Université d'Oran 2
Faculté des Langues étrangères

THESE

Pour l'obtention du diplôme de Doctorat en Sciences
En Langue Anglaise

The Representation of Soueif's Female Characters as Suffocating and Liberating Phoenixes.

Case Study: Aisha and The Map of Love

Présentée et soutenue publiquement par :
Melle Brahimi Samira

Devant le jury composé de :

Belkhenchir Khadoudja	Professeur	Université d'Oran 2	Président
Lakhdar Barka Sidi Mohamed	Professeur	Université d'Oran 2	Rapporteur
Nait Brahim Abdelghani	Professeur	Université d'Oran 2	Examinateur
Bahous Abbes	Professeur	Université de Mostaghanem	Examinateur
Ghanim Niaama	M.C.A	Université d'Oran 2	Examinateur
Gerroudj Noureddine	M.C.A	Université de Belabbes	Examinateur

Année 2015/2016

DECLARATION

I, hereby, declare that this work has not already been accepted in substance for any degree, and is not concurrently being submitted in candidature for any other degree.

Samira BRAHIMI

DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my parents who initiated me to continuous improvement and perpetual search for knowledge.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to express my thanks and gratitude to Professor Sidi Mohamed Lakhdar Barka who has been a radiant source of inspiration and guidance. His pertinent intellectual comments have tremendously enlightened my career as a researcher and teacher. I do acknowledge my being extremely lucky to have him as my supervisor.

I also would like to thank Professor Abdelghani Nait Brahim who has also had a strong impact, as a teacher and a friend, on the fulfillment of this research work, guiding me with precious advice.

ABSTRACT

The representations of Arab and Muslim women, narrowly related to the perceptions of women in general, have long incarnated women as a strange Other and weak entities dependent on their male counterparts. Eastern women, in particular, have also been portrayed as sexual objects, sin perpetrators, and exoticised creatures feeding age old Orientalist fantasies.

The Egyptian writer and activist, Ahdaf Soueif, has long fought for the eradication of such stereotyped portraits painting different pictures of her female protagonists as liberated phoenixes ready to start life anew. The current research explores the myriad representations Soueif grants to the set forth protagonists in her fiction works respectively: *Aisha* (1983), *The Sandpiper* (1996), and *The Map of Love* (1999). However, one noticed that the author's perceptions oscillates between a demystification of the stereotyped portraits and a confirmation of them, sometimes picturing her female protagonists as limited, male dependent and nostalgic. This research also scrutinizes the writer's use of time past as an element of liberation of her female characters, granting them constant flashbacks to reconsider their past in order to better live and understand their present and future.

Chapter one focuses on the scrutiny of two important concepts, namely, Other and women, from postcolonial and feminist perspectives. It also explores understandings of keywords like strangeness, difference, stereotype, representation, crisis of identity, ideology, racism, essentialism, and hybridity. The concept of women has also been explored from a post colonial feminist critique perspective eradicating the difference between 'first world' and 'third world women'. Besides, this concept has been analysed from religious, historical and literary stand points.

Chapter two offers a scrutiny of the eight narratives constituting *Aisha*, Soueif's first collection of short stories. A special consideration has been offered to the 'double portrait' Soueif grants her female protagonists and the use of time past gearing narration forward. Aisha is knitted as a seemingly separate collection of female narratives centring on one character which is that of Aisha.

Chapter three investigates the same 'double portrait' in *The Sandpiper* Soueif's second collection of seven short stories. Yet, in this collection the author utilises Eastern and Western female protagonists and allows their stories to intermingle and travel throughout time to paint one single portrait which is that of resilient phoenixes resurrecting from the ashes of an uncertain nostalgic past.

Chapter four focuses on the same 'genus portrait' in *The Map of Love*, Soueif's second novel. However, in this novel the intensity of the dual picture falters as Soueif portrays female characters both, Eastern and Western that are ready to demystify the stereotypical portrait most cherished in the West, and that incarnates women as sex-objects, weak, and male dependent.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Dedication ……..…….. ……I

Acknowledgements ……...…….. ……...II

Abstract …….……. III

Table of Contents…….....VIII

General Introduction……...2

Chapter One: Woman as Other: Postcolonial, Feminist, and Literary Critiques.....21

Introduction.....21

I.1. The Other as Stranger and Different: A Stereotyped Hostile Foreigner in Postcolonial Critique.....23

I.1.2. Understanding the Other as Stranger from Psychoanalytical and Interactional Terms.....23

I.1.3. The Other as Stranger and Different: A Postcolonial Perception.....25

I.2. Dialogism as an Open Space to Understanding Otherness.....36

I.3. On Narrative as a means to Understand Otherness.....40

I.4. Woman as Other: A Feminist Critique.....42

I.4.1. Woman as Other: A Postcolonial Feminist Critique.....45

I. 4.2. The Difference between 'Third World' and 'First World' Women.....47

I.5. Representations of Women in the West: Religious, Literary, and Historical Implications.....51

I.5.1. Western Literary Representations of Muslim and Arab Women.....60

I.5.2. Arab/Muslim Women Postcolonial Texts as Counter Discourses.....68

I.6. Soueif's Reaction to the Relation of Fiction to Politics and the Changing Role of the Writer to Activist in Times of Crisis……71

Conclusion.....74

Notes to Chapter One.....77

Chapter Two :"*Aisha"*: A Child/Adult Female Representation vs. Aisha as Foreigner and Exotic Character.....82

Introduction.....83

The Phoenix: A symbol of Immortality.....84

Time: A Vision of Cooperation and Dialogism.....85

Part One:

II. "*Aisha"*: A Child Adult Female Representation.....90

Introduction.....90

II.1. "*The Returning"* as the Home-Coming.....91

II.1.2. Time Shift and Memory in "*The Returning"*.....97

II.1.3. "*Knowing"*: A Childhood Revisited.....99

II.1.4. "*The Apprentice"* as a Boy/Woman Persona.....105

II.1.5. "*The Suitor":* Mimi, a Domesticated Cinderella.....107

II.1.6. "*The Wedding of Zeina":* Zeina as a Child Bride.....110

II.1.7. "*Her Man":* Zeina as the Amazonian Co-Wife.....111

Conclusion.....113

Chapter Two Part Two: Aisha as Foreigner and Exotic Character in "*1964"* and "*The Nativity"*.....115

Introduction.....115

II.2.1. "*1964"*: A Misfit Adolescent.....115

II.2.2. "*The Nativity"*: The Duped Femme du Monde.....122

Conclusion.....129

II.2.3. Aisha Echoed in Her Female Protagonists' Tales.....132

II.2.4. The Structure of the Narratives Emerging from a Palimpsest.....136

II.2.5. Soueif's Choice of Themes and Characters: A Complementary Vision of the Other.....137

Conclusion.....142

Notes to Chapter Two.....147

Chapter Three: "*The Sandpiper"*: A Mosaic of Eastern/Western, Trapped/Liberated, Timeless Phoenixes…….149

Introduction…….....150

III.1 "*The Sandpiper"*: The Story of an Absent/Present Phoenix……152

III.2. "*Chez Milou"*: A Waning/Dreamy Phoenix……161

III.3. "*Mandy"*: A Story of an Oriental/Western Harem……...167

III.4. "*Melody"*: A Swan's Lake Childish Symphony……..175

III.5. Soueif's Female Characters Echoed in Lawrence's "*The Plumed Serpent"* and Gordimer's "*Something Out There"*.....182

III.6. "*The Water Heater"*: Salah: A Desire Bewitched Messiah……..184

III.7. "*Satan"*: A Victim among Orientals……..192

III.8. Soueif's Female Characters Echoed in Fielding and Woolf's Works……...202

III.9. "*I Think of You"*: A Memory's Salvation…….203

Conclusion.....215

Notes to Chapter Three.....220

Chapter Four: The Map of Love: A Portrait of Timeless Female Protagonists.....221

Introduction.....222

Part One: A Story of Timeless Female Phoenixes.....224

Introduction.....224

IV. 1. A Story of Timeless Female Phoenixes.....224

Conclusion.....251

IV.2. Part Two: The Representation of Female Protagonists as Phoenixes.....253

Introduction.....253

VI.2.1. Amal: The Outsider Insider Phoenix.....253

VI.2.2. Isabel: The Messenger Phoenix.....262

VI.2.3.Anna: The Fairy Tale Intrepid Phoenix.....265

VI.2.4.Layla: The Egyptian Lady Uniting Phoenix.....277

VI.2.5. Sharif: The Uniting He Phoenix.....281

Conclusion to Part Two 284

Conclusion to Chapter Four.....284

Notes to Chapter Four.....288

General Conclusion……..290

Bibliography……..296

Appendices

Appendix 1

Summaries of the Fiction Works…….340

Appendix 2

Paintings by Frederick Lewis…….341

Summary of the work in Arabic

Summary of the work in French

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

General Introduction

The representations of 'Arab' and 'Muslim' women both at home and in the West, tightly linked to those characterising women in general, particularly in feminist writings, have been caricatured to represent an *Other* as an inferior entity; the weak entity dependent on their male counterparts and unable to take decisions. Many thinkers, especially female ones, from different parts of the world have contributed to demystify this representation. One may state a few names like: De Beauvoir (1949), Ferguson(1996), ,Lazreg (1988), Malti-Douglas (1995), Spivak, (1988), Mohanty(1984) and Shakir (1988).

The Egyptian writer Ahdaf Soueif also attempted to obliterate the afore-mentioned stereotypical portrait in her fictional and non-fictional works. Particularly in *Aisha*, her first collection of short stories, *The Sandpiper*, her second collection, and *The Map of Love,* her second novel, Soueif projects her female characters as liberating characters, focusing on temporality and point of view as the main dimensions of her narratives. She allows her female characters, both Western and Eastern, to un-map and demystify hitherto fixed structures, myths and representations, amalgamated into one story that her female narrators weave. However, some female characters within the set forth works seem to incarnate the opposite portrait the writer aimed to demystify. These characters seem to immerse themselves in their past fleeing their present and future featuring as melancholic, maudlin and weak women. They in the mean time allow a telling of their narratives as one story with other female characters allowing their past to be unveiled enriching and clarifying myriad aspects about their present. Soueif female characters are therefore designed as timeless phoenixes resurrecting from the ashes of their intertwining stories.

Rational of the Research

The main questions this research work attempts to answer are the following:

1) How could Soueif depict her female protagonists as liberators granting them the role to un-map and demystify fixed structures, myths and representations?

2) Why did the writer, however offer a Janus portrait of these very characters by relocating them within the same frame she aimed at reshaping casting them as maudlin and weak female characters and propelling them to flee their present and plunge in a past life?

3) Why did Soueif champion the past as the main leitmotif gearing the events in the aforementioned works, highlighting the past as the main motive to enhance and propel events and forge her female characters and time past as liberating?

Originality of the Study

This research work aims at probing three of Soueif's fictional works *Aisha*, *The Sandpiper* and *The Map of Love* as artefacts designed by female narrators whose stories are geared by the past to highlight the present and future. Such female protagonists attempt to redefine their portraits of hitherto victims, weak and maudlin creatures dependent on their male counterparts, to life generators and strong entities striving for renewal and unity. These oeuvres enclose stories within others, forging palimpsests of other stories**.** Soueif grants her main female characters the role of telling a story that they all forge into being, constituted of these characters' individual stories of their past, present and future. In her aforementioned works the author focuses on her protagonists' pasts to gear the narrative(s). The past is the crucial element that allows readers understand the stories. In *Aisha,* a collection of short stories and Soueif's first fiction work, the writer depicts seemingly separated short narratives of the main character Aisha 'interrupted' by other stories of female characters related to her; her nurse Zeina, her Coptic friend Miriam and her young hairdresser. A reading of the whole collection is necessary to understand Aisha's present featuring in the introductory narrative *The Returning*. The protagonist's past is unveiled progressively reaching the last narrative *The Nativity,* launching readers back to *The Returning* to get a glimpse of the present revisited and enlightened. The collection thus emerges as a 'novelised short story' centred on one main female character Aisha as the synthesising knot of the entire work and as its uniting title.

In *Aisha* the main female characters are depicted as liberating ones too, gearing towards a demystification of their representation as 'The' weak entity; an Other dependent on their male counterparts, liberating their presents by allowing a reconciliation with their pasts and championing life and strength over death and weakness. However, the same liberating characters are also perceived, at a first glance, as maudlin characters entrapped in their nostalgic pasts, victims of rape, their own femaleness and patriarchal authority. Male characters are represented as predators, rapists and authoritarians striving to empty and strip their female counterparts of their pasts, their life and dignity as human beings.

Readers could alter this very portrait gathering all the elements of the story and reconnecting the narratives that construct it in one single web returning to life.

The main 'present female characters' in *The Map of Love*, Amal and Isabel, grant a resurrection to their fellow 'past female characters', Anna and Layla, through narration unveiling their narratives and voices. The 'past characters' reborn through their diaries and letters that the 'present characters' collected and shaped as a one-whole story. Soueif's female characters could talk to one another across time and space. They could forge a new time category; a time when and where they could meet, which is neither past nor present but a time to make readers listen to their tales. It is a time they conjured up to meet during narration. Thus, Soueif offers her female characters the opportunity to control time, making the past shape the present and the latter resurrect and release the past allowing it to change both present and future. This time intertwining and hybridisation permitted the drawing of a map of time and point of view. Also throughout *The Map of Love*, Soueif attempted to demystify the myth of woman as a weak and an absent entity, casting her as a source of life, rebirth and strength. The novel is presented as a cyclical process of death and rebirth. Female characters recuperate life from among the ashes of death. Death is introduced by male characters that seem to fear life and shrink back to their former lives whenever they fall in love, scarred by former experiences. Unlike Soueif's male characters, her female phoenixes try life again although scared of death, loss and deception. These very characters seek liberation through life. They emerge as reliable and strong.

Some of Soueif's characters undergo a process of *defacement* highlighting the presence of others. An example could be Anna, the British lady who 'abandons' her past, her country and culture to assimilate *totally* in the other's culture i.e. the Egyptian Sharif Pasha's. Anna brings back budding life to Sharif and his family, inducing her past to vanish. She is silenced by the writer and disappears, returning to Britain, after the death of her Egyptian husband. The male characters in the novel behave like ghosts disappearing from stage to make female characters emerge and reign. This 'character defacement' mentioned above could have been introduced by the writer to allow a kind of character completion i.e. characters completing and highlighting others especially to strengthen the performance of her female main characters as liberating ones. Soueif displays a character mosaic of her female characters to permit them tell their story, voice it, control it and un-map the myths and misrepresentations surrounding it. Thus, they could demystify the hitherto maintained myth of their representation as weak and absent agents.

In *The Sandpiper*, like in *The Map of Love*, Soueif allows the same female stories intertwining from both Eastern and Western perspectives. The author merges different worlds within one. *The Sandpiper* is a mosaic of stories shaped by women about women. One gets a close view of how Eastern women represent Western ones and vice versa. Soueif attempts at tying these women's hitherto separate worlds and lives together. Asya's life is related to Clara's and Mandy's because the three of them love the same man. Melody, a young Eastern girl dies because her mother was not 'mother enough' according to her husband and yet she is pitied by the Western narrator of the story, who previously regarded this mother with suspicion. Female characters in this vey collection revisit their past lives to unveil truths about the stories they narrate. Time past is the main revelatory that dig out truths and mysteries to enlighten the present.

Female characters in Soueif's works cooperate to further unite their female counterparts and empower the story's web. Hence, the suggested title for this research work is as follows: ***The Representations of Soueif's Female Characters as Other, Suffocating and Liberated Timeless Phoenixes. Case Study: Aisha***, ***The Sandpiper and The Map of Love.*** Readers must have noticed that the above title is written beneath another title namely ***The Representation of Soueif's Female Characters as Suffocating and Liberating Phoenixes. Case Study: Aisha and The Map of Love*** which is the very first suggestion of title for this work that dates back to 2011. As research is the ultimate field for change and maturing of ideas and perspectives, researchers are to follow the tide of title and structure modifications as further proof of their continuous and enhanced processes of reading, debating, and reflection.

Methodology :

This research is located within postcolonial and feminist studies. Chapter one, entitled *Woman as Other from Postcolonial, Feminist, and Literary Critiques,* is divided into four parts referring to both postcolonial and feminist theories. Part one, entitled *The Other as Stranger and Different: A Stereotyped Hostile Foreigner in Postcolonial Critique*. This part is divided in two sub titles. The first one is entitled *Understanding the Other as Stranger from Psychological and Interactional Terms* that includes mainly the perception of the concept as mainly a difference in relation to the self besides the Lacanian representation of it in relation to the ego and how it recognises and misrecognises itself. The Other is also deemed by Lacan to be the locus of desire since one strives to be desired

and loved by another from childhood. The representation of the Other from an interactional stand focuses on how individuals interact with one another considering familiarity and strangeness as key issues regarding the success or failure of that very dialogue. The views explored within this perspective are the opposing stands of Schutz and Simmel's.

The second sub-title is *The Other as Stranger and Different: A Postcolonial Perception* whereby one presents understandings of postcolonial and postcoloniality as controversial i.e. as terms whose definitions are not clearly defined among critics. Scholars such as Vijay Mishra and Bob Hodge, Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin, and Ania Loomba respectively thought of considering the terms as pointing to colonised parts of the world, counter-discourses to normative and master narratives, a historical land mark lining lands that had been influenced by imperial powers from the beginning of colonisation to the present time, an indication of division between powerful and weaker parts of the world, a difficulty to categorise countries as former colonies and later as colonisers embracing a neo-colonialist nature like The United States, and the possibility of including and not excluding what both terms entail.

Next, before probing the myriad understandings granted to the concept of the Other firstly from a postcolonial perspective, the term strange is explained in relation to the meaning of the Other. Strangeness is perceived as difference hampering the process of interpersonal understanding. It is however, also viewed as an important prerequisite for mutual interaction in that it fosters the knowledge of others as well as one's own self. Then the Other is magnified under postcolonial lenses from different scholars' perspectives. Said defines it in terms of 'Us' and 'Them', Césaire in terms of colonised entities incapable of ruling themselves contrasted to their colonised counterparts and Fanon regards it as mirroring tortured and psychologically disturbed colonised individuals. The opposing of an 'Us' and a 'Them' results in stigmatisation of geographical regions incarnating the Orient; an exotic land nurtured by Western fantasies, biased representations resulting in age old stereotypes.

Strictly related to the idea of foreignness, colonisation and stereotyping is the term racism, widely discussed by Todorov, which results from vilification and assumed supremacy exercised by so-called superior races over others. The ultimate consequences of such restricting visions are the ideas of fixed identities, clash of civilisations, ethnocentrism, monocentrism, subaltern races and crisis of identity. Postcolonial scholars

such as Bhabha considered hybridity as counter discourse to monocentric identity to highlight the meaning of polarity embracing and containing similarity, Spivak claimed for the ever existing voice enabling the subaltern to speak and write back to the centre, and Todorov negated the possibility of persons being uprooted from their origins or sticking to one overwhelming and strict definitions of themselves.

The second title entitled *Dialogism as an Open Space to Understand Otherness* stands to counter argue the perception of the self/Other relation as mere complexity, difficulty and misunderstanding, Bakhtin opposed to Vygotsky, believes the very relation should be illuminated by dialogism. The latter entails a two way process of knowledge, interaction, and understanding of the others. It also alludes to a better understanding of the self, turning the others' gaze of oneself to be viewed, tested and valued by us.

To further highlight the possibility of mutual understanding between self and Other narratives grant an opportunity to readers to encounter characters, agree and disagree with the writers' ideologies, and the chance to proliferate one's interpretations of others' imagination. Such stands were adopted by Derrida, Wellek and Warren, and Foucault. These perceptions also clarify one's perspectives to search for knowledge amidst conflicting meanings.

The third title is *Woman as Other: A Feminist Critique.* It focuses on how women have been stigmatised as Other, weak and dependent on their male counter parts. An overview of the most relevant queries in feminist studies is presented. Examples of such queries are: discrimination in the labour market, the repercussions of home confinement, the status of women in various jobs, and productive rights (Andersen, 2008).Another major point was to stress the social basis of gender roles, and so demystify the dominant biologically essentialist explanation of sex differences to finally confirm that gender is a socially determined entity. Besides the question of gender emerge the class and race prerequisites. Women's studies were to learn from many groups facing race discrimination and class discrimination in the 1990's (Omi and Winant, 1994). Discrimination against women means disequilibrium in the power balance that geared towards the male side. However Foucault had different views regarding this perception as argued that while power presupposes a subjugating process, a possibility of an emerging of an agential subject is very likely.

Regarding the representation of women as Other among the most important scholars sparking the debate of women's strangeness and Otherness were De Beauvoir and Sartre. The set forth debate further enlightens the meaning of the otherness of women as either a curse to be borne by men or a means to enhance their agency and existence. The male/female dialectic has also been a subject of debate between Lucy Irigaray and Emmanuel Levinas. For Irigaray the feminine subject must be perceived as Other, namely enjoying its own freedom, distinction and raison d'être, irrespective of the resemblances it might have with the male subject. To recognize an inter-subjectivity between the masculine and feminine means for Levinas a prevention of the subject preservation as autonomous, and its weakening, by highlighting its limits. As for Hanna Arendt, a female subject, she insists should be conceived as complementary to the male subject not a subject of totalitarianism or a hostile Other.

The first sub-title is *Woman as Other: A Postcolonial Feminist Critique*. This part concentrates on the perception of the woman as Other from a postcolonial standpoint. The term subaltern is presented and explored through the understanding of Spivak besides the element of voice vs. silence. Silence counter opposed to voice has always meant subjugation to an authority and a lower social status. On the other hand, voice entails a forceful energy that certifies and solidifies the presence of one's identity in a difference bound environment. And yet, silence has also been used as a politics of resistance according to Foucault. Women have long been trapped in the circle of gender and society difference that excluded them from owning and maintaining social and political discourses however holding voices of their own helped demystify the age old shame factor.

The second sub-title is *The Difference between 'Third World' and 'First World' Women* probes the difference between 'First' and 'Third World' women. This distinction casts 'Third World' women as doubly others. First they are deemed slaves of men and second they are labelled mere followers of 'First World Women'. Arab Muslim women fall in this very category as they are labelled pawns of Arab Muslim men supposedly trapped by a restricting religion. This results from a representation, mainly of Westerners, that is biased by ignorance and that engenders another facet of Orientalism so-called 'women Orientalism'. And yet any further communication between women of both worlds necessitates mutual understanding and better knowledge of each other.

The third sub-title is *Representations of Women in the West: Religious, Literary, and historical Implications.* This part investigates instances of the perception of women in general including Western women in The West from religious, literary and historical standpoints before delving into the exploration of representations of Arab/Muslim women in The West. The most recurrent view of women had been that of their association with sin and fallen humanity. Lilith had been a religious symbol of sin and destruction. She stands for a night demon and she is also labelled "Bitch Goddess". Some science fiction writers claimed another vision of Lilith. She is symbolised as an incarnation of freedom and power. The fact that women are viewed as an incarnation of sin is due to their being morally degraded according some Western scholars. However, some other scholars, like Carol Gilligan, argue that women are far from being mere undervalued thinkers. They are different moral reasoners and they should be by their specific standards. In her study of male and female response to both hypothetical and real life crises, she came to discover that both female and male participants view these cases quite distinctively. Women rely and focus on relationships, which renders their thinking contextual. The same picture of women as morally devalued reoccurs in Western literature. Instances of such biased images are found in ancient Greece as the patriarchal, competitive and hierarchical pattern was the dominant feature of all relationships. It took the image of a powerful God and the feminine aspect was spared to monsters. However in other instances women represented renewal and life preserving. The theme of Eternal Return was incarnated by The Creating Deity represented by the Great Mother Goddess. She incarnated the Earth, Water, and Air. She had myths of universal patterns. They were elements in nature that never ended and recur constantly and continuously (Wilshire and Wilshire: 1989). Another example in Greek theatre is Euripidian drama as Euripides represents the puzzling and worrying presence of women able of making men offer them oaths, which challenges the phallocentric hierarchy of his society.

Concerning Elizabethan drama Shakespeare's Lady Mac Beth stands for the ogress that sacrifices her womanliness for power. Further in history and specifically within the Puritan era in 17th Century Salem, New England America, women were depicted as more sinful than men (Reis, 1990). They were labelled witches and were burned alive and accused of adultery. However some thinkers believe that witch-hunt concerned women who "failed" to conform to the scriptures of patriarchy as the overwhelming power ruling society.

As for modern times women do not escape the aforementioned portrait. Philosophers and thinkers like Freud, Schopenhauer, and Hegel agree that women are responsible for the degradation of civilization and they are second hand thinkers. On the other hand, Dr. Adler posits that there is no biological proof of women's moral inferiority and that men create such legends to explain the difference between mental capacities that exist between both sexes.

The fourth sub title is to explore *Western Literary Representations of Muslim and Arab Women.* In this section one notices that the representations of Arab Muslim women in the West do not escape the frame work designed for their counterparts in the West. They are still prone to submission, weakness, dependence and sin. Mohja Kahf (1999) asserts that Arab Muslim women do not escape the Orientalist perspective designed for them in the West. Basing her investigation on a number of texts, particularly literary and travel books written originally in English, French, Italian and Spanish, from medieval to Romantic periods in the history of Europe, Kahf believes that before the eighteenth century the aforementioned representations had not been the same. For instance Muslim and Arab women represented in the European medieval texts have another image rather than that of the submissive or oppressed. They 'enjoy' and share the image of the 'masculinized' warriors, reflecting the European discourse on Islam as the creed of idol-worshipping enemies. Within the course of medieval romances this intrepid and strong Muslim noble woman is depicted in literature as a character that falls in love with a Christian hero and finally converts to Christianity. A kind of 'equilibrium' in Renaissance texts is witnessed in representing Muslim and Arab women for they were depicted as much more feminine than women in medieval texts. As far as the eighteenth century is concerned it is characterised by the colonial intervention of European forces in Muslim lands, Muslim and Arab women were portrayed in Western texts as dependent, suffocated victims, and odalisques. Another pertinent account of the Arab Muslim woman by the West is Sophia Poole's. Sophia Poole is the sister of the Arabist William Lane. Poole (1842) recounts her experience in Egypt depicting Egyptian women as mere sex objects and white women as superior beings not able to mix with such voluptuous creatures.

The same picture of Arab Muslim women as victims saved by the West reoccurs in the genres of life narratives and popular fiction about Muslim women. These texts like *Burned alive: the survivor of an honour killing speaks* (Souad, 2005); *Sold: one woman's true*

account of Modern slavery (Muhsin, 1994) have gained a colossal readership in the West. They are the cradle nourishing the aforementioned discourses.

Further Arab Muslim women have been associated with belly dancing symbolising sexually defined creatures. Some 'white Western' women have learnt the dance to write back to Oriental women, and to men in general, expressing bodily freedom.

Another important element distinguishing Arab Muslim women has been the veil. The latter has been deemed responsible for Arab Muslim women's 'backwardness' and diminishing freedom besides its interference within the smooth oscillation of these very women from their private to their public spaces. However, some argue that the veil is an instrument of women's agency and freedom to be different and handle their bodies their own way.

The second title in part two is: *Arab/Muslim Women Postcolonial Texts as Counter Discourses* handles the counter discourses Arab Muslim women used to write back to the West to demystify whatever stereotype has defined them for long through written texts. A few examples of these women are Nawal el Saadawi, Fatima Mernissi, Ahdaf Soueif, Assia Djebar, whose main works have dealt with women in Muslim and Arab societies. (Amireh and Majaj 2000) and (Kahf 2006) posit that some of these works even confirm the age old discourse through providing Western readers with the same narratives they already know or expect concerning Muslim women. This part also includes the most important anthologies of Arab Muslim works such as *Opening the gates: a century of Arab feminist writing* (1990), edited by Margot Badran and Miriam Cooke and *Women claim Islam: creating Islamic feminism through literature* (2001) by Miriam Cooke. *Liberating Shahrazad : feminism, postcolonialism, and Islam* (2006) by Suzanne Gauch probes works by Maghrebian and North-African women writers and film-makers and believes that like Scheherazade uses the art of storytelling to confront Shaherayar's patriarchal authority, these contemporary female writers are influencing the perceptions of both local and foreign audiences and those outside Muslim culture about North-African Muslim women.

Despite being represented as a symbol of sin, weakness and dependence the woman used her voice as a means to write back deconstructing stereotypes and myths about her. She strived to unveil the age ignorance wrapped around her sex.

Chapter two of this research work is entitled: ***Aisha a Child/Female Representation vs. Aisha as Foreigner and Exotic Character.*** Chapter two is divided in two parts. Part one is entitled: *Aisha: A Child/ Adult Female Representation* whereby an investigation of the first six narratives in *Aisha* respectively: *The Returning*, *Knowing*, *The Apprentice*, *The Suitor*, *The Wedding of Zeina* and *Her Man* is to take place. The second part is entitled *Aisha as Foreigner and Exotic Character* exploring the remaining tales namely *1964* and *The Nativity*. Within this very chapter an attempt at answering the following questions is the main aim: How does Soueif represent her protagonist female characters? Are they to dwell submissive, oppressed and men's sex-object, confirming the stereotyped image of the Arab-Muslim woman? Are they to emerge as liberating phoenixes? How does the author highlight the element of time past and space as both liberators and entrapping elements? How does the author translate such a view adopting a special narrative structure and techniques? What could the implications of such journeys and encounters be vis-à-vis the possible perspectives set by the author for her work?

Before one delves into the exploration of the narratives in *Aisha,* One is to shed some light on the notion of the phoenix and its understanding from mythological and religious stand points according to its relevance to this very research work as all female protagonists within it are imagined as phoenixes. Besides the notion of the phoenix chapter two also highlights the element of time and its understanding as linear and as a co-operation of time dimensions stressing the phenomena of flash backward (analepsis) technique championing time past as the inaugurator of events in many modern and postmodern narratives and flash forward technique (prolepsis) looking forward in time. Time was also considered as tensed vs. untensed and the difference between remembering and mere nostalgia. Many scholars understandings are discussed to name a few: William James, Gerard Genette, Peter Brooks, Tzevetan Todorov, and Paul Ricoeur.

In this chapter and in part one Aisha in *The Returning* is to be represented as both a maudlin female character clinging to her past and rejecting her present as she remembers how happy she once was enjoying her past life and a controversial relation with what she deems ‘careless’ and ‘selfish’ husband. Soueif strengthens the bond between her protagonist, past time and space, and other characters in the story to unveil it. Soueif relies on the stream of consciousness and flash back techniques to help Aisha resurrect her past.

Aisha however decides to quit her past at the end of her narrative and locks the door of her apartment leaving memories and nostalgia behind reaching for a new start.

The next title in chapter two part one is entitled: *Time Shift and Memory* in *The Returning* that emphasises the role played by time shift and memory to play with time and highlight the past as an important element in any story. The elements discussed in this very title are Genette's, a comparison between Aisha and Marcel Proust's *Remembrance of Time Past (La recherche du temps perdu),* and Ricouer's (1992) conception of time as he contends consequently, that action takes place in a historical time. The latter includes two more essential senses of time: the cosmic time that has a general conception. It is the time of the world that unfolds according to universal laws and within which many changes occur. There is also lived time which has an idiosyncratic conception, and within which an individual values some moments more than others. It is time represented from an individual's perspective.

The next title within part one is *Knowing: A Childhood Revisited* whereby the child Aisha remembers her childhood and is cast as a dreamy studious little girl oscillating between her wonder land of dreams, Egypt as a sweet colourful country and England as a cold strange one. Aisha plunges in fairy tales and Arabian Nights stories welcoming characters from there to be part of her real world. She also convinces her parents stubbornly that she keeps meeting and seeing them. One meets Aisha as a child whose parents were constantly absent from home and who seemed to deny Aisha's world any existence or truth.

The following title is *The Apprentice* that concerns Yosri, the only male protagonist in the whole collection who is yet portrayed by an omniscient narrator as a an effeminate young boy whose personality is completely high jacked by a group of high class ladies, Aisha included, coming to the hairdresser salon he works for. He dresses the way the ladies say and he feels blessed being their captive. Yosri ends as rape victim by one of the tough mechanics working in the neighbourhood.

The Suitor is the next title in part one chapter two whereby Mimi, Aisha's Coptic friend is discussed. The story is narrated by Aisha as she remembers the past that links her to people she always knew; Tante Safi, Mimi's mother and Mimi. Marianne's story is that of

an educated, demanding, and extravagant Cinderella that ends by her marrying in a merely 'traditional' way. She marries a man she has never seen before nor known before. Her last suitor is not torn to pieces nor is his anatomy examined. The only man Marianne trusted to be the ever 'perfect' gentleman treated her as a 'sex-object', an attractive pompous doll who immediately surrendered to his charms. She is portrayed as a mere spoilt child in her late twenties.

The Wedding of Zeina is the following title featuring Zeina, Aisha's nanny recollecting her past and telling her story to Aisha as a child bride on her wedding night. Zeina is cast as a child adult in that Soueif highlights two facets of this very character as once an innocent child watching women relatives preparing her for her wedding with a nineteen year old cousin. Zeina the child also is the bride who refuses to let her bridegroom approach her as she had to fight with him before he could win her out.

The next narrative explored is *Her Man* that recounts the story of Zeina no longer the child bride but a full-fledged sexually attractive young woman. Zeina features like a silently suffering woman victim of polygamy. She is a woman who misses her husband; her man, and could not get another child. Zeina lost a girl before her son Saad and she hardly went through the pain. Her co-wife Tahiya appears as an idiot child/woman who trusted Zeina to be her protector from a windy scary night. Zeina uses all her malice and wit to win her man back playing tricks on Tahiya. Thus, she reverses her role from the weak victim to the strong predator.

Chapter two part two is entitled *Aisha as Foreigner and Exotic Character: 1964 and The Nativity.* In *1964* Aisha's adolescent story is recounted as she is portrayed as a misfit teenager repudiating the present as 'barren' and 'dreamless'. She strives to witness something to happen in the future. Like the child Aisha she misses a sunny Egypt and struggles to integrate into England as a foreign and cold land. She revels in Maggie Tulliver, Anna Karenina, and Emma Bovary's company as her best friends. Aisha feels estranged from both setting and people. She features as the eternal, weird Muslim girl with her strange looks in a land where everybody is pale with freckles. Finally, Aisha decides to quit school and study at home preparing for her 'Egyptian prep' defying her parent's fury.

Aisha is also compared to the aforementioned female characters i.e. Maggie Tulliver, Anna Karenina, and Emma Bovary as lonely women finding no solace in their arid present looking forward to a new and better life in vain. They all die at the end of their stories however Aisha could make her voice heard.

The next narrative to be explored is *The Nativity* whereby Aisha is pictured as a duped femme du monde fighting for her right to be a mother and conceive a child. Her controversial relation with her husband visited in *The Returning* looms large as she steps more and more back from him visiting saints, going to presences and shrines, and dancing in a trance with 'devil stricken' young women. Aisha appears as a foreigner in her home land Egypt that she hardly knows and read about merely in books. She ends up as a victim of rape by a butcher she hardly knows and she trusted to show her the Egypt she read about. Aisha dies at the end on an operating table about to give birth to her baby girl.

Aisha is the subject of Edward Said's scrutiny emphasising the tradition/modernity opposition and "extraterritoriality" that the narratives enjoy. Aisha is also compared to female characters in stories by female writers like Nawal El Saadawi's Firdaus in *Woman at Point Zero* (1983), Leila Abouzeid's Zahra in *Year of the Elephant* , Alicia Erian's Jasira in *Towelhead* (2005), Laila Halaby's Nawal, Khadidja, Sorraya, and Hala in *West of Jordan* (2003), Faqir's Selma in *My Name is Selma,* Aboulela's Sammar in *The translator,* Najwa in *Minaret* and Amal in Randa Abdel-Fattah's *Does my head look big in this*? The female protagonists struggle for a free voice, space, and being of their own. Their authors highlight the role of society and patriarchal authority in hampering the protagonists' efforts and yet the latter all try hard to find a place in a world full incongruities, injustice, and denial of their ultimate rights each her own way.

The following title is *The Structure of the Narratives Emerging from a Palimpsest.* Within this part Aisha is imagined as a palimpsest of works whereby Soueif relied on the richness of intertextuality between texts and genres. She could merge George Elliot's, Marcel Proust, Tolstoy's and many more others' texts into her own. She could produce a text that oscillates between a short story and a novel in that she wrote about and explored Aisha's character throughout a series of short stories uniting characters that highlighted this character the further one reads them.

The last title: Soueif's Choice of Themes and Characters in Her Fiction Works: A Complementary Vision of the Other, explores Soueif's works namely In *The Eye of the Sun*, *The Sandpiper*, and *The Map of Love* whereby she chooses to mix Eastern and Western characters in one work. Her female characters tell one story they share throughout the whole work. Her protagonists enjoy difference, weaknesses and strength as they live their Otherness as part of their struggle for liberation from an age old stereotype of oneness and stillness to an unending and moving sphere where their portrait can revel in eternal variety and life.

Chapter three is entitled *The Sandpiper: A Mosaic of Eastern/Western, Trapped/Liberated Phoenixes* and it probes the narratives constituting Soueif's second collection of short stories *The Sandpiper*. The first tale within the collection is The *Sandpiper* and it features a nameless female narrator who is a British woman married to an Egyptian. The first title *The Sandpiper: An Absent/ Present Phoenix* focuses on the narrative techniques Soueif uses as the stream of consciousness technique, the use of senses as smell and sound fostering remembering and the representation of the protagonist who appears as a maudlin and nostalgic woman and also as a strong woman ready for renewal.

Chez Milou: A Waning dreamy Phoenix is the next narrative explored and it concerns a Greek woman who lives in Egypt with her ailing old father. Milou owns her father's restaurant and mourns a regrettable past life that she missed and the love of a man who never loved her. Soueif creates a theatrical effect moving from present to past and vice versa via the smooth movement of a cluster of red curtains in the restaurant. Milou holds a word dear in her memory which is *tendresse* that she shelters in her heart. *Tendresse* is Milou's leitmotiv for hope and love.

Mandy is the following narrative investigated that Soueif tailors to fit a three part story in the form of two letters from Asya to her mother and the content of Mandy's journal. It is entitled *An Oriental/Western Harem* within the research work because it pictures Asya the Egyptian and Mandy the American in love with the same man, Saif, who is Asya's husband. *Mandy* is also a story about the past unveiling the present. It is the story of two women representing one another, attacking one another and pitying one another

uncovering each others' characters throughout their consciousnesses. Love keeps both women desperate and hopeful, dead and alive.

Melody is the next tale explored and it is narrated by a Canadian woman. It is entitled *A Swan's Nest Childish Symphony*. *Melody* is a story about a Turkish family and precisely about their late daughter Melody. The narrator goes back to a past event geared by her senses and her maternal instinct. She pictures the Eastern family and woman in particular as careless, stupid, and cruel as compared to what Western people are. Melody the angelic blond young girl seduced her little boy dancing as a grown up woman, she had a careless/good mother who did not take her to school. Melody had a furious father/loving father who wanted more and more children, enslaved his wife cleaning and cooking for him, blamed his daughter's death on her mother and compelled a mourning mother to conceive of another child. The narrator also told her story of a desperate wife who had to stay buried in a remote country she disliked as a deal with her husband to conceive a child. She mourned Melody too and pitied her mother for her loss.

Next one focuses on *The Sandpiper* as embracing myriad facets of misogynist attitudes championing patriarchy and denial of women's Otherness. It also pictures instances of racist behaviour featuring Eastern women and men as inferior and strange entities. The Sandpiper is compared to DH. Lawrence's *The Plumed Serpent* 1966 precisely highlighting the character of Don Ramon as a racist misogynous WASP/red man. A light spot is also focused on Kate a female character in the same work as sharing ambivalent attitudes towards Mexican Indians namely those of attraction and despise. She also features as a waning character as she attaches her own importance to the existence of a man in her life.

Within the same line of thought Soueif's male and female characters are compared to their Gordimer's counterparts in many instances. Besides the racial images destabilised and altered by Gordimer in her novella *Something Out There* 1984 are the patriarchal images although supposedly described in a coyly manner.

The Water Heater is the following narrative to be probed and it is the only tale in the whole narrative to concern a male protagonist. It is entitled *Salah* as *A Desire Bewitched Messiah*. The entire story is seen through Salah's consciousness as a 'pious' devoted young

man whose life is centered on being a devout Muslim and succeeds in his studies. One day in Soueif's Salah's life like a day in Joyce's Ulysses suffices to round about instances in his past life and uncover him as a Jekyll/Hyde character clearing away from sin and drawing near it putting his younger sister Faten as a subject of desire. Soueif utilizes the technique of sound rising sound ceasing of the water heater as barometers measuring tensions in her tale. Faten, the coy young sweet child is the ultimate victim of Salah's tirades of patriarchy. Her freedom is at the mercy of her elder brother's frenzied mood as he decides to marry her to his cousin to save his own chastity.

Satan: A Victim among Orientals is the next story analysed and it involves Asya the same Egyptian protagonist like in *Mandy.* Asya suffers loneliness and longs to resurrect her past life with her husband Saif who prefers to run away from her going with different girl friends. Asya memory fumbles for souvenirs of her past happy life and the imagined picture of her unborn child while visiting her in-laws in a London apartment. She concentrates her attention on a black kitten called Satan that nobody cared for in the house. She feels as forsaken as he is. She has no particular status in that house as she and Saif were separated and he spends his days and nights with women she knew and befriended just to prove she is no traditional/oriental woman. The cat gets almost killed at the end and she runs away with it looking for compassion, mercy and freedom at the company of her husband in his hotel.

The last narrative explored is *I Think of You*. It is entitled *A Memory's Salvation* and it features an unnamed Egyptian female narrator trapped in a hot country where she finds herself alone. The very narrator is about to give birth to her second child and she suffers high blood pressure that puts her life and the baby's at a great risk. The slightest movement or even weeping could be the causes of her death. And yet, she finds solace in remembering her late friend who died of cancer and the stories of both women become one. The narrator remembers sour and sweet times with her friend fighting death through life and forgetfulness and loneliness through reminiscences.

Chapter four is entitled *The Map of Love: A Portrait of Timeless Female Protagonists.* This very last chapter is divided in two parts. The first part *entitled A Story of Timeless Female Phoenixes* and it emphasizes the use of the element of time, especially time past, to unveil the mysteries of a 'present' story having its deep origins in an old one dating a

thousand years back. Part one also focuses on the narrative techniques used by Soueif to allow her protagonists to tell their narratives as one united story. The techniques used are stream of consciousness technique, dialogue, letter writing and reading, and indirect discourse. This very chapter also un-maps the linearity of time and reveals it as a co-operation of times and spaces. In the main, it maps lives uniting them through love.

Part two is entitled *The Representations of Female Protagonists as Phoenixes* and it concerns the exploration of female protagonists individually setting a detailed portrait of each character respectively Amal, Isabel, Anna and Layla. The description stresses instances whereby the fore mentioned characters are perceived as desperate women looking for protection and love and able of protecting and loving, suffering the gnaws of death and loss and life sources capable of regenerating life and re-gathering stuttered lives. The only male portrait granted analysis is Sharif Pasha's as his very presence in the narratives translates into further uniting of the set forth characters and inspires them to strive for renewal and life.

CHAPTER ONE
Woman as Other: Postcolonial, Feminist and Literary Critiques

CHAPTER ONE

I. Woman as Other from Postcolonial, Feminist and Literary Critiques

Introduction

This research is located within postcolonial and feminist studies. Chapter one entitled, *Woman as Other: Postcolonial, Feminist, and Literary Critiques,* is divided in four parts referring to both postcolonial and feminist theories. Part one, entitled: *The Other as Stranger and Different: A Stereotyped Hostile Foreigner in Postcolonial Critique*. This part is divided into two sub titles. The first one is entitled *Understanding the Other as Stranger from Psychological and Interactional Terms* that includes mainly the perception of the concept as mainly a difference in relation to the self. The second is *The Other as Stranger and Different: A Postcolonial Perception* whereby one presents understandings of postcolonial and postcoloniality as controversial i.e. as terms whose definitions are not clearly accepted among critics. It also probes the representation of the foreigner and stranger as different and the same crystalizing into the Other from a postcolonial perspective. This part is related to the perception of the woman as Other and as stranger by their male counterparts and as 'third world women' by their fellow women so-called 'first world women' belonging to a different culture that is dealt with in part four. An understanding of strangeness as difference and Otherness is perceived from a postcolonial perspective probing myriad key words such as colonialism, orientalism, representation, stereotype, racism, Eurocentrism, ideology, essentialism, identity, crisis of identity and hybridity.

Part two entitled, *Dialogism as an Open Space to Understanding Otherness* probes how dialogism could stand as a clarification of the self/Other relation as dialogic and centrifugal relation rather than a unanimous one way relation. This part also highlights how difference and strangeness could play an outstanding role on the way to mutual understanding between two different entities.

Part three entitled, *On Narrative as a Means to Understand Otherness,* tackles the way narrative can be a means to understand Otherness. It stresses the role of fiction and characters in highlighting and cementing their link to readers via imagination. Fictional works allow readers' meeting of the Other as characters enhancing and mingling their experiences and understanding of one another.

Part four entitled, *Woman as Other: A Feminist Critique,* that is divided into four sub-titles. Within this title an overview of the most relevant queries in feminist studies is presented. It analyses the perception of the woman as Other and stranger from a feminist stand point categorized as the weak sex and as "third world" entity. This chapter explores the concepts of strangeness, difference, and Otherness characterizing the relations between Soueif's female characters as Eastern and Western and the link between the former and male characters, which is to be highlighted clearly in the following three chapters. Key words like: female, male, gender, weak (sex)/strong (sex) are discussed.

Sub-title one is *Woman as Other: A Postcolonial Feminist Critique.* This part concentrates on the perception of woman as Other from a postcolonial standpoint. This part also includes a rapprochement between how women are represented in both feminist and postcolonial theories. It also includes another sub-title: *The Difference between 'Third World' and 'First World' Women*. It also refers to the relation between so-called 'third world' and 'first world' women namely as Eastern and Western counterparts. The key words considered within this part are: voice, silence and the subaltern.

The second sub-title is *Representations of Women in the West: Religious, Literary, and Historical Implications.* This one investigates instances of the perception of women in general including Western women in The West from religious, literary and historical standpoints before delving into the exploration of representations of Arab/Muslim women in The West. It also explores women and morality, women in Greek literature, Elizabethan literature, and opposing views of Western thinkers concerning women.

The third sub-title is to explore *Western Literary Representations of Muslim and Arab Women.* In this section one notices that the representations of Arab Muslim women in the West do not escape the frame work designed for their counterparts in the West. They are still prone to submission, weakness, dependence and sin.

The next title in part two is: *Arab/Muslim Women Postcolonial Texts as Counter Discourses* handles the counter discourses Arab Muslim women used to write back to the West to demystify whatever stereotype has defined them for long through written texts.

The last title to be investigated is *Soueif's Reaction to the Relation of Fiction to Politics and the Changing Role of the Writer into Activist in Times of Crisis*. This part links the discussion explored earlier about women's representation and Ahdaf Soueif's role as

woman, writer and activist. This also stands as a gate way to introduce readers to the following chapters investigating Soueif's oeuvres respectively *Aisha, The Sandpiper* and *The Map of Love*.

I.1. The Other as Stranger and Different: A Stereotyped Hostile Foreigner in Postcolonial Critique

I.1.2. Understanding the Other as Stranger from Psychoanalytical and Interactional Terms:

Analysing the concept of the Other individually before relating it to the concept of woman is of at most importance. This demonstrates, firstly, that Otherness is not a concept solely created to characterise the female entity. Secondly, this exploration allows the probing of key words, recurrent in postcolonial theory like stranger, foreigner, and racism that will appear in later analyses of Soueif's works. Other key words recurrent in feminist theory, like strong vs. weak sex, dependence, the other sex will also be probed in Soueif's fiction works in chapter two, three and four.

Before one probes the implications of the Other as stranger, that will be dealt with next under the title *The Other as Stranger and Different: A Postcolonial Perception,* one needs to present an understanding of the Other in psychological and interactional terms.

The Other has been variously understood as pointing to a difference or opposition to the same. It is often capitalized to indicate its difference (Van Pelt, 2000). When persons 'define' the Other, it depends mainly on their conception of it with reference to themselves (Charnay, 1980). According to Lacan concerned with the psychoanalytic interpretation, subjectivity is concerned with the interaction of the developing ego with what he calls the 'other'. For him human identity is constructed via a series of interactions between the individual concerned and two levels of meaning he calls the imaginary and the symbolic. He considers that self-recognition and misrecognition are very relevant to the development of the human subject. Concerning the mirror stage, Lacan presents a child watching its image in a mirror and concentrating on it. The child's image is both unified and coherent however; the child's own development is still in its beginnings, which reflects its incoherence and incompleteness. The dispersed child strives to resemble the image attracted by its wholeness; which according to Lacan is very preliminary to the imaginary order. Lacan perceives desire as the locus of human subjective developments, and it is

always geared towards some form of otherness. He writes: *"The first object of desire is to be recognized by the other"* (1977, p. 58) *"I always find my desire outside of me, because what I desire is always something that I lack, that is Other to me"* (Sarup, 1992, p. 68-69). Desire is a very significant element in the development of the ego and its building of an identity. Since early infancy, one seeks and wishes to be desired and loved by the Other which entails the mother at the very early stages of development then the father, then one's peers and later all symbols of authority including God, society and nature (Bracher, 1993). Principally, it is one's perception of the other that determines the kind of identity that we develop and language is part of this development.

