told me" (256), and he insists: "Saru, don't do it again", (257) and he explains to her: "Don't turn your back on things again. Turn round and look at them. Meet them" (256). His genuine eagerness at helping his daughter astonished Sarita. He tells her:

> But let that go. That's all past and done with. I'm speaking of now. I'm asking you, pleading with you. Have I ever said to you (…) do this or don't do that? I left it all to your mother (…) But now I'm appealing to you. Don't go without meeting your husband. Talk to him. Tell him what's wrong. (257)

As Sarita's father reminds her of her past wrong deeds, she realises that he is aware and concerned about herwell being. Moreover, his taking back of the agency of the guiding father figure who insists on his daughter that she faces her own problems instead of running away and leaving them unresolved restores his relationship with her.

Nonetheless, Sarita finds herself uncertain and afraid of confronting her own fears, a problem that originates from her childhood. The narrator describes: "'And then?' she asked in a small, frightened voice. A child asking apprehensively for the denouement of a horror story. Afraid to hear it, yet unable to leave it alone" (257), referring to her ambivalent stance of liminality between her retreat to her comforting zones and confronting her own fears and problems. She responds to her father's appeals: " Baba, you don't know. I'm tired, so very tired. I really don't how I can go on. If only I could end it all" (258), linking her previous futile attempts at confronting her husband, she confesses:

> Each time I tried to speak, to open my mouth, my heart failed. What if he said (…) are you crazy?' And there had been the other thing. Her feeling that so long as she did not speak, the thing that happened between them remained unreal. That by speaking she would be making it real. (241)

The above excerpt features her rationalization of her problem in adopting self-silence and holding that her husband's sadistic sexual intercourse can be considered as an unreal moment because "he was so normal at all other times" (241). In fact, her fears stem from what proceeds after making her husband realize his pathological sexual behaviour that has developed from her dislocation of binary system. She tells her father: "But there can never be any forgiveness. Never any atonement. My brother died because I heedlessly turned my back on him. My mother died alone because I deserted her. My husband is a failure because I destroyed his manhood" (258), implying not only the tragic turnings of the complexity of her her guilt, but also the strong effects her transgressions had on her self-advancement and the patriarchal figures.

Yet, Sarita could not admit to herself the destructive power of her will to self-fulfillment and self-actuallization. She finds herself stuck as her inflated ego rejects holding responsibility for deconstructing the patriarchal norms and attitudes that she herself rejected and did not conform to. Thus, her father tells her: "Why do you torture yourself with others? Are you not

enough for yourself? It's your life, isn't it?" (258). Again, her father's simple analysis surprises her troubled thinking. The narrator describes her thoughts: "It came over her again, the feeling of being bereft she'd had when Madhav had said (…) it's my life. She knew the words had some relevance to her life that they held some significance for her, but she seemed unable to find the connection" (258), suggesting Sarita's confusion and resistance to take problems easy. This inability stems and has developed from the androcentric parental upringing of girls in accordance with the ideals of modesty, self-denial and self-sacrifice which are sustained and perpetuated by the socio-cultural norms and attitudes.

Sarita realizes that it is her responsibility to face courageously her own problem. She notices her father's retreat after simplifying her dilemma: "Now it was obvious. He had retreated, he has withdrawn. He would do no more" (259). The narrator describes: " It had happened at last, what she had always dreaded. She was alone, alone in the dark like Dhruva and her mother who had died alone in the middle of the night" (260), suggesting the aloneness she had mostly feared from, that of a small child and a deserted and ill mother. The narrator reflects on her realization of the inevitable necessity of human existential experience: "Perhaps the only truth is that man is born to be cold and lonely and alone. And now it seemed that this was the worst thing that had happened to her. To embrace this knowledge meant that she had to relinquish all hope forever" (260), alluding to the necessity of assuming one's responsibility in taking the lead of one's life and confronting the consequences of such decision. The narrator illustrates Sarita's thoughts:

> It's my fault again. If mine had been an arranged marriage, if I had left it to them to arrange my life, would he have left me like this? She thought of the girl, the sister of a friend, who had come home on account of disastrous marriage. She remembeed the care and sympathy with which the girl had been surrounded (…) for the failure had not been hers, but her parents'; and the guilt had been theirs too, leaving only the suffering for the girl…Now she had both, the suffering and the guilt. (259-60)

This excerpt testifies Sarita's view that her situation would be easier if she had conformed to the society's norms and attitudes, it would save her the trouble of the feeling of guilt. Sarita realizes that her taking lead of her life implies taking responsibility for her decisions, which necessitates more strength and patience as the road to self-actualization for women in its labyrinthal ways is troublesome to some extent.

Ruminating on these issues of guilt and self-fulfillment, Sarita reaches the epiphany that she can take the responsibility over the devastating outcomes of her life decisions towards self-actualization in an androcentric environment. The narrator portrays her thoughts:

> But as she fearfully grappled with this nothingness, a strange thing happened to her. She was overcome by a queer sensation as if everything was unreal. Her own body felt insubstantial. There was a feeling of weightlessness that made her almost euphoric. Even her fears faded into insubstatial ghosts. And with this sense of unreality came the thought (…) none of this matters, not really. (260)

As argued in the above passage, Sarita embraces the feeling of detachment from her feminine body that enslaved her with all the cultural implications that impede her true self-actualization. She feels the weightlessness of being free from the feminine body after years of chronic anxiety and stress of her cursed identity as the "guilty sister, the undutiful daughter, the unloving wife" (261). However, she decides "she had to go on. To blunder her way through this to some kind of a life that would seem right to her" (261), implying her will to take action even when this would mess up her life for a little while. The narrator describes her reconciliation with her self: " She had to accept these selves to become whole again. But if she was all of them, they were not all of her. She was all these and so much more" (261), explaining that she accepts the predicament that came with taking control of her life.

Indeed, Sarita realizes that her own predicament stems from her clinging to the orthodox image of the successful lady doctor and the loving wife. She portrays:

> My life is my own (…) somehow she felt as if she had found it now, the connecting link. It means you are not just a strutting, grimacing puppet, standing futilely on the stage for a brief while between areas of darkness. If I have been a puppet, it is because I made myself one. I have been clinging to the tenuous shadow of a marriage whose substance has long since disintegrated, because I have been afraid of proving my mother right. (262)

In doing so, she admits her conformity to the ideal image of both the subordinate wife and successful doctor. In fact, Sarita's self-denial of her own fragmentation grows from her defiance to her mother's curse of living an unhappy life. As such, she develops a complex neurosis that worsened her situation.

Eventually, Sarita's fear of her husband's coming to see her at her father's home reaches its peak when she hears a knocking at the door. As her father and Madhav leave it for her, suspecting it is Manohar who came, Sarita gathers her courage to open the door and finds out that it is a neighboring child who needs her to look after his sick sister. As she prepares herself to go and check her neighbours' daughter, she comforts her father saying: "And, oh yes, Baba, If Manu comes, tell him to wait. I'll be back as soon as I can" (263), suggesting her readiness to confront her fears. This statement testifies her mature awareness that confrontation is inevitable. Moreover, the narrator contends on her resolution with the inner dilemma: "She hurried out of the house. The gate swung behind her with its usual protesting squeak. And now, there were no thoughts in her, except those of the child she was going to help" (263), implying that she has finally transcended her fears, and is able to deal with her personal issues.

In sum, Deshpande follows the tripartite process of her female protagonist towards self-fulfillment and healing of her trauma. In doing so, she explores the social and psychological conditioning of the protagonist by an authoritative mother who perpetuates the patriarchal order through nurture. Due to the misogynist attitudes towards women, the protagonist experiences the symbolic violence of the inferiorizing gender norms, attitudes and expectations. However,

Sarita deviates from her gendered stereotype since childhood, and sets forth to assert her visibility by a mother and a patriarchal society that marginalises her. The author explores the contemporary Indian women struggle against the inhibiting systems of patriarchy and caste, gender roles, and the socio-cultural codes of conduct. Deshpande portrays the female protagonist' psychological trauma that is maintained by the dogmatic traditional belief about normative femininity within the domestic and subjugated sphere. She depicts her self-journey of refusal to get crushed under the weight of her personal tragedies and face her traumas with courage and strength. Deshpande's protagonist also transgresses gender, social, and sexual taboos as a consequence of the limiting and unhealthy rules of conduct that encourage silence and self-sacrifice over communication.

Moreover, the author highlights the female protagonist's quest for visibility and recognition since the day she decided to attract her mother's attention by hiding in the forest till dusk in a pathetic attempt to see her mother's love through worry. However, her little brother's insistence to accompany her and play in the muddy pond led to his accidental death and her helplessness to rescue him. This act is analogous to Sarita's later craving for social visibility that led to her husband's unconscious feeling of inferiority and his development of sexual sadism. In so doing, the author conveys the assumption that the female's craving of visibility and recognition would annihilate the male's presence in her life, and make her feel guilty for unintentionally doing so. More importantly, Shashi Deshpande insists on taking the responsibility of confronting this guilt with self-confidence as to affirm that the patriarchal system is inherently weak and evil and entails the subversion of power dynamics to her side, i.e. she takes control of the situation and has the ability to transform it a positive way. As such, the author discusses the extent to which the female's quest for visibility needs strength and courage to facing its repercussions in her society.

Although Deshpande writes in English, we can safely assert that her English is interlaced with Indian linguistic hybridity that is evident in her novel *The Dark Holds No Terrors*. The author remolds the English language to reflect the rhythms and syntax of the Indian language, and develops a new way to demonstrate mastery of a language that was, in a sense, forced upon Indians, and it serves as an opportunity to address the masses of readers all around the globe, thus, proving it to be a dynamic site of resistance against the silencing monopoly over cultural discourse. As such, her literature becomes linguistically and culturally hybrid. In doing so, Shashi Deshpande's imperial consciousness is revealed, which enables the *subaltern* to speak for herself.

III-5 Journey to Self-Actualization and Reconciliation in Ahlem Mostaghanemi's *Chaos of the Senses*

Particular issues are revisited in this novel according to the author's fashion. This section shall explore the journey to the fulfillment and self-actualization of the female protagonist in Ahlem Mostaghanemi's novel, *Chaos of the Senses* 1997. Starting with a detailed synopsis of the novel, which introduces the reader to the general plot, we shall divide our analysis following our tripartite structure of women self-actualization.

III-5-1 Synopsis of the Novel *Chaos of the Senses*

The novel, *Chaos of the Senses,* is set in both Constantine and Algiers during the turbulent period of the 1990s. The female protagonist, Hayat, is a well-known and established Algerian author who is involved in the arts and literature, and she challenges death and terrorism through her writing. Within the charged political atmosphere of the 1990s, Hayat faces loneliness and estrangement from her political and cultural environment. As she strives to be fulfilled and express herself in an inhibiting environment where androcentric interests reign and political instability intimidates, anxiety takes over Hayat's psyche and inhibits a clear vision of her ideas and passions. Through her current literary project, Hayat reflects a projection of her feminine and masculine subjectivity onto her characters and considers seriously her narrative as a means of flight from her conflicted life through confessional writing.

Being disillusioned with a life of phallocentric interests, Hayat looks for inspirational material in order to express the melancholy and loss experienced by a generation weary of the turbulent post-independence era. Soon, her fact and fiction worlds become consciously intertwined, creating a unique world for her. Hayat embodies her own beliefs and desires through her embodiment of her female protagonist. The turning point occurs when Hayat

becomes indulged in an extramarital romance with the male protagonist of her narrative. This happens when she seeks inspiration from real life, but her feminine sensibility takes the agency in orientating the plot. The author's captivating poetic prose describes the journey of the protagonist into reconciliation with her guilt from the disturbing trauma of the ideological unrest and its effects on her writings and personal life. The protagonist finds her liberation through mixing between her real and illusionary-fictionalized worlds and transgressing her gender norms and rules of conduct for a married woman.

The novel is narrated through the first person pronoun by the female protagonist in a poetic and lyrical stream-of-consciousness style, with frequent flashbacks. The narrator, in a manner reminiscent of but not identical with the author, is named Hayat, which connotes life, fulfillment, realization of dreams, pleasure and knowledge in the face of threatening violence and death. The author's association of writing to the cyclical pattern of life and nature is prominent in this novel; Hayat's literary pen is triggered by the sight of a notebook that intuitively guides her to writing a new story. The novel is divided into five parts that are entitled in definitive terms as they follow an inevitable process: Beginning, Always, Of Course, Inevitably, and Definitely. It begins with the protagonist being driven strongly to writing after two years of silence. Hayat considers the act of writing as a means of expressing herself as she admits: "break two years of silence" (14). The narrative starts with the protagonist weaving an imaginary romance story, which does not have any connection to any of the events surrounding her actual life. She constructs the character of the male protagonist as a mysterious, charming, and philosophical character. The female protagonist, however, is the *alter ego*[47] of Hayat; a woman who conducts her life through her inner feminine voice defying the phallocentric

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[47] The term alter ego denotes an alternative self of the split personality. Wilson Glenn Daniel contends that it may be applied to the role or persona taken by an actor. See Glenn Daniel Wilson (1991).

norms, and driven by the male protagonist's subversive logic. In Hayat's embodiment of her own protagonist, she suspends the limits of her conscious voice in order to reconnect to and apprehend her authentic self and write about her lived experience.

The plot develops with the narrator's willful embodiment of Hayat's sensual self when she suddenly discovers that the random name she chose for the setting of the meeting between the lovers of her story in the "Olympic Cinema" exists simultaneously in the real world. The *synchronicity* (meaningful coincidence in Jungian sense) of this discovery provokes a series of questions for her: "Should I be wary of this story I'd written, whose details had turned frightening? Or should I view it as a sign from the Beyond and a promise of some future encounter?" (23). From that moment, Hayat's intuition leads her to the embodiment of her fictional female protagonist into a lived reality that she indulges herself in, and she develops a romantic liaison with a man whose definitive language is identical to the male protagonist of her fictional story. Being emotionally needy, Hayat gets involved in her fictional world as she admits: "The writing process in which I'd sought refuge from life would take me, albeit obliquely, back towards life itself, thrusting me into a story that would, one page after another, become my own." (28). In doing so, Hayat's haunting desire that is struggling to come alive is born through her writing narratives. As she asserts: "intimate realities are more easily written about than spoken of, since writing is a kind of silent confession" (179), pointing out to the therapeutic capacity of writing in self-disclosure, and that literature embraces that which reality could not.

Ahlem Mostaghanemi critically merges between two main narratives in this novel. The first one is about the status of Algerian woman in society and the religious/cultural frameworks that lead to her passive socialization and/or rebellious rejection. The second narrative is an examination of the history of resistance and post-independence politics in Algeria. Simultaneously, the author creates an intersection between the two narratives through the erotic

story that the protagonist lives and writes about. In doing so, Hayat embodies the transgressive potential. The author fuses the real with the ideal through the female writer's agency. Admittedly, Mostaghanemi's lived experience of the country's political turmoil serve as a significant impetus for the production of her gendered account in the trilogy.

III-5-2 Women Glocal Challenges

Generally provoking controversy, Mostaghanemi's fiction explores the fluid intersection between gender, class, politics, desire, ideology, and history, among others. The selected novel for our literary analysis is the translated version of *Fawda El Hawas* (1997) into English by Nancy Roberts, *Chaos of the Senses* (2015). This novel is the second in her trilogy which starts with *Memory of the Flesh*, published in 1993 and which has received phenomenal success throughout the Arab world. Ahlem Mosteghenmi continues her literary achievements by writing the third sequel expressing the culmination of the author's lyrical gift and political leaning: "*Aber Sareer*" (Bed Hopper) in 2003. Each novel of the trilogy is a bestseller throughout the Arab world.

Our selected novel *Chaos of the Senses* is written in poetic prose, and revolves around erotic love, political resistance, betrayal and trauma. The novel is one of the most notable and famous works of fiction that deal with the 1990s in Algeria, a decade which witnessed the horrors of the collapse of political system leading to the military upheaval and the civil war. As a female writer, Mostaghanemi has assumed the challenge to write about such a sensitive issue that had been veiled and considered as unspeakable in the Algerian literary productions at that period. Her nationalistic consciousness on the circumstances circulating around the years of the Algerian Civil War or the bloody decade led her to produce such a gendered narrative that relies on the historical aspect to construct a romantic narrative that has gained

wide popularity in the world. The story is told through the voice of an Algerian female, which represents the voice of the suppressed, subjugated and marginalized writers.

III-5-3 Enculturation of the Socio-Cultural Gendered Conduct

Concerning Hayat's early enculturation and its effect on the development of her character, the author informs the reader that she develops a conflict with the dominant socio-cultural mindset, which sustains women subjugation to the patriarchal culture. As a consequence, she experiences alienation from it and prioritizes her isolation and solitude over socialization with the common women of her environment. Hayat finds that those women embraced their being as sexualized bodies whose interests are confined to the basic physiological needs of eating and sleeping in addition to their reproductive capabilities. Rather, she is interested in pursuing her intellectual and creative curiosity that the society inhibits. She also avoids tight social obligations; and insists that she has been estranged from her female peers and ascribed feminine roles ever since her childhood. As she admits: "I'd been a skinny little girl with big questions surrounded by women full of loose answers" (99), referring to the social *indoctrination* of women into beings whose focus is to be limited to the domestic sphere. Nonetheless, Hayat perceives this ascribed femininity as too narrow for her aspirations and as a constraint to her needs. She notes:

> They were women of ennui with houses so neat they looked as though nobody lived in them, who cooked only the most complicated dishes, whose words were insincere as they were polite, whose bedrooms were as frigid as they were luxurious, and whose exorbitant wardrobes concealed bodies that no man had ever set on fire. (98)

This excerpt indicates the relegation of women to the domestic sphere, which segregates them into their biological role of motherhood and wifedom. Moreover, Hayat questions the societal norms and abstains from behaving the same as her gendered social group in order to guard her

spontaneity and freedom. In doing so, she emerges as a subject who symbolizes independent thinking, courage, sensitivity, and compassion.

Furthermore, Mostaghanemi critically explores the issue of the Algerian patriarchal norms and the dual standards that are reflected in her critical assessment of the gender norms and ascriptions to women's conduct. She questions how in Constantine, a micro image about Algerian culture and the antique city which is considered as the capital city of knowledge and the locus of resistance,[48] women's conduct aspires to the patriarchal gaze for acceptance. The narrator expresses her exasperation at not being tolerated for going alone to the cinema or to a café; as this would allow men to sexually harass women assuming that they are "sufficiently free" (31), connoting a sexual nuance to their misogynist attitude.

Significantly, these restrictive norms are held by Hayat's husband who insists that in her courses with the family's chauffeur, she has to sit in the back seat of Uncle Ahmed's car, in order to avoid people's suspect gaze and judgments. Regardless, Hayat sits next to the old chauffeur, as doing so feels right for her; especially when considering her trust and familiarity with Uncle Ahmed. She asserts her firm objection to change her convictions: "there's no hope of my changing— I've looked at things this way for as long as I can remember" (97). Notably, it is the seat or positioning that she chooses which metaphorically suggests her rebellious rejection of the inscribed spaces on women. She admits:

> I'd never realized that our decision to sit in one seat rather than another could expose something
>
> as deep as our convictions and aspirations in life. Nor had I realized that such a decision might

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[48]Constantine is also considered as the centre of Algerian Islamic reform which appeared with Abdelhamid Ben Badis' establishment of the Association of Algerian Muslim Ulema According to Frank Tachau, the organization was established in 1931 by   Abdelhamid Ben Badis, with a leadership consisting largely of middle-class men, most of whom were Arab-speaking schoolteachers. Itsupported Islamic reformism and was strongly opposed to the marabouts (religious teachers). It opposed assimilation with the French, but did not support independence, instead supporting linguistic nationalism and loyalty to France. Despite this, the French authorities sought to closely control the organization, eventually leading to it to form alliances with nationalist parties. (4-5)

cause the death of an innocent man because, without changing his place, it had changed the way

he was perceived. (95)

As explained, Hayat aspires for creativity and freedom disregarding the inherited norms of gendered conduct. Moreover, she is at pains when realizing that her transgressive act of sitting beside the chauffeur caused his assassination by the terrorists as they suspected him being a military man or even her husband whom the society contempts. Thus, her intentional positioning in a suspect space can eventually lead to her death sentence. This realization would serve as a catalyst for her future movements in having to conceal her convictions for both her own safety and her family's.

Traditionally, the conceptualization of femininity according to the patriarchal lens is reduced to the determinism of sexual distinction. As such, female sexuality is commonly held as a potential threat to a man's honor. Thus, her sexuality is chained to the patriarchal manipulation through the education of repression and ban of sexual exploration beyond the marital sphere. The writer explains: "So was womanhood a kind of ritual impurity?" (188), and goes on further by pointing out to the association of feminine sexuality to corruption, fear and impurity: "people here teach you that not only is sex shameful, but so too femininity, along with everything that bespeaks it" (188). In doing so, the author expresses Hayat's realization of the suffocating framework within which many women in her society are trapped to being sex objects for male's manipulative interest. As such, a conflict developed within Hayat's perception of her repressed femininity as she held contempt for the ideal projected femininity.

Furthermore, the conception of marriage is framed around the wife's expected duties of sacrifice, silent suffering, and subjugation. Although Hayat admits that she is not happy with her husband, she cannot ask for a divorce because, in her words: "He's my husband, because I'm alone, and because I don't know how to make any decisions" (256), revealing her acquired indecisiveness and helplessness in a society that has already set the limits of her life path. She

elaborates on the frowned upon or condemned divorce: "The life of a divorced woman in a country like this is a slavery worse than marriage, since everybody else makes themselves your guardians" (256), suggesting that women prefer staying in an unhappy marriage for stability over enduring the harsh grip of the patriarchal and misogynist society.

Mostaghanemi explores Hayat's sexual subjectivity through her introspection on her early encounter with femininity, sexuality, desire and ageing. The protagonist discovers the common conception of femininity and sexuality through her widow mother and her personal toiletry bag. Hayat notices that her mother's sexual subjectivity has been switched to her relationship with her toiletry things; thus, her body has undergone thingification or reification. She confesses: "I would dream and dream, close my mother's body up again in the bag, stash it in the wardrobe, and rush out of the room before being taken by surprise by my other mother, the one that had no body" (186). Obviously, Hayat contemplates on the status of her mother's body as a torn entity which is divided into two parts; the first being embodied by her feminine accessories and products and giving the impression of the presence and celebration of love and erotic desire in her life. The second part, however, displays the dull reality of her body that is devoid of any desire and romance. Therefore, the body is gender free, and that these feminine accessories and products give the body a gendered identity.

Mostaghanemi reveals too that the character of Hayat is shaped through her critical mother-daughter memories. In fact, the mother-daughter relationship is situated at the core of the feminist discourse. In 1929, Virginia Woolf declares: "we think back through our mothers if we are women" (1957, 79). As Hayat ponders on her early exposure to the conception of femininity and perpetuation of gender roles, the reader realizes that her mother represents the central figure that deeply affected her character development. She states:

> As a child I would often sneak a look inside that bag as though it were a chest full of wonders. I would sit on the edge of the bed, dreaming of women's world that as of yet I knew nothing

about. I would look at my mother's things and dream of having a body just like hers on which

to sport that lovely lingerie. (186)

Hayat, as a female, has grown up curious about women's life. The bag symbolizes a fertile ground of women's sensual mystery, and which prefigures her future transgressive relationship with Khaled, which is based on secrecy and erotic desire. Her mother provides her with the earliest model of femininity that is based on sensual pleasures. In doing so, Hayat is seeking to find a positive meaning of her own feminine subjectivity from her gender conditioning.

Furthermore, Hayat's developed her perception of femininity and the female body beyond the inherited conception that is based on the glorification of the youthful and slender body. The passage about the Turkish bath reveals the experience of Algerian women with their body appearance that is framed around normative femininity. The narrator perceives herself a woman who is outside of the perpetuated image of youthful feminine features that is defined by the male gaze. She explains: "Was it out of respect for femininity, which I had always expected to be more beautiful than bodies that had lost their natural contours?" (187), indicating her rejection and resistance to normative femininity and her sexual objectification, which is fatal for women sexual and existential subjectivity. As her mother's body ages and loses its young shape, Hayat becomes aware of her mother's alienation from her body image and seeking social validation by her proud identification with Hayat's younger body over her own. She reflects on her mother's compliance and reproduction of the dominant femininity norms on body appearance:"Since she had given birth to me, did she think of my body as personal possession that she was entitled to flaunt before others as one of her accomplishments, finding in it some solace or compensation for what her own body had become? (188). This quote reveals her mother's strong identification with her daughter's young and slender body. Seeking appraisal and acceptance from society reveals her internalization of the cultural assumption that her self-worth is linked to youthful body. As Hayat contemplates on her

mother's alienation and self-displacement, she rejects the perpetuated projection of femininity that traps women in an alienating swirl. In doing so, the protagonist transgresses this conception of femininity and affirms her subjectivity.

Hayat's alienation from the conventional projection of femininity, leads her to seek refuge through her creative writings in which she can express and assert her subjectivity. She contemplates on her self-perception and the projection of normative femininity while being in the Turkish bath: "From the very beginning I'd been destined to be a creature of paper and ink whose existence was imperiled by these prodigious amounts of water and steam" (187), referring to the excessive amounts of water that women pour on their bodies while bathing as an indication on the symbolic weight of their bodies that women unconsciously want to get rid of. As such, the narrator uses this comparison, which suggests that Hayat, unlike other women, is a fictionalized character that is under the risk of the smashing reality. To phrase it differently, the female subjectivity is molded by the hegemony of the male gaze and his masculine fantasies. For this reason, Hayat avoids being in such places, which impose on her the normative image, in order to reclaim control over her body and, most importantly, over her subjectivity. To pursue this idea, she notices that in the act of pouring excessive amounts of water over their bodies, women express unconsciously the automatic suppression of their own sexual subjectivity as an "accusation" (188) that follows them. In doing so, these women's annihilation of the feminine is a revelation of their adoption of subaltern silence, and this is another reason for Hayat's dislike of such settings.

Moreover, Mostaghanemi constructs the character of her protagonist as a rebel who questions and rejects her ascribed gender role, and challenges the standards of becoming an objectified woman. Her transgression of the norms is manifested through her writings and identification with her texts. Following the assassination of Uncle Ahmed and the painful guilt she felt for sitting beside him, Hayat is encouraged by her husband to have a rest in order to

overcome her trauma and accept the workings of fate. Moreover, she discovers the special opportunity of taking a break from her social ties and concentrating on her self. She declares: "When we take a trip, we're always running away from something we know. However, we don't necessarily know what we've come looking for" (112). Her unplanned displacement with a female companion, Farida, to a villa on the shores of Sidi Fredj brought her an open appetite to expressing her very intimate thoughts through writing, in addition to experiencing a new sense of freedom for both females. For Farida, a divorced woman, freedom meant enjoying the seaside sight of people swimming and dreaming. As to Hayat, freedom meant being untied from inscribed expectations and subsequent responsibilities. It also meant living fully these peaceful moments through engaging all the senses and emotions.

As the novel unfolds, the narrator describes the nature and development of the relationship between the protagonist and her lover, which is resumed after a break of two months. Being entangled by the enigmatic character and the confident attitude of her lover, the female protagonist could not restrain herself from indulging in a romantic liaison with him. The narrator informs the reader that the male protagonist projects for Hayat the same character as Khaled Ben Toubal's, the male protagonist in Mostaghanemi's first sequel *Memory of the Flesh,* concealing his true identity. In fact, he even appropriates Khaled's mindset to the point of admitting in one of his conversations with Hayat that he is not jealous of her husband but of Ziyad elKhalil; the poet whom Hayat admired in her previous novel, indicating his fusion between reality and fiction. More to the point, the narrator indicates that Khaled invests in the physical affinity between his actual crippled left arm and Khaled Ben Toubal's. Mostaghanemi clarifies that Khaled's identification with Khaled Ben Toubal (the painter in Mostaghanemi's first sequel) reveals his adoption of a camouflage strategy to hide his authentic identity as a nationalist journalist from the military and terrorist groups, it also shows that he is projecting to Hayat what she desires to see based on his close reading of her first sequel.

Moreover, Hayat realizes that she is not the woman he thinks he saw in a ceremony as he recounts to her. For him he sees her as a fascinating woman, like a mother figure and he becomes her object. Yet, she does not correct him and assumes her identification to that foreign woman in order to meet Khaled's fantasy. Henceforth, both Hayat and Khaled embody their idealized selves in their self-othering operation to represent the possibilities that she or he cannot recognize and experience without their projections, and experience a feeling of omnipotence and control in order to please the other. Significantly, his nationalist engagement and physical cripple is suggestive of the social and political cripple in postcolonial Algeria at the 1990s. Furthermore, the reader is informed that Khaled was mistakenly taken as one of the demonstrators, got shot by the police on his left arm while he was taking photos as a journalist during the 1988 October Riots (explored in the cultural chapter). Moreover, Khaled later confesses that he had to figuratively give up his right arm, i.e. by giving up writing with his true name, and adopting the pseudonym of Khaled Ben Toubal to voice his views in order not to be assassinated. Unlike his comrades in journalism, he prefers invisibility rather than acknowledgement in commenting on the actual politics. He contends: "They shine on account of the things they say, whereas I shine on account of my silence! " (209), highlighting his concealment of his identity which is caused by the distrust and danger that come to characterize the 90s in Algeria. By doing so, the author conveys that Khaled stands as a symbol for those journalists who continued their resistance with their pen names.

Furthermore, Mostaghanemi depicts the central unnamed male protagonist, Khaled, as a masculine, mysterious and manipulative man. The protagonist portrays his appearance: "a distinguished-looking man wearing a black shirt and dark sunglasses. Looking to be in his forties, he had a confident gait and exuded an effortless manly elegance", indicating his peculiar character. Being pointed out as "him" (134), the narrator describes: "this man was so skilled with words that he could bypass all your questions without giving you a single answer"

(210), revealing his proficiency in his use of words and also his paradoxical logic. In addition, his quiet character constitutes an enigma for Hayat; his silence is possibly due to his job as a journalist being politically aware of events around him, but also because language limits the expression of his aspirations and true feelings. He has also a wide knowledge in art and literature and this is perceived through the significant discussions that he has with Hayat.