Next, one needs to probe the self/Other relation from an interactional stand. According to Alfred Schutz people interact with one another on the basis of the familiar that constitutes the reality of their everyday life. They assume that they perceive the outside world that is shared by the others who are part of it taking for granted their shared perceptions and views. Everything that is different is unfamiliar and strange and belongs elsewhere (Gurevitch, 1988). This understanding has characterised the phenomenological studies of human interaction. It is based on the division of the familiar and unfamiliar. In fact, studies of human interaction have been greatly influenced by the researches undertaken by Simmel (1950) and Schutz (1944) on strangeness. The former perceives the stranger as being both outside and inside the host country. Schutz considers it as a perfect observer of social relations pertaining to an objectivity that the familiar does not possess. As an alternative view to Schutz comes Simmel's view to suggest another representation of the stranger as a considerable social category relevant to the *"study of the process of social interaction"*. Unlike Schutz Simmel considers the stranger as not an outsider to the continuity of the group, but part and parcel of a social dialogue. *"Being a stranger is a very positive relation: it is a specific form of interaction"* (Simmel, 1950, p. 402).The stranger provides the group with qualities that might be inexistent there (Ibid. 113). This does not mean that the stranger is far from encountering confrontation with this group. He is both outside and inside its boundaries (Ibid. 402-403). According to Simmel, *"...The human being is the bordering creature who has no border"* (1994, p. 10). And according to Schutz the stranger is uprooted from his past and can never be rooted in his new strange environment (Ibid. 314). However, Simmel pointed out in *Bridge and Door* (1909):"*In the immediate as well as the symbolic sense, we are at any moment those who separate the connected or connect the separate"*. Taking for granted that people are similar either

belonging to the same society and culture or different, entails discarding the element of strangeness from any given dialogue. Strangeness, thus, is to be viewed as a negative element to be avoided by participants (Gurevitch, 1988, p.1181-1182). Schutz posits that for individuals to understand one another they have to take for granted that understanding will take place. To make this possible, they have to believe that self and other are the same (1970, p. 180). He further indicates: "*I am able to understand other people's acts only if I can imagine that I myself would perform analogous acts if I were in the same situation"* (Ibid.181). No matter how the details constituting a given dialogue may affect the understanding of participants of one another, the underlying pattern and what is known about it by both is the most important element. It only is responsible and is the guarantor of understanding. According to Garnfinkel, this kind of processing dissolves the other as other to a supposed same. This ultimately denudes dialogue of its interactive requisites and entraps it in a world of sameness and typicality. Any attempt at difference and separateness of participants proves illusory (Gurevitch, 1988).

The real question that one is to focus on as far as dialogue, interaction and understanding are concerned is how to behold the other as other. Although it is the same stranger that is not understood, the other does not depend entirely on understanding. The fact that it is not understood does not mean it does not exist or should be eliminated. Rather than reframing the other as conforming to 'my own world' one is to seize the opportunity of its distantness and unfamiliarity to attempt an understanding of it as it is and not as one likes it to be (Ibid. 1184). It is an opportunity one is to experience of distancing one's self from the delineated confines of the self to a broader distance encompassing a larger space than one's own world (See also Kohut, 1978; & Natanson, 1974).

I.1.3. The Other as Stranger and Different: A Postcolonial Perception:

Before one moves to exploring the Other and stranger from postcolonial lens, one needs to investigate what the term postcolonial and postcolonialism imply. 'Postcolonial' and 'postcolonialism' are terms whose definitions are not clearly defined among critics. Yet, they are the most loosely used critical terms when one points to the condition resulting from the colonial relationship between West and non-West. Vijay Mishra and Bob Hodge understand postcolonialism as:

> a neologism that grew out of older elements to capture a seemingly unique moment in world history, a configuration of experiences and insights, hopes and dreams arising from a hitherto silenced part of the world, taking advantage of new conditions to search for alternatives to the discourses of the colonial era. (2005, p.378)

Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin refer to postcolonialism as covering *"all the culture affected by the imperial process from the moment of colonization to the present day"* (1989, p. 2). Gugelberger remarks that, postcolonial theory concerns *"the texts that participate in hegemonizing other cultures and the study of texts that write back to correct and undo Western hegemony"* (1994, p. 582).

The term postcolonialism has become the latest *"catch term"* to dazzle the academic mind (Jacoby, 1995, p. 30) as it becomes the *"intellectual, academic industry taking as its topic the colonial division of the world"* (Smyth, 1995, p. 27). However, some critics questioned the epistemological status of the concept as turning to an 'analytic concept':

> Such has been the elasticity of the concept postcolonial that in recent years some commentators have begun to express anxiety that there may be a danger of it imploding as an analytic concept without any real cutting edge". (Moor-Gilbert, 1997, p.11)

The problem is not with the concept itself. The real problem is with the process of reduction of meaning of concepts by users. The concept alludes to nations and countries being both colonized and colonizers like The United States. Although some critics like Ashcroft (1989) and Kennedy (1996) denied the belonging of Ireland to the category of postcolonial nation, E. Said's view about Yeats' works suggests a wider and more open use of the term. According to Said Yeats can both be considered as a crucial part of the canon of English literature and "*European high modernism" [he] "can nevertheless be seen as belonging to the tradition of the world ruled by European Imperialism"* (1990, p. 69). As Ania Loomba notes the point about postcolonial theory is if in the *"process of exposing the ideological and historical functioning of such binaries, we are in danger of reproducing them"* (1998, p. 4). One has to avoid a strictly binary relation between certain concepts such as selfhood and alterity and colonizer and colonized. One has to be careful of the choice based on the use of these terms. Jacques Derrida expressed it well when he suggested that terms can be explained considering a logic of *"neither this nor that; but*

rather this and that", "without being reducible to a dialectical logic either" (1981, p. 161).

As stated earlier one has to turn to the question of the Other from a post colonial stand point. The Other has been represented as stranger and foreigner or an excluded hostile foreigner; an image much deplored and rejected by postcolonial[1] thinkers in both fictional and non-fictional writings. Hence, foreignness, described in relational terms, tends to be considered as something that proves unfit into the available structures. It has been assumed that each human order is based on continuity, regularity, and dependability[2]. This order relies on its ability to maintain and secure its own identity i.e. defines what is familiar or 'normal', and what is foreign or 'abnormal'. Henceforth, 'the foreign' cannot be integrated in such an order, for it resists any attempt at including it in the realm of the ordered which it interrupts and destabilizes (Lippitz, 2007). Strangeness performs a major role in interpersonal relationships. It entails otherness whereby the other emerges as a separate self (Gurevitch, 1988). However, the essence and presence of otherness is a crucial element for a successful dialogue. The recognition of the otherness of the other is indispensible. It presupposes the rising of difference, diversity and separateness which are vital for human beings as separate egos. During the communication process, the strangeness of the other engenders a confrontation to a *"real distance"* that is perceived either *"as a terrifying abyss"* or as *"a dialogic span"* that motivates the desire to know the other, as well as the self and *"fosters movement and change"*. There is *"an idea of dialogue as interplay of familiarity and strangeness"* (Ibid. 1180)

The perception of the Other as stranger was voiced by E. Said (1978) within a postcolonial framework pointing at the traditional opposing stand categorising an 'Us', the self, and a 'Them', the Other. This representation of the self/Other relation aims at dividing people in two groups: the first constitutes the norm that is valued, and the latter is known by its flaws and is therefore devalued and prone to domination and discrimination (Said, 1978). These concerns Said voiced particularly when he discussed the West/Orient binary which is investigated later in this chapter. The same view was expressed by Cahoone as he contended that the unity of certain cultural units such as human beings, words, meanings, ideas, philosophical systems and social organization is preserved and maintained through a deliberate *"process of exclusion, opposition, and hierarchisation"*. Other entities should be viewed as foreign or 'other' in as much as the set forth system of hierarchisation leads to a dualism favouring and privileging the unit and devaluing the Other (1996, p. 6-14).

The crucial understanding of the stranger as Other most deplored in postcolonial theory is also the foreigner who is unable to rule itself and that has been for long a prey of colonialism and its dire consequences. Thinkers like Aime Césair, advocating Marxist theory, linked colonialism to capitalism and was in favour of a classless society whereby the colonized foreigner Other regains its equality (Hassan, 2002, p. 47). Fanon, unlike Césair, contended that while colonialism marginalized the proletariat class, there was no room for analogy between colonized workers and Western ones because the former, besides belonging to a deprived class, belonged nowhere unlike the latter. Henceforth, the colonized Other, besides being considered poor, was also foreign. They endured dehumanization, deprivation and neurosis by the colonised. Such psychological disorders and traumas had been explained by Fanon, relying on a psychoanalytical critique (1991, p. 23, 67)[3]. Said's sharp criticism of Marxist ideology stemmed from his rejection of an essentialisation of history to include only the European model imposing its conception of classless societies. He argued for a reconsideration and re-reading of history, emphasizing the notion of discourse and therefore, basing his study on the *"body of writing"* describing imaginative, exotic, and remote places and people under an essentialist heading: The Orient (Hassan, 2002, p. 47-48). Orientalism[4] is essentially a critique of Eurocentric representations and the manufacture of the Other as a category which is inferior, uncivilized, ignorant, and hence, unable to rule itself by itself. (See chapter two And yet Said's *Orientalism* (1978) has been criticised by a number of critics. The main criticism has been Said's overgeneralization about all Orientalists and the Western discourse on the Orient (Porter, 1994; & Malik, 1996). Some judged *Orientalism* as being a pessimistic work (Johansen, 1990). Other critics as Albert Hourani have claimed for the necessity of locating orientalist discourse in its historical context (1979). Others have blamed Said for dissolving the concise characteristics of the Orient in overgeneralisation while critiquing the discourse of Orientalism (Kerr, 1980; & Turner, 1989). Henceforth, Said himself states in *Orientalism:*

> My whole point about this system is not that it is a misrepresentation of some Oriental essence—in which I do not for a moment believe—but that it operates as representations usually do, for a purpose, according to a tendency, in a specific historical, intellectual, and even economic setting. (1978b, p. 273)

The West's stigmatisation of Eastern people and those in the developing world in general as stereotypes is perceived as *"a frequently repeated picture, more or less rigid, of a group of people"*. Stereotypes are related to cultural presuppositions on the part of the observer. They *"mean a group image of a vocational, racial, cultural, or national group"* (Heaton, 1946, p. 328). They are possibly acquired in whatever given environment and are not the result of a conscious learning. They render people's experience limited in that they stick to their minds as static *"pictures- in the- head"* (Ibid.329). For Saville-Troike stereotyping is a kind of disaffiliation or rejection and rationalizing prejudice. *"It involves an exaggerated belief associated with category. Its function is to justify our conduct in relation to that category"*(2003, p. 193-4). This confinement of the Other as stereotype is also due to representation[5] as a restructuring of reality which is endorsed, *"first in the language and then in the culture, institutions and political ambiance of the presenter"* (Said, 1995, p. 129). Ahdaf Soueif, as an Egyptian writer living in Britain, expressed the same concerns stating:

> …but it troubled me that in almost every book, article, film, TV, or radio programme that claimed to be about the part of the world that I came from I could never recognize myself or anyone I knew. I was constantly coming face to face with a distortion of my reality. (2004, p. 2)

Most of Soueif's fiction works to be probed later in chapter two (p.90) emphasise the set forth phenomena particularly the short story entitled "*1964*" (p.114-120). One also witnesses the same idea of representation and orientalist thinking in "*The Nativity"*(120-128).

Said expressed clearly that such concepts as 'barbaric and 'cannibals' were used by westerners to mean an *'Other'* different from' *Us*', inferior vs. superior, ignorant vs. knowledgeable, barbaric vs. civilized (2007, p.41). He equated colonialism and imperialism with the urge to tame the Other's culture by domination because these people, *"beseeched domination",* they are dependent, inferior, *'"subject races"*(Ibid.8). This stigmatisation is also due to ideology understood here as:

> Systems of belief that are elaborate, integrated, and coherent, that justify the exercise of power, explain and judge historical events, identify political right and wrong, set forth the interconnections (causal and moral) between politics and other spheres of activity. (McClosky, 1964, p. 362)

This conception of the stranger Other had been triggered by racist inclinations towards it. According to Todorov, 'racism'[6] is the name given to a type of behaviour which consists in the display of contempt or aggressiveness toward other people on account of physical differences between them and oneself (Todorov & Mack, 1986, p. 171). He denies existence to the word 'race' (which he puts constantly in between inverted commas. What makes race non-existent for Todorov is that biologically the concept is useless and that it cannot separate human beings as belonging to different species genetically. Thus, race is a fallacious concept that racists invented to impose their supremacy on other persons on the basis of such trivial criteria as skin and body structure (Ibid. 172)[7] .As a result, phenomena such as ethnocentrism emerged as the belief that one's own language, culture and blood are superior to others (Lehtonen, 2000, p. 43).

Critiquing the notion of colonialism and discussing Man's living in difference with others, Todorov inaugurates his *La conquéte de l' Amérique* by the following statement:*" I want to talk about the I's discovery of the Other" (Je veux parler de la découverte que le 'je' fait de 'l'autre)* (1982 , p. 1). Todorov delves into the controversial topic which is that of Man's relationship to other peoples. He got inspired by the Spanish conquest of South America (in particular Mexico), in the sixteenth century. His concern is *"to study other cultures and peoples from a libertarian or a non-repressive and non-manipulative perspective"*(Said, 1978, p. 24). He claimed for the attainment of Man's living difference in equality: *"Vivre la difference dans l'egalite"* [8] (Ibid. 253). To turn to a more integrating view of the Other as difference, one needs to consider Todorov's revision of Rousseau, Smith, and Hegel's [9] works in his *Living Alone Together*. In *Living Alone Together* he based his studies and reflections on Otherness, commenting on three of the most distinguished figures of Enlightenment philosophy namely, Rousseau, Smith and Hegel. He discussed the thinkers following works: Rousseau's *Discours sur l'inegalite (Discourse on Inequality*), Smith's *The Theory of Modern Sentiments* and Hegel's *phanomenologie des Geist (Phenomenology of Spirit)* (Wolker, 1996, p. 44). He contended that Western philosophy has been less concerned with "the social dimension of human nature"than with human solitariness and *"the virtues of contemplative life"*. Secondly, he argued that though ancient Greeks were preoccupied with the use of notions such as *"sympathy and sociality"*, the use of these latter translated their *"desire for companionship"* and an attraction for sameness and not for people different from oneself (Ibid.44). He stresses the huge

importance of sociability translated into the other's gaze *"enabling persons to be persons"*(Ferguson, 1996, p. 25).

Strictly related to the ideas of foreignness, strangeness, and the Other is identity especially in the age of globalisation whereby the world is transforming into a small island. Defending one's identity from the tidal wave of globalisation one tends to consider one's historical narrative as master (Rusen, 2004, p. 119). One attempts as well to sharpen the difference between one's self and the others maintaining one's identity as powerful as opposed to the weakness of the others. This results in the rise of ethnocentrism. This has widely been the strategy of Western 'civilised' people towards so-called 'barbaric nations'. All thinking and history that is different from Western ideology is perceived as barbaric and a 'deviation from the Western standards'. This has also contributed in the fuelling of another phenomenon called 'clash of civilisations' that stands for a clash of ignorance. Cultural differences are viewed as vehicles for separateness between people who belong to them. A strong feeling of identity provides people with a powerful feeling of self-esteem. Identity has always been rooted in the perception of being different from the otherness of the others. Viewing one's self as the only important and positive entity leads one to underestimate the others. *"This is due to a very degrading aspect of Ethnocentrism called 'asymmetrical evaluation"* (Rusen, 2004, p. 121) as people value themselves at the expense of the others. Ethnocentric historical thinking is grounded on a continuous polarised relationship between good and evil and the self-victimisation strategy that projects guilt and responsibility for one's suffering on the Other (Ibid. 122). Identity became an important issue in our contemporary world because of culture clashes.

One is to witness such pretentions of superiority and civilisation over other people by Western people further in this work precisely in chapter three exploring Soueif's second collection of short stories *"The Sandpiper"* probing the following narratives: *"The Sandpiper"* (p. 150-160), "*Mandy"* (p. 166-174), and "*Melody"* (p. 174-181)

An understanding of identity as being static and unified is no longer conceivable. Identity is perceived as 'becoming' rather than 'being'. It is evolving, and always in a state of being re-constructed (Dillon 1999, p. 250). For Gayatry Spivak, identity is not predetermined but is multifaceted and variable. She contends that *"there are many subject positions that one must inhabit; one is not just one thing"* (1990, p. 60). Hall also argues against an essentialist frame imprisoning identity and claims for a discursive model of

identity formation, whereby discourses play a significant role in identity building. He points out that:

> identities are never unified and in late modern times, increasingly fragmented and fractured; never singular but multiply constructed across different, often intersecting and antagonistic discourses, practices and positions. (1996, p. 4)

Hall sees *"a very close relationship between identity and representation"*. According to him, *"identities are ... constituted within, not outside representation"* (1996, p. 4).

The idea of a monocentric world is another element contributing to the continuity of master narratives. A given people place themselves at the centre of the world and the others should remain on the margin (Rusen, 2004, p. 124). The farthest one is from the centre the more negative is its image representation (Ibid. 125). How to Overcome Ethnocentrism? It is possible by including the 'principle of equality' in the identity-forming value system, considering the difference between self and others. One should recognise difference as being mutual. I am different from another as the other as the other is different from me. Self-esteem does not presuppose devaluating others. People may have negative and positive experiences in their history. So, it is necessary to integrate negative historical experiences into the master narratives of one's own group. Thus the self-image of the people becomes ambivalent, and this enables people to recognise otherness. This recalls the issue of colonisation and explains how so-called civilised nations could be responsible of atrocities and injustice to others. The main reason for such an understanding is also the mythologizing of ideology understood both as:

> Systems of beliefs that are elaborate, integrated, and coherent, that justify the exercise of power, explain and judge historical events, identify political right and wrong, set forth the interconnections (causal and moral) between politics and other spheres of activity. (Mc Closky 1964, p. 362)

It is also perceived as:

> A system of collectively held normative and reputedly factual ideas and beliefs and attitudes advocating a particular pattern of social relationships and arrangements, and/or aimed at justifying a particular pattern of conduct, which

its proponents seek to promote, realise, pursue or maintain (Hamilton 1987, p.39).

'The commanders of master narratives' have to view their past in relation to their present and future as not an inevitable and continuous happening. For example Europe is viewed as the cradle of empires and authority that must remain so peopled with 'purified races'. A process of historical discontinuity should take place to meet the changes in the present and future. The amalgamation of different races and the idea of a melting pot is a concrete example of such a situation.

To further highlight the Other as difference instead of considering it as an ultimate opposite, Bhabha critiqued colonial discourse, focusing on the subaltern as an important feature of Otherness. According to Bhabha, the subaltern [10], viewed as the non-western, the Other, who escape Western representation is constantly ready to challenge colonial hegemony (Hassan, 2002, p.49). He also borrows from Freudian and Lacanian psychoanalytic theory, like Fanon, to illuminate the limitations of colonial discourse. He scrutinizes concepts such as anxiety, narcissism, and fetishism, to denote the ambivalence of that discourse (Ibid. 50). He discusses the mimetic and ambivalent features of colonial discourse in that it describes the colonial subjects as ' human and not wholly human'. Colonial mimicry is the desire for a *"reformed" ," recognizable"* Other, as a *"subject";* as *"a difference that is almost the same but not quite"* (Bhhabha's emphasis, Bhabha,1984, p. 126). Thus the colonial subject is according to *'the imperialist master'* seen as *'partially present* ', 'partially civilized', and 'partially Christian'. They could not grant the Other its sameness fully, nor could they spare it its difference. Bhabha reconsiders *"colonial mimicry"*and *"sly civility"* as means of native resistance. These forms of resistance empower the colonized with the strength to use the coloniser's weapon, provoke their frustration and anxiety to confront a hitherto colonial subject as sharing the same power. He, therefore, displaces the focus from an interest in the Other's, as foreigner and colonized, neurotic disorders to the coloniser's psychic disorders (1994a, p. 85-101). Young reproaches Bhabha's use of rather essentialist concepts such as hybridity and mimicry as "*static concepts"*. No specificity is provided by Bhabha as to the cultures these concepts are addressed to (Young, 1990, p.146). A merely rhetorical kind of resistance is offered by Bhabha to the colonized subject. Besides, this kind of hybridity emerges as a

"figure for the consecration of hegemony" (Shohat, 1992 , p.110). Henceforth, the Other, both as colonized and foreigner, according to Bhabha, is to embrace the same hegemonic status as their colonizers', to escape stigmatization and essensialisation, and therefore, mingle their difference with the colonizer's sameness. The phenomenon of hybridity is to be reconsidered again when exploring Soueif's 'hybrid characters' embracing both Eastern and Western features in chapter two (p. 97-104), chapter three (p.91- 201), and chapter four (p.252-280).

The exclusion of the Other as hostile and a queer foreigner by Westerners induced this latter to endure a phenomenon labelled crisis of identity, essentially when writers chose Western languages as a code of expressing themselves as subjects from former colonies. Kumaaswamy posits that the disintegration of the Ottoman empire had been the major beginning of the emergence of Middle Eastern states *"unable to define, project and maintain a national identity that is both inclusive and representative"* (2006, p. 63).

Therefore, these writers' Otherness translated by difference from the colonised became mere confusion and bewilderment, resulting from their use of a foreign language as their main means of expression. They could not view themselves as different neither could they consider themselves the same as the 'White' foreigner. The same concerns were expressed by Jan Mohamed Abdul. R:

> Genuine and thorough comprehension of Otherness is possible only if the self can somehow negate or at least severely bracket the values, assumptions and ideology of his culture…However this entails in practice the virtually impossible task of negating one's very being, precisely because one's culture is what formed that being. (1985, p.65)

In the main we need to return to the understanding provided to us by one's own self or one's home culture to maintain the sense of 'dialogue of identities'. It also offers a rather positive sense to out sidedness when it stands as a means of self and Other knowledge. This entails 'the knowing thy self through the knowledge of others'. Bakhtin posits that:

> There exists a very strong, but one-sided and thus untrustworthy, idea that in order better to understand a foreign culture, one must enter into it, forgetting one's own, and view the world through the eyes of this foreign culture…Of course, a certain

> entry as a living being into a foreign culture, the possibility of seeing the world through its eyes, is a necessary part of the process of understanding it; but if this were only aspects of this understanding, it would merely be duplication and would not entail anything new or be enriching. (2002, p. xiii)

The encounter with others from different cultures is basically dialogic for one way of knowing one's self invites a way of conceiving others. An indirect result is the formation of an exchange of meanings building the self. A clearer understanding of dialogism is to be highlighted later in the next title *Dialogism as an Open Space to Understanding Otherness* (p. 35-38).

The exchange between *"diasporic"* and *"resident"* voices has been a heated debate related to postcoloniality. The exchange faultlessly focuses around questions of authenticity and visions of "*in sidedness"* and *"out sidedness"* (Radhakrishnan, 1993, p. 762). Questions like: who has got it right: the insider or the outsider? Who speaks for the majority: the insider or outsider? At the first place, it seems that the resident is well positioned being both representative and representational i.e. that it is the spokesman of the majority. On the other hand, the diasporic voices are deemed non-representational for their constant absence and travel besides being deracinated. Among the positive sides of diaspora is that it offers challenging possibilities for the intellectual who has constantly dreamed of:

> pure spaces thought disjoint from ideological interpellations and identity regions. The diaspora as the radical non-name of a non-place empowers the intellectual to seek transcendence through exile and an epiphanic escape from the pressures of history. (Radhakrishnan, 1993, p. 762)

Yet, the estranged spatiality of the diaspora means that the diasporic voice can either belong or not belong to either of the two worlds: the native land and the host country. The diasporic condition therefore stands as a condition of pain and double alienation. *"If the diasporic self is forever marked by a double consciousness, then its entry as legitimate citizen into the adopted home is also necessarily double"* (Ibid. 763).

In response to such assumptions, Todorov argues that human beings are far possibly to be uprooted from their culture as trees do. Opposition to cultural supremacy and racism does not entail neglecting one's own culture. Human beings are separated by culture differences but are united by a *"common identity"*. The latter is a pertinent factor *"promoting communication, dialogue and comprehension of Otherness",* which is not a radical attitude. Otherness is not there in order to deny something else; it is there to coexist with something else. *"Culture is learned and it can be relearned. No people are born what they are, nor could they stay so forever"* (Todorov & Mack, p. 1986, 176). Jan Mohamed could have possibly misunderstood Otherness to mean up-rootedness from one's culture in an encounter with another. However such an encounter presupposes an engagement of one's out-sidedness as well as one's in-sidedness for a thorough understanding of what it entails to be an Other not in losing but in gaining.[16] Besides, human beings live in a society and not alone as Durkheim posits that being part of a society is fundamentally linked to our being human. He represents society as *"an immense cooperation that extends not only through space but also through time."* It gathers ideas and feelings within a rich and complex set of processes via which humans beings become *"truly human"* (Durkheim, 1995, p. 15-16). He sees human interaction as widening one's horizons much more further from our immediate perceptions and desires. It also transforms and alters them thanks to the power of collective life (Mellor, 2004; & Durkheim, 1995).

I.2. Dialogism as an Open Space to Understanding Otherness:

Bakhtenian Dialogism stands as counter understanding to the binary relation between self and Other. For Bakhtin the self/Other relation should be linked to the dialogic nature of human interaction. He posits that open ended dialogue is the only grantor of "*verbally expressing authentic human life"* (Bakhtin, 1984, p. 293). Human life is about asking questions, heeding, arguing, and responding. When dialogue becomes the harmonious force on which human interaction is based, life will cease to appear like a web of misunderstanding and struggle for meaning.

Human beings experience a process of interaction throughout their participation in an open ended dialogue. This highlights the idea of sociability of language in being an

important means of communication to stay alive, for life itself is dialogic. The sociable nature of language Bakhtin alludes to as discourse. The situated act of dialogue in discourse is the utterance (Ibid. 183). Bakhtin calls the quality of the utterance, being directed to the others, its addressivity (Ibid.95). Therefore, the participant or addressee is by no means a passive listener, but an active contributor in a communicative process and so is the addresser. On the active role of the hearer within a dialogue Harris also argues: *"...when the communicator faces the hearer, the communicator's purpose or intent must be to confront the hearer in a way that enables the hearer to discover that rigorous demand is set before her or him"* (Harris, 1991, p. 97). The hearers are invited to respond either positively or negatively. They have the freedom to choose (Ibid. 67).

When Bakhtin turns to give examples of possible participants in a dialogue he emphasizes that this addressee could be an interlocutor involved in everyday dialogue, or a group collective of specialists, in a particular field, people from a different ethnic group, opponents and enemies, people intellectually superior or inferior to us and it can also be an "*indefinite"," unconcreticized" "Other"* alluding to a possibility of the involvement of a non-human Other (Bakhtin's emphasis, Bakhtin, 1986, p. 95). An important feature of Bakhtin's understanding of the Other is his insisting on the distinctiveness of the latter i.e. its alterity—the otherness of the Other. It is the fact that this other expresses itself from a different perspective and has a different stand that allows the productivity of dialogue with other people. He suggested: *"In what way would it enrich the event if I merged with the Other, and instead of two there would be now only one? And what would I myself gain by the others merging with me?"* Bakhtin suggest the Other remains outside of one's self to enrich one's life with diversity and difference (Bakhtin, 1990, p. 87).

This also points to Bakhtin's insistence that the difference and distance of the Other from the self should be maintained and considered essential; not mere imposed 'sameness'. It is the constant struggle with difference and misunderstanding that renders dialogue and thought productive. Therefore, consensus between participants in a dialogue is never a measure for dialogic productivity. This line of thought is utterly different from Vygotsky's understanding of dialogue. Unlike Bakhtin, he claims for

the absolute sharing of information between interlocutors and he favours internal dialogue, or monologue, over external dialogue. His understanding of dialogue is related to the distinction he made between, inner, or what he termed *"egocentric speech"*, and *"external speech"* (Wertsch, 1980 , p.151). "*Inner speech*, Vygostky explains, *"is speech for oneself. External speech is speech for others"* (Vygotsky, 1987, p. 257). For him the ideal speech is one in which the shared *"given"* in a conversation between addresser and addressee is maximal and where misunderstanding between them is minimized. His view of dialogue is that the exact information contained in the speech of the listener is a *replica* of that contained in that of the speaker. Each interlocutor constitutes an *insider* to the Other's world (Ibid. 69). This condition presupposes the assumption that dialogue is an enterprise based on cooperation whereby the aim is focused on *maximal* agreement. It is of at most importance to point out that the difference between Bakhtinian and Vygotskian perception of dialogue is their representation of the self/Other relation. Vygotsky claimed for a dialogue with the Other that blends the participants together, highlighting their sameness by, presumably decreasing the chances of misunderstanding, granting them identical ways of thinking and amount of information. However, Bakhtin argues for a relation with the Other perceived from outside the self-i.e. a relation based on difference from and possibly conflict with the self, yet which induces dialogue and interaction. This allows for the weakening of egocentric perception of the Other in terms of sameness and concentration on the self as the centre of attention. It also, according to Bakhtin, translates the shaping of a knowledge of the self through the *"special form"* of the self's connectedness to the outside world in *Author and Hero* and *Discourse in the Novel.* He attributes a "*double-voicedness"* positions (1981 , p. 354) for the self/"I" .Firstly stands the "I-for myself position (Bakhtin, 1990, p. 24). It determines the inner construct consisting of one's ideas, ideals, attitudes, values, and preferences…etc. are perceived from one's own cognition i.e. how one views one's own self and feels about it, Secondly, there is the position of *"I and the Other"* that concerns my relation to outsiders under the supervision of my own look. Finally comes the position of the *"Other- for- me". "...either as my own lived experience or as the lived experience of this particular and unique other human being "* (Ibid. 23-25). It is the gateway allowing the Other's gaze on myself and mine on theirs. Thus the famous *'know thyself'* directive presupposes an encounter of intertwining competing epistemologies either within the same self [as

one's own Other] or from without. Besides, in his notion of the dialogic self, Bakhtin argues that it is oriented precisely toward such an actively responsive understanding. He does not expect passive understanding that merely duplicates his own idea in someone else's mind. Rather, he expects response, agreement, sympathy, objection, and execution (Bakhtin, 1986, p. 69). However, pertinent and promising such intentions and ideas are, some reservations should be noted about Bakhtin's understanding of the self/Other relation considering the following passage:

> To be means to be for the Other, and through him, for oneself. Man has no internal sovereign territory ; he is all and always on the boundary; looking within himself, he looks in the eye of the Other or through the eyes of the Other…I cannot become myself without the Other; I must find myself in the Other; finding the Other in me. (Todorov, 1984, p. 96)

The set forth passage highlights Bakhtin's recognition of the Other as existing, its contribution and relevance to the existence of the self besides the primacy of its role in the knowledge of the self of itself. However, the following words and phrases could be misleading gearing towards appraisals of the self over the Other. 'To be for the Other, and through him for oneself', a constant emphasis on oneself that might caricature the Other as a mere means of self-recognition or appeasing existential queries. Man *'has no'* internal '*sovereign'* territory; he is '*all*' and '*always'* on the boundary looking within *'himself*'. This could stand as a denial of self-sovereignty which is essential for one's self-esteem. '*I cannot*' become myself without the Other may entail the Other's existence is confined and sacrificed for that of the self, and therefore, it is there only to be used by the self. To critique Bakhtin, Jeffrey Nealon asserts that the latter's theory slips towards the same solipsism as Enlightenment theories of the subject. Nealon's reservations point to the possibility of the subject's 'objectification' of the others i.e. appropriating them as objects for the sake of its own self-understanding (Nealon, 1997, p.130; & Delehanty, 2001, p. 33). One should rather aim at a negotiation of perspectives, which means the possibility of not seeing one's self through the narrow lenses of the self but to allow the Other's gaze to tell one more about one's self and about the Other. This could also mean the denial of difference as self-assertion that is played out as a no-loss game, for the consideration of difference cannot empty the self. It is there to enrich it and be enriched by it.

Most of Soueif's works explored later in chapter two, three and four display this idea of dialogic relations that Soueif allows between characters themselves besides space and time to expand the meaning of Otherness as mutual understanding.

I.3. On narrative as a means to understand Otherness :

Where theory seems to leave pitted spaces as to understanding Otherness the narrative mode may take the lead. Narratives enhanced by imagination uses a less distanced language that may draw one closer to the dialogue presupposed in the reading process between reader and writer or self and Other. Empathy could be as a further incentive in this mutual recognition. Therefore it could be considered as an empowering practice. Jacques Derrida calls for a window of opportunity to put into question the foundations of Western philosophy in that all disciplines have been affected by it, however literature he believes could be a space to critique such foundations*: "In literature…philosophical language is still present in some sense; but it produces and presents itself as alienated from itself, at a remove, at a distance. This distance provides the necessary free space from which to interrogate philosophy anew"* (Kearney, 1984, p. 109). Harris contends that imagination could have one's assumptions challenged to be able to encounter the Other anew. *"…imagination characteristically looks at reality from the reversed, unnoticed side"* (Ibid. 9). For Ricoeur narratives articulate an experience of the 'other-than-self' element by the self. They consider the 'life' of characters in relation to moments of their responsiveness or failure to respond to others. The responsive self for him concerns primarily its transcendence of its condition to responding "*faithfully and thoughtfully to others"* and to expect responses from them (1992, p. 165-8)

However, artists' use of their imagination was said to transmit their imperfect view of things and the audiences get affected by this distorted view of reality, translated in Plato's reproaching the audiences' fall under the spell of the artist .Besides, questions such as 'is literature dead? (Doody, 2000), as in Alvin Kernan's *The Death of Literature* (1990) (as cited in Beaty, 2000, p. ii) or if it is still a 'reliable' and an 'up to date' source of knowledge in a cyber-era, still constitute a space for debates (Paulson, 1993) *" Literary modes are very natural to us very close to ordinary life and to the way we live as reflective beings"* .They highlight individuals' view and consideration of the others , living together (Murdoch,1998, p. 6). E.M Forster in *Aspects of the Novel* insists that the novel allows introspection within the inner lives of characters and their motivations as part of reader's

knowledge about the others and the world (1966). This kind of knowledge stems from *"the seriousness of art itself"* as *"aesthetic seriousness";* a *"seriousness of perception"*.

Readers' experience of narratives has an aim, a seriousness of its own. It makes their imagination work to perceive things they could not hitherto understand and situations they experienced before but never saw clearly. Following this line of thought, reading stories *"conveys knowledge"* or "*a kind of knowledge*" the possibility of having various ways of knowing drawn from "two basic types of knowledge" each using language as a system of signs: the sciences which use the "*discursive mode*", and the arts, which use the *"presentational mode*". In this sense one can claim that art as containing and presenting a kind of knowledge particular to it, could be viewed as presenting "*a* truth" rather than "*the* truth"(Wellek and Warren, 1949, p. 68). It grants meaning a sense of dialogism and flexibility.

On deconstruction Derrida contends that the reader of any text will typically seek out what has been excluded to demonstrate the illusion of completeness within a system. To deconstruct is to identify points of failure in a system points at which it is able to feign coherence only by excluding and forgetting that which it cannot assimilate, that which is "Other" to it. Stories are a way of maintaining the ubiquity of the Other and the meaning, the belief and awareness that at some crucial point *"everyone and everything is related to everyone and everything else even in exclusion"* (Harris,1991, p.1).

As to Man's relation to the world as possibly non-human Other and a source of knowledge, the relation is by no means harmonious. Foucault explains it when he suggested that the world does not offer one easy and simple formulas of meaning that one is o decipher without any misunderstandings. One, he contends, practices violence and imposition on discourse for understanding and knowledge to be possible (1981)

Man enters into conflicting relations with the world in his search for knowledge. It is by no means harmonious, linear, and disconnected. This is clearly pointed at by Foucault's using words as 'violence' and 'impose'. Knowledge is far from being finite, for the world is not the accomplice of it. There is so much to be known, and the realm of the unthought-of is far from being limited or accurately articulated by the thought. The violence we do to things and the practice imposed on them discards any possibility of attuning Man might assume with the world, according to Foucault. Thus, he seeks to transcend the illusion of the sovereign self in command of the world by situating it in a world larger that it and

partly constitutive of it. In this respect, one would be responding to the way things are rather than just letting one's feeling out. He also disdains notions such as *"a settled way of life"*, that he thinks endorses too much ambiguity and is itself a form of imposition. This entails that Man should embark on a life of perpetual questioning to avoid imposition of any kind, precisely that of *"available knowledge"*(Foucault, 1970a, p. 316). [15]

I.4. Woman as Other: A Feminist [11]Critique:

Feminist studies have been the locus of the creation of an open space for counter discourses against women's representation as Other. Women have been marginalised and othered in the same way the stranger and colonised were relating to the investigation set forth. One needs to probe first the causes and implications of such representations in feminist studies besides pointing at the debate on Otherness implicating both female and male scholars.

The concerns in the 1970's for feminist scholars were oppression, discrimination in the labour market, the repercussions of home confinement, the status of women in various jobs, and productive rights (Andersen, 2008). Another major point was to stress *"the social basis of gender roles"*, and so demystify the dominant biologically essentialist explanation of sex differences to finally confirm that gender is a socially determined entity. The study of gender as structure means that "women are in society and society is in women". Feminist scholars attempted to link the changing and fluid construction of gender with its social structural realities. They tried to maintain gender in its own social structure. (Ibid. 442)

Another very important theme in women's studies was defying taken for granted ideas about the "*inevitability of institutional forms"* (Ibid. 439- 440). In sociology this theme has been discussed mainly in the critique of *"functionalist interpretation of the family"*. Feminist scholars defined the idea, recurrent in functionalism, that expressive and instrumental roles in the family were necessarily divided along lines of gender". Feminist scholars asserted that such institutions could be changed. For instance the single parent family seemed less natural than others. Another very important point in feminist studies was to consider women's lives as a valuable item. This entailed that women's culture could finally be considered as a major theme. A prominent work on such a subject was published

by Jessie Bernard's in *The Female World* (1981). This also meant that women's contribution to literature and art was to acquire significant status.

Besides the question of gender emerge the class and race prerequisites. Women's studies were to learn from many groups facing race discrimination and class discrimination in the 1990's (Omi & Winant, 1994; & Andersen, 2008, p. 443). Besides, these two major points of discussion were included the roles of power and agency in shaping social relations. Questions such as who holds power? How, and under what conditions, and with what effects, are of uttermost importance (Ibid. 444). The *"race-class-gender"* debate was and still is the fundamental nexus of the 2000's studies (Kennelly, 2004). Lynn Weber wrote: *"Race, class, gender and sexuality are historically and geographically specific, socially constructed systems of oppression—they are power relationships"* (2001, p. 9).

Foucault has a different conception of power removed from that entailing oppressor/oppressed or master/servant. He argued that while power presupposes a subjugating process, a possibility of an emerging of an agential subject is very likely. Therefore, individuals *"are always in the position of simultaneously undergoing and exercising power. They are not only its inert or consenting target; they are always the elements of its articulation"*. This triggers what Foucault labels an *"insurrection of subjugated knowledge(s)"* (1972-1977, p. 81-98). The knowledge (s) Foucault speaks about are marginalized discourses that appear to resist society's hegemonic discourses. He further contends that *"power must be analysed as something that circulates… [Moreover] there are relations of power without resistances"* (Ibid. 98-142). This understanding of power allows a decentring of essentialism carving a dominator/dominated positions. Foucault's position stresses the notion of power/knowledge which aims at a relationship with another who is an "acting subject" and who possesses insurrectional knowledge. Thus, the oppressed is never solely a potential victim but can turn into an agent having their own knowledge . In the same token borrowing from postcolonial theory Spivak's (1990) subaltern subjects concern individuals for whom the circulation of power has been cut off.

Among the most important scholars sparking the debate of women's strangeness and Otherness were De Beauvoir and Sartre. Although he acknowledges that man exists in a world of the Other in Being and Nothingness, Sartre argues that:

> While I attempt to free myself from the hold of the other, the other is trying to free himself from mine; while I seek to enslave the other, the other seeks to enslave me…conflict is the original meaning of being-for-others. (1989 , p.364)

However, Beauvoir emphasizes reciprocity as the building block of the self/Other relation. She contends that one's subjectivity is not inertia, withdrawal, or separation, but rather a movement towards the Other so that the difference between the self and this latter no longer exists, and one can call the Other her or his (1974, p. 245; & Tidd, 1999, p. 164, 65). In *Le deuxième sexe*, (*The Second Sex*) she explores the male/female dialectic in that men consider women as subjects of oppression and an ultimate Other, inferior and weak. She contends:

> Humanity is defined by man and man defines the woman not relating to herself but in reference to himself…she determines and differentiates herself according to him; she is the inessential compared to the essential. He is the subject, he is the absolute; she is the Other[12] (1949, p.16).

However she championed living with the others, Beauvoir was criticized for favouring individualism over co-existence with others when she considered it a kind of accident that people should overcome to transcend and know one's self better (Beauvoir, 1965).

The male/female dialectic has also been a subject of debate between Lucy Irigaray and Emmanuel Levinas. Irigaray claims for the existence and perception of different subjects that a normative view colonizing Western philosophy has blurred. For Irigaray the feminine subject must be perceived as Other, namely enjoying its own freedom, distinction and raison d'être, irrespective of the resemblances it might have with the male subject (Irigaray & Marion, 2004). She critiques Levinas's stand for not recognizing the interaction between different subjectivities and that the female Other belongs to a totally different world than that of the male. For her, the recognition of gender differences and autonomy is far more important than that given to the foreigner as Other, in maintaining a distinction and *"elaboration of subjectivity and culture"*. This leads to a sustaining of difference between two "kinds of human species" (Ibid. 69). For Levinas, the Other is not the woman but the son, maintaining and preserving a patriarchal tradition and converting the Other to the same. To recognize an inter-subjectivity between the masculine and feminine means for Levinas a prevention of the subject preservation as autonomous, and its weakening, by highlighting its limits. He denies the female subject its alterity i.e. being an Other different

and autonomous from the male, so as not to permit the possibility of the male being Other on its turn (Levinas, 1987).[13]

Hannah Arendt considered feminism and women issues as part of the *"public person"* and not a matter of a private self-detached from the rest of the world (Cutting-Gray, 1993, p.35). She denied translating Otherness in terms of racial or gender opposition. She resented the idea of individuals belonging to a social group and getting transformed into *"a collection of private selves"*(Ibid. 37). Otherness should not be perceived in terms of "other-self-contained-egos" and not in terms of Others blending their alterity with that of Others; with capitalization reinforcing these latter's irreducible difference (Ibid.40). To view everything outside oneself as an ultimate danger and threat means to forbid and condemn difference under the disguise of an erroneous or illusory inviolate self. Such politics shatters the idea of a heterogeneous world for a monolithic unitary one, invocating sameness , if everything outside the self, becomes the incarnation of a *"hostile Other"* (Ibid.41). The deprivation of privacy for Arendt lies not in the natural relation and separation from others, but in the absence of others. She labels this kind of private retreat into the self to preserve one's privacy, *"inner emigration"*(Ibid. 42- 43). A female subject, she insists should be conceived as complementary to the male subject not a subject of totalitarianism or a hostile Other.

I.4.1. Woman as Other: A Postcolonial Feminist Critique

The same representation of the female as a hostile Other, an inferior and weak being, and a threat to male ego, dominated postcolonial feminist studies, post colonial theory and concerns had been the subject of a thorough explanation earlier in *The Other as Stranger and Different: A Postcolonial Perception* (p. 24-35). Spivak relied on the theoretical projects of feminist, Marxist, and deconstructionalist thoughts. This allowed her a multilayered critique at more than one level of various hegemonic structures. She had been able to challenge the male dominance over many areas of critical studies: Marxism, psychoanalysis and poststructuralism. She sharply rejected the politics of silence and the underestimation of the subaltern as the silent foreign Other. Besides her critique of the essentialised perception of the labelled 'Third- World-woman' as inferior, marginalized, men's sex-slave by Western feminist thought, she argued for a deconstruction of such stereotypes (Hassan, 2002).

However, Spivak was criticized for having confined the area in which the colonized can claim a history only through writing. The Subaltern is prone to silence in colonial discourse and in the counter discourse of the postcolonial critic. She had also been criticized, especially by Neil Larson and Dipesh Chakraborty, of setting the building of *"dominant forms of knowledge and politics"* as a condition for the subaltern to be heard. Therefore she is said to be claiming for the same hegemonic discourse she is supposed to deconstruct i.e. conjuring up the subaltern as the replica of the colonizer or foreigner.

Relating to the ideas of silence of the subaltern is the element of voice (Luke, 1994). As an empowering tool for women, it has represented a crucial concept in feminist theory and practice since the start of the women's movement in the 1960's. Voice entails women's speech and language has contributed to raising female consciousness and allowed them speak about their experiences. The element of voice has always stood as adversary of silence nurtured by patriarchal discourse that features women as Other (Ibid. 213). Silence counter opposed to voice has always meant subjugation to an authority and a lower social status. On the other hand, voice entails a forceful energy that certifies and solidifies the presence of one's identity in a difference bound environment. Yet, "*What the literature has largely overlooked is the use of silence as a politics of resistance, in Foucauldian terms, the use of silence can be read as a refusal to 'confess' and to 'expose' the self"* (Ibid. 213).

Women speak in different ways and have different relations to language and knowledge. That women possess various and altering voices is a direct result of women's historical sociocultural and economic positions relating to men. Thus, perceiving the relation of women to language as a social structure and not as a means of essentialisation allows the possibility of change and facilitates it. This permits an exclusion of women from the fact of being different for the sake of difference but in relation to another item and another construct in their relationship that is men. Representational and power defined faculties of language have long been the franchise of men. *"Women's historical location in the private sphere of muted domesticity and servitude has excluded them from education, from reading, writing and speaking the public tongue of politics"* (Luke, 1994, p. 213), (Gilligan, 1982; Irigaray, 1985, 1993; Belenky et al., 1986; & Fuss 1989). Women have historically been positioned outside the realm of men's discourses. This has devalued and muted their speech degrading it to the sphere of *"pre-language"* or *"the unconscious"* (Irigaray, 1985; & Kristeva, 1986). It has been a strenuous task for feminist historians,

literary theorists and anthropologists to recuperate these silenced voices. According to Foucault's perception of how to redefine and rewrite history, feminist scholars' mission is to work as archaeologists of discourse, unveiling and digging away deeply *"buried sites of women's knowledge"* (Luke, 1994, p. 214). Gumperz (1982) posits that women's silences must not be regarded as indicating a form of passivity and engendering powerlessness in social encounters. Cross-cultural research reveals that *"women use silence in politically strategic ways to 'revert the power gaze' and confront male social and linguistic power"*. Susan Gal (1992), a feminist sociologist suggests that cross-cultural studies assert that women's use of 'gossip', poetry and song, gesture and ritual, and even bilingual diglossia are socio-cultural practices used to subvert and contest dominant, usually male, discourse. Girls use language in terms of gender depending on their cultural and social background. They learn to be different from men through their different use of language (Tannen, 1992), Bartky (1990). This is sometimes concerned with "*marks of shame"* that women speak with and a *"repertoire of stereotyped gestures appropriate to their situation"* (Luke, 1994, p. 216). This *"shame"* unveils:

> ...in their silence, the necessity for hiding and concealment; in the tentative character of their speech and in their regular apologetics, the sense of self as defective or diminished. The fear of demeaning treatment could be seen in the cringing before an Other from whom such treatment was anticipated, shame could be read even in the physical constriction of their bodies. (Ibid. 90)

I.4.2.The Difference between 'Third World' and 'First World' Women:

Another important theme characterising women's studies is the difference between 'First World' and 'Third World' women. Insisting on the difference between 'first' and 'third world' feminism, Chandra Mohanty Talpade believed that:

> For too long, women in the third world have been considered not agents of their own destiny, but victims. A potent image has been constructed, even in feminist scholarship, of 'an average third world woman' who leads an essentially truncated life based on her feminine gender. (1984, p. 47-56)

So, women in the developing world have been stigmatised as doubly others; featuring the female weakness and inferiority plus the ignorance and dependence summoned to people from their part of the world. They have been denied their Otherness as emancipation, change and difference and the possibility to restore a new image for

themselves. This resulted in having women devoid of their agency who were described by Derrida as a "non-other". *"She (woman) engulfs and distorts all vestige of essentiality of identity, of property"* (1978, p. 51). According to Golley:

> some have even gone further to argue that because feminist and national consciousness emerged at the same time and as a reaction to western imperialism, feminism is an illegal immigrant and an alien import to the Arab world and, as such, is not relevant to the people and their culture[14] (2004, p. 521)

Besides, Arab women have been named *'pawns of Arab men'* by western women (Bulkin, 1984, p.167-168). They have been represented as obscure creatures, submissive and secluded. Their main concern was their homes and children and the other females in the 'Harem' (Golley, 2004, p. 522). They have been condemned to remain' third world'; *"ignorant, poor, uneducated, tradition bound, domestic, family oriented, victimized…"* (Mohanty, 1984, p. 47-56). In the main, Lazreg investigates the way both western and 'third world' women's feminist conception of Eastern woman. She insists on the continuity of themes tackled by French colonial and neo-colonial discourse, and resumed by Eastern feminist writings (1988). Namely, the most recurrent themes are the oppression of third world women by men, religion and family preoccupations which hamper their emancipation and participation in professional life. According to Lazreg, these forms of essentialisations such as victimized, uneducated, domestic and submissive are associated to Eastern women out of a lack of knowledge of the nature of the latter (Ibid. 89). A lack of knowledge condemned women in the developing world to dwell in the circle of ignorance, dependence on men, inability to decide and, therefore, instead of enjoying their Otherness as part of their distinction from others that could build their identity, remained the excluded stereotyped Other.

Another phenomenon spreading throughout 'Third World' and 'First World' women's encounter has been 'women's orientalism'. Although Orientalist discourse was broadly generated by men, Western women have their share of the blame regarding this image (Liddle & Rai,1998, p. 499). Sara Mills has added that Western women's voice could be differentiated from men's voice as the latter bore authority of the colonizer. Consequently Western women's contribution to Orientalism was "*not straight forwardly Orientalist in the way Said has described it"* (Mills, 1991, p. 62). Women's Orientalism: So called female Orientalism demonstrated complex and varying approaches regarding the image of the Indian and 'third world' woman. Chaudhuri and Strobel argued against that *"complex*

dynamic of complicity and resistance" which could not be identified as straight forward Orientalism" (1992, p.7). Reina Lewis believes that women's Orientalism was *"either simply supportive or simply oppositional"*, it was also *"partial, fragmented, and contradictory"*, (1996, p. 237) offering more or less images of the Eastern women that prove to be less sharply loaded by orientalist energy. However, Antoinette Burton believes that feminists articles in journals of the early twentieth century depicted 'Eastern' women as *"enslaved, degraded, and in need of salvation"* (Chaudhuri & Strobel, 1992, p. 23).

Ramusack (1990) spoke of 'maternal Imperialists' referring to Western women writers. Most of these writers supported the cause of independence of the colonies and yet thought of colonisers as improving life in the colonies. 'White Men's Burden' coined to describe white Euro-American men assumed mission of 'civilizing' other races has been inherited by Euro-American white women to give birth to 'White Women's Burden'. In this line of thought Kumari (1995) explains that Western women writers perceived Eastern women in general and Indian women in particular as their burden and considered themselves as the caterers of progress and civilization.

Burton in Strobel and Chaudhuri (1992, p.139) viewed Indian women as victims struggling to come into terms with a decaying society enmeshed in colonialism. This mission of civilizing Eastern women Western women writers placed as everything they fought for and as *"the measure of their own progress"*. In the meantime their struggle for women's rights was another guarantee of empire preservation (Ibid. 145-152).

Despite considerable efforts and improvements Eastern women achieved in bettering their situation, they remained stuck in the same ubiquitous and immutable "unitary image" of the slave and victim. Mohanty posits: *"the true 'subjects' of this counter-history [white] third world women…never rise above the debilitating generality of their 'object' status"* (1988, p.79).

Future feminist works in feminist studies must include, besides the issue of authority, a means to strengthen the dialogue and communication between 'first' and 'third' world women (Radcliffe, 1994, p.25). The communication issue becomes characterised as possessing a *"double dimension"* when considering the question of representation. A Representation in this context of relations between 'first 'and third' world woman includes how images and texts are produced. Representation entails picturing and unveiling *"what is first an authorial representation; and secondly a notion of political speaking-on-behalf-of, a*

formation of a political constituency, a political representation" (Ibid. 26). The dilemma that western feminist geographers confront is that of the way the latter would make 'third world women' known to the world and depict their texts within their own productions. Another issue remains at stake which is that of how and whether 'third world women' should be represented politically. 'Third world women' have been ignored by 'first world' geographical feminism especially in terms representing written productions in the latter's own productions. These feminists, British in particular, overlook and avoid 'third world women's' contribution to feminist thought. These contributions include critiques of 'first world' feminists. Even in their discussion of concepts as gender, white feminists have avoided the inclusion of race, nations and multiple identities of 'third world' female subjects. The latter are an active component in *"global relations of modernisation, colonialism/post-colonialism, capitalist development, and Euro-American geopolitics"* (Ibid. 26). However, 'third world' feminist writers have struggled to make their voices heard and efficient and have argued against the ways they have been represented in white feminist literature. They strongly critiqued their being essentialised by white feminists as figures of perpetual suffering, victimisation and passive recipients of 'first world' productions (Mohanty, 1991; Minh-ha, 1989; Ong, 1988; & Radcliffe , 1994). Such limitations localise 'third world women' in a static space, time and history (Mohanty, 1991, p. 6) that prevents any opportunity to make them special (Minh-ha, 1989). Thus, 'third world women' become subject to exclusion and not active agents in communication. They are labelled a minority both as authors and politically. They are allowed to express themselves only within the boundary of 'first world' conventions regarding them as Other condemned to eternal difference. This could be a way to *"disclaim the right to speak about 'third world women' themselves"* (Radcliffe , 1994 , p. 28). And yet 'third world women' in being 'different' and 'exceptional' are the ones to be able to speak for themselves most prominently. *'First world women and men'* do not need to represent them authorially and politically (Radcliffe , 1994; Fuss 1989; & Stasiulis, 1992).

The issue of restoring 'third world' women's contribution to world academia had been analysed by Haraway (1991). Haraway probed the privileged and power 'first world thinkers' have to produce and represent written texts regarding their belonging to a certain race and geographical area. Haraway posits that written productions produced by western feminist writers were possible thanks to the labour of their 'third world' counterparts. Haraway further argues that 'first world male and female' social science academics are

allowed by systems of loaded by power in order to tell stories and to form myths. This representation of 'third world women' cannot help escape the political arena for the 'first world' academics representation answers social and political constituencies. Those academics derive their authority and power from politics that indicates the level of their influence belonging to a privileged geographical area called *'the first world'* (Radcliffe , 1994). One way of overcoming this dilemma of 'third world women' being misrepresented or spoken for by more authoritative 'first world academics is suggested by a variety of 'third world' scholars like Spivak. They favour the recognition of 'third world' women's voice as a part of an international dialogue. Third world women should take an equal part in the communication with 'first world' women and not just need to be allowed to speak. They need authority and status. The process of communication between 'west and rest' needs to be reconceptualised. 'First world' women issues should no longer regard 'third world' women as essentially 'different' and particular to this category. They must widen their scope to view such a category as women having similar concerns and challenges.

The same idea of differentiating between 'first world' and 'third world' women recurs further particularly in chapter three (p.149) probing 'Eastern' and Western female characters misrepresenting each other out of lack of knowledge.

I.5. Representations of Women in the West: Religious, Literary, and Historical Implications:

Before one probes the representation of Arab/Muslim women in the West, one needs to explore the perception of women in general including Western women in The West too from religious and literary standpoints. The most destructive view of femaleness in Western religious conception is its association with sin and fallen humanity besides being a distortion of the perfect (male) soul. It further disfigures the notion of Man, woman included, created in God's image demonizing the female entity (Kamitsuka, 2004). Patricia Hunter (1993) argues that *"If all God created was very good, including human kind, then all women, regardless of ethnicity, class, varying abilities, or sexual orientation, are part of God's very good creation"*. Some feminists posit that the two creation stories read together yield the insight that *"the image of God is reflected in a community of persons, in a human kind that is created male and female "for whom being like God can be achieved*

only by the gift of self to others and the reception of the gift of self from others" (Kamitsuka, 2004, p. 198-199).

Because women have long represented the symbol of sin, some feminist scholars like Rosemary Ruether had granted sin a social dimension besides its theological implication entailing an offence against God or a religious or moral law (Kamitsuka, 2004). These scholars viewed power imbalances and social discrimination against women a sin committed against women that renders the latter victims of oppression. The cause of such discrimination is inaugurated and perpetrated by what Ruether calls *"group egoism"* performed by *"the dominant male ego"* (1983, 163-164) and is highlighted in the social sin of sexism. Ruether also posits that women participate in the sin of oppression and become themselves oppressors when they discriminate against others because of their race and class. Yet, she contends that even when women become oppressors, the real culprits are men. This view, however true to a certain extent, is a proof of essentialism and binarism concerning female/male relation.

Challenging female stereotypes extends to include one of the oldest mythic and religious female symbols that is the Lilith; *"the apocryphal first wife of Adam"* .She stands for a night demon and she is also labelled *"Bitch Goddess"* (Osherow, 2000, p. 68). A thorough revision of the myth of Lilith is found in C.L. Moore's *Fruit of Knowledge* and Octavia .E. Butler's *Dawn*. Within these fictions Lilith's mission trans-passes the mission of threatening male protagonists. She rises as a hero that out shadows the stereotypes' delineating the aura of female characters. Oscillating between the incarnations of wicked temptress and found mother, the Lilith emergent from women's science fiction introduces a new feminine image which is characterised by displaying a purification of women's roles in contemporary culture. Lilith is represented in myths as a forceful and inhuman force (Ibid. 69). Her image in feminist's science fiction revisions is portrayed as both "*earthly and enigmatic"* without overlooking her potential power. Concerning these revisions of the Lilith's legend Hélène Cixous and Catherine Clément assert: *"myth transmits itself making changes in accordance with…cultural evolution"* (1986, p. 6). The whole change includes new attitudes towards women's position within a patriarchal culture. Women writers of science fiction extended the franchise of defining female characters ultimately in relation to male heroes (Russ, 1972). They shape female champions *"who reject the "good girl/bad girl"* binary in which what is *"good"* entails women's submission to the patriarchy and "bad" casts them as a threat to it. These revisions also picture a controversial

representation of Lilith as both an empowered sorceress and an idealised mother. "*She is both an independent sexual self and a person on whom innocents depend for sustenance and protection"* (Russ,1972, p.5).

Lilith, according to Jewish legends, was the first woman who defied both God and man by considering herself as equal to man (Osherow, 2000). She is represented as an evil being who joined forces with Satan. She also gave birth to armies of devil children (Koltuv 1986). She was banished and punished by divine law for having deserted her mate causing one hundred of her children to die each day (Ginzberg, 1967). Her name was associated to demon and witch who attack small children and pregnant women. Cantor posits that Lilith's crimes include "*several crucial male fears"* embodying impotence, loss of a female companion, and loss of the patriarchal line (1983, p. 45-46). However, he also claims that she is the incarnation of a desperate search for freedom and equality (Ibid. 50).

Moore's tale published in 1940 represents Lilith as the first female as in the Jewish tradition, yet she adds her own new touch (Osherow, 2000). According to Moore's tale Lilith precedes Adam. She incarnates *"The Queen of Air and Darkness" who takes the human form only when she gets wind of Adam's fantasies".* She is a temptress and lives for passion for men and revenge from Eve who took her place in Adam's heart (1975, p. 175). Moore intends to display a picture of her Lilith as both evil and bad powerful independent as opposed to Eve who appear as submissive, childish, and silly creature. (Ibid.183). According to Cantor, Lilith threatens man with her autonomy (1983) while Eve supports it with her submission. Although Moore's version of Lilith is inspired from tradition, her revision of its tale is important as she insists on Lilith not to be human but super human and therefore more powerful than Adam. She happens to take a human form yet she feels more comfortable when she is:

> ...not confined to flesh…Without thinking, almost without realising what she did she sprang up and out of flesh that was betraying her. Up through the crystal morning she sprang impalpable as the air around her…she was free of the flesh and the terrifying weakness that had gone with it (Moore, 1975, p. 179). [16]

Lilith has more power than man. The human shape of Adam appeals to her, yet it is something foreign to her. Moore empowers Lilith with alien power and she also depicts her as hungry for creation and thus striving to compete with God for divine creation. Moore offers an image of a powerful, intelligent, independent and determined Lilith. She remains

so until the end. She is not limited or controlled by any human, especially male. Moore gives her more power as she flies freely through the air with the burden of desire that she could not get rid of. God gives her the choice: "*Make your own choice, Queen of Air and Darkness"* (Moore, 1975, p. 198).

The representation set forth, some Western scholars argue, is due to the fact that women are morally degraded. Carol Gilligan argues against traditional accounts of moral development in her distinctive book *In a Different Voice* (1982). She contends that psychologists led by Freud have identified psychological development in male terms. For instance, Lawrence Kohlberg's six-stage account of moral development represents most women as morally immature. This theory degrades them to stand at the moral development's third ladder stair as they are concerned exclusively with "goodness" and helping others. However, men reach the fifth and sixth levels that are predominantly associated with universal rules and principles. Gilligan deems this theory, and similar theories are biased, since they deny women existence (1982). Such theories state male patterns of development as the norm. Gilligan further posits that women are far from being mere undervalued thinkers. They are different moral reasoners and they should be by their specific standards. In her study of male and female response to both hypothetical and real life crises, she came to discover that both female and male participants view these cases quite distinctively. Women rely and focus on relationships, which render their thinking contextual. They therefore, highlight the specificities of a given situation (Gilligan, 1982). They refuse any reference to universal principles that men emphasise. Gilligan, thus, differentiates *"male morality—an ethics of rights—with female morality—an ethics of responsibility"*. Women focus on connection and the inedibility of care and men focus on separation and individual rights. Gilligan does not deny a convergence of both female and male moral perspectives if considered from a wholly mature moral view (Gilligan, 1982, p. 165-7; & Robinson & Ross, 1990, p.78).

Not far removed from the image of women offered in Western religious conception is her image in Western literature .Some scholars condemn the spread of female/male stereotypes in modern art and suggest a return to older modes of expression. Frederick Turner in his article *The Crisis in Modern Aesthetics* describes the giant leap to modernism in art as an 'out of the blue' performance eliminating basic human *"systems"* and *"imprints"* suspecting them to be traditional and archaic. He labels modernism as *"oedipal…adolescent rebellion" that to "assert existence…must eliminate its father"*

(Wilshire & Wilshire, 1989, p. 22). Turner suggests an artistic renaissance and a return to older cultures, to our *"progenitors"* so that we allow the possibility of a flexible, sweet and clear vision of art that is based on "*renewable resources"*. The welcomed, efficient return to the traditions could be fulfilled via a reconsideration of *"pan-human" "mythical stories, basic cyclical, self-regenerating rhythms, phases and processes of primal people"* (Wilshire & Wilshire, p. 24). One should avoid the classical vision of converting the world into a series of "oppositional polarities: male/female, citizen/foreigner, master/slave, e.g., Greeks separated women, children and foreigner when interesting activities where concerned. Primal peoples-from pre-history- have never separated the world into that dualism divisionary and have always considered time as a:

> cyclical continuum without a definite beginning, end, or goal beyond itself". "From the Palaeolithic Age through the Neolithic, cyclic, regenerative values were the pervasive persuasive forces, and the primary divine image was Female, the Creator or Source-of-life, being the Pregnant Mother Goddess. This image is pan-human, and truly intercultural, a perennial model being human. (Wilshire & Wilshire, 1989, p. 24)

This very image of femaleness has been blurred and repressed and it needs revitalisation and resurrection. The ideas of regeneration, revival, continuation and renewal are very important (Wilshire & Wilshire, 1989, p. 24).

In Marilyn French *Beyond Power* she posits that in ancient times society and family were hugely *"mother-centred, matristic, relatively egalitarian and cooperative"* (Wilshire & Wilshire, 1989, p. 25). However, in ancient Greece the patriarchal, competitive and hierarchical pattern was the dominant feature of all relationships. It took the image of a powerful God and the feminine aspect was spared to monsters and "*The Pregnant Goddess"* is the opposite of Apollo in almost every way. She is an inclusive model of life; her round life giving body excludes no one and nothing for she is full of all possibility, carrying the Other (male and female) close to her heart inside Her all-knowing all-encompassing body.

Besides, interculturalism in art is necessary for renewal and continuation. It is not enough to display other cultures models as exotic images to dazzle our audience's eyes. What is important is to draw what lively and generative models we can from these cultures in order to enrich our vision and allow sustaining to life as a continuum (stories, rituals,

modes of expression) like the life and death cyclical process. The stories should not have final ends. The subject of the cycling of Nature was predominant in Shamanic dramas depicted on caves. It reinforced the theme of Eternal Return. The Creating Deity representing this was the Great Mother Goddess. She incarnated the Earth, Water, and Air. She had myths of universal patterns. They were elements in nature that never ended and recur constantly and continuously (Wilshire & Wilshire, 1989).

The Pregnant Goddess's *"story is not an individual's, but is everyone's throughout all generations. She embodies cyclicalness and includes all impersonally in Her pregnant body"*. However, the stories in ancient Greek times do not enhance and highlight *"everyone's earthly, cyclical humanness"* (Wilshire & Wilshire, 1989, p. 28).

Karen Malpede: *Women in Theatre* (1983) explored the dramatic richness of the pre-classical ages. She focussed on the Eleusinian Mysteries (pre-Greek origin). In these stories women and men enjoyed the powers of nature and the divine Female incarnated by Mother Goddess Demeter and her daughter Persephone. It concerns the dramatic ritual enactment at Eleusis. Eleusis is a genre that is neither tragedy nor comedy. It tells the story of Demeter the Goddess who went in search of her daughter Persephone. Though the Goddess grieves for her daughter, yet this grief is not eternal like in tragedies. There are instances of comedy and laughter. The mother and her servant rise from extreme grief to hope enhanced by an internal force that searches for life and overthrow of sadness and stillness. This cry for life is inclusive of both male and female because being human is inclusive and not exclusive (Wilshire & Wilshire, 1989).

The ritual relives the act of birth giving by the Goddess of her daughter. The physical mortal body of the Goddess incarnated by her servant Iambe comes to life again to empower the spiritual in the Goddess (Ibid. 32). The Greek females were never portrayed as pregnant. That became unfashionable when Athena proclaimed that she was born from her father's body; no longer did anyone need a mother (Ibid. 33).

However, Euripidian dramas, representing an example of the most distinguished Greek dramas, came to stand as a witness to a different image of women at that time. Among the earliest and most significant pieces of literature are Euripides' Oaths. The oath is one of the strictly male public discourse practices in ancient Athens. It used to be the locus for power in 'the agora', the assembly and the law courts. Agora stands for an open space used for markets and public meetings in Ancient Greece (Fletcher, 2003).

Euripides represents the puzzling and worrying presence of women able of making men offer them oaths, which challenge the phallocentric hierarchy of his society (Ibid. 31).[17] Besides, Laura McClure (1999) insists that women were granted a public voice in some contexts in Ancient Greece whereby she could express herself publicly. Particularly in three Euripidean dramas, *Medea*, *Hippolytus* and *Iphigenia* in *Tauris*, women use these crucial speech acts to gain control of men's language and action. Euripidean female characters make men swear to do things for them in the presence of gods who guarantee the efficiency and functioning of the oaths (Fletcher, 2000). This three faceted relationship man, woman and god, hampers the rising agency of female protagonists and ensures their hegemony as the gods become witness to the oaths. Oaths had divine force and status that sustained them with a cultural authority. This Euripides uses at the service of women's voice recognition. Euripides displays the extent to which the spoken word empowers women. *"Euripidean oaths tendered by women lead to a disruption of the status quo"*. They compel characters in Medea and Hippolytus *"to perform improbable acts"*. Female characters propel men to swear oaths that give the former the authority that allows them to act as *"authorial figures within fiction"*. This authority is gained through these characters use of language to conquer a masculine fifth century audience. Consequently, this phenomenon created an anxiety in classical Greek literature that expresses it via a description of women's speech "*as duplicitous or dangerous"* (Fletcher, 2000, p. 331-30). It constitutes the stereotype representing females tendering oaths in tragedy (Bergen, 1983).

Concerning the representation of woman in Elizabethan drama lady Mac Beth in Shakespeare's play *Mac Beth* stands as the epitome of the stereotypical image of woman as a symbol of sin and struggle for lost power denied to her by her fellow men**.** What lady Mac Beth expresses contradicts the known and agreed upon nature of women as fair sex, submitted, and weak.

Lady Mac Beth yearns for power so she decides to sever her womanly skin and wear that of Evil. She struggles to make Mac Beth King so that she becomes queen. Her main obstacle towards attaining power is her womanhood that she decides to curse and repudiate. She emerges as an equal counterpart to man in terms of evil doing and becoming. She comes as a replacement to unravel man's weakness to satisfy her male figure incarnation of strength and power. Here is what she invocated the spirits to do for her:

Under my battlements. Come, you spirits
That tend on mortal thoughts, unsex me here,
And fill me from the crown to the toe topful
Of direst cruelty! (Macbeth Act 1, scene 5, 38-43)

It basically means that Lady Macbeth is asking spirits for help to take away her feminity and replace it with masculine features such as strength because she thinks men are more powerful and stronger and it will be easier for her to commit a crime without feeling any guilt.

Further in history through the 17th Century Salem, New England America, women were depicted as more sinful than men (Reis, 1990). Despite the fact that individuals were considered in terms of souls and not in terms of sex, women were perceived as more prone to Satan's workings. Reis claim that this was a major factor in triggering Salem witchcraft as women internalized the set forth ideas as beliefs. Karlsen in *The Devil in the Shape of a Woman* (1987) posits that witch-hunt concerned women who '*failed'* to conform to the scriptures of patriarchy as the overwhelming power ruling society. These were women who go astray from their roles of *'obedient'* and *'good'* wives i.e. *'non-conformists*'. The prominent work of Nathaniel Hawthorne *The Scarlet Letter* incarnates such an image.

As for the representation of women in modern times Western male philosophers and social theorists associated the woman with disorder, savagery, chaos, unreason, and excluded *Other*. James Branch Cabell posits that for long women have been taken for granted and considered as mere conveniences (Wrenn, 2010). They were perceived as objects of copulation and pleasure. Men were concerned with theory, logic and order (Glasgow, 1913).

Hegel describes women as the "*Eternal irony of the community"* and Freud considers them as *"the implacable enemy of civilization"* .Ellen Glasgow in *Feminism* (1913) posits that in *"the past men have confidently asserted that woman exists not as an active agent of life but merely as a passive guardian of the life force and that it is nature's purpose that woman sit and watch"* (Wrenn, 2010, p. 9)

The philosopher Schopenhauer believes that just looking at a woman one is to understand that she is not made to perform great mental or physical labour. He goes as far as to confirm that women are childish, stupid, and non-human. According to him men are the only creatures that deserve human traits (Glasgow, 1913; & Wrenn, 2010). Coolidge confirms

that it was civilized men's mission to characterize women as efficient or useless: *"A successful women must be approved of"* (Coolidge, 1912, p. 85). Dr. Adler believed the biological basis for the inferiority of women has no legitimacy. He perceives women's inferiority as mere fictitious creation of man and that women are convinced to believe that they are inferior to men right from their early childhood (1935). This illusion Adler asserts exacerbated women's striving for dependence. However, Dora Marsden believes that women's perception as weak and dependent is due to a feeling they cherished for long seeking men's protection and comfort. She posits:

> it is not possible for an outer force to give or take away freedom; it is born in the individual's soul. She further asserts that women's immutable feeling as dependent and weak is not a truth but a myth that is prone to destruction (Wrenn, 2010 , p. 10; & Marsden, 1911).

Nietzsche's essay "*Supposing Truth is a Woman. What then?*" presents a similar version of how fake *"truths"* come into being. His contention is that dogmatist's tendency to make up "truths" is nothing less than a need for acceptance into a universal canon. He claims that *"truth is nothing short of a superficial erection that is structured upon a lie, a fake stability intended to give simplistic, determined and fixed values of things"* (2009, p.79). In order to have the acceptance of the many, this truth must be "*thinned down, shrouded, sweetened, blunted, falsified"*. Usually, the more conventionally acceptable a form is , the more it will end up being hollowed out of its *"truths",* until only a *"superficial" "mask"* remains (Nietzsche, 2009, p. 24). Nietzsche states that the *"wicked and unfortunate are more favourably situated and have a greater likelihood of success"* (Ibid. 24). Glasgow (1913) also confirms that traits assumed to be feminine prospects like passivity and weakness are not inherent but acquired and are principally due to women's consent to comply with society's norms.

Women's literature has also been part of the controversy surrounding women's question. Questions like: is there such a thing as 'women's literature? Is women's literature a category? Are there any literary qualities present in all works by women and absent from all works by men? They have long been subjects of debate in the academia. Some scholars have claimed there are differences between men and women. Some general traits attributed to females are: being more sensitive, more aware of details, illogical, they take everything personally, their lives are confined to and centred on love and they have higher moral standards. Authors like Patricia Spacks Meyer and Elaine Showalter respectively argue that

women writers are very similar in the choice of their subject matters in writing and in their use of language "that men do not understand" (1975, p. 5), (1975, p. 10).

Women could have specific subject matters that they like to write about or are urged to tackle to better their conditions and make their voices heard. Yet, this does not mean that they write in a different way from men or use language differently. One should admit that some subjects tackled by female writers differ from men's because women have had different life experiences and conditions. For instance, they have been subject to submission and deprivation of their rights. They have been subject struggling to maintain self-assertion and professional career. They have been confined to husband and child care. Yet, the most significant book exploring the realities of child raising was written by a man Arnold Bennett *Old Wives Tale*. Some literary works reassert the power of stereotypes describing female characters such as the dark seductress and fair angel. The quality of an interesting book is to demystify such stereotypes and altering the old patterns (Amiran, p. 1978).

One should keep in mind that literature is not entirely an imitation of life and that according to Frye it is made of literature. Women's literature should not be understood as literature written by women with particular subjects. It should be understood as the literature written about women and exploring their concerns. These books include those written by men (Amiran, 1978). One can argue that the 'best' books about women are written by women. Yet, one must not also deny that the 'best' books about women are written by women who could change the pattern relevant in books written by either men or women. Examples of male characters suffering the same problems as female ones is Augie March a masculine character behaving like a female (Amiran, 1978).

I.5.1. Western Literary Representations of Muslim and Arab Women:

The representations of Arab Muslim women in the West do not escape the frame work designed for their counterparts in the West. They are still prone to submission, weakness, dependence and sin. Mohja Kahf points out that:

> The dominant narrative of the Muslim women in Western discourse from about the eighteenth century to the present basically states, often in quite sophisticated ways, that the Muslim woman is innately oppressed. (1999, p.177)

Western representations of the Muslim woman: from termagant to odalisque (1999) is Mohja Kahf's book whereby she has presented a survey of literary representations of Muslim women in Western discourses from medieval times up to eighteenth century. What makes Kahf's book important is that those representations have not always been homogeneous throughout history. Besides, the ubiquitous conception that Orientalists trace of Muslim and Arab women as victims has been subject to change. Basing her investigation on a number of texts, particularly literary and travel books written originally in English, French, Italian and Spanish, from medieval to Romantic periods in the history of Europe, Kahf believes that before the eighteenth century the aforementioned representations had not been the same. She claims that the main cause of negative influence done to the representations of Muslim and Arab women, besides the shaping of knowledge about them, have been:

> the geographical origins of the representing texts, the preoccupations of the time, the material or ideological conditions affecting the relationship between the West and Islamic societies, and the shift in the balance of power relations between the West and the Muslim world (1999, p. 3-9).

Muslim and Arab women represented in the European medieval texts have another image rather than that of the submissive or oppressed. They 'enjoy' and share the image of the 'masculinized' warriors, reflecting the European discourse on Islam as the creed of idol-worshipping enemies (Kahf 1999). Kahf points that the Middle Ages were characterised by the emergence of a clear enmity between the Muslims and Christians that resulted in the Crusades.

The Islamic empire (especially the Ottoman Turks and the Moors of North Africa) presented a source of envy and a source of threat for Europe related to its material wealth and power. Henceforth, within the medieval texts, the image that spread of Muslim woman is that of a "*termagant",* a medieval term for a *"quarrelsome and overbearing woman"* (Kahf, 1999, p.33). Within the course of medieval romances this intrepid and strong Muslim noblewoman is depicted in literature as a character that falls in love with a Christian hero and finally converts to Christianity. She immigrates to Christian lands and helps Christians capture the citadel and the fortunes of her father. Thus she created a kind of balance between Christians and Muslims (Kahf, 1999).

Indeed a kind of "*equilibrium"* in Renaissance texts is witnessed (Kahf 1999, p. 60) in representing Muslim and Arab women for they were depicted as much more feminine than women in medieval texts. On the other hand, after the expulsion of the Moors from Spain in the sixteenth century, there was a strong desire to rid Spain of everything linked to Moors, so a change in the Renaissance image begins to show. For example in Cervantes' Don Quixote the character of the Muslim princess is conjured up as the *"rescued Muslim maiden"* (Kahf, 1999, p. 56–58). She is no longer an active element. She is rather depicted as passive. Mary Shelley and Cervantes perceive Arab Muslim women in their novels respectively, *Frankenstein* and *Don Quixote* as mere poppets. Women characters in both novels are forced into self-imposed exile from their home culture and convert into a masqueraded European self. They do so in defiance to their fathers. Zoraida in *Don Quixote* abandons her father on an Island to go in search of a 'better' Christian world. Safie in *Frankenstein* steals gold and forth from her father and goes in search of her beloved Felix. Both ladies write letters to be translated and therefore understood on foreign lands and use signs language. They are both veiled and both *"violate the boundaries separating the Orient from Europe by circumventing spoken language"* (Webster, 2000, p. 142). Zoraida arrives at the Christian land after being robbed off her pearls, bangles and rubies and conjures up into a miserable Christian. She stays under the protection of a convert Christian captive as a silent woman. Zoraida appears as *"A woman in Moorish clothing, her face hidden by a veil"* (Cervantes, 1995, I, p. 37, 250). She immediately transforms into a subject of curiosity by the inn's guests as she was cast as an exotic doll. The guests in the inn were baffled by Zoraida displaying bewilderment and ambiguity. She features as an exotic creature by her dress and Christian by her looks. "*Zoraida is a mass of conflicting signs. She is fair and chaste, and she yearns for Christianity"* (Webster, 2000, p.143).

As far as the eighteenth century is concerned it is characterised by the colonial intervention of European forces in Muslim lands, Muslim and Arab women were portrayed in Western texts as dependent, suffocated victims, and odalisques (Kahf, 1999). This fed the cause of colonial powers to rule foreign lands and play the role of saviours. The veil characterising Muslim women exacerbated the fantasies about Muslim women. The image of the Muslim and Arab women had not witnessed important changes since then (Kahf 1999, 2000; & Zine, 2002). Kahf argues that the prevailing image of Muslim women in Western discourse from about the eighteenth century to the present time has been that of an

oppressed entity. Muslim women sometimes produced a different image *"being rebellious renegades—rebellious against their own Islamic world"* and matching *"Western gender roles"* (1999, p. 177).

Besides, Western women have named themselves saviours of other women as victims. Zillah Eisenstein posits on the violation of women's bodies:

> women all over the world [lost] their rights and freedoms on their own grounds--- the assistance of the West and its women does not aid in this recognition, nor does it enlighten Muslim Women to discover that abuse or violence upon their bodies is an outright violation (2002, p. 96), (See also Aguayo, 2009).

Another pertinent account of the Arab Muslim woman by the West is Sophia Poole's. Sophia Poole is the sister of the Arabist William Lane. *The English Woman in Egypt* (1842) is the title of her famous work. Commenting on the book and the fame it bought Sophia Poole, Jane Robinson author of the anthology of women travellers *Wayward Women* (1994) praised Poole's contribution. Robinson could not imagine an *English Woman* immersing herself *"in the exotic culture of the East"* as she would normally have tolerated it from her brother with all the atrocities related to it as haunted houses, barbarous murderers, and stupendous harem's life in Egypt (Sobhi, 2002, p. 170).

Though white women were oppressed by white patriarchy, female writers like Poole felt proud of competing with male writers. Yet, such efforts by a courageous female writer as Poole, though admired by Victorian male reviewers, were praised *"because coming from an inferior or gender, a mere woman"* (Sobhi, p. 108-109). Poole trusted her brother's account of the Egyptian women's life. Lane labelled Egyptian women as uncontrollable, lascivious and licentious. Even virtuous women and educated ones allowed themselves to speak about any subject they desired oblivious of men's presence and no matter how rude the language they used was. He considered Egyptian men as unable to delimit the freedom of act and speech of their women. Female writers like Poole, able to penetrate Egyptian harem represented white patriarchal and colonial eye there (Sobhi, 2002). Poole perceived Egyptian women as a cheap and enigmatic commodity presented to curious public, to decipher and reconstitute. She wrote under the authority of her brother (Sobhi, 2002). As her brother kept a mistress in Egypt and Poole visited her brother's household very often, she ended by converting to an 'orientalised' English lady rather than westernising her brother's household. She dressed as an Egyptian

and had to live as one in order to report what she saw in the harem world. Poole had to apologise to her British readers for adopting the natives' manners of eating for they were *"disgusting"* (Sobhi, 2002, p. 112). Her staying in Egypt was haunted by her involuntary surrender to Egypt that she constantly tried to combat.

The Orient has been represented an eternal Other by the West objectifying all houses as haunted. Living in Egypt, Lane had to disguise himself as an orientalist not to become one of them or to co-exist with them but to be considered in the West as *"an acknowledged cultural contributor."* This disguise constituted a distance between him and the object observed. It was a strategy he adopted to be concealed from the native eye though he lived among the natives. He attempted familiarity with *"their language, their customs and their dress", as primordial features for "the deception"* (Sobhi, 2002, p. 114).

As far as the Muslim dress is concerned, Poole found the Oriental dress stifling to an unforgettable degree. In visiting women who were considered *"the noble of the land"* Poole wore the 'Egyptian' riding costume, the English dress, to avoid any *"humiliation"* putting her on the same footing as her Egyptian counterparts. Yet, though she visited the aristocratic women belonging to the upper class she felt superior to them. Her English dress constituted a *"discursive expression of superiority*" (Sobhi, P. 115).

J. G. Herder's pioneer text *Outlines of the Philosophy of the History of Man* (1800) elevates European white women to a higher level of chastity and Eastern women to that of *"voluptuousness"* (p. 116-117). In a similar claim for superiority Kinglake (1844) in his article *The Rights of Women* speaks of English women in Egypt and describes her as intelligent and gifted by a noble mind and manners as opposed to her Eastern one. He thus excludes her from bearing any of these distinguished manners. Thus, to escape the inferiority label cast on her by white male, white women condemned the *"women of colour"* to degrading and submissive. Poole considered the harem as an *"impassable barrier to men"*. She did not estimate herself as a white man's rival to highlight her feminity. She defined her feminity as opposed to the Eastern one being ethically and culturally different and superior. In a description of a Coptic funeral, Poole reminds her readers of the rituals of cannibalistic feasts using the same discourse. She speaks of native women surrounding the corpse *"beating the tambourines and singing"*. Some Others *"were crying aloud, and slapping, or rather beating themselves"* (Sobhi, 2000, p. 122).

Poole believed that *"everyone who has studied the human mind will agree with me that, with few exceptions, the oppressed become the hardest of oppressors"* (Poole, 1842, II, p. 97).

The same Orientalist image of Muslim and Arab women as weak, trapped and oppressed persists (Kahf, 1999 & 2000; Keshavarz, 2007; Zine, 2002; Dabashi, 2006; & Smith, 2007). In Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin's words: *"the discourse of Orientalism persists into the present, particularly in the West's relationship with "Islam"*, as evidenced in its study, *its reporting in the media, its representation in general"* (2007, p. 164). The most important texts that have fed the ubiquity of this vey portrait are the genres of life narratives and popular fiction about Muslim women. These texts have gained a colossal readership in the West. They are the cradle of nourishing the aforementioned discourses. In the main, Aminah McCloud and Fatemeh Keshavarz (2007) do not doubt that they are a *"new kind of Orientalism"* as they *"continue to present Muslim women as exotic others"* (Smith 2007, p. 22). The most important Memoirs discussed are: *Burned alive: the survivor of an honor killing speaks* (Souad, 2005); *Sold: one woman's true account of Modern slavery* (Muhsin, 1994); *My forbidden face*: *growing up under the Taliban: a young woman's story* (Latifa, 2002); *Behind the burqa: our life in Afghanistan and how we escaped to freedom* (Swift Yasqur, 2002); *Price of Honor: Muslim Women lift the veil of silence on the Islamic world* (Goodwin, 1995)*; Princess: a true story of life behind the veil in Saudi Arabia* (Sasson, 2001). According to the titles of the aforementioned works the women represented are still the old victims waiting for fair saviours. As for their contents, they suffer misery and injustice in their Muslim lands. They wait for *"White men saving brown women from brown men,"* as Gayatri Spivak puts it (Dabashi 2006 par.8; Spivak 1988, p. 297). Gillian Whitlock also believes that these memoirs, for which there is a large market in the West, represent Islam as *"monolithic and threatening"* (2007, p. 53–54). These memoirs paint veiled Muslim women as *"exotic others"* to Western readers. They depict Muslim and Arab lands as the cradle of wickedness and the West as the heaven where everything is good (Whitlock, 2007, p. 119). Whitlock argues that such memoirs of Arab and Muslim women metamorphose *"more historical and appropriate ways of representing Arab culture"*, and reduces the Arab world to *"an estranged ahistorical land of Bedouin custom and ancient tradition"* (2007, p. 129).

Adding a vital symbol designating Muslim women as stereotypes is the belly dancing phenomenon. Belly dancing has become since 2001 a fashionable phenomenon through which American women strive to demonstrate their *"whiteness"* and *"Americaness"* vis-à-vis *"Muslim feminities and masculinities"* (Sunaina, 2008, p.318). What appeal does belly dancing has that attracts American women to such an 'exotic art'? Priya Srinivasan observes: "*it is the corporeal 'liveness' of Orientalist spectacle",* manifested through dance, *"that brings such an overwhelming response for white American audiences"*. The dance tends to reveal a sort of *"glamorous"* self or stardom (Srinivasan, np. 2007).

White as well as non-white American women use belly dancing as a form of writing back to oriental women, original performers of the dance, of imperial powers to demonstrate their power to handle the dance as a tool towards self-expression and freedom. It is a strong note American women strive to unveil and maintain focus on their feminity, liberalness, and multi-culturalness (Sunaina, 2008, p. 319).

Belly Dancing is first and foremost a window on maintaining an orientalist frame that further limits and contains the age-old stereotype of the Arab Muslim women. This representation had been labeled "*neo-Orientalism"* by Said as a continuous striving to hold on the binary relations that relates West to East (1978b, p. 3-5). Amy Koritz posits that belly dancing performed by Western Women constitutes a sharp version of orientalism as a work of their imagination of the Middle East. It strengthens the ubiquity of the West/East *"binary opposition"* of Orient/Occident that Said criticized (1997, p. 134).It further emphasizes the image of the trapped and yet *"sensual and mysterious females"*. And yet, against all the odds, Belly dancing is seen as a form of *"bodily liberation discourse"* (Sunaina, 2008, p.322).

Another important element distinguishing Arab Muslim women has been the veil. Leila Ahmed believes that a major part of colonial discourse on Islam has been "that Islam was innately and immutably oppressive to women, that the veil and segregation epitomized that oppression, and that these customs were the fundamental reasons for the general and comprehensive backwardness of Islamic societies" (Ahmed, 1992a, p.152). Her existence (Arab Muslim woman) in the private and public space cast her as a different being. This situation is characterised as a *"non-identity"* area (Derrida, 1978, p. 49). Derrida describes this situation as "the veiled movement" of non-existence which hides behind her *"beguiling song of enchantment"* (Ibid. 49-51). Therefore, women's existence as a

"determinable identity" remains negated and she veils the *"untruth of truth*" behind her "*golden-embroidered veil"* (Ibid. 51).

In *Algeria Unveiled*, Fanon offers a similar picture of this situation. He says:

> Without the veil she has an impression of her body being cut into bits, put adrift; the limbs seem to lengthen indefinitely…The unveiled body seems to escape, to dissolve. She has an impression of being improperly dressed, even of being naked. She experiences a sense of incompleteness with great intensity. She has an anxious feeling that something is unfinished, and along with this a frightful of disintegrating. (Fanon, 1965, p. 59)

Kingslake (2011) posits that Muslim women's faces when unveiled reflected the day's shining light. The writer describes veiled women as: without any particular identity. Of herself you see nothing: "*Of her very self you see nothing except the dark, luminous eyes that stare against your face and the tips of the painted fingers depending like rose-buds from out of the blank bastions of the fortress"* (Ibid 2). Now when these women take off their veils, they make sure they remain unseen to the public. When they take off the veil, their faces shine upon the audience that admires their beauty (Ibid. 23). Rasack (2008) confirms that the West considers Arab Muslim's covered bodies reflect their conformity or non-conformity to 'modernity' and 'civilization'. The Algerian poet Malek Alloula's response to the French colonial attempts to gain control of Algerian women is also useful as he posits:

> Converting the women, winning her over to the foreign values, wrenching her free from her status, was at the same time achieving a real power over the man and attaining a practical, effective means of destructing Algerian culture […] Every Evil that fell…was a negative expression of the fact that Algeria was beginning to deny herself and was accepting the rape of the colonizer. (Moore, 2009, p.36)

A further example of 'West oriented texts' is *Le voile du silence* (1991) (*The Veil of Silence*) discussed by Patricia Geesey (2000) and probed through the vision an Algerian woman living in France. About *Le voile du silence* she claims that this text published in

France, could engender the opposite effect aimed by the writer which is to empower the Algerian woman with a voice of her own.

Whatever the intention of these authors writing texts about their lives and the lives of others, they intentionally or unintentionally, contribute widely the incarnation of an immutable stereotype which is that of the Muslim and Arab women, and further widen the gulf between East and West. Mohanty argues that what is *"of paramount importance"* is *"the way in which"* these works by third world women *"are read, understood, and located institutionally"*. She further states that, "*the point is not just 'to record' one's history of struggle, or consciousness, but how they are recorded; the way we read, receive, and disseminate such imaginative records is immensely significant"* (1991, p.36).

I.5.2. Arab/Muslim Women Postcolonial Texts as Counter Discourses:

During the postcolonial era, Muslim women have produced many literary works, both in vernacular and European languages that demystify the traditional colonial representation of them as oppressed, weak, and silent victims. They rather opt for a conception of Muslim women as strong, articulate and ready to fight oppressive forces. Their writings display how capable they are of recognizing and challenging patriarchal forces. These literary works have defied the overwhelming vision of Muslim and Arab women at two levels: at one level is a Muslim and Arab woman, also and committed writer, who confronts and talks about the concerns of women in her society; on the other hand, is the portrayal of a fictional character who rebuffs silence and oppression when faced with suffocating forces. Some of these writers who are well-known in the West are Nawal el Saadawi, Fatima Mernissi, Ahdaf Soueif, Assia Djebar, whose main works have dealt with women in Muslim and Arab societies. Later in chapter two part two (II.2.3. p.130-134) texts by such authors are examined under the tile: *Aisha Echoed in Her Fellow Female Protagonists' Tales.*

There are also scholarly works which have discussed how these texts have collectively and individually challenged the discourses about Muslim women in the West. In other instances some critics even argue that some of these works even confirm the age old discourse through providing Western readers with the same narratives they already know or expect concerning Muslim women (Amireh & Majaj 2000; Kahf 2006).

The first collection of Arab and Muslim women's feminist writing published in English was *Opening the Gates: a Century of Arab Feminist Writing* (1990), edited by Margot Badran and Miriam Cooke**.** This collection includes over 50 pieces—short stories, essays, folktales, poems, film scripts , memoirs, lectures/speeches—by Arab (and mostly) Muslim women. The main contributions, that are mostly translated from Arabic into English, are classified under three main headings of 'Awareness', 'Rejection' and 'Activism', referring to how Muslim women are conscious of the injustices done to them, have begun resisting oppressive practices and are directly and actively immersed in feminist practices in order to provoke a change in their conditions. A new edition of this book in (2004) adds a new section, 'Transition', which includes feminist writings by Muslim women from 1990 onwards. The introduction by the two editors precise the focus of the book; however, the works are not individually analysed. This work is mainly an example of critical works whereby' Muslim woman' translates as a woman belonging to a Muslim background and culture, and in which concern for the religious aspect of the identity of Muslim women is collateral next to the hugely feminist concerns of the authors and editors.

Another interesting work in this concern is *Women claim Islam: creating Islamic feminism through literature* (2001) by Miriam Cooke. This work surveys the literature, fiction and memoirs of contemporary Islamic feminist writers and probes the way these women could, via their works as well as through engagement in some organizations and NGOs, defy being excluded from the discourses of history, war, exile, emigration and religion. Examining the works of some of these writers as different as Zaynab al-Ghazali and Nawal el Saadawi, the text displays how these women, who consider Islam as the core element of their identity and use it as a means of self-empowerment, construct a gendered Islamic epistemology which defies both the indigenous male authority in the interpretation of Islamic doctrine and colonial racist discourses about Muslim women. Besides containing chapters that emphasise the literary analysis of fiction and autobiographies of Arab Muslim women, the book includes chapters on the history and development of Islamic feminism as a legitimate and strong quest for justice for Muslim women.

Liberating Shahrazad : feminism, postcolonialism, and Islam (2006) by Suzanne Gauch probes works by Maghrebian and North-African women writers and film-makers and believes that like Scheherazade uses the art of storytelling to confront Shaherayar’s

patriarchal authority, these contemporary female writers are influencing the perceptions of both local and foreign audiences and those outside Muslim culture about North-African Muslim women. They fight misogyny at home and stereotypical views about women held by many Westerners. Also like Scheherazade, these female writers always postpone the final word about their subjects not offering evident characterizations. In so doing, they capture the interest of their audience more widely. The writers whose works are discussed in this book are from Tunisia, Morocco and Algeria and are Moufida Tlatli, Fatima Mernissi, Assia Djebar, and Leila Sebbar. This work is mainly geared towards the analysis of works by Muslim Arab North African writers, focus on the power of the artists in challenging the stereotypes about North African Muslim women.

Shattering the stereotypes: *Muslim women speak out* (2005) by Fawzia Afzal-Khan is another anthology dedicated to the works of Muslim women published recently in the West. It consists of a collection of essays, poetry, fiction, plays and memoirs by Muslim American women, reflecting their attitudes and experiences mainly after experiencing 9/11. The anthology aims at granting voice to Muslim women and it involves American Muslim women writers in a continuous debate and reorients the understanding of Islam from an immediate oppressor of women and terrorism. Henceforth, the eminent element about the collection is the proliferating of voices of Muslim women it deals with. It includes, to state as an example, works by and about women who refuse hijab (Islamic dress) as a defining element of their identity and those who consider it the core aspect of their identity, besides works by women who think of Islam as only *"one spoke in the wheel of their lives"* and women who view Islam as their universe (Afzal-Khan, 200, p.51).

In the main, one could assume that one prominent message that the book focuses on is that Arab Muslim American women are by no means a delineated item. The collection does not contain a thorough examination of the works it displays. Afzal Khan's book is not centred on Islam as its core element. The writers whose works are discussed in the collection also do not consider it as so; however they belong to a Muslim background.

The main aim of such anthologies was to insist on the way literary texts, written by Muslim women writers in their own vernaculars or in European languages, are able to both demystify Western stereotypes aimed at representing them and defy indigenous patriarchal practices, and how feminist activism has developed through literary texts among Muslim

women intellectuals. It also stresses the diversity that Arab Muslim women intellectuals enjoy.

Women have been described as *"Mothers of the nation"*, *"privileged bearers of corporate identities"* and *"boundary markers of their communities",* and further *"the source and building of cultural heritage and "custodians of cultural particularisms"* (Kandioti, 1994, p. 382-388).

Muslim women have added the weight of being perceived as *"the repositories of religious beliefs and keepers of purity and integrity in the community"* (Bassu, 1997, p.3). Their lives and experiences have been compared to those already cherishing their share of gender equality in the West. Therefore these experiences have been scrutinized. Although the image of Muslim women remains that of an object devoid of agency, literature features as the locus of reinterpretation and reimagining and very often this has been a mission anointed to literature and politics. Thus writers should *"acknowledge how their work can be used as an instrument of ideology in the service of a dynamic of power"* (Viswanathan, 1989, p. 4). Virginia Woolf stated on behalf of many women: *"....The road was cut many years ago [...] many famous women and many more unknown and forgotten, have been before me, making the path smooth, and regulating my steps"* (Gilbert & Gubar, 1985, p. 65).

I.6. Soueif's Reaction to the Relation of Fiction to Politics and the Changing Role of the Writer into Activist in Times of Crisis:

The following three chapters explore the fiction works of Ahdaf Soueif, a postcolonial Egyptian writer who expresses herself in English. These works are respectively: *Aisha* (1983), her first collection of short stories, *The Sandpiper* (1996), her second collection and *The Map of Love* (1999), her second novel. Soueif's career has been influenced by her oscillating between fiction writer and activist and her strong influence by politics both in the Arab/Muslim world and global politics. In her interview with Joseph Mayton she speaks about how she could describe herself:

> I am a teller of stories; I want people to know me as a novelist. All the activism stuff is kind of a result of circumstances in my life at that certain moment. So if it is natural and that is where I am at that point in my life and it comes through in my writing. (Mayton, 2009).

When asked about why she has chosen writing as a medium of expression, she replied that "I still enjoy fiction and so do many people. It is still a pleasure people have. I believe it serves a function in our lives today. Readers still have an aesthetic pleasure of entering another world.

She believes that activism is part of the effect of books. Novelists write about what moves them. If politics is strong in one at a time writing their novel it ends up as an activist novel. *"What happens at the time of writing changes what you are writing as you go"* (Mayton, 2009).

In her interview with Jamal Mahjoub after the Egyptian revolution of January 2011 he asks her about her working on another novel she started before the revolution. She could not finish the book because she confirms*: "everything in it would prove obsolete"*. She says that it is a novel not a political tract. She thinks there are priorities to being an activist because circumstances affect what a writer produces and what he chooses to be (Guernica, 2011). Asked about the social and political role of the Arab writer today she confirms that every writer should invest every bit of their talent to further highlight the meaning of revolutions and maintain the pulse of their functionality. Revolution for Soueif is a time of enlightenment when people are ready to be responsible and take charge of their own history. It is also an opportunity to refresh themes tackled by Arab writers for so many years which is that of criticizing Arab society and situation. Revolution is an opportunity for a proliferation of themes dependent on artist's choice (Near East Quarterly, 2012). She confirms that seeing the revolution on the ground she could not help but bear witness. *"Seeing it there on the ground is different. What can I do except bear witness"* (White Review, 2012)

When asked about the art genres that will lead in Egypt after the revolution she confirms that it will be poetry and song, music, a lot of graffiti, plastic art type and stand comedy. However, the novel will take time to be produced (NS, 2012).