Ahlem Mostaghanemi reveals that Hayat has an acute feminist consciousness about Khaled's authoritative character and language as early as the narrative opens. As Khaled refuses to reveal his true identity, the narrator remarks: "She suspected that he'd wanted to humiliate her as a way of ensuring that he really possessed her. Perhaps he'd thought that if a man wants to hold on to a woman, he has to keep her under the illusion that he might leave her at any moment" (5), which refers to his manipulative inclination that stems from the patriarchal culture they grew up in. She finds herself led to compromise herself to his projection in order to realize her literary and romantic goals. As the narrator elaborates: "As for her, she'd always thought that a woman should be willing to give up anything to keep the man she loves" (5). Khaled intrigues Hayat's curiosity, which is muted whenever she tries to rid him of his mystery. He asks her to "avoid asking questions when you're with me. That way, you won't force me to lie. Lying starts when we're forced to give an answer. But everything I say to you of my own accord will be the truth" (8), imposing their immersion in the seemingly tranquil world of the unsaid and the unknown, which makes her the least serene as he keeps his truthful identity concealed in order "to experience with her the satisfaction of loyalty born of hunger. He wanted to nurture love amid the mines of the senses" (1), indicating her being entangled by her own senses, and literary construction.

Besides, the narrator describes Khaled through his use of language: "he was a man who embodied the words of Oscar Wilde: 'human beings created language in order to hide their feelings' Whenever he spoke, he was clothed with language, but the silences in between

stripped him naked" (3), relating his decisive wording which ironically hides the turmoil of his feelings to Wilde's statement that language falsifies the truth of feelings. Moreover, the author's portrayal of Hayat's language and attitude as flexible and vague creates an opportunity for Khaled to manipulate her. The narrator illustrates: "She liked vague formulations and statements that sounded promising even when they really weren't: sentences that ended not with a full stop, but with ellipses" (9). Hayat highlights his use of decisive wording: "he was a man of categorical language. His sentences consisted of words that put all doubt to rest, from 'of course', to 'definitely', to 'always', to 'absolutely'" (9), revealing that the linguistic stand that he adopts represents the over-confident stereotype of authoritative masculinity which may conceal a fragile entity.

On the historical level, Mostaghanemi sets her narrative in two interconnected periods and at the centre of a loaded political atmosphere. The narrator contemplates: "Why did his love have to run parallel to the tragedies of the homeland" (124), referring to her conjunction of the national and political with the personal through her dreams and aspirations. She declares:

> Of course (…)
>
> It wasn't a time for love. But doesn't love's greatness lie in its ability to survive even in the times most opposed to it? (126)

The above excerpt highlights the juxtaposition of forbidden love with the threat and horror of the war to account for the fact that both are tolerated for having no rules. Following the first sequel, which was mainly about the colonial period in Algeria, *Chaos of the Senses* is more about the postcolonial period. In fact, as the nation was undergoing a political, economic and cultural shift, the transition to an emancipated and fully-fledged identity was not an easy path. The ideological process led the alienation of Algerian people from their culture, and from each other. Artists, journalists, intellectuals, and civilians found themselves restricted by the silencing efforts of the usurping authoritarian forces. Consequently, many people lost their

hope for a better life after experiencing the traumas of the colonial past as well as the disappointing conflicts of the postcolonial present.

Politically speaking, *Chaos of the Senses* is a gendered and critical response to the political policies that followed the independence in Algeria. As the narrator admits: "we had been orphans" (197), alluding to the common feeling of Algerians after the death of President Houari Boumédienne and the political void he left after his death. Consequently, Mostaghanemi expresses the urgent need and the faith Algerians had for such a nationalist militant, eloquent, and honest president like Mohamed Boudiaf that she amply praised and dedicated this novel to him and to his faithful companion Slimane Amirat. With his National Consultative Council, Boudiaf gathered a great number of politicians and intellectuals to help him to "bring Algeria out of its political and legislative quagmire" (199). It was the first attempt in "a country in which neither intellectuals nor women had ever been asked their opinion" (200).

Remarkably, Mostaghanemi draws parallels between the intellectuals and women in this historical moment, and she appreciates the fact that President Boudiaf was the first leader who honored both of the intellectuals and women by involving them in policy politics and decision making. In addition, the author obviously suggests that a country can never win its full decolonization without involving and according those two classes of people with equal recognition and agency in policy making. Moreover, the narrator adds: "If women, like the peoples of the world, truly desire life for themselves, then Fate is bound to let them have their way even if the one who appears to be controlling their destinies is a high ranking officer or a pretty dictator in the form of a husband" (204), highlighting the equal effect of their will to life, change, and freedom. In doing so, the author exposes the hierarchy of patriarchal power that extends from the political authoritarian rule to the social system of patriarchy. Ahlem

Mostaghanemi asserts that women, doubly oppressed, have to fight both patriarchal attitudes and authoritarian regimes.

It is worth noting that the end of colonialism (1962) in Algeria had initially denoted a new era with the premise of stability and peace. However, the coming postcolonial era is characterized by the ongoing turmoil in politics among the leading elites. As the ideological conflicts cumulated, the resulting schism into the Oriental and Western-oriented cultures gave rise to the armed conflict between the Islamic *Fundamentalists* and the Algerian government. Armed groups waged a guerrilla war or *Jihad* against the government and its supporters, and later expanded to target civilians, intellectuals, artists and journalists. The kidnapping of President Mohamed Boudiaf just after the period of his 166 days of rule brought about an unbalanced period that led to the emergence of the *Black Decade*[49]. The author unveils the fact that political corruption is a major spoke in the wheels of postcolonial progress in Algeria, and that President Boudiaf's plan to investigate and end this corruption disturbed the *ruling pouvoir*. In doing so, she describes the deceit and corruption of the *ruling pouvoir* surrounding President Boudiaf's circle which showed up after his assassination: "The forty thieves who were secretly delighted at the sight of his corpse rubbed their hands with glee over the spoils they were sure to divide among themselves for years to come" (270), indicating that the nation would suffer years from the governmental regime that would loot the resources of the nation, and corruptly seize the country's wealth. Inevitably, this would hold the nation back from economic development and political stability. She mentions that the corrupted pouvoir flaunt publicly their robbed wealth and lavish lifestyle: " [They]succeeded in sparing themselves life's hardships by plundering the country wherever they went and shamelessly flaunting their

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[49]The Black Decade, also known as the Bloody decade and the Algerian Civil War, refers to the 1990s decade when a military conflict rose up between the Algerian system and the *Fundamentalist* rebel groups from December 26th, 1991 to February 8th, 2002 in Algeria.According to Farhat Slimani (2015), the number of deaths was around two hundred thousand Algerian civilians.

spoils " (174), which points out to the boldness and arrogance in showing pride of their theft in a normalized fashion.

One of the key issues that Mostaghanemi emphasizes in *Chaos of the Senses* is the urgent necessity of re-evaluating and facing the traumatic fact of the inefficacy of the Algerian post-colonial strategies to development, namely, the ineffective nationalist revolution; the July 1965 coup of Houari Boumediènne and the rise of Islamic *Fundamentalism* as an alternative ideology for a national identity in Algeria. This confrontation which is carried out through this creative literary work is a contribution to the gendered metanarratives which aim at healing the Algerians' traumas of war and political instability. Consequently, the author purposefully links the turbulent political events with the appearance of Khaled, the mysterious male protagonist who symbolises the nationalistic hopes. The protagonist speculates: "Why is he [Khaled] alongside of politics? Why does he come back according to history's timing? And why is it that, when I relate to him, my joy is constantly on guard against sorrow?" (138), indicating that her joy and stability are constantly threatened by the political condition which radiates its despair, bewilderment, and fractures on her destiny. In doing so, Mostaghanemi performs a political act as her female protagonist, Hayat, embodies the history of the nation and is rewriting it through linking the personal with the historical.

The woman author Mostaghanemi ponders upon the alienated, confused and desperate condition of young Algerians during the period of the 1990s through her characterization of Hayat's younger brother, Nasser. The protagonist elaborates: "As you can see, we're all on a trip. The dead are the only ones with permanent addresses now" (165). By "all", the author alludes to the young Algerian intellectuals, journalists and artists being led to seek voluntary exile away from the life threats surrounding them for their critical voices which expose the politics underlying the *ruling pouvoir* and the *Fundamentalist* opposition. The author implies that Nasser, like many other young Algerians at the time, is a victim of postcolonial politics in

the sense that, by opposing the corrupt system, he becomes involved with its alternative oppositional ideology, which proposes a radical ideology based on Islamic *Fundamentalism,* and he is found to be engaged with *Pan-Arabism* (ideological unity of Arab countries) and its ideological issues concerning Irak, Kuwait, among other countries in the Middle-East.

Significantly, the three male figures in *Chaos of the Senses* are involved in the political arena. While Hayat's husband is busy in suppressing the Islamic *Fundamentalist* opposition, her brother Nasser is continuously travelling for his *Fundamentalist* ideological affinity. Even her secret lover, Khaled, is a journalist who keeps his identity, address and movements secret to avoid being assassinated by one of the opposing sides. Both stories are loaded within a charged political atmosphere as the narrator contends: "Why did his love have to run parallel to the tragedies of the homeland" (124). This unsettled atmosphere developed in Hayat and her mother a constant fear of losing suddenly one of their male cherished relatives in a country torn by inner strife. Hayat states: "All I could think about was Khaled, just as all my mother could think about was Nasser. Now that he was gone (…) my mother had developed a fear of men who go away all of a sudden" (224). The fear haunted the houses and had a doubled effect on women, as the narrator declares:"How could I possibly live outside the realm of terror?" (272), emphasizing the psychological effects of national and civil conflicts. As such, Algerian women endure and express the fear, terror, and hardships of life under political/military unrest through their gendered narratives. Henceforth, Mostaghanemi mirrors the traumatizing and stressful effects of armed conflicts on the family's well-being and psychological health as a testimony of the destructive phallocentric interests. For women, their tradition of storytelling is practised not only to document their personal experiences of resistance as a form of activism, but also politically to recover a muted agency in reflecting on man's world.

Besides, Mostaghanemi portrays the ideological division among Algerian people through the positioning of her major male characters': the loyalists to the *ruling pouvoir*

(Hayat's husband); the opposing *Fundamentalists* (Hayat's brother)*,* and the people in-between: Khaled among the journalists, artists, and intellectuals who critically expose the vices and defects of the polar sides and, by consequence, are terrorized and assassinated for any direct exposition. In this way, the three main male characters in the novel embody these three ideological groups. On the other hand, Mostaghanemi constructs the character of her protagonist through her embodiment of the feminine that symbolizes the subaltern subject who is oppressed by both of the opposed ideologies and whose voice is unheard. In doing so, Hayat is a symbol who represents the nation and its hopes/despair away from any political or ideological affinity. Rather, Hayat is placed as 'the extreme other' to these power figures, and she seeks visibility, recognition, and reconciliation through negotiation with these power figures.

Furthermore, Hayat conveys her pain at witnessing the distrust, fear, and terror that characterizes the socio-political climate: "How had we become strangers to ourselves and each other? We were alienated to the point of being afraid of each other, taking precautions lest others look at us askance, and terrified every time we heard footsteps behind us" (137). The author laments the lost values and principles of the *November proclamation* (people's unity based on independence, freedom, and construction of the Algerian nation), and their replacement with estrangement, hostility, and fragmentation. Being painfully confused with the current condition, Hayat declares: "I couldn't help but wonder whether there was some contagion going around among the men of the country that made them say the same thing, and dream of nothing but leaving" (169), alluding to the unstable and suffocating environment that pushes the intellectuals and artists to seek self-exile away from the disappointing postcolonial politics and the terrors of the *Black Decade* (1990s).

The protagonist, Hayat, reflects on her lifeless marriage with a high-rank general. The narrator does not ascribe for him a specific name as he is constructed to represent the military

rule in postcolonial Algeria. Yet, for the reader of the trilogy, it is obvious that her husband is Si Mostapha, a traitor general of the enemy[50] involved in corruption and robbery. Hayat contends on her naive motive for accepting his marriage offer: "I found something of the authoritative, fatherly nurture I'd been deprived of" (27). It seems clear that her husband had represented the fatherly figure that Hayat missed during her painful years of orphanhood. Moreover, his involvement in the military sphere charmed Hayat's nationalist spirit as she expresses: "His political duties and military rank didn't matter to me because of their prestige but, rather, because they were an extension of the patriotic nostalgia I'd been raised on" (27). Nonetheless, it became apparent that the basic interest of the *ruling pouvoir* in postcolonial Algeria deviated from its nationalistic foundation. Rather, they used these principles as a façade to cover their materialistic and personal interests, i.e. to plunder the nation of its riches; please the imperialistic interests; and even distort Algeria's authentic history of the revolutionary war. Hayat later finds out that the general married her for being the daughter of Tahar Abd ElMawla, an acclaimed nationalistic leader in order to gain esteem and power.

Notably, the narrator refers to Hayat's awareness about her husband's disloyalty when the latter accidently discovers from a neighbor that he usually brings blond-haired women for a short liaison at his house in Sidi Fredj. However, Hayat does not feel angry or jealous at his disloyalty. Rather, she is puzzled at the degree that his greedy interests in military rank and social position have taken control of his life, to the point of choosing a life partner. She explains: "What I couldn't understand was why my husband had married a dark-skinned woman if fair-skinned women were his preference. And why had he taken a second wife if the only thing that satisfied him was the snacks he picked up while he was out" (133), referring to his choice and insistence to marrying her against his true desires. As such, Hayat discusses the

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[50]Generals of the enemy refer to the Algerian generals whom the French authorities formed and appointed to rule Algeria after the emancipation keeping their imperialistic interests.

paradox existing between the public image her husband entertains, and his true self that he conceals and lives privately.

Additionally, the protagonist's loneliness increases as her mother and brother get distant with their worldly preoccupations; her widowed mother with the frequent receptions for her holy *Meccah* (holiest city in Islam) pilgrimages, and her activist brother with his constant travels. Being alienated from participating in her mother's receptions for the phony rituals of extravagant façades, Hayat seeks solace from her younger brother and expresses her discomfort and exhaustion with her marriage. Yet, Nasser insists on her complicity in maintaining her misery by staying with a corrupt military man. He declares: "it was your choice to join this club, so you might as well get used to it" (107). Although Hayat admits that she is partly responsible for following her mother's directions and finding meaning to her marriage through the society's lens, she expresses genuine need for compassion for being victimized by her naïve assumption that her husband's military rank and his involvement in postcolonial politics are a source of nationalist pride. At that moment, she helplessly flings into Nasser's arms, shedding tears and asking him for affection instead of his habitual contempt. She reveals:

> Don't be against me. It's too painful. You're always letting Baba's death come between us, and you try to outdo everybody else in glorifying our martyrs. But Baba would never have wanted things to be this way. I don't want the day to come when we're enemies just because we don't think the same way. (108)

In this passage, Hayat firmly pleads Nasser to not conflate between their family issues and his ideological affinity. Actually, the author's aim in making her protagonist marry with a high rank officer knowing that she would be his second wife seems to be driven by the society's or familial pressure and the protagonist's naivety in grasping military high-rank through paternal and nationalist lens. In doing so, the author is clearly criticizing the materialistic attitudes held by Hayat's relative family/society where one's worth and respect are buttressed according to the degree of belonging to the class of rulers.

III-5-4 Transgression of the Normative Cult of Femininity

Hayat's journey of transgression begins when the narrator employs a reference to Baudelaire's saying to account for the defiance that is a key trait in Hayat's character. She argues: "Everyone worthy of the name human has a yellow adder crouching on his chest that says, 'no' whenever he says, 'yes'" (206). As such, Hayat identifies herself with the transgressive side of the human being who rejects one's idealistic principles and openly follows one's desire. She declares:

> Everyone worthy of the name human has a yellow adder crouching on his chest that says, 'No', whenever he says, 'I want' (…) I realized that this adder's 'no' has seven heads, and that whenever you kill one of them, another one appears, thrusting this or that warning or negative imperative in your face. Nevertheless, I dozed off munching on the apple of forbidden desire while those seven heads looked on. (206)

Indeed, Hayat shows her challenge to the norms and conventions of womanhood. She purposefully breaks the rules and reaches her liberation in followingthe *eros* (instinct of life), as epitomized in her sexual love. Through this tone of confrontation, Hayat's rejection and refusal of the traditional assigned gender role is obvious.

As Hayat's curiosity in deciphering the mystery surrounding Khaled and her romantic involvement with him intensifies, she asks for him on phone to be surprised by the uncommon and direct expression of his erotic desire for her. He admits this sudden change in abstaining from physical relationship when he perceived her as "the most delectable woman I could imagine refusing" (226), and clarifies that he had intentionally denied his desire in order to hide the emotions of guilt in having an affair with a married woman and a well-known author. This is supported by the narrator's initial statement: "He wanted to experience with her the satisfaction of loyalty born of hunger" (1), referring to the aesthetics of abstinence and his desire in leading an ascetic romance. Alarmed from his friend Abdelhak of a possible life threat,

Khaled breaks his silence and urgently confesses his erotic desire for Hayat: "I want to make you mine so that I can do all sorts of forbidden things with you" (226), expressing his willingness to transgress the patriarchal authority which condemns such a desire that Hayat is a married woman. As such, Khaled's abstinence from expressing his desire reveals an anxiety that stems from the fear of castration from the authority of his acquired rules of conduct. In doing so, Khaled transgresses his subservience to the dominant culture and assumes a newly defined position in which one's desire and intellect is embraced and asserted. As they fix a meeting in his apartment the next day, the narrator depicts him as a "sea" in its unpredictable movement. With *Zorba* music (Greek music denoting the philosophy of freedom) in the background, which is symbolic of assuming a joyful mindset in the face of tragedy and distress, Khaled seduces Hayat to adultery through sensual touch. Hayat depicts him as

> A man who was half ink, half sea denuded me of my questions between high and low tide, and drew me towards my destiny.
>
> A man who was half timidity, half seduction inundated me with a feverish torrent of kisses.
>
> Holding me with one arm, he cancelled out my hands and began writing me, pondering me in the midst of my perplexity. (230)

The excerpt depicts Hayat's realization of the mystery surrounding Khaled; a character whom she only knows his projected image, and the other and true side of him is unknown and unpredictable to her. Eventually, she loses control and surrenders to his erotic grasp as he takes the lead in writing their fate with her body. She becomes a territory to be sexually conquered by Khaled who epitomizes the omnipotence of masculinity with respect to the feminine alleged passivity. Moreover, the author contemplates on Khaled's aesthetical approach of having pleasure in the midst of pain:"So is it possible that the sea makes love out of pain?", and examines his statement: "In you I want to escort my friend to his final place" (231), referring to his assassinated friend whose pen persisted in the face of the terrorist threats.

Significantly, the author's contrasting depiction of the act of lovemaking with her husband and with Khaled reveals her attack to the logic behind the hierarchical binaries (reason/emotion, dominant/submissive, denial/desire, death/life), and unequal power marked by the constant threat of sensual chaos. Mostaghanemi explores the issue of female sexuality and eroticism by arguing that though female sexual expression is conditioned to remain framed and unvoiced, the erotic desire stays latent and is boldly sought. She depicts her husband as an automaton who undertakes the act of lovemaking as a hollow and mundane pursuit of chores: "I watched my husband take off his military uniform and put on my body for a few moments before falling fast sleep" (74), which reveals the mechanistic way of their intimate and supposed to be passionate act of lovemaking. The narrator elaborates on her husband's commitment to the radical aspects of masculine and authoritarian interests, which were rather misleading for her naive assumption about his skillful treatment of issues. She contends: "it was just because he was a man with no imagination or, rather, a man who exhausted all his imagination and intelligence somewhere other than in our bed" (75), suggesting that his conception of sex is stuck at the physiological needs. She concludes: "After all, men who were made to occupy a seat of power weren't necessarily made to occupy a bed, while the ones who dazzle us with their clothes on don't necessarily dazzle us with them off" (75), alluding to his military uniform which projects the image of power distinct to others.

On the other hand, the narrator depicts her erotic experience with Khaled as passionate and transcendental. Their indulgence in sex is beyond sexuality, but for the seeking of the essence of the 'other' being through the medium of the body. Following his paradoxical logic that charms Hayat, Khaled invites her to their erotic pursuit. He explains: "trees have no choice but to make love standing up. Come stand with me. In you I want to escort my friend to his final resting place' (231), revealing his desire for a stand-up position in the face of death, and a keen adulation to erotic love against terrorist hatred. Moreover, the narrator conveys Khaled's

poetic gaze to their act of lovemaking after perceiving her shyness at her nakedness through

this epiphanic remark:

> He said, 'This is the first time I've looked off the page at your body. Let me see you at last.'
>
> I tried to seek refuge behind a blanket of words. He said reassuringly, 'Don't hide behind
>
> anything. I'm looking at you in the darkness of the ink and nothing but the lamp of craving is
>
> lighting your body now. So far our love has lived its entire life in the darkness of the senses.'
>
> (230)

Clearly, Khaled has experienced masculine *jouissance*[51] after deriving his pleasure from

Hayat's body and mind, especially after unveiling her erotic desire, which was metaphorically

expressed through a language of a mystic desire, love, truth, and recognition in her previous

novel *Memory of the Flesh*. The act of nakedness reveals not only the openess to the *other* for

connection, but a state of loss from the consistency of reality that leads to the experience of the

sublime[52]. He eventually reports the epiphany of projecting her sensual and erotic side to

herself which has been expressed through her writings, and that is currently unveiled with his

symbolic embodiment.

Similarly, Hayat's act of sexual transgression with Khaled results in her experience of

feminine *jouissance*[53] for the first time. She tends to seek a truer and deeper love as she

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[51] *Jouissance* is a concept developed by the French psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan and used in many ways across his teachings. In his Seminar XX (1972–1973), Lacan argues that masculine jouissance (which he refers to as sexual jouissance) is different from the feminine one. He (1998) contends that, "through the phallic function that man as whole acquires his inscription" (79), implying that the phallic or sexual *jouissance* makes him unable to "attain his sexual partner (…) except inasmuch as his partner is the cause of his desire" (80).

[52] The sublime in philosophy denotes the value of greatness at many levels, and that is beyond calculation.

[53] Lacan (1998) contends in his later teachings that women experience a specifically feminine *jouissance* that is "beyond the phallus" (74). Unlike men, women have access *both* to the phallic, or sexual *jouissance,* and to a supplementary form of *jouissance* by virtue of being not wholly subsumed by the phallic function as men are: "being not-whole, she has a supplementary *jouissance* compared to what the phallic function designates by way of *jouissance* " (73) and is like mystical ecstasy (44). Bataille (1988) explains that eroticism is "that which one usually calls *mystical experience*: the states of ecstasy, of rapture, at least of meditated emotion […] an

portrays: "with every region that he declared occupied territory, and which I declared liberated, I discovered the greatness of the losses I had suffered before him" (231), implying a conjunction of their fantasies which is not only a physical encounter but also an aesthetic and spiritual one, resulting in a transcendent reality of emotions and feelings. With Khaled, she realizes the way his lovemaking helps her to explore a world of flesh excessive pleasures that are beyond the obsessive and turbid aspects. Besides, his erotic sensuality is irresistible for Hayat as she depicts: "Actually, I would have had neither the strength nor the will to resist him. I took pleasure in being overwhelmed by him as he placed his keys in my body's secret locks" (211), referring to her loss of control. She adds: "In pleasure there is a bodily code that renders one person another's slave without his realizing it. This man (…) who had told him how to traverse the secret passageways of desire that no other man's lips had ever probed? " (211), referring to her wonder at his mastery in dealing with her sensuality.

Obviously, Ahlem Mostaghanemi has boldly depicted an erotic act, which is generally considered as a taboo by the general Arab reading public. The protagonist described by Mosteghanemi seems to defy the Islamic religious divine law, Sharia. Yet, as *jouissance* refers to "the pleasure that results from a transgressive act" (Taubman, 41), Hayat hints at a feeling of guilt that follows her adultery when she admits: "This is the first time love has led me to sin" (231), which refers to the guilt that has a 'pleasing' connotation. Eventually, Khaled reveals his truthful identity to Hayat, and confesses that he is a journalist, and that he adopted such a name for his articles from Hayat's first sequel *Memory of the Flesh.* Indeed, Hayat's characterization of Khaled Ben Toubal reflected to a great extent the journalist's physical and psychic aspects, making him infatuated with Hayat. Being a 'good reader', Khaled could not only see Hayat through her writings, but also puzzle her with such an understanding.

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experience laid bare, free of ties, even of an origin, of any confession whatever" (3). Henceforth, feminine jouissance is an experience that cannot be interpreted by the dominant repressive discourse.

Remarkably, Mostaghanemi relates the past with the present through her analogy of Hayat and Jamila Bouhired for the comprehension of her conceptualization of what it means to be a woman in Algeria. She demonstrates how Djamila Bouhired, an anti-colonial female activist, deceived the French colonial soldiers during the Algerian War of Liberation with the technique of *camouflage* (French word denoting strategic disguise), which allowed her to bypass the French Army soldiers' checkpoint. The *Mujahid* (national combatant) and female icon of the Algerian Revolutionary war dressed like a French woman and carried a bag hiding a bomb in it. The narrator observes: "France, which, after having demanded that Algerian women remove their hijabs, discovered that European dress might be used to conceal a freedom fighter" (138). The act of mimicking the French woman to perform a resistant operation is a subversion of the power hierarchy, i.e. it is a reversal of the binary dominant/subordinate through Djamila's embodiment of the dominant position by body clothing. The author links Bouhired's brave operation to her protagonist's; by using the same technique of appearance transformation in the same setting. Hayat bypasses the Islamic *Fundamentalist* checkpoints to reach her lover's apartment. The narrator portrays: "And here I was, forty years later, Djamila Bouhired's legitimate heir, passing the same café disguised in the garb of piety, since women had discovered that this very garb might conceal a lover whose body is set to explore with passion" (138). With the same overwhelming impulse of both female figures, Mostaghanemi carries a silent message; all foreign ideology is rejected and resisted. Moreover, she connects the national to the personal in order to give meaning for Hayat's quest for life and her identity. The author also demonstrates how the Algerian woman with her bravery, intelligence, and rebelliousness resists the hegemony of the authoritarian and ideological systems in order to reach her liberational goal.

As the proverbial phrase says, "All in love and war is fair", the author significantly invests in linking the national to the personal in this narrative. Furthermore, Hayat's intentional

act of *camouflage* when she dresses with an *Abaya* (long black dress for veiling) and a shawl to bypass the *Fundamentalist* manifestation makes her reflect upon her positionality as she describes it: "I found myself living back and forth between two people, one of whom was practiced in seduction, the other in piety (...) In short, I was being occupied in turns by two different women, both of whom were me " (137-8), indicating the embodiment of both chastity and lustfulness at the same time. This willful and strategic positioning implies the subversion that Frantz Fanon discussed in his essay '*Algeria Unveiled'*, this time reversed to a postcolonial Algerian woman who used the veil as *camouflage*. The performance of both Djamila Bouhired and Hayat is reminiscent of Homi Bhabha's concept of mimicry, where the *other* appropriates the skills and manners of the dominant position to the point of producing confusion or ambivalence for the foreigner. It is essentially read as an act of resistance through breaking up the dichotomy of in-group and out-of-group established by the *Fundamentalist* ideology. It is also a parody that disrupts the violent authority of the *Fundamentalists'*. In this way, the psychological and physical spaces are deeply intertwined with the details and atmosphere of the setting.

It is worth noting that the setting of this resistant act in Emir Abdelkader Square is significant. The place was named after Emir Abdelkader Ibn Muhieddine (1808-83), the Algerian spiritual and military leader who led an organized revolution against the French colonial invasion in the mid-19th century, and who established the modern Algerian nation. The narrator describes him as a symbol of national resistance and pride: "This man_ who gave us a reason to be proud of our history by founding an Algerian state that dazzled France itself." (137). However, the author employs irony to account for the fact of the Algerian nation that has delineated from the original conception of its initial foundation. The narrator declares

No wonder, then, that for twenty-five years Emir Abdelkader had been registering his displeasure at among us by standing with his back turned to the Liberation Front Party

headquarters and his face to the sea, a fact that had become the stuff of many a political joke among residents of the capital. (137)

The haphazard placement of his statue obviously demonstrates the present ironic condition. It seems clear that Mostaghanemi emphasizes the tragic workings of fate, which has led to the opposite of Emir Abdelkader's expectations and aims behind the Algerian revolution against the French Imperial rule. The narrator elaborates: "no wonder, then, that for twenty-five years Emir Abdelkader had been registering his displeasure at being among us by standing with his back turned to the Liberation Front Party headquarters and his face to the sea" (137), suggesting the general discontent with the *ruling pouvoir* for their turn from the original principles of the emancipatory revolution and foundation of the Algerian nation.

Notably, Mostaghanemi employs the setting for the triumphant operation of Hayat in the name of love and desire in parallel with Djamila Bouhired's resistant act of revolution in this narrative. She draws the connection between the violence of the French occupation and the *Fundamentalist*'s ideology that are both foreign to the Algerian culture. The latter imported ideology from the Oriental world transformed a good number of Algerian subjects who in their opposition to the corruption of the ruling system became alienated from their origins and fraternal unity. The narrator explains: "Where had we got these expressionless faces, these hostile temperaments and these strange fashions that had never suited us?" (137), alluding to the crushing authoritarian rule of the Algerian postcolonial politics which, in an attempt to unify the multitude of native cultures in Algeria, adopted *political Islam* (politics derived from interpretation of Islam). The latter's radical ideology sanctioned the opposing militant groups during the Civil War of practising punishments and mainly execution against the ruling figures and the apostate society which supports it.