Again when asked about how she would rate herself from fiction writer, an activist or a journalist, she responded that at heart she were a fiction writer but it has been twelve years since she had not written any fiction work and therefore she had been an activist. She confirms that she had started a book but she has not finished it. It proves very hard to stay at home and to concentrate on a book while things are boiling outside.

When asked whether she were interested in politics she said that she had been brought up on politics and that she had been participating in term of activism in writing for long.

About the situation of women during the revolution she confirms that after the revolution problems like harassment had come back again and women still fight back on the streets. She confirms that the government decision to subject women to virginity tests has never stopped them from being on the streets. Women like Samira Ibrahim herself from a conservative background took the authorities to court and won. She confirms that that was just a kind of rebuffing the revolution but they never succeeded into doing so.

About objectivity in writing she said that she has never written from an objective stand point and that she is Partisan and her writing is a kind of activism.

In her Guardian Books interview she declares: *"In times of crisis, fiction has to take a back seat "*. She posits that almost all novelists in Egypt have sacrificed novels and all fiction writing in general after the 27 of January revolution to devote all effort to political activism. For Soueif in time of crisis any work of fiction produced especially a novel would transform into a *"political tract with a veneer of fiction"*. She believes that it is the story that chooses the writer and not the other way round (2012). For Soueif a fiction writer should not absent him/herself from the world but be part of it; *"be part of the narrative of the world"*. They should *"live outside their skins"*. The novelist's duty, the writer's in general, is to choose the right story, right characters for the right readers to be engaged in that story. What is at the core of a writer's works is:

> the willingness to imagine myself (Soueif) into another's, the willingness to imagine myself into someone else's shoes. This itself is a political act: empathy is at the head of much revolutionary action. (The Guardian, 2012)

She hopes fiction will be restored to life again. Trying to write fiction would prove too simple. *"The immediate truth is too glaring to allow a more subtle truth to take form…for reality has to take time to be processed to transform into fiction"* (The Guardian, 2012.

Conclusion:

Chapter one concerned the concept of the Other in its relation to the self, perceived from different perspectives, namely the postcolonial, feminist, the dialogic, and the literary. Chapter one is divided into four parts. Part one, entitled *The Other as Stranger and Different: A Stereotyped Hostile Foreigner in Postcolonial Critique*. This part was divided into two sub titles. The first one is entitled *Understanding the Other as Stranger from Psychological and Interactional Terms* that included mainly the perception of the concept as mainly a difference in relation to the self besides the Lacanian representation of it in relation to the ego and how it recognises and misrecognises itself. The representation of the Other from an interactional stand focuses on how individuals interact with one another considering familiarity and strangeness as key issues regarding the success or failure of that dialogue. The views explored within this perspective are the opposing stands of Schutz and Simmel's. The second sub-title entitled *The Other as Stranger and Different: A Postcolonial Perception* whereby one presents understandings of postcolonial and postcoloniality as controversial i.e. as terms whose definitions are not clearly defined among critics. Then the term strange was explained in relation to the meaning of the Other. Strangeness is perceived as difference hampering the process of interpersonal understanding. It is however, also viewed as an important prerequisite for mutual interaction in that it fosters the knowledge of others as well as one's own self. Then the Other was magnified under postcolonial lenses from different scholars' perspectives. To name a few: Said, Césaire, Todorov, Bhabha, Sohat, Spivak, Mohanty, and Young. Another important key word probed was racism, widely discussed by Todorov, which results from vilification and assumed supremacy exercised by so-called superior races over others. The ultimate consequences of such restricting visions are the ideas of fixed identities, clash of civilisations, ethnocentrism, monocentrism, subaltern races, and crisis of identity.

The second title entitled *Dialogism as an Open Space to Understanding Otherness* considered the Other as a dialogic entity. The Other had been perceived as a source of interaction with and reciprocal knowledge about the self and the outside world. Maintaining its dialogic characteristic, the Other as author in literary texts could stand as an incentive and a cementing force of readers' understanding of narrative texts. It allows

an experience of different selves, namely the author and the characters'. Besides the settings and times encompassed in the stories could stand as the non-human Other constituting not a lesser important opportunity for knowledge and dialogism with readers for an illuminated image of narratives.

To further highlighting the possibility of mutual understanding between self and Other part four *On Narratives as a Means to Understand the Other* presented narratives as granting an opportunity to readers to encounter fictional characters, agree and disagree with the writers' ideologies, and the chance to proliferate one's interpretations of others' imagination. The following title is entitled *Woman as Other: A Feminist Critique.* It focused on how women have been stigmatised as Other, weak and dependent on their male counter parts. An overview of the most relevant queries in feminist studies was presented. Examples of such queries were: discrimination in the labour market, the repercussions of home confinement, the status of women in various jobs, and productive right besides the representation of women as Other. The following sub-title *The Difference between 'Third World' and 'First World' Women* probed the difference between 'First' and 'Third World' women. This distinction represented 'Third World' women as doubly others. First they are deemed slaves of men and second they are labelled mere followers of 'First World Women'. Arab Muslim women fall in this category as they are labelled slaves of Arab Muslim men supposedly trapped by a restricting religion. This results from a representation, mainly of Westerners, that is biased by ignorance and that engenders another facet of Orientalism so-called 'women Orientalism. The next sub-title was *Representations of /Arab/Muslim women in the West: Religious, Literary, and historical Implications.* This part investigated instances of the perception of women in general including Western women in The West from religious, literary and historical standpoints before delving into the exploration of representations of Arab/Muslim women in The West. The most recurrent view of women had been that of their association with sin and fallen humanity. The next sub title was to explore *A History of Western Literary Representation of Muslim and Arab Women.* In this section one noticed that the representations of Arab Muslim women in the West do not escape the frame work designed for their counterparts in the West. They are still prone to submission, weakness, dependence and sin.

The second title in part two is: *Arab/Muslim Women Postcolonial Texts as Counter Discourses* handles the counter discourses Arab Muslim women used to write back to the West to demystify whatever stereotype has defined them for long through written texts.

The last title in chapter one concerns Ahdaf Soueif's reaction to the relation of fiction to politics and the role of fiction writers as activists in times of crisis. She expresses this in a series of her interviews.

Henceforth, the woman crystallising as Other has been condemned to a process of exclusion discarding all the possible representations it could have highlighting one image as 'The most' appropriate to satisfy the presenter's essentialised vision. Both concepts suffered limitation of meaning revolving around an incarnation of strangeness, weakness and dependence. Woman's Otherness should be conceived as a distinguishing feature engulfing individuals' freedom, emancipation, and enjoying their difference. However, blurred and caricatured an image, the first perception should be maintained to draw a consistent comparison between the presenters' mere fantasies and egocentric views and what is true. The concept of Otherness is part and parcel of how people construct their identities and view themselves as parts of a society, different from other people. Such roles people build for themselves do not necessarily oppose or alienate them from the others.

Chapter two entitled *Aisha: A Child/ Adult Female Representation vs. Aisha as Foreigner and Exotic Character* (p.81) will highlight the same representation of the woman as Other, male dependent and weak entity through Soueif's female characters in *Aisha* (1983) her first collection of short stories. Yet, one is to be presented with a different portrait of these characters, which is of liberated female characters capable of making their voices heard.

Notes to Chapter One

1) *"Postcolonial studies", referring as often does to the rapid growth in the eighties of scholarly interest in colonial relations and nationalisms, is best understood as a belated project. It is based on a long history of debates about issues such as the struggle for independence, the appropriability of the colonial languages, the role of regional cultures in nationalist traditions, the marginalization of gender and women's issues in many newly independent nations, and the role of indigenous traditions in shaping a postcolonial modernity. These discussions that took place among creative writers and critics, theatre workers and teachers, revolutionary thinkers and nationalist leaders at various moments and sites of the newly independent world continue to be echoed in contemporary postcolonial scholarship" (Desai & Supriya , 2005, p.2).*

On the meaning of post colonial literature,Ashcroft contends that writing back to the centre' is a form of reply colonised people give to the colonial power and legacy, while "they write their own histories and legacies using the coloniser's language(e.g. English, French, Deutch) for their own purposes. Indigenous decolonisation is the intellectual impact of postcolonialist theory upon communities of indigenous peoples, thereby, their generating postcolonial literature" (Ashcroft, 1989, p. 9).

2) Medieval/Christian understanding of foreignness: Metaphysical understanding of a progressive order or hierarchy moving from physical and visible to the invisible heavenly realm of ideas is exclusively Christian and medieval and even Greek in origin. Within the limit of the soul are the invisible, intangible, and divine which is believed to be eternal in human beings. The soul typifies the rational order of the whole, while the more disorderly, earthly world of the human beings must be made and included to follow that order. Following this line of thought, foreignness is said to be only transitional. It is a "sickness"or "sinfulness"that is possible to be cured in the hereafter (Lippitz, 2007, p.81).

3) "*cet opprimé qui n'appartient pas à la même essence que son maître*" (Fanon, 1991, p. 23)

" Présentée dans sa nudité, la décolonisation laisse deviner à travers ses pores, des boulets rouges, des couteaux sanglants. Car si les derniers doivent être les premiers, ce ne peut être qu'a la suite d'affrontement décisif et meurtrier des deux protagonistes. Cette volonté affirmé de faire remonter les derniers en tête de fil, de les faire grimper a une cadence (trop rapide disent certains) les fameux échelons qui définissent une société organisée, ne peut triompher que si on jette dans la balance tous les moyens, y compris, bien sur la violence " (Ibid. 67).

4) On Orientalism: *"A way of coming to terms with the Orient that is based on the Orient's special place in European Western experience"* (Said, 1995, p. 1*)." Orientalism expresses and represents that part culturally and even ideologically as a mode of discourse with supporting institution, vocabulary, scholarship, images, doctrines"* (Ibid.2). *"Orientalism is a western style for dominating, reconstructuring and having authority over the Orient"* (Ibid. 3). However, Muslims also have prejudiced views about the non-Muslims. *"Do you belong to the Cross or the Crescent?"*[Es- tu de Croix ou du Croissant?] (Charney, 1980, p. 143) is a recurrent question they posed to the non-Muslim travelers in the 19th century. They have always distinguished between believers and non-believers. This has often resulted in the Islamist fundamentalists crimes in the name of Islam.

5) On Representation: They have a **"***special flawed nature and they are intimately tied up with worldliness, that is, with power position and interests"* (Said, 2004, p. 48-49) (See also (Gramschi, 130, p. 131).

6) Todorov distinguishes racism and racialism which are related. He labels racism aggressiveness and a feeling of superiority towards other individuals, and racialism the same attitudes contingent on scientific knowledge to justify racism. (Todorov & Mack, 1986, p. 173).

7) The Nuremberg laws distinguished four racial categories: 1. Germans [persons with four German grandparents] 2. Second degree Mischlinge [all persons with one non-Aryan grandparent] 3. First degree Mischlinge [all persons with two non-Aryan grandparents, who in addition, did not adhere to the Jewish religion and who were not married to a Jew] 4. Jews [all persons with two or more non-Aryan grandparents] (Galbin, 1997, p. 142).

Hybrid and Mischlinge were used interchangeably in nineteen and twentieth century as racial theory and practice to indicate mixed-race individuals. Hybrid referred to a biological entity, totally different from its current use that connotes a cultural paradigm. Racial theorists such as Gobineau, Chamberlain, and Fritsch considered race mixing between unrelated races a destruction of pure 'racial types', distabilising the classification between races. Its consequences are the emergence of mongrel races, stricken by mental diseases and physical disabilities (Ibid.143).

8) However, Todorov argued that the Spaniards and the Aztecs employed different codes of communication. Though they excelled in the art of orator, their view of the world was ritualistic, restricting sophisticated levels of communication to their communing with the gods. The Incas for example believed Spaniards to be gods [to illustrate their inability to perceive différence [*passés ,Maîtres dans l'art de la parole rituelle, les Indiens réussissent d'autant moins en situation d'improvisation"* (Todorov and Mack, 1986, p. 92). This could entail that those people's thinking is primitive, relying on their ability to memorise previous experiences rather than perceiving new ones. Despite all the consideration he ascribed to the question of the Other, he further acknowledged Western superiority over non-Western people. This he illustrated by praising the success of a limited number of Spaniards in conquering the Aztec empire thanks to their mastery of communication: *"Il ya une technologie du sublime qui est aussi susceptible d'évolution que la technologie des outils, et dans cette perspective, les Espagnols sont plus en avance que les Aztèques (ou pour généraliser: les sociétés à écriture, que les sociétés sans écriture"*. Ironically for a scholar who championed difference, Todorov is assuming that the Spaniards' access to the writing code made them endowed with higher mental structures that granted them the possibility of perceiving difference (Ibid. 92).

9) Hegel's master/slave dialectic, to describe the self/Other relation, discusses the struggle between master and slave for recognition, in which self and other are involved in a contest for autonomy. He highlights the importance of labour for the servant's attainment of an *"independent*

consciousness". : *"Through work and labour, the consciousness of the bondsman [the slave] comes to itself",* and his awareness and feeling of himself. He shows an awareness of the master/slave dialectic as suggesting an inclination of dominance for the former and a propensity for servitude for the latter (Hegel, 1967, p. 238-239). The end of this struggle culminates in the appropriation of that which is other different, and foreign by the victorious self. To reach self-assertion, the Other must be subjugated in order to familiarize it and dissolve its foreignness in its familiarity. In such a struggle for self-autonomy and recognition, the self becomes altered, different, strengthened and enriched by this experience

10) The subaltern is a term borrowed from Antonio Gramsci and used by Spivak and the whole Subaltern Study Group to designate people of the colonies other than the Europeanized native elite. The term is sometimes also extended to encompass Asian and African socio-cultural phenomena that escape Western modes of representations (Hassan, 2002, p. 49).

11) According to Anne Ferguson, *"the key goal to feminist theory was a radical one: to use theory to critique male dominant power relations in order to empower all women"*.[The trends in feminist theory have been first the radical critique movement organizing trend, second gender difference theory, and finally the contemporary difference between women postmodernist focus. [ibid. 199] Many feminist theorists were influenced by Marxist ideology in that *they "developed a radical feminist critique of patriarchy as a system of oppression based on gender which was analogous to Marx's idea of systems of class exploitation based on private property"*. Radical insights in feminist theory- especially leftist attitudes *"gave rise to a lesbian-feminist separatist practice on the one hand, and those who wanted to synthesize an autonomous but not separatist leftist feminist theory"* (Ibid. 200).

"Essentially, feminism is the elevation of so-called women's issues—equal pay for equal work, political equality, legal access to contraceptives and abortion, protection from rape, liberation from gender stereotypes ,etc—into a full-blown ideology" (Goldwag, 2007, p. 18- 19).

12) "*L'humanité est male et L'homme définit la femme non en soi mais relativement a lui…elle se détermine et se différencie par rapport a lui; elle est l'inessentielle en face de l'essentiel. Il est le sujet, il est l'absolu ; elle est l'autre"* (Beauvoir, 1949, 16).

13) In Other respects, Levinas comments on Otherness: *"I am defined as subjectivity, as single person, as an I, precisely because I am exposed to the Other. It is my inescapable and incontrovertible answerability to the Other that makes me an individual; an "I*" (Kearney, 1984, p. 62). He argues that the value of the Other must exceed the value of the self. In ethical terms, he contends, the Other's right to exist supersedes one's own. Difference for Levinas is of utmost importance as it is required by the self to implement meaning to its existence as it cannot survive by itself alone "within the ontology of sameness"(Ibid. 60).

He also declared:

"How in the alterity of a you, can I remain I, without being absorbed or losing myself in that you? How can the ego that I am remain myself in a you, without being, nonetheless the ego that I am in my present, that is, an ego that inevitably returns to itself? This can happen only in one way: through paternity" (Levinas, 1987, p. 91).

14) On feminism in the Arab world: *" a product of decadent western capitalism…it is the ideology of women of the local bourgeoisie, and…it either alienates women from their culture, religion and family responsibilities on the one hand, or from the revolutionary struggle for national liberation and socialism on the other"* (Golley, 2004: 521).

15) This could also entail Man's recuperation of hegemony that knowledge sets on him/her, turning the balance of power in their favour. Foucault argues that the will to truth cannot be eliminated, but its hegemony can and should be contested (Foucault, 1970b, p. 316)

16) For details of examples of women's position in Classical Athens, see John Gould. Law, Custom and Myth: Aspects of the Social Position of Women in Classical Athens, Journal of Hellenic Studies No. 100 (1980): 38-59; Elaine Fantham et al. Women in the Classical World (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994, p. 79.) Laura McClure in Spoken like a Woman: Speech and Gender in Athenian Drama (1999) insists that women were granted a public voice in some contexts.

17) Medea who murders her children makes both Jason, her husband; and Aegeus an Athenian king, swear oaths in the presence of the god Zeus. The oaths guarantee the safe stay of Medea in Athens.

Medea: Swear by the great plain of Earth, and the Sun, father of my father, joining all the gods together.

Aegeus: That I do or not do what, tell me.

Medea: That you will never cast me from your land. Not release me to my enemies, as long as you live.

Aegeus: I swear (omnumi) by Erath and shining light of the Sun to abide by what I hear from you.

Medea: That will do, what will you suffer if you don't keep your oath?

Aegeus: That which befalls impious mortals (Euripides, 744, 55) (MC Dermott, 1989, p.103).

This oath direction rescues and ensures Medea's total command of Aegeus speech. Medea controls the dramatic script in which Aegeus merely follows his director's orders. Like Medea Aphrodite in Hippolytus makes Hippolytus swear an oath in revenge for his blasphemy as he insulted her as *"the vilest of the gods"* (Fletcher, 2003, p. 36).

CHAPTER TWO
Aisha: A Child/ Adult Female Representation vs. Aisha as Foreigner and Exotic Character

CHAPTER TWO

Aisha: A Child/ Adult Female Representation vs. Aisha as Foreigner and Exotic Character

> *As opposed to place which has a name, an identity and a given history and distinguished character, time is anonymous when we give it a face it is the same face the world over...time tells us nothing about itself except by the signals that it is passing* (Welty, 1977, p. 163).

Introduction

As stated earlier, this research work is entitled: *The Representations of Soueif's Female Characters as Other, Suffocating and Liberated Timeless Phoenixes. Case Study: Aisha*, *The Sandpiper and The Map of Love.* In the preceding chapter an investigation of the representation of women as Other was dealt with. Women have been said to incarnate weakness, dependability, and sin. This picture encompassed both Western and Eastern women though the latter's image were to include more characteristics such as 'slaves of Arab men' and victims of a restricting religion. The set forth fiction works had been selected because they clearly illustrate the aforementioned double portrait. Soueif's first novel *In the Eye of the Sun* also does, but in this novel Soueif does not include an amalgamation of female narratives to make one single tale. Besides, in this novel Soueif did not bring into play Western female characters, offering them an opportunity to tell a narrative, particularly in *The Sandpiper* and *The Map of Love*. The works explored within this research work allow this intermingling of Eastern/Western female narratives. Instances from *In the Eye of the Sun* will be mentioned later in this investigation, though.

The remaining three chapters explore three of Soueif's fiction works respectively: *Aisha* (1983) her first collection of short stories, *The Sandpiper* 1996 her second collection and *The Map of Love* (1999) her second novel. The focal points are the representations of female protagonists and the use of time in the fore mentioned works. Before one delves into the analysis of the first work in chapter two namely *Aisha*, one is to probe first the notion of the phoenix and the reason why it was included within the title of this work. Also to be explored are the different conceptions of time both in philosophy and narrative fiction for time is an important factor that grants Soueif's characters liberation.

The Phoenix: A Symbol of Immortality

The phoenix incarnates the symbol of the sun (Suhr, 1976). It was sacred to the Sun (Fitzpatrick, 1933). It is a symbol of light decorated by a diversity of illuminating colours: its wings are gold and red; its legs are of Tyrian purple. It has a flaming aureole around the head and a crest that shines with the light of the sun. Some scholars posited it was like an eagle (Bulfinch, 2006). Others thought the phoenix cannot be linked to any species of bird. This creature is a combination of many birds. It has a cock's head, a snake's neck, a swallow's chin, a tortoise back a fish's tail. It is a hybrid creature. The phoenix is a purely imaginative creature that stood for what the sun looked like to a primitive mind (Suhr, 1976).

The phoenix is a symbol of prosperity. This bird-like creature appeared when prosperity reigned among the human race and when their behaviour was exemplary (Suhr, 1976). It is a symbol of longevity and eternity in Ancient Egypt (known as the bennu). It is also an iconic figure in Ancient Rome and the Christian tradition because the bird is said to resurrect from its own ashes after death (Fitzpatrick, 1933). It is also a symbol of time, resurrection and virginity (Van der Broek, 1972). Also in the Christian tradition, *"the phoenix, like many messiahs, becomes a symbol of the immaculate conception, a miraculous birth without the usual media of father and mother"* (Suhr, 1976, p.32).

The Chinese believe that the Feng is male, and the Huang is female which entails that the phoenix is bisexual (Suhr, 1976). The phoenix is sometimes described as a female creature too. The span of life she is spared is five hundred years (Fitzpatrick, 1933). However, the most considered idea is that the phoenix is bisexual (Van der Broek, 1972). The bird lives on Frankincense and odoriferous gums. It dies amidst odours: cinnamon, spikenard and myrrh and builds a pyre with them (Bulfinch, 2006).

The main reason why the metaphor of the phoenix is included to describe Soueif's female characters is its ability to regenerate and to be born out of its own ashes. As it will be illustrated later, Soueif's protagonists are granted renewal and the possibility to be alive again, eternal and strong through time and the telling of their stories. Further investigations of such characters will illuminate this assumption.

Time: A Vision of Cooperation and Dialogism

A study of pre-modern societies indicates that their perspectives of time were related to ecological time i.e. they considered its passage according to natural laws following nature's cycles and rhythms e.g. day/night and seasons changes. Change had been the indicator of the passage of time. Shoemaker posits, relying on book IV of Aristotle *Physics*, *"we measure time by observing changes"* (1969, p.366). In the main, James believes *"awareness of change is the condition on which our perception of time's flow depends"* (1890, p. 620). However:

> In modern societies, social life has become severed from nature and the cosmos. . . As a result, modern man searches for alternative systems of belief, such as science and historical materialism, so that he might master history, rationalise it and bring it to a conclusion. . . . It seems reasonable to assume that in modernity it has been an attempt to rationalise the past and predict the future that gives rise to a linear time perspective (Smethurst, 2000, p.177-8).

According to John Hassard the perspective of linear time moving forward in modern societies had emerged with the enchantments of the industrial capitalism as a symbol of development and progress (1993).

As opposed to modern and earlier versions of the novel, the postmodern novel is characterized by a championing of non-linear time and temporal displacement that put into question the real and the scientific commandments that rule the modern world. It also problematises social and cultural structures that determine one's perception of time dictated by western vision of reality. Besides, the most important aspect of post-modern novels is their attempts to reject chronological time and to put to the front a kind of circular spiralling time that is a version of *"mind time"*(Currie, 2007, p.92). Thus, what is labelled cosmological time and inner or mind time perpetually influence and modify one another (Ibid.94).

The idea of accepting a reverse motion of the arrow of time namely going backward instead of its usual tendency to advance forward has been completely hard to accept. Davis claims that the possibility of reading *"the arrow of time"* (1995, p. 222) backwardly strikes

one as unconceivable being too much used to the idea of reading time forwardly. This process would even seem irrational. In the main:

> In the chronotopes of postmodern novels, non-linear time and temporal displacement are often integral to the thematic structure and *content* of the novel: they are not just stylistic elements . . . they are designed to problematise scientific, social and cultural constructions of time, constructions that are associated with western concepts of reality. (Smethurst, 2000, p.175)

Earlier, Jameson posits, Western modern social system has started to *"'lose its capacity to retain its own past, has begun to live in a perpetual present and in a perpetual change that obliterates traditions of the kind which all earlier social formations have had in one way or another to preserve"* (1981, p. 179). However, Husserl and Heidegger rework Augustine's conception of the disappearing present in *Confessions*. For the latter the present "*lacks extension"*. One experiences it as divided and lacking duration. If by any chance it were given extension granting it labels such as presence, this presence will compellingly be divided into entities which have been and those which are still to come (Currie, 2007, p.13).

Besides calling it linear and non-linear time, Anglo-American philosophical approaches to time also distinguish between tensed and untensed views of time. The first view considers time in its linear passage i.e. past, present, and future following clock time. The second view perceives time as *"a block in which the relations between events are understood as a sequence of times and dates in which events relate to each other in terms of before and after"* (Currie, 2007, p.17). It views time as one entity whereby events of different time dimensions existing together (p. 17). According to Lucas the existence of tensed time is actually experienced and yet one cannot deny some kind of *"temporal tourism"*. He confirms that although one is physically located in the present that does not prevent one from experiencing other temporal dimensions i.e. past and future through one's thoughts. That brings one to distance oneself from the physical bounding gates of the present. He confirms:

> It is a deep metaphysical fact that though in our bodies we are time-bound, in our thoughts we are not. I, my mouth, my body, my hand, am imprisoned in the twentieth century. But my mind is free to range over all time. (Lucas, 1989, p. 11)

The most known situation describing a fictional narrative, considering the relationship between a text and its reading, is that it grants a model of time. The fact of viewing time as co-existence and not as linearity is the result of experiencing it as internal time. This Genette pin points when considering the chronological order in which events should have been told and the way they are actually recounted throughout the consciousness of its characters. One of the striking abilities of the fictional narrative, as Genette has analysed, is its freedom to roam in time, and particularly in the use of the anachronies of analepsis and prolepsis (1980). Genette posits that fictional narratives have a prominent characteristic that is to travel in time using techniques such as analepsis and prolepsis. Genette understands prolepsis, or flash forward, as a deconstruction of chronological wave of telling the events in a story as the narrator narrates future events. Future events are told to unveil what comes next in a narrative before it goes back to the present. The counter part of prolepsis is analepsis, or flash back, in which events are told moving back to the past that turns to be experienced as quasi-present because it is the time the reader becomes involved in so that his/her temporality is mingled with that of the narrative. Therefore, the past of the narrative becomes its present for readers. However, Peter Brooks claims that:

> If the past is to be read as present, it is a curious present that we know to be past in relation to a future we know to be already in place, already in wait for us to reach it. Perhaps we would do best to speak of the *anticipation of retrospection* as our chief tool in making sense of narrative, the master trope of its strange logic. (1984, p. 23)

The idea of time as succession becomes obsolete making space for the idea of time as co-existence of three temporal dimensions (past, present and future). In *Being and Time* Heidegger also insists on the vision of time as co-existence discarding the idea that only the present is of import as regards our being in it. For him one's being in the present entails a constant recall of the past and future. Even the literary genre that is deemed linear by nature i.e. the detective story turns to be non-linear. According to Todorov it still experiences a movement of backwardness and forwardness as the investigation of a crime

casts events to the past and future to reshape events that lead to the crime (1966). One experiences the same process of non-linearity when a character's memory is at stake. In Virginia Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway*, narration concerns events of a single day that follows normally a linear line and yet because some of the events are memories, the latter call for constant flashback (Currie, 2007) It is *"a kind of 'cut up' technique whereby the narrative jumps constantly in time, so that the principal hermeneutic activity of the reader is the reconstruction of a chronological sequence of events"* (Ibid. 37).

In *Time and Narrative* Paul Ricoeur distinguishes between two kinds fictional narratives: *tales of time* and *tales about time.* Fictional narratives, according to him, are all considered tales of time *"inasmuch as the structural transformations that affect the situations and characters take time"*. However, tales about time are different in the sense that "it *is the very experience of time that is at stake in these structural transformations"* (Currie, 2007, p. 110). Time is deemed a universal trait of any narrative and yet only some of them hold it as a topic.

Mrs. Dalloway is about time because the conflict between internal duration and the exteriority of clock time is *"ultimately at stake"*, just as Proust's novel is a quest in which *"what is at stake is, precisely, the dimension of time"*. Ricoeur claims that Virginia Woolf's Mrs. Dalloway is a tale about time for within it there is a clash between *"internal duration and the exteriority of clock time"*. Proust's *In Search of Lost Time* is about a constant search involving the time dimension (Currie, 2007, p. 2).

Narrative fiction also prevents the tale from getting immersed in the dungeon of mere nostalgia. The difference is significant. Nostalgia meaning *nostos,* the return home (Green, 1991), and remembering are in some respects antithetical. The first is a forgetting, merely repressive, however memory could look back so as to move forward and conjure up *"disabling fictions to enabling fictions, altering our relation to the present and future"* (1991, p. 298). Forgetting is a major obstacle to change. Besides, "*Understanding the past changes the present and the ever-evolving present changes the significance of the past",* and thus creating a kind of time dialogism (Rabinowitz, 1987, p.179). Ahdaf Soueif could be said to have applied the pattern of circular return that matches Paul Ricoeur's phrase to read time backward. He contends that understanding depends on knowledge of the end, though linear reading is important. "*By reading the end into the beginning, we learn to*

read time backward…In this way, the plot does not merely establish human action in time… it also establishes it in memory, and memory in turn repeats-recollects-the course of events" (Mitchell, 1981, p.165-179-186). Toni Morrison insists on the inevitability of considering a non-fixed pattern of telling stories *"No author tells the stories. They are just told---meanderingly- as though they are going in several directions at the same time…I am simply trying to recreate something out of an old art form in my books…"* (Mc Kay, 198, p.420).

The narratives as a work of art could also be read as an archeological construct *"…events moving backward as in an archeological dig that unearths deeper and deeper layers, moving back to the originating events"* (Green, 1991, p. 318). The importance of a life that used to be i.e. the past and the one yet to come i.e. the future for people constitutes what Ricoeur calls *"the narrative unity of a person's life",* be them 'real' people or characters in stories. Retrospection and introspection are what narratives articulate. They allow a vision of one's life as a whole throughout past, present and future (Ricoeur, 1992). And yet, in its constant trials to confirm the possibility of a backward movement of time, narrative fiction emphasizes the forward movement for it insists on the necessity to go back to the past and start there in order to visit the present again and then the future.

One must consider an important query about time and fiction. What possible definition, redefinition or further knowledge about time does narrative fiction unveil that physics has left unexplored? (Currie, 2007). This leads one to Barthes' view of literature as a source of knowledge that uncovers much about life. He posits, according to Wood, that *"Organized or systematic knowledge is crude, life is subtle, and it is for the correction of this disparity that literature matters to us"*. He adds that literature can boost physics knowledge about the subtleties of life including the insight it sheds on understanding of time and its extension (2005, p. 40). Literature knows a lot about life's secrets unlocked by the consciousness of their characters and its author's imagination. Readers are not likely to unlock that secret however the depth of their reflection is (Miller, 2001).

Joyce's Ulysses concerns the account of a single day in Dublin. The events unfold in a circular structure extending the space of one 'physical day' into a novel that is read during hours. "*Both Mrs Dalloway and Ulysses are concerned at a thematic and technical level with the opposition between internal and external time, and with the enormous quantity of*

mind activity that fills the smallest units of time" (Currie, 2007, p. 129). Both works unfold secrets and keep others of their own consciousness, their author's and Man in general. Basing his claims on Nietzsche's phrase 'monumental history' Ricoeur describes this apparatus as 'monumental time' and grants a special power to novels to know the relation of personal to monumental time in this way:

> We must not stop with a simplistic opposition between clock time and internal time. [One] therefore must consider the variety of relations between the concrete temporal experience of various characters and monumental time. The variations on the theme of this relation lead fiction well beyond the abstract opposition we have just referred to and make of it, for the reader, a powerful means of detecting the infinitely varied ways of combining the perspectives of time that speculation by itself fails to mediate. (1985, p. 108)

Soueif's works to be investigated in this research offer a vision of time that is read backward and grants eternity and strength to her female phoenixes that transform them from mere stereotypes into agents of their own stories and lives.

Part One:

II. *Aisha*: A Child/ Adult Female Representation

Introduction:

Chapter two is divided in two parts. The first part is entitled *Aisha: A Child/ Adult Female Representation* whereby an investigation of the first six narratives in *Aisha* respectively: *The Returning*, *Knowing*, *The Apprentice*, *The Suitor*, *The Wedding of Zeina* and *Her Man* is to take place. The second part is entitled *Aisha as Foreigner and Exotic Character* exploring the remaining tales namely *1964* and *The Nativity*. Within this chapter an attempt at answering the following questions is the main aim: How does Soueif represent her female protagonists? Are they to dwell submissive, oppressed and men's sex-object, confirming the stereotyped image of the Arab-Muslim woman? Are they to emerge as liberating phoenixes? How does the author highlight the element of time past and space as both liberators and entrapping elements? How does the author translate such a view adopting a special narrative structure and techniques? What could the implications of such journeys and encounters be vis-à-vis the possible perspectives set by the author for her

work? Time, space and character are to be considered, following Bakhtin's understanding of the chronotope. It designates the amalgamation of time and space governing the preliminary condition of all narratives and other linguistic acts (Bakhtin, 2002).

The first part of the second chapter is entitled *A Child/Adult Female Representation* because the author perceives her female protagonists, including Yosri the only male protagonist in *The Apprentice*, as a *Child/Adult Female* highlighting two facets of the same portrait. *The Returning* and *Knowing* are presented by Soueif as a remembrance of time past, for in the course of it the protagonist Aisha will be viewed as an adult then as a child, plunging into reminiscences of her past, in An oscillating movement between England and Egypt. She returns home to Egypt from England within the introductory narrative *The Returning*. Soueif allows her protagonist such a journey applying the stream of consciousness technique[1] and the flash back technique remembering her past in Egypt. Aisha is to be described in relation to the 'strange setting' and 'absent time' she encounters when coming back besides the objects in her flat and her husband.

II.1. "*The Returning*" as The Home-Coming

In the opening narrative one meets Aisha with her *"little red car",* returning to Egypt. "*I need those books"*, Aisha insists on her way to her long deserted flat. She has come back to Egypt from England after a six year absence. *"She did not recognise this square"* (Soueif, 1983, p.12-11). So far, the author sets the setting of her story as Egypt. The story starts in the present relating to a six year absence. Thus, recognition seems impossible right from the start. Then Aisha starts comparing a setting that used to be with the one in front of her. "*She remembered a green garden with spreading trees and flower beds and paths of red sand. She saw instead a construction site"*. The intrusion of constructions into nature displays a contradiction between what used to be in an old time and what is really there for Aisha. The few trees spared there are *"dusty and yellow*" *"the whole place was strewn with bricks'*. A dusty taste it leaves on Aisha's memory. Again, the old familiar green setting has been conjured up into an arid garden of *"cement" "steel rods", "mounds of sand", "a demolition",* such a *"drastically reduced space"* seems to stifle in Aisha's eyes. Aisha is to remember again eyeing the road, *"bumpy and dotted with potholes."* She arrives to "*their*

house". It used to be "*pretty, reddish brown and beige"*. Now, it is *"flunked by tall apartment blocks"*, diminished, *"looking bleak"* (Ibid.12).

So, the main character remembers and imagines to compare old and new, familiar and unfamiliar, and an imagined past with an inescapably ubiquitous present as it really is.
The curious women Aisha notices *"hanging out of windows were still there"*. Yet she cannot help wondering: *"did they belong to the same people as six years ago? Or different? Younger sisters, perhaps, daughters, with the Islamic head dress. Out of the corner of her eye she could not tell"* (Ibid. 12). She just ignores them, as she had always done. She walks purposefully. Not recognising is Aisha's lot now. Is ignoring the only escape left for her? Is she not able to recuperate the old? How does one feel flanked with strangeness and the unfamiliar? Is one to transform into a lonely puppet in a deserted theatre, or an out of place? The same characteristic displaying binary relations feature in recurrent themes in modern Arabic literature and those of literature written by Arab writers in English. It *"takes the form of pairs of opposites or polarities"*. Examples of these pairs are *"town and country, tradition and modernity, East and west, or Arab and European, freedom and authority, society and the alienated individual"* (Badawi, 1993, p. 4).

Paving her way to her flat, Aisha is not to give up. May be she would catch a familiar scene and jump on it. So, she turns to the door man. Yet it is not Abdu the old one. It was "*a strange man with a stripped galabiya"*. Abdu and his wife Amna, left long ago. The setting is unfamiliar and strange. It is a dusty setting that Aisha cannot recognize. Is it the end? No Aisha is to remember again. Abdu and Amna*"were incorporated into her dream of coming home"* (Soueif, 1983, p. 13). Aisha is immersed in a stream of consciousness web trying to flee such an 'alien world'. She has repeatedly imagined the scene of her home coming in detail that is obviously different from the one she really encounters. *"It would be the beginning of the academic year, a warm October day. She would drive up to this door with Saif* "(her husband) (Ibid. 13). Again, the use of the words imagine, dream, remember are called upon by the writer to strengthen Aisha's rejection of the strange real world around her, merging with an imaginary, long lost world that now belonged to a time past. Yet, there is no Abdu and Amna to greet her on her coming home. No Saif as well, as she has expected. What she imagined to be familiar and déjà vu turns to be a stranger. To intensify the huge gulf between what Aisha expected and what she finds Soueif uses the conditional tense to describe her protagonist's expectations

Now Aisha is to enter her apartment. Is she to encounter the same strangeness? The passage is dark .She finds *"a worn-out key"* .Even her hand remembers as she comes back home like Ulysses at the end of his journey, returning home as a complete stranger under his disguise. The writer uses personification as her protagonist's hand remembers and finds the light to put more pressure on senses used to strengthen the impact of remembering. The writer uses collocations such as *"forgotten smell", "familiar smell"* and *"ghost smell"* to put more flesh on the main character's 'vain' and repeated efforts to come to grips with a familiar world and reality like the smell of fresh paint*." It's not really here but I'm smelling it"* (Ibid.14-15). Aisha thinks *may be he'd had the flat painted.* This is one of Aisha's thoughts that Soueif presents with no speech markers to blend these thoughts within the course of narration smoothly. Thus, she insists on recounting Aisha's story through the latter's consciousness. One also notices Soueif's use of senses: smell, watch and touch to strengthen the idea of remembrance. This narrative technique she also adopts in the other stories.

So far Aisha's encounter with the setting includes the unfamiliar time and space; opposing the past to the present, and a fading green space to grey shabby constructions as she tries constantly to relate everything to her own self and to what she already knows. Besides, an investigation of Aisha's meeting with the objects in her apartment tightens the ambivalent relation she has with the present space.

The first 'familiar object' Aisha meets is *"the white marble basin in the middle of the green living room wall. 'It was the very first thing they* (Aisha and Saif) *had bought for the house*". The rocking chair appears then as "*...A present from her professor of poetry"*. The rocking chair "*became her favourite seat*". It was a wedding present. In the large mirror Aisha, catches her dim reflection, remembering again. It was an old Victorian mirror which was *"declared hideous* "by her husband Saif (Ibid.16). *"Her reflection staring back at her was not the one she was used to seeing there. It was a different person: one strange to this mirror."* The changes move into focus. *"A slimmer face framed by shorter, more curly, though still black hair*"(Ibid. 16). The changes on Aisha's face displayed by her reflection in the mirror appear to her gradually. Her own face in the mirror seems to conjure into a strange Other that she is not to recognise. Then she has to remember hotel rooms where she used to stay with her husband in Paris, Rome, Brussels, Vienna, and

Athens as a known space to blur the strangeness. However, she comes back again to her reflection on the mirror and her own strangeness. *"Her expression too was different. The wide.-eyed, open, expectant look was gone. Instead there was — what? Repose? Something that people took for serenity. But she knew. She knew it was frail as an egg-shell*' (Ibid, 1983, p. 17).

The old familiar expression is no longer there. Aisha has struggled to resurrect it back. Yet, she meets a stranger in her mirror. The stranger is no one but her own- self – whom she has tried to feel alive putting her fingers on the mirror. *"The mirror was a wall between her and the warm flesh behind it .... It was cold"*. Aisha seems not to be able to grant any reality for her reflection in the mirror. It is cold as ice, beyond reach as a ghost, as unreal as a dead face reminisced anew. Is this ghostly setting to stand as a *"metaphor for her relationship with him?"*(Saif)

> She could see him, sense his contours and his warmth but whenever she made a move to touch him there would be a smooth, consistent surface. It was transparent, but it was unbreakable. At times she had felt he put it there on purpose and she had been furiously resentful. At others it had seemed that he was trapped behind it and was looking to her to set him free. (Ibid. 18)

Aisha's reflection in the mirror depicted an alien face to her,' unreal', ghost– like unidentifiable; an opposite strange Other . She has tried a recollection, an imagining of her husband's face; may be to cast more life into her own. The relation of self/Other in its oscillation between sameness and difference has often been kindled to the metaphor of the mirror in the sense that they, self and Other, are mirror images of each other, each different yet somehow the same and, henceforth, linked by their reflection. *The "labyrinth of looking-glasses" is the image that describes this relationship* (Kearney, 1998, p. 17).

However, the boundary between the expected, old familiar warmth and life proves unbreakable. It hints at Aisha's cold relation with her husband, a ghost- like figure in a mirror. He seems out of reach, making the distance between them feel eternal. Yet he is no freer then she is. He seems trapped in this confined 'glass-space', hoping she can set him free, as trapped and flanked as she makes him appear. Saif seems to clutch to the rags of Aisha's memory, her past and a world she used to know but knows no more. A world she

can 'live' and 'be in' through reminiscences. It is a world she has longed to remember, to imagine yet it turned clad in fictional dress. She remembers him drunk in the same flat (Soueif, 1983, p. 19). She stood looking at him wishing it was all over. Among the objects on the desk was a gun: *"An old Colt. 45, serial number **91*. She picked it up. Saif told her: *"When you shoot yourself in the head, your brains splatters all over the place. It's a hell of a mess"*. *"What can you do?"* she had asked. *"Put your head in a plastic bag first"*. Time shifts to the present as the doorbell rings and Aisha answers it as a boy hands her ironed shirts.

Back to the past, Aisha reconsiders her relation with her husband, how 'cold' he was, 'careless' of her *"crying till she could not breathe"*. He prefers smoking, reading and listening to music instead; totally indifferent to her, *"she slept alone, unknowing, in large double beds that mocked her."* The tapestry in the flat portrays *"the Arab Knight and poet Antar on horseback and his beloved cousin Abla in a litter on a camel's back"*. Aisha remembers telling her husband that Antar *"thought a lot of himself like you'* (Ibid.19). She refers to a world of imagination and the 'unreal' to imagine her husband as an 'Arab or Frinji'knight*,"he would have gone out and slain dragons and ghouls*". He has learned to do things without her, like travelling, making adventurous trips to the desert. He has learnt to be alone without her. Aisha's memories of herself are not to compete with her memories of her husband. She feels she has not got a past. Besides, "*it had seemed to her that 'her past was devouring her present* (Ibid. 22). She seems to have tried to belong to the same world as he did, but in vain. This could entail he is the self and she is the Other; the female inferior stranger. Her attempts at rapprochement seem to widen the gap between her world and his. He wanted to be alone without her. He seems alone as she does. Only memories of him are available now. Memories of his childhood with her, and memories of her estranged marital life remain. Her present is overwhelmed by his past and memories of him. This reminds one of the discussion dealt with in chapter one under the title *Woman as Other: A Postcolonial Feminist Critique* (p. 44-46) whereby women have been the subject of a binary reflection opposing her to men and this will also be the focal point determining the relation between male and female characters in chapter three entitled *"The Sandpiper": A Mosaic of Eastern/Western, Trapped/Liberated, Timeless Phoenixes* (p.141).

The last object Aisha recovers from her past she is to find in the cupboard. *"Her veil and small pearl embroidered Juliet's cap nestled in tissue paper. They were covered with black*

moths". She wants to get rid of it. She carries the white card box where the veil is, *"she put it in the sink, searched for the matches and set fire to it"*. Is it desire to finally break up with her past and memories? Aisha feels dizzy, crying again. *"This too was familiar"*. Her answer was always *"I don't know"* when people enquired about her *"Recurring illnesses",* which they said, were "*hysterical"* (Ibid. 22). She just sleeps, finally tired of her sobs.

When Aisha awakens she realised that *"she did not have an instant doubt about where she was. She knew. What she did not know was when she was"*. She seems to be out of time. Yet this time *"she knew"*. She asks*:"what happened?", "where is he?"* (Saif) *"What did I dream?"* she seems to compare what has happened to her to a dream. Are her memories in her apartment just a dream? Has it all been a dream of a past that now has been converted by her to a mere imaginary world she has resurrected to try a merge with her own self, familiarity, and the reality of' 'when she was'. She returns again to the mirror, she has not seen a round-faced girl with long, straight black hair. Instead she has seen a woman with the curly hair and the pearl necklace. "*She looked at the mirror with recognition, relief and sorrow*." Now she sees clear what she really is with recognition. She is retired and sad. She seems to compromise with what is really there. So, she decides to leave the room. She scanned the literature shelves and picked out five books on seventeenth century poetry, in the living-room. She leaves the flat, *"switched off the light and pulled the door too. Then she put her key in the lock and turned it finally, twice"* (Ibid. 23-24). She drives her red car again and goes away. Do her blossoming recognition and her awakening of what she has called a dream prompt her to feel what she strived to make real but in vain? Her recollected past woven into an imaginary world, has she decided to break up with it, finding Aisha again, to part with it in search of a new world?

Aisha's experience of female Otherness in *Aisha* could be compared to that of Eveline in Joyce's *The Dubliners* whereby the experience of the Other is different from women to men. Eveline, the eponymous protagonist of the fourth story in *Dubliners* is determined by her own personal and social other (O'Brien, 2004). This fact worsens her status as compared to that of her male counterparts. Eveline's present as a woman is determined and cursed by her dead mother's miserable past. Like Aisha's self-dependence on her husband Saif, her sense of self is screwed to that of the men in her life; her father, brothers and boyfriend Frank. She exists only as a subject of desire of such men, striving for their love and recognition. In Lacanian terms, this other i.e. men that Eveline strives to be desired

and loved by, refers to the whole unified mirror image the child longs to identify with. Usually the object of desire is illusive. The same understanding had been dealt with in chapter one (p. 22). For Eveline, has longed to find a man to love her and then she meets Frank whom she considers both as the subject of her desire and *"the signifier through which she comes to a form of full identity as herself"* (Joyce, 1914, p. 28). That is the same experience Aisha had looking at her face in the mirror. Eveline is presented as a static character as opposed to Frank who travels a lot as a sailor (Joyce, 1994). Eveline's relationship with her mother has been battered by illness and death. That may be significant as far as her passivity is concerned (O'Brien, 2004). Eveline's thought relate with her wholeness only by being married to a man: "Then she would be married—she, Eveline. People would treat her with respect then. She would not be treated as her mother had been (Joyce, 1994, p. 29-30). Eveline would not gain respect entirely unless she marries Frank. *"Eveline is a commodity in this story"* (Ibid.208). Her brother Ernest is dead and Harry was not to be found often being immersed in his job. Eveline finds nobody to protect her from her violent father who is introduced holding a *"blackthorn stick*" (Joyce, 1994, p. 26). She falls captive of her father's violence and her passivity. She fails to identify with any of the mirror image available for her. Her being a girl circumscribes her actions, choices and personal development. Her father had never *"gone for her like he used to go for Harry and Ernest, because she was a girl"* (Ibid. 27). This is a further example of the inability to communicate between male and female entities.

II.1.2. Time Shift and Memory in "*The Returning*":

The element of time had been dealt with earlier in the introduction to this chapter as linear or untensed i.e. Read backward. Soueif's use of backward and untensed time besides her application of the stream of consciousness technique in *The Returning* allows for a time economy, blending the past in a series of memories the main character recollects, merging present and past in one story. On time economy Genette says: *"So that the story follows up the narrative, the duration of the latter should not exceed that of the former"* [2](2007, p. 230). It could be illuminating to recall another similarity that Marcel Proust's *Remembrance of Time Past (La recherche du temps perdu)* has with *Aisha*, emphasising the vital role memory and time shift plays in such works. The structure of Proust's work is not meant to be chronological. It is rather 'centrifugal'. The narrator is made to move around his memory, trying to fall asleep; with a smoothly flowing awareness of the places

he has visited and lived in. Proust displays his protagonist's reminiscences displaying the latter's consciousness to readers (Moss, 1962). Discussing Proust's *La recherche du temps perdu*, Genette contends that it is characterized by a *"coming and going" movement* [un mouvement de va-et-vient] whereby reminiscences control the narrative (2007, p. 35). Those reminiscences have a euphoric effect even if they recollect a painful past (Ibid. 46). According to Ricoeurian understanding, every action has a purpose and is related to another. An action can be both a response to a past one and it is itself in a position to be responded to by a future action. Ricoeur contends consequently, that action takes place in a historical time. The latter includes two more essential senses of time: the cosmic time that has a general conception. It is the time of the world that unfolds according to universal laws and within which many changes occur. There is also lived time which has an idiosyncratic conception, and within which an individual values some moments more than others. It is time represented from an individual's perspective (Ricoeur, 1992). Some writers choose to indulge their characters only in a time present. For instance, unlike Soueif or Proust, Hemingway's stories all take place in the present. They behave like plays that we watch on stage. His characters have no 'pasts' and no 'futures';" *Outside the spotlight of their present they are nothing"* (Welty, 1977, p. 90).

Likewise, *The Returning* seems to inform us about the importance of memory to fix time. The journeys through time reveal so much hidden truths to us about the world around ourselves, about ourselves and outside ourselves that once transcended allow one to see clearer and grow to knowing. They offer one an opportunity to renewal. For narrative is about remembering and remembering entails repetition in order to avoid it and promote change as a liberating move from an old story to a new one (Green, 1991). "*Dating back to antiquity, story tellers understood the interesting effects that could be attained by deviating from chronological order"* using time shift as *"narrative avoids presenting life as just one damn thing after another, and allows us to make connections of causality and irony between widely separated events"* (Lodge, 1992, p. 74-75*)."Time shift is "naturalized as the operation of memory, either in the representation of a character's stream of consciousness…or more formally as the memoir or reminiscence of a character-narrator"*. The time we lose might be recuperated through writing and through art which functions as a preserver of memory itself.

II.1.3. "*Knowing*": A Childhood Revisited

Probing this narrative informs the understanding of the set forth story and the ones to follow for it unveils crucial facets of Aisha's childhood. In *Knowing,* Soueif makes Aisha recall her sweet childhood using the flash back technique, swaying between Egypt and England. In a 'diary-reading -like' narration, the child Aisha oscillates from a setting to another and travels from a time to another, meeting relatives and characters in stories like an Alice in a wonderland. Henceforth, the child Aisha is to be related to space and time both in Egypt and England, her family and to the characters in the tales she read.

Knowing immerses the reader in Aisha's childhood where one is to meet a studious, dreamy girl, fascinated by fantastic stories and fairy tales, conjuring her nightmares into bizarre encounters with 'hybrid monsters'. The child remembers, unveiling the pages of a 'diary-reading-like' narration. She journeys between Egypt and England comparing space, time and characters in both places. The child strives for familiarity, for a world she has known. The queries to be asked and probed throughout this investigation are: how does Soueif allow the child's journey in search of the known, meeting the unknown as space, time and character that leads her to knowing? It is very important to remind readers that this is not an attempt to questioning a child's, rather natural, reference to a world of imagination and dream compared to a more down-to-earth adult world. The aim of this investigation is to show how both spaces could be complementary and informing one another; not necessarily opposed.

Knowing starts with "*I remember"*. In its setting, the child Aisha enjoys *"a time of happy dappled sunlight"* in a *"flowering garden"* like an Alice in a wonderland; the greenness and freshness she missed in *The Returning*. The child moves to describe the living room of her parents' house in Egypt containing *"lots of lots of books"*. The people men and women in the living room *"all do clever things. They write books and make music and paint pictures. Their pictures placed on the walls of our apartment"***.** The child's representation of the adults' world is completely different from her own. *"The grownups are wonderful, and clever, and wise. They can do anything, explain everything"* However in her own world appears *"a horrible creature with long curving arms on the ceiling of her room and she screams"*. Yet her father is there, not her mother - to explain: "*It's the shadow of the chandelier, little goose*". Her father is a psychologist. He is depicted by the child as 'strong' (Soueif, 1983, p. 65). A consideration of Soueif's biography could be

illuminating in so far as it reveals that the author's father is also a psychologist who used his daughter as a case study (Masaad, 1999, p. 82). This allusion to the writer's biography does not entail adopting a strictly biographical approach, but it could highlight writers' being influenced by events and situations throughout their lives that they translate in writing and thus allowing art to merge with reality and reality with art.

The child shifts to speak about *"the magazines or picture book"*. Her Dada Zeina chats to the other women while she is *"absorbed in the pictures"*. The adults have books and she has pictures. Aisha goes on describing and narrating [This] *"woman is my grandmother. My mother's mother"*, performing her prayer. Her grandmother is *"delicate and frail"*. Yet, she went to the pilgrimage alone…*"My grandfather (her husband) having had neither the true nor the inclination to accompany her and look after her"*. The child already has in mind a representation of a woman as 'frail' and 'pious' and that of a man 'careless', 'selfish' not willing to help. The reader might recall Aisha's perception of her husband Saif in *The Returning* (Soueif, 1983, p.66-67).

Later, one follows Aisha in her grandfather's shop to meet her again imagining and remembering. She describes the loft upstairs. The shop is *"dark"*. She finds the place ghostly with little light spared there. So, she strives to render it a paradise, arranging the tumbled furniture. The child flees a setting that she finds unimpressive to The paradise she sees may be more attractive than the 'real world' around her. So far, Aisha seems to journey between an adult world to her own world; a kid's space she knows, coloured in imagination oscillating from a setting to another.

When she describes her grandfather again Aisha depicts him as *"Am Morsi, a big man with greying hair and sharp, black eyes. He has large workman's hands and gruff voice. Myth surrounds him"*. He was a self- made- man. 'The strong male' myth is to loom large again (Ibid.69).

To call the grown-ups' rather disconcerted attention, the child Aisha [takes] a pinch of stuff' example from the narguila and puts it to her nostrils, after it has been offered by her grandfather and his friend. *"After a second I break into three exaggerated sneezes and my grandfather and Hajj Zayed burst out laughing"* (Ibid. 71). The child wants to play the clown and she is happy to do so. She felt like smoking and so she does. The writer's

depiction of Aisha the child is of a daring and intrepid young girl. After trying smoking, Aisha five years old now, is to try something else: *"The wooden outside bathroom clogs"* despite her aunt's strong objection (Ibid.72). She gets the wooden clogs walk with them. She gets a lot of presents from her uncles and aunts a *"bridal dress with a long veil and train", "sugar-dolls-and knights"*. In Ramadan Aisha spends *"evening round the fire, cracking nuts and roasting chestnuts. A month of exotic sweets"*, *"A month of playing with a beautiful coloured lantern with a real lit candle inside....."* (Ibid.73). Later, she describes the eve of the feast at the end of the Muslim fasting month of Ramadan with the cakes women prepared. Another important event in [Aisha's] life is the summer holidays in Alexandria on the beach. Thus, this is the 'exotic' picture Aisha the child draws of Egypt, a sweet time past and space and character she revels in recounting and belonging to, experiencing another in England.

Aisha turns to speak about stories. She knows Cinderella well and she has *"unbounded confidence"* in clever Hassan. She knows the story of *Little Red Riding Hood* which ends up involving *"the wolf as a domestic pet"* (Ibid.74). Here is a very interesting passage which, though long, is worth quoting as a whole.

> Divine order. Evil is a passing naughtiness; the mighty forces work for the good and all stories end happily. I endlessly make up tales surrounding the pictures in the books I cannot yet read. I pore over a book full of Rodin sculptures and my parents are delighted with the sunny little fables I produce. My life is woven into tales and my tales become part of my life: aunts and uncles are characters in a story book and Hansel and Gretel join me under the desk in my grandfather's shop. I invent characters who become my friends and perform a play with them to an assembled family audience 'The child has such a lively imagination', they say, and surround me with admiration and love. (Ibid.75)

Those are the tales characters she communes with and belongs to. This is how Aisha's life is pictured, merged with that of characters that immerse a world of reality versus another. Everybody admires her because she has a lively imagination. Fiction is part and parcel of her 'real life'. Her parents know that characters in stories are unreal. They know because they are grownups.

Aisha is to leave Egypt taking another time machine to Britain on *"a long journey across the sea alone with my father"*. She embarks on another machine to travel through time. This time it is a boat and not her red car in *The Returning*. She describes Britain as *"A cold, dark, wet, windy place with a lot of trains"*. It is no more the sunny summer in Egypt; it is another cold weather in England. Then appears her mother whom they waited for after she has been absent for months. This is another shift of time, place and character for Aisha, so how is she to react?

Aisha does not seem to like the new place much. It is *"much darker, much colder than I'm used to"* she misses her relatives. An air of nostalgia is loading her narrative. Aisha's new life in Britain is characterised by her being *"initiated into a semi-grown up role"*. She is left out alone at home. She is no more the spoilt child in Egypt but another. Her parents say that The Brownie will leave sweets for her that she will find in the morning. Another important passage depicting Aisha dreaming while she is awake is worth noting. At night she awakened suddenly and sees a hamster. *"He",* she describes*," is a cross between a tiny man and a hamster*". He is running quickly, up right on two legs and he wears a little green suit and hat. He has human face with a black mouse snout and pointed pixie ears. Aisha is now 'living' the dream in reality. She is awake seeing all what she is to see 'really'. Now, the hamster is to adopt a human figure. ***'He'***, the hamster, is, as Aisha personifies it, mimicking a human appearance. Yet Aisha does not find her expected and long awaited presence, supposed to be left by the Brownie. She fetches it desperately but in vain. She has to wait for the morning to find a bag of liquorice under her pillow when her mother awakens her. The power of Aisha's belief in what she is seeing is so striking. Provided she thinks she sees it, this 'reality' of her own is to prevail and persist. When Aisha tells her parents about what she saw the answer was *"you couldn't have dear" "But I did", "you must have dreamt it" "but I was sitting up in bed. I wasn't asleep' "you couldn't really* ". Her parents insist that the Brownie come only when children are asleep.

The child is convinced of having seen the weird creature because she has not been asleep. Yet her parents, who know more than she does, who do clever things as grownups, who are wise, probably wiser than she is, assured her that the Brownie, contrary to the story she has told and believed, comes only when children are asleep. Her parents look uncomfortable when she has to narrate her story. Yet she [I] *"cannot understand"* why.

Aisha mentions an important event: *"I learn to read"*. She calls the printed world she reads *"black marks"* which now" *"made sense"* to her. *"I want to do nothing but read. I read and I read and I make up more stories..... my world is peopled with fascinating characters and bursting with adventure"*. She reads about Vampires at night. "*Here is new material for my imagination",* she says (Soueif, 1983:76). Yet her imagination induces her to have night-mares, *"an octopus is trying to catch me to drive a stake through my heart"*. Fortunately her parents come on time to save her. It is her father again, the psychologist who tells her to recall the frightening scenes and objects consciously before she went to bed so that she stops having night-mares. The recipe seems to work to a certain limit.
Aisha becomes more and more demanding, for she finished the books quickly. This time it is her mother who gives her access to her books – especially the Arabian Nights (Ibid.78). With the *Arabian Nights*, Aisha enters *"a world of Oriental souks and magic and Djinnis"*. She thinks that *"the world has undreamt – of possibilities",* she is completely immersed in a world of magic. So after having night-mares and visions of strange creatures taking part of her 'imaginary real' world, Aisha decides not to give up. She devours more and more books and welcomes as many new characters to her world as possible. She does not seem to care that her parents think it is all 'unreal', woven by her imagination, though they know more than she does. She declares:

> I know now my parents are neither omnipotent nor omniscient. They cannot stop the vampire from appearing but at least they can be there when he arrives. I insist that they stay in and win. I will never be left alone after this. And I am miserable. (Ibid. 80)

Aisha is 'utterly' 'sure' what is going on in front of her open eyes is 'true' and 'real'. Yet, her fear is to win over and hurl her back to the grownups world and their own conception of 'reality'. She still needs her parents to protect her from that unusual, scary yet enjoyed world. At least she is convinced that it is 'real' for when she is called to it she is awake and not 'asleep'. The child knows her parents cannot stop the vampire from appearing, or the hamster or the Djinni, which are characters belonging to her imagined world, yet *"they were still there"*. She does not seem to give up the idea that what she witnesses and lives and imagines is not real. She ends her narrative stating*: "I am miserable"*. She longed to belong to her world and felt the need to escape it when it became too scary. So are both spaces worlds apart?

To round up it is necessary to trace back the main steps one has gone through to answer the questions set forth in the introduction to *Knowing* i.e. Aisha's repeated attempts to escape and alienate herself from the adult 'real world' to a world of fiction drawn by her imagination and how the author allowed such a journey relating the main character to the setting, time and the other characters in the story. An attempt at linking *Knowing* to the first narrative *The Returning* in which Aisha the grown up resolved to her memories of the past to flee her present and view the world outside from inside has also been tried. An obsession to see the world outside from within and not like it 'really is'.

Harking back into Aisha's childhood one met Aisha as journeying from a time space and character between Egypt and England. She was described as a studious reader of stories estranging her further from an adult world. She enjoyed creating stories and characters she called real people, and made them part of her own world and made herself part of theirs. It was a world she created, believed and knew to be true. She emphasized that she could view this world eyes wide open. One met Aisha as a child whose parents were constantly absent from home and who seemed to deny Aisha's world any existence or truth. They knew their world was 'more real'. Yet it was mostly her father who 'held the truth' all the time. Her mother featured as a still absent puppet.

The whole mood of the story seems to be pointing to the disillusionment of the main character. This disillusionment stems from her 'incapacity' to make the adult perceive of her world which she thought 'real'. It is a world she imagined and 'made true'. Yet, she could voice her concerns about it. She could make people come to it and be aware of it. She could tell her own narrative and refused to be imposed any other especially her parents' who were not able to protect her from the visions she had of her own world yet could save her from fear. Aisha's claim for narrative is understood as a voice which is more than a physiological faculty. It concerns a woman's voice that is "*the narrative instrument that permits"* (her) a literary medium, *"to vie with the male in the process of textual creation"*(Malti Douglas, 1995, p. 5-6). By restoring their own narratives, women intend the eradication of misrepresentations and preconceived ideas about them either as children adolescents or adults as being 'weak', 'emotional', 'dependent' and 'sex subjects'.

The dreamy child seems to end up desperate, coming to the awareness, and having to know, as the title of the short story suggests, that all is 'much ado about nothing' because

after each attempt to embark into a better dream world, she is made to go back to what she thought a strange and arid reality. All the visions she has been experiencing are but illusions as her psychologist father explains. Yet, is not the real adult world the child strived to flee as another strange space, the same space that could lead to her knowing about it? Despite the possible alienation it might have burdened the dreamy world with, the same other world allowed Aisha to be aware of it, to know it, to live its difference, to get out of herself to different franchise. The adult could protect her, and in the cold English space and distant time she could learn to read. She could recall and feel the sun in Egypt. The supposedly alien outsider has been there to highlight the difference and shape the sameness. Aisha displays the same features of 'rebellion' as a teenager in *"1964" A Misfit Adolescent* (p. 114-120).

II. 1.4. "*The Apprentice": Yosri as a Boy/Woman Persona*

The Apprentice is narrated by an omniscient narrator. The time is late spring (Soueif, 1983, p.111). The opening scene displays a sexually attractive fair woman featuring on a billboard, bathing in the sun while the sea "*sits smooth and quiet"*. She wears a green dress with ships and a *"décolletage"*. Yosri, the apprentice, appears then as a small and dark boy. *"He is dressed in faded stripped green pyjama trousers and a torn brow nylon tee-shirt"*. He also "*wears brown plastic sandals"*. Yosri is totally immersed in the sea scene, watching the fair beautiful lady that he does not notice the speedy taxi that is about to bump into him. He does not hear the loud horn either.

Yosri's mother thinks that gentlemen who go to school and (Ibid.113) work with their diplomas *"are not for much"*. She speaks to her employer, Set Nadia: *"What would he have learnt, Set Nadia? How to be a gentleman? Don't take it badly, but gentlemen can't make enough to eat these days. I want him to learn a trade"*. Yosri's mother also thinks of making a man of her son. Yosri looked younger than he really is. Set Nadia says: *"I thought he looked quite delicate"*. She suggests he works at a hairdresser's. She suggests Monsieur Hassan her own hairdresser. His mother does not mind: *"Why not? I've tried him at men's jobs and he can't get on. May be he'll get on at the hairdresser's"*. Yosri thinks the fair beautiful woman and Set Nadia are the most charming women in the world. He is attracted to feminine *"things"*. *"For the hundredth time he marvels at the invention of the Creator: even their cigarette stubs are different. Yosri is different from his brother who steals everything from the house"*. At this instance the narrator resumes narration as though another story has started. One warm morning in early summer, a young boy stands outside

the heavy smocked-glass door of the Salon Romance. Yosri is no longer described as a dark small boy (Ibid.114-115).

The narrator turns to describe Monsieur Hassan as a man who works with ladies and *"understood them so well"* (Ibid.116). He looks for change desperately to please them *"A lilac canopy draped over the ceiling" and "Two S-shaped dressing-tables in the middle of the floor"*. Monsieur Hassan believes this décor is different for it should look *"more intimate"*. The prevailing colours in the Salon Romance are: purple and rose. The best clients are: Madame Nadia, Madame Aisha, Madame Angèle and Mademoiselle Mimi. Yosri takes particular care of them. He is described as "good-looking. And quiet. "*Too quiet?"* That's how he is liked by the ladies.

The Salon Romance is full of ladies with different styles for Yosri's eyes to revel in: the small, the tall, the slim, the plump, the fair, the dark. Each lady reflected a different colour. Monsieur Hassan is more than a hairdresser. He does things for ladies, buys food, and sets appointments at mechanics for Aisha to take her car. Yosri watches everything without uttering a single word. Madame Gabi, another client, thinks Yosri a pretty boy. *"What a pretty boy he's turning into, Monsieur Hassan. Has he been curling his hair?"* she asks Monsieur Hassan (Ibid. 118-119). She also suggests he wears a golden chain. Aisha suggests he wears two earrings like men abroad. Madame Gabi thinks *"No real man would ever wear earring…those are the you-know-whats"*. Madame Gabi thinks of pirates. It could be referred to by the narrator alluding to what will happen to Yosri later and may be Madame Gabi is reminded of pirates by the earring. She believes that pirates spent months without women and once they found them. *"May be they worked both ways. Took what they could find. Sometimes a boy, sometimes a woman"*. Madame Gabi is blending women and boys to match the same category (Ibid.120).

Yosri's first step towards professional hairdressing quickens thanks to Mimi Aisha's friend. One day, she begs Monsieur Hassan to let Yosri wash her hair. *"Why not",* she protested. "*I'm willing to try him. If he's not good enough, I'll just call for someone else"*. Yosri shows a degree of high professionalism in dealing with ladies hair. He washes Mimi's hair and massages her scalp with great delicacy and carefulness. Mimi cannot help expressing her surprise at the boy's flawless job. *"The boy is a born coiffeur; he has a real feeling for hair",* Mimi thinks (Ibid.123).

Time passes to reach September on a stifling day. Yosri has grown taller, wears tight white denims and a dark shirt. On his way to quit the Salon Romance on that very day, the door opened and there appears a *"large figure"*. The *"large figure"* turns to be a man and the man turns to be a mechanic from the garage up the street. He gets in the Salon and shuts the door behind him. He starts to get closer to Yosri who sensed danger mounting to his weak legs and knotted stomach. The young man just put his hands in his pockets. *"The man took one slow step forward and reached out"* to Yosri. "*His hand brushed against the boy's chest as he carefully took hold of the chain and began stroking the golden fish with his thumb"* (Ibid. 124-125).

Thus Yosri a 'boy/woman' character ends as a victim of rape in the hands of a tough mechanic. The romance of the Salon Romance and the golden Pisces necklace could not save him from danger nor could the women's world in which he was totally immersed. This narrative reincarnates the age old myth of the weak woman victim of rape and violent men discussed earlier in chapter one.

II.**1.5. *"The Suitor"*: Mimi a Domesticated Cinderella**

The story of *The Suitor* is narrated by Aisha. It starts with her Tante Safi begging her to talk to her daughter Marianne, or Mimi, who is also Aisha's friend, to persuade her choose a husband Besides, her uncles are making a fuss about her not choosing a husband and not being married. Tante Safi ensures Aisha that Mimi's choice is too posh as *"Nobody is good enough for her. Nobody fills her eye. The cream of young men have come knocking at her door and she just won't give them a chance"* (Soueif, 1983, p. 52). Marianne, or Mimi, Aisha's Coptic friend, is represented as a university graduate and a very demanding young lady (Ibid. 47). This is what Mimi's extremely anxious mother thought of her, fearing her attractive daughter attracts spinsterhood. Marianne tears suitors to pieces (Ibid. 50). She decorticates her suitors' anatomies, examining their ears, trousers, and their shoes. She wants to live her life fully, enjoying parties, and staying in restaurants and hotels (Ibid. 50-51).

A return to the past returns to the story as Tante Safi's hands remind Aisha of the past. She has known her for years and yet her hands, arms, and legs remained the same fascinating members of a body that an *"attractive woman"* in her twenties would rather have. The hands, arms and legs are delicately tailored and decorated by an *"unblemished skin"*. And yet the age contrast comes to its fruition when one meets the *"aged wrinkled*

face with downward-slanting, tired, grey eyes, a wart and a frazzle of peppery hair". The contrast becomes striking as two times and ages meet in a single shot of description: the present and the past, young age and old age. Another jump into the past Soueif allows when Tante Safi mentions that Mimi's father was dead and that now her uncles are responsible for her (Ibid. 48). The photo frame of him is hanging on the wall.

Back to the present, Safi resumed her talk with Aisha considering Mimi's cousin Sahar's marriage with a Muslim a *"scandal"*. If Mimi were to marry a Muslim, Tante Safi thought, this marriage would kill her. Sahar's family severed all relations with her as though she had never existed. Yet, only her female close relatives i.e. mother and aunts kept seeing her secretly for they were terrified about her lot. A man under Muslim law, Tante Safi confirmed to Aisha, can divorce his wife, and as she is denied presence in her own family *"where would she go?"* She ensured Aisha that she is greying old (Ibid. 49) and that she won't live forever for her daughter, besides Marianne is twenty nine. Safi asks Aisha to speak to her again. Tante Safi leaves the room and Aisha stays there remembering the same room ten years ago. Nothing has changed, Aisha noticed. Aisha quits the room immediately after for she knows there is no use speaking to her stubborn friend. Aisha then would imagine exactly how Tante Safi would behave visiting the priest and complaining about her daughter's behaviour. She then remembers how her friend decorticated her suitors' anatomy. She made remarks about their ears as she noticed very tiny details about them: fleshy, red, transparent or brittle. Trousers also were a significant issue: too low, worn, too high, too baggy, or too tight. Shoes were an important criterion too: tight, too flared, or not flared enough, or just out of fashion (Ibid. 51). Shoes, Mimi thought, are a *"highly significant item"*. They got to shine like silk. She cared if her suitor wore moccasins or lace-ups. She would prefer the slim ones. Only when her suitor clothes and appearance are acceptable, he could finally speak. She does not tolerate men who minded their mothers' opinions too much, or does she preferred *"traditional men" who would "fall asleep after supper?"* Mimi simply wants to *live.* Tante Safi makes it still harder to find Mimi's Suitor. It (Ibid. 52) does not have to be a man emigrating elsewhere and taking Mimi from her. Besides, her daughter's husband should at least have a master of art and does not have to live too far from her mother's home. Not even in Heliopolis. He has to live in Cairo itself. Safi thinks Heliopolis' water is not good for her daughter who has a fragile stomach. Marianne's suitors went to the library where she works. She would leave

them to Gina's care, a friend who works with her. Mimi did not bother uttering a single word or allowing them to utter any.

Years go by and Mimi is still waiting for the thirty nine year old single with acceptable ears and shoes, a flat in Garden City or Zamalek, with a lot of money and a flamboyant business.

Aisha confirms that ten months ago Mimi got credit for her behaviour. A man showed in the library. Finally, engineer Wassef Ghali, the flawless bewitching Copt who visits Mimi at the library where she works, casts a spell on her. Soueif uses Marianne's thoughts as she speculated about the dazzling suitor to foster suspense within narration. Mimi thought he wore no ring which meant he was not married. He was in the library at 11.00 so he did not work in the government and he had his own business. His clothes looked expensive. He must be doing well or he is rich. He did not behave like a suitor, or was he just clever? He had a beautiful red Volvo that she could see through the window.

A week goes by without Wassef Ghali being seen around in the library. Then he shows up. He does not speak to her and addresses himself to Gina. He continued ignoring her until Marianne's interest grew to a crescendo. Ten days later, (Ibid. 54) Wassef invites Mimi to lunch. She likes the way he invited her for a lift in his spacious car for lunch. Mimi thinks he is everything she has dreamt of (Ibid. 54). She thinks *"...he was a man of the world and knew how to treat her"* (Ibid. 56). So, Marianne, the demanding educated woman falls madly in love with Wassef who she expects will ask her to become his wife (Ibid.57). She makes sharp comparison between her own home and Wassef's flat. The latter is modern, all chrome and glass, white leather, with shag Nile rugs and dimmed lights and mirrors. Marianne goes regularly to Wassef's flat and accepts flirting with him. After Mimi spends a dreamy time with her prince charming, he disappears from sight. The prince charming is evasive to Mimi's desperate questions. Wassef Ghali turns to be an owner of prostitute flats, escaping police surveillance. Her brother-in-law finds out that the bright charming prince is nothing but a prostitute home owner. He discovers that she has been one of his regular visitors. To avoid family scandals, and as Mimi is almost thirty, she accepts a suitor without any conditions. She decides to stop working and have children as

her plain suitor suggested to her. On her wedding day, Marianne confesses to her friend Aisha *"I can't wait forever. Besides, what is there to wait for?"* (Ibid.61).

Marianne's story is that of an educated, demanding, and extravagant Cinderella ends by her marrying in a merely 'traditional' way. She marries a man she has never seen before nor known before. Her last suitor is not torn to pieces nor is his anatomy examined. The only man Marianne trusted to be the ever 'perfect' gentleman treated her as a 'sex-object', an attractive pompous doll who immediately surrendered to his charms.

II.1.6. "*The Wedding of Zeina": Zeina as a Child Bride*

In *The Wedding of Zeina*, Soueif grants Aisha's nanny, Zeina, a narrative backed by an omniscient narrator. Narration also moves on geared by Aisha's consciousness. Zeina tells Aisha the story of her wedding night, her initiation to adulthood when still a child of fifteen. The old woman Zeina calls *'Setti',* her grandmother, announces her that she is to become her cousin's wife (Soueif, 1983, p.83). The women in the family call the Mashta as she is the woman in charge of adorning brides (Ibid. 84). Zeina is to live in a small room on the roof of Aisha's grandparents' house where they kept rabbits. According to Aisha's parents Zeina and her likes belong to the *"vulgar people"* (Ibid. 85). Yet, Aisha enjoys her nanny's thrilling stories as she described to her in details how the Mashta removes hair with 'sugar' from Zeina's body to be ready for her bridegroom, and how she resists the group of women who hold her down. The story made Aisha grow up. *"…Although in some deep corner inside she was uneasy, feeling the bribe in the words, she still felt proud and anxious to keep those privileged story-telling hours"*. She laughs when Zeina does remembering her innocent questions to the women who prepared her for the wedding night. Zeina asked them what her bride groom had to do with her beautiful hairless dress and laughed at her own self. So does Aisha though she does not understand the reason for her nanny's mock at her own self. Aisha wants to become an adult in spite of all. She had asked her mother about joy cries and her father furiously replied that *"it was something vulgar people did"*. Zeina tells Aisha that Zeina's grandmother had to paint the room on the roof for her and her bridegroom. Aisha remembers the same room on the roof her grandfather kept rabbits in (Ibid.87).

On the day of her wedding, Zeina is escorted to her room by her uncle while one of her tough uncles is holding a gun in his hand (Ibid. 87). This induces the scared Zeina to

remember the girl who was killed on her wedding night. Zeina's young bridegroom appears with a *"thick white bandage wrapped round the middle finger of his right hand"*. Zeina, *"the foolish child"* thinks he hurt his finger. When Zeina's aunt ordered her to take off her knickers and be ready for her man, the child bride asks him to go out; ignoring that now he is her husband. Zeina is so hard-headed that she needed a group of women to hold her down and continuous threats to kill her from her furious armed uncle waiting outside the bride room (Ibid. 88).Yet, Zeina resists them all, giving the bridegroom *"a mighty kick that sent him sprawling on his backside"* (Ibid .88). However, the young bridegroom used all his strength to force his *"bandaged finger into Zeina, working it round and round as she choked and screamed"* (Ibid. 89). When the bandage soaks with blood, Zeina hears the drumming growing loud, the joy cries filling the air and her uncle's gun bullets exploding in it. Then she hears her uncle's calling out *"our honour. Our daughter's honour. Our family's honour."* Zeina's grandmother explains to the terrified young bride that Sobhi now is her husband and he can do anything to her when he wanted without her resisting him. Yet, Zeina fights him for a month before he masters her. She told Aisha that she does not hate him and that *"he is a strong man and as big as a bull"* (Ibid. 89).

The Wedding of Zeina recounts the story of a child bride whose initiation to adulthood through marriage was a mingling of sweet and bitter souvenirs. Her pink-painted bride room on the roof witnessed a terrifying wedding night of a fifteen year old child to an eighteen year old young man. The child was forced to abide by her uncles and aunts orders 'to save the families honour' despite her strenuous efforts to flee her 'shame' and pain as innocent and young as she was. Zeina who belonged to 'the vulgar people' i.e. a kind of uneducated and ignorant people according to Aisha's parents, could fight as a child to protect herself from 'shame' and pain. She attempted tirelessly to resist a conservative family that was more concerned with 'saving its honour than with a child's sufferings. Soueif seems to confirm the stereotype of the Arab Muslim woman represented by the West discussed in chapter one under the title *Western Literary Representations of Muslim and Arab Women* (p. 59-66) as victims of rape, and slave to authoritarian male and society.

II.1.7. "*Her Man": Zeina as the Amazonian Co-Wife*

Although *Her Man* is told by an omniscient narrator, it is seen through Zeina's eyes. Unlike in *The Wedding of Zeina* whereby she is represented as a foolish and ignorant,

though intrepid child, in *Her Man,* Zeina is portrayed as a full-fledged young woman. Zeina uses the second person pronoun *"you"* to address her own self contributing to the recounting of the story. She describes her sexually attractive legs as follows:

> The men are always looking at them as you walk down the street, your melaya draped tightly round your body but showing one full, straight leg with a dimpled ankle adorned by a thick silver anklet. (Soueif, 1983, p.93)

She's a sexually attractive lucky woman *"pretty, with eye lashes as night even without kohl, and face fair and full of light, and hair smooth as silk".* She has a nine year old boy. She has magnificent thighs that everybody admired (Soueif, 1983, p.93). She addresses herself as Zeina again: *"Pull yourself together, now Zeina and go and get your son from the lane".*

However, Zeina is a woman who misses her husband; her man, and could not get another child. Zeina lost a girl before her son Saad and she hardly went through the pain. Yet, she keeps reminding herself that she has to have faith in God and that*" it will all turn out to the good"* (Ibid. 94). In spite of her sparkling self-confidence, Zeina turns to be a desperate wife no longer speaking to her husband who marries another woman. Her husband and cousin still *"holds [her] dear. Still supports [her]. But she's hurting his pride and his manhood"* not speaking to him anymore (Ibid. 95).

Zeina's co-wife, Tahiya, is perceived as a *"dope"* and *"a half idiot orphan"* (Ibid. 96). She often compares the *"simpleton"* to her own self bitterly, as young and pretty and wise as she is. She has not attempted to play tricks on Tahiya, her co-wife, and pour salt into her cooking, cut up her clothes, and sprinkle dust in her room (Ibid. 97). That will make her man angry. Instead, Zeina chooses to prove as wise as everybody thinks she is. As her childish co-wife comes to find shelter in her room on a windy scary night, Zeina welcomes her to her bed. She fiendishly arouses her sexually and rapes her, pretending to appease her loneliness and fear (Ibid. 102-103-104). Tahiya thinks her co-wife a kind woman not beating her and not tearing her shifts into shreds (Ibid. 105).

As her man comes back from a long travel, Zeina insists to show him *"the big blue bite"* she inscribed on *"Tahiya's right buttock"* (Ibid. 105). She pretends that Tahiya showed it to her as she had been with another man and as a means to show off. So, Zeina's man Sobhi beats his second wife to death, divorces her, and sends her back to her mother. Zeina

then takes the lead to appease her furious husband's rage, preparing hot water for him to have a bath, and a delicious dinner. Thus, Zeina wins her man back 'wisely', behaving completely differently and unusually compared to an ordinary desperate woman and wife.

Conclusion:

One met Aisha in *The Returning* as an emancipated educated Egyptian woman on her returning. Coming home, she struggled to come into grips with her present and real world already confronting the unfamiliar setting and time, her flat, the objects in it, and the characters in the narrative, including her unrecognised reflection in the mirror, and her relation to her husband all seemed alien to her. So, she converted her present into a past immersed in memories and imagination to recuperate the old familiar Aisha. She was depicted by Soueif as a maudlin female character submitting to her reminiscences, imprisoned in her obsessions of a nostalgic past, rejecting any belonging to the present, and therefore, turning a blind eye to the world outside her cocooned self. She strived to carve a picture of her husband no other than the one dwelling in her imagination; a selfish man doing things without her, failing to understand her as a lonely woman. She overlooked his estrangement that the mirror succeeded in displaying. Aisha could not borrow other lenses to see through other than her own. However, the elements that seemed to hamper Aisha's merging with the outside world as alien and opposite guided her to knowing. It was no more the past no more the old setting. It was the present that she had to call herself to so as to detach the past from the chains of iron nostalgia to set it free as complementary to, and informing the present. So, she decided to leave it locking the door of her flat twice with her literature books in her car, as she drove speedily. This could be the passage through which the author confirmed then demystified the myth and the stereotype of the cocooned Arab-Muslim woman as denied freedom and knowledge. Here is Aisha knowing and encountering herself again as hitherto lost in the past, resurrecting it to a present. Aisha, could be viewed as the female character whose self-renewal could grant her a novel start. Thus the past could both entrap her and liberate her to feature as a liberated phoenix that emerges out of its ashes.

The Returning could be considered the free space through which Aisha voiced her concern about both female and male concerns especially the latter's estrangement from one another, symbolised by the metaphor of the mirror , epitomising coldness and distantness. Literature, compared to other fields of inquiry, becomes the space whereby the situation of

women in society transcends factual descriptions to reach a more deeply rooted ground. It touches the emotional, intellectual and spiritual of the situation. "....it mirrors different levels of truth" crucial to the understanding of society with its norms and imposed rules. (Haim, 1981, p. 512)

In both narratives, Aisha the adult and Aisha the child embarked in search of a more known world which she strived to call hers. She was looking for herself. Remembrance seemed the right way out. A sweet past Aisha revelled to resurrect, a setting and characters she learned by heart. She was unable to imagine, to know, to accept and to make herself part of another. The present time, the shabby constructions, the strange unknown people pictured an opposite stranger. However, the dreamy exotic warm wonderland and people in Egypt, the spoilt child she was, portrayed the familiar. The freezing sun and parents was the stranger. Aisha could lock the door twice, leaving a nostalgic past behind when surrendering herself to knowing. She could penetrate the adult's world seeking their protection. The old obsessions of childhood she dragged along to adulthood seemed to have dissolved in the double reverberating of the turning key. Compared to Soueif's *The Returning*, the Lebanese writer George Salim's protagonist in his short story *Al- Quitar*, "*The Train",* is also described relating to time and memory. The latter is a man who embarks on a train a mysterious search in the desert, attempting to reach a paradise, and to forget about his previous life. The protagonist refuses to abandon his past memories either good or bad, returning from where he came (Young, 1982).

Soueif could paint portraits of female characters as both the same and different from the age old stereotype of the weak, dependent, and victim. Her characters explored in the first part of chapter two, except Yosri and Mimi could appear differently as liberated, outspoken, and prominent entities who could have a say in their life scenarios. Part two of chapter one probes Aisha as an adolescent and a 'femme du monde'. She does not escape the Janus portrait aforementioned.

Chapter Two: Part Two

II. 2. Aisha as Foreigner and Exotic Character: "*1964*" and "*The Nativity*"

Introduction

"*No one today is purely one thing*"(Said, 2004)

The distinguishing feature of the following narratives is that within the course of the narration the main character Aisha crystallises in its being The foreigner Other, besides the other representations that featured in the previous stories that will be alluded to later. In *The Nativity*, in particular, appear the male character and the society's authority vs. the female as a 'sex-subject'; The weak, and a rape target. The main questions to be answered, probing the set forth stories are: How is the main character highlighted as the foreigner that is opposite and hostile, considering Aisha's relation to the foreign characters in Britain as British and emigrants? Is Aisha to be conjured up into an alien back to Egypt regarding her people as uneducated and ignorant, facing a crisis of identity and sustaining the self-centeredness she displayed in the previous narratives? What perspectives does Soueif grant her protagonist beyond the stereotyped image of the maudlin, weak, and rape victim Arab-Muslim woman? What narrative techniques does the writer utilize to convey the relation of space and time to the main character as she journeys from Egypt to England as a foreigner and locale?

II.2.1. "*1964*": A Misfit Adolescent

1964 is a story that pictures Aisha as an adolescent in England. She constantly attempts to replace a seemingly arid present to a future she deems better and promising. She juxtaposes two times as opposed categories; a time and its opposite. Here are the inaugurating sentences: *"I stood in the snow, freezing and waiting for the bus. I was lonely"*. Aisha's encounter with the setting around is frozen just like the snow beneath her feet. A young girl of fourteen awakens alone each morning in the dark, while her parents, her young sister and brother slept. Communing with fictional characters might appease her loneliness:

> I like Maggie Tulliver, Anna Karenina, and Emma Bovary and understood them as I understood none of the people around me. In my own mind, I was a heroine and in the middle of the night would act out scenes of high drama to the concern of my younger

> sister who had, however, learnt to play Charmian admirably for an eight- year- old. (Soueif, 1983, p.29)

As in the previous narratives, *The Returning* and *Knowing*, Aisha finds herself alone, confronted to alien space and time. So, what she does, is immediately turn to her imagination to find solace in dreaming, which sends her to a world of her own, foregrounding the sameness between the child and adult Aisha. In *1964* the protagonist is fascinated by fictitious characters: Maggie Tulliver, Anna Karenina, and Emma Bovary. She understands them and belongs to them more than she does understand the people in the real world. She is one of them. She is a heroine in her own mind. She used to belong to the world of fairy tales Cinderella, and Little Riding Hood and Noddy, the Djinni and The Brownie and the Hamster. Now fourteen, Aisha's world has to grow with her to encompass Maggie Tulliver, Emma Bovary and Anna Karenina and more names to come. As an adult in *The Returning*, Aisha quits her world of past remembrance locking the door twice behind her, back to the 'real world' with her speedy car. As a child in *Knowing* Aisha is forced back to the real world again by her fear and night mares to a world of grown-ups who think so little of her and understand so little of her world. How about *1964,* what would Aisha the teenager heroine make of her world this time?

Aisha moves on to tell about her adventure on the Stratheden, a boat as another space machine, heading from Port Said in Egypt to London. She has to abide by the rules set by her parents as Egyptian academics: *".....beneath my mother's surface friendliness there was a palpable air of superiority. We were Egyptian academics who come to England on sabbatical to do Post-doctoral Research "*. Aisha longs for an adventure on board the Stratheden. Against her parents 'surface friendliness' and 'palpable air of superiority' she meets an Indian boy, Christopher, *"tall, thin, and seventeen year old with a beaked nose"*. She gives him her address in London. Then Aisha has to face her parents' wrath, discovering Christopher's, letters and photo with her. The situation displays the meeting between foreigners considering other foreigners as inferior and alien. Yet, Aisha is the least *"troubled with the loss of Christopher. Just by the loss of a potential adventure. Anything that happened to me in those days represented a potential adventure"* (Soueif, 1983, p. 30). Here she is, an adventuress 'losing' her first opportunity to a 'potential adventure'. However, others are still to come.

After she missed an adventure with the Indian Christopher, "*a curfew of eight thirty pm"'* is imposed on Aisha by her parents. '*.... No path to rebellion was open' to her. She waited for something to happen obligingly within the set boundaries". "Nothing ever happened", "life was passing me by".* Luckily for Aisha something is to happen with her mother's proposal to meet the Vicar's children. She could even go out with them (unlike with the Indian Christopher). Aisha *"was thrilled".* Life is to go on. Is a potential adventure on the brink of becoming possible? The present seems to waver against her expectations and the future might be the saviour.

Aisha's new British friends are *"angular girls with varnishing eye- brows and hair pulled back"*; the boy has *"extremely short hair and glasses".* Her *"knowing heart"* made her *"resolute* as *"The possibilities were infinite"* for her. She is going to move to the café and play the *"juke box",* or go to the youth club. She imagines them to be like the Gezira Club at home (In Egypt), "*only much more exciting and liberated'*. Here is another jump to the past with imagination. Is a potential adventure possible at last? *"Instead, we went to church",* Aisha says. It is not even *"an old and picturesque* church. *It is "modern and bare"*. Yet Aisha is made to rejoice being accepted as a Muslim to their church.*' She 'prayed for something to happen to relieve the tedium of life*'. She feels desperate. She has to listen to the Vicar's sermon who speaks of "*alien races, alien beliefs",* and who is there *"to guide them into the love of 'Our Lord* '" (Ibid.31). She has no doubt he meant her. After the sermon, Aisha is made to feel 'an alien' among the people who are supposed to be friends. She and her people have been represented as alien. The orientalist view of the Other Edward Said investigated is of great concern here people of a different culture are being stigmatised as alien to the white- Christian-European civilisation and as pagans and unprivileged. D. H Lawrence's view of the gradual "annihilation of the 'White psyche', race and civilisation are also of great concern in this respect (1924, p. 70-169). Lawrence's openness to change is most prominent in his idea of the 'old White psyche' that must be annihilated gradually as well as the 'white epoch', 'civilization' and 'race' (Ibid.70-169). This death of the 'white norm' could make room for other races, and other colors. "Everybody was large and pale with straight light brown hair and tweeds. I felt excessively small and dark and was agonisingly conscious of my alien appearance, and particularly my alien hair, as I waited to be sought out and guided into the love of Jesus" (Soueif, 1983, p. 31).

Aisha feels estranged from both setting and people. She knows that – "*however unknowingly"* – she "*has been betrayed*", and she *"knows"* and decides she "*would never go out with the Vicar's children again"*. After perpetual attempts to escape the supposedly 'stale-static' present in which nothing happened to expect a better future full of adventure and life and thrill, Aisha feels an alien again. She is back to the present; feeling betrayed, desperate and disillusioned. She could not attain for that much dreamt about would be world of adventure.

Yet she is still to compare the stillness and 'death-like' meeting with the Vicar's children to that of *"Teddy boys and the Rockers"* she meets on her way home. *"They are all that I was missing,"* she says'. Her heart yearned for another adventure when she walks past one; her heart would thud in anticipation of his speaking to her. Yet, her parents are never to accept. This is what Aisha has to say about herself, feeling out of space and time:

> And I realised that with my prim manner and prissy voice they wouldn't want me for a friend anyway. I was a misfit: I had the manner of a fledging westernised bourgeois intellectual and the soul (though no one suspected it yet but me) of a "Rocker". (Ibid. 32)

The contrast stemming from what Aisha thought she is and dreamt of becoming is striking. She imagined another Aisha that she has not found yet. She strives to be a rocker and experience adventure, but this is not to be possible since people around her already have an 'idea of what she [seemingly] is, which she thinks she is not. However she cannot change anything. This phenomenon Genette links to the dilemma of the 'I' used by the first person narrator (2007)[3]

"Oddly though", Aisha does not give up experiencing an adventure. This time her parents allow her to go to the theatre with a friend's son called David. Rushing to get home, David kissed Aisha in their front garden, yet he never asked her out again. Aisha had to confess*:"But I had had an adventure: my first – ever kiss. I had felt nothing at all, but I became more and more a heroine and borrowed from the library Mills and Boon romances...."* Even with the adventure *"coming true"*, Aisha still can feel nothing. The world around is still alien to her. She has to become a heroine not in the world around but in her own. She has been used to this (Soueif, 1983, p. 33).

Her first meeting with the comprehensive school does not seem that exciting as she thought it was. It was not like *"schools in books like The Girls Annual [where] all seemed jolly good fun"*. She finds it rather "dark" and "cold". A freezing encounter with an unknown space. On her attempt to merge, to blend in silently and belong to the crowd in the school,

> she wasn't about to declare herself a "Mohammedan" or even a "Muslim[4]" for the latter "can be excused from assembly on the grounds of being so, yet, Aisha's attempts at fading into the masses were unsuccessful. (Ibid. 34)

The conversation with Susan, her school- mate unveils other revealing truths. Susan is slight and pale with freckles and red hair as opposed to Aisha who is dark with thick black curly hair. Susan's first question to Aisha is about her origin and Aisha says she is from Egypt. Susan has an idea about Egypt which is that of Pharaohs and crocodiles, where people go to school on camels, live in tents and where one man could have ten wives. She does not care about Aisha's denial of those stereotyped images. The confrontation with Susan conspired to alienate Aisha still further from the world around. One feels Aisha as a fractional woman trapped between her being Egyptian, Arab, and her being British. The notion of the *"fractured [Man] more than blossomed in Arab American novels"*. A major theme recurring throughout these novels is *"...the primacy of the journey to find one's fate, to seek patrimony, to understand who one is…it is a gathering of stained glass, fractured, yet full of light and color"* (Orfalea, 2006, p. 127)[5]**.**

Susan's representation of Egyptians living in tents and riding camels strengthened Aisha's exclusion. It matches the representation of Arabs in Hollywood as ignorant, wealth- thirsty villains found in Shaheen's (2003). It implies that Aisha does not belong where the others do. She does not even speak as they do, though she speaks the same language. The reader could have felt the seeds of what orientalism and the inevitability of becoming a mimic of western manners. The young girl seems to speak out of total ignorance of what Egypt is really like now. The supposedly 'pharaoh' who is answering her question speaks 'Standard English', and her parents are university teachers in Britain. Besides, they live in a Belgian apartment and not in a tent. She does not conform to the stereotype in Susan's 'head- pictures'. Aisha could make friends neither with the white girls, because they *"live in a world of glamour and boyfriends" to which I had no entrée* (Soueif, 1983, p. 37) nor with the dark girls who regarded her *"with suspicious dislike"*.

She is the Egyptian who gets it right. "*The African*, a *'foreigner who is to teach the British their language'* (Ibid.35). There flowers the seed of the identity crisis Aisha is to suffer from and which is to deliver its fruits in the last narrative, *The Nativity.*

Aisha has just to yearn for her sunny days in Egypt feeling an outcast. She has to go back to the world of books, stories and music, "*uninterrupted by cold blasts of air or reality"* in the library. She communed with Catherine Earnshaw, and she has visions of herself as an age "*thirty seductress, smoking cigarette with a score of tall, square- jawed young men"* at her feet. She transcends her imagination to the world of magic, dreams and music to feel more at home. She is *"on familiar ground"* once in the corner café, heading towards the juke box to play some records she bought secretly. *"But I was happy"* she confessed and *"brilliantly alive"*, as though she has been denied life before, or she has felt dead elsewhere (Ibid.38).

In the last situation in the story, Aisha feels *"terror struck and elated"* for she thinks she is about to enter a world of glamour, passion, excitement and adventure. It is the St Valentine day. Aisha decides never to miss it. Yet, she suddenly finds herself facing a seemingly transformed space that was school. It is no longer cold and hostile (Ibid, 1983, p.40). *"It was Vibrant, throbbing"; "a magical place".* She goes dressed as a princess in a black night dress and "*le talon bébé"* with David in her company. Yet, the girls have brought no boys with them. The music is playing yet the dance floor is empty and Aisha confesses bitterly:

> I tried to enjoy the music but it felt dead and flat. Time passed as I was waiting for something to happen while the evening slowly crumbled away and the stars went out one by one. I knew now there was no hidden world, no secret society from which I was bared. There was just nothing. What I have been imagining about St Valentine day turned to a deadly boredom day. (Ibid.41)

Nothing she has dreamt of happened. Her disillusionment seems the greatest as she has to realize that *"there was (just) nothing",* hurled back to reality. The world around her feels meaningless. Aisha's 'easy-made' and ready-made response was merely her decision to quit school. She is to concentrate on *"her studying for her Egyptian prep".* Her mother seems to be more concerned with her father's reaction then with her daughter's decision or its cause. "*Daddy won't speak to you" he is "horribly displeased with you".* Yet, nothing is to change Aisha's mind. "*I'm not going to school anymore"* is her sharp answer. She is

to live her private life with music and books *"impervious to the cold, disapproving atmosphere that pervaded the evening"* (Ibid.42).

Aisha has been presented as the misfit adolescent; dissatisfied with the present that seemed meaningless and non-exciting. She dreamt about the future that she thought an escape. Yet, nothing seemed to please her as she missed every opportunity for living a true thrilling adventure. Her ideal fictional characters: Emma Bovary, Anna Karenina, Catherine Earnshaw and Maggie Tulliver seem to have faced the same ordeals and unrealised dreams. In her interview with Joseph Massad, Soueif spoke about her favourite female characters and argued that the novels in which they feature as protagonists *"are primarily about women, about a woman finding or not finding herself"* (Massad, 1999, p. 88).

James argues that Flaubert's Emma Bovary, the protagonist of his novel *Madame Bovary,* is a victim of the imaginative habit. He labelled her:

> an embodiment of helpless romanticism... A pretty young woman who lives, socially and morally, speaking, in a hole, and who is ignorant, foolish, flimsy, unhappy, takes a pair of lovers by whom she is successively deserted. (Zabel, 1985, p. 477)

This whole dilemma leads her to give up her husband and her child. She dissolves in *"duplicity, debt and despair"* and reaches a tragic end, committing suicide (Ibid. 477). Maggie Tulliver is the heroine in George Eliot's *The Mill on the Floss.* It is the story of a misfortunate young lady considered *"no more than a woman",* domesticated, and 'intellectually limited'. She is oppressed by her father who, though cared about her future, has a biased view of women. Maggie is a disillusioned seductress who ends tragically, dying with her brother (Ashton, 1990). Emily Bronte's Catherine Earnshaw, another character in Aisha's world, is the protagonist of *Wuthering Heights.* She is portrayed as a character having a personality split. Her obsessive love for Mr Heathcliff pictures her as a wild and daring female character. She marries another man, however and dies suffering from a fever. Tolstoy's *Anna Karenina* scrutinises*" the complexities of adulthood and the realities of adultery and marriage".* Anna Karenina a married woman falls in love with Vronsky. This leads to the breakdown of her marriage and to her committing suicide at the end (Hemmings, 1974). The characters with whom Aisha communes and identifies seem to have faced the same fate. Yet Aisha is to know again, transcending space, time and character as alien, and she is sent back to knowing. She could have a clear picture of how

the people, she thought she belonged to, perceived her; a distant alien pharaoh emerging from an exotic land. The present has always been present to her knowing. It has been more than a strange time, demystifying a premature future signifying nothing.