Eventually, Hayat describes her disappointment and bewilderment in the last chapter when she finally discovers that the man she was searching for was not Khaled but his recently

deceased friend, Abdelhak. She attends his funeral wearing a seducing dress and she explains her reason: "It wasn't sadness I was feeling that day, but rather, an overwhelming sense of defiance (…) All I wanted was to defy the killers, brandishing the two accusations that I knew might be levelled against me: being a woman, and being a writer." (288). Hayat, as the name indicates in Arabic, embodies the will to life renewal and transgression. She constantly challenges the authoritarian orthodoxy intaking the risk as a female writer and lover. Her non-conformity to the normative cult of womanhood reflects her rejection and resistance through her writings and identification with her texts rather than the sad reality. In the end, Hayat decides to buy another notebook to continue with her resistant act of writing which represents a space of freedom and identification, a cycle of life. In doing so, the author concludes that this world, which is governed by androcentric and materialistic interests, is a disappointing illusion.

Through this novel, the narrator explains that Hayat's withdrawal from writing for the last two years is due to her feeling of betrayal and remorse for not being able to fulfill her promise in dedicating her first sequel of the trilogy to her father. Although Hayat was on the verge to publish it soon, the news of her father's sudden death while she was abroad had a deep impact on her psyche. The protagonist's distress led her to deny the grim fact of her father's death. Instead of weeping for him at his grave, Hayat wept the grave of the martyred President Mohamed Boudiaf and his savior Suleiman Umeirat. The narrator coveys the moment in which the distressed protagonist laments her dereliction towards her father:

> She had taken it to him on the day of his death, excusing her absence for those many years by telling him that she had been busy writing to him, and for him. She's been lying, of course. The fact was that she's been writing for herself. Otherwise, she would have left the manuscript on his grave and gone her way. (296)

Hayat considers her publication of her previous novel as a betrayal to her father's expectation; as the narrator admits: "never forgave herself" (296). Consequently, she could not raise her pen during the period of her grief which lasted for two years. The narrator conveys her feeling

of guilt and punishment: "Through years of silence, she punished herself for the crime of preferring thousands of readers over one particular reader who would never see what she had written, and who alone had reason to do so" (297). It seems clear that the materialistic interests of the publication of her literary work took control of her decisions.

III-5-5 Healing and Self-Actualization

Eventually, Hayat reaches her self-reconciliation after a moment of self-reflection on the events of her life. Her sudden and almost unknown cause for her decision to leave the notebook on Abdelhak's grave symbolizes her will to abandon her misleading and illusionary romance. She explains:"I was experiencing a kind of lightness, something bordering on happiness that I couldn't find any explanation for. Then I remembered that the reason for it was the notebook I'd left behind, indifferent to the literary gains I might have made by publishing it" (296). This quote points out to the achieved state of serenity that Hayat experiences after letting go of the notebook on Abdelhak's grave, liberating herself from the painful past. In doing so, Hayat betrays Khaled's expectation at personifying the maleprotagonist of her next published novel. As such, she keeps her pride and agency over one's writing in taking control of her decisions, and eventually of her life. She refuses to be confined in her immersion to a world lacking vision that connects her with a larger world. Although disillusionment in strongly present in her life, she is struggling to become as independent as she can.

On another level, Hayat realizes her betrayal to her family by neglecting them while being immersed with her illusionary story. She declares: "I would sit with my mother after having neglected her for so long. I had also been neglecting my brother" (299). Hayat could regain and celebrate a healthy connection with her family, and especially pleasing her mother through keeping her marriage. She adds: "My husband was the beneficiary of my suddenly

renewed interest in him, which rescued a relationship that had been stricken with a tepidity for which he could see no reason, and he worked to win me back with small gestures" (300).This statement indicates the agreeable moment of her return to her actual life. Mostaghanemi highlights the necessity of facing the androcentric authority and overcoming one's own tribulations. She also refers to the therapeutic potentiality of writing to reconstruct what has been broken by reality. As such, she is referring to the positive aspect of writing, but the point seems to strike a tragic note about the fact that women are condemned to continue their struggle in order to assert themselves in a world of enforced projections.The novel has, more generally, a thoroughly defying outlook of the female existence. Her return to her previous life reflects her resistance based on the need to locate herself as part of a given world in order togain visibility and assert her reconstructed identity.

Interestingly, Mostaghanemi's poetic approach to writing about the consequences of the political conflicts after independence is a metaphorical expression of her lived experience, and a revolutionary voice for articulation and identification to a nation still struggling from neo-colonial interests. Her novel, *Chaos of the Senses*, can be deemed to perform a political function because it is a response to the urge of investigating and negotiating the established ideological and social arrangements involving women in Algeria during the last decade of the twentieth century. In doing so, the female protagonist, Hayat, being written and expressed by her own fictive text, becomes a vehicle through which the truth is exposed leading the reader to ponder upon and appreciate the author's creativity. Her novel is about the cycles of time, narrative, memory and nature that are automatic and sequential.

Remarkably, the protagonist's Arabic name, Hayat, which literally indicates life in English, has wider ontological implications. Notably, it alludes to Nietzsche's concept of the

eternal recurrence[54] of nature and, metaphorically, the free pen that eternally challenges and survives the woes of reality. In this sense, and with the same intuitive urge to write, Hayat finds herself driven to buy a new notebook to continue her resistance through writing, which represents a space of freedom and identification. The author relates this urge to the eternal renewal of seasonal life in autumn to symbolize equally her renewal of faith and hope for change. Although the tone is formerly characterized with melancholy for the end of her story, the protagonist gains insight to her inner dilemma and confidence to assert her new reconstructed identity.

This kind of writing following the procession of the seasonal cycle creates reverberations between the end and the beginning, death and life, the past and the future. It draws a connective bridge between the seemingly personal events in our life and the greater national and universal ones. Moreover, Ahlem Mostaghanemi's employment of the autumn season in both the beginning and at the end of her narrative alludes to completing one life cycle and reaching a period of both relinquishment and new beginning leading to a new season that begins with coldness and gloom. This period is also a season to reflect on and embrace the harvest/change made in us, and to get prepared for the coming season. In the last passage of the novel, the protagonist portrays the preparations for the coming winter through a notable juxtaposition of shops displaying winter clothes and stationery:

> Shop windows were displaying warm winter coats for the coming season, while stationers' offered displays of books, notebooks, pencils and pens.
>
> Life was preparing for the end of one season and the beginning of another- preparing to start all over again. (301)

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[54] As Anderson and Zelta define this concept "the idea that all events in the world repeat themselves in the same sequence through an eternal series of cycles"

This excerpt highlights the fact that the protagonist relies upon writing to face the coldness of the winter, referring to the dread of the political unrest. As such, the desire for writing draws Hayat automatically to a notebook for a new aesthetic and creative adventure.Writing for Hayat is liberating, it frees her from restriction, disempowerment and trauma. It is also a transgressive act, Hayat explains: "Of course, not only because writing is the ideal prescription for spending your life isolated from life itself, but because in this country in particular, it's the charge on which you're most likely to lose your life" (298), indicating that writing denotes exposing the vices and defects of the authoritarian rule, as it raises consciousness through creative reflection of the political, economic, and socio-cultural aspects of the Algerian reality.

In conclusion, after Hayat's indulgence in her literary and erotic affair, we get insight about the way it began as strong, intense and passionate liaison, and ended in shallow confusion and disappointment. Yet, Hayat gains a dreamlike sense that she has, despite everything, advanced further in reconstructing her identity. Writing for the protagonist reflects two paradoxical feelings: one of excitement and fear and the other of exhalation where the past and the present mix up to give sense to the actual situation. This novel is about the doubt that characterizes the 90s, the frustration, and a reality that is even stranger than fiction. Mostaghanemi reflects the vague, chaotic, and disturbing era of the 90s and how many people perish in its tumult, and only few ones emerge from such chaos. It also offers a poetic vision of female selfhood unconstrained by familiar or orthodox obligations. The protagonist's reconstructed identity is a compromise between social ties and personal likings.

At the level of language, we used the translated version by Nancy Roberts who did her best to convey Mostaghanemi's intended meaning in her translated adaptation. Yet, Mostaghanemi's literary talent is revealed through her poetic narrative, sensitive expressions as well as her critical consciousness about political and ideological issues. For instance, in the passages where she recounts the dialogue between Hayat and Khaled, the language is fractured

and joined with many dots. The author is aware of the fact that this relationship is difficult to be told through language: it is ineffable. Consequently, Mostaghanemi turns into disjointed language that mirrors the incoherence, missing, and the loss of the 1990s. The novel's tone is erotic and her language has lyrical expressions. Moreover, her Arabic is interlaced with colloquial Algerian expressions and metaphors: an Arabic that is reformulated in order to carry the specific Algerian gendered reality and its rhetorical style. As such, Mostaghanemi addresses both Algerian and Middle Eastern readers to convey to them an authentic and gendered account about the Algerian history and culture. She is creatively claiming liberation as a vital necessity against patriarchy and the authoritarian rule. Mostaghanemi deals with political issues in order to create a new female language and consciousness. Eventually, the female protagonist triumphs by not being destroyed by the illusion and trickery of Khaled. She overcomes her own disillusionment and becomes stronger.

In sum, we note that Ahlem Mostaghanemi's novel reflects the fact that the Algerian history is painful. The author uses her special literary discourse to unveil that part of history, and insists on people to face it. In her narrative, she transgresses gender, social and sexual taboos and adopts the erotic stand to reflect life and its relation to death. As such, the desire that is a characteristic of her literary style is resonant to the Bataillean concept of eroticism "Desire in eroticism is the desire that triumphs over the taboo. It presupposes man in conflict with himself" (256), referring to the author's craving to write about the forbidden facts. Moreover, her confrontation with death and fear through her transgressive acts of writing and her erotic affair with Khaled also reflect Bataille's principle that "Eroticism, unlike simple sexual activity, is a psychological quest (...) eroticism is assenting to life even in death" (11). Mosteghanmi uses the erotic to empower her female protagonist by challenging both the patriarchal and political authority in text and context.

Notably, the female protagonist's memories of Algerian history are a means used by Ahlem Mostaghanemi willingly to cure the people's trauma that occurred during the 1990s. Mostaghanemi can touch her suffering and Algeria's only when her female protagonist, Hayat, fuses with her fictional writing. She represents her female protagonist as her own *alter ego* in order to resist her traditional projection, as well as the terror resulting in the traumas of colonialism, postcolonial struggles, and patriarchal authority. Henceforth, effective liberation and sustainable development has to undermine the patriarchal domination, heal colonial and postcolonial traumas, and deconstruct the norms and conventions of writing and representations.

As a Muslim woman, I do think that, nowadays, most women keep tightly their dignity within the confines of traditional culture though they want to be granted their rights and freedom to behave as free women according to their needs and interests. Indeed, the weight of tradition overwhelms Algerian women that they seek their self-fulfillment within the confines of Islamic religious framework to some extent. Each one expresses her own identity being unique and different from the other.

III-6 Journey to Self-Actualization and Reconciliation in Ahdaf Soueif's *In the Eye of the Sun*

Particular issues are revisited in this novel according to the author's fashion. This section shall explore the journey to the fulfillment and self-actualization of the female protagonist in Ahdaf Soueif's novel, *In the Eye of the Sun* 1992. Starting with a detailed synopsis of the novel, which shall introduce the reader to the general plot, we shall divide our analysis following our tripartite structure of women self-actualization.

III-6-1 Synopsis of the Novel *In the Eye of the Sun*

The epic novel *In the Eye of the Sun* is a dense narrative about the female protagonist's journey to self-fulfillment and self-actualization in a rich historical, political, and cultural background. Composed of ten chapters in addition to an epilogue, the novel provides a vivid and detailed narrative that engages the reader. Adopting the cinematic technique of writing in scenes, the narrative uses flashbacks and flash forwards in a non-linear time structure as it opens in 1979 and goes back to 1967, and often provides information about future events. Moreover, the story is narrated through the third-person narrator, which is largely limited to the protagonist, but also minimally subjective in conveying perspectives of the major characters through epistolary letters and diaries.

The story begins with the female protagonist's revealment of her concerns about her uncle's health and her involvement in a mission of raising the awareness of Egyptian rural women about the benefits of birth control for their personal health and financial expenses. It then shifts to 1967 when the female protagonist, Asya, studies for her General Certificate of Secondary education, and reveals for the reader the familial, cultural and historical atmosphere that has shaped her character and consciousness about gender norms as well as the national and global politics. At University, Asya becomes close friends with Chrissie, a young girl who

epitomizes Asya's *alter ego*. She also meets with a young man, Saif Madi, who represents the conceptualisation of the ideal masculinity that she has constructed through her readings and the societal expectations, and falls deeply in love with him. Saif Madi asks Asya for marriage, but her parents refuse the idea of engagement, and insist on Asya to graduate and prioritise her studies. Yet, Asya transgresses their decision and continues to date Saif secretly. Although the loving couple experiences physical intimacy, Saif is against engagement in any pre-marital sex due to the socio-cultural prohibition and the failure of his previous romantic experiences. On the other hand, Asya discovers that Saif suffers from delusional beliefs to buttress his ego, and tries to make her adopt those beliefs that reflect the androcentric idea of holding prestige and power. Yet, Asya does not consider seriously confronting Saif about this issue, as her love for him and his charming personality are overwhelming. Soon, Asya's sexual repression grows dangerously and she expresses frankly her sexual desire to Saif who rejects the idea altogether.

The repercussions of Asya's sexual repression are revealed in her solo trip to Italy for a scholarship of summer studies. While Asya accepts the invitation of her classmate to go to a yacht excursion, she discovers the unrestrained exploration of sex that her mates are engaged in, and gets curious in exploring their world through her relationship with an Italian man on the condition that she stays virgin for her commitment to Saif. Her exploration of the carnal pleasures radically changes her attitude towards the conceptualisation of love and sex as closely related. After this diasporic experience, Asya returns to her home country, receives her license degree and gets engaged to Saif who continues to impose his perception of ideal femininity as asexual, docile and passive on Asya. His firm stance on repressing Asya's sexual desire and thoughts while he engages with her in foreplay deeply frustrate Asya, and she realises during the first night of their marriage that she could not tolerate penetration.

As a consequence, Asya's marriage gets more strained with their estrangement and Saif's retreat and refusal to resolve their conjugal problem. She is perplexed by Saif's disregard

and his silencing attempts to make Asya pretend that everything is going allright. She refuses to conform to his projection of the docile wife who suppresses her consciousness about their deteriorated marriage, and tells her mother that she would not play that exhausting role of denying the reality of a declining marriage. The couple's estrangement increases with their separating displacement: Asya travels to North England for her Ph.D. scholarship, and Saif goes to Damascus and Beirut for a well-paid-off job in computer engineering. The effect of the foreign setting adds to Asya's feelings of loss and homesickness, which negatively affect the well-being of her study research. Knowing that Asya is experiencing fears, loneliness and insecurity in North England, Saif manages to resign from his job and joins her. Yet, their reunification does not lead to the physical intimacy that Asya craves for.

The next stage takes place when Asya is fully convinced that Saif's disregard to their conjugal issue will not change. She stops her resistance to invoke his jealousy and provoke his anger. Instead, Asya starts to gradually reappropriate her violated subjectivity in transgressing her expected attitudes and actions: first by showing Saif that she does not make any drama about their conjugal problem, and second by voicing her thoughts confidently. In so doing, Asya breaks intentionally Saif's expectations and projections of her ideal actions and attitudes. This transformative moment leads Asya to reflect upon the condition of her marriage, and to reject being condemned to her role-play as the dutiful and happy wife.

As Asya attempts to overcome her emotional attachment to Saif as well as their physical detachment in living apart, she meets with Gerald Stone, a Western man who is interested in Oriental cultures, and the character who takes the storyline to the next level. Gerald Stone shows his erotic interest to Asya, and uses her vulnerability to buttress his sense of sexual Imperialism. As to Asya, she benefits from Gerald's obsession with Eastern cultures and women to reclaim her sexuality. Asya's feelings of joy after her transgression are followed with feelings of guilt and sadness that she has committed against the trust of her husband who

supports her morally and financially for her research studies in North England. Yet, Gerald's insistence on Asya to tell her husband about their relationship, and his attempts at manipulating her actions and thoughts according to the Orientalist stereotypes soon lead to Asya's disenchantment with him.

Eventually, Saif Madi learns about Asya's living with a foreign man at his cottage, and he drops in almmost unexpectedly to seek an explanation from her. Asya confesses that, indeed, she is sleeping with him and watches his reaction as he collapses and gets furious with her. Although Asya initially wanted to study Saif's reaction at the news of her adultery, she decides to stay with him and endure his anger and violence to atone for her feeling of guilt. After this turbulent period, Asya leaves Saif with his promiscuous lifestyle and his refusal to go back to his job. Although Asya faces difficulties in her Ph.D. research, the support of her mother makes her advance, and she could submit her Ph.D. thesis. Meanwhile, she travels with Gerald Stone to New York for the New Year's Eve, and could confidently voice her irritation at Gerald's manipulation of making her fit into his Orientalist model of femininity. Soon after her break up with Gerald, Asya is depicted in her final scene with Saif where she expresses her desire in keeping the friendship of Saif despite the necessity of their divorce. While Saif rejects the idea of keeping their friendship, Asya considers that her return to him means denying her selfhood altogether.

In the final scene, Ahdaf Soueif depicts Asya in 1979 in Cairo while she is teaching English at the University of Cairo, and a number of her students reveal the spread of Islamic *Fundamentalist* ideas among the youth. Asya becomes alienated from this hostile atmosphere to Western language and culture, and finds meaning through her involvement in the *civilizing mission* to educate rural women about the benefits of birthcontrol to their health and overall financial condition. Ultimately, Soueif portrays Asya's self-actualization through her discussion with her friend, Chrissie, about any future romantic relationship. Asya expresses

confidently her view that if ever she gets engaged with a man, he would accept her as she is and would not manipulate her to conform to any projection of femininity. Asya could reach the serenity she has aspired for through her admiration of a newly unearthed female idol that some local kids led her to see in an archeological site. The sight of that female idol, which is portrayed as having complete possession of herself as revealed to the world, symbolizes Asya's identification with her Pharaonic female ancestors and her transcendence of her projections to a complete possession of her self that is revealed confidently and serenely to the world.

On the whole, the novel *In the Eye of the Sun* is concerned with Asya's quest for a viable and acceptable mode of owning and expressing her selfhood through her sexuality: first by defining the boundaries for her feelings; and second by finding a relevant socio-cultural construct which would permit her to live what she feels openly and to make an appropriate, vital and affirming connection between her projections and self-perceptions. Ahdaf Soueif examines the ways in which the local and global society distorts the career-oriented Egyptian woman's subjectivity, and her resistance to transcend her ascribed projections to a complete possession of her selfhood.

III-6-2 Controversial Women Issues

The novel, *In the Eye of the Sun,* follows the coming-of-age of Asya al-Ulama to her self-fulfillment and actualization. It opens with Asya's letter to her friend Chrissie informing her about her final return from London to Cairo after spending five years in North England for her Ph.D. research. The reader understands the family's concern about the degrading health of her uncle, Hamid Mursi, with his lungs pulmonary metastasis. Moreover, the reader also learns that Asya is charged with the mission of introducing family planning to peasant wives in the rural suburbs of Cairo, suggesting her efforts in educating rural women about their sexual health and how they can prevent unwanted pregnancies. In figuring out appropriate ways to

deliver her message to this class of women who are illiterate and poor, Asya finds meaning in undertaking a practical lifework. The novel, later, shifts to 1967, where the atmosphere is loaded with political concerns of the state and its foreign policy. Asya studies for her General Certificate of Secondary education, and her mother Lateefa Mursi, provides her with special care to excel in her studies.

As the novel unfolds, Ahdaf Soueif highlights Asya's political consciousness through her debates with either her friends or family members. Her story is associated with important events in the history of Egypt's politics and foreign policy in the period (1967 - 1980). Ahdaf Soueif documents the political atmosphere and the shift in regime from President Gamal Abdel Nasser (1954- 28 Sep1970) to President Anwar Sadat (15 Oct 1971-1981). The reader learns about Egypt's defeat in the Six Days War of 1967, President Gamal abd Nasser's sudden death, and the decline of his ideological and economic policies which are directly replaced by President Anwar Sadat's. The later initiated the *Infitah*[55](Arabic word, denoting the opening) or the Open Door economic policy, established multi-party system, adopted peace with Israel and has become an ally to the USA.

Admittedly, the setting's geography, culture, society and customs recreate life in this narrative. Soueif's accute descriptive style is a marker of her fiction in which she deals with women concerns. Our selected novel for analysis explores the fluid intersection between gender, class, nationality, politics, immigration, and Imperialism, among others. Thus, offering an understanding of the *median* space and hybrid identities. The protagonist's self-actualization is achieved through a process of three stages; enculturation of the societal and cultural programs, alienation and transgression, reconciliation and self-actualization.

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[55] A financial policy to attract private foreign investors by establishing industrial free zones and giving investors liberal terms for the repatriation of their profits and protection against nationalization and expropriation.

III-6-3 Enculturation of the Conventional Code of Gender Conduct

The dynamics of space play a central role in the understanding of the female protagonist's acquired identity. As the novel unfolds, we get insight into the environmental background that has shaped the female protagonist's acquired mindset. Significantly, the social position of Asya's parents who are both reputed as highly academics and intellectuals has much contributed to the fashioning of her path. Being the eldest child, Asya played a good role in being the dutiful daughter through her parents' mimesis of their path. Moreover, by informing the reader of her father's exercising a number of respected offices counting the dean of the Faculty of Arts, an ex-Egyptian Minister of Culture, and a respected public figure, the narrator implies that this fatherly character is a figure of authority and order. On the other hand, Asya's mother, Lateefa Mursi, is a professor of English at Cairo University, an influential personality, and a devotional mother who relatively accepts her gender role. Asya's Western-oriented bringing-up which allows for her insider/outsider status as well as her parents' support to women self-fulfillment and career advancement, is above all other considerations such as marriage or tradition. So, the female protagonist grew up in the midst of throbbing cosmopolitan and secular metropolis that was formed by Anglophone colonial culture along with retaining the sensitivities and the complex linguistic fabric of being Egyptian.

Furthermore, the protagonist's pursuit of an academic career that is similar to her well-respected parents leads her later to realize that she is continuously visible under their formidable shadow. This strong effect is revealed in a discussion between Asya and her younger sister Deena, when Asya expresses her annoyance at the society's attitude towards her: "it's also this business of being our parents' daughter all the times" (477), and she continues: "It's awful (…) I'll never be able to do anything on my account. Every single thing I do will always be seen in reference to them" (477), referring to the association of her career to that of her mother; a professor of English at Cairo University. Hence, her mother serves as

a mentor for her education choice and a model for her future career. Additionally, the narrator emphasizes the strong familial ties between Asya and the Mursis, a respected middle-class family, as a cultural marker of the Egyptian collectivist society. Worth noting is the fact that Al-Ulamas family does not get any attention by the author in the narrative as the Mursi's, giving the agency of influence to the maternal ties.

Worth noting is the reason behind the protagonist's conscious selection of her lifetime friend Chrissie, and also of her husband Saif Madi at the university. The narrator describes Chrissie's appeal to Asya as she appears to be "vivid, confident, almost exuberant" (75), which implies that the traits that attract Asya reflect a projection of her aspirations to self-confidence. Additionally, the narrator informs us about their complementary friendship: "Asya is clever in class. Chrissie is smart outside it. Asya interprets Auden to Chrissie. Chrissie explains the world to Asya." (78), referring to Asya's idealistic contrasted to Chrissie's realistic view of life. As for Saif Madi, Asya describes what attracted her to him: " He speaks terrific English and I absolutely know he's read just about everything (…) he wears a tweed jacket and Hush puppies and glasses and smokes a pipe" (98). Apparently, Asya's attraction to Saif is due to his consistence to the classical stereotype of the perfect man that she has constructed from the culture of her parents and of the British books she has read. Besides, the narrator informs the reader about Asya's feeling of intellectual impotence in front of Saif: "she doesn't feel clever or quick when he's around" (158), revealing his larger knowledge which has entrapped her, and his image which assembled "the confidence. The friendly arrogance. The charm. The mischief"(243) that seduces her. However, Saif's brilliance relatively subsides when Asya learns of his delusional beliefs and his attempts at reinforcing the stereotype of being a lady and a 'princess' as he calls her. Remarkably, Saif's delusion is covered up by Asya's love for him, as he points out in one of his diaries that she is "careful with people's feelings and beliefs,

and was forgiving, especially to me" (153), indicating that Saif is aware about her mindfulness at his flaws.

The author, Ahdaf Soueif, offers the reader with a lens to see the misogynist practices and attitudes of the Egyptian patriarchal society through Asya's critical perception. In an incident that happened to her best friend, Chrissie, the narrator portrays how Chrissie's brother, Taha, who happens to see Chrissie's inconsiderate act of walking in the street with a male classmate, and finds himself urged to inform their father who, in return, represents the patriarchal authority and head of the house. Despite the mother's pleas for Taha and her explanation that it was Bassam, one of her classmate, he insists and asserts that "It's a matter of reputation; the whole family's reputation. And that's why my father has to know about it" (114). In doing so, Taha performs the role of the dutiful informer of his sister's act to their father. The society's condemnation of opposite-sex friendship is justified by the patriarchal conception of protecting the family's reputation and honour as well as the chaste behaviour of their women. Women are perceived as a potential threat to the family's honour, weaker beings and sinners who can bring shame even by suspicion. Worth noting also is how Chrissie's mother, Muneera a-Tarabulsi, stands beside her daughter in order to protect her from the father's fury and violence, beating her and swearing to forbid her from continuing her studies at the University. This incident reveals both to Asya and the reader the severity of the violent, even unintentional, socio-cultural code of gender conduct.

Equally important, Ahdaf Soueif's concern about the authority of patriarchy is demonstrated through her representation of Asya's father, Mukhtar al-Ulama, as a symbolic image of the masculine domination. Even though he occupies an elite position of a cultivated gentleman, he still holds the traditional attitudes towards women. Asya describes his firmness to her friend Chrissie:

> You can discuss things, sure, but you can't change anything. Honestly, Chrissie. He knows
> where he stands in the beginning and he doesn't move. Honestly. Not one little centimeter. It's
> bad enough when you're discussing abstract things, theoretical stuff or politics or something,
> but when it comes to something real it's dreadful. He listens and talks but his position is fixed
> from the start and that's that. (144)

This passage highlights Asya's agitation with her father's firm rejection of Saif's marriage proposal to her until she graduates from the University. Although Asya reports her father's openness to communication and discussion, she complains about his rigidity and enforcing adherence and adoption of his own order and rule.

Speaking about the development of Asya and Saif's relationship, it goes through five stages: an intense interest and desire, a romantic courtship, an engagement with a detachment, and finally a failed marriage that ends with bitter estrangement and betrayal. The growing conflict of the protagonist starts when Asya's parents delay Saif's engagement proposal until she graduates. By repressing her desire to marrying Saif, Asya insists on continuing to date Saif secretely. In doing so, she transgresses not only the social conventions, but also her parents' decision and trust as she takes the agency over her destiny. Nevertheless, her female sexuality which is awakened by the physical intimacy they started experiencing is continuously muted by Saif's abstaining to engage in premarital sex, Asya's sexual repression grows dangerously. Her first knowledge about sex is through clandestine pornographic magazines, which she analyses curiously.

III-6-4 Transgression of Gender Norms and Expectations

Asya's first and secret trip with Saif to Beirut marks the first instance of her agency in expressing her own desire. This is revealed through her plotting to stay with Saif in Beirut without the knowledge of her parents as she was preparing for the summer course at University College. This transgression of both her parents' and Saif's expectations of the feminine virtues

of silence, obedience, and chastity can be read as a sign of feminist assertion. Remarkably, the author's choice of the setting which is Beirut is insightful; the city is regarded as the Paris of the Middle East because of its vibrant cultural and intellectual life as well as its liberalism. Moving with Saif into an apartment that he has rented from the contessa lady, Asya is excited at privately having some space with Saif away from the cautions they usually take while meeting in Cairo. Asya describes her delight in her transgression of living with her boyfriend, Saif. She asserts: "It is great to be sinful. Sinful in Beirut!" (131). This highlights Asya's violation of parental obedience and the conventional sexual chastity when Asya expresses her desire to undergo premarital coitus with Saif who argues that "it wouldn't be a good idea" (139). Yet, Asya seems unconvinced of his retardation and retraction of their erotic desire.

The repercussions of Asya's conflict with her sexuality in a socially restricted environment are revealed in her solo trip to Italy for a scholarship. When Asya deliberately accepts the invitation of her foreign mates to go for a yacht excursion, she feels out of place in a community with unrestrained sexual exploration and enjoyment among both adults and adolescents. However, the narrator contends that Asya was "excited by the thought that behind the closed door of the cabin Bobba was doing it with the old man- and doing it without love or talk of love (...) She had been fascinated by the casual way Carlo and Eva took their turn in the cabin" (167), highlighting her realization of the absence of any restrictions or value systems. This realization coupled with her being alone and out of her country encourages Asya to enjoy the freedom of thought and action away from the moral frames of her family and society. The narrator explains her joy: "how wonderful to think her own thoughts- not to have her mother's or her father's or Saif's superimposed over her own" (174). Soon, these thoughts become actions when Asya revolts against her acquired values and agrees to become Umberto's girlfriend in Italy on the condition that she stays virgin for her commitment to Saif. With Umberto, Asya engages in the liberated sexual lifestyle and the desire for carnal pleasures that

he introduces her to. Surprisingly, Asya attends parties, takes drugs and "realises that all her life she had a headache and her mind had been pressed and cramped and confined in a tiny place" (174). She even surprises herself by desiring a foreign man and nearly losing her virginity, enjoying his erotic touch and the pleasures of the flesh. This experience of compartmentalization has helped her not only to accept her sexuality, but also to separate her emotional side from her physical one. The author records the sexually Italian lifestyle through Asya's travel.