II.2.2. "*The Nativity*": The Duped Femme du Monde

To follow the same procedure as in the previous narratives an attempt at answering some questions, probing the last narrative is necessary. How does Aisha grant herself an adventure to know everything she has not known and 'to really live' what she has been reading in books and what she has been imagining about a tribal Other in Egypt? Why does she transform into a duped character, lacking the knowledge needed to live in a tribal and traditional setting and facing an identity crisis? Aisha seems to turn in the gyres of a double absence, not to belong anywhere; neither to the peasants in her traditional Egypt, considering her a foreigner, nor to England, viewed as an alien. How does Soueif allow a character reversal from a disillusioned, victim of rape, and weak woman to a female character liberated from the trappings of obsessions and desires and free to voice her own narrative, escaping the clutches of an identity crisis? The phenomenon of identity crisis had been discussed earlier in chapter one (p.33).

Narration is led by a mysterious presence. It is an unknown narrator that could be desire, tribal Egypt, an evil presence, death, the unknown, or the 'evil eye'. The strange narrator starts the story describing the opening scene with its striking omnipresence besides Aisha and her husband. The three characters are standing late at night on a rainy May night. Aisha feels delighted by the rain. She does not open her umbrella and welcomes wetness on her head. She is happy. The queer omniscient narrator a kind of *"third eye"* is watching her and her husband as he offers her protection of the umbrella and she refuses. The 'third eye' speaks of a fourth presence joining the couple, calling it a *"third figure",* as they pass-by Cathedral (Soueif, 1983, p.130). It is a fortune teller offering to tell Aisha's fortune for ten francs for the couple are in France now. Aisha abstained to accept the strange woman's services at first then she surrendered to her insistence extending her right hand. "*You carry darkness",* the woman says. "*In season, with the year. In its beginning its end will be. Too close. You should have gone too close".* This might be a prediction of Aisha's death at the end of the year December and beginning of another. Aisha has gone too close to death and danger.

Time travels back to early March. The 'third eye says it has watched Aisha and her husband over the years. They are used to arguing and yet Aisha knew how to be more careful with time (Ibid.131). 'The third eye' says "*she learnt to avoid me",* i.e. it, besides the *"excesses and tears".* This presence could be madness, the freedom to do whatever she wanted. It alludes to the possibility that Aisha has always felt this presence. The 'third eye confirms feeling happy watching Aisha in despair for it is the only condition it could stay close to her. This presence could be weakness, her demon, or Aisha's Mr Hyde (Ibid.132). The malicious presence assures she would not let Aisha rest. It decides to overwhelm Aisha's space and time. *"I would lie low for days lurking in dark corners until she came upon me. I would feel her recognise me. And then she would fight. But she knew".*

The presence has always been there to witness Aisha's actions and portray her as a desperate wife shrinking from her husband's love and striving to have a child. The third eye mocks Aisha's nanny Dada Zeina as she pretends it knows Aisha more than it does. Dada Zeina blames it all on the *"Evil Eye*" for Aisha is *"young and beautiful and fortunate",* so people must envy her. *"She does not love him* (her husband) *as a woman should love her man".* Is it The Evil eye? Is it responsible for her disturbed sexual and marital life? The same feeling one gets reading *The Returning* with Aisha described as an unhappy wife forsaken by her husband. Time and again she had to *"turn her head away and drift the whirling cornices of the walls or the intricate lace of her pillow".* In the most intimate moments with her husband Aisha chooses to be indifferent to him and oblivious to his love. They live like *"strangers".*

Dada Zeina reminds Aisha how primordial a visit to the Saint Sidi Abul Suoud is. The *"master"*, Saif, has left the doctors "*look at him handle him, squeeze him"*. This hurts his *"man's pride",* yet, a child is not to be hoped for. Aisha has done all she could so far. She has to go to the Saint. Dada Zeina says they will pray for him and *"May be the knot will be broken"* (Soueif, 1983, p.132).

So Aisha decides to go to the Saint to conceive a child, refusing to stand as a childless woman after years of marriage. Her love for her husband fading, she decides to do something about it (Ibid.134).

The place is a *desert* in "Masr Atiqua" (Ancient Egypt). Aisha appears to the black clad Bedouin ladies as a *"foreigner*" with her *"beige trousers", "gym shoes"* and her *"jacket and cotton shirt".* The echo of the Other locale vs. foreigner seems to loom large. She

'failed' to belong where her British 'friends' did, crystallised as a stereotype, living in tents and riding camels in *1964*, and now she is labelled a foreigner at home.

Dada Zeina decides she and Aisha will visit a presence first before going to the Saint. Aisha does not object. She accepts to go the Saint to have the "knot broken" i.e. to allow herself have a child and may be restore back, her husband's fading love. She has to change the present, so, she obeys her nanny.

The place is a *desert*, with a tent, musicians playing drums and tambourines. Men with turbans and women with galabiyas are smoking *"hashish"*. Does not it remind Aisha of the *Arabian Nights*, a book she read when a child? It looks like the oriental souk with exotic images of Bedouins in deserts[6]. The same representation Susan had thinking of Egypt with people living in tents and riding camels. It is the first time Aisha has the opportunity to experience such an exotic and dreamy setting looking like a foreigner, though a "native", or a "journalist" like the women in the desert decided to call her. Aisha decides to stay in the tent, to watch the presence where women are dancing in trances, their hair loose. The children are watching their *"mothers in abandon"* (Ibid.135). Aisha seems to ponder about the whole scene. She finds strange the fact that she should have read about the whole scene in books as a child and as a grown up. She dismissed it and she thought about the place as merely a decor of a remote past that now is facing her for real (Ibid135-137).

Aisha 'knows' about what she sees now through books. She used to read books when a child. 'Third eye' returns to address Aisha and remind her of her childhood:

> How strange. Yes how strange that you should have read about it; that as a child you should have brooded over pictures in big, fat books. While I waited. All those years I waited. And then you dismissed it all. You decided it was a world that had happened long ago, long ago in far-off places. By what right did you decide? With what knowledge? And now? Will you see that it is here? That all the time it was here? On your door step waiting for you? (Ibid135-137)

This could entail that the mysterious presence alludes to tribal Egypt, a demon that has accompanied Aisha throughout her life to prove what she read about was true, fantasy, the world of magic she has longed to belong to. She considers it as a space of vagueness, a desert she got lost in. The third eye urges Aisha to believe what the strange man is doing to the young unconscious woman trying to chase away her *"demon, watch, watch"*. It knows what Aisha is thinking when she hesitates to identify Farag. She hesitates if he is a man or

a boy then she decides he is a man. Yet, she doesn't seem to have believed in a world she has merely read about, known from her class mates in England or from some people like the Vicar speaking about *"Aliens coming from alien places"*. So, her knowledge of the scene has confined her tribal Egypt to dwell in her imagination. Now she is here. She has to confirm what she has imagined and what she has read about; the exotic land of the remote Other. She is to live the whole thing for *"real"*. She is in a desert, in a tent, hearing tambourines and watching women dancing in a trance, and later she will visit a Saint and might conceive a child. Is not it wealthy material for her imagination; the old longing for adventure she cherished in her childhood *Knowing* and teenage*1964*? She has been granted a chance to 'test' her imagination; to really live what she merely has read about.

In the same tent Aisha meets a man named Farag who is used to coming to presences. The man appears in a pair of cheap black leather trousers tucked into plastic boots and *"his hair is frizzy and brown"*. He offers Aisha to accompany her to see the Saint. *"You shouldn't really wander round here alone. But this is my patch – if you're with me no one can bother you"* (Ibid.138-139). So, besides the vulgar muscles he had making his strength show off, he knows the place perfectly well. He informs Aisha that he is a butcher and she accepts the offer, shaking his hand. She does not seem to think about what *"her husband will say, making a friend with a butcher and squatting in the dust"* like those women dressed in black. She just overlooks her nanny's warnings begging her not to go with Farag. Despite her nurse's warning: *"we'll have nothing to do with him"*, Aisha does not seem convinced of giving up her visit to another Saint with Farag. In a pilfered moment of day dreaming, Aisha stands watching the butcher, while the women are dancing. She thinks about Farag and the way he looks, noticing that he does not look like men she is used to knowing. She recognises that she knows so much about art than she does about real life that she constantly ignores (Ibid.142).

So Aisha feels like quoting poetry seeing Farag and being lost to the rhythm of music in the tent. She has to remind herself that what she sees is 'reality', real life and not art. It is not a story she has read in a book. Farag is not an Antar, the Arabian knight on a horse. Again Aisha continuously calls back her imagination whenever she tries to translate what she sees in the language of reality. She relies on the same over self-centeredness to perceiving the outside world. Her nurse's question to her is pertinent and conclusive to sum up what has just been suggested: *"Don't you know anything?"*(Ibid.144).

Then Aisha enters the Saint's hiding behind strong Farag who makes way for her and her nanny through the crowd outside the tent. The room is full of candles and Aisha has to talk to Set Habiba the Saint's wife for *"no one could approach him except through her, for she had the key to his heart"* (Ibid. 148-149). This is what her nurse Zeina knows and says. Aisha has to confess to Sit Habiba; to tell about her ordeal, her desire to have a child, a grille is separating her from the Saint while she is talking. She confesses that she is no longer in love with her husband, yet she desired a child strongly (Ibid. 150).

Aisha seems reluctant following the pauses she produces in her speech. She does not intend to have sexual relations with her husband. She does not love him anymore. Yet, she wants a child because people say so. The husband and society's authority is omnipresent. She does not know exactly what she wants. She should not leave her husband who she loves no more only because he is sound for her and he is a good man. Besides she desires a child so the only way is to stay with her husband. "*The child will make her safe"*, that is what the others say and want and she just has to abide by the rules. After Aisha and her nurse pray for The Saint and cite verses from the Koran next to his Shrine they are shepherded by Farag again out of the courtyard of the mosque. Farag does not miss the opportunity to praise Aisha as being a *"lady*" because *"the women there are all peasants"*. So she deserves according to him, to go to better presences*" more classy"* (Ibid.151), *"In flats...real luxury and stuff"*. He promises to look after her for it is *"his quarter"*. No one can come near her (Soueif, 1983, p.152). Besides, Saturday, the day he proposes, will coincide with a festival celebrating the Nativity of Saint Sidi Ali the patron Saint of his quarter; the slaughter house. Despite her nurse's strong opposition she expresses questioning Aisha *"do you have to see everything? How many days are there in a life time, then?"* Aisha insists on Farag's accompanying her to her car. He is to show her the slaughter house. Aisha is portrayed by her nurse as an *"obstinate",* who once she's got an idea in her head, no one can stop her. She longed for adventures when a child and a teenager, so here is another chance to live 'a real' adventure as an adult. Farag the butcher might symbolize a hero she has encountered in a story. A kind of Shatter Hassan, a Mr Heathcliff in *Wuthering Heights* or the Tarzan in her childhood dreams. This time she is a '*grown up lady'* the seductress (Ibid.154) she has always dreamt to be. She is with Farag 'the strong Mr knows -all' who will show her places she has never seen before. He will grant her an adventure besides *"he had not taken his eyes off [her]"* (Ibid.153).

Dada Zeina expresses her blatant disapproval of Aisha's behaviour and her knowing people of *"Farag's type"*. She thinks he is not a protector but *"as some sort of parasite; an opportunist grabbing a ride in a posh car"*. She could not help reminding Aisha of her husband but in vain. Dada Zeina knows that Aisha has never known "Farag's type" *"he is not like the men you know. He's not like those foreigners or the boys at school or at the Gezira-Club. You don't know anything about his type"*. Aisha's reply to such objections is simply that Farag is a "*pleasant and polite man"* and that he was thrilled to offer them protection especially for her a "*lady"* unlike the *"peasants"*. Besides *"Farag saw the car an everything....."* Her nurse's angry answers *"you don't know anything, do you? I swear by god that you don't know a single thing"* do not seem to mean much to her. Aisha wants the world to know:

> let things come to a head. Let them all know she would do as she pleased and there was no harm in it. Let them know there were more ways of being in this world than the way they chose. And let them know she was not content with the way mapped out for her (Ibid.155).

Aisha wants to be her own self; she has been searching for it in stories and in her imagination, in a world of her own. So that could be one reason why she came to the presence. She strives to speak to her demon like *"millions who speak to their demons with more familiarity than she did to her husband"*. She wants to keep that demon happy. Is it 'more real' than her husband? Is this demon a symbol of a self she has kept looking for and appeasing for years? Has it been a journey from imagination, fiction and the world of fantasy or the unreal to a 'real world" where demons Saints and presences still exist? And how about the people with whom she is now? *"They are ignorant, primitive people. What's new?" "Everyone knows about that. Read any text of social anthropology"* (Ibid.156). They are mere strangers, foreigners. They are opposite and inferior to the people she knows.

Aisha asks her friend Mimi to accompany her and yet the latter excused herself for she could not go out without her husband. So Aisha decides to go alone. *The third eye* appears again when Aisha is driving to the Nativity of Sidi Ali. It is close to her in the car while she is alone. It gets closer to her while she is alone. It keeps watching her. She gets nearer to it while she is getting nearer to the Nativity. On her way to meet Farag on Saturday, Aisha is described again facing a strange setting. Her car parked near the police station seems an alien machine, sleek and shining. It sits among the *"squatting camels the piles of*

hay and junk", the smell of sewers and slaughter. The shirt trails of camels, buffalo, sheep and goats, horses, mules, donkeys and the odd dog (Ibid.157). She feels out of place, clad in a western black dress and a *"woman on her own"*. Yet, Aisha thinks it is a plain black dress. She thinks it *"foolish to borrow one of her nurse's long galabiyas",* women peasants long black dress. As she draws nearer the festival, she tries to avoid the *"deafening sound of drums"* and the thrash of men and women in black gown. Farag comes as it has been planned (Ibid.158). She thinks that everything is to go on well in Farag's territory. The butcher makes no effort as he creeps smoothly among the mass of people in the festival making way for her. Aisha feels very thrilled, living an adventure 'for real' and watching men dance in loose gowns.

"This is wonderful". She feels. Among the wonderful decor Aisha has been attracted to in the festival is a woman "*who wore a man's striped galabiya and her legs were crossed"* (Ibid.15.). *"On her feet were thick black men's socks and golden mules and her head was turbaned...."* (Ibid.159). The woman is smoking. Farag forbids Aisha from smoking as she asks him to, watching the woman in the turban, dressing like a man. Dressing up as a man for Isabelle Eberhardt meant feeling strong and protected in the Algerian South. *"I have donned the cloak of the restless wanderer"*, she contended (Ablel-Jaoued, 1993, p. 106). *"Dressing up as the Other, [meaning both as a man and as an Oriental] becomes a second nature"*(Ibid. 111).

The 'woman-man' Aisha sees is different*: "She's a strong woman"*, Farag answers. He goes further explaining to Aisha:

> She just is. She runs her own business. She does as she pleases and she'll never surrender to a man. Even if she chooses to marry someone, she'll hold the right to divorce in her own hands. She's tough. I've seen her beating men up. No one dares cross her (Soueif, 1983, p.161).

So, this is Farag's representation of a *"strong woman"*. A *"strong woman"* is the one who dresses like a man, runs her own business, as she pleases and does not surrender to a man. It is Aisha's representation as well as she tries to do as she pleases going out with strange man not caring about her husband. What is important for her is *"to know everything",* to experience everything and to experience an adventure. How about Farag's image of Aisha? She is a lady not a peasant. She is attractive as he could not set his eyes off her. However, does she fit into the picture of a strong woman? She drives a car. She is

there alone with men. Will she surrender to him? Is she to dwell within the confined circle of the weak woman? She surrenders to the temptation of smoking hashish: *"and where else would she ever get a chance to try it?" ".... So much talk of hashish, and she had never had a chance to try it". "She longed to try it and now she had"* (Ibid.162).

As Aisha moves to be shepherded by Farag (Ibid.163), she feels hot, and *"didn't feel very confident or steady"*, after a puff of hashish. Farag has always been there, though. "*He took her arm and led her through the crowd".* She seems to take his words and him for granted. *"I'm an expert. I know what I'm doing".* These are his words, since childhood. (Ibid.164). Again Farag puts one hand on her back and another on her arm. He feels he is familiar to her, or does he prefer women who surrender to men?

Aisha carries on discovering guided and 'protected' by Farag. We meet her on her way to the Saint trotting the tombs. She has just known Farag and she thinks she *"had learned so much".* However Aisha starts to feel uneasy having to answer the butcher's questions about her husband and why she has not told him she is married. The third eye feels Aisha's uneasiness and predicts something harmful is to happen as she asks Farag to come back to where the crowd is. It says:"*Now, of course, looking back, I see that she must have felt something"*. It addresses her as *"My poor, my precious darling"*. Farag refuses to let her go as she asks him to. He induces her to fall and bump her head against a tomb, then he rapes Aisha. She tries to resist him, but he rapes her in the name of God (Ibid.165.166.168).

The last scene features Aisha on the operating table facing death. *"No one knows yet whether her child will live".* She trusted Farag to protect her and show her what she has never seen before and what she has never known before, yet Farag raped her and made her surrender as a weak woman. In December the third eye says that it will wait for Aisha again. It knows this could last for years. Yet it is sure Aisha will and must come back to it. *"Aisha. She always does".* Aisha indeed came back in all the stories that built up the whole collection viewed throughout her consciousness and named after her.

Conclusion:

As compared to some female characters in Soueif's *Aisha*, Lawrence's female characters were portrayed as rather 'strong and non-submissive women' opposing women's portrayal as men's sex objects. Instances from his fiction works are: Ursula in *Women in Love*,

March in *The Fox,* Hannel in *The Captain's Doll*, Harriet in *Kangaroo*, and Kate in *The Plumed Serpent.*

The major characteristic of this last narrative is Soueif's opposing of Aisha and Zeina as characters highlighting a controversial relation between both of them, each considering the other as different . Aisha has been portrayed as rather 'naive' and completely out of place as regards the wider culture of her homeland [Egypt] that she knows very little about as opposed to Zeina. The character of Dada Zeina pictures the traditional Egyptian woman as opposed to that of Aisha, 'the bourgeois intellectual'. Zeina orally transmits narratives to her protégé Aisha against the latter's parents will. She is the only character in the whole collection to be granted two narratives: *Her Man* and *The Wedding of Zeina*. Zeina recounts the story of her forced marriage and having to chase her co-wife[7] as compared to Aisha's narratives telling the story of a comfortable life between Egypt and England. Aisha figures as a 'foreigner' in the desert in her 'European dress', whereas Zeina appears in a black *galabiya* and *tarha*. Zeina knows what 'butchers' mean, as she came from a family of butchers, however Aisha does not and does not want to heed any of her nanny's pieces of advice and therefore, she gets raped.

> The [somewhat melodramatic] consequences of Aisha's attempt to move outside of the cultural norms of her class suggest that the amalgamation of these worlds [hers and Zeina's], cannot as Aisha hoped, be transcended in the pursuit of her own individual freedom. As such, Soueif's text offers a critique of Aisha's world view. (Narrain, 2005, p. 506)

Soueif herself confirms that the earliest stories she wrote, *The Wedding of Zeina* and *Her Man*, which were later published in the collection of short stories *Aisha* (1983), were tales that *"[presented] Egypt or the East in terms that perhaps the West is comfortable with: as a world that is very traditional, very close to magic, ritualistic, a little brutal, and very sensual – our world as perceived by aficionados of the Arabian Nights"* (Soueif 1999: 86). She further admits: *"that was the Eastern world that the West was comfortable with and wanted to read about"* (Soueif, 1999, p. 86). And yet, in her later novels Soueif demystifies this portrait casting her female protagonist as agents of their own fate.

Edward Said wrote about *"a new literature of the Arab world"* describing Soueif's *Aisha*. He pinpointed to the crisis lying beneath the surface of a meeting between the

traditional Egyptian abysses in the collection. He compares Marianne's character to Zeina's. The first starts as a bourgeois doll ending into a life of *"dull domesticity"* and Zeina as clever and struggling to win her man back. He considers *Aisha* as *"a cycle of experiences, from childhood to marital estrangement to death; the lives of friends, relatives, lovers, family retainers"* that mingle with Aisha's (London Review of Books, 1983).

According to Said, Soueif's works enjoy an *"extraterritoriality"* that they could attain through the English language. The events in *Aisha* lurk not far from revolutions and wars, for example, the 1952 revolution and the 1967 war. "*Instead of politics we are given the strange dislocations that are caused by that unresolved tension between what is traditionally Muslim and Egyptian and what is Western and modern"* (London Review of Books, 1983). *Aisha*'s story theme is about a woman "*neither entirely Arab nor entirely English"*. Her stories are characterized by their *"distance and un-fulfillment"* which contribute to their unusual appeal. He believes the appeal in Soueif's story is sustained by a kind of "*white writing"* that emphasizes less the queer and shocking material she uses than its *"controlled matter-of-factness"* (Ibid. 1983)

Soueif's protagonist Aisha has been presented in *1964* as a misfit foreigner who seemed to belong nowhere. She venerated the future hoping it would cater for the unusual, the exciting and the world of magic she strived to live in. However the world of enchantment turned to nothing. A picture of each female character Aisha has been influenced by in her adolescence was also drawn. They seem to have led an unhappy life and to have missed the sense of longed for adventurous life they dreamt about.

In the main Aisha in *The Nativity* had gone to visit the Saint's shrine to conceive a child although she loved her husband no more. The same coldness and emptiness she felt having to recollect instances of her marital life in *The Returning*. The visit to the Saint allowed her to see and experience things she had never seen or done before, so, her curiosity was aroused the most having to have a guide to make her know more and discover an exotic tribal world. The world that she had read about in her childhood and adolescence she was to live for real. She took Farag the butcher for her protector and she trusted him as a courageous strong man who cared to satisfy her curiosity and make her experience the unusual. Farag induced her to surrender to her desires of watching exotic festivals and

souks and also converted her from what she fancied an 'emancipated lady' going out alone at night with strange men, and doing as she pleases to a duped ‘weak woman’ and a mere victim of rape. The butcher is different from her imagined Shatter Hassan.

II.2.3. Aisha Echoed in Her Fellow Female Protagonists’ Tales:

Aisha looks like other female characters written by Arab female writers. In the fiction of Nawal El Saadawi and Leila Abouzeid, like in Soueif’s, the authors emphasize the role of women in relation to *“authority”, “tradition”,* and *“modernity”*. Their female protagonists are spared the space of expressing their struggle against personal crises and social dilemmas (Babana-Hampton, 2002, p. 23-24). In El Saadawi’s novel *Woman at Point Zero* the protagonist considers her *“individuality”* as the core of her life. She unveils society’s mishaps and short comings in relation to the way she defines her *“selfhood”* (Ibid. 25-26). In Abouzeid’s novel *Year of the Elephant* individuality is not focused upon society. Both characters Firdaus and Zahra use their voices to criticize society’s entrapments and limitations. Their narratives concentrate on their *“self”* and *“feminity”* as the primordial cause of their narratives.

Woman at Point Zero tells the story of Firdaus a woman whose narrative is recounted by a female narrator. It is a biography of an imprisoned woman sentenced to death. Firdaus’s story is of a woman who suffered child abuse by her uncle. She became a prostitute. The narrator is a witness to Firdaus’s story as she undergoes researches on women *“who suffered degrees of neurosis”*. Firdaus features as a victim of male oppression, belonging to a lower class. Despite this much degraded portrait, the narrator describes:

> This woman, despite her misery and despair, evoked in all those who, like me, witnessed the final moments of life, a need to challenge and to overcome those forces that deprive human beings of their rights to live, to love and to real freedom (El Saadawi, 1983, p. iv).

Zahra’s story in *The Year of the Elephant* is unlike Firdaus’s . Zahra is not depicted as a passive female character but as an intrepid woman joining guerrilla fighters during colonization. She is described in relation to her male counterparts not in relation of authority but in negotiating situation. Although Zahra divorces, her story reveals the

possibility of a *"spiritual awakening and maturation"*. Unlike Firdaus, who sees the spiritual and religious realms as male dominated spheres symbolizing male authority, Zahra sees in them a path to salvation and self-realization. She attempts at a redefinition of *"the intimate space of her identity"* as an entity that mixes with the *"autonomous sphere of God/Truth, an act that liberates her from the constricting and partial institutional laws that serve the male's interests"*. Zahra's concern is not material needs concerning her ability to procure food and shelter after her divorce but her integrity and spirituality (Babana-Hampton, 2002, p. 33).

West of Jordan (2003) is a novel by Laila Halabi who is the daughter of a Jordanian father and an American mother. The story recounts the experience of four female cousins of Arab descent with their fathers: Nawal, Khadidja, Sorraya, and Hala. The first has a rather affectionate relation with her Palestinian father. However Khadidja's is an abusive drunkard father. Money is all that matters to him as his wife takes the lead when it comes to power and decision. She describes him as follows:

> Sometimes my father loves my mother- and the rest of us- so much that he becomes a kissing and hugging machine. Sometimes, though, he is an angry machine that sees suspicious moves in every breath. But most of the time he is sad; his thoughts are somewhere I cannot visit Sorraya's case is totally different. She lives in Los Angeles and is very independent and outspoken. Her father is a "disempowered man". (Bosch, 2008, p. 107)

Hala's story is of an orphan who comes back to Jordan for her mother's funeral. Her father wants her to stay there and not to go back to The States. These times were different from the times when her mother was alive (Bosch, 2008:108) and her father had to respect her mother's wishes. By the end after his daughter struggles to get her freedom of decision back negotiating with her father, he became a *"new father"* ad decides to let his daughter shape her future by her own hands. *"I was to replace my mother with a husband. I was to stay in Jordan forever. Marry […] have children, be someone else's burden"* (Halabi, 2003, p. 45)

Faqir's writing could also be compared to Soueif's in that the former also expresses herself in English and not Arabic, she has lived in Britain and Jordan, and is labeled a diasporic and hybrid writer. Faqir's *My Name is Selma* emphasizes the migrant experience. Selma escapes her village of Hima in Jordan because she goes pregnant without getting married. She gives birth to her girl child in prison. The child is taken to an orphanage for illegitimate children. Selma spends eight years under protection in prison. A British man arranges her transportation from a Lebanese convent to England where she works as a seamstress. She gets married to John, a British university lecturer and got a son she called Imran. As she begins to take control over her life and history, Selma returns to Hima to get her daughter back. Yet she discovers that her daughter had been killed as an act of revenge by the people of her village. Selma (Bibizadeh, 2013) Selma is shot dead as her brother and uncle discover that she had returned home. Abu-Lughod believes that women are to appear as 'honourable' as long as they 'give up' their sexuality. A woman would be labeled modest if she did not attempt to attract men either by her dress or behavior. This woman would remain so even on the day of her marriage. *"The woman who does not is called a 'slut' or a 'whore' "* (Nash, 2007, p.152). Like Soueif, Faqir opted for fractured narratives rather than linear ones. She explains this phenomenon in her interview with Claire Chambers:

> More tragic and more beautiful than the whole, and perhaps it will capture a larger chunk of the truth if it's told from different perspectives […] The source of this may be The Arabian Nights, because it contains a changing narrative: you have one story, within a story, within a story, within a story. You don't get a resolution quickly, and perhaps I took something from that (2011, p.65).

Like Ahdaf Soueif, Aboulela is a migrant writer writing migrant novels. The same as Soueif's, Aboulela's protagonists confront nostalgia in the host country. In Nash's words, Aboulela's novels work *"through many of the usual exile's routines"* (2002, p.30). In *The translator* nostalgia is introduced when Sammar longs for a sunny Sudan and a blue Nile. She also misses home longing for the religious elements such as azan and her use of Quranic verses in her everyday speech. Azan was the thing she misses the most in England to the point that *"sometimes she fancied she heard it in the rumble of central-heating pipes, in a sound coming from a neighbouring flat"* (Aboulela 1999, p. 145). Unlike Soueif's characters, Aboulela's characters do not look for ways to assimilate in the host

country for their spiritual identity related to Islam is the real home for them. Sammar grows to the awareness that *"home ... is a state of mind rather than a geographical location"* (Steiner 2008, p. 23). When Rae converts to Islam she finds in him the man she has always searched for and also a sense of family for her and for her son. For some of Soueif's female and, indeed male, characters the main hurdle to their union in love is traditions related to a different social back ground of the lovers. Yet, for Aboulela's Sammar, the main obstacle coming between her and Rae is religion as she refuses to marry him because he was Christian and she was a Muslim (2004, p.74-75). Mc Ewan joins this understanding stating that:

> despite Sammar's human weaknesses, her Islam remains the dominant force in her choice between earthly and heavenly pleasures … we find that she will not sell her faith to a man, no matter how much she loves him. (2001, p.12)

Minaret also includes a love story between Najwa and Tammmar her employer's young brother. What makes them fall in love is mostly their devotion to their faith. Najwa cannot marry Tammar because of class divide. She does not become desperate because of this and longs to go on a pilgrimage to Mecca with the money she receives from Tammar's mother. One comes to understand that spiritual love wins the battle back at the end as romantic love recedes.

Myriad scenes depict Amal in Randa Abdel-Fattah's *Does My Head Look Big in this*? (2005), as a misnomer in an Australian society particularly scenes that confront her with white Anglo-Saxons. Soueif's Aisha goes through the same experience with Susan at school in *1964.* Here is another conversation, like the one between Aisha and Susan that exacerbates racial and ethnic differences between two teenagers, Amal and Tia, seemingly from the same social background at school:

> Why don't you just fucking leave our country and go back to some desert cave where you belong? "I stand over her, my heart drumming in my chest", Amal says. This is my country and if you ever forget it again I'm going to rip your head off! (Abdel-Fattah 2005, p. 232)

Amal desperately tries to explain what happens around her to her own self first. She admits being unable to cry when feeling sad because she would still think of what other people say about her. She declares: *"I wince every time Ms Walsh says the word 'massacre' with the word 'Islamic', as though these barbarians somehow belong to my Muslim*

community" (Abdel-Fattah 2005, p.237). Aisha will be compared to her fellow 'Western protagonists later in chapter three under the tites :*Soueif's Female Characters Echoed in Lawrence's* "*The Plumed Serpent"* and Gordimer's "*Something Out There"* (p. 181-183) and *Soueif's Female Characters Echoed in Fielding and Woolf's Works* (201-201).

II.2.4. The Structure of the Narratives Emerging from a Palimpsest

It is also important to discuss the structure of the narratives as an amalgamation of texts principally, or interextuality[8] web that could be applied to genres, namely the short story and the novel in that she relied on the stories of the life of one character to deliver one narrative uniting the whole work as an intertextual fabric. Allen contends:

> the essential thrust of the structuralist project seems to be toward the intertextual, in that it denies the existence of unitary objects and emphasizes their systematic and relational nature, be they literary texts or other artworks (Allen, 2000, p. 96).

Genette produces a theory of *"transtextuality",* which Allen explains as *"intertextuality from the viewpoint of structural poetics"* (Ibid. 98). Perceiving literature as essentially *"transtextual"* or a second-degree construct created out of shards of other texts that become palimpsests . Allen points out that:

> palimpsests suggest layers of writing and Genette's use of the term is to indicate literature's existence in `the second degree,' its non-original rewriting of what has already been written (Ibid. 108).

Particularly in this category, Genette is concerned with intended and self-conscious relations between texts, especially in terms of specific genres*, "I mean a category of texts which wholly encompass certain canonical (though minor) genres such as pastiche, parody, travesty, and which also touches upon other genres-probably all genres"* (Allen, 2000, p.108). One reads *Aisha* as a work of art, following an archeology that presupposes an unearthing of its layers; a collection of intertwined short stories that read as a novel. An analysis of these layers involves what Genette would call the 'generic reactivation', meaning a consideration of the contribution of each genre in the construction of another, as Bakhtin's discussion of how other genres participate to shape the discourse of the novel, allowing a dialogism of genres (Genette, 1997, p.210-12-13). Genre transformation throughout history determines both its finite and infinite nature as described by Rosmarin

in *The Power of Genre* (1984): *"...a finite schema capable of infinite suggestion"*(Rosmarin, 1984, p. 44).

Malak spoke about the quality of palimpsest texts Soueif produced from a linguistic perspective. He indicated that while the writer and her characters' first language is Arabic, besides the setting and action, the reader could sense the power of translation forged into a hybrid text[9] resulting from a fusion of English and Arabic. This results in the *"original text, once existing in the writer's mind, is non-existent"* (Malak, 2002, p. 161), and therefore emerging from palimpsests as new constructs replacing old ones. The notion of hybrid texts was of a great concern to Said as he labelled them texts *"mixed in some way"*, encompassing worlds of exile, emigration, and crossing of boundaries (Yacoubi, 2005, p. 202).

II.2.5. Soueif's Choice of Themes and Characters in Her Fiction Works: A Complementary Vision of The Other:

Before concluding, it is relevant to review Soueif's choice of characters and themes in her fiction and nonfiction works in order to compare them to *Aisha*, *The Sandpiper* and *The Map of Love* and also to focus on her perception of the Other, especially the woman, in these works.

Soueif's protagonists are female characters who are in constant search for their own voices and the control of their narratives (Darraj, 2003, p.2). She focuses on the condition of the Egyptian women in particular and of women in general what the Tunisian psychologist Mahmoud Dhaouadi calls *"the Other underdeveloped" (*Dhaouadi, 2002, quoted in Trabelsi, 2003, p. 3). She rejected the stereotyped picture of Arab women in particular forged as *"sexed social beings", "not self-defined autonomous beings"* (Ibid. 10). So, through her writings, Soueif aims at adopting values such as female emancipation, the right to education which may seem western but they are there to *"transcend geographical boundaries".* She means to construct an image of the 'modern Arab woman', forging her own way neither by submission to *"neo-colonial hegemony nor to "neo-colonialist xenophobia"* (Ibid.10). Some of her critics blamed her for choosing English as a means to express herself in writing. Yet, Soueif did not have to apologize neither for not writing in Arabic nor for writing about themes that she thought important. Here is what she had to say about her choice:

> It is very difficult to explain that this was not a choice, that you work with the tools that are best for you…I don't know why, but the fact is that I write better in English than I do in Arabic. (Brooks, p. 1999)

She asserts that writing in English gives her more freedom because she can use English in literary terms better than she can use Arabic, playing with the language as easy as she can. She insists that the question of language arises because, principally, of the *"sexually frank"* passages in her books. For Soueif, it does not make any difference because when her works are translated or to quote her. Yet, when translated to Arabic, Soueif would not go without those passages (Wassef, 1998). When asked about how free she is coming from a rich and vibrant tradition as an Arab and ironically called British novelist, Soueif replies:

> I think I am, yes, an Egyptian novelist writing in English. What else could I be? And I guess I am as free as anyone can be. I write about the things that I care about, the things that I want to explore. I'm not aware of any particular constrains that come with being an Arab woman and a novelist. (Ahmede, 2007, p.2)

Writing in the language of the colonizer has also been a reason for criticizing writers like Soueif and Fadia Faqir as she chose English as a medium for commenting (Bibizadeh, 2013, p. 1). This also has been deemed as the cause of perpetually condemning Arab women as conforming to the image of oppressed entities (Abdo,2009). Adopting English represents an act of resistance on Faqir's part to disentangle 'the burden of representation' and writing back to one's own culture (Chris, 2012, p. 23). Geoffrey Nash posits that:

> compared with other writers of the Anglo-Arab encounter, [Faqir's] writing is distinctive, both in its conscious connection to Arabic narrative forms, which she co-opts in an innovative manner into her English fiction, and for her contextualization of that encounter alongside a gendering of the Arab nation. (2007, p.113)

Faqir expresses her view on the positioning of Arab women and their labeling as victims. She contends that Arab women do not escape the label of "a minority" even at home. They are considered second hand natives, *"they feel invisible, misrepresented and reduced"*. They are also subject to Orientalism at home joining the same Western Orientalist views. Arab men perceive them as inferior entities.

Arab women are treated as a minority in most Arab countries. *"They feel invisible, misrepresented and reduced"*. Perceived as second rate natives, they are subjected to a particular kind of internal Orientalism. Native males assume a superior position to women, misrepresent them and in most cases fail to see them. This parallels the Orientalist attitudes with which Westerners have treated the Arab world for so long. *"Arab women are therefore hidden behind a double layered veil"* (Nash, 2007, p.120-125).

Hassan adds on the reception of Arab writers in English by audiences:

> Within each context of reception, an Anglophone Arab writer is seen as a representation of the Arab world. He or she is, therefore a minor writer in relation to two literary traditions and the limitations of her or his minor status (the representational burden of knowing that everything personal or private is always political and collective), as well as the opportunities it affords to transform language and genre, to forge a new discourse, and to expand the cultural worldview of society. (2011, p.164-65)

Soueif's works were criticised by her opponents in the 'Arab world' as not belonging to Arab literature at all, casting her as a foreigner. Besides they were labelled "immoral" and *"an insult to Arab women"* (Wassef, 1998, p. 4). Speaking about 'Arab women' and their sexuality openly and discussing other marital issues, induced more and more critiques of her works as containing harmful ideas which are imposed and geared towards the destruction of the *"Arab social fabric"* (Trabelsi, 2003, p. 4). Soueif demonstrates in her fiction and non-fiction that she is both an Egyptian and an English woman bearing the burden of a hybrid writer.

Soueif's female characters are born anew out of an old womb to a lighted space not to sink into a lethargic slumber but to face mighty challenges in order to deserve their new picture. This is to write and become 'masters of discourse' and to erase labels that feminist writers deplored.

The Sandpiper is the second collection of short stories that Soueif had produced. What is prominent and interesting about this literary production is that in it Soueif reverses the situation of the Egyptian young girl or woman claiming for her narrative, trapped between East and West. She creates Western female characters that are also denied their narratives, caught in a foreign Eastern setting. For instance, the unnamed British female protagonist in the short story *The Sandpiper*--that lends its title to the whole collection—recounts the deterioration of her marriage with an Egyptian. She tells about instances of her unhappy union with him (Soueif, 1996, p. 25) .She used to write stories, yet later she becomes unable to produce words on paper. Unlike Aisha, she surrenders to her fate. This might mean that the writer struggles to demonstrate that the West had deprived the East of its narrative for so many years, leaving it tarnished with exotic images and an orientalism that contributed only in the belittling of the Eastern character. Soueif seems to say that now comes the time for the East to tell its own 'true' narrative. This also seems to confirm Soueif's power for empathy with both Eastern and western characters. A thorough study of this work is to be presented in chapter two of this research work.

In the Eye of the Sun is Soueif's first novel. In her first long work Soueif portrays Asya, like Aisha, enduring her Westernised Egyptian husband's strong grip until she decides to set herself free. She comes to the awareness that she has been a mere puppet in the hands of her parents and her husband who loves her only *"when I behave the way he wants me to behave"* (Soueif, 1993, p. 299). She breaks up with all the ties imposed on her though she has to face a list of ordeals. She endures her American lover's orientalist representation. Again Gerald Stone wants to shape Asya's narrative, matching the exotic images he has of an Eastern princess (Davis, 2003; & Soueif, 1993).

The Map of Love[10] is Soueif's most known second novel. In it she merges the historical with the fictional. Amin Malak described the novel as a *"tour de force of revisionist metahistory of Egypt in the twentieth century"* (2002, p. 141). She 'borrows' real people from history to feature in her novel meeting their fictional cousins. [11]

Soueif hated reading stories where male characters are meant to be Egyptian but they are not. Mr Rochester in *Jane Eire* and Mr Heathcliff in *Wuthering Heights* are, she thinks, kind of Eastern men: *"*tall, dark, handsome, enigmatic, a stranger, proud, aloof". Such characters, when one gets close to them will discover their *"depths of sensitivity and empathy and passion and tenderness. That is what Soueif made of Sharif pasha. She*

created a genuine Egyptian man" (Burnett, 2000, p.102). The choice of her characters stems from her self confidence and courage, creativity and imagination as a writer.

For Soueif coming from a part of the world where *"social reality takes a primary role over art"* does not entail that the artists should not write about what they feel most passionately about (Ahmede, 2007, p.2). Although such writers transform problems into themes they discuss relying on their imagination. The particularity of such themes or places of the world do not deny, according to Soueif, that *"in the end, there is a common humanity that unites us all"* (Ibid. 2). The unique experience that literature grants its readers dilates their reading scope to make an Egyptian or an Algerian read, enjoy, and empathise with works written by Indians, Americans or Russians.

Soueif has also written myriad articles for British and Egyptian newspapers like *The Guardian* and *Al Ahram.* She wrote about the oppressed people in the Arab world especially in Palestine and Iraq. She also fought in writing, for the co-existence between Arab Christians and Muslims. She made several trips to Palestine and Iraq to see for herself the suffering of the people there and to transmit as true a picture she can to her readers. Reading *Mezzaterra*, one would have the best instances of such sufferings and an idea about what dangers some writers, like Soueif are likely to encounter for the sake of telling the truth (Soueif, 2004, p. 29-62).

When asked about the idea that art is a form of *"self-protection"* returned to the artist and to the world as a personal treasure, Soueif replied that people who are engaged in art are responsible of something that has its own autonomy. Besides they bear the responsibility of the most valuable thing in the world which is culture (March, 2005, p. 3).

Soueif's *Cairo My City, Our Revolution* (2012) also possesses the same dual portrait as her other works. At times it recounts the happenings of the eighteen days revolution with tear gas, bullets and baltagis (criminals) attacking demonstrators who wanted to keep the demonstration peaceful. Both women and men were arrested. Women were raped and tortured. At other times one reads about Soueif's past and family. Mostly, the book concerns her exceptional love relation with her city Cairo:

> And it's also, in a small way, a story about me and my city; the city I so love and have so sorrowed for these twenty years and more. I am not unique; but Cairo is An her streets, her Nile, her buildings and her monuments whisper to every Cairene who's

taking part in the events that are shaping our lives and our children's futures as I write. (p. 8)

Conclusion

Chapter two entitled *Aisha: A Child/ Adult Female Representation vs. Aisha as Foreigner and Exotic Character* was divided in two parts. In part one entitled *Aisha: A Child/ Adult Female Representation* Aisha was presented as a maudlin female character in *The Returning* immersed in her past memories in her home land Egypt. She returned from England after a six year absence to encounter a strange setting and space besides she does not recognise the same old people there. She struggled with strangeness and nostalgia including her rickety relation with her husband. Aisha decided to quit weakness and depression enmeshed in her obsession in her past and rejection of her present and future when she unlocks the door of her flat, rides her car and drives away searching for a different beginning.

The second story investigated was *Knowing* presented Aisha as a child absorbed in her world of horror stories and fairy tales. Again Aisha remembers her childhood and her world oscillates between two spaces Egypt as an exotic land of sweet souvenirs and England as a cold land devoid of liveliness and mysteries. Failing to be understood by her parents who left her alone all the time. The child Aisha decides to cling to her own world and to the people she meets there such as the Djinnis and ghouls. The whole mood of the story seems to be pointing to the disillusionment of the main character. This disillusionment stems from her 'incapacity' to make the adult perceive of her world which she thought 'real'. It is a world she imagined and 'made true'. Yet, she could voice her concerns about it. She could make people come to it and be aware of it. She could tell her own narrative and refused to be imposed any other especially her parents' who were not able to protect her from the visions she had of her own world yet could save her from fear.

The Apprentice was the third story to be probed and it concerns Yosri the only male protagonist in the whole collection. Yosri is portrayed as an effeminate young man dazzled by a female world that lent him some kind of security and worthiness. He is presented as a puppet being moulded and undone by the ladies in the Salon Romance. And yet he falters in the trap of feminine attraction ending as a male's victim of rape.

The next story is *The Suitor* whereby Marianne, or Mimi, Aisha's Coptic friend, is represented as a university graduate and a very demanding young lady. She is twenty nine and refuses all men because of trifle reasons such as their trousers, ears, and looks. The story jumps into the past as Aunt Safi, Marianne's mother, reminds Aisha of the past and how she knew her for years. Mimi meets Wassef Ghali who she thought was prince charming and yet turns to be an owner of prostitute flats, escaping police surveillance. Finally, Marianne the educated, demanding, and extravagant Cinderella ends by her marrying in a merely 'traditional' way. She marries a man she has never seen before nor known before. Her last suitor is not torn to pieces nor is his anatomy examined. The only man Marianne trusted to be the ever 'perfect' gentleman treated her as a 'sex-object', an attractive pompous doll who immediately surrendered to his charms.

The Wedding of Zeina was the following tale to be investigated. It was the story of Zeina, Aisha's nanny who narrates to the latter the story of her wedding night remembering the past with mixed bitterness and sweetness. The young Zeina totally ignorant of what a bride is and what marriage and husband are, slipped into a continuous struggle between maintaining her innocence as a child and becoming a full-fledged woman. Her pink-painted bride room on the roof witnessed a terrifying wedding night of a fifteen year old child to an eighteen year old young man whom she fought when he approached her. The child was forced to abide by her uncles and aunts orders 'to save the families honour' despite her strenuous efforts to flee her 'shame' and pain as innocent and young as she was.

Unlike in *The Wedding of Zeina* whereby she was represented as a foolish and ignorant, though intrepid child, in *Her Man*, Zeina was portrayed as a full-fledged young woman. Zeina struggles forcefully to gain her man back being threatened by the ghost of her co-wife Tahiya whom she perceived as a *"dope"* and *"a half idiot orphan"*. Zeina wins her man back playing tricks on her co-wife and refusing to behave like a weak woman victim of polygamy.

In part two of the second chapter entitled Aisha as Foreigner and Exotic Character: *1964* and *The Nativity* Aisha is portrayed as a misfit adolescent in *1964*. She constantly attempted to replace a seemingly arid present to a future she deems better and promising.

She juxtaposes time entities as opposed categories; a time and its opposites the past, present and future. Aisha had been presented as the misfit adolescent; dissatisfied with the present that seemed meaningless and non-exciting. She dreamt about the future that she thought an escape. Yet, nothing seemed to please her as she missed every opportunity for living a true thrilling adventure. She tried strenuously to mix with her British counterparts in vain. She remained the age old foreigner. Her only solace was again her past and sweet souvenirs in a warm Egypt and the female fiction characters she read about as a studious young girl. Those women like Emma Bovary, Anna Karenina, Catherine Earnshaw and Maggie Tulliver seemed to have faced the same ordeals and unrealised dreams as Aisha did. The present had always been present to her knowing. It has been more than a strange time, demystifying a premature future signifying nothing. She refused to go to school defying her own parents and decided to study at home and to She is to concentrate on *"her studying for her Egyptian prep"*.

In the last narrative entitled *The Nativity*, Aisha appeared as a duped femme du monde and a foreigner in her own homeland Egypt. Aisha had gone to visit the Saint's shrine to conceive a child although she loved her husband no more. The same coldness and emptiness she felt having to recollect instances of her marital life in *The Returning***.** The visit to the Saint allowed her to see and experience things she had never seen or done before, so, her curiosity was aroused the most having to have a guide to make her know more and discover an exotic tribal world. The world that she had read about in her childhood and adolescence she was to live for real. She took Farag the butcher for her protector and she trusted him as a courageous strong man who cared to satisfy her curiosity and make her experience the unusual. Farag induced her to surrender to her desires of watching exotic festivals and souks and also converted her from what she fancied an 'emancipated lady' going out alone at night with strange men, and doing as she pleases to a duped 'weak woman' and a mere victim of rape. The butcher proved different from her imagined Shatter Hassan. Like all those characters Aisha read about and communed with, she died at the end and yet goes back to life through her narrative and her voice to investigate her past experience and quit the obsession of it locking the door of her flat twice in *The Returning*. Aisha ended on the operating table in the last scene, fighting for life, and yet she had been spared another beginning by Soueif to be her own self, set her imagination and memory free to know and to display to readers the magic, the ambivalence, and the torment of what lays there. Though at times she proves to be an

incarnation of the stereotyped female portrait investigated in chapter one, Aisha escapes it and transcends it struggling to tell her own story of past, present and future escaping a monolithic frame.

Also in chapter two part two the relation of writing to memory, as different from nostalgia, was reconsidered to shed more light on the idea that *Aisha* could be perceived as a product of memory. An allusion to the structure of the work as palimpsest was also mentioned, considering *Aisha* as a work of art and literature combining other genres. Comparing Soueif's previous and later works to *Aisha* was meant to highlight the differences and similarities her first work had with the others and to further illuminate the writer's consideration of the process of 'cooperative/intertwining narration' in those works. The analysis is an allusion to the importance of memory for fixing time, shaping artistic products and featuring as non-human Other with its power to engender knowledge of and possibly a better understanding people and the world. The second analysis is devoted to the imagination of the whole text constituting the narratives as emerging from a palimpsest as a new construct, with a novel imagination of the short story becoming 'novalised', and bearing archaeological attributes as a work of art with multiple layers to be unearthed. The last investigation proposes a look at Soueif's consideration of the question of the Other in her major works, comparing it to her perception in Aisha. This last part aims also at strengthening and maintaining the idea of dialogic relations that *Aisha* could encompass as language, story, and structure, and that the title of the research work attempts to explain.

Soueif allows her protagonist to reach an original new self and thus free Aisha's narrative to intertwine with that of myriad female characters *"reaching back in time"* and *"touch an old original self"*, to get back a part of it *"which lay buried, deep as any pharaoh, all these years", "to make gestures…associated to freedom"* (Ballantyne, 1975, p.194 12)[12]. Scheherazade's power as a female character culminates when she saved herself and the entire kingdom by the power of the narrative, delaying and then stopping the genocide of king Sheherayar's killing of virgins at dawn, and thus preventing the kingly genealogy from extinction and death, and returns to life (Ouyang, 2003, p. 412).