Asya became more at ease with expressing her sexuality and less afraid of Saif's judgments who is later unpleasantly surprised by the assertion of her libido. Asya expresses confidently her desire to undergo premarital sex when they got the chance to stay alone in Beirut and in London, which broke down Saif's sexual sensibilities. In fact, it is a taboo for a woman to seek out and make sexual advances in Arab societies, which opposes the ascribed role as passive recipients of sexual desire. In this instance, Ahdaf Soueif highlights the limiting attitudes surrounding female desire and the positionalities that are available for women's ways of speaking about it. While Saif's discomfort stems from his acquired assumption of females as passive bodies, Asya's frustration has to do with Saif's upholding and perpetuation of the restraining normative conventions. Her agitation with Saif's restraint accentuates when she expects that he would confidently make it after their engagement. However, his new commitment to her family occupies all his time in order to win their consent. In doing so, Saif enhances the dominance of the socio-cultural conventions and gender expectations. Moreover, he perpetuates the phallic superiority in satisfying his sexual fantasies through Asya's body in foreplay while she is expected to act according to the common projection of the asexual woman who has to wait till the marriage ceremony allows. Significantly, this situation reminds the protagonist of a story he once told her about the Greek marble statue that he and his friends took to a drunk friend's bed. The narrator describes:

He had laughed as he described Peter, hung-over, next morning, refusing to let her go: 'He just kept hold of her, stroking her face and saying sadly over and over, "She's so perfect."' Asya can see the marble lady lying in the disordered bed. Her eyes are open but sightless. Her sharp stone nipples point up at the ceiling. Her arms are cut off above the elbow. Over her, the man laments. (162)

Asya's sudden remembrance of the story can be understood as a conscious association of her projection to a desired statue-like woman whose agency over her sexual and existential self is violated in an attempt at the idealisation of a 'so perfect' man-made woman. This allusional reference to the myth of *Pygmalion and Galatea* implies that Saif acts as a Pygmalion who creates or sculpts Asya as an aesthetic and erotic model who is controllable and shapeable. The statue's sightless eyes and cut arms symbolise the castration of her intellect and will while she is erotically stimulated as her nipples are 'point up'.

Interestingly, Asya's painful sexual repression soon leads to her experience of *vaginismus*[56] (involuntary closure of vaginal walls); the unconscious petrification of her body towards her sexually restrictive husband, Saif. During their intercourse the first night after marriage, Asya experiences a terrible pain and could not tolerate penetration. Saif describes her physical rigidness, which was like hitting a wall: "I felt her tense and stiffen until she was lying under me like a statue" (258). Although Asya has long craved for that moment, her body does not respond to him or to her desire. She becomes helpless to the command of her unconscious mind, which developed an involuntary anti-penetration complex as a protective response due to Saif's pressure at repressing her libido. As such, Asya does not only fulfill *Pygmalion*'s wish but experiences a dissociation of her body from her emotional commitment. Even for Saif who realizes Asya's incapability to tolerate intercourse, he is more surprised with

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[56]Vaginismus is defined by Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders as a recurrent or persistent involuntary spasm of the musculature of the oputer third of the vagina, which interferes with coitus and causes distress and interpersonal difficulty.

his condition of dissociation of the physical from the emotional being due to stressful situation that refutes his sexual expectations. He depicts: "I was surprised that my hard-on was still there. It was, but it was no longer part of me; it had become like some instrument I could decide whether or not to use." (258). Clearly, both characters display an instance of reciprocal mild dissociative disorder that would lead to the decline of their marriage.

Asya's conflicted marriage gets more strained with Saif's sexual retreat from her. After numerous failed attempts at penetration, he tells her: "OK, princess'(...) let's just leave it. I love you well enough to live with you like a sister" (302). In fact, Saif's statement does not soothe Asya's dilemma at her incapability to tolerate a full sexual intercourse, she still longs for the lost passion and tells him: "I want us to be in love like we used to be" (302). Moreover, her obvious discontent and unhappiness with Saif draw the attention of her family and friends. Yet, she could not communicate to them her conjugal problem to avoid its potential association to the stereotypical image of male impotence. The narrator reports Asya's thoughts: "they'd probably, she thinks, start talking about manhood and conjugal duties and that would be awful. She shudders. Duties. That's not it; that's not it at all" (303). Eventually, Asya frustration bursts out by telling her mother that she has been aware of her compromise to her father and that she is not going to do the same in surrendering to the ascribed docile, subordinate role of wifedom and decides to take the agency over her destiny. She declares:

> I remember hearing you argue once when I was seven and I thought then he was being beastly and I thought, why doesn't she walk out and slam the door? And later I saw you crying in the kitchen while he sat around inside thinking everything was just fine! And that's how it's always been, and I'm not going to let it be like that for me. I'm not. (299)

Obviously, this passage points out to the peak of Asya's alienation stage expressed through her firm rejection to conform to the image that both Saif and the society enhances; that of the docile wife who suppresses her consciousness and pretends that everything is going alright. She adds in a self-reflective moment: "how they pretend to the world -that is necessary- but how they

pretend to each other. This is the worst bit. He is living this lie and forcing her to live it too"
(444), referring to the exhausting role of pretending a role and a state that is contrary to the
reality of their marriage.

As far as Asya's transgressive acts are concerned, her first conscious challenge to her
husband and the patriarchal authority to reclaim her self happens just before her grandfather's
death when Saif asked her to go back home and she did not want to, so he left alone and she
moved to stay temporarily at a friend's house. She expresses her frustration at Saif's negligence
and uncare who "didn't care whether we made up or not" (299). She adds: "I was just supposed
to just shut up and go! I didn't even want to be with him" (298), referring to his unwillingness
to discuss her favourite author George Eliot. When Chrissie reminds her that they have always
got on so well, Asya replies: "Yes, we do. As long as I behave the way he wants me to behave"
(299), suggesting that he forces her indirectly to behave according to his own conceptualization
of wifedom. She continues expressing her emotional frustration and blames her mother for
what is happening to her marriage, she argues: "When I was desperately in love with him and
terribly wanted to marry him it was, 'Oh, it can't be that bad. What's wrong with waiting till
you graduate?' and now I'm angry it's, 'Oh, it can't be that bad. Why don't you trot off home
like a good girl" (299). Moreover, in a revealing passage on Asya's awareness about her
mother's compromise to her father in order to keep peace and stability of their family, Asya
faces her mother about it:

> I remember hearing you argue once when I was seven and I thought then he was being beastly
> and I thought, why doesn't she walk out and slam the door? And later I saw you crying in the
> kitchen while he sat around inside thinking everything was just fine! and that's how it's always
> been, and I'm not going to let it be like that for me. I'm not. (299)

This passage points out to Asya's refusal to compromising herself at the expense of her
contentment and serenity. She adds: "We were supposed to believe you had this wonderfully
happy marriage, but it was all at your expense" (299). Asya's early awareness about her

mother's complicit silence and hiding her distress had a deep impact on Asya's development of an uncompromising character that refuses the fatalism of the ordered life of her parents.

The next stage in Asya's relationship with her husband develops with the couple's estrangement as Asya and Saif live apart while pursuing their careers; the former travels to North England for her Ph.D. scholarship and the latter to Damascus and Beirut for a well-paid-off job. The rising career of Saif in computer engineering allows him to afford a wealthy lifestyle, and he spoils Asya with precious gifts. Even with their frequent meetings during holidays in Beirut, Paris, Italy, and London, the couple's estrangement is getting incurable. From the outset, Asya's uneasy stay for her Ph.D. studies in North England brings forth feelings of homesickness and nostalgia for her life in Egypt. The strong sense of loss and sadness that is conveyed about Asya's displacement extends to her studies as she struggles in formulating her thesis in a highly competing intellectual environment.

It seems clear that the portrayal of the effect of the setting on Asya implies her inability to be adapted psychologically and educationally to the demands of her new situation. She is consumed by the thoughts of her husband and studies; this is illustrated with her consciousness about the circumstances that are derailing her relationship with her husband and the advancement of her studies. The narrator expresses her thoughts on her life choices: "She cannot claim coercion. No one forced her to do anything. She chose" (353), referring to the man she married and the specialty she chose to pursue for her Ph.D., which is literary stylistics. Trying to improve her declining marriage, the narrator conveys Asya's intention to conform to Saif's ideal projection of her: "The only thing to be done now is to adapt, to be the person he wants her to be; the person he probably believes she is -apart from the odd aberration. And if she does that, and gives him what he wants, maybe he'll love her again" (358), indicating both her awareness of her responsibility for her conflicted marriage and willingness to fix it. She expresses her fears and insecurity to Saif who manages to resign from his job and join Asya in

North England for a Ph.D. too with the money he earned. Soon, Asya's feelings of loss and homesickness diminish with Saif's company and her sense of stability is restored.

Contrary to Asya's expectations, her reunification with her husband does not lead to the physical intimacy that she craves for. The narrator informs the reader about Saif's perception of his wife: "She is his wife, his friend and his companion. But he does not want her" (392). Additionally, Saif's unwillingness to fix his marital relationship is reported: "She wants him to make her want him; make her want him like she used to. But he won't. He will have nothing to do with it at all" (393). Despite Asya's attempts to evoke her husband's jealousy in affectionately dancing with his male friends, she gets baffled with his carelessness and emotional detachment. The narrator recounts his changing attitude towards Asya: "But there was a time when he would have minded. A time when even her just wearing a low-cut dress was guaranteed to make him miserable and beastly" (407), referring to Asya's further bewilderment with his growing split between his emotions and his perception of Asya. The narrator reflects on Saif's perceiving his wife through the admiring gaze of others: "He only sees her when he sees other people seeing her-not for himself- not anymore-" (416), expressing his further emotional detachment from her. Surprisingly, while dancing with her husband's friend, Mario, Asya discovers that she has an erotic attraction to him and ponders upon her preconceived beliefs on female sexuality: "They tell you- all your life they tell you- that a woman's sexuality is responsive, a woman's sexuality is tied up with her emotions", referring to her responsive sensuality to the physical touch of an emotionally distant man. The narrator affirms: "the way he holds her is perfect (…) her body yearns to draw closer to him" (390). This conscious realization of her 'other' side brings forth feelings of acceptance rather than fear.

Notably, the author depicts the protagonist's admiration of a Persian girl whom she met in North England for her over-confidence. She likes her distinct look in cutting her hair short,

the narrator portrays: "not just for looking like this, but for looking like this by doing what she wants ; by knowing what she wants and not being afraid to do it, and she puzzles over what her family back in Iran must think she's doing now. They can't know she is living with a man" (380), suggesting her transgression of the norms in having pre-marital relationship with a Western man. Asya's admiration of Mina's character clearly reveals her desire to have the courage to conduct her life free from the expectations of androcentric interests and her society's norms. She expresses: "How wonderful to be Mina, to be so certain of what you're doing, so sure of yourself, to know what you want and feel what you feel" (390). Additionally, the author significantly uses an insightful dialogue between Mina and Asya on the latter's specialty choice for Ph.D. research:

> Asya : "Oh so for a decision to count in your book it has to be completely disruptive or whatever one has been doing up to then'
>
> Mina : 'it's interesting that you use 'disruptive'. You see, you place such a high value on order that you unconsciously only take decisions which allow your life to continue along a particular path-"
>
> Asya : 'You are making a whole grans theory out of nothing. Most people's lives do go along a particular path, especially if they happen to start off doing what they want anyway,'
>
> Mina : 'But you don't like the work you're doing'
>
> Asya : 'No, but I'd already taken to do it, and-'
>
> Mina : 'undertaken', you see, it's all duty-'
>
> Asya : ' But i had chosen it. Nobody had forced it on me-'
>
> Mina : 'You don't have to live with your choices for ever.' (402)

This passage indicates Mina's triggering questions that attempt to awaken Asya from the illusion she is living in; assuming she had made a free choice when everything about her life has been already determined by her positionality and contextual conditioning. Asya's dramatization of her choice and hanging onto it is reflected in her relectance to admit her

discontent with the specialty she has chosen. This dialogue demonstrates the way Mina systematically countered Asya's arguments and led to Asya's loss of absolute certainty.

Furthermore, the use of the setting by the author is significant at this stage. The couple is positioned on the shore of North England watching sunset, which symbolizes the positioning of their declining relationship that is still hovering between two spaces, an in-between position. Asya knows the reason Saif took her to the seaside; to talk about the circumstances that made him resign from his job and delay his acceptance of important job offers. She expresses her discomfort at watching him rejecting the career opportunities presented to him. The reader notes Asya's abililty in taking the agency over her life in this statement: "Not anymore. I'm not afraid of this place anymore. And as long as I'm doing the work- as long as nothing goes wrong there, I'll be all right" (396). Moreover, the dialogue between them reveals both the contrasted feelings of despair and faith in fixing their relationship:

> Asya: You know how people are always afraid of –growing apart- I mean, even the reason your mother wasn't completely against your giving up your job was because she said, 'At least you'll be together', and I'm just worried – I mean maybe we were starting to get used to- maybe we might have- "
>
> Saif: 'Everything will get sorted out. And when we're together we'll be really together.'
>
> Asya: 'Yes?'
>
> Saif: 'It really isn't a big deal. You know. (…) We'll take it slow. Let it build up slowly and speed up on the studying-"
>
> Asya: "I know it's not a 'grande amour" anymore, or anything- (…) We've still got a lot to lose; we're such good friends.' (397-8)

At this point, the author significantly relates the condition of the couple's relationship with the setting. This scene closes with the sun vanishing pointing out to the dusk of their relationship.

Convinced of Saif's emotional detachment, Asya defies not only her own habit of craving for his touch in bed, but his prescriptive expectations. The narrator portrays: "she will

wait until he knows that she knows it too so that he should not think that she is lying there waiting him to touch her" (409), referring to her transgression of her expected habit in an attempt to demonstrate her self-control. Moreover, Asya takes a step forward in verbally defying her expected attitude when Saif assumes her viewpoint. She enrages her husband by expressing her disappointment at his assumption of her thoughts and feelings in taboo topics such as wife swapping, adultery, or suicide. She protests against her husband's projection of her ideal thoughts and refusal to discuss taboo topics,especially when it comes to her. She declares: "Why should you assume you know everything about me? Everything about how I'll react to anything? Particularly given the- given that it isn't something we've ever talked about-" (424). In their dispute, she invites him to discuss issues of the like with her, and he replies: "there are things that decent people don't talk about" (424),relating decency to abstaining from discussing taboo subjects with his wife. Notably, the narrator informs the reader of Asya's visit to the British Museum before meeting and having a dispute with Saif. Asya could at last overcome her phobia of looking into the mummies at the museum. She "had gazed and gazed at her", referring to the exhibited female mummy to whom she feels no more terror "but a sympathetic, sorrowing friendliness. My ancestor, my sister (…) Asya thinks of her as the princess" (429). Clearly, the author links Asya's transgression of her expected attitudes and actions to her transcendence of her phobia of looking into the unlookable.

At that point, the protagonist, Asya, gets immersed in self-reflection moments where she evaluates her role in her marriage. She thinks how well they have learnt to project the perfect image of the happy couple:

> But when they're together it's worse than when they're apart (…) she always has to be so careful it now seems to her as though she's acting a role: the perfect wife. It is fraudulent. And the worst sham of all is how they pretend they're normal people with nothing at all odd about their marriage. Not how they pretend to the world -that is necessary- but how they pretend to each other. This is the worst bit. He is living this lie and forcing her to live it too. (444)

Hence, the veiling of their true deteriorated marriage is a camouflage that distorts not only their outward image, but also damages her own self-perception and creates an ambivalent sense of her self. Moreover, her confession that she has reached the point where she can no more adopt her fake persona makes her sense of disenchantment reach its peak. Ultimately, Asya reaches the epiphany of her refusal to continue playing her ascribed role, repressing her consciousness about Saif's manipulation and indifference towards their deteriorating marriage:

> This image will be used to mark the beginning of her descent- of all their descent –into what she later to call 'the bad bit'. At the moment, of course, she feels it is the end; she believes she has reached –alone-the nadir, the pure distillation of misery, weakness and humiliation. Finally one phrase forms itself in her mind.' No more', she thinks (…) She cannot, for one more second, bear to feel what she is feeling. (508)

At this transformative moment where Asya is taken to the bottom of her *abyss* (dangerous condition), she clearly rejects to be condemned to her role play of the dutiful wife in her total servitude to her husband regardless of her embittered reality, and in doing so, she takes proper responsibility and control over her life.

The turning point occurs when Asya gets involved in an intense sexual affair with Gerald Stone, a British student who is interested in Eastern cultures and peoples, and the character who deteriorates the storyline and orientates it to the next stage. She met him in an Anglo-Arab Friendship party at the University. As the converstaion between them flows, Asya's accute remarks on Gerald's appearance is reported through the narrator:

> He's good looking, Gerald Stone, although she generally does not go for blond men: she'd stopped watching James Bond (…) her heroes were always the older, darker, more withered types (…) he's good looking tall and well built, the face very angular and masculine (…) but there's something studied about him : like he's very aware of what impression he might be making (…) he seems natural-natural but not without awareness. That shirt, though, with Marylin Monroe all over. That's really vulgar-ah but from where does she get her notions of vulgar? From her father and Saif. Why wouldn't someone wear a fun shirt once in a while –maybe he's wearing it for a joke. (482)

As usual, the narrator points out to Asya's quick attention and her close study about Gerald's appearance. Although his boisterous Marylin Monroe shirt impresses her and reminds her of her acquired stereotypes of vulgarity, she is quickly reminded that the relative filters through which she perceives him belong to the world she comes from, and mainly the conservative authority of her father and husband. Thus, she adopts a more tolerant attitude towards Gerald's eccentric clothing style, which transgresses her inherited culture. In this way, the author depicts a female subjectivation who re-appropriates her own thought, which has been confiscated by her father and husband.

With Asya's vulnerability, Gerald outwardly shows his interest in Asya during his invitation for dinner. As they exchange information about their lives, Asya learns that he belongs to the middle class and that his ex-girlfriend is from Trinidad. Gerald's alert and acute awareness about his impressions make him feel the presence of a mutual chemistry, making him open up about the possibility of a close relationship. He tells Asya: "I feel there's a potential for something really wonderful between us if you'll- " (523). Even though Asya withdraws resisting her own erotic interest, he insists on her through an upcoming meeting. The narrator reports her thoughts about Gerald and the potential experience she can have with a Western man who is quite open and unrestricted. The impetus that led her to be indulged in such an adulterous liaison is two-fold. The narrator conveys them throughout Asya's thoughts:

> With Gerald she knows he feels- the vibes- as much as she does- maybe even more. And what possible harm can it do to anyone if she goes out (…) with someone who finds her atractive, who wants to know what she thinks about things, someone with whom she can talk about whatever comes into her head (…) someone open to chance (…) and besides, he was going away soon. Four weeks maximum and he'd be gone. (527)

As expressed, the narrator refers to Gerald being aware of Asya's declining marriage and her erotic interest in him. On the other hand, Asya considers the opportunity of using him for a short sexual liaison. It is worth noting that the dynamics of such a relationship are based on

reciprocal interest; while Gerald takes advantage of Asya's vulnerability in buttressing his sense of sexual Imperialism, Asya benefits from his obsession with Eastern culture and women for her sexual fulfillment.

Admittedly, the author's belief in the importance of dreams in understanding one's inner dilemma is reported through the protagonist's recounting of her strange dream to Gerald about her leg being split open from the hip to the ankle and spilling black blood, which foretells the resolution of her conflicted sexuality. Remarkably, Asya is amazed at "how strange it was that there was no pain" (535) while she was looking at the wound, which indicates that her emotional detachment suggests that it is a defense mechanism. Gerald tells her that "dreams tell you all the important things about yourself. They're the language your psyche uses to communicate with you" (535), and he interprets the dream: "there's something in your life that's bad (…) it's also telling you that getting rid of it won't be painful" (535), and he adds that the leg is symbolic because it "is what you stand on (…) something undermining your whole being" (536). The black blood is strongly associated with facing one's own fears which, in our case, refers to Asya's resolution of her *vaginismus* and unleashing her erotic desire. Indeed, Gerald's deciphering of the dream content is accurate, and Asya shall soon overcome what she has repressed.

Besides, the author depicts the repercussions of Asya's transgression of the marital vows of sexual fidelity and chastity on her psyche. The narrator portrays her regret: "where is the mighty adulteress now, she thinks, the liberated, fulfilled, sensuous woman, the defiant *femme de plaisir*? She just lies quietly and lets the tears roll down" (543). Remarkably, Asya admits that her transgression with Gerald brought her the feeling of *jouissance* that is followed by feelings of remorse. Yet, Asya resists the negative feelings of guilt, sin, and anxiety that follow her sexual transgressive act of adultery by dissociating her condition of the vulnerable

wife from the Islamic concept of '*muhasanah*' (the sexually protected wife). The narrator conveys her self-reflection:

> Is she truly a muhasanah? What is the fort that protects her within its walls? How can she been made secure? How much care has her husband devoted to making her secure? No, she would not be stoned- and anyway, where are the four witnesses (…) and besides, the door of repentance is always open. (541)

By doing so, the narrator conveys Asya's negligence of her socially and morally inappropriate act that threatens her ego. Therefore, she automatically rationalizes her transgression to protect her psyche against such a threat on her self-esteem. The narrative voice soothes and justifies Asya's sexual transgression.

Additionally, by identifying herself as the unprotected wife, Asya allows Gerald Stone to impose himself on both herself and her relationship with Saif. His pressing demands from Asya to inform her husband about their relationship, radically change her mannerism, and sexually conform to his Imperialist fantasies exhaust her. This is revealed when he asks her to get naked with only her precious jewels on, loosen her hair, and stand up for him so that he admires her. He asks: "I never want you to get dressed when we're married. Be like this for me, babe: naked and perfumed, your hair falling on your shoulders, wearing only your jewels" (563). When looking into her own reflection in the mirror, Asya quickly comments on it: "an odalisque you want" (563), and she clarifies "a concubine. A female slave" (563). In doing so, Asya realizes the image Gerald Stone projects onto her; the gendered stereotype of nineteenth century Orientalism. He once told her: "you're the horniest woman alive" and he explains: "it means you make me want you just by looking at you" (542), indicating that his sexual desire is associated with the visual projection of his fantasies, it is permitted with her consent to adapt to such an image. Moreover, she cannot resist his dominance over her erotic drives and wonders at what his lovemaking does to her: "where do all those vast spaces come from that open up inside her head", as she feels weighless and describes his lovemaking as "a great stormy sea"

(564), recognizing her ecstacy and valuing her actual sensations. Although she is bewildered by these sensations, once having been touched by them, she becomes unwilling to pull away. She thinks: " if only sex and romance were one –imagine feeling like this and knowing that if she opens her eyes it will be Saif's deep brown eyes" (564), confessing her recognition of the fallacy that sexuality and love are inseparable, and her emotional faithfulness to her husband.

It is worth noting that the author's employment of the language of endearment used by both Saif Madi and Gerald Stone establishes their perspective towards Asya. While Asya's husband addresses her with the term 'princess', her sexual partner calls her 'Babe', and when she argues with him, he calls her instead 'man'. It is therefore obvious that these terms stem from the nature of their relationship as well as individual and cultural differences. The narrator displays Asya welcoming Gerald's endearment: "why not? Why not baby and babe and honey (…) Why would she always be sweetie and princess (…) and never to be kissed and caressed and undressed and looked at and admired, never to feel hot breath on her face" (539). Clearly, the connotations for Gerald's terms of endearment are of a sexual nuance and Asya initially liked it. However, Gerald switches to addressing her with 'man' whenever she resists conforming to the sexual woman he wants her to be. As such, Ahdaf Soueif employs the rhetoric of class and racial difference to reinscribe the dichotomous relationship between native/foreign, and Oriental/Western. In this way, the author constructs racial identities that express a binary system that subverts the *Orientalist* stereotypes.

III-6-5 Healing and Self-Actualization

Asya's realization of Gerald's willingness to sculpt her according to his Orientalist projection coupled with her indulgence in this sexual affair bring forth anxiety and enormous pressure that hinder her concentration in the advancement of her Ph.D. research. Therefore, she solicits the guidance of her mother who appeases her anxiety and leads her away from Gerald

to concentrate on her thesis, repair her marital problems, and get rid of Gerald Stone. In a revealing dialogue, Asya explains to her mother her subaltern state when she is unable to express herself with her husband: "What I'm complaining about is what it's like when we're together. I feel like a stranger, I feel like I'm acting, I know I'm just closing my mouth and suppressing 90% of the things that come into my head" (573), suggesting that she finds herself muted and subjugated to Saif's omnipotent-like presence.

However, Gerald Stone's insistence and pathetic begging for Asya to stay, traps her and prolongs their inevitable split. In the midst of this emotional turbulence, Asya asks Saif for a sabbatical period to reorganize her priorities and sort out what she wants. She expresses the reasons: "I need a break. I have to be my own person for a while. I just don't know who I am anymore (…) I don't know what I want (…) I think your thoughts instead of my own. I've never had a chance to be on my own" (583). Clearly, Asya is searching for her self in the midst of the projections ascribed for her. She also adds: "I won't spend anymore of your money" (584), revealing her willingness to be independent from Saif's financial support not to feel that she is subjugated in any sense to him. Reasonably, the narrator describes Asya's realization of the loss of the physical attraction the moment Saif had tried to approach her that night and she turned him down: "the realization that she was feeling nothing (…) It had been as odd as though it were Kareem or her father bending over her (…) Her body was loyal to Gerald Stone" (586). Eventually, this situation will characterize her relationship with Saif Madi for the rest of the novel.

The tension reaches its climax when Saif unexpectedly drops in and asks Asya for an explanation about living with a male friend. Asya confesses that indeed, she is sleeping with Gerald Stone. The narrator portrays his reaction through Asya's eyes as she "watches him crumple. He stands his ground but she can see him collapse. He looks like a man in a film the moment after he's been shot and before he fells to the ground" (623). Notably, Asya has always

wanted to tell him about her sexual affair and study his reaction. The narrator portrays her inspection of Saif Madi's suffering and her wish to feel his pain. As they interchange the blames, he forces her to draw a flow chart of the reasons that led her to commit adultery. Besides, Asya's confident rejection of his order and firm accusation of his negligence surprise him. He hits Asya powerfully for the first time that he bruises her rib. Asya describes her feelings of being hit:

> So this is what it feels like to be hit: it feels good. It feels peaceful. It feels clean. It feels as if, for once, they've been in something together – engaged in the same act; not clawing at each other through a glass pane. It must have hurt him though: hitting his princess like that. (639)

Clearly, Asya appreciates Saif's physical violence as a sign of his attention and carefulness of her sexual desire but in the reverse sense. As such, her delight reflects not only a self-abasement practice to atone for her guilt, but also gladness in having done so to evoke his attention. The excerpt also pinpoints to the following regret about his uncommon violence.

Worth noting is Asya's indirect responsibility in the success or downfall of her husband's career. She helped him climb the ladder of success by being the docile and selfless wife. Conversely, she caused his breakdown by reclaiming her sexuality and autonomy. With Saif unwillingness to answer the calls of his bosses in Syria, he faces the risk of bankruptcy and unemployment. In fact, Saif Madi blames Asya for ruining his career: "you blew my career. You blew me up the moment you opened your legs" (646). Moreover, Asya's irritation at Saif's constant demands of explanations on the details of her sexual affair is disclosed: "It's impossible to explain anything to you. You don't want to understand (…) what you want is either flow charts or empty sentimental" (656). Saif's reacts by showing more violence in slapping her face and raping her as he reports in this passage:

> I hit her with my open hand across her face (…) she fell from surprise (…) I've never hit her face (…) I hit her again (…) pulled her pants down and over her feet. Then I rubbed them in her face and forced the gusset into her mouth. I held her hands above her head and fucked her,

> truly fucked her, for the first time in our marriage. She fell asleep afterwards, right there on the
>
> floor (…) but in her sleep she turned away from me (…) I thought then that I would do anything
>
> to hang on to her. (653)

Significantly, this provides the reader with an insight about the abusive relationship that the couple is engaged in. Saif Madi's frustration at his wife's betrayal led him to physically and sexually intimidate her. However, Asya assumes her guilt and is, in fact, undergoing a self-abasement stage to atone for her act. She pities him for having betrayed his trust and faith in being a chaste and comprehensible wife during his absence.

Remarking Asya's bruises, her mother reacts angrily and shows her willingness to talk to Saif Madi and blame him. However, Asya stops her arguing:

> How can you be like that when you know what happened? When you know what I've done? I
>
> know it looks bad but what is it ?A black eye? I've done worse to him than that: I've brokenhis
>
> heart (…) I've ruined his life (…) people look at him as if he's a brute and one woman came
>
> and I said 'But I'm not a battered wife' (667)

In this passage, the author shows that Asya assumes her guilt and is, in fact, undergoing a self-abasement stage to atone for her transgressive act. She is afraid to leave him alone as she knows that she destroyed him.

Eventually, Saif gets over Asya's betrayal and rents a near cottage to Asya's flat and gets indulged in having girlfriends and going to parties, while Asya is engulfed in completing her Ph.D. research. With the moral and financial support of her mother who stays with her as she studied for her comprehensive Ph.D. thesis, Asya could at last finish her research and be given a date for her viva. Meanwhile, she goes with Gerald Stone to New York for the New Year's Eve and stays at his friends' house.