Aisha goes inside the dungeon of time held by her ankles. Her changed perspective could be the most important element to experience change. The story of her life is no more

than a version of it. The patches that Soueif represents as Aisha's life are to be gathered and connected by readers as diverse as they are, for there is no finite pattern of telling a story either as readers when interpreting them or as writers. There is always room for renewal, discovery, connection and learning to rebuild and reconnect with others. The writer pictured Aisha as the returning phoenix resurrecting from her ashes, saving her from death back to life and knowing and transcending the shell inside her cocooned self to reach the world outside.

The next chapter explores Soueif's second collection of short stories *The Sandpiper*. One is to notice the same oscillation in female characters portraits' from submission and surrender to struggle and courage. Time is to play the same crucial role moving throughout different dimensions triggered by time past. The processes of death and life are to be mingled to play the renewal play performed by female phoenixes resurrecting out of their ashes.

Notes to Chapter Two

1) James was the first to use the term stream of consciousness "*Consciousness… does not appear to itself chopped up in bits. Such words as 'chain' or 'train' do not describe it fitly as it presents itself in the first instance. It is most naturally described. In talking hereafter, let us call it the stream of consciousness, or of subjective life"* (1981, p. 239).

2) *"Pour que l'histoire vienne ainsi rejoindre la narration, il faut bien entendu que la seconde n'excède pas la première*

3) Genette on the nature of ambivalent character: *"un héro qui n'est ni tout a fait lui même ni tout a fait un autre. La conquête du 'je' n'est donc pas ici retour et présence a soi, installation dans le confort de la subjectivité, mais peut être exactement le contraire: l'expérience d'un rapport a soi vécu comme légère distance et décentrement, rapport que symbolise a merveille cette semi-homonymie plus que discrète, et comme accidentelle du héro narrateur et du signataire"*(2007, p. 260-1). Genette distinguishes between two kinds of narrators:

"*Le narrateur absent de l'histoire qu'il raconte (narrateur hétérodiégétique), ...l'autre est un "narrateur présent comme personnage dans l'histoire" (narrateur homodiégétique)* (2007, p. 255). (See also pp. 256-7-8).

4) *"The meaning of the word 'Muslim' is obviously undergoing change under the pressures of politics and history. Our definition, this time, as Muslim, as inescapably Muslim- a term that today refers primarily not to belief, but rather, in the eyes of The CIA, The INS and of ordinary people, to something that is ineradicably there now, apparently- in our genes, names, our place of origin"* (Ahmed, 2008, p. 6-8).

5) Aisha's embarrassment and uncertainty, having to answer Susan's questions, reminded me of Vance Bourjaily's *The Fractional Man,* a chapter of his novel *Confessions on a Spent Youth* whereby the protagonist Quince when asked about prominent Lebanese and Syrian Americans in America, he imitated a cousin of his, Saloom, who is less Americanized*: "I tried to produce his voice, now his diction. He was shorter than I, and I slumped a little. He scowled and smiled a lot, and I started doing so, too. The questions were searching---on what streets did the Arabic speaking people live…in Brooklyn, Syracuse or Chicago? Who was the proprietor of this restaurant, that bakery? "How would you expect me to know? I'd say, or Saloom would say, whichever I was by then, scowling or smiling"*(Bourjaily, 1971, p. 256).

6) This setting reminds one of an image of Algeria drawn by writers*: "A big country almost entirely covered with sand and the ubiquitous palm trees. Sitting in the shade of these trees men are found swatting to savor the pungent smoke of an enormous pipe. Nearby, a horse seems to bray triumphantly. In the distance, a strange looking animal with an uneven back: the camel. Then come the lion and the hyena, a particularly ferocious animal. On the shore, pirates are about to kidnap a young woman…"* (Esquer, 1925, p. 3 quoted in Lazreg. 1994, p. 37-38). It could suggest that

Soueif conjured up the same image to describe the Egyptian desert, and therefore, encrusts that image in the readers' minds.

7) However, in *Her Man* , Zeina betrays another woman, Tahiya, her co-wife, 'raping' her, entailing that for Soueif the blame for sexual discrimination is not gender-specific (Malak, 2002, p. 142).

8) Although Julia Kristeva coined the term intertextuality, she improved on the term initiated by Bakhtin in his Problems of Dostoevsky's Poetics, first published in 1929. He suggests the concept of polyphonic novel as a criticism of historicist literary criticism conception in that it considers the novel as consisting of a unitary perception of reality, focuses on the writers' opinion, or displaying their psychology. The concept of the polyphonic novel, on the other hand, stresses the different *"idiolects"*(Morgan, 1985, p. 11) used by characters and the extra literary-texts like newspaper articles, anecdotes permitting, consequently, different facets from which reality could be represented. Henceforth, the polyphonic novel confirms the idea of intertextuality governing literary works as no more unanimous systems i.e. having a fixed structure, as is the case of the realistic novel. In this respect the literary work is considered in its relationship with other texts (Ibid. 1).

9) In *Discourse in the Nove*l, Bakhtin asked: *"What is hybridization? ",* meaning 'linguistic hybridization' i.e. the fusion of texts expressed in different languages. He contended that it is *"a mixture of two social languages within the limits of a single utterance, between two different linguistic consciousnesses, separated from one another by an epoch, by social differentiation or by some other factor"* (1981, p. 358).

10) Examples from *The Map of Love* of historical personalities are Qasim Amin and Muhamed Abdu.

Emily Davis refers to the novel as a political romance in that it involves a love story between a British lady and an Egyptian Pasha within the trappings of imperialist Britain. Davis says*: "The romance evokes transnational coalition---significantly, of women---and unearths genealogies of their resistance in order to critique and transform the postcolonial state and to comment upon the international balance of power in the wake of British imperialism"(*Davis, 2007, np). When Amal the protagonist reads lady Anna's, the British protagonist, journal, she reads it as a romance. What is important for her is reading this British lady's past experience *"losing one's self in the past as an evasion of the present"* The reader might recall Aisha's attempting a similar escape in *The Returning* that I alluded to earlier in chapter one. Davis enquires about the 'real' reason for Amal's addiction to Anna's narrative. Is it *"a desire to engage in with the lessons of the past for the present, or is the real desire to retreat from the present altogether?"* (Davis, 2007).

11) Mona Fayad discussed the Algerian novelist and film maker Asia Djebar's novel *L'amour, la fantasia* in *Fantasia : An Algerian Cavalcade*, 1985. She compares Djebbar to Soueif in using history as a material for their writing, acknowledging the role of the Algerian women in the war of independence from France (Fayad, 2008).

12) This includes Sheila Ballantyne's discussion of Norma Jean, her main character's resurrecting a new self.

CHAPTER THREE

The Sandpiper: A Mosaic of Eastern/Western, Trapped/Liberated Timeless Phoenixes

CHAPTER THREE

The Sandpiper: A Mosaic of Eastern/Western, Trapped/Liberated Timeless Phoenixes

> *To live in the unhomely world, to find its ambivalences and ambiguities enacted in the house of fiction, or its surrendering and splitting performed in the work of art, is also to affirm a profound desire for social solidarity.*(Homi Bhabha, quoted. in Ghazoul, 2004)

Introduction

The previous chapter entitled *Aisha: A Child/ Adult Female Representation vs. Aisha as Foreigner and Exotic Character* probed Aisha, Zeina, Marianne, and Yosri as child/women and Aisha as misfit adolescent and foreign exotic character. The main characteristic of the aforementioned characters, except Marianne and Yosri, is that they are pictured as both weak/strong and liberated/trapped entities. They tell their stories referring back to the past to undo chapters of their present they resist and refuse. They are allowed a voice by Soueif to make their echoes heard and change their present and future.

Chapter Three entitled, *The Sandpiper: A Mosaic of Eastern/Western, Trapped/Liberated Timeless Phoenixes,* probes the narrative technique used by Ahdaf Soueif in *The Sandpiper*, It also concerns the importance of time past, and female representations. *The Sandpiper* is described by *The Cambridge Guide to Women's Writing in Englis*h as *"a collection of short stories about women in the wrong place, who have reached a crucial phase in their lives"* (Sage, 1999, p. 590).

The main queries to be answered are what are the main narrative techniques that Soueif uses to build the narratives constituting *The Sandpiper*? How does narration convey double portraits of trapped weak and liberated phoenixes from East and West? How can time past unveil and overwhelm these characters' present lives to make them one united story Implications.

The exploration of the set forth narratives starts with *The Sandpiper* as The Story of an Absent/Present Phoenix, describing the main female character within it as a ghost-like narrator mourning her past life and overlooking her present. In the second story *Chez*

Milou the protagonist is also represented as a waning/dreamy phoenix missing a life of love and tendresse. The third narrative probed is that of *Mandy*: A Story of an Oriental/Western Harem whereby Mandy the American is caught between her 'love' for the Egyptian Asya's husband Saif and her love for his money. The Fourth story explored is that of *Melody*: A Swan's Lake Childish Symphony. Melody is described as the symbol of a lost childhood, an incarnation of the seductress oriental woman, and a symphony that oscillates between hope and despair.

Another title is suggested featuring Soueif's female characters echoed in Lawrence and Gordimer's female characters, respectively in *The Plumed Serpent* and *Something Out There*. These characters are compared to one another in terms of misogynist attitudes displayed in these works besides the misrepresentation of non-western characters as uncivilized people.

The fifth story is Salah's, the only male protagonist in the whole collection. Salah is portrayed as a desire bewitched messiah who sacrifices his younger sister's happiness and freedom to prove to his own self and to the world that he is the same 'pious' ideal young man he has ever been. He emphasizes that his sister is to blame inducing him to look at her as a sexually attractive woman. The sixth story is Satan's, the black little kitten being, according to Asya the narrator, ill treated by a bunch of cruel oriental people. Satan is the only pretext Asya could find to meet her husband Saif who left her for other women.

Another title is suggested comparing Soueif's female characters to Fielding's works and particularly Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway*. These characters are perceived as weak, trapped, and nostalgic.

The seventh story probed is *I Think of You*. This narrative is imagined as a memory's salvation. It is the story of two female characters sharing a story of sadness, strength and resilience.

Despite the stereotypical portrait Soueif's female protagonists in *The Sandpiper* are granted, they succeed to escape it in different ways as will be shown later in this exploration. These characters attempt to flee their limited framed picture to live their lives freely each on its own way.

III.1. "*The Sandpiper*": A Story of an Absent/ Present Phoenix:

Soueif chooses a first person female narrator to tell the story of *The Sandpiper*. The narrative starts in the present on the beach in Alexandria, Egypt (Soueif, 1996, p. 23). The narrator describes a path that is outside the place she is actually telling her story from and seeing the place from. So the story starts from without. This path is made of *"beaten white stone"*. There is also a white wall there that is not allowing her to see what is behind it. One senses an allusion to entrapment and deformation. She shifts to the past to speak about what she used to see from her window; the place she is watching the beach through now. One gets the drift of a past time when things used to be perceived differently. She used to contemplate patterns in the drift of the white sands. The narrator also speaks of being on the beach and walking carefully for *"there never was much room on those white spaces that glinted flat and free of sand"*. Again, an idea of confinement is referred to and also an attempt at getting free from it. She did not want to change the pattern on that beach, *"not even a grain of sand"*. Only nature was allowed to fulfil such a change. Then the narrator asks a question of trying to change that pattern: *"What point would there be in trying to decipher a pattern that I had caused?" "It was not easy"*, she confirms.

The reader is informed that the opening scene features a familiar sea, a beach where the narrator paints a portrait of a life there with colours and sounds (Ibid. 24). Water rolls on this beach *"its frilled white edge nibbling at the sand, withdrawing to leave great damp half-moons of a darker, more brownish beige"*. The portrait becomes richer with, still, white and brownish beige besides its lively movements. Here again readers can witness movement and stillness, freedom and confinement. There is a mention of the sea shifting unceasingly, stirring and sending out *"fingers, paws, tongues to probe the shore"*. Movements and releases continue besides personification of the sea which seems to strive for a prey which is the shore, using fingers, paws and tongues. The narrator then moves to describe the waves and their diversity of *"coming in"*. Waves are separated out of the big "*moving blue"*. There is a surging and rising forward with a *"low growl"* fading to a *"pale green"*, a turning over, a displaying of the *"white frill"* that slides like *"a thousand snakes"*, and a breaking and a skittering *"up the sand bank"*. The portrait is still getting painted with colours and movements, stillness and attempts at freedom, and being prey to a rapacious predator. The narrator used to sit still within this dynamic marine painting. No resistance on her part was to be witnessed for when her heels were filled with water "*without a break"*, she did not move.

The narrator continues to describe what she used to see and do on the beach throughout her bedroom window. She was *"looking for the next clear space to set the other foot down"*. As she walked, she looked for a free space to breathe and move in and on. She confirms that *"it took a long time to reach the end of the path. And then the stretch of beach shows. And then the sea"*. The narrator could be alluding to the end of the story whereby she might find a freer space. She could also be tracing her movements from the least to the most relaxed and wider space: path, beach, and sea. Colours help her painting to reveal a lively and visual narrative and allow readers draw the same scene and setting, using their imagination. It could also reveal the portrait of a detail stricken, romantic and lamenting woman.

So the narrator has been telling her story depicting what she saw throughout the window of her bedroom departing from the present. She then moves to describe the beach she knew by heart using her memory. She remembers and drags along the web of many souvenirs. Her memory moves while she remains static. Now from the same room in the present her memory shifts to remember and count twelve years ago when she met her husband. Eight years ago she gave birth to his child. Then her memory sends her back to the space (Soueif, 1996, p. 26) she is in: *"the beach-house west of Alexandria"*. They have been coming here for eight summers. The first summer she devoted to loving her husband. So, her memory delves deeper and deeper into a remoter past. It was not a summer of reflection. It was a summer of getting used to that new and different place she lived in. Even her husband was *"new"* to her. She remembers him being a different person when they were living in her home country England. Her memory extends back to speak of her life with her husband in her country. Only a slight entity of the 'new him' was revealed then. He was to uncover completely as a novel being—man—when they were back to his country. Movement continues with the narrator mentioning that she and her husband used to walk *"in the sunset along the water's edge",* kicking at spray, fall, and fall of her hat. She devoted her first summer for love of her husband. That was her *"occupation"* not reflection in what she labels *"this new and different place"*. The beach and the sand are blood and veins of the narrator's life for her husband and his family are part of it. The movement process continues with words like thawing, carrying, catching, and hoisting taking place on the beach.

Numbers gear narration as the narrator mentions her second summer *"here"* that she scarcely names, as the sixth summer of our love (she had loved her husband for six years

so far dating from the second summer). This was the last summer of the couple's happiness. The narrator sets land marks for herself in numbers, colours, and sounds to help her remember. This was the same summer when she carried her child and sat on the beach contemplating the sand, thinking and remembering. Again she casts her memory to recollect her life with her husband before she married him and while they were living in her country. They spent four years in *"the cosy flat"*, compared to the confined and supposedly uncomfortable space she lives in now in her husband's country (Ibid. 26). She reveals that her husband has a *"new and an old him"* speaking about his personality. Her task is to *"love this new him, who had been hinted at but never revealed when we lived in my northern land, and who after a long absence, had found his way back into the heart of his country, taking me along with him"*. One gets a meaning of personality change being in and out of one's country. The narrator's memory seems to be the sole solace and comfort she is having. She missed *"those things"* she did with her lover back home, yet *"with no great sense of loss. It was as though they were all there, to be called upon, to be lived again whenever we wanted"*. So suffice it that her memory is there to help her escape whatever unpleasant time she is going through to reminisce memories of old times. Now as she sits watching the sea from her bedroom window, she realises that she loves doing what she always did because she constantly is looking for a feeling of love that appears and disappears as distance grows bigger from home.

The narrator shifts back to her last point of narration where she sat contemplating the sea. She came to the awareness that she was trying to *"decipher the pattern"* or "*to work out my coordinates"*. Movement is still there to booster narration as the water and sand she watched: meeting, flirting and touching. *"I tried to understand that I was on the edge of Africa"*. The narrator thinks that the vastness ahead of her greatly surpassed the one behind her. She had been to Africa and witnessed for herself *"its never ending dusty green interior, its mountains, the big sky, my mind could not grasp a world that was not present to my senses"*. There was the narrator in a continent she knew is called Africa but she has never felt nor known. Trying to make things fit around her she could see only the beach, the waves, the blue sea beyond and most of all, she felt her baby inside. The baby girl that lay *"inside her belly"* filled with life and its movement as does the sea around. Those movements she labelled *"eruptions"* and *"fluttering"* are her baby's besides the punches and talking that she exchanged with her. Then the narrator goes back to numbers to mention that when she conceived she was twenty nine and that she had waited for seven

years to conceive (Ibid. 27).She loved the baby's father so much that as *"His baby was snug inside me and I wanted him there too"*. One gets an idea of the narrator attempting to contain her world: the people she loves, the dear time she spent and still spends with her family and the place she knows by heart. Is it a longing on her part to imprison her world the same way it confined and entrapped her?

Back to the present where the narrator is standing now: *"All I can see is dry, solid white"*. She plays with colours again especially the white colour to send readers back to the beginning: *"The white glare, the white wall, and white path narrowing in the distance"*. Could this mean that the space is narrowing further still to stifle every attempt at freedom and release? The continuous allusion to white elements seems to refer to limitation and an inability to unveil what such white elements are hiding. This feeling of entrapment and narrowness reminds her that she once thought of leaving. *"I should have gone",* she confirms. Yet this thought is no longer hurting her. It became *"familiar and dull"*. She repeats *"I should have gone"* three times in the same paragraph. She thinks that she should have gone when stifled with anger having to discover that her husband was no longer the man she used to know and that he was *"pulling away"* from her. She cannot help cling to the old idea she had of her husband believing he should not change. The narrator struggles to maintain an ancient order and tradition that seem to flee her grip. That attempt reminds one of the questions she asked at the beginning: *"what point would there be in trying to decipher a pattern that I had caused?"* The pattern seems to be already settled and encrusted in the narrator's mind and heart and its colours, ruled by the white colour, have already been set and chosen.

Another movement springs to the present scene as the narrator turns inside her room to watch (Ibid. 28) the closed blinds that resist and cover a glaring sun outside. Drawing her finger along a wooden slat she remembers that *"Um Sabir",* her husband's old nanny, does all the house work plus the cooking at the house. The narrator does not do either of these for the ladies in the house thought it is a "*shame"* to let her spoil her beautiful hands.

As for her relation with her daughter Lucy, it was close and tight. She speaks of her daughter as fitting herself to her body as though to make one while trying to sleep. The narrator enjoying her task as mother puts her arms under her daughter until the latter sleeps. She makes use of her body as if it belonged to her: her breast is a pillow and her hip is her footstool. At last the narrator feels useful: *"I lie content, glad to be of use"*. The

narrator feels alive again and useful sticking to her daughter's body. This mother and daughter scene reminds the narrator of a scene she witnessed *"many years ago"* in *"a transit lounge in an airport"*. The scene featured a Pakistani woman asleep. She wore a dress and trousers that were deep yellow silk with flowers on them painted in purple and green. Thus, colours are resurrected allowing the painted narrative to be carried on. Against the Pakistani woman *"her son lay curled*". This son was the woman's *"worldly treasure"*. *"This image, too, I saved up for him"*. So the scene in the airport the narrator saved for her husband. Thus, the narrator informs readers that whenever tenderness and love are called back she remembers her husband. She also informs readers that she is still thinking about him.

Swinging in the mosquito-net this morning, she remembers again nine years ago as she was sitting under her first mosquito-net. She was writing: *"Now I know how it feels to be a memsahib"*, while she was in Kano in the heart of Africa. At that time three years ago had elapsed of the couple's love. They had to part (Ibid. 29) at Heathrow airport. Yet their parting she confirms thickens their union and love for each other. They were to meet again in a fortnight in Cairo so that the narrator gets acquainted to her husband's family. She remembers having thought about writing a story during those two weeks. The story was meant to be about her first trip to Africa. She met a man named Mohammed el-Senusi who explained to her that women were inferior. Yet she, *"being foreign, European, on a business trip", "I was an honorary woman"*, she boasts. As she was travelling along a straight road to Maiduguri, she saw a lion. *"I asked the driver to stop, jumped out of the car, aimed my camera and shot as the lion crouched",* she explained. The narrator proved an intrepid European woman as she jumped to her own death facing a lion in the heart of Africa only to take a photo of it.

The narrator recalls that she never wrote the story she was supposed to. She still keeps the notes. She sees them right here, *"in this leather portfolio"* kept in her cupboard. *"My Africa story"*: that is how she labelled it. The story she has not written but she told it to her husband as they were in a Cairo restaurant next to the Nile River. In the same restaurant where her husband confessed he was crazy about her. That time no time could be counted nor measured. There was just eternity on the couple's lips, eyes, and brows. They got married and the narrator felt very happy.

Now, as she looks at her notes she realises that all her notes are meant for her husband. Then, she turns back to think about their parting at the airport. Her husband wrote that *"he felt very desperate"* not to be with her. There was nobody there to stand by him. She wonders about the kind of story she can write coming back to the present with her notes put on her writing table. She waits for her daughter Lucy. Lucy is not asleep a she others think. She waits for her daughter who is on the beach and who does not seem to need her now having her father, cousins, uncles, aunts, and playmates. Um Sabir is here as well as she prepared sandwiches and iced drinks (Ibid. 30).

The narrator goes back to the past again overwhelmed by the summer heat to remember when she was in the market in Kaduna. She saw meat with flies *"swarming and settling on it"*. There were also vultures that were "*heavy and still and silent"*. She used to see sparrows in England and vultures are to be seen in Africa, craving for meat. Their coolness and unblinking eyes surprised her as she had to endure a hard sun. One is reminded of the idea of predators and preys as the *"fierce"* sun turned to be another predator that beat down the head of the vultures. She became overwhelmed with fear yet; she felt that fear was meaningless. Vultures always dwelt there and people went about their business as normal as they could (Ibid. 31). The market was a common place for them. They were taken for granted.

The narrator springs back to the present to speak about the stifling heat taking hold of the house she is in. The writer uses feelings to guide narration as well. This prompts her to open the door of her room and *"walk out into the silent hall"*. She lands in the bathroom looking for fresh water to cool her feet, hands, and wrists. As she presses wet palms to her face (she) *"I picture grey slate roofs wet with rain. I picture trees; trees that rustle in the wind and then the rain had stopped, release fresh showers of droplets from their leaves"*. This refreshing scene with the showers of rain replacing the burning heat outside is but a *"picture",* a grey picture that she used to witness in her own cold and wet country England. One senses the return and prevailing of colours and movements to enhance a smooth flow of narration. She then reaches the kitchen, opens the fridge and takes a cluster of yellow grapes put on a white saucer. She then thinks about her daughter Lucy crunching *"cucumbers and carrots straight out of the green grocer's baskets"*. Fortunately she remembers that Um Sabir washes all the fruits and vegetables before putting them in the fridge. Lucy *"was born here"* i.e. in Egypt. She belongs here too. She thought of the

possibility of having taken her away as she was eight month old. Then *"she would have belonged with me"*.

Then the narrator walks back to the corridor, passes by Um Sabir's room, her husband's, and Lucy's room to reach her room again. She thinks of standing again at the window watching through the clink in the shutters. She realises that the *"white seems now to be losing the intensity of its glare"*. She fancies the possibility of moving to the window, which she does not do, and imagines: *"I would see the green lawn encircled by the three wings of the house, the sprinkler at its scene ceaselessly twisting, twisting"*. This picture anchors the idea of colours, entrapment and movement that are prevailing. The narrator's movement are limited and she is confined to the space of room her as the green is encircled by the three wings of the house. Lying on her bed she remembers a few weeks ago, back in Cairo as Lucy held her head up to face the sky (Ibid. 32). She said to her mum *"I can see the place where we're going to be"*. *"Where"*, her mum asks. "*In heaven",* Lucy replied. Her mother wondered what heaven was like and Lucy replied: *"it's a circle, Mama, and it has a chimney, and it will always be winter there"*. This heaven scene reminds one of the narrator's home country where winter and coldness are predominant.

The narrator alludes to her being sick for home and for a *"time that was and that I can never have again. A lover I had and can never have again"*. She constantly laments for a time past that she can no longer resurrect. Movement continues leading the narrative with the narrator watching her lover vanish or rather *"slip away",* and *"recede"*. He wished his wife could hold him and he did not explain how. The narrator thinks that her couple's magic faded away and she foresaw this magic vanishing[1] (Ibid. 33). She alludes to her foreignness, her inability to remember names, speak his own language, her being irritated and attacked by the sun and mosquitoes. Her husband had not found a tender home of a lover to shelter him back home. She used to know and see her lover in the remote past and in a home (her own country) she knew. *"I never see my lover now"*, she confirms. *"Now"* is a frightening word. *"Now"* is a time and a place she does not recognise. She resists change and a time and place she now lives in. She seems imprisoned in her own ego besides her past. She does not attempt at recuperating her lover or her husband. Whenever a possibility of regaining her lover lurks, she *"turns away"*. The charms of her foreignness also faded away as she explains *"my foreignness which had been so charming, began to irritate him"*. She has been unable to remember names, *"to follow the minutiae of politics, my struggle with his language, my need to be protected from the sun, the mosquitoes, the*

salads, the drinking water". The same scene of unfamiliar setting and time one witnessed in *The Returning* (p.90-96) and *The Nativity* (p.120-128) in chapter one whereby Aisha does not recognise the strange world around her.

Her husband went back home from England where he used to live with her. He was in need of a person to make him feel he was back home. This lasted for almost a year. *"His heart was broken in two, mine was simply broken"*. This picture of two hearts one broken in two and the other simply broken could entail that the husband's heart was split in two parts. That is a bit dramatic than the narrator's heart that was simply broken. Does this mean that her heart was broken into pieces that she could no longer gather back? Or was her husband less pathetic than she was being at home again? The narrator feels she lost her lover: *"I never see my lover now"*. She only recuperates her husband and lover while he is playing with his daughter on the beach only then she feels she falls in love with him again.

She told her husband one day of seeing her first mirage on a long road to Maiduguri and on the desert road to Alexandria. She wondered how unbelievable the idea of mirage was disappearing when one is really sure about its being there and seeing it clearly. Her husband informed that it is a matter of only thinking one saw a mirage. She then wondered if the case was the same when one saw water and one's brain confirmed *"there is water there"*. *"Is not that enough proving of its existence?"* Then her husband answered: *"yes…if all you want to do is sit in the car and see it. But if you want to go and put your hands in it and drink, then it isn't enough surely"*.

This idea of the mirage about which the narrator complained of its non-existence though one is sure of seeing it could stand for her family life as a foreigner in a country she barely knows. It could also picture her staying on the edge, not only of Africa, but of her whole life. Does her being a foreigner entail she had to remain foreigner for her husband, his country and his family? Has she done her best to win her lover back and be open to love and change? Could her integration into her own family allow her more space, more freedom and more credibility and fewer mirages? Her being a mother seems to send her back to life and to her family (Ibid. 34).

The narrator travels back to a nearer past, yesterday, when she dressed her daughter after the shower. She remembered brushing and plaiting her hair. Looking at her daughter's serious face in the mirror, she remembered a time when she escaped death in the plane incident (Ibid. 35). The only appeasing escape she finds is recollecting her husband's

name, the fear of not marrying him. Then she goes back to yesterday finishing Lucy's plait and confirming that she is her *"my treasure and my trap"*. Her love for her daughter trapped her to dwell in a place and time she refuses to stay in.

Thinking of herself as a mother and feeling its sweetness reminds her of an incident that happened to her in Africa. It was on a plane from Nigeria to Cairo. She felt being on the brink of death. At that time she thought of how her husband—then her lover, counted for her and she heard and repeated his name. She could not imagine dying and not be with him and not having children with him. *"His name became a talisman"*. When she did not die, she met life again remembering her husband and her life with him. *"My life, which once again stretched out before me, shimmering with possibilities, was meant to merge with his"*. Lucy is both her treasure and trap. This could allude to the narrator's being bound to stay where she is and be what she is with people she at times wants to be with and another wants to escape from them. The narrator feels she loses everything she strives to hold on to; the things she owns and does not possess. She communes with a paradox that smells sweet and bitter, lovely and ugly. Here she still is and still lives in a *"continent where I live, where I almost died, where I wait for my daughter to grow away from me"*. Everything seems to flee her way and she still is trying to hold on to (Ibid. 36).

In the story's last scene, the narrator speaks of *"the different things"* she sees on the beach out of her bedroom window. She then sees *"that summer six years ago"*. The last of the foam is swallowed bubbling into the sand, "*to sink down and re-join the sea at an invisible subterranean level"*. "*The green water"* eats out the remaining parts of the sand. The other parts are licked by the beach. Again, one senses a feeling of intrusion, movement, attack, resistance and containment. Yet the remaining part of the sand knows by heart the *"white waves"* that slashes it, caresses it and allows it to vanish into it. The white foam too knows by heart the sands that await it to rise to have a grip of it and *"suck it"*. The sand is to lose itself to the sea. *"The narrow stretch of sand knows nothing in the world better than it does the white waves that whip it, caress it, collapse into it, vanish into it"*. The sand knows the white waves or is it so used to it that it allows it to whip and then caress it. The painting carries on being coloured drawing thoughts and feelings of harm and tenderness, preys and predators. It is a display where the former consent to such bitterness and pain that turns at times to feeling sweet and familiar.

Yet, the waves do not know what *"the massed hot, still sands"* belonging to the desert lying *"just twenty, no, ten feet beyond the scalloped edge?"* The narrator also wonders if the beach is aware of *"the depths, the cold, the currents just there."* She indicates the *"there"* as though showing it to readers and wonders if they can see it: *"do you see it? Where the water turns a deep blue"*. The narrator is refers to sands and waves, the same way she turned prey to a time and space that she resists though they keep whipping her and harming her. There still are unknown and hidden sands and currents that the beach does not know about. This may be an allusion to a hidden force and freedom the narrator encompasses within her and nobody around cared to discover. This veiled power and freedom might jump up at any time and empower her to confront whatever predator comes to attack her. In *Chez Milou*, the next narrative to be probed, one encounters the same idea of entrapment and echoes of a missed life.

III.2. *"Chez Milou"*: A Waning/Dreamy Phoenix

Chez Milou also starts in the present featuring Milou sitting behind the cash desk. The narrative is recounted by a third person omniscient narrator and seen throughout Milou's consciousness. Right from the start the narrator springs to a description of Milou's she-dog called Athène. The dog is described as *"sleek"* and *"plump"* and growing old that shows in her eyes. The air of laziness and decadence overwhelms the setting as Athène is said to sometimes venture wandering in the restaurant *"amidst the waiters' feet"*. Yet Milou is constantly there to watch her and ask her to come back and sit on her lap. Besides, Athène is helped by the waiters to get there. The narrator carries on describing setting and character moving to depict a physical description of Milou as having *"manicured"* thick fingers and hands full of liver spots that add a touch of uncertainty to them on the cash register. She wears *"her grandmother's heavy Russian rings"* (Ibid. 39).

The first slip to the past turns up in a reference to Philippe, a man Milou *"might have married"* a long time ago. She senses that she missed a chance not marrying him. Then one returns to the present following Milou's scanning of the restaurant to allow readers have a more detailed picture of it. The restaurant has red velvet curtains *"screening at its entrance"*. Readers get the idea of entering a theatre and finding a seat to watch a play that is to unfold soon. An allusion to Milou's usual state of mind displays an aging heavy woman who never smiles and *"only nods sternly"* to her customers. Her hair is dyed in hennaed and she *"never leaves her seat"*.

Stillness and limited movements frame the setting of the story. Despite her sternness, Milou's customers come back for they *"find her a benign presence"*. The narrator continues describing the setting throughout Milou's consciousness calling readers' attention to the man hiding to Milou's left in a forgotten corner of the restaurant to remain unseen even by his own daughter. It is her old father Monsieur Vasilakis who is almost ninety and who remembers the present barely and confuses people for others. He still owns his soundless and *"flickering"* black and white TV. All his best friends *"have passed away"*. Milou is always aware of what her father is doing though she seems not to, being busy with her customers.

The narrator goes back to the red curtains for Milou is watching them continuously. She is awaiting a friend called Farah who actually is much younger than Milou to be considered her friend. The narrator informs readers about the beginning of this friendship that dates back to *"Latifa's wedding night"*. The phrase is repeated for readers to stop at and consider for it reminds Milou of events in the past that, though do not count any more, they still hold a space in her memory. Milou remembers. *"Latifa's wedding night"* raises in Milou's memory feelings of shame, misery and unease. This phrase features in the text as a title to a tragedy as it speaks for its own self and propels readers stop at it and grant it a particular attention. The phrase *"Latifa's wedding night"* reverberates along the lines leaving a pause for remembrance. Latifa's wedding night does not stir in Milou's mind any separating thoughts or feelings. *"But she remembers"*. She remembers the shame and misery which for years that phrase evoked in her; *"the shiver moving up her back, into her shoulders and arms until her fingers tingled with it, the cold weight in her stomach that she had had to rub and press into something she could bear"*. So here is Milou, the old grim, barely moving and heavy woman awaiting a young friend who will lead her back to that night; a night of shame, disturbance and perplexity. It is a night that does not mean much to her now except that she still remembers it (Ibid.41).

Using the stream of consciousness technique, the narrator induces readers delve deeper into Milou's mind to uncover the events that took place on that night. It happened when Milou *"had fled"* passing by the dark staircase to Ismail Morsi's, their neighbour's, apartment to find his daughter. Morsi's daughter is no one but Latifa who was supposed to marry on that night. Milou found her in the bathroom tearing off her *"elaborate chignon"*. She confessed whispering that she hated that situation and so did her bridegroom.

Neither she nor her husband liked being looked at as *"monkeys"*. When she saw Milou standing behind her she just made her come in and shut the door behind her. Milou told Latifa everything that happened to her that night. Nothing is said by the narrator about the details of what happened to Milou on that night. The narrator carries on describing its effects on Milou as a remembrance of time past. So now she is recalling how deadly the event felt at that time for she thought she must die and that tomorrow will never come. Yet now the show falters to a possibility of being a *"film she had seen"*. That is a film that must have moved her (Ibid. 40).

Philippe, the man that Milou might have married, shows up again in her life for she is now to remember the first time she had met him. Milou met Philippe "*amid ululations and the clash of cymbals at a friend's wedding in the Greek Orthodox Cathedral on Shari el-Malika Street"* in Cairo. Milou was a different person then still twenty years old and *"tall and well-built"*. That lively portrait clashes with Milou's present portrait of an old heavy woman.

Attention moves to Monsieur Vasilakis thinking of his daughter Milou. He constantly watched her as an active and busy woman coming and going in the restaurant that she had already owned. Milou's *"sharply legs"* and *"her exuberant auburn hair"* reminded him of Milou's mother. Now the lime light turns back to Milou as the narrator mentions that she was aware that her mother was a beautiful French dancer. Milou knows that her mother had *"abandoned"* her and her father when she was just one year old. Milou's mother left with a Turkish soldier who came to Alexandria on boat in 1927. Three years later Monsieur Vasilakis left Alexandria with baby Milou and Faheema the black maid to settle in Cairo. He sold his old restaurant there and opened another one in Cairo calling it *"Chez Milou"*. He refused any hint at his remarrying (Ibid. 42).

Milou became the owner of her father's restaurant and he grew fearful of the day when a charming prince would appear and steal her from him. Milou was so beautiful and the threat was constant of her leaving her father and breaking him up for the second time. Milou's physique exacerbated her father's fear with her: *"long, strong, legs, the lean waist, the straight back, the broad forehead, the wide set eyes and brilliant hair"* (Ibid. 43).

A reference to Philippe features again to draw readers back to Milou's remembrance of her first meeting of him in a friend's wedding in a Greek Cathedral. He appeared to her like an angel; a boy-not a man yet. He was so *"fair and so still"*. Philippe turned to appear

as though one of the *"shining Byzantine icons on the walls";* not belonging to the species of the breathing and moving humans there. He captured Milou's heart and mind with his elegance, stillness and gentleness. Milou investigated who the man was (Ibid. 44) and found out that he was *"only seventeen and still at school with the Jesuit Frères"*. Milou had to conjure up an introduction and discovered that Philippe had *"green grey eyes",* and *"that his voice was mellow"*. He spoke *"chic French"* and *"broken Arabic"*. Philippe appeared as a distant extraordinary, *"extra mortal"* creature. She longed to touch his face. Milou carried on the investigation on her own for she had no mother to do the work for her. She found out that Philippe was Greek too and his father was a grocer. Philipp's love grew in Milou's heart with him smiling to her amazingly.

Yet, "*it never occurred to her to wonder whether he had felt it too"* (Ibid.45). To further cement her relation with Philippe and her meeting him constantly, Milou decided to buy goods for her restaurant from Philippe's father grocery though it *"was the furthest one of all"*. Milou continued to go there with her black nanny Faheema who noticed Milou's care for Philippe. *"What would a grocery store have that would make a normally reasonable girl march ardently to the end of the world for it like this?*" Faheema wondered. That must be love, she concluded. Philippe's father was very welcoming and Milou's going to his grocery amounted to a daily habit. Philippe never stayed longer in his father's shop when Milou was there. He just uttered: *"I will leave to conduct your business"* and left smiling shyly to Milou. Philippe's father was aware of Milou's growing care for his son (Ibid. 46).

Yet Philippe's mother objected for Milou "*is too old"* and "*she is four years older than Philippe."* Besides, a man tires of a woman older than him, she thought. Philippe's father was rather a pragmatic man thinking about Milou as the only heiress of Monsieur Vasilakis with no brothers or sisters.

Years passed and Philippe joined the faculty of commerce. Milou continued her visits to his father's shop and buy goods from there. Yet, she sometimes despaired for no response from Philippe was to come and comfort her. Whenever she saw him she made sure of those intentions. *"Their glances had met for a fraction longer; his smile had asked a question—a question she longed to answer"* until Latifa's wedding-night. The narrator does not supply details of what happened on that night. Yet a description of what had happened days before is to come. Faheema, the black maid, advised Milou *"to make things move"* i.e. to test Philippe's love and care and love by getting closer to him, speaking to him, and call

his attention to her. This situation had lasted for three years and nothing had changed. Once Milou thought he pressed her hand with different gentleness. Another time she thought he touched her hand with his lips. Besides, Faheema thought he might be too young to understand Milou's intentions and that was why she had to react.

Now the narrator is to unveil the enigma of Latifa's wedding-night, back to that wedding party taking place at the roof terrace. Guests had to pass by Ismail Morsi's flat and to reach the staircase. Milou attended that party that night (Ibid. 47). Yet she had (Ibid. 49) to leave suddenly whispering a few words to her friend Sorraya, the bride's sister. When she had left the terrace to those stairs, Milou met a man in the dark climbing the stairs. He turned to be no one but Philippe. He barely smiled at her and whispered a *"bonsoir"* that Milou answered softly like in a sweet dream. The stairs were very narrow, yet Milou dared go down and get closer and closer to Philippe's body. Milou and Philippe's bodies touched as they were very near to one another. Milou put her hand on Philippe's face; a dream that came true. She kept closer looking at his eyes. She expected a kiss. Philippe stayed still and surprised. He was *"too well-bred"* to just stand still. Milou finally drew her hand off his face and rushed down the stairs to Ismail Morsi's flat where she found Latifa his daughter struggling with her chignon and describing her situation as a bride *"despicable"*.

Back in the present, Milou frowns as the red curtain opens again welcoming a *"very pretty young woman"*. The pretty young woman is Farah, Milou's old friend Latifa's daughter. Milou welcomes her kissing and hugging and enquiring about her aunt Sorraya, Latifa's younger sister (Ibid. 50). Farah (Ibid. 51) ensures Milou that Sorraya still lives in her father's old house and that nothing has changed (Ibid. 52). Answering Milou's questions, Farah tells about news of her own family.

Her mother Latifa divorced from her father, lived alone, then remarried, then went back to live alone parting from her husband. Farah lives with her father and her son Adam for she too divorced from her husband. Farah insists that her mother is freer and happier now as she lives alone and enjoys reading a book at bed and sleeping with the window open. Farah confesses she can no longer speak to her. Besides Latifa's son disappoints her and she constantly say it to him. In the meantime, she tries to make her daughter Farah go back to her husband. Yet Farah does not want to for she says they were not happy together. Latifa disagrees declaring "*So what? Who's happy in this world?"* Milou thinks Latifa is. But Farah does not, thinking that her mother is doing the wrong thing tasting the sweetness

of freedom living alone. Farah admits that her father wanted to model Latifa the way he wanted.

Latifa *"started speaking up for her own self"* and he did not like it. She was the first to leave him and he enjoyed his life without her too. Farah thinks that Milou keeps the same look as her aunt Sorraya for both women sacrificed their lives for their fathers. They had a *"closed look"* painted with an *"old familiar unease"* (Ibid.54). Farah finds it very hard to live as a divorced woman in Egypt. She has not got a flat of her own and she is *"thirty already"* (Ibid. 55). *"When you have your own flat it is different",* Farah confirms. She insists that her son Adam is her whole life and she cannot imagine how people go on living without getting married. Then Farah suddenly recognises that she has made a mistake telling this to Milou the woman who spent her entire life alone. Milou believes that *"that's all in the past now"* (Ibid. 57). When Milou asks Farah if there is a man in her life, Farah confirms that there is nothing interesting. She thinks of a *"marriage of convenience"*, though. She did not want to be in love again. She is thinking of a man that might be suitable for her. She considers the whole matter as *"really too ridiculous"*. This very man is no other than (Ibid. 58) Philippe Panayotis; the same Philippe that Milou *"might have married"*. It is the same Philippe; the angel-like 'man-boy' who never loved her back nor answered her queries. Farah insists that Milou must have known him. Yet Milou answers: *"No. Not really"*. Farah admits that he is older than her, but he "does not look too bad though", is gently and *"Adam likes him"*. Besides, Philippe has his own flat. Thus, Milou's whole demeanour is turned back to the past; a past she buried and that jumps to life from time to time.

Farah is also confident that Milou must have met him. Milou confirms that *"I have—have met him. On occasions: weddings and so. That's all"*. Milou has had no reaction so far. She just listens to Farah's report of her life (Ibid. 59). Besides, she adds that her aunt Sorraya told her that *"Philippe never changes"* and he still lives with his mother. Milou's thoughts are boiling. She cannot help asking if it is Philippe who asked her to marry him.

Farah confirms that she is not going to marry Philippe and that she is just "*playing with the idea"*. Milou is not satisfied with such an answer and she asks Farah again: *"But has he asked you?"* Farah repeats (Ibid. 60) that he had not. *"But he would if I wanted him"*. Milou wanders how a Muslim like Farah can marry a Christian Orthodox like Philippe. Farah believes he will convert to Islam. She repeats that *"one knows these things"*. She

speaks about the same *"thing in his eyes"* when he looked at her. She is surprised at the way he looks each time. She meets him on the stairs: *"he looks as though something terrific has happened"*. Farah's aunt Nadia *"thought Monsieur Philippe had a tendresse"* for her.

Milou's thoughts are still confused and wandering. She asks Farah about her reaction if as she says she thought a man had a tendresse for her and she made the first step to call his attention and yet he ignores her. Farah denied such a thing had happened to her and (Ibid. 61) if it happened she would ignore him. Farah sticks to the word tendresse and asks her Tante Milou if such a word is not lovely. Milou agrees and confirms: *"Tendresse…of course"*.

Milou's story is that of a fading phoenix whose chance to love and marry the man she always dreamt about had escaped her. She turns to being a shadow of her own self crooning an old hazy song. Milou lives upon mere souvenirs and the nostalgia of having felt tenderness for a man who has never shown love for her. *Tendress* seems the only sad and yet hopeful symphony left for Milou to live for.

III. 3. *"Mandy"*: A Story of an Oriental/Western Harem

Mandy is a narrative that is divided into three parts. The first part is a letter dated Wednesday, 28 December, 1978. The letter is written by the main character Asya to her mother to make the story within it told by a first person narrator. The writer mentions that she is writing from New York and by the time the letter gets to her mother she will be back in London. She visits New York for the New Year (Soueif, 1996, p. 89).

Asya writes that she is with Gerald and she does not explain who he is. Then she moves to inform her mother that she saw Saif before she left London and he looked *"OK"*. She has been borrowing Saif's *"pretty flat"* and decides to look for a flat of her own as soon as she gets back to London for she had *"no fixed address"*. Asya, the writer narrator, turns to speak about Saif and how he has known another *"Female"*. The new girlfriend is American. Saif brought his new girlfriend a fortnight before Asya quits London to New York. Saif asked Asya to come and meet them (he and his girlfriend) at the train station. They intended to visit Windermere and go to the same hotel where Asya and Saif once had dinner.

Asya then moves to describe the American girl who was with Saif. "*She was dressed up like a Lichfield ad"*. A counter casual outfit that he wanted her to buy back in 1975. So, narration goes back to the past a fortnight ago before the narrator goes to New York from London where she met Saif and his girlfriend. Then Asya remembers when Saif wanted her to buy the same clothes in 1975 that his American girlfriend wears now. *"…a just-below-the-knee camel skirt, a russet cashmere jumper and a cape with a Burberry check scarf, brown Charles Jourdan boots and Etienne Aigner hand bag to match"*. Asya thinks the American girl looked lost for the clothes did not suit her.

The American girl is called Mandy the name Soueif's chooses as the title of the whole narrative. Mandy has fair skin and brown hair. Asya insists that her clothes were *"weird"*. Yet, those kinds of clothes were Saif's symbol and emblem of *"elegant women"*. However, Asya is sure Mandy would never have chosen such clothes for her own self. Later Asya asks her mother as though seeing her and talking to her face to face if she remembers a scene she witnessed in Harvey Nichols. Saif stopped at a mannequin and told her that the clothes on it will look good on her. So, a going back further in the past with the scene in Harvey Nichols takes place again. The narrator cried and asked *"why does it always have to be beige?*" *"She pitied the American girlfriend calling her "free-wheeling" "verse writing girl"*. She mentions then that Saif told her Mandy is a free verse writer. Besides, Mandy is a *"dope-smokin"* and a photographer. Mandy smokes dope like everybody else. Yet Asya ensures her mother that she did not. Asya felt relieved not to be forced to wear clothes she did not like just because Saif bought them for her. Yet she felt jealous of Mandy because Saif *"was looking after her"*. This is the kind of jealousy children feel because their parents treated kindly other children than themselves (Ibid. 90). She admits not being "*jealous jealous"* like for example to *"change places with Mandy"*. She did not wish Mandy any harm either. She rather *"felt sorry for her"*. She says Mandy seems *"out of place"* yet *"determined"*. She thinks it difficult for Mandy to be *"dragged off to meet "the wife-even an estranged wife- as she once put it"*. Asya confirms *"neither of us* (meaning Saif) *has mentioned a divorce yet"*.

Asya rushes to speak about Saif her husband who looked great and who was still a heavy smoker smoking *"40 cigarettes a day"*. Saif is *"terribly chic"* and wearing a beard. Next Asya tells her mother that she *"took them to the best place that the town had to offer in the way of cafés"*. The café was full of senior citizens and angry young mothers. It smelled off frying oil. They had tea and the narrator felt terribly jealous about Mandy again. She

compares herself to a mother who was shown her son's *"new girl"*. Mandy she thinks is not *"pretty enough"* and she does not fit Saif. Yet, she is sure Mandy is in love with him. Moreover, it is difficult not to fall in love with him. She also thinks Mandy cannot make him happy and will not be happy with him. Mandy rather liked Saif's money, Asya thinks, for he was *"prosperous"*. The money Mandy loves will not last long for he spent a lot of it (Ibid. 92).She then mentions that the couple (Saif and Mandy) *"drove off to the Lakes"* with a camera. Saif phoned her to say that they found the hotel nice as he and she had already done before. Three days later Saif came back alone to see Asya and say goodbye. Mandy, he said went shopping. However, Asya thought that the real reason for not being there was that Mandy did not want to go through the same experience again of meeting her boyfriend's estranged wife. Asya did not blame her.

The second part of the story is an extract of Mandy's journal dated 11/24/78. This entails that Mandy's narrative dates earlier than Asya'a. Mandy writes it and narrates it at the same time. Both narratives are written and told by their female narrators. Mandy starts recounting the extract of her journal by stating that Asya met her and Saif at the station. Asya was so friendly, Mandy confirms, to the point that made her feel like throwing up.

She blames Asya's inexpressiveness on *"Eastern women's inscrutableness"*. She writes that the woman's name is Asya. In Arabic the name means "Asia". He (meaning Saif) informs her that it could also mean *"the Cruel One"* and *"she who is full of sorrow"*. Asya, Mandy writes, insisted on taking them for tea to the place she calls *"dump"* and smelled off frying oil. She is sure that this is the kind of place that both of them knew and they considered *"picturesque and quaint"* for (Soueif, 1996, p. 93) it was near a market.

Besides it was down a dusty, cobbled lane. The people who went there were poor and they did not afford *"anywhere better"* (Ibid. 94). She thinks it *"a hell of a depressing scene"*. She hated the *"greasy pastry"* and over *"boiled tea"* they were eating and drinking and their *"dump conversation"* too. One part of the conversation that lasted longer was Asya and Saif's discussion of Sadat's Jerusalem trip. Asya then paid the bill and ensured Saif and Mandy that they would like Windermere for it is beautiful. Mandy is sure Asya avoided mentioning the name of the hotel she and Saif went to. She asked them to drive her home. Yet Saif preferred to stop at his college first. Mandy writes that Saif informed her that Asya is finishing a dissertation to get a Ph.D. Mandy thinks the way he said it made her think he was telling a joke (Ibid. 95).

She makes sure writing her journal that she is trying to be as fair as possible for that is what a journal is about. She confesses Asya *"is good looking; not a stunner or anything, but OK"*. She had shiny thick black hair. She thinks Asya a lot older than her. Yet she could not be sure of her exact age for this was the trick of Eastern women and Eastern people in general. The roots of Orientalism and (mis)representations discussed in chapter one (p. 27) loom large in this very narrative.

Saif took Mandy to his old college and introduced her to his acquaintances saying just *"this is Mandy"*. He did not precise who Mandy is. Mandy was fed up but could not help but follow him. She learnt that Saif made her follow him and do whatever he pleases without caring about the others.

Although she got *"madder and madder",* Mandy kept smiling and greeting Saif's acquaintances. She keeps reassuring herself that Saif would not think of taking her to such places as if he had intended to split with her soon. She can feel calmer now. She does not afford being mad at him for he is paying for the suite she is in. Besides, she has never lived in a suite like the one she is in now. She feels the place a real old English room to write poems (Ibid. 96). She repeats that Saif is paying for the trip and for everything that she buys. She has never been obliged to use her own money for three weeks since she has met him. Besides, Mandy had many people who owed her money. She is amazed at how prosperous he is and the way he spends his money exorbitantly. She is also surprised at the number of times he takes showers and how many times a day he changed his socks. Yet she profits from such a luxurious life for he always buys her something too. She mentions the outfit she was wearing this morning—the one Asya criticized in her narrative.

Mandy writes it is called a *"Lady's Travelling Outfit"* and that is what she was trying to look like. She writes that she saw Asya *"clocking it"* in the station. She thinks her clothes were new and fashionable. She is sure Asya is used to the kind of clothes Saif bought. Asya has been married to Saif for six years and she must know these details by heart. She probably has not concluded this looking at the way Asya dressed: *"jeans and sweater"*. She could notice that Asya did not care anymore. Mandy believes Saif did not mind spending money on her. This is a typical Eastern nature. According to her Eastern women belong to Eastern men like *"chattels"* and *"cattle"* that rhyme together; She guessed that *"Nomadic people",* belonging is *"livestock"*. She is not yet sure more time leading such a life and she feels Asya got *"fed up"* although *"she was born to it"*. Mandy wonders for a

time why she is thinking about Asya constantly. She also wonders if Saif is still thinking about her. She fancies he thinks about Asya *"a fair bit"*.

However Saif has never admitted it nor has he discussed it even. He just answered a few questions. Mandy admits that seeing Saif with Asya reminds her of a kid showing off to attract his mother's attention and *"playing her up"*. Once he is to smile to her and other times he is harsh with her. Yet Asya is serene and patient like a mother who *"takes it all"*. Her story could have been *"beautiful"* Mandy writes. Yet it makes her sick (Ibid. 98). Two people had lived throughout the stormy and good times of their life and yet ended being mere good friends. Mandy feels sick about their situation. She gets upset just to think about it. She stops writing for a while to have a smoke and a small Scotch and continues writing her journal.

This journal is very important to her for she keeps everything in it *"accounts, observations, fragments, poems, even the days* "[she] *I get my period and the nights I make love"*. Mandy carries on writing and comparing Saif as he sleeps to a baby as he *"turns onto his side and curls up like a baby"*. She thinks him very *"cute"* and *"rich"*. He sometimes behaves strangely and does not speak much. She believes Saif has never talked *"about anything personal"*. She is sure they will have a nice day tomorrow (Ibid. 99). They will go on the Lake and go to Wordsworth's home town and have real tea and cakes in a *"neat place"*. She intends to have a joint instead of sleeping. She prefers copying two poems. She thinks of typing her poems and showing them to Saif.

Here ends part two of *Mandy* written and narrated by Mandy Saif's American girlfriend.

The last part of the narrative is another letter written by Asya to her mother dated Sunday, 12 March, 1979. This means this letter is written a year later as compared to the previous texts. In this letter Asya thanks her mother for being her *"Guardian Angel"* and for answering her letters (Soueif, 1996, p. 101). She announces to her mother that she has a new job at Citadel Publishing House. Asya is using her mother's money *"to make a down payment on a little flat in Kensington"* to which she will move next month. She turns to speak about Saif saying that she is borrowing his flat as he is away. She feels strange being *"in his atmosphere "*again. That could be one way to remember him and keep him constantly next to her. She mentions that Saif is in the States. She is not sure about what he is there for, yet she knows he is there with Mandy. Again Mandy and Saif come back in Asya's life. She writes that he is there either to meet her parents or to get rid of her. That is

what she wishes for sure she wants him back with her. Saif gave her a portfolio of Mandy's *"oeuvres"* a while ago (Ibid.102).

Now another narrator is implemented within the narrative to report what Asya does, says and feels. An omniscient narrator is introduced to take part of narration. Asya looks up from her typewriter. She thinks Mandy must be doing her best to become a poet and she is sure Mandy did not ask Saif to give Asya her poems. She guessed Mandy was horrified. Then she considered the idea to be improbable for if she were horrified her work would not be with her now. Saif is not to oblige her give it to Asya, she thought.

Soueif now uses the senses and camera film technique mentioning that Asya is seeing Saif and Mandy, Mandy trying to get her work published, and Saif finally suggests giving it to Asya for *"she's in publishing"*.

Then the narration shifts to mention Asya remembering in a time past when she discussed publishing Mandy's works with Saif without any introduction nor direction*: "But what am I supposed to do with this?"*, Asya had asked Saif. *"I have not the foggiest idea"*, Saif said. Asya then informed Saif that Citadel Publishing House published school books and not the kind of works Mandy wrote. Saif suggested to Asya she sends Mandy a rejection slip. Asya then returns to Mandy's portfolio and considers it. She wonders if Saif wanted her to see it and if it was meant for her with a hidden message. Asya reads a poem of Mandy's:

"We see what we want to see

Only what one wants to see—

You see your own reflection".

Something else attracts Asya's attention that she finds among Mandy's poems is first a set of photographs of buildings with mirrored windows and secondly a set of photographs (Ibid. 103) of autumnal trees and a blurred figure, Saif surely, vanishing into the distance, and on the facing page Mandy mentions that *"the trees will flower next year"*.

Sitting back on her chair, Asya thinks again if what is written is meant for her. Yet, it was Mandy who wrote it not Saif. She wonders whether she would be turning everything she reads into a personal message. She looks through the dark window. *"Last month she had stood out there"*. Going back to the past again, she thinks she sat under the same tree

she is seeing now just as a dark shadow. That day she watched him and she made sure that she was never to sit with him on the same twin armchair. She still tries to see the sky to look for any stars. She tries to imagine the world there in the sky full of signals. One *"picks one up and it seems to speak to you. To you alone"*. She wonders whether this is what the horoscope is about. Saif hated such questions. And he sent her Mandy's portfolio. Asya returns to her table taking distances from the window. She thinks Gerald would love such things though and multimedia. She takes Mandy's portfolio and looks to the pages until she reaches the longest of the poems and stops at it.

She concludes that Mandy could say the word *"ass" "Jaunty ass". "Big deal",* Asya thinks as she turns back to her type writer. Then the omniscient narrator vanishes to allow narration resume where it stopped with Asya writing the same letter to her mother. She tells her mother that Mandy's poems are *"vaguely ok"*. They are not the kind of poems she would prefer and like. Then she asks her mother to come next summer (Ibid. 104).

Tracing back the story from its beginning and probing the narrative technique Soueif has used so far one is to notice that the writer designed both first parts as writing/narrating texts. The first part is a letter written by Asya to her mother dated Wednesday, 28 December, 1978. The second part is written by Mandy as an extract of her journal has an earlier date 24/11/78. So Asya's first part takes place following an advanced time as compared to Mandy's narrative. Both women are writing and narrating at the same time telling fragments of their lives with the same man Saif. They both loved the same man and felt desperate, weak and trapped by this love. Saif is Asya's husband and Mandy's boyfriend. Both narratives intertwine recounting the same stories of shared lives from different vintage points. Asya's story is recounted from an 'Eastern' woman's perspective. According to Asya's letter to her mother Asya is seeing a man called Gerald. She is in New York and would soon be back to London. She is homeless borrowing Saif's flat and she looks for a flat of her own. Asya recollects the past a fortnight ago back in London when she met Saif her husband with whom life is not going very well. Saif was dating a new *"female*", this time an American, called Mandy. This entails that Saif was used to knowing women despite his being still married to Asya. Asya was of course *"emptying her heart"* to her mother her own *"guardian angel"* thinking of events that sure had made her feel regret and pain.

Mandy is Saif's American girlfriend who according to Asya dressed weirdly. She was obliged to wear what Saif bought for her. Asya remembers again her own self back in 1975 when she stood near a mannequin and was shown the clothes she was to wear and that she did not choose. So, Asya delved back to a remote past to empathise with Mandy and reminisce how sorry she felt to wear clothes and colours that were imposed on her. She felt sorry for Mandy having Saif to care for her. This means that she was still in love with him. She confessed that Saif was a man that a woman could not help but fall in love with. She mentioned that she took them to the best place she knew full of *"senior citizens"*, had tea and chatted.

Asya admitted feeling jealous of Mandy like a mother would feel when shown her son's girlfriend. She thought that Mandy was not pretty enough for Saif and was unable to make him happy. She thought Mandy had a liking for Saif's money and his prosperous life. Saif took Mandy to the same hotel in Windermere that he and Asya went to. Asya entails he still loved her. He came three days later to her just to say goodbye. Mandy was not with him. Asya thought she did not want to go through the same embarrassing situation of meeting the estranged wife of her boyfriend. Yet Asya did not blame her.

On her turn Mandy told the story of her meeting Asya writing in her journal dated 28/11/1978 nearly a month earlier than Asya's letter. Mandy mentioned meeting Asya at the station and she thought her friendly in an exaggerated extent and also inscrutable the way Eastern women and people looked. Mandy criticized the *"dump"* place Asya took her and Saif to have tea. She described the pastry as greasy and the tea as over boiled. According to her such Eastern people could not know better places than that dirty place smelling off fried oil and situated near a market place.

According to Saif, Mandy insists, Asya's name meant a woman who is sad, full of sorrow and who is cruel. It also meant Asia in Arabic. This foreshadowed how sad and disillusioned Asya was. She could also become cruel perhaps with people that snatched her happiness and her whole life such as Mandy and many others. At the café, Mandy felt Asya talked to her and Saif as a mother to her children or as an elder person would talk to people younger than they are. Asya wished them a nice trip. Saif enjoyed his conversation with Asya on politics discussing Sadat's trip to Jerusalem. That was the only long and interesting part of their conversation. Mandy felt Asya not fit for a person writing a Ph.D. Mandy said so for she was determined to be fair to her journal. When she went to Saif's

old college his colleagues for he chose to stop there. She felt trapped and a mere child following her father. She might be alluding to the livestock following its master in Eastern countries and so did women tracking the steps of their men. She could not refuse though to do so while she felt mad and upset. She was very nervous and anxious thinking of Saif splitting with her, yet she tried to ensure herself he did not think he would do it. So like Asya thought, Mandy was dragging along that Eastern man who used to be her husband like livestock because of his money. He was paying for the suite she lived in. Mandy confirms she had never stayed in such places.

She enjoyed her stay in that *"old English"* room where she could write poems. She did not have to spend her own money for he paid for everything. She thought this natural for an Eastern man to do. She also wrote about the outfit she was wearing when she met Asya on the station. Mandy believed Asya envied her while the latter thought the clothes did not fit her at all. Mandy knew Asya had had the same experience with Saif for she had lived with him for six years. She also had a word to say about the way Asya dressed: *"jeans and sweater"* as compared to her stylish way of dressing. She had something to say about Eastern men and the way they owned women like cattle. Mandy pitied Asya for she *"was born to it"*. Asya also pitied Mandy as she was bound to wear clothes she did not like. Mandy kept thinking about Asya as Asya did and whether Saif thought about her still. She could not bear the look of both of them together. She felt Saif behaved like a son who desperately wanted to attract his mother's attention showing off. Asya was the mother who took it all. In her turn Asya mentioned in her letter that she could not bear seeing Saif caring for Mandy like a child, missing his/her parents' attention that had been granted to another child, would feel. Mandy became sick for the couple's relation ending like that of mere intimate friends. She thought of them enduring so much then giving it all up. She had probably felt part of the problem. She talked of the trip she and Saif would have on the Lakes. She also wrote about smoking dope and writing poems. She intended to type them and show them to Saif back in London.

III. 4. "*Melody*": A Swan's Lake Childish Symphony

Melody starts with the narrator's inviting readers to smelling the scent of jasmine that fills the air from where she is telling the story. The narrator, a woman again, describes the kinds of plants that grow where she lives (Soueif, 1996, p.3). It is a season of change in this country and this change is sensed by the overwhelming odour of jasmine and *"the*

bougainvillaea [that] blooms against the walls all the year round". One gets the idea of confinement, veiling and intrusion, thinking about this climbing plant with red and purple flowers that is common in hot countries. Soueif uses nature introducing plants and animals and the senses introducing smelling and hearing as agents that gear narration. She entitles the story *Melody* prompting readers to hear this melody all along narration. Besides, mosquitoes buzz outside the netting and the lizards dart outside.

The story is told by a first person female narrator starting from the present time. She begins speaking about the human element in this place as *"we" "us women"*. The narrator speaks about herself and other women who are not allowed to use the pool in such a hot country. Right from the outset, one starts to hear the echo of the confinement melody crooning. Only kids are permitted to use the pool and *"the men of course"*. So, *Melody* is a story told by a woman that Soueif elected to tell the story of other "*us women*" in a hot country where only men and kids have access to the pool.

The narrator also reminds readers that she cannot smell jasmine *"that much either"*. She has to go at night to smell it. However, she is not able to because of Wayne. She addresses readers as *"you"* which is one element of Soueif's narrative technique to get narrator and readers involved in the same story. Does this *"you"* stand for women only? The narrator lives in a compound where there is not much to do other than shopping or visiting friends or at least acquaintances.

The narrator starts recounting the story from the present describing its setting, then (Ibid. 4) she starts narrating from the past. She tells the *"you"* that she came to this place six months ago with her son Wayne and her husband Rich. Her child went to school every day and has to wake up at seven each morning and sleep early while the*" [other] child was never sent to school"*. The narrator remembers this child thinking about her own. She mentions a *"She",* the other child's mother, keeping the child who *"was never sent to school"* with her all the time.

She then shifts to tell readers about her family's disappointment with the setting. Even if the grocer's, hospital, flower shop, and news agent are at hand: *"not that any of them looked like they were up to much but still they'd have to be better than nothing"*. She then switches to speak about the same woman and her child that she met at the pool. She describes the woman as tacky with dyed hair and make-up, insisting on readers to see dark roots on the woman's hair where the dark hair was growing on the bronze one. The woman

had *"quite a bit of eye make-up and her skirt was shorter than you normally see around here"*.

The narrator is stunned seeing the woman not wearing an abaya which *"is normally ok on a compound"* not a short skirt. The woman, according to the narrator, has probably broken certain local laws around. Then *"the kid"* appears. She was very pretty. It was a little girl whom her son Wayne had fallen for and who was not as fake as her mother. *"She was a true blonde with natural fabulous curls"*. With such a description of naturalness and authenticity, the narrator draws a painting of a Dorian Gray beauty (Ibid. 5) with a reverberating sweet music of its own. The kid's portrait was painted in yellow on her hair and blue on her eyes. Thus nature, music and colours could tell the story too.

The narrator slips to describe the child's mother character. The woman called Ingie chatted all the time and her English was appalling. Unlike the narrator who chose a school for her son, Ingie kept the girl, Melody, with her and taught her to read and write.

Narration flows as the narrator moves to discuss the elements of attraction and bewitchment in the story. It is a love story that began between her son Wayne and Melody. The narrator did not understand the causes of the attraction. Beauty in the story could be felt emanating from children whose innocence is the real melody of the story. The narrator then mentions that Ingie and her child Melody were Turkish for Melody spoke only Turkish and her mom spoke it too besides awful English. The Turkish woman confesses to the narrator that her daughter Melody did not go to school. She says that she taught her how to read and write. She adds that she did not want her girl to go to school. *"I like her with me",* she confirms. The narrator insists that such an attitude is wrong. Ingie is described by the narrator involving colours and sounds (Ibid. 6) as Ingie's *"main thing is laughing. Laughing and clothes and make-up and dancing"* and of course *"cooking"* were Ingie's main things. This could also be mentioned to highlight the difference between her, the Western, and Ingie, the Eastern. The narrator expresses her surprise at this Turkish woman cooking for her husband all day long. This is how Muslim women are, which she is not. The narrator warns readers using a *"mind you"* recall that this is how Muslim women caught their men by being slaves. She preferred reading a book rather than wasting time cooking. These women, like Ingie, do not care if they are second wives. Besides, her husband is a lot older than she is.

Then the narrator introduces Elaine; another woman who knows much of this family. Elaine is the narrator's Scottish friend. She has lived in the same place for almost four years and *"she knows everything"*. The narrator is sure and wants to ensure readers that what Elaine says and knows is true. It is Elaine who told the narrator that Ingie's husband had been married to an American woman and had lived with her for twenty years with his two boys. The narrator thinks Ingie's husband divorced his American wife and opted for Ingie, the Turkish, *"that he could lock her up while he made lots of money"*. Ingie told her that her husband was a genius and that he loved his work. Besides, *"his wife is very bad girl"*.

Ingie's husband is described as dancing happily in Melody's third birthday. The music of the story appears back to draw the picture of a *"joyful"* family (Ibid. 7) *"Ingie too is a very joyful person. When you visit her she always has some tape on—loud. Disco, rock, oriental music, whatever"*. Music resumes narration to spread joy within the family. Melody likes music too.

> And one of Melody's favourite games is to sit Wayne down, help her mother to put on the same of that wailing, banging staff, grab a scarf and start dancing for him. And she can dance. Arms and legs twirling. Neck side to side leaning backwards. The lot. And Wayne, who normally can't sit still for a minute, sits transfixed, watching a little blonde who cannot speak a word that means anything to him, strutting and flirting about with a veil. (p. 7)

It is the music and dance that renders Melody alive. Soueif draws a picture of an oriental setting having a woman—a belly dancer—dance for a king or prince. Besides, the narrator is a Westerner describing an oriental and exotic setting of an oriental little girl bewitching a Western little boy. It could entail that all the music and dancing in the scene are meant to bewitch a man though, a mere child, by a woman, though a little girl. The narrator still does not think this friendship suits her child. Yet, she is bound to bring him to Melody's house because he insisted on going there weeping and shouting besides the tears and the tantrums. However, Melody did not care as much as he did.

The narrator shifts to speak of being: *"In point of fact"* a second family as well and that Rich, her husband, has three sons back in Vancouver. She made a deal with her husband to live in a place she despises. The place she is living in now is she considers strange and hostile. This is what he wanted. To conceive a child is what she wanted. Her husband

signed this contract and on the other hand she accepted, like a few women, *"to be buried alive in a place like this"*. However, Rich agreed on such a deal, he got himself vasectomised for he did not want any more children (Ibid. 9). Readers granted a briefing of the narrator's intimate life in order to compare what happened with Ingie as far as child conceiving is concerned. Ingie's Eastern husband, unlike the narrator's Western husband, asked his wife to become pregnant with a third child. Yet, as Elaine said, Ingie was on the pill, which her husband did not know. Ingie believed in fortune tellers, and because of one of their prophesies, she did not want to have a third child for the latter *"would break her heart"*. The narrator mentions that she does not believe in fortune tellers. She also believes that Ingie's husband's perpetual insistence on having children stems from his being Muslim. Muslim men *"can never have enough children"*. Mostly though, they want boys. But Ingie's husband broke the rule hoping for another girl. He thought girls were tender and loving.

Ingie is described as a woman of no importance, nosy, talkative and meddling into her neighbours' private lives. Besides, *"For all her tartiness, though, she* [Ingie] *was a good mum"*. So, according to the narrator, both mother and daughter had a tendency to sexually attract men. The narrator thinks both parents 'good'. They accompany their children to *"Kiddi World on the last Thursday of the month; Western Family Day"*—to buy presents (Ibid. 10).

Then readers are taken back to the present to be informed that *"Now of course, you don't see them anymore"* meaning the Turkish family who played Western for a day or a month were nowhere to be seen. The narrator does not justify this absence, yet goes on to confess that *"nobody wants to see much of them to tell the truth"*. Elaine always repeated that Ingie's husband was weird. Yet, the narrator never knew to what extent until she heard that stuff about the camera. The accident of the camera, the narrator heard of later when Ingie and Melody could not be seen anywhere.

Narration moves back to the past when one night the narrator went to see what weird news surrounded this strange family. The scent of Jasmine was there to fill the air. *"...the air in the compound was, as I said, not just full of the scent of jasmine, but literally heavy with it"*. Now, the strong scent of jasmine is back again to remind readers of how the story started and that this smell is to accompany narration further. The narrator knew there was a funeral in Ingie's house and that a lot of people went there the night before. Yet, she waits

until the next day to go there in order to be labelled friendly. When she reaches the house, she heard the Quran being chanted which (Ibid. 11) contributed to the musical element fostering narration.

A description of Ingie's house includes a lot of women in black and babies inside in this Muslim house where a funeral is taking place. Men are gathering outside and women are preparing food and serving black coffee for them. Ingie transformed into an aging woman plain without any make up and wearing a long skirt. She has no tears to drop and no (Ibid. 12) voice to speak although she tries hard to. She just mentions to the narrator that "*people live fifty years. Seventy years, even. She lived fifty months"*.

Still the narrator does not mention the cause of Ingie's paramount sadness, her metamorphosis, nor the reason for all these people being there with the Quran being chanted in her house. To dramatize events further the writer makes Ingie speak again: *"He gave her to me. Why he take her way? Why?"* Who gave and who took and who is the 'her' that Ingie speaks about? The narrator does not have any answer. She mentions a woman reminding Ingie that she is a Muslim (Ibid. 13). The writer makes Ingie speak again talking about missing her daughter who is no more there and who disappeared in a minute. Elaine comes back to be mentioned again for she is the one to know that the Turkish woman who consoled Ingie and who asked about what happened is the latter's best friend.

The writer then allows Ingie to tell the story of her daughter's disappearance beginning from a yesterday. Ingie recounts that on an errand to the shop with Melody and Murat her son, Melody had a car accident. Melody was left by Ingie with a friend for she did not want to take her to the shop in order not to *"nag her"* on buying sweets which Ingie thought were bad for her daughter's teeth. Melody wanted to follow her mother and a car violently hit her rolling her over and over as she crossed the road alone. *"Mama"* was the last word Melody uttered. A child's rescue call for her mother drags the sad melody along to take the lead in narration. It was the jasmine flower-shop man who carried Melody as she fell with her blood oozing on the road. So, here is the jasmine scent to be mentioned again when death comes to Melody.

A beautiful paradox is drawn by Soueif as she mixes sweet jasmine scent with music to indicate both liveliness and melodious setting and death to put an end to both happy notes and lively scent. Jasmine and melody could be put there by Soueif to stand for death and the end of innocence with Melody's death. One recalls D.H Lawrence's short story *Odour*

of Chrysanthemums whereby the author set the beautiful white flowers as symbol of death. Does jasmine incarnate death for Soueif or does it play the eternal melody of the tale? (Ibid. 14)

Melody dies although she was taken to hospital. The mother's disbelief of her daughter's death bound her beg for truth in the narrator's eyes and those of the women there. *"Her eyes"*, [Ingie's], the narrator resumes, *"have a questioning, doubting look in them as though one of us might tell her she is wrong and Melody is "not die"*.

The narrator then leaves Ingie's house to go to the flower shop and buy some flowers for her husband for he kept Wayne while she was at Ingie's. While she was crossing the road, the narrator is (Ibid. 15) stunned not to find any sign of Melody's death on the road. *"There are no marks on the surface, no bent lamp posts, no police cordon. Nothing to say that something out of the ordinary happened here last night"*. Does the narrator entail that in such a Muslim country people's lives are worthless? Does she mean that nobody cared about a little girl being brutally killed on the road? Or does she allude to people's carelessness when it comes to responding to an innocent melody crying for empathy and care? Again she mentions that the flower-shop-man, *"a greasy Lebanese who I never liked"*, is the one to inform the narrator and readers that Melody's father wanted to kill the man (Ibid. 16) who killed Melody and that the killer is in prison.

The flower man also tells about the accident of the camera mentioned earlier. Melody's father took a camera and filmed the blood scene on the road and his daughter in the morgue. He filmed every detail of Melody's death interviewing the flower-man. When the narrator goes to see her friend Elaine, the latter narrates the story of Melody's father showing his saddened wife the films in his camera: one film of Melody's third birthday, another of the detailed death scene, and another of Melody in the morgue (Ibid. 17). Elaine also informs the narrator that Ingie's husband blamed her for his daughter's death[2]. The narrator mentions "they" as people who again inform her that Melody's father obliges his wife to have another child—another daughter.

Melody is buried in Turkey where snow fills the place and air. Nobody in the compound wanted to meet the couple. The narrator could not understand how Ingie could cross the same road as her late daughter did: *"How can she ever cross that road without thinking of Melody?"* How can she walk in the gardens or live in the same apartment? The narrator mentions going to visit Ingie again. The mother was still thinking of her late daughter

believing she was a good child not a selfish one and that the house grew empty after her sudden death.

Melody's story ends with the narrator leaving Ingie's house and walking home with the smell of jasmine filling her nose and the sad melody of Melody's death reverberating in her ears. Melody ceased crooning and laughing yet children are still playing on the street and jasmine is still smelled there.

Melody is the story of innocence, death, strangeness, hope and despair. Soueif blends odours and colours again to tell a tale of differences and sameness mingling her Oriental and Western women together in one story. The Western narrator sounds pompous and strives to appear different. Yet, her being a woman bound her not to use the pool whenever she could and not to smell jasmine flowers at any time she wanted. Her being a mother allowed her to sympathise with a grieving mother for the loss of her baby. In *Melody* Soueif afforded to make Western and Eastern women listen to the same sad symphony of death and the hope striving symphony of life regained again with Ingie's pregnancy.

III. 5. Soueif's Female Characters Echoed in Lawrence's "*The Plumed Serpent*" and Gordimer's "*Something Out There*":

Soueif's *The Sandpiper* embraces myriad facets of misogynist attitudes championing patriarchy and denial of women's Otherness. It also pictures instances of racist behaviour featuring Eastern women and men as inferior and strange entities. *The Sandpiper* shares these basic features with other literary texts as DH. Lawrence's *The Plumed Serpent* (1966). In this text Lawrence depicts misogynist creations and a greed for power. He charges his protagonist Don Ramon to detest the masses of people in Mexico (invaded by capitalist Europeans). Ramon despises intimacy with them (pp.247- 48- 50). Both he and Kate (the female protagonist) admit aristocratic superiority and their loathing of race mixing (Ibid. 246). Don Ramon dislikes seeing the native Indians strained with European capitalist loss of innocence and craving for power. He wants them to remain primitive and deny them access to knowledge and power. Don Ramon is chosen by Lawrence as the supreme God that should be worshiped. He is a Mexican of European descent; a white Christian and a man of intellect. He shows his dying wife no compassion.

Kate's opinion about Indians and the possibility of their dealing with politics translates into *"When you got these dark-faced people away from wrong contacts like agitators and*

socialism, they made one feel that life was vast, if fearsome, and death was fathomless" (Lawrence, 1966, p. 101). It means that those rather red-faced so called dark-faced primitive people should be kept away from politics and remain simple and merely attractive and sensual being admired thanks to their sexually appealing dark bodies .Kate's opinion of the Indian fluctuates between despising and admiring them: *"tenderness and revulsion"* (Ibid. 73) *"fearsome and so appealing* (Ibid. 46) *"passionate warmth"* (Ibid.170) to *"brutish evil, cold and insect-like" "primitive" "Slightly imbecile"* (Ibid. 72-131-212).

As far as female inferiority is concerned Don Ramon thinks Kate had little or no significance (Lawrence, 1966, p. 386). She was not real until she was reciprocal. One feels that submission to the other sex concerns only the female side as Kate is made to question individuality as an illusion as she feels that by oneself one is *"starless and fragmentary"* (Ibid. 388).

Soueif's male and female characters look like their Gordimer's counterparts in many instances. Besides the racial images destabilised and altered by Gordimer in her novella *Something Out There* (1984) are the patriarchal images although supposedly described in a coyly manner. Joy, Gordimer's protagonist, inherits a status of *"triple marginality Otherness"* (58). She incarnates the political force owing to her role as a revolutionary. She also constitutes a threat aspiring to remodel the South African power structure. Her being white shapes her as a racial traitor. She renounces whiteness as the norm dehumanising all other forms of being and colours. Yet, Gordimer's renewed representations of women are sometimes controversial comingling her own patriarchal constructions of women-as-Other or women-as-lesser. Joy fails to conceive a child and pretends a false pregnancy. Gordimer expresses this deviation from the normal and natural on Joy's part (Lazar, 1992, p. 58-61), (Gordimer, 1984, p.134). Joy is described as a skeleton like figure: *"you could see her bones through her crinkly cotton shirt…She wore glasses. A long thin nose spoilt her face…the forehead tugged tight by flat blond hair twisted into a knob"* (Ibid. 122). Joy is described by black male characters as a sexual alien: *"Without flesh or flirtatiousness for any man to enjoy"* (Ibid. 144). Gordimer does not seem to counter argument such condemnations of what a 'real woman' should be. She seems to insist on Joy's lacking these qualities. *"The overall picture of Joy is of bonny a sexuality and austerity. This singular lack of bodily attractiveness marks the depictions of many of white women activists in Gordimer's fiction"*. This entails that such a category of

women though revolutionary is rendered less important as compared to male. She classifies the physically unattractive women as inferior as regards male characters or bodily attractive women. Thus, Gordimer did not escape categorisation of women in a sexist fashion. Now, *"She attempts to make various sides of Otherness visible to each other"* (Lazar, 1992, p. 63).

III. 6. *The Water-Heater*: Salah; A Desire Bewitched Messiah

The Water-Heater starts in the present and it is narrated by an omniscient third person throughout Salah's, the main character's consciousness. Salah is sitting on the sofa in front of his open room remembering. Salah's remembering is characterised by a constant movement from sound to silence to sound again. The story opens on a description of the flat Salah is in as *"silent"* and the introducing of the *"hiss"* of the water-heater as a sound Salah *"was not completely used to yet"*. The narrator reminds readers that this part of narration in the present concerns the time the water-heater was bought. Narration moves on as Salah's daily routine actions are listed as a time dimension linking past to present time. *"Salah would…"* this is how the narrator characterises Salah's habitual actions using the conditional tense. This tense is referred to by the writer to distinguish the main character's habitual actions in the past from what Salah does now. So, Salah would awake from his siesta and go to his mother's room to enquire about her poor health. His mother has a weak voice that entails her illness, frailty and old age (Soueif, 1996, p. 65). His mother would ask him about his studies at university and pray God to save her dear son. Salah is displayed as a coy and obedient young man (Ibid. 66).

Some minutes later, the passage of the habitual time in silence is interrupted by another sound which would be now the weak voice of Salah's mother asking Faten, Salah's younger sister, to prepare tea for her elder brother. Faten would do as asked i.e. prepare tea for all and ask her brother if it was time she would prepare his bath. Faten is used to ask her brother if she would heat the water for his bath now. Salah's answer to his sister would be just *"a nod"*. So, far silence in Salah's mind resumes again and yet it is interrupted by Faten's lighting of the primus that Salah hears as though it were really there. Salah's memory travels from peaceful instances through moments of interruption by crescendo mounting sounds.

When hot water is ready Faten, would announce this to her elder brother, speaking softly as she always does, and disappearing from sight. *"Later"* is the adverb used to join the

time of the bath and what would happen next. A cleansed Salah would emerge from the day's dust and dirt and the *"mysterious impurities of sleep"*. Salah would put on *"a fresh white Jalabiyya"*. Using referents as 'fresh' and 'white' by the writer could allude to the use of senses with the first and colours with the second to point to their opposites, unclean and black. The first referents would pinpoint to a transformation gone through by Salah. Salah would then tell his prayer beads, recite the Quran until the time of the evening prayers. So far Salah's memory is bathing in peace.

A sudden going back to the present is introduced by a kind of red light featuring Salah sitting at the same place reciting the ninety nine names of God, absent minded, his prayer beads reverberating aimlessly between his nervous fingers. Another return to turmoil then is experienced by Salah. This evening is a special one for Salah for *"his routine had been broken"*. No tea is taken with his mother for she is not at home. She went to the funeral of a friend's husband. She is adamant on performing her social duties especially when death is concerned. She insisted on going although the death of her husband—Salah's father, left her *"almost invalidated"* four months ago.

Salah's routine is broken in another more crucial way today that is his not performing the sun set prayers or any of the day's prayers on this special and unusual evening. He sits on the sofa eyeing the bathroom door. The bathroom is loaded with steam that is reflected on the glass panel he gazed at, besides *"he could hear the hiss of the water-heater"*. The 'narrative's blood pressure' and breath are to rise and quicken; running fast with Salah's listening to the hiss of the water-heater. Salah's mind grows into a mess again. He cannot concentrate on reciting God's ninety nine names. He asks for God's forgiveness, begging for some peace and tranquillity to save him. His thoughts are to clutch to the first peace moment remembering again. He remembers what Sheik Hafiz said in the mosque. *"He was an ideal"*. He had been told that often. He was an ideal for young men to follow.

He was a rare and endangered flower in this decadent age. This is what Sheik Hafez confirmed. *"Look at the way he spends his day"*, the narrator comments allowing Salah's stream of consciousness to waft peacefully again. Salah would awake with *"the first call of the muezzin"*. He always preformed the dawn prayers even with cold water for his ablutions (Ibid. 68). He would spend the rest of his time to prepare his lectures until the morning comes for the morning prayers. He would *"add two prostrations for the prescribed four for good measure"* (Ibid.68). Salah's habitual actions would carry on being

listed with Salah choosing his clothes carefully and their colours: grey, black and dark blue. His eyes now turn to look at the small mirrored wardrobe. His remembrance of his choice of clothes reminds him of how clean and neat they are kept by Faten his younger sister. He thinks how carefully laundered they are and how good their smell is. He never finds a missing button and his shoes are always polished. Besides, *"He never saw her do it"*. It is Faten the obedient girl who does all this for her elder pious brother who never tells her what to do.

Salah's remembering drags him along to recall his mother's voice talking about his sister: "*she'll make some good man a wife worth her weight in gold"*. His mother' voice crumbles and turns down his short peace of mind as a *"spasm shot through his stomach"* and he looks down at his prayer beads trying to look for some peace again. This thought terrifies him. He asks for God's forgiveness. He assures himself that he remains grateful to God *"even for the ills that befall me"*.

Again Salah tries to concentrate on *"the details of his past life"* scanning for some tranquillity. His memory casts him back to where he stopped before his mother's voice interrupted his quiet remembering. After dressing, Salah would emerge out of his room to find his breakfast ready. Faten would have already prepared it and gone to school for she has a school bus to catch. Then he would clean his hands and mouth—keeping himself pure and clean all the time, go to his mother to beg her blessings and then go to university (Ibid. 69).

Out of home, the usual peace and tranquillity would follow Salah and be part of him. He would never raise his eyes to look at a woman stranger to him. On the overcrowded bus horrors would occur as men and women's bodies would stick one to the other in the unbearable morning heat. Salah would cling to his usual serenity and quietness keeping his eyes lowered. Tension would grow high again once out of the bus with women and men's bodies crushing again. Salah would seek God's protection again on his way to university: *"God preserve us. God preserve us. I take my refuge in Thee"*. He could not help thinking of Faten on one of these buses. He thanks God she has a school bus for women are subject to humiliation and shame on them. They are *"God's hell"*. Faten already knew these buses are forbidden for her for this is what her brother ordered. *"She accepts everything he did and everything he said—without any question"*. Faten's portrait is the only stereotyped

sample available in the story which is that of a soft and obedient female doing everything her brother asks without any discussion just the way her mother behaves[3].

Back to the present featuring Salah sitting on the sofa (Ibid. 70), his eyes could not move away from the glass panel above the bathroom door. The bathroom is still lit and the water-heater's sound is still humming. Thinking about what Faten is doing inside the bathroom, Salah's *"heart leapt to his throat"* and the mess in his mind takes the lead again. She must be washing her hair, Salah thinks. He invokes God's forgiveness and support against the Evil and *"Crafty"* soul and to help him get rid of Satan: *"I ask Thy forgiveness and pray for Thy support against the whisperings of the Crafty One"*. Again and again, he tries to keep his mind busy and peaceful reciting the ninety nine God's names. Yet, he cannot regain peace for he remembers sitting as he does now two months ago (Ibid. 71). It was the day of the installation of the water-heater. It was Salah's father who had ordered it and it arrived two months after his death. He had his own bath that day and Faten had hers too. That day his mother summoned him to come to her room and close the door. She announced him that she had been to her sister's home and the latter asked for Faten's hand for her son Isam. Isam is graduated dentist who is about to open his own Clinique and become rich. Faten is the right woman for him according to Salah's mother. Salah grew furious and surprised. He warned his mother against marrying a mere child of sixteen. Salah thought the idea a nonsense for Faten is an intelligent girl who must complete her education and go to university. Though his mother insisted that: *"A girl is destined for marriage"*, and education is not that important for a woman, Salah maintained his opinion strongly. He asked his mother not to speak to Faten and let her think about her studies. Besides, the prophet peace be upon him, commanded Muslims *"to seek education even as far as China"*. His mother agreed without any further objections. Salah thought his sister a good girl and she was very unlikely to go astray off the right path (Ibid.72).

That day he sat on the sofa two months ago, and the then new water-heater was *"singing in the flat"*. He was thinking of that conversation with his mother believing that he was right to prevent his sister's marriage and Faten would never go astray. Suddenly the bathroom door opened and Faten appeared reflecting light behind her in the dark. Feeling the *"new-released"* steam getting out of the open bathroom, *"a great heat rose in Salah's body"*. So, the quietness he enjoyed thinking about his right judgement and the idea of purity involving his sister faded away, paving the way to a sudden and growing unease. At the same time a noise was heard outside and Faten (Ibid. 73) hurried to see what the noise

was about. She came rushing to his room to lean over the railing of the balcony. There was a thief outside chased by a crowd. Salah concentrated on his sister's *"glowing skin"* and the fragrant odour of soap her body released. Her wet body had water tears dropping along it to reach her bare feet. Faten asked Salah if he had seen the thief and he denied having seen anything. His heart was already pounding. *"Everything pounded. The world pounded"*. She was worried about what would happen to the thief for she pitied him.

Salah thought no one had the right to *"transgress the law of God and Man"*, and that the thief should be punished. Salah was aware of Faten's presence beside him and he drew nearer to be able to touch her arm. He repeated that the thief should be punished no matter how poor he was. Faten did not discuss her elder brother's opinion. He was in his final year of Law school and therefore he knew better than she did. After that, Faten went to her room. Salah rehearsed an old saying: *"He who should guard has stolen"*. He remembered every detail of his sister's bathed and beautiful body. Her eyes were wide and bright brown (Ibid.74).

Now Salah, still sitting on the sofa in front of his room, tries hard to concentrate on his prayer beads and reciting the ninety nine God's names in vain (Ibid.75). The strong and persistent image of the details of his sister's body he had seen that day imprisoned his mind. Her wet and radiant hair, her beautiful skin and her open mouth were overwhelming. He turns to remember his good deeds and how much of an ideal he was to young men. He turned to his studies at university and law school. He never wastes his time wandering with his friends or girls. He spent much of his time between lectures halls and libraries. He did not know any girls and he did not want to know them. They seemed dirty and impure. He usually compares these *"street girls"* to his sister Faten who is so clean, smelling soap, shy and soft. She spends most of her time studying in her room. She does not argue and accepts everything with respect and love. She is the incarnation of obedience, submission, and non-resistance[4].

Yet he had returned all this purity and kindness with breaking God's commandments. In the mosque Sheikh Hafez insisted that Muslim cannot marry their mothers, sisters and their aunts. What would Sheikh say and do if he had an opportunity to unveil the real content of Salah's heart? He would certainly send him out of the mosque and he would be right. He thinks of carrying *"filth and contamination in his heart"* and God is not to forgive him until he gets rid of them. He still thinks of himself waiting for his sister to pass in the hall

so that *"he could accidently brush against her"*. He cannot find peace again as his mother's words reverberate in his mind. *"He who should guard has stolen"*, he thinks again. Faten's picture overwhelms his mind. He thinks of touching her fingers while she hands him tea. He feels he is not different from *"the furtive men on the buses"*. He thinks of his weak mother sensing the fire burning in his head. How about Faten? Has she suspected anything of the hell he is enduring? Can she still feel everything and hide it? He remembers the saying that women are deficient in brains and morality. She must know everything and conceals, he thinks. Yet, Faten is different. She *"has no secrets, no dark thoughts"*. *"Her face is an open book"*. Yet he still doubts whether she knows or not. *"Can you ever really know?"* he wondered.

The night before the neighbour's funeral, Salah's friends convinced him to go out and (Ibid.77) have fun. And so they did. They went to a café chatting and mocking the girls they knew and the ones passing by as they studied details of their bodies and laughed. He thought of how different Faten was from those girls. He was *"forced to focus on her details"*. Now, the turmoil and burning head strangled him again as women are mentioned. Faten did not wear tight clothes and was shy. One of his friends suggested they go to Sawsan *"a lovely new girl there"*. The hell in Salah's mind and body grew to a crescendo and he fetched in his pocket for his prayer beads. Salah asked God's forgiveness. He refused sharply to go to Sawsan's, warning his friend that he is about to commit *"fornication"* and to flout the *"laws of God"* (Ibid.78). His friends mocked him. Another friend asked the others to leave Salah alone for he was *"a man of God"*. The first friend denied this and believed that *"men of God"* were the most experienced in *"flesh"* matters and women. Salah declared he was leaving them and returning home. He felt extremely worried hearing such opinions for the first time in his life. He thought that people must have felt his impurity. God might be sending him a warning. He was telling him that he was seeing him and the others too. His fury and misery mounted as he walked home. Again he asked God to preserve him from Evil's temptation and to save him from his creatures.

Salah reached home dragging along the burden of sin. He wondered what the utility was of his lowering his eyes and not looking at the female neighbours when he dared raise them to his own sister. Yet he remembered that raising one's eyes to one's sister was permitted. However, what he did was not. How could he dream of being with Faten in one bed, touching her and studying the details of her body? He still doubted whether she was as innocent and pure as she seemed. He wondered how people could know about what evil

things he did or ideas he had when his face is still the same *"sharp"* and *"clean boned"* and his eyes are still *"honest"* and *"direct"* (Ibid. 79).

It was eleven o'clock and his sister and mother were asleep. He thought of his day prayers and remembered he had not performed any. On his way to the bathroom, he stopped at his sister's door room that was open and he stepped inside. He got nearer his sister's bed and found out that Faten slept peacefully as the odour of soap still overwhelmed her aura. When he extended his hand to touch her, she moved and he took some steps behind. He watched her body carefully (Ibid. 80) under the sheet and went out of the room. His ablutions and prayers were already out of his mind when he went to his room and slept deeply. Salah woke up, the voice of the muezzin ringing in his ears. He recollected some terrible events that might have happened yesterday. Had it really happened? Had he really lifted the sheet off his sister's body and touched her?

Yet he remembered that when he had whispered Faten's name the woman under the sheet laughed at him and said she was Sawsan. Salah realised that it was just a dream. His turmoil was the noisiest when he became aware that he slept without performing his evening prayers for the first time. He thought of himself as*" impure"* and *"idle"*. He called for God's help for he *"reached the depths"*. Then he decided to go to university. Yet whatever he did later he was unsure of for he was absent minded. He could not even pray for he felt his contamination with filth and sin had reached its peak. Salah decided salvation was the way out and he was to find it (Ibid. 81).

Back to the sofa again where Salah sits in his room and also back the present whereby he still plays with his prayer beads uncertainly. The ninety nine God's names escape his focus. His mind and heart are playing and dancing to the tunes of a single 'satanic music': he and Faten are alone in the house. Their mother went to the funeral of a neighbour's husband and will be late. Now the water heater ceases. It is quiet. He thinks that Faten must be drying her body. Salah is searching for a way out, though, for *"...if he went on like this he would be lost. He would be lost both to this world and to the next"*. Everything he holds dear would be lost: his studies, his future and his soul. Suddenly the bathroom door opens and salvation goes away. Faten goes out of the bathroom and Salah is weary of what she is wearing under her night-dress. Faten enters her room and comes back again where Salah sits. She asks him if he wants a cup of tea and refuses sharply. Surprised at the sharpness and shortness of his answer, Faten prepares tea for herself and enters her room

again. Salah is still looking for God's help. He (Ibid. 82) decides to go to the kitchen and makes tea for his own self. Yet, instead of going there, he finds himself in his sister's room entering it. He is still thinking of what she is wearing. The usual hell in his mind opens again as he gets nearer and nearer his sister and puts his hand on her bare neck. Faten smiles at him and his whole body starts to shake. Allowing his eyes to wander on her desk he sees a magazine on it. Salah's fury grows as he asks his sister what it is about.

The magazine features a man holding a woman's arm and her breasts are clearly outlined. Faten answers innocently that it is a magazine her teacher of French lent her to learn French conversation. Salah bursts like an angry bull at his sister's face accusing her of obscenity and blasphemy (Ibid. 83). He feels Evil is there to teach him how to touch his sister's breasts and arms while twisting them pretending to harm her. He continues blaming Faten for having such dirty magazines instead of going to study. He slaps her face as she tries to explain to him that the magazine she brought is just to learn French conversation. He tells her that she just pretends to be innocent while his hands are still touching her breasts and neck. He confesses that his mother has given her too much freedom. Besides, he orders her to stop trying to fool him with her pretension at innocence and that the test of her innocence will fail in a moment.

Faten sits still like a wax figure. At this moment Salah and Faten's mother turns the key in the lock and enters her home. Aware of his mother's presence, Salah releases his sister's arm and neck and she rushes to her bed and covers herself with the bed sheet. Then Salah quickly and nervously asks his mother to come to her room for he has something important to announce her. He reminds her of the day she had spoken to him about marrying Faten to Isam his cousin. Salah now ensures his mother he definitely agrees to this marriage and that he wishes it will take place as soon as possible.

He informs his mother of having caught Faten hiding an obscene magazine in her room. He thinks that if she keeps going to school and later goes to university she will be as rotten and ruined as the other girls there. His mother expresses her surprise at her son's change of heart and mind and asks him to let his sister at least finish school. Salah refuses utterly and decides his sister will not go to school any more. Besides, he no longer thinks education is important for a woman. His mother acquiesces without discussion. *"Whatever you say my son"*, she says. *"You're the man in this house"*. Salah insists his mother goes to see his aunt tomorrow. As he finishes discussion with his mother, Salah thanks God for the new

found salvation and peace. Then he walked out of his mother's room towards the bathroom and turned the on tap (Ibid. 85).

However, unlike Soueif's Faten is Achebe's Ekweifi who is an example of female's resistance of masculine tradition and ideology and who dared make a journey with Chielo the priestess of Agbala the deity of the Oracle of the Hills and Caves. The journey consists in taking Okonkwo's daughter Ezinma to Agbala on his demand. Although the route is full of dangers, Ekweifi suggests going there fearless of the darkness and the evil spirits that might be encountered there Ekweifi defied the masculine God that could *"strike"* her (Achebe, 1986, p. 71-72-73-74).

Again *The Water Heater*, like *The Wedding of Zeina* and *Her Man* confirms the stereotypical portrait of Eastern women favoured by Western audiences. And yet Soueif in her later works like *The Map of Love,* to be probed in chapter four (p. 201), provides a contradictory portrait picturing her female protagonists as liberated from such representations. *The Water Heater* also highlights the representation of woman as symbol of sin explored in chapter one (p.50-59) describing the Lilith persona as an ogress.

III. 7. "*Satan"*: A Victim among Orientals

Satan starts with a conversation between Asya the protagonist and her mother-in-law about the latter's son Saif—Asya's--husband about their decaying marriage. The story starts in the present and it is narrated by an omniscient narrator. The mother-in-law expresses her deep regrets when hearing about the end of her son's and Asya's marriage. She confesses that her son is strong headed and is a bit crazy and she also knows that he loves Asya very much and *"can never do without her"*.

One recollects his relation with Mandy, the American, in the narrative *Mandy* and how his relations with women ruined Asya's six year marriage with him. The mother-in-law ensures Asya that their marriage has failed because of a woman: *"a low creature"*. Yet she also blames Asya for being too absent and therefore create a hiatus between her and Saif. After a long moment of silence, Asya finally speaks denying that the collapse of her marriage with Saif is caused by Clara, the woman her mother-in-law has mentioned. Saif's mother is surprised to hear Asya utter Clara's name without being moved or enraged. She is more surprised hearing that Asya already knew about Clara, which she could not believe.

The scene is further clarified as the narrator mentions that Adila Hanim, Asya's mother-in-law is cooking while speaking to Asya.

Adila Hanim is deeply shocked because of Clara's *"boldness"* as she came once with Saif to the flat where she and Asya are now. Asya's mother-in-law confesses her edginess towards Clara as she stresses to Asya that she is never to welcome her or talk to her or ever shake her hand. Asya is standing in the door way of the kitchen. She is worried because Adila Hanim must have annoyed Saif not accepting to treat Clara friendly. Yet Adila Hanim does not care about her son getting annoyed. So, now in *Satan*, one meets the same Asya as the one met in *Mandy*; a woman devastated by her husband's relations with other women. Yet she bears this with 'resilience', 'carelessness', and an air of 'being used to such situations'. She met Mandy, spoke to her and invited her to drink tea and eat pasta with Saif present there. Now, it is the same Asya one meets taking her husband's romantic adventures for granted while her mother-in-law is shocked at her son's behaviour. Submission, resilience, patience, and sadness and pain bearing are the main labels inscribed on Asya's character (Soueif, 1996, p. 107-108).

Adila