However, as Asya's patience with Gerald is growing thin, she writes a letter to Chrissie expressing her willingness to split with him for the apparent disaccord in their characters and beliefs. She reveals: "I don't think Gerald and I are going to stay together, we object to too

many things about each other. I know one is supposed to adapt, but if I couldn't adapt to Saif- and that was Saif- Why should I even adapt to G?" (719). Moreover, the author's choice of the setting where Asya finally reaches her true emancipation from Gerald's manipulation is significant. It is in New York; the city which symbolizes liberty, freedom, and self-fulfillment. It is only in New York that Asya, being marveled by its people and their way of life, could express her irritation at Gerald's manipulation of making her fit into his Orientalist model of femininity. She says to him: "You've pushed me and pushed me and pushed me and I've had it. I hate it. I hate people who go round trying to change people. The hypocrisy of it. 'I know you better than you know yourself'" (723). In doing so, she brings forth to him his sexual Imperialism in this passage: "Why have all your girl-friends been from 'developing countries'? (723), and she continues, "and the reason you've gone to Trinidad- Vietnam- Egypt- is so you can feel superior" (723). Having voiced confidently her thoughts and her firm objection to carry on with Gerald Stone's delusion, Asya feels the joyous ecstasy pulsing within her. The narrator portrays: "she's done it (…) if she can say that she can say anything, anything at all – nothing can stop her now-" (724), describing the epiphanic moment when she finally gathered the courage to stand up for herself and be unstoppable.

Soon after Asya's break up with the British man in New York, Ahdaf Soueif depicts Asya in her final scene with Saif where feelings of sadness are evoked. While Asya expresses the necessity of their divorce, she helplessly wants him to stay as a close friend. Saif Madi sees that this would be impossible. As they walk apart, the narrator portrays Asya's consideration of the possibility of going back to him as his wife and reflects: "She imagines going inside and sees herself vanish. It is like vanishing into one of those black holes they are talking about these days" (735). In her letter to Chrissie, she asserts: "I missed him so terribly that it was an actual ache- but I could not bear to be sitting in the other armchair turning the pages of a magazine" (735). Clearly, her awareness about how life would be like with him restrains the feelings of

loss for the friend he was to her. Asya's self-actualization encapsulates a radical feminist consciousness, which suggests the possibility for the Middle Eastern woman to transcend the oppressive attitudes that are locally and globally inscribed in socio-cultural attitudes.

In the concluding epilogue, the author depicts Asya two years later, in a different Cairo from the one she left six years ago. Feelings of nostalgia characterize this part as Asya longs for the moments of happiness she spent with her friends and Saif in the places that are no more the same. As such, her past memory becomes a lens through which she reads the new environment of Cairo. She is engaged in a civilizing mission to educate agrarian and village women about the benefits of contraception and birth control. In fact, her attempt to save Egyptian women from overpopulation and subsequent poverty through birth control does not stem from any personal political agenda. Nonetheless, she is seen as an alien by those women with her desire to interfere in the workings of God. Henceforth, her attempt at modernising this aspect in the Egyptian traditional society is impaired by the indomitability of the Egyptian tradition.

Furthermore, Ahdaf Soueif evokes the changing atmosphere caused by the rise of Islamic *Fundamentalist* ideas among the youth. Asya becomes aware of its political agenda from her interaction with her students at University. When she asks her students at the introductory session to write the reason they chose English, a hooded female figure unexpectedly answered: 'I want to learn the language of my enemy' (754), suggesting the held animosity towards non-Muslims and the Western world. To Asya's surprise, the hooded student could not even expand her arguments because 'the voice of a woman is an *awra*[57]'

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[57] In Arabic, the term *'awrah* or *'awrat* (عورة) derives from the root 'a-w-r which means "defectiveness", "imperfection", "blemish" or "weakness" that needs to be covered. However, the most common English translation is "nakedness". The debate over women's voice is widely discussed in fatwas, the strictest interpretation is that women should not speak to non-*mahram* men, i.e. male family members with whom sexual intercourse would be illegal, and that her voice should not be heard in public. Others argue

(754), reinforcing the traditional gender role stereotypes of female sexual objectification and of male's aggressive and uncontrollable sexuality. Indeed, this cultural encounter between women who adhered to dualistic ideological affinities at the University creates a third space of negotiation that the author highlights for negotiation. Asya reflects on this event: "she'd never come across anyone for whom it was a living truth before. So as far as this girl- and the others who thought like her- were concerned she was doing a sort of porno-spread up here on the podium for the world to see" (754), indicating the possible perception of Asya by her *fundamentalist* students. She is alienated from the politicized faith and from the changing places. The narrator expresses her feeling: "how can she be yearning for Cairo and the feel of the Cairo night and the voice of Ummu Kelthoum while she is actually here in the middle of it all?" (780). Furthermore, the author demonstrates Asya's admiration for the peasant women for their simplicity, strength and serenity.

Eventually, the author illustrates Asya's final self-actualization and the desired serenity she has aspired for through a deep conversation with her lifetime friend, Chrissie. When asked by Chrissie for a possible future emotional relationship, Asya insists that her future man should make efforts at exploring and knowing her without patriarchal or imperial prejudice, instead of changing her according to any other projection. The narrator reports her inner thoughts: "he would want to know her, really know her, and he's take her as she came and explore her and not want her to be any particular way" (782). In the end, Asya's self-actualized self is demonstrated through her admiration of a newly unearthed female idol that she has been led to see in an archeological site. Remarkably, the tomb of that female is said to belong to a dancing girl elevated to one of Ramesses' sister-wives. The narrator depicts her:"in complete possession of herself-of her pride, and of her small subtle smile" (785), indicating the reason

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that a Muslim woman should speak in a modest way as not to distract or incite salacious and licentious thoughts/acts.

for Asya's admiration of that woman who symbolizes, after all, Asya's transcendence of her projections and elevation to a complete possession of her self that is revealed confidently and serenily to the world. She came out of her ashes for a new life in which she learns to be invincible.

It is worth noting that the etymology of the title of this novel,*In the Eye of the Sun,* points out to Ahdaf Soueif's emphasis on the confident claiming of the protagonist's authority not only over her body and mind, but also on taking responsibility of her destiny, thus, asserting her visibility as an autonoumous subject. The protagonist's agency over her life and liberation from the shackles of the androcentric expectations in a patriarchal and Imperial society is achieved through a process of three stages that starts with the internalization of the conventional code of gender conduct and ends with her self-actualization. The conflict between Asya's alienating projections and her rebellious self-perception is the major theme in this narrative in addition to other sub themes including displacement, the Anglo-Arab encounter, sexual politics, transculturalism, hybridity, belonging, transgression, Arab-Israeli conflicts, social values and taboos, among others. The author has explored the self of her protagonist and has aimed to understanding as an instance of the journey within, an existential journey to self-realisation and constructing an authentic and autonomous identity. Asya has finally reached her healing though a balanced psyche and the wholeness of her subjectivity. It is about the relationship between the East and the West, of men and women in an intercultural context, through cultural encounters and symmetrical relationships.

In sum, Ahdaf Soueif has traced gradually the development of Asya's identity in this narrative, which is about escaping cultural and linear ways of identification. Moreover, the condition of displacement provides the protagonist with not only a larger opportunity of reconstructing an authentic identity because she is free from responsibilities and intimacies, but a challenge to assert herself in an Imperial order that perceives her through an Orientalist

lens. With the protagonist's awareness about her self and the surrounding world, she grows to a stronger individual who is able to shoulder her own responsibility. As such, this protagonist curves out a reconstructed identity for herself without denying her past, her roots and her traditions. Ahdaf Soueif, in this novel, insists that the Arab woman should resist the oppression of both the local and foreign androcentric projections that inhibit self-expression and autonomous identity development. In addition to having a strong romantic component, her writing style is a discursive practice that is puposeful and ideological. It is a mode of resistance to particular hegemonic discourses. The author uses flashbacks, diaries, and letters to contextualise, analyse and layer the narrative, creating prose of shimmering complexity. In addition, this diasporic literary work acts as a bridge between the East and the West to some extent; it aims at cutting through the confusion between different cultures. The journey of the Ahdaf Soueif's protagonist traces the complex process through which the unfolding of desire(s): sexual, social, economic, political is shaped by her characters and all what surrounds them. It is this complicated picture that is painted by Ahdaf Soueif's meticulous brush. She proclaims in her interview with Massad (1999):

> In the West, I think that part of why people liked my work is because they felt that it gives them an insight into another world, into the hearts and minds of people they would not have access to otherwise. Because the books are written in English - without the medium of translation - because the form is familiar to them, they find that they respond to it, and they're able to empathize. In the East, people have said that even though the writing is in English, that this is an authentic Arab voice, an authentic Arab *wigdan* [inner soul, passion, or sensibility], which is being expressed in English. It is as if these stories speak for them, in a way, as if they are their emissary to the world at large. So, I guess I'm lucky - to have the Arab *wigdan* and the English language, I mean. (89)

Ahdaf Soueif examines the relative perspectives through her characters discussions, in which she highlights the specificity of cultural context, and allows her readers to see beyond the stereotypes regarding the '*other*' for many issues, such as polygamy.

Through this narrative that represents a sample of Soueif's literary style, linguistic hybridity is a marker that is reflected through her use of the English language with different cultural, rhetorical, and literary norms. Growing up as a bilingual child, Soueif masters an individualized version of English that carries both English and Egyptian culture. As disputed by Geoffrey Nash who uses Edward Said's phrase 'Anglo-Arab encounter' for his book on Anglophone writing, contemporary Arab Anglophone writers prefer using English for the wider opportunity it provides them in voicing certain issues and bringing them to light. Soueif's Anglophone fiction retains the typical idiomatic structure of the Egyptian colloquial Arabic. Her dialogues transferred from Arabic into English abound in cultural characteristics of Egypt, such as Arabic expressions and turns of phrase, metaphors, Quranic verses and forms of address. This fusion of Arab logic and English formulation confers a unique quality of her literary style, which allows her bilingual readers to hear the dialogues in Arabic in their heads. Arab terms and phrases in the flow of narratives and dialogues written in English function as documents of social and semantic reality of the Arab cultural setting, which would be complicated to convey in any other way. This fact renders Soueif's English reducible only to her fiction and her individualized version of English, which is far from the Standard English, intended for a purely English environment. The various ways of Soueif's handling of English are conditioned by her authorial intentions. Henceforth, Soueif appropriates the English language for her intended purposes so well. In addition, the impact of her readings of the classical British literature is apparent in this novel in which she alludes to George Eliot's *Middlemarch* (1871).

In doing so, Soueif demonstrates in her novel that the interaction between the Eastern and the Western civilizations is inevitable and fruitful. Her writing is significant in promoting dialogue and harmony between the East and the West. In his *Reflections on Exile and Other Essays*, Edward Said (2002) notes that:

> Soueif does not fall for the East versus West, or Arab versus European, formulas. Instead, she works them out patiently (...) The fine thing, though, is that Soueif can present such a hegira (emigration) (...) thereby showing that what has become almost formulaic to the Arab (as well as Western) discourse of the other need not always be the case. In fact, there can be generosity, and vision, and overcoming barriers, and, finally, human existential integrity. (410)

Soueif creates her own version of English, a hybridized English interlaced with Arabic expressions, an English reshaped in order to carry the specific Arabic reality and its rhetorical style. English as her literary language enables Soueif to address English-speaking, Western readers and convey to them an authentic picture of the Arab culture. The author, therefore, consciously undermines the prevalent Orientalist image of the Arab culture in the Western media.

Furthermore, the Iraqi academic Amin Malak argues, in his *Muslim Narratives and the Discourse of English* (2004) which is an in-depth analysis of Anglophone narratives by Muslim writers, that Soueif seems to be cautious and at times self-censoring so as not to aggravate the negative image of Islam and the oppressive practices and violence perpetrated against women in certain areas of the Muslim world. Despite her national loyalty and cultural allegiance, she does not hide the gruesome customs in the rural areas of Egypt, which are, however, related in a second-hand manner through embedded narratives such as polygamy and crimes of honour. Soueif, however, never identifies these acts of sabotage of women with Islam and her writings suggest that, in Rana Kabbani's words: "in Islamic society as in the West, the oppression of women is usually more the result of poverty and lack of education and other opportunities than of religion " (qtd. in Amin Malak, 148). Amin Malak argues that "The discourse of liberation

passes not through ridiculing or rejecting her Islamic heritage, but through appealing to its most enlightened and progressive tradition" (149), he adds that Muslim writers who appropriate "a language with a perceived hostile history toward Islam" not only render it "a site of encounter for cultures and peoples on equal terms," and thus shift from "resistance to reconciliation" (11). As such, Ahdaf Soueif calls for a gradual reform via this *third space* (in-between space), which triggers compromise, reinterpretation and revision of traditional and normative frameworks. Her narratives advance Arab women as equal partners to men. The author lets her female protagonists go through agonizing doubts and struggles, but at the end their aspirations and goals are attainable only if they free themselves from the male protective, but patronizing power and they become independent individuals standing firmly on their own feet, their destiny solely in their own hands.

III-7 Analogies and Constrasts

The following illustration sums up the main conflicts that are dealt with in each novel:
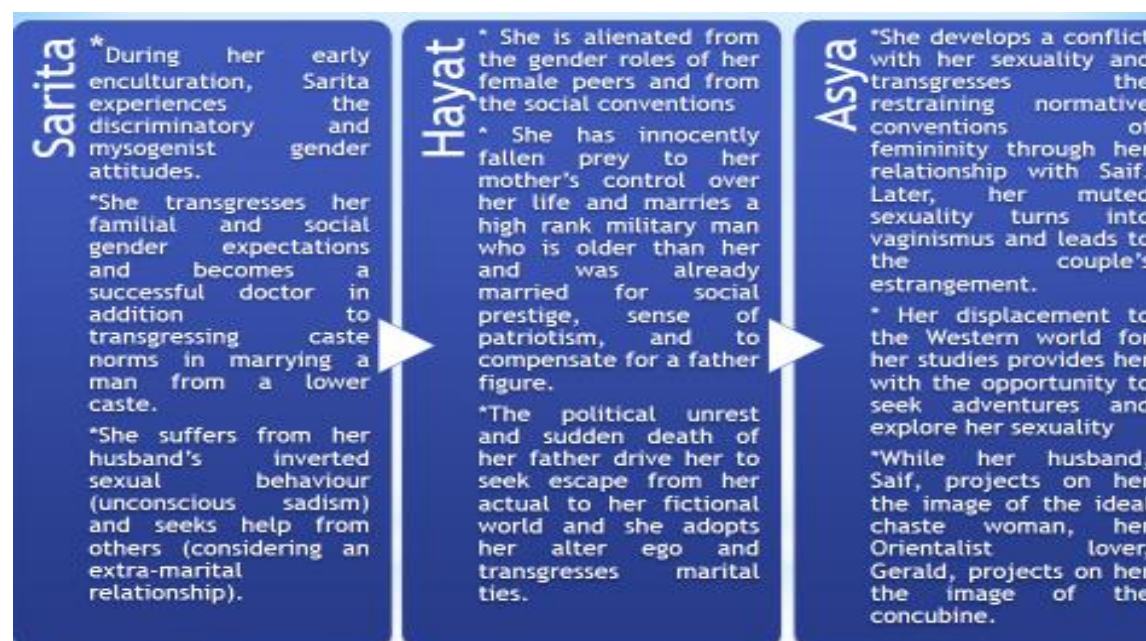
Table III-7: Practical Background about the Fictional Texts

The authors' portrayal of their female protagonists' existential journey towards self-actualization and fulfillment is as structural and arduous that it can be metaphorically analogous to a labyrinthal pilgrimage with a unicursal path. The female subject in her journey from exclusion and *othering* to self-assertion transcends her gendered identity to that of a human being passing through many paths carrying a candle and a book that represent the light of knowledge which guides her path and offers her hope to reach her aspirations. Eventually, she succeeds in uncovering the aim of these long unicursal paths and experiences through the light of wisdom and inner-peace in comprehending that the hegemony of the socio-cultural structures that legitimate her subordinate status is not an inert fact of nature but a violent, materialist and constructed patriarchal authority that needs to be eradicated from its roots.

Speaking about the unicursal path, one can divide it into passageways that are organized according to their function. The first passageway leads to human self-fulfillment and

achievement in the pursuit of one's career and professional aspirations. The second passageway leads to the assertion of the feminine sexuality and corporeal reality. And the last passageway leads to constructing a supportive and symmetric gender relation in the form of father/daughter, brother/sister, or husband/wife, which plays a vital role in a woman's life. These three passageways, which constitute the unicursal path, are necessary for the female metaphorical pilgrimage to solve her dilemma in her quest for reconstructing a synthetic and autonomous identity.

Concerning the first passageway towards human self-fulfillment in the pursuit of one's career and professional aspirations, the three authors address this issue in their selected novels with determined female protagonists. Obviously, Shashi Deshpande is genuinely concerned about the contemporary Indian women struggle against the inhibiting system of patriarchy, which confines a woman's role to the domestic sphere. She portrays the female protagonist's first confrontation of opposition with her mother who perpetuates the traditional gender norms in alienating her daughter's impulses from an early age and obstructing her aspirations to pursue an educational and professional career. The protagonist denounces her parents' disregard to women education, and considering her as a burden and responsibility to be married. The gender-confined society led the rebellious protagonist to develop a sense of ego-inflation that makes her advance in transgressing the socio-cultural norms that hinder her way to self-fulfillment. Strikingly, the male figures in this novel are represented as compassionate rather than oppressive. Notably, it is Sarita's father who convinces his wife to let Sarita pursue her medical studies outside her hometown. Even when Sarita's parents abandonned her for marrying a man from a lower caste, her husband Manohar encourages his wife to continue her studies and supports her towards achieving a successful medical career. Therefore, while the mother figure in this narrative embodies the medium through which *indoctrination* of the

oppressive attitudes are practiced on same-sex peers; the male figures represent support and understanding that a woman needs for her self-fulfillment.

As for Ahlem Mostaghanemi's *Chaos of the Sense*, the writer demonstrates the journey of the female protagonist into liberation and self-fulfillment through writing as a means of emancipation and self-expression against the violence of the political unrest and its effects on her personal life. This literary text is a rich well of historical accounts on the socio-cultural and political condition of Algeria during the colonial and postcolonial era. It examines the root-cause of the Algerian Civil War and its effects. Remarkably, many autobiographical aspects of the author are reflected upon her protagonist Hayat. Both women are successful writers who have been raised on integrity and patriotism. Their fathers, military officers, are supportive and committed to national service and family care. Both writers dedicate their novels to the memory of their martyred fathers who encouraged them to pursue their careers. Therefore, it is the male figure who supports the female protagonist in pursuing her career. The adversity that impinges women's self-fulfillment is the patriarchal culture, spread of hostility, distrust, and opposing ideologies resulting from the political crisis that has shaken human relationships in the Algerian society. The political turmoil and the hegemony of socio-cultural norms play a crucial role in restricting intellectuals, both men and women, from critical free-expression about the national crisis during the 1990s. This restriction implies the subalternity of the female subject as a writer and an intellectual. The narrator constantly reminds us how depression, lack of communication, and confusion shrank her creative capacities in fictional writing and led her to seek raw material for her story in the real world by getting personally involved in her fictional narrative. When fiction and reality are intertwined, this implies that there is no space for further imagination as bitter facts dominate both the real and creative world. Even the act of writing about these issues is not welcome in a country where opposition is aborted at its initial phase.

In Ahdaf Soueif's novel *In the Eye of the Sun*, the woman author examines the ways in which local and global society distorts woman's subjectivity and affects her life choices. It is worth noting that the social position of female protagonist's parents who are both academics and intellectuals has much contributed to the fashioning of her path. Being the eldest child, Asya played a good role in being the dutiful daughter. The protagonist's pursuit of an academic career that is similar to her well-respected parents led her later to realise that she is continuously visible under their shadow. She decides to undertake a practical lifework through her mission of introducing family planning to Egyptian peasant wives in the rural suburbs of Cairo, suggesting her efforts in educating rural women about their sexual health and preventing unwanted pregnancies. In figuring out appropriate ways to deliver her message to this class of women who are illiterate and poor, Asya finds meaning to her life. The author displays the support that her female protagonist received from both her parents, and her husband to pursue her Ph.D. research abroad. Although some misogenist attitudes and patriarchal norms are described and reflected upon by the protagonist's critical perception, the author's aim is centred on her repressed sexuality in a socially restricted environment. Yet, it is through displacement for study purposes in both Italy and North England that the protagonist could solve her sexual conflict.

Turning to the second passageway of the protagonists' reconciliation with and assertionof their feminine identity, it is agreed that in almost all patriarchal societies that a woman's role and value are determined by her procreative abilities, which confine her to domesticity, reproduction and nurture. The implications of this biological determinism entail self-negation of a woman's subjectivity, which contradict the modern humanist values of equality, justice, freedom, and advancement for all social categories. In the three novels, the female protagonists transgress the traditional role prescribed to them. While their mothers represent the traditional, subordinate and domestic model of womanhood, the female

protagonists epitomize the new and modern model. Worth noting is the fact that Deshpande's female protagonist holds aversion towards her mother; Mostaghanemi's female protagonist sympathizes with the helplessness of her mother; and Soueif's female protagonist confronts her mother about her docility to the patriarchal rule and informs her that she would not do the same. This variety in the female protagonists' reaction to their prescribed feminine identity is due to their lived experience of identification with the cultural connotations of femininity.

In Shashi Deshpande's selected novel, *The Dark Holds No Terrors*, the protagonist's bitter experience of her maturing body indicates her entry into the feminine world that is characterized by its scornful implications. The image of the feminine body has inferiorizing implications that Sarita insists on her rejection and repression of her femininity in her younger age. Her graduate studies in medicine helped her to overcome her anxiety by understanding that her feminine sexual development is natural and irreversible. Eventually, she could affirm her sexual identity and rejoice it. Through her initial relationship with her husband, the author pinpoints to Sarita's yearning for love and its expression. In doing so, the protagonist's need for love and acceptance reflects her desire to make up for the lack of motherly love and reclaiming her self-esteem through her body. However, as Sarita's social and financial position becomes superior to that of her husband, he develops an unconscious sexual pathology (sadism) to compensate for his masculine ego. Sarita felt not only pity for her husband's unconscious sadistic acts, but found herself responsible for his predicament. In doing so, Deshpande subverts the patriarchal dichotomy of husband/ wife and dominant/subordinate into portraying the developed female character as the dominant in leading her life and her relationships with the patriarchal figures in this novel.

As to Ahlem Mostaghanemi's *Chaos of the Senses,* the author provides us with a demonstration of the psychological and socio-cultural construct of femininity in the Algerian context. The protagonist, Hayat, is aware of her society's conceptualization of femininity,

which suggests an inherent guilt, leading women to unconsciously adopt self-negation and denial of an autonomous subjectivity. Notably, the author depicts the condition of women in a patriarchal society where the young protagonist rejects her sexual identity by hiding her feminine parts from the degrading gaze of both males and females. In this sense, the female subject experiences the inferiorizing perspective of the patriarchal society towards the feminine aspect of her identity from same-sex peers. This implies the unaware internalization of the gender norms and their automatic and unquestioning perpetuation by women of their own plight. The false consciousness of women to their plight leads Hayat to sympathise with her loving mother rather than feeling aversion. Moreover, her non-conformism to the social norms is manifested through her bold presence in many prohibited settingsfor women such as the cinema, funerals and cafés. Her boldness lies in her stirring appearance with her seducive black dress as a *femme fatale,* implying her defiance to the traditional society and the religious extremist ideology that was prominent at that time. In addition, her sexual indulgence in her extramarital relationship reflects a hedonistic logic challenging authoritarian rule. The female protagonist's acts of defiance represent her embrace of her accusation as a woman and as a writer, challenging the subaltern condition of women intellectuals engendered by the hegemony of the patriarchal and misogynist society as well as the violent political rule.

Concerning Ahdaf Soueif's *In the Eye of the Sun*, the author explores the female protagonist's journey to self-actualisation through her sexuality. The protagonist, Asya, develops a conflict with her sexuality as early as she starts her series of transgressions against the socially restricted environment for her relationship with Saif, the male protagonist. Asya's female sexuality, which is awakened by the physical intimacy she experiences with Saif, is continuously muted by his abstinence to engage in premarital sex, leading to her sexual repression which grows alarmingly. While Saif's discomfort with Asya's direct assertion of her libido stems from his acquired conceptualization of the idealized woman as asexual and

passive, Asya's frustration is related to Saif's endorsement and perpetuation of the restraining normative conventions. As a consequence, the author portrays the way female sexual repression develops into the condition of vaginismus leading up to the couple's conjugal estrangement. Besides, the protagonist's displacement to both Italy and North England for her studies provides her with the opportunity to seek adventures and explore her sexuality. Although these short affairs stem from her erotic desire and are sought for sexual fulfillment, the female protagonist subsequently experiences the feelings of anxiety and guilt for her sexual indulgence against marital loyalty and chastity. Soon, Asya found herself in a subaltern position where she had to adjust herself to both Saif's and her lover's opposing projections for her. While Saif projects on her the image of the ideal chaste woman, her Orientalist lover, Gerald Stone, projects on her the image of the concubine. Eventually, Asya had to seek her autonomous self in the midst of the projections ascribed for her. She reapropriates her subjectivity through confronting both men about her awareness of their manipulation that she rejects. In doing so, Asya takes the position of subject rather than an object to be exploited.

Concerning the last passageway towards finding a balancing human relationship in the form of man/woman relationship, the three authors explore the necessity for this relationship that helps the protagonist in the development of her selfhood through a negotiation with the male subject. This relationship needs to have a symmetric form in the father/daughter, brother/sister, or husband/wife. Their chief efforts are aimed to cope with the challenges and achieve a harmonious relationship with themselves and with their surroundings. In Shashi Deshpande's novel, the protagonist finds this balancing relationship with both her husband and father who provide her with support in pursuing her medical career. Moreover, it is Sarita's father who allows for the resolution to her conjugal dilemma with her husband's sadistism, which compensates for his male ego that has been deteriorated by her privileged social status. Running from her sadistic husband, the protagonist takes refuge in her father's house, seeking

his support in times of need. Realizing her helplessness in dealing with her conjugal situation, her father insists upon her to face her fears in confronting her husband about his sexual pathology. As such, this father/daughter relationship has provided the female subject with the needed strength to confront her dilemma and to reconciliate with herself.

As in Ahlem Mostaghanemi's *Chaos of the Senses*, the protagonist finds this balancing relationship with her brother and father. She confirms her need for a human relationship that provides her with moral and emotional support, and insists that this relationship does not have any sexual nuance. However, her brother's aversion from her marriage with a military man and his busy involvement with the *Fundamentalist* ideology alienate their relationship. Additionally, it is only when she lost the man she realized she was seeking for, and went to his funeral in the same graveyard where her father is buried, that she finally confronts the root cause of her being absorbed by melancholy and the chaos of her senses. Notably, it is the unexpected death of her father, and the opportunity that she missed in letting him read her dedicated novel to him, that caused the protagonist's feeling of betrayal to her self, her father, and her nation. This double loss had a significant effect on her psyche; it unconsciously led the protagonist to live in an ambivalent space where sense perception deteriorates the truth. Eventually, she could solve her dilemma and reconciliate with her self when she leaves her one year piece of writing at Abdelhak's grave, indicating her abondonment of the success she could have with its publication. This act can be read as a compensation of her guilt of betrayal, and declaration of her faithfulness to the memory of her father. She takes the agency of her destiny with her decision to return to the reality after living in a chaos of senses for so long.

Concerning Ahdaf Soueif's *In the Eye of the Sun,* it is through the husband/wife relationship that Asya arrives at constructing a balanced relationship with the central male character in this narrative. Her husband, Saif, has supported her in pursuing her studies and helped her to overcome her feelings of homesickness and loss which extended to her studies

due to her displacement to North England. Moreover, he provided her with financial security through affording a high-class lifestyle, which allowed her to live a comfortable life with no worries about her financial expenses during her studies in North England. Notably, Asya valued their bond of long friendship that when he suspected her disloyalty during his absence, she confessed to him about the causes that led her to get indulged in a sexual affair with a Western man. This demonstrates that Asya assumed her guilt and underwent a self-abasement period to atone for her betrayal. Her stay with him till he overcomes his feelings of anger and frustration towards her reflect her sense of responsibility towards her husband. Indeed, Saif's protection of Asya continued indirectly even after their breakup that she often missed her being his pampered princess. Yet, she is aware that she could never be his desired wife for her reconstructed selfhood. Although it was necessary that their marriage ends with divorce, Asya valued their relationship that she asked him to keep their close friendship. In this way, the female protagonist grew into a stronger individual who reapropriates her subjectivity and takes control and responsibility over her life, and reconciliates with her self.

Ruminating on the thematic contrasts that are inscribed to circumstantial and cultural distinction, and the way its projections of femininity perpetuate a disempowered subjectivity that is violated sexually, economically, and ideologically, we have found that these women projections lead to distinct, yet, universal coping mechanisms that are undertaken by the fictional protagonists in order to reconstruct an individuated or self-realized selfhood. Economically speaking, the value of labour performed by women determines their social and financial status. As such, career oriented women earn their respect and worth in a male-dominated culture through the value of their work which speaks for itself. But however hard professional women try to adjust themselves in a gender biased society, this value seems to be janus-faced, i.e. while it allows them to experience financial and social privileged status, it would have its negative effects on their personal life. In Shashi Deshpande's novel *The Dark Holds No Terrors*, the female protagonist

sought to become a doctor since childhood. She worked hard to register at a university of medicine, and worked hard to earn her social and professional respect as a successful doctor. Yet, it is this very value that deteriorated her personal life and caused her marital predicament. The female protagonist is aware that her success has indirectly subverted her social positioning in her marriage, leading to the unconscious reaction of her husband's ego in practicing sexual sadism to compensate for his violated sense of masculinity. In an attempt to cure her predicament without facing her husband about his sadism, the female protagonist tells him that she is ready to abandon her job and to take care of her family life. However, her husband strongly rejects her suggestion arguing that their family has been adapted to the comfortable lifestyle that her financial earnings permit, and that there is no way back to their poor life whatsoever. As such, the female protagonist reached that point where she was ready to abandon her career for the sake of her marital stability, but she did not quit. Rather, she realized that she has to control her emotions of fear, her attitudes towards her self-worth, and to control her life.

In Ahlem Mostaghanemi's novel *Chaos of the Senses,* the female protagonist enjoyed social fame and respect as a successful author. However, this value has added to the estrangement that she suffers with a husband whose materialistic character alienates them from each other. Moreover, this value has created a sacred aura for the protagonist's faithful readers. As she was seeking emotional fulfillment through an erotic experience in her fictive text, she decides to embody her alter ego to seek a romantic relationship with a man who already knows her and is, in fact, a faithful reader of her novels. As the female protagonist gets indulged in this romantic affair, she challenges the social norms and circumstances to live that experience to the fullest. Yet, she realizes after having an erotic experience of sex with her lover that she she wronged by her senses and that her lover was not the man she originally was seeking for, but his close friend. She also realizes that he was manipulating her in order to publish a novel about their experience. At the point where the female protagonist was going to give her manuscript to her lover at the

cemetery, she suddenly changes her mind and leaves it on the grave of his recently assasinated friend. In so doing, she heals her initial guilt of breaking the promise to her father by writing for him and handing him the first copy. Moreover, this act symbolises her reappropriation of her subjectivity, which was violated by economic interests and appeal, by taking control of her agency, and not giving up to the demands of the reading public.

In Ahdaf Soueif's novel *In the Eye of the Sun*, the female protagonist has pursued her graduate and postgraduate studies in North England through a scholarship program. The social position in which she was raised in as the eldest daughter of her parents who are both academics and intellectuals contributed to the fashioning of her character and path. It is her remarkable scholarly status and her critical overview towards pertinent social and political issues of her time that makes her stand from her peers. However, her family's postponement of her marriage till she graduates coupled with her husband's conformity to the restrictive attitudes towards pre-marital sex muted her sexual expression. Moreover, the couple's growing estrangement as Asya and Saif lived apart while he continued disregarding their conjugal problem and offered her gifts and lavish financial support during her stay in North England postponed her confrontation with Saif about the reality of their declining marriage. After receiving her Ph.D. degree, the female protagonist finds meaning in practical work, not just in her job of teaching at the University. She joins the national *civilizing mission* to educate agrarian and village women about the benefits of contraception and birth control. However, those agrarian women who hold the belief that contraception would interfere in the workings of God perceive her as an alien woman from their traditional culture. Henceforth, her attempt at raising consciousness of the Egyptian traditional women is impaired by the indomitability of the Egyptian tradition. Even at the University, Asya finds herself further alienated from the new atmosphere caused by the rise of Islamic *Fundamentalist* ideas among the youth. She realizes that her journey

towards cultural dialogue and modernization is arduous due to the ideological underpinning of the Egyptian society which is characterized by its close relationship to religion and tradition.

Turning to the ideological violation of women subjectivity, the prevailing social hierarchy is based upon the discourse of sameness vs. difference which justifies not only the institutionalization of male dominance and female subordination, but it extends the same discourse over regulating and representing the intersecting dimensions of identity through race, ethnicity, class, among many others. The postcolonial female subjectivity is violated through the removal of of the position of a subject as having authority over her self (mind, subject). She is disempowered and objectified for the male desire, protection and violence at both the local (native) and global (Imperial) levels.

Accordingly, the female protagonists of Shashi Deshpande's novel *The Dark Holds No Terrors*, Ahlem Mosteghanmi's novel *Chaos of the Senses*, and Ahdaf Soueif's novel *In the Eye of the Sun* have arguably explored the shared possibility of the reappropriation of their subjectivity through their body, which has been regarded as their impediment to the androcentric view of subjectivity, in addition to deconstructing their gender norms in unique ways. In Shashi Deshpande's novel *The Dark Holds No Terrors*, the protagonist has been raised through the stigmatizing accusations of her mother and the regulatory mechanisms of gender norms. The author highlights the struggle of the female protagonist to affirm her subjectivity through gender transgressions in imposing her will and demonstrating her dominance, which is a masculine component of agency, through her interactive inclusion to the materialistic world by being socially and economically superior to her husband. In Ahlem Mosteghanmi's novel *Chaos of the Senses*, the female protagonist receives the same *indoctrination* of gender norms, but within a dense historical and political atmosphere that is characterized by illusion. The female protagonist's engagement in the pursuit of truth is carried out through the erotic aspect of her writing and gender transgression. As such, the female protagonist affirms her

subjectivity through following the logic of her senses and intuition in writing. In Ahdaf Soueif's novel *In the Eye of the Sun*, the protagonist revolts against the feminine script of gender norms and stereotypes of femininity, both locally and globally, to affirm her subjectivity and articulate her needs and thoughts through her sexuality.

Regarding sexual violation, the cult of femininity, which is common to universal androcentrism, is based on the phallocentric vision of lack as why women are inhibited of a self-oriented construction of female sexuality. This sexist discourse has located female sexuality at the periphery in relation to male's central sexuality, and opened the possibility for the abuse of female corporeality within the large realm of unethical hedonism. The three female authors have contested this essentially biological assumption by putting forward that their female protagonists have asserted their sexuality in their context. In Shashi Deshpande's novel *The Dark Holds No Terrors*, the female protagonist fulfills her sexuality through her transgressive act of marrying a man from a lower caste. Her husband provided her with the emotional security and support that she lacked with her parents, especially with her mother. However, her late professional fulfillment as a renowned doctor has deteriorated her sexual life to experiencing terror in bed with her husband's sadism. It is her late financial and social superiority which has indirectly subverted the asymmetric relationship husband/ wife, and dominant/subordinate of her marriage. This subversion of power relations explains the unconscious and deviant sexuality of the protagonist's husband as a defense mechanism to compensate for his disturbed masculine ego through violent power.

In Ahlem Mostaghanemi's novel *Chaos of the Senses*, the protagonist expresses her discontent with her husband's cold, mechanistic, and disloyal relationship. She could not find emotional or sexual fulfillment with her husband whose manifest identity is dominated by his materialistic achievements and the public image of the successful and powerful man that he projects against his most private desires. The protagonist's poetic character and writing career led

her to seek an erotic experience through writing fiction. The fictional enthusiasm led her follow her intuitive senses towards the experience of a romantic and erotic affair in the real world, leading to the development of her next novel. Eventually, she comes to the realization that her senses and the materialistic life have conspired to make her live a momentary illusion, and that she is condemned to the logic of the illusionary world that distorts a poetic and immaterialistic vision.

In Ahdaf Soueif's novel *In the Eye of the Sun,* the female protagonist found her emotional, moral and financial support from her husband. Yet, the restrictive attitudes and norms which her husband held towards premarital sex led her to develop vaginismus and to experience its repercussions. In addition to the lack of physical intimacy, the couple's estrangement as they lived apart while pursuing their careers has led to the female protagonist indulgence in a sexual affair with a Western man who is obsessed with Oriental women and cultures. Torn between the androcentric projections of her husband and her lover, the female protagonist feels abbreviated, and subjugated to the limited way they perceive her and expect her to become. Ultimately, she breaks free from both relationships by confronting them about how their projections of femininity manipulate her identity, and reaches the serenity she needs by taking control of her self.

III-7-1 Process of Female Selfhood Reconstruction

The following table sums up the issues dealt with in each novel.

Issues	Sarita	Hayat	Asya
Female selfhood (1)	*	*	*
Deconstruction/Reconstruction of subjectivity (2)	*	*	*
Transgression of Gender Norms (3)	*	*	*
Political Consciousness (4)		*	*
Violence (Symbolic/Concrete) (5)	*	*	*
Imperial stereotype of femininity (6)			*
Displacement (Symbolic/Concrete) (7)	*	*	*
Spiritual identification with one's roots (8)		*	*
Financial independence (9)	*		
Liberation from socio-cultural ties (10)			*

Table III-7-1: Process of Female Selfhood Reconstruction.

1- Female selfhood refers to the thematic quest of reconstructing an authentic and autonomous selfhood in the midst of the prescriptive projections of femininity and gender conduct.

2- Deconstruction/Reconstruction is linked to the cognitive and affective process of deconstructing the ready-made projections of femininity through critical consciousness and reconstructing an autonomous conception of one's subjectivity, and ultimately revealing it through manifest identitary practices.

3- Transgression of gender norms refers to crossing over the limits of the prevailing dogmas of feminine ideal conduct both in attitudes and practices.

4- Political consciousness denotes the female protagonists' awareness about the political issues both at the national and global levels. In *Chaos of the Senses* and *In the Eye of the Sun*, both heroines discuss political issues: Hayat is deeply concerned about national politics and pan-Arab politics. As for Asya, she discusses with her friends political matters of her nation as well as the Palestinian cause.

5- Speaking about violence in its symbolic and/or concrete manifestation, we imply the latent violence that is present in the prescriptive process of socialization that is inscribed in androcentric interests and the fundamental quest for power. This socialization or enculturation

inflicts violence upon the autonomous construction of identity at an early age. Despite being beneficiary for the male subject who enjoys acquired privileged, it causes him later an anxiety when confronted with a reality in which his female counterpart asserts her economic and/or social privileged. His neurosis would automatically lead him to inflict manifest or concrete violence upon his female counterpart. As for the female subject, she receives the double load of symbolic or abstract violence that is embedded in the gender norms and expectations of her society. She has to resist those norms, take control over her life, and assert her reconstructed selfhood in the society. Moreover, this female subject would inevitably experience the violence of her male counterpart whom her financial and/or social privilege (appropriation of power) disturbs his ego, and has to take the agency in controling one's life, confronting him and negotiating the possibility of a symmetrical relationship with him. In the three novels: *The Dark Holds No Terrors, Chaos of the Senses*, and *In the Eye of the Sun*, the three female protagonist experience both symbolic and concrete violence from their patriarchal society, androcentric expectations, and ultimately the manifest violence from the frustrated egos of their male counterparts.

6- By the imperial stereotype of femininity, we refer to the Orientalist lens through which Western men view women from the Middle East as exotic beings with promised sexual delights for their fantasies of manipulation and power. In the novel *In the Eye of the Sun*, the Orientalist stereotype of femininity is explored through the protagonist's relationship with a Western man.

7- By displacement in its symbolic or concrete aspect, we refer to the linguistic, geographic, and psychological displacement. In the novel *The Dark Holds No Terrors*, Sarita voluntarily experiences psychological displacement from her parents and her belonging to middle class status. She deserted her parents for her marriage with a man from a lower caste, and sought a successful medical career that lifts her up from poverty and low finances. In *Chaos of the Senses*, Hayat voluntarily seeks displacement from fact to her fictional world through

embracing and following the attitudes of her alter ego to seek realistic material for her fictional story. In the novel *In the Eye of the Sun*, Asya experiences both psychological and geographic displacement from her gender expectations and native country. Her diasporic experience helped her to overcome her identity dilemma and seek liberation and self-assertion.

8- Concerning the spiritual identification with one's roots, we refer to the female protagonists' identification to their female ancestors and models of conduct. Both Hayat and Asya are inspired by symbolic female models from their own culture: while Hayat is inspired by the nationalist activist Djamila Bouhired, Asya is inspired by her ancestor female Pharaohs. Both models reveal the culture that was agreeable and promising for the development of the status of women.

9- Financial independence refers to the freedom one earns from subjugation to the provider's will. In the novel *The Dark Holds No Terrors*, the female protagonist occupies the dominant position for the superior value of her occupation as a doctor, which provided her with social and financial privilege over her husband's. In both *Chaos of the Senses*, and *In the Eye of the Sun*, despite the fact that the female protagonists are career oriented women and enjoy social esteem, they remain relatively dependent to either their husbands' or parents' financial support.

10- By liberation from the socio-cultural ties, we infer liberation from the institution of marriage which is built upon patriarchal principles of female subjugation and servitude. Unlike the protagonists of *The Dark Holds No Terrors* and *Chaos of the Senses* (Sarita and Hayat), the protagonist in the novel *In the Eye of the Sun* (Asya) breaks her ties from marriage and her extramarital affair through frank confrontation and fluent expression of her frustration about men's manipulative interests.

III-7-2 Pyramid Chart of Women's Hierarchy of Oppression

This pyramid illustrates the stratification of oppression to the female subjectivity.
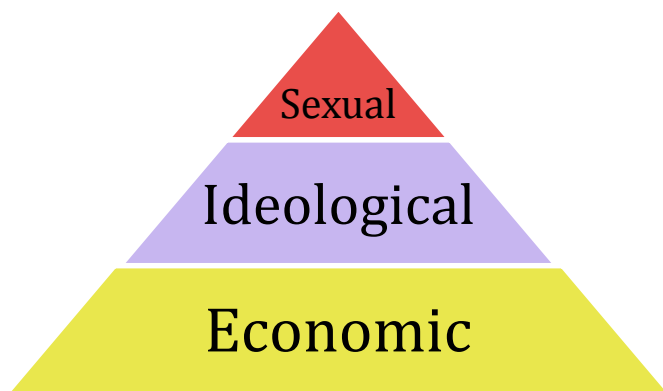
Figure III-7-2 : Hierarchy of Women Oppression (Self-made).

This pyramid chart reveals the levels of women oppression depicted in the hierarchical shape of a pyramid. The economic level at the bottom is the fundamental foundation upon which power relations are based. Taking as a starting point the fact that women are more related to their biological bodies due to their procreative abilities, the androcentric view has identified this biological feature as limiting the female subject from taking progressive advances to control the outer world. This logic led to the systematic development of a multilayered ideology that identifies man as the dominant subject upon Earth. Of course, the will to power, which is the driving force of the androcentric concerns through accumulation of wealth, led to the prescriptive organization of social relations in a hierarchy at the local and global levels including race, ethnicity, class, among other categories. The sexual oppression lies at the top of social segregation, reducing women's selfhood to their sexualised corporeality under the hegemony of patriarchy and Imperialism, and attributing to femininity inferiorizing connotations that violate their self-esteem and potentiality.

III- 7-3 Venn Diagram of the Overlapping of the Violation of Female Subjectivity

This Diagram shows the trapped female subjectivity amidst its violating systems.
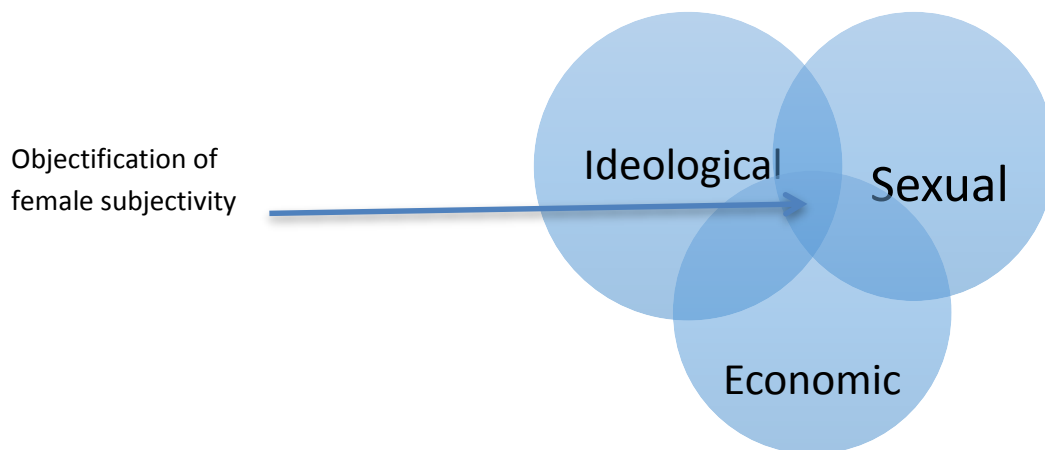
Figure III-7-3: Objectification of the Female Subjectivity through the Overlapping Violations (Self-made).

This Venn diagram shows the overlapping of the economic, ideological and sexual oppression that intersect resulting in the annihilation of female subjectivity towards her objectification and dehumanization.

III- 7-4 Diagram of the Self and the Other, as Inscribed in Women Projections and Self-Perceptions

The self is an island in the vast *Other*
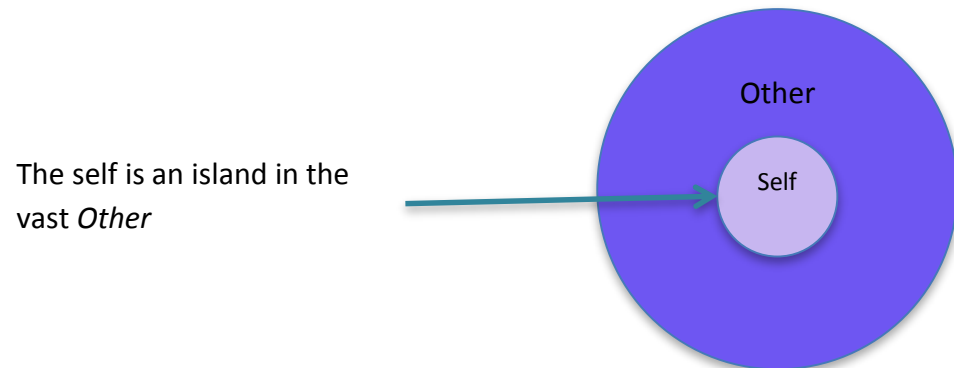
Figure III-7-4: Representation of the Enmeshment of the Self within the *Other* (Self-made).

This diagram shows the self as overwhelmed by the all-embracing androcentric social organizations. Despite one's attempts to assert and experience oneself authentically and autonomously, one has to appropriate androcentrism through economic and ideological subversion as the only strategy to speak back to a system that uses power and violence to impose itself.

III-8 Conclusion

The three female authors: Shashi Despande, Ahlem Mostaghanemi, and Ahdaf Soueif, depict a portrait using extremes to underscore the notion that, as human beings, women more often than not find themselves caught between limits in some liminal wasteland of indecision, indifference, and uncertainty. These women writers have placed their female protagonists in the liminal space of the binaries that are inscribed as projections/self-perceptions, fact/fiction, and orthodox/liberated, having access to both polarities and, yet, belonging to none. The three authors, like many other artists and intellectuals of the second half of the twentieth century,

such as Anita Desai, Toni Morrison, and Fadia Faqir, experienced and expressed the general sense of ambivalence, the feelings of ineffectualness and impotence, and the sense of isolation and confusion that have come to define the era around globalization for both genders. The authors' concern is to explore the root-cause of the fragmentation of their female protagonists and explore the dynamics of their psyche in their process to self-actualization and fulfillment.

Thus, the three novels portray the female protagonist's growing consciousness about her own interests and desires, which are restricted by the rigid traditional societies. This consciousness has triggered a dilemma between the conceived totalizing projections that have been legitimized and perpetuated through cultural and political institutions, and, on the other hand, her lived experience and self-perception which contests and questions the androcentric and imperialistic representation, revealing its blind spots, and demonstrating its tight paradoxes. At the peak of her conscience, this female subject starts to untie gradually her shackles from the acquired inhibiting gender expectations. She starts by critically questioning those socio-cultural projections of femininity that have confined her to the biological function, and later gets engaged in expressing her rejection through resistant acts that challenge her gender role. In her journey for self-knowledge away from the restricting social conventions, the conscious female subject transgresses the inner frontier of self-discovery and explores her *self* and the world with a beginner's fresh mind. In this literary study, the way the selected women authors explored transgression of the patriarchal norms leading to the reconstruction of their protagonists' selfhood has been investigated. Moreover, these authors highlight the female sexuality and its erotic side that go beyond procreation. In so doing, they have sought to 'speak the unspeakable' by exploring this taboo theme, by transgressing both gender and literary expectations.

Through creatively deconstructing their socio-cultural gender norms, the three women authors invite the reader to inspect the process of female construction of autonomous selfhood.

Gone is the prudence of speaking up the unspeakable such as discussing sexual taboos, national traumas, and dogmatic beliefs. Recalling the personal and national memories that disrupt one from catharsis is an outstanding step towards moving on. There is a relief in confronting and writing about these sensitive and debateful issues at the individual, and collective level; the boundaries of denial and repression are lifted and the subject gains self-reconciliation and creative power. Henceforth, writing is a creative therapeutic activity, a critical action of coming out of the cocoon of home and the inner self.

When the sense of one's identity wavers, the only direction left in which to seek for meaning may be inward. Taking the first step towards realizing one's subjectivity is a step taken through one's lived experience. These literary narratives reflect the protagonists' journey to self-fulfillment and self-actualization, though shaped by external factors such as the cultural and historical aspects; it also reflects the authors' wellspring of perceptions, feelings, values, and aspirations. Telling stories through recounting the sad memories and moving repressions can externalize human struggles, so that they might be comprehended more objectively reaching self-reconciliation and liberation, and create a new narrative of understanding, coping with and moving forward. Those memories and feelings must be recalled and faced in order to reach healing. The act of repressing them can never enable one to forget, i.e. to heal from one's dramatic traumas. Indeed, both of the individual and collective aspects of one's identity need to confront the concrete and abstract violence and terror inflicted upon psyche through shadow integration into one's consciousness.

On the other hand, the three authors, namely, Shashi Deshpande, Ahlem Mostaghanemi, and Ahdaf Soueif aim to regain connection between men and women, and between the individual and the global society. They do not espouse the radical tenets of Western feminism and its militant pursuit of emancipation. Instead, they seek for the wholeness of female identity and existence, not through direct rebellion against men but through a

strategic assertion of one's identity within society. Our selected authors provide us with the portrayal of the specific condition of the postcolonial women's status during the last decades of the twentieth century; their female protagonists articulate and reconstitute their identity through transgression and introspection. The literary texts chosen to the examination of the aforementioned concerns considerably provide an authentic representation that improves our comprehension of this phase in postcolonial history, as well as its effects on the postcolonial woman subject and society overall. Therefore, the three women authors write about the protagonists' existential crisis and creatively express their alienation, anger, and disharmony that mark this transitional phase in postcolonial history.

Indeed, difference of representation prevails between the Algerian, Egyptian and Indian cultural contexts, which construct a contrastive exploration of the major themes that are discussed relatively in our analysis of the selected literary corpora. In tracing the journey of the female protagonists towards their self-fulfillment, we have highlighted these cultural, economic, religious, and political specificities regarding their exclusive aims and demands through their representation in our selected narratives. Yet, we insist on the essential assumption that feminist concerns transcend the simple scope of difference to be a movement expressed in intellectual, artistic and literary works against the patriarchal order and androcentric interests.

Although Shashi Deshpande and Ahdaf Soueif write in English, Ahlem Mosteghanmi does it in Arabic. We have incorporated the English translated version in order to share our reading experience with a larger audience beyond the Arabic linguistic boundary; their language differs from the English or Arabic literature of the English and Arabic authors who write from an English or Arabic origin. Their literature is by no means identical to the original country of their adopted language nor is it similar to that of their country of origin. As such, it may rightly bear the epithet of a *hybrid* literature which bears the cultural and linguistic markers

of both the authors' country of origin and that of their adopted language (Britain/Middle East). Their literature is also a space where both home and host cultures converge, intersect, and even sometimes clash.

Significantly, the diversity of the historical, cultural, social, economic and religious characteristics of the authors' relative countries creates unique sites where one can reflect upon the intersecting mode of writing. This mode seems to adopt English as the language of expression for the Indian and Egyptian selected novels as well as using the Arabic language for the Algerian novel as a resistant strategy of speaking back to the metropolis (Western Imperialism/Islamic Radicalism) against their hegemonic discourse. Accordingly, the use of the English language by the Egyptian and Indian authors, respectively Ahdaf Soueif and Shashi Deshpande, denotes more than just the language they have been comfortable with, but more of a strategy of appropriation and subversion of the imperial discourse and language in order to reflect the distinctiveness of the gendered postcolonial experience both in text and context. Moreover, the use of the Arabic language by Ahlem Mosteghanmi is a reactionary statement to speak back to both of the extremist Islamic discourse and the *ruling pouvoir*'s and reveals the exploitative and insincere nature of their agenda. In doing so, their literature expands the richness and heterogeneity of English and Arabic literature, and discourse by bearing the cultural markers of both the addresser's native language and that of the addressee.

GENERAL CONCLUSION

The selected literary works of Shashi Deshpande, Ahlem Mostaghanemi and Ahdaf Soueif have demonstrated the extent to which the cult of femininity common to universal androcentrism is the major limiting factor for Indian, Algerian, and Egyptian women; holding them back from constructing an authentic and autonomous identity beyond the hegemony of patriarchal and imperial egocentrism. As such, this Doctoral research holds that the latent myth of womanhood and femininity engendered by androcentric fantasies is maintained by both tradition and structural power to perpetuate a fixed and disempowered model that annihilates a self-oriented construction of identity. As the scholar Hague Euan (1997) declares: "society constructs masculinity as a bearer of power and subjugates femininity to maintain the dominance of that power through patriarchy" (51). As such, this research validates the main assumption that gendered identity is a socio-cultural construct and not an inert fact of nature, and that patriarchy is a universal fabricated institution preserved by systematic power structures, i.e. culture and law. Projected onto the female subject are the *anima* fantasies defined within the general negative represenational framework with a set of regidly generalized stereotypes that are antithetical to the concept of masculinity; all women are deemed to be morally degenerate, irrational, sensual, and are ultimately to be controlled and domesticated. Institutionalized femininity relies on feminine instinct rather than intelligence; selflessness rather than self-realization; and relation to the *other* rather than creation of self. Hence, the myth of femininity implies inferiority and subordination to masculinity, which helps, of course, to buttress the male's sense of masculinity and ego as inherently superior and masterful.

In this regard, we affirm that the indoctrination of the cult of femininity and rules of gender conduct result in either eternal self-silencing or transgressive self-assertion. If the internalisation of the androcentric sets of values was to a degree an effective way of disempowering women, it was also the source of trauma for women who were taught to look negatively at themselves not as a human subject, with agency over one's interests and needs,

but as an object, a peculiarity, or the *Other*, who is placed at the mercy of androcentric narrow definitions and specifications. In the selected fictional works, the female protagonist feels abbreviated, violated, and enslaved by a way of perception that denies her the right to define her own identity as an autonomous subject. As such, we hold that identity is a double-sided concept. One side is self-controlled by the agency of the subject in constructing an authentic selfhood through ongoing dynamics of negociation with the contextual identitary forms. The other side is antithetical to the first one; the subject is subordinated to the agency of the androcentric powers, i.e. language, knowledge, and culture. Hence, it is reduced to a domesticated version. The androcentric hegemony makes for the female subject a ready-made model to fit in, and in doing so, it commits a sexual, economic, and ideological violence against her subjectivity, and splits her very sense of self in a binary division of her projections/self-perceptions.

The far-reaching effects of the hegemony of prescriptive identification is of paramount significance. The hegemony of androcentric culture maintains that women are doomed to hold the traumatizing belief of their own inferiority and subordination. One automatic response to such trauma is to strive to escape it by embracing the ideal of womanhood reflected in domesticity, piety, and submission. But however hard women try to accept the values and be adapted accordingly in a man's world; to don the persona that has been already set up in order to achieve a redemption that will cover up their so-called essential nature of moral degeneracy and irrationality indexed by their feminine sex, they would never be accepted on equal terms with men. That imaginative distinction between genders is a devastating part of patriarchal domination, one that imprisons the mind as securely as chains imprison the body. For the selected female authors, the end of patriarchy means not just political or economic change, but essentially a cultural, psychological and existential change as well. Patriarchy is destroyed only once its way of thinking about identity is successfuly challenged.

At that point, the female protagonists of the selected fictional corpora flip the coin and realize that their identity is not the preconceived, limited, and fixed one that has led to their dilemma, but the one which renders itself to their own agency for self-exploration and realization. Between the polar sides of the identity coin is that inevitable space of alienation and confusion that stems from the consciousness of the incompatibility of the protagonists' quest of self-fulfilled identity. It is an ambivalent space where disenchantment distablises the sense of identity of the female protagonists. The confining attitudes as well as the repressed desires of the female protagonists have created a sense of being, an order of gendered existence that was to be performed. The commonly held assumptions about gender roles and rules of conduct, which justified the patriarchal domination, led to an identity crisis and accumulated repression in the female subjects' psyche. Indeed, the selected literary works apply a certain structure, which sets up a number of clear oppositions in order to present reality as dominated by a binary logic between a subject and its antithesis, self/other, male/female, Occidental/Oriental, etc. By setting up and personifying these binaries, the female authors projected scenarios where the female protagonists are constantly confronted with a hegemonic patriarchal form and struggle to assert their own defined identity rather than give in to the pressure of the dominant culture that ascribed to them a position and a role in accordance to the androcentric order.

The three female authors, Shashi Deshpande, Ahlem Mostaghanemi, and Ahdaf Soueif have explored in their selected novels the extent to which both patriarchal authority and the female protagonists' urge to an authentic identity reconstruction have interacted and yielded a distinguished female subject who has reconciled with her society, and essentially with her self. The female protagonists have broken their condition of subalternity and mutedness, and have articulated their voices and asserted their convictions. In so doing, the awakened ego of the female protagonists has experienced its *animus* (masculine) side, i.e, its active self-

consciousness, as good as bad at once. The latter has emerged from the *anima* (feminine) matrix, and found itself by distinguishing itself from this matrix to the degree of experiencing and accentuating one's difference and individuality. During the ambivalent period of interstitial interaction, the female protagonists had to relatively transgress in different levels of severity the norms and rules of conduct of their corresponding societies and cultures. In doing so, they have deconstructed tradition as an inhibiting system against the progress of their self-actualization and fulfillment, showing its pitfalls as it fails to be homely to the demands of the new postcolonial woman who aspires advancement in her professional career. We confirm that this interstitial space of transgression is a rite of passage to women self-realization which essentially questions her projections. In addition to the female protagonists' trangressive acts against their cultural mores of conduct (manifested through appropriating one's authority over the mind and body), their confrontation with the unconscious flux of their past repressions, i.e. *the uncanny*, play pivotal roles in the progress towards self-emancipation from the confining attitudes as well as towards self-reconciliation with their past traumas. These acts necessitate the protagonists' dislocation and retreat from their persona to an identification with their repressed self. The aim from such symbolic dislocation is to work for their self-liberation which has a healing effect on the female psyche through the dialogue of one's ego with the shadow. As such, this symbolic dislocation allows for an individuation and self-assertion of the new self-oriented identity.

Indeed, the quest for the female's identity in the postcolonial era is an interesting research study in psychoanalytical feminism and socio-cultural studies. It reflects the degree to which women are socially integrated and nationally assimilated following the progressist standards; especially as their misery is doubled at the level of oppression from both the Western legacy of colonialism and Imperialism, and the hegemony of the local gendered and ethnic hierarchies which sustain the universal discriminatory attitude of being second-class

humans/citizens. Strikingly, men who advocate women advancement also endure this load that leads them to experience critical psychological troubles with their masculine ego. The new society, thus, becomes a collection of fragmented beings who are torn between the progressist urges and the conservative restraints. It is noticeable that the postcolonial literary texts of the late twentieth century are replete with the protagonists' neuroses and alienation as themes with the motif of self-fulfillment that triggers their existential journey. The latter confirms the struggle of the postcolonial female subject to find answers to her existential controversy over one's self-perception and her projections. The literary texts chosen to the examination of the aforementioned concerns have provided a considerable and creative representation that improved our comprehension of this period in postcolonial history and its effects on the woman subject. The three authors write from the womb of oppression and creatively express the alienation, anger, and disharmony that characterise this transitional stage towards development and modernity. In doing so, the authors have reflected the difficulties they experience in their contribution to the post-independent nation building and development and revealed how their participation earns them self-esteem but harms their man/woman relationship.

Worth noting is the fact that the female authors have reconstructed the subjectivity of their female fictional protagonists as well as the language of their expression by discursively creating a hybridized version of English/Arabic. This new language is interlaced with native expressions and reshaped in feminine style in order to carry the specific cultural andgendered reality and its rhetorical style. The adoption of this new literary language enables the authors to address a wider range of readers and convey to them a positive picture of the native culture. The female authors, therefore, consciously undermine the prevalent negative image of their respective cultures of the foreign media and show their skill in rendering language to their own command.

Considering the period in which these literary texts are produced, it is noticed that the three female authors authentically correspond in their writings the anxieties and concerns in sequence to the surrounding historical and cultural context. Within the complex contextual situation of the authors, evaluating the female self needs to be appreciated within the light of its historical, political, and socio-cultural aspects. Moreover, their societies, which cultivate marriage as a central social institution, limit the career-oriented woman's freedom in both the private and public sphere. Speaking about India, Shashi Deshpande's novel *The Dark Holds No Terrors* provides a deep insight about the encounter of the Indian society with the controversy of tradition and modernity and the different aspects of its implications on both men and women. The author discusses issues that have been kept in silence such as marital rape and sexual sadism, as well as the female's contribution to maintaining the hierarchical gendered and ethnic oppositions in Indian patriarchal society such as male/female, and superior/inferior. The author scrutinizes the psychological effects of the violence of the patriarchal order on both her male and female characters. Turning to Algeria, Ahlem Mostaghanemi's novel *Chaos of the Senses* (*Fawda El Hawas*), is written in a time considered as a national crisis due to the political unrest and the alienation of people from each other during the 1990s. It offers a valuable interpretation of the psychological, existential, corporeal, socio-cultural and political experience of the crisis in Algeria. The author relies on the conceptualisation of the erotic to challenge the violence of patriarchal and political authority and transgress its norms. Ahdaf Soueif's novel *In the Eye of the Sun* offers a seminal insight into both Arab and Orientalist stereotypes of femininity and insists that the Arab woman should resist the oppression of both the local and foreign androcentric projections that inhibit self-expression as well as an autonomous and authentic identity construction.

The three authors provide a female-centered literary narrative about the root-cause of the tension and the incompatibility that the Indian, Algerian and Egyptian female individuals

experience in this transitional period which provokes their fragmentation and divided-self. The literary narratives also show how the female protagonists who are career-oriented women develop their strength in order to cope with the alienation, trauma, violence, and the impediments that they endure when seeking to fulfill themselves and their aspirations. As such, the recurrence of the commonality of the material conditions to the production of these lliterary texts confirms Elaine Showalter's claim that feminist women writing is a 'literature of their own', and that the literary corpora reflect the female phase in the development of their genre.

The career-oriented female subject, whether she follows the path to self-actualization and individuation with the consent of her parents and society or without it, faces the double load of obstacles from the hegemonic socio-political systems in the postcolonial era. It is found that the three female protagonists unconsciously go through the same labyrinthal journey in their identity quest as a pilgrimage journey to reconciliate with the universal patriarchal connotations of being women. It seems that this labyrinthal journey through a tripartite structure is a common archetypal pattern in reality, albeit varying cultural degrees in which its triad levels appear one level versus another.   In doing so, the female authors encourage women, both at the local and global levels, to advance in the *erotic* (according to Bataille's symbolic conceptualization) pursuit of one's self-actualization and individuation and reject the prescribed gender identity that confines them to the domestic sphere. They advocate women to put faith in their truth instead of the group's half-truths. Moreover, in their exploration of the existential journey of career-oriented women in the postcolonial era, the female authors meet at the certain point that their protagonists never reach the end of that labyrinthal journey, which implies the ongoing strife for identity quest where the external objectification of desire is projected onto the *Other*. The absurdity of their quest, which condemns these fictionalized female subjects to a cyclical repetition, mimics Friedrich

Nietzsche's notion of the burden of *eternal recurrence*[58] as well as Albert Camus' notion of the eternal return of the *myth of Sisyphus*[59]. In this sense, the female authors sincerely reveal that the fundamental challenge is to keep faith and hope through the ongoing appeal of a balanced society with symmetric relations and equal rights, to a transhuman world that praises difference rather than scorn it. They channeled the *sublime* and the *real* to *reality* through art, and created a truth or fictionalized narratives that reflect their vision and desire. Significantly, the philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche contends in his *Will to Power* that, "we have art that we shall not die of reality", suggesting that art is guided unknowingly by the *real* to transform reality into a truth. Therefore, a truth is a fictionalized narrative that enriches human experience through its hedonistic illusions that reflect the aesthetic constructions of human thought.

Besides, the projection of the three protagonists' transgression of the marital ties in their narratives symbolizes the peak point of their revolution against the inhibiting norms of self-expression. It is an aesthetic reflection that is used purposefully by the authors to show the extent to which the accumulation of repression and the complexity of the contextual background can lead to a chaos of morals and a loss of control over the private sphere of one's identity which is their sexuality. The authors' portrayal of their protagonists' transgressive acts against the marital ties of loyalty is but an artistic expression about rebellion and self-assertion and does not necessarily represent women in their respective cultures who resist the patriarchal order without giving up their mores of conduct especially when it comes to the sanctity over one's body.

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[58] Nietzsche's concept of eternal recurrence refers to the idea that all existence and energy has been recurring, and shall continue to recur in an infinite manner across time and space (also the ancient idea of the *Ouroborous* as the symbol of birth, death, rebirth)

[59] *The Myth of Sisyphus* (1942) is a philosophical work by Albert Camus. It reveals the absurdist aspect of life and meaning through its use of the Greek figure 'Sisyphus' who is condemned to repeat the same absurd task of pushing a boulder up a mountain forever, only to see it roll down again. Camus concludes his work by saying his famous cynical phrase: "One must imagine Sisyphus happy", implying that one is obliged to construct a positive meaning to life despite its absurdity to avoid the wretched condition of existence.

Importantly, the selected women writers are depicting protagonists' behaviours in conformity with their understanding or perception of reality and creative imagination. Yet, it must be underlined that their respective protagonists' behaviours are not at all representative of the cultural identities to which they belong but are the translation of idealistic or artistic literary expression.

Certainly, if one were to recommend further research in the field of the psychoanalytical, postcolonial, and feminist in-depth exploration of the individual's psyche and its surrounding social organization, then a key implication of this research would be the importance of investigating not only the concrete and symbolic effects of social organization on the fictional characters in their journey for self-fulfillment, but the realistic evaluation in which one can undermine the hegemony of androcentric and patriarchal interests on the psyche of both males and females. For this purpose, an active cultural work must be undertaken in order to change the attitudes and societal expectations. The deconstruction of the normative frameworks in which one is allowed to think, speak, and write is fundamental in transcending the limited discursive subjectivities. At the pedagogical level, one can promote poststructuralist reading and writing about the discourse of power relations through the study of literatures that speak back to the metropolis in its language and deconstruct the limited binary logic and linear identifications. The aim is to highlight the third vector operating in order to ensure the maintenance of the dualistic system. This third space is the point through which the binaries meet, interact, and create the triad that symbolises the enfoldment and unfolding that reconciles all.

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APPENDICES

LIST OF APPENDICES

I- Short Biography of Shashi Deshpande

Shashi Deshpande (1938-) is a renowned Indian novelist and a recipient of 'the Sahitya Akademi Award' for her novel *That Long Silence* in 1990 and 'the Padma Shri Award' in 2009. She was born in Dharwad, Karnataka (South India) to a family of intellectuals. She received her education in Mumbai and Bengalore, and graduated in Economics and Law. Later on, she took a diploma in journalism in 1970 and an M.A. in English. Deshpande has written four children books, a play, five volumes of short stories, and eleven novels, in addition to many influential essays on social and political interests.
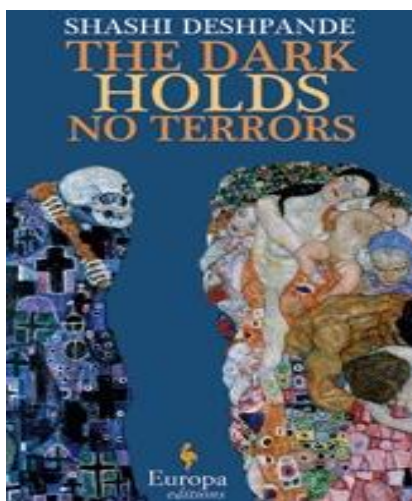
I- 1 Plot Summary of *The Dark Holds No Terrors 1980*

This novel explores the journey of a *Hindu* woman seeking a medical career and climbing the ladder of social and financial success in a patriarchal society. The protagonist, Sarita, comes from a middle class rural family who adopts traditional attitudes towards women and their role in life. Following the accidental death of her little brother, Sarita's mother accuses her for killing her brother intentionally and refuses to listen to the circumstances leading up to his unexpected death. These accusations coupled with the hostile and discriminating treatement of her mother traumatise the young protagonist's psyche and she seeks personal and social recognition and acceptance through her studies and medical career. Moreover, her rebellious character is revealed when she transgresses her socio-cultural and familial boundaries through marrying a man from a lower caste whom she later unintentionally destroys his masculine ego with her earned social and fianacial superiority. The repercussions of Sarita's traumatized psyche with guilt make her suffer at her personal life with the subverted sexual behaviour of her husband, which turned into unconscious sexual sadism. Sarita seeks to solve her dilemma to end her psychological and physical suffering through taking refuge in her father's house and reflecting upon the events of her life, from her traumatic experience of a domineering mother during her childhood, to her marriage and earning a successful medical career. In the midst of her reflections, Sarita becomes aware of the necessity of confronting her husband about his pathological sexual behaviour and assume her responsibility in taking control of her life.

I-2 Shashi Deshpande's Published Works

Novels

The Dark Holds No Terrors. Vikas, 1980.

If I Die Today. Vikas, 1982.

Roots and Shadows. Sangam, 1983.

Come Up and Be Dead. Vikas, 1985.

That Long Silence. Virago Press, 1988.

The Binding Vine. Virago Press, 1994.

A Matter of Time. Penguin Books, 1996.

Small Remedies. Viking, 2000.

Moving On. Penguin Books India, 2004.

In the Country of Deceit. Penguin/Viking, 2008.

Shadow Play. Aleph, 2013.

Short Stories

The Legacy and Other Stories. Writers Workshop, 1978.

It Was Dark. Writers Workshop, 1986.

The Miracle and Other Stories. Writers Workshop, 1986.

It Was the Nightingale. Writers Workshop, 1986.

The Intrusion and Other Stories. Penguin India, 1994.

Plays

Drishte, 1990.

Other (for children)

A Summer Adventure. IBH, 1978.

The Hidden Treasure. IBH, 1980.

The Only Witness. IBH, 1980.

*The Narayanpur Incident*. IBH, 1982.

II- Short Biography of Ahlem Mostaghanemi

Ahlem Mostaghanemi (1953-) is an Algerian poet and novelist. She was born in exile in Tunis while her country Algeria was undergoing a political and military unrest. After independence, her family returned to Algeria and her father occupied high rank military offices. As the eldest child, Mostaghanemi grew up in a dense political atmosphere that has shaped her conscious concerns and writings. Her father encouraged her to study in Arabic and to pursue a writing career. Mostaghanemi started with writing poetry and later shifted to fiction. Her first novel 'Memory of the Flesh' received the Naguib Mahfouz Prize. She later adds two sequels to it: *Chaos of the Senses* in 1997, and *Bed Hopper* in 2003. Mostaghanemi later adds two published novels to her account.

II- 1 Plot Summary of the Novel *Chaos of the Senses 1997*
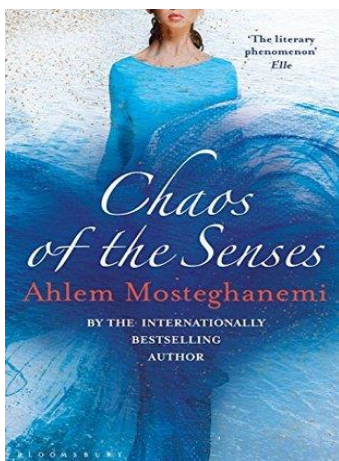
The novel is the second sequel of her trilogy. Set in a dense political atmosphere, it narrates the female protagonist's poetic and erotic adventure that links her fictional world to her realist condition. Being trapped in a marriage of interest coupled with the terror of the period of the Algerian Civil War during the 1990's, the protagonist Hayat finds solace through writing fiction. Through her current literary project, Hayat reflects a projection of her feminine and masculine subjectivity onto her characters and considers seriously her narrative as a means of flight from her   conflicted life through confessional writing. Hayat embodies her own beliefs and desires through her embodiment of her female protagonist. The turning point occurs when Hayat becomes indulged in an extramarital romance with the male protagonist of her narrative. This happens when she seeks inspiration from real life, but her feminine sensibility takes the agency in orientating the plot. The author's captivating poetic prose describes the journey of the protagonist into reconciliation with her guilt from the disturbing trauma of the ideological unrest and its effects on her writings and personal life. The protagonist finds her liberation through mixing between her real and illusionary-fictionalized worlds and transgressing her gender norms and rules of conduct for a married woman. Written in poetic prose, this novel is a historical, socio-cultural, political and gendered account of the Algerian Civil War and the woman condition during the postcolonial   period.

II-2 Ahlem Mostaghanemi's Published Works

Novels

Zakirat el Jassad (Memory of the Flesh/The Bridges of Constantine). Dar al adab, 1993.

Fawda el Hawas (Chaos of the Senses). Dar al adab, 1997.

Aber Sareer (Bed Hopper). Dar al adab, 2003.

El Aswad Yalikou Biki (Black Suits You so Well). Hachette-Antoine, 2012.

Anthologies

Ala Marfa al Ayam (In the Harbour of Days). SNED, 1973.

Al Kitaba fi Lahdat Ouray (Writing in a Moment of Nudity). Dar Al-Adab, 1976.

Algérie, femmes et écriture (Algeria, Women and Writings). l'Harmattan, 1985.

Akadib Samaka (Lies of a Fish). l'ENAG, 1993.

*Nessyane.com* (The Art of Forgetting). Dar Al-Adab, 2009.

III- Short Biography of Ahdaf Soueif

Ahdaf Soueif (1950-) is leading Anglophone writer who lived both in England and Egypt. She was born in Cairo to intellectual parents who encouraged her to follow her own path in academic and writing career. Her frequent travels to England and her surrounding political atmosphere contributed to the shaping of her thought and writing. She is actively engaged in cultural, feminist, and political issues at the local and global level. Her debut novel *In the Eye of the Sun* set her as an acclaimed Arab Diasporic writer. Her second novel *The Map of Love*, was shorlisted for the Booker prize for fiction in 1999. Ahdaf Soueif is also a social and political commentator in the Guardian in London as well as in the Egyptian daily Al Shorouk, she writes both in English and in Arabic. In addition, she is the author of a number of attractive collections of short stories and books in which she expresses her concerns.

III-1 Plot Summary of the Novel *In the Eye of the Sun 1992*
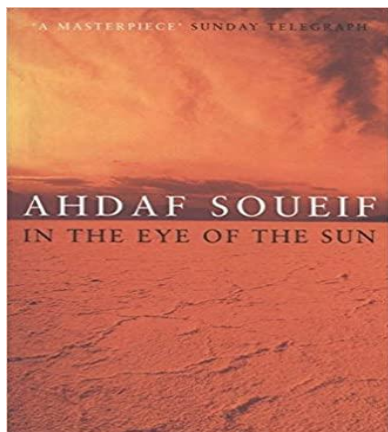
This buildungsroman novel follows the self-actualization and individuation of the female protagonist, Asya al-Ulama, from adolescence to adulthood. It is dense epic novel that is set in a rich historical, political, and cultural background. As the novel opens, it reveals for the reader the surrounding familial, cultural and historical atmosphere that has shaped Asya's character and consciousness about gender norms as well as the national and global politics. The conflict begins when Asya meets Saif Madi, and falls deeply in love with him. As their relationship develops, Saif proposes to Asya and asks for her hand from her parents who firmly reject her engagement in marriage at an early age, especially that she did not graduate from university yet. Yet, Asya transgresses their decision and continues to date Saif secretly. Although the loving couple experiences physical intimacy, Saif is against engagement in any pre-marital sex due to the socio-cultural prohibition. As Asya conforms to Saif's projection of ideal femininity, she represses her sexuality, which later turns into severe vaginismus that she experiences after her marriage with Saif. Asya's eventual realization about her husband's disregard to their conjugal problem and their physical detachment leads her to seek an extra-marital relationship with a Western man who, in turn, imposes upon her the Orientalist image of Arab women. Soon, Asya breaks free from both relationships through the expression of her rejection to conform to the androcentric projections of femininity, which reduce her to an object for male satisfaction. Eventually, the feelings that follow Asya's self-assertion bring her overwhelming serenity and contentment.

III-2 Ahdaf Soueif's Published Works

Novels

In the Eye of the Sun. Bloomsbury, 1992.

The Map of Love. Bloomsbury, 1999.

Short Stories

Aisha. Jonathan Cape, 1983. Bloomsbury, 2000.

Sandpiper. Bloomsbury, 1996.

Zinat al-Hayh wa Qisas Ukhra (Life's Allurements and Other Short Stories). Dar al-Hilal, 1996.

Essays

Mezzaterra: Fragments from the Common Ground. Bloomsbury, 2004.

Non-Fiction Books

Reflections on Islamic Art. Bloomsbury Qatar Foundation Publishing, 2011.

Cairo: My City, Our Revolution. Bloomsbury, 2012.

Cairo, A City Transformed. Bloomsbury, 2014.

Translations

I Saw Ramallah, a memoir by Mourid al-Barghouti. AUC Press, 2000.

In Deepest Night. A play for al-Warsha Theatre Group perfomed at the Kennedy Centre, 1998.

IV- Vedic, Arabic and Hiyeroglif Scripts

Vedic Script

(https://www.wikiwand.com/en/Vedas)
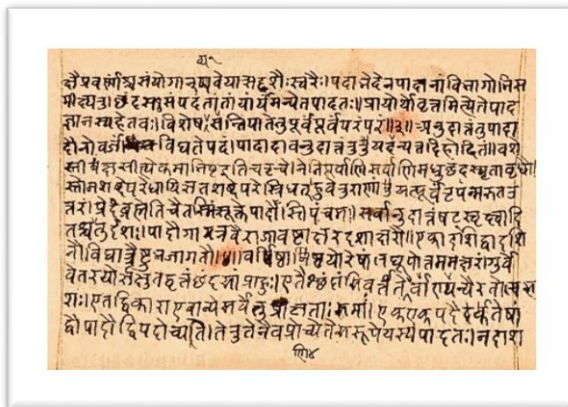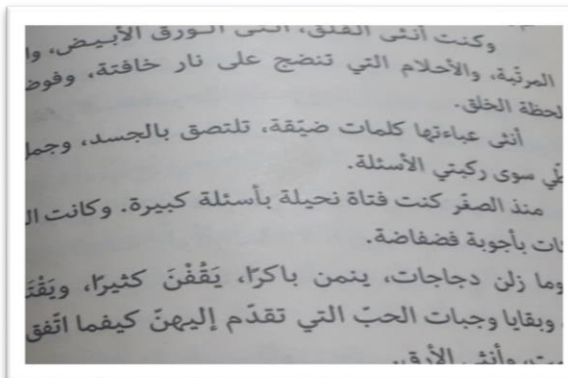
Arabic Script

(My own picture taken from the novel
Chaos of the Senses)

Hiyeroglif Script

https://teespring.com/stores/ancient-egyptian-gods

V- Traditional Clothing of Indian, Algerian, and Egyptian Women

Indian woman with her *Sari*

https://www.google.com/url?sa=i&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.pinterest.com%2Fpin%2F60869032436558288%2F&psig=AOvVaw1m1J8WL08DCgbjIPeqhX9f&ust=1605927478566000&source=images&cd=vfe&ved=0CAIQjRxqFwoTCKCeh7CQkO0CFQAAAAdAAAAABAI

Algerian woman with her *Gandoura*

(https://za.pinterest.com/pin/544724517424916096/)

Egyptian Woman with her *Gallabiya*

(https://www.ebay.ie/itm/EGYPT-An-Egyptian-town-woman-in-outdoor-dress-yelek-yashmak-abaya-1900-/401292745172)

VI- Modern Clothing Style of Indian, Algerian, and Egyptian Women

Modern Indian Woman

(https://shilpaahuja.com/daily-indian-fashion/)

Modern Algerian Woman
(https://twitter.com/Sophia_xv/status/9997
11969824399360/photo/2)

Modern Egyptian Woman

http://www.imesclub.org/research/female-
images-in-modern-egyptian-advertising-a-
religious-perspective

VII- VII- Representation of Ancient Indian, Algerian, and Egyptian Women in Scripts

Picture of *Hindu* Godesses Parvati, Lakshmi and Sarawati

(https://www.alamy.com/picture-of-hindu-goddesses-parvati-lakshmi-saraswati-image69896884.html)

Picture of Berber North African Women
(http://elraaed.com/ara/news/11969-اللباس-إفريقيا-شمال-فى-التقليدي-الرومانى.html)

Picture of Pharaonic Queen Nefertiti
https://www.google.com/url?sa=i&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.pinterest.com%2Fpin%2F252483122836312827%2F&psig=AOvVaw3y5jddC4SZDTNHbznTh3f0&ust=1605928027976000&source=images&cd=vfe&ved=0CAIQjRxqFwoTCKDvgaOSkO0CFQAAAAAdAAAAABAD

GLOSSARY OF SCIENTIFIC TERMS

The definition of the present terms is taken from works that are included in the works cited section.

Abyss: refers to the bottomless pit of Hell, deep void or chasm either in a literal or figurative sense. In Nietzsche's sense, the abyss is that chasm of stored sensations and thoughts of our direct experience with the outer world. The direct realization of one's abyss means confronting one's repressed feelings, ideas and desires, and bringing them to consciousness. It is a painful experience that the psyche prevents through its occupation with the ongoing input of sensory experiences.

Agency: The power of a human subject to exert his or her will in the social world. To have agency is to have social power; to lack it is to be ignored or subjugated by others who possess it. Typically, agency is associated with the subject of Western discourses and historical *agency* is perhaps the most important form. To acquire agency outside of or in conflict with these discourses is considered by many to be a political, even an insurrectionary act.

Alienation: A multifaceted term, with wide currency in literary and cultural theory. The general concept stems from the Marxist notion that workers cannot enjoy the fruits of their labor and are thus alienated from the objective world they help to create. In many cases, this term is used with a psychological emphasis and denotes experiences of anomie, disconnection, and isolation.

Alter ego: from Latin (állos egő) is a secondary self. The fascination behind an alter ego is in its secrecy, it is almost always a second identity or life that is being hidden from a person or

character's friends, family, and others around them. When a character lives more than one life, having a secret identity or taking on more than one personality, that alternate personality is their alter ego.

Ambivalence: In general, it refers to the failure of language or discourse to settle on a single definitive meaning. Rhetorically, ambivalence resembles irony, which marks a gap between a thing said and a thing done or between intention and effect.

Androcentrism: a term coined by the American writer Charlotte Perkins Gilman in her publication of 1911, *The Man-Made World or Our Androcentric Culture*, which denotes a system of thought centred around male identity and values. Within androcentrism, the female constitutes a deviation from a norm defined by reference to the male: a good example of this in language is the way in which 'mankind' is a term used to refer to all people regardless of their gender.

Autonomy and autonomous : These terms refer to the possibility of grounding subjectivity or aesthetic production beyond the influence of social, political, and cultural forces. The bourgeois SUBJECT is often described as *autonomous* in this sense. Some theorists speak of a process of *autonomization* by which the illusion of *autonomy* is maintained in both theory and practice.

Camouflage: A French notion that denotes strategic disguise in order to deceive someone. It is an imitation that is not complete. Mostly, it is an intentional strategy that projects the desired image while concealing the true one for specific purposes. Similar to mimicry, it is a form of resemblance that sometimes implies a threat to the authority.

Colonial discourse: A discursive form of domination. Colonial discourse consists of all those texts, documents, art works, and other means of expression that relate directly and indirectly to colonial rule. Colonial discourse is the object of certain forms of discourse analysis, for example orientalism.

Colonialism: it is the process whereby imperial states acquire new territories and exploit them for land, raw materials, and human labor. Administered colonies like India were in large part driven by commerce in native produce, but they were also major centers of imperial power. The colonial bureaucracy was large and offered advancement to Europeans, but it also created the need for native civil servants. By contrast, settler colonies involve the extensive settlement of Europeans, either through the establishment of penal colonies, as in Australia, or the appropriation of arable land, as in Ireland, the Caribbean, and parts of Africa. Decolonization is a period of intense social contradiction and conflict that typically ends in an anti-colonial resistance and the creation of independent nations. Neocolonialism refers to the continuation of European exploitation of former colonies and implies, on the part of those colonies, either economic helplessness or collusion.

Cultural feminism: It seeks to understand women's social locations in society by concentrating on gender differences between women and men. This type of feminism focuses on the liberation of women through individual change, the recognition and creation of "women-centered" culture, and the redefinition of femininity and masculinity.

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

Dialectics, Dialectical materialism: These terms refer both to a kind of process and to a mode

of analysis. The former goes back to Plato and the Socratic dialogues, in which logical propositions are formulated through the give-and-take of discussion. Hegel made famous the idea of an interplay between thesis and antithesis that yielded a new synthesis, while Marx put this idea into materialist terms when he theorized a dialectical struggle between classes that yielded a classless society. A dialectical materialist mode of analysis concentrates on the process of class struggle and its social, economic, and political effects. A dialectical logic underwrites most varieties of cultural materialism.

Discourse: Refers primarily to signifying systems, typically linguistic, within the limits of a particular field of study or knowledge (e.g., medical discourse, literary discourse). For some formalist theorists, discourse signifies a linguistic system constituting a dynamic totality. Michel Foucault has proposed the idea of the discursive formation, a term which refers to the aggregate of statements made about a given idea (madness, sexuality, punishment).

Écriture féminine: A form of strategic essentialism, which revalues women's bodies and identities outside of hegemonic discursive practices. It is an acknowledgment of the body as the mystical or spiritual ground for a specifically female *essence*, and thus as the origin and legitimation of a new form of writing. Literally, "feminine writing," it is typically translated, "writing the body."

Essence, essential, essentialism: The essence of a thing is what is inherent, indivisible, immutable about it, what it must possess in order to be a thing. It is the chief assumption behind biologistic theories of race and gender and it drives certain theories of literature and culture that rest on moral and ethical premises. Such theories are often referred to as essentialist. Opposed concepts include social constructivism and écriture feminine.

False consciousness: in philosophy, particularly within critical theory and other Marxist schools and movements, the notion that members of the proletariat unwittingly misperceive their real position in society and systematically misunderstand their genuine interests within the social relations of production under capitalism. False consciousness denotes people's inability to recognize inequality, oppression, and exploitation in a capitalist society because of the prevalence within it of views that naturalize and legitimize the existence of social classes.

Femininity: One of Simone de Beauvoir's most famous aphorisms is 'One is not born, but rather becomes, a woman' (*The Second Sex*). It is an apt summary of the feminist claim that, while femaleness is a consequence of biology, femininity originates from within societal structures. Femininity is thus a set of rules governing female behaviour and appearance, the ultimate aim of which is to make women conform to a male ideal of sexual attractiveness. Masquerading as 'natural' womanhood, it is actually something imposed upon the female subject, in spite of the fact that the pressure to conform to the culturally dominant feminine ideal is internalised to the extent that women effectively tailor themselves to fit it, hence the existence of an immensely profitable fashion and beauty industry. A twist to this debate, however, (and the essence of 'girl-power') stresses the pleasure of creating self-aware, even parodic, feminine identities which exploit the potential femininity offers to construct different versions of the self.

Gender is commonly believed to be congruent with sex and implies a whole set of norms and moral codes. More and more feminists like Judith Butler, Monique Wittig and Julia Kristeva have tried to escape and overthrow those stifling and limiting rules governing gender identity

by deconstructing the gendered and sexed categories and thus revealing their constructedness and artificiality.

Globalization : A term that encompasses a number of theories con- cerning the international extension of political, technological, and economic capital, in association with a form of cultural imperialism that seeks a universalized consumer culture. A *globalized* economy or a global culture is one in which difference is minimized and stan- dardization the norm.

Habitus: Associated with Pierre Bourdieu, habitus refers to a social practice, the construction of a subjectivity within the rules and limits of social field. These rules and limits are not arbitrary or externally applied but are rather the result of the aggregate of practices, habits, beliefs, and general knowledge that individuals acquire living in specific social environments. The ability successfully to manipulate habitus guarantees the individual social distinction.

Hegemony: The process by which the ideology of dominant classes exerts control through social, political, and cultural institutions. Ideo- logical hegemony is a form of non-coercive social control achieved through consensus rather than through direct and material coercion (e.g., military and police force). That this *hegemony* is achieved without force does not mean that it is thus benign. Counter-hegemony refers to attempts to critique or dismantle hegemonic power.

Hybridity, Hybridization: A term associated with postcolonial studies, where it is used to describe the multitude of subject positions and identities in colonial and, especially, postcolonial societies. Homi Bhabha describes it as an "affect" of colonial mimicry, in which the subject is doubled in a transgressive rewriting of colonial discourse. It can also result from

immigration and migration, especially the form known as *diaspora*, in which large numbers of a people are dispersed across wide geographical areas. Examples include the Jewish diasporas throughout history, the African diaspora that began with the slave trade, and the Irish diaspora that followed the famine of the 1840s. *Diasporic identities* are those formed along multiple geographical locations, the result of slavery, exile, expulsion, or emigration. These identities may be formed and nourished in enclaves or they may develop along cosmopolitan, multiracial, and multilingual lines. *Hybridity* thus refers to a pluralized identity, open to contingency and change, to linguistic, ethnic, and racial merger.

Hypnosis: An altered state of consciousness which results in an increased receptiveness and response to suggestion. While associated with relaxation, hypnosis is actually an escape from an overload of message units, resulting in relaxation. Hypnosis can be triggered naturally from environmental stimuli as well as purposefully from an operator, often referred to as a hypnotist.

Identity: A term that traditionally has designated the distinct and stable "personality" or "character" of an individual, both as it is con- ceived by others in social environments and as it is conceived by the individual herself. Identity is often spoken of in terms of its social construction or its gender and sexual determinations. Important for many theorists is the relationship between identity and ideology. Self- identity refers to the awareness of one's own identity as a stable and singular entity. In metaphysical philosophy, it refers to the possibility of a thing according perfectly with its idea, of the sublation of difference within absolute sameness. Non-identity is a term from dialectics that refers to the opposite pole of *identity*; in dialectical operations, nonidentity is subsumed into the construction of identity.

Ideology. In Marxist theory, a set of beliefs, laws, statutes, principles, practices, and traditions

proclaimed by a dominant class in order to rule other classes. Some theorists believe that ideology is an "unscientific" point of view, a form of "false consciousness" because it obscures the reality of historical processes. But ideology can also refer to any set of beliefs, laws, statutes, and the like; thus, we can speak of "working-class ideology" or "socialist ideology." Some theorists hold that ideology is precisely the process of representing ideas and beliefs in signifying systems, of making meaning in a social context.

Imaginary: it is both a chronological stage in individual maturation that is dominated by the perceptual and the later survival of sense-making patterns marked by these preverbal, pre-Oedipal forms of understanding. In its central event, the mirror stage, the young human identifies its own image, forms an idealized image (imago), and internalizes this identification as the beginning of its ego (moi).

Imaginary/Symbolic/Real: Orders of reality proposed by Jacques Lacan. The *Symbolic* designates the realm of law, language, reason, metaphysics, the phallus, and so on. The *Imaginary* is the order of fantasy, of pre-Oedipal merger (mother and child bond) and lack of differentiation, jouissance, différance. Some theorists argue that the Imaginary is, in fundamental ways, misrecognition of the Symbolic. The *Real* designates what cannot be designated, what cannot be thought or known via the Symbolic or the Imaginary. But its persistence, as in the Freudian unconscious, can be felt as symptoms in the Symbolic and, more effectively, the Imaginary order.

Imperialism: If colonialism refers to the administration of foreign territories, *imperialism* refers to the social and political objectives of colonialism and the economic and political consequences of competi- tion with other European states. It also specifies a phase of capitalist

development in which markets and labor shift to peripheral territo- ries. Imperialism also designates a complex matrix of cultural codes and practices grounded in the social, political, and economic realities of colonialism. Neoimperialism designates the continuation of these codes and practices after the imperial era, a situation which leaves the postcolony in a familiar state of dependency. Often used interchange- ably with neocolonialism.

Indoctrination: Theories of indoctrination generally define it in terms of aim, method, or doctrine. It is any form of teaching that causes students to embrace a specific set of beliefs, e.g., a certain political ideology or a religious doctrine—without regard for its evidential status. Thus it is contrasted to critical thinking and objectivity.

Intersecionality: It is a prominent analytical approach toward the study of identity politics within geography and the social sciences. It recognizes that the simultaneity of individuals' multiple social identities, such as gender, race, class, age, etc, may lead to both opportunities and oppressions that vary according to a given situation. While emphasizing the role that space and time play in the formation of shifting and intersecting subjectivities, geographers also draw connections between macrolevel power relations and the ways in which individuals negotiate 399 their multiple identities at the microlevel. Geographical work on intersectionality has expanded along two key trajectories: first, through work that focuses on the intersectionality of dominant social identities and second, by drawing attention to lesser-known identity constructions situated in non-Western social, cultural, and political contexts. These studies also expand the scope of the intersectional approach through integration with theories such as postcolonialism and posthumanism.

Jouissance: Often associated with sexual pleasure and death, jouissance (from the French

jouir, to enjoy) refers to the unknown and inexpressible aspects of unconscious experience and desire. In Jacques Lacan's terms, it is the imaginary misrecognition of the symbolic in which intense pleasures are decoupled from the "law of the signifier." Jouissance is therefore that which is not known, that which is beyond knowledge, beyond the subject of knowledge.

Masculinity: In common with the term femininity, with which it is inherently linked as both parallel and opposite, masculinity is an extremely problematic term, in that both articulate the complexities in thinking about the dynamics of gender, sexuality, social roles and identifications. Masculinity, in its definition of what is characteristic of or peculiar to men, has recourse to simple biological determinism, essentialising biological distinctions between the sexes. Both essentialist feminism and deconstructive feminism have identified the binary structures of thought and culture within which objects and qualities are understood as corresponding to poles of masculinity and femininity, with those gendered masculine generally culturally privileged over the feminine. Essentialist feminism, then, seeks to reverse this hierarchy by reversing dominant cultural values and affirming the 'feminine'. Deconstructive feminism, however, ultimately seeks to undermine the very oppositional polarity between masculinity and femininity, the paradigm of binary thought.

Mimicry : A concept pioneered by Frantz Fanon, who argued that colonized people, forced to abandon traditional notions of selfhood and national identity, learn to *mimic* their colonial masters. Homi Bhabha modified the concept to emphasize its critical and productive potential. Colonial mimicry entails an act of subverting colonial discourse by exploiting the ambivalence at its heart, its unstable, contradictory, nonidentical potentiality. It results in hybrid identities. The term mimicry now broadly refers to acts of appropriation that result in the social construction or performance of identity. The term is frequently used in a more general sense to

designate any sort of critical parody.

Modernity: Refers to a period after the decline of feudalism in which we see the rise of secular science, technology, and rational philosophy. It embraces the Renaissance, the Enlightenment, the nineteenth-century Age of Progress, and the triumphs of the early twentieth century. It is grounded in secularism, humanism, and an openness to innovation in all spheres. Key features of modernity include industrial capitalism, the nation-state, the development of governmental bureaucracies, the development and refinement of educational systems, and the emergence of the subject as sovereign and self-identical. *Modernization* refers to the material processes that ensure scientific and technological advancement. It refers also to a condition of rapid and pervasive social and cultural development.

Neurosis: mental disorder that causes a sense of distress and deficit in functioning. Neuroses are characterized by anxiety, depression, or other feelings of unhappiness or distress that are out of proportion to the circumstances of a person's life. They may impair a person's functioning in virtually any area of his life, relationships, or external affairs, but they are not severe enough to incapacitate the person. Affected patients generally do not suffer from the loss of the sense of reality seen in persons with psychoses.

Orientalism: Associated with the work of Edward Said, this term refers to the authoritative discourses on the East (or Orient) produced by the West (or Occident). These discourses include historical, linguistic, philological, and literary works and operate on latent and manifest levels.

Other, otherness: It designates a variety of positions opposed to the *same* or the *self-same*. In

poststructuralism, the *other* refers to the negative pole of a dialectic, that which is sublated to fulfill the destiny of the positive term. It also refers to the difference in language or to the structure of a speech act or text in which there is a receiver of a statement. Ethical philosophy treats the *other* in a similar fashion, as the receiver of actions and attitudes. From Lacanian psychoanalysis, we get the sense of the *other* as the unconscious *Other* which speaks through instances of otherness generated by gender difference 'other'. For example, the "woman as other" refers to a situation in which a woman becomes a mere surface from which the male subject receives back his own vision of himself, which is generated from the unconscious 'Other'. Postcolonial theorists, influenced by Psychoanalysis, have developed theories of the *other* based on racial, ethnic, and cultural difference.

Penis Envy: A fundamental if controversial concept in Freudian psychoanalytic theory of femininity, but one which has been much criticised both by anti-Freudian feminists and by many psychoanalytic feminists. It is the theory that the girl's perceived lack of a penis leads her to want to possess a male member and to her subsequent need for a child as a penis-substitute. For many anti-Freudian feminists, the concept of penis envy was deeply insulting to women, seeing them as incomplete men. Other psychoanalysts also disagreed with the theory and saw the attribution of penis envy to women as a symptom of male fear and envy of their reproductive power. Psychoanalysts Juliet Mitchell and Jacques Lacan see it as envy not of an anatomical penis but of 'the phallus', a signifier of power, which is similar to Simone de Beanvoir's analysis in *The Second Sex* (1949), which argued that women envied not the penis but male power.

Phallocentrism: A term relating to the advancement of the masculine as the source of power and meaning through cultural, ideological and social systems. Within this conception,

advanced primarily through the work of psychoanalysts such as Sigmund Freud and Jacques Lacan, patriarchy is symbolically represented by the phallus. The phallus is not to be confused with the biological penis: instead, it is a construct which advances the 'Name of the Father' as the natural locus of law and meaning, thereby affording symbolic power to the penis. Female subjectivity is thereby categorised as naturally subordinate to male subjectivity, since women are characterised by absence (of a penis), while men are characterised by presence. Jacques Derrida defines the phallus as a 'transcendental signifier': that is, an extra-linguistic point of meaning which is fixed and unified, the apex of male power. In relation to the definitive phallus, female subjectivity is constituted as 'Other', or 'marginal'. Thus women are effectively stripped of agency and consigned to displacement by the discourse of phallocentrism.

Power: A term used by Michel Foucault and those influenced by him to refer to the expression of social and cultural forces (energy, libido) in the form of discourse and discursive formations. A notoriously ambiguous term, power (or "power/knowledge") can mean many things. It is analogous to ideological hegemony, but is generally depicted as indeterminate and diffuse, closer to Nietzsche's 'will to power'.

Subaltern subject : This terms refers to social groups, e.g., migrants, shantytown dwellers, displaced tribes, refugees, untouchable castes, the homeless, that either do not possess or are prevented from possessing class consciousness and who are in any case prevented from mobilizing as organized groups. In this limited sense, *subalternity* refers to many but not all strata of colonized peoples. Antonio Gramsci introduced the current critical meaning, but the term is grounded in the idea of subject races, a term put forward by Lord Cromer in 1907 to refer to non-European peoples.

Subject, subjectivity: These terms typically refer to Western traditions of citizenship, self hood, and consciousness. The *subject* of modern Western societies is often referred to as the subject of knowledge (of a specific epistemological framework) or the universal subject and is regarded as autonomous, sovereign, and self-determining. Many theorists challenge these characteristics when they become normative, regulative, or repressive. For them, the subject is at the mercy of social forces that determine it, more or less completely. *Subjectivity* is the condition of being a subject, specifically the condition of self-identity (i.e. self-awareness), and the ability not only to recognize oneself as a subject (agent or citizen) but also to regulate one's actions accordingly. To be capable of conscious action and social and historical agency, the subject must occupy a recognizable and legitimate *subject position* within a specific social context.

Synchronicity is the coincidental occurrence of events and especially psychic ones that seem related but are not explained by conventional mechanisms of causality. It is discussed in C. G. Jung's works.

Thanatos/Eros—Freud identifies two drives that both coincide and conflict within the individual and among individuals. Eros is the drive of life, love, creativity, and sexuality, self-satisfaction, and species preservation. Thanatos, from the Greek word for "death" is the drive of aggression, sadism, destruction, violence, and death.

The median space of Anzaldua extends beyond geographical sense to all sorts of margins that can occur sometimes in the interior of a land (one's own place of origin). These spaces as bell hooks argues are spaces for radical possibility and resistance.

The pineal gland is a tiny organ in the center of the brain that played an important role in Descartes' philosophy. He regarded it as the principal seat of the soul and the place in which all our thoughts are formed.

Transnational Feminism : The focus on the transnational in feminist research aims to decentre Western epistemologies, shaking the foundation of the sometimes taken-for-granted framework of Western—and specifically UK, US or European-focused—feminist research in the English language; it aims to disrupt the embedded hegemonies of nationalist ideologies, in all their heteropatriarchal connotations. The transnational as a qualifier for feminist research methods and methodologies specifically aims to continue the project of transnational feminism, understood as a feminist paradigm and plural field of feminist thought, research and practice that can manifest as scholarly, intellectual and activist projects. Transnational feminisms, as activism and scholarship, have largely been developed and influenced by the work of selfidentified women-of-colour feminists located in the Global North and postcolonial scholars or 'Third World feminists' located both in the North and South.

Woman identity is perceived as a process of construction / deconstruction, an ideal to be negotiated in the space between at least two different cultures either at home or in a different geographical setting. The in-between, where traditional and patriarchal boundaries are challenged and transgressed towards self-fulfilment, becomes a site where hybridity could occur.

GLOSSARY OF CULTURAL TERMS

The definition of the present terms is taken from works that are included in the works cited section.

Aufhebung/Aufhebun: is a German word with several seemingly contradictory meanings, including to lift up, to abolish, to cancel or to sublate. The term has also been defined as abolish, preserve, and transcend.

Berber: (Amazigh, plural Imazighen) are any of the descendants of the pre-Arab inhabitants of North Africa. The Berbers live in scattered communities across Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Libya, Egypt, Mali, Niger, and Mauritania. They speak various Amazigh languages belonging to the Afro-Asiatic family related to ancient Egyptian.

Buddhism: is a faith that was founded by Siddhartha Gautama ("the Buddha") more than 2,500 years ago in India. With about 470 million followers, scholars consider Buddhism one of the major world religions. Its practice has historically been most prominent in East and Southeast Asia, but its influence is growing in the West. Many Buddhist ideas and philosophies overlap with those of other faiths.

Classicism: The principles or style embodied in the literature, art, or architecture of ancient Greece and Rome. It also refers to the adherence to traditional standards (as of simplicity, restraint, and proportion) that are universally and enduringly valid.

Confucianism: Stressing the importance of correct behaviour, loyalty and obedience to hierarchy, Confucianism is a system of ethics devised by the Chinese scholar K'ung Fu-tzu

(Latinised to Confucius) in sixth century BC China. An itinerant teacher, Confucius (551–479 BC) essentially systematised elements of ancient Chinese philosophy.

Fitna: (or fitnah, pl. fitan; Arabic: فتنة) It is an Arabic word which connotes temptation, trial, discord, conflict or distress. Its meaning varies according to its usage and its historical implications.

Fundamentalism: type of conservative religious movement characterized by the advocacy of strict conformity to the fundamentals of sacred texts and revival of their lifestyle. Indeed, in the broad sense of the term, many of the major religions of the world may be said to have fundamentalist movements.

Ganpati or the Ganesh Chaturthi Festival: A Hindu festival celebrating the god with an elephan't head in South India and Maharashtra.

Genesis: (Hebrew word meaning the generations of heaven and earth) It is the first book of the Old Testament, describing how God created the world.

Haldi-kumkum: socio-religious function, exclusive to women. Haldi (turmuric), and kumkum (a red powder with which *Hindu* women dot their foreheads) are indispensable in all rituals.

Hammurabi's Code a legal document reflecting the social developments during Hammurabi's rule (c. 1700 BCE) in Mesopotamia, which is an ancient civilization located between the Tigris and Euphrates rivers in the area of contemporary Iraq.

Harem: Arabic *ḥarīm*, in Muslim countries, the part of a house set apart for the women of the family. Although usually associated in Western thought with Muslim practices, harems are known to have existed in the pre-Islamic civilizations of the Middle East; there the *harem* served as the secure, private quarters of women who nonetheless played various roles in public life. The prophet Muhammad did not originate the idea of the *harem* or of the seclusion and veiling of women, but he sponsored them, and, wherever Islam spread, these institutions went with it. The virtual removal of women from public life was more typical of the Islamic *harem* than of its predecessors, although in many periods of Islamic history women in the harem exercised various degrees of political power.

Hinduism: The term Hinduism became familiar as a designator of religious ideas and practices distinctive to India. It is a major world religion originating on the Indian subcontinent and comprising several and varied systems of philosophy, belief, and ritual. Although the name *Hinduism* is relatively new, having been coined by British writers in the first decades of the 19th century, it refers to a rich cumulative tradition of texts and practices, some of which date to the 2nd millennium BCE or possibly earlier. If the Indus valley civilization (3rd–2nd millennium BCE) was the earliest source of these traditions, as some scholars hold, then Hinduism is the oldest living religion on Earth. Its many sacred texts in Sanskrit and vernacular languages served as a vehicle for spreading the religion to other parts of the world, though ritual and the visual and performing arts also played a significant role in its transmission. A **Hindu** refers to the culture or person who recognizes the divine nature of Hinduism's holy writings, accepts their ideas, and follows their prescriptions. The roots of Hinduism are found in texts and ritual hymns called *Vedas* dated 1500 BCE and earlier and further developed in the oral teachings or *Upanishads*—the fundamental and sacred texts of Hinduism.

Indus culture or the Indus Valley Civilization: was a cultural and political entity which flourished in the northern region of the Indian subcontinent between c. 7000 - c. 600 BCE. Its modern name derives from its location in the valley of the Indus River.

Infitah : A financial policy to attract private foreign investors by establishing industrial free zones and giving investors liberal terms for the repatriation of their profits and protection against nationalization and expropriation.

Instruction of Ptah-Hotep: (flourished 2400 BCE), Ptah-Hoteb is the vizier of ancient Egypt who attained high repute in wisdom literature. His treatise "The Maxims of Ptahhotep," probably the earliest large piece of Egyptian wisdom literature available to modern scholars, was written primarily for young men of influential families who would soon assume one of the higher civil offices. Ptahhotep's proverbial sayings upheld obedience to a father and a superior as the highest virtue, but they also emphasized humility, faithfulness in performing one's own duties, and the ability to keep silence when necessary.

Jihad: (Arabic: "struggle" or "effort") also spelled *jehad*, in Islam, a meritorious struggle or effort. The exact meaning of the term *jihād* depends on context; it has often been erroneously translated in the West as "holy war." *Jihad*, particularly in the religious and ethical realm, primarily refers to the human struggle to promote what is right and to prevent what is wrong.

Karma: Sanskrit karman ("act"), in Indian religion and philosophy, the universal causal law by which good or bad actions determine the future modes of an individual's existence. Karma represents the ethical dimension of the process of rebirth (samsara), belief in which is generally shared among the religious traditions of India. Indian soteriologies (theories of salvation) posit

that future births and life situations will be conditioned by actions performed during one's present life—which itself has been conditioned by the accumulated effects of actions performed in previous lives.

Krishna Sudama: A Hindu story about friendship, faith and divine rewards. The story is about Sudama and King Krishna. Sudama is an impoverished poor man who was also lord Krishna's intimate friend in childhood. Going through extreme poverty, the king Krishna visits Sadama and asks him to serve a snack as he was a guest. Having but modest food, Sudama offered him all what he has. When king Krishna leaves, Sudama enters his house to be surprised that it has been magically changed from a hut to a palace.

Manusmitri/Law of Manu: (also called the *Manava Dharma Shastra*) traditionally the most authoritative of the books of the *Hindu* code (Dharma-shastra) in India. *Manu-smriti* is the popular name of the work, which is officially known as *Manava-dharma-shastra*. It is attributed to the legendary first man and lawgiver, *Manu*. The received text dates from circa 100 CE.

Mezzaterra: A term created by Ahdaf Soueif from Italian, she combines the two words for "half" or "middle" (mezza) and "world" or "ground" (terra), to refer to the idea of the middke ground, a space of negociation and compromise. Soueif's notion mezzaterra is closely associated to Homi Bhabha's 'third space of enunciation'. Making a direct connection between the idea of the 'third space' and his concept of hybridity, Bhabha explains in his interview with Jonathan Rutherford : "for me the importance of hybridity is not to be able to trace two original moments from which the third emerges, rather hybridity to me is the 'third space' which enables other positions to emerge. This third space displaces the histories that constitute it, and sets up

new structures of authority, new political initiatives, which are inadequately understood through received wisdom." (211)

Muhasanah: an Islamic notion that denotes a pure woman or a fortified woman who is protected from commiting the sin of adultery by virtue of marriage.

Purdah: From Persian, dennoting 'curtain'. Also spelled *Pardah*, Hindi *Parda* ("screen," or "veil"), a practice that was inaugurated by Muslims and later adopted by various Hindus, especially in India, and that involves the seclusion of women from public observation by means of concealing clothing (including the veil) and by the use of high-walled enclosures, screens, and curtains within the home.

Pygmaleon-Galatea: Related to Greek mythology. The Roman poet Ovid, in his *Metamorphoses, Book X*, relates that Pygmalion, a sculptor, makes an ivory statue representing his ideal of womanhood and then falls in love with his own creation, which he names Galatea; the goddess Venus brings the statue to life in answer to his prayer. The story was the inspiration for many artists.

Rigveda : (Sanskrit: "The Knowledge of Verses") also spelled Ṛgveda, the oldest of the sacred books of Hinduism, composed in an ancient form of Sanskrit about 1500 BCE, in what is now the Punjab region of India and Pakistan. It consists of a collection of 1,028 poems grouped into 10 "circles" (mandalas). The Rigveda was preserved orally before it was written down about 300 BCE.

Sanskrit: (from Sanskrit saṃskṛta, "adorned, cultivated, purified"), an Old Indo-Aryan language in which the most ancient documents are the Vedas, composed in what is called Vedic Sanskrit.

Sati/Suttee: Sanskrit sati ("good woman" or "chaste wife"), the Indian custom of a wife immolating herself either on the funeral pyre of her dead husband or in some other fashion soon after his death. Although never widely practiced, *suttee* was the ideal of womanly devotion held by certain Brahman and royal castes. It is sometimes linked to the myth of the Hindu goddess *Sati,* who burned herself to death in a fire that she created through her Yogic powers after her father insulted her husband, the god Shiva—but in this myth Shiva remains alive and avenges *Sati*'s death.

Sari: (also spelled *saree*) principal outer garment of women of the Indian subcontinent, consisting of a piece of often brightly coloured, frequently embroidered, silk, cotton, or, in recent years, synthetic cloth five to seven yards long. It is worn wrapped around the body with the end left hanging or used over the head as a hood.

Sharia: (Arabic Sharīʿah) is the fundamental religious concept of Islam, namely, its law. The religious law of Islam is seen as the expression of God's command for Muslims and, in application, constitutes a system of duties that are incumbent upon all Muslims by virtue of their religious belief. Known as the *Sharīʿah* (literally, "the path leading to the watering place"), the law represents a divinely ordained path of conduct that guides Muslims toward a practical expression of religious conviction in this world and the goal of divine favour in the world to come.

Taoism: (also known as Daoism) is a Chinese philosophy attributed to Lao Tzu (c. 500 BCE) which contributed to the folk religion of the people primarily in the rural areas of China and became the official religion of the country under the Tang Dynasty. Taoism is therefore both a philosophy and a religion. It emphasizes doing what is natural and "going with the flow" in accordance with the Tao (or Dao), a cosmic force which flows through all things and binds and releases them.

Vedas : are the religious texts which inform the religion of Hinduism. The term *veda* means "knowledge" in that they are thought to contain the fundamental knowledge relating to the underlying cause of, function of, and personal response to existence. They are considered among the oldest, if not the oldest, religious works in the world. Unlike the scriptures of other religions, however, the *Vedas* are not thought to have been revealed to a certain person or persons at a specific historical moment; they are believed to have always existed and were apprehended by sages in deep meditative states at some point prior to c. 1500 BCE but precisely when is unknown.

Yinyang: (Wade-Giles romanization yin-yang, Japanese in-yō) in Eastern thought, the two complementary forces that make up all aspects and phenomena of life. *Yin* is a symbol of earth, femaleness, darkness, passivity, and absorption. It is present in even numbers, in valleys and streams, and is represented by the tiger, the colour orange, and a broken line. *Yang* is conceived of as heaven, maleness, light, activity, and penetration. It is present in odd numbers, in mountains, and is represented by the dragon, the colour azure, and an unbroken line. The two are both said to proceed from the Great Ultimate (taiji), their interplay on one another (as one increases the other decreases) being a description of the actual process of the universe and all that is in it. In harmony, the two are depicted as the light and dark halves of a circle.

Yoga: in Sanskrit, the primary language of Hinduism, it means "to control" or "to unite". Yoga is a philosophy which first developed in India, in which physical exercises and meditation are believed to help people to become calmer and united in spirit with God.

Abstract

This thesis enhances the contributions of postcolonial women writers in the field of third world feminist literature. It is a literary study that is concerned with the dilemma of identity and its relation to women projections and self-perceptions. It explores the process of fulfillment and self-actualization of the female identity in three novels written by women who belong to different cultures, namely, India, Algeria, and Egypt. Therefore, our investigation relies on psychoanalytical, feminist and postcolonial criticism. It examines the way women stereotypes are imposed and resisted in Shashi Deshpande's *The Dark Holds No Terrors*, Ahlem Mostaghanemi's *Chaos of the Senses* and Ahdaf Soueif's *In the Eye of the Sun.* This study argues that the mechanism of transgression is an organic necessity and a rite of passage for the female subject to reclaim her self which has been violated sexually, economically and ideologically. It concludes that the female authors have creatively pursued the female's quest for an autonomous identity through a gradual process that deconstructs the prescribed gender roles and Imperial egocentrism in order to achieve self-actualization through resistance and self-reflection.

Key words: Identity construction, cultural feminism, psychoanalysis, transgression, self-actualization.

Résumé

Cette thèse met en valeur les contributions des écrivaines postcoloniales dans le domaine de la littérature féministe du Tiers-Monde. C'est une étude littéraire qui s'intéresse à la problématique de l'identité et à sa relation avec les projections et les perceptions de soi des femmes. Elle explore le processus d'épanouissement et de l'accomplissement personnel de l'identité féminine dans trois romans écrits par des femmes appartenant à des cultures différentes, à savoir l'Inde, l'Algérie et l'Égypte. Pour ce faire, notre analyse s'appuie sur des critiques psychanalytique, féministe et postcoloniale. Nous examinons la manière dont les stéréotypes féminins sont imposés et ont résisté dans *La nuit retient ses fantômes* de Shashi Deshpande, *Le chaos des sens* de Ahlem Mostaghanemi et *Dans l'œil du soleil* d'Ahdaf Soueif. Cette étude soutient que le mécanisme de la transgression est une nécessité organique et un rite de passage pour que le sujet féminin récupère son « moi » violé sexuellement, économiquement et idéologiquement. Notre étude conclut que les écrivaines ont poursuivi, de manière créative, la quête d'une identité féminine autonome à travers un processus graduel qui déconstruit les rôles de genre prescrits et l'égocentrisme impérial afin de parvenir à l'accomplissement personnel par la résistance et l'autoréflexion.

Mots Clés: Construction identitaire, féminisme culturel, psychanalyse, transgression, auto-actualisation.

ملخص

تهتم هذه الأُطروحة بتثمين كتابة المرأة في مجال الأدب النسوي الما بعد إستعماري. هي دراسة أدبية تعنى بإشكالية الهوية وعلاقتها بالإسقاطات التصويرية للمرأة وتصوراتها الذاتية. تبحث في سَيْر عملية تحقيق الذَّات للهوية الأُنثوية في ثلاثة روايات كتبتها أديبات ينتمين لثقافات مختلفة، وهي الهند والجَزائِر ومِصر. لهذه الغاية، يعتمد تحقيقنا على النقد النفسي التحليلي والنسوي والما بعد إستعماري. كما يدرس الطريقة التي يتم بها فرض ومقاومة الصور النمطية للمرأة في رواية شاشي ديشباندي "الظلام لا يَحْمِل أيَ رُعب"، ورواية "فوضى الحواس" لأحلام مستغانمي، ورواية "في عين الشمس" لأهداف سويف. تناقش هذه الدراسة بشكل أساسي آلية التجاوز كضرورة عضوية وطقوس مرور للمرأة المضطهدة لإستعادة نفسها التي تم استلابها جنسيًا واقتصاديًا وأيديولوجيًا. وخلصت دراستنا إلى أن المؤلفات تابعوا بشكل إبداعي سعي المرأة للحصول على هوية مستقلة من خلال عملية تدريجية تُفكك الأدوار الجنسانية المحددة والنزعة الأنانية الإمبريالية من أجل تحقيق الذات من خلال المقاومة والتفكير الذاتي.

الكلمات المفتاحية: بناء الهوية، النسوية الثقافية، التحليل النفسي، التجاوز، تحقيق الذات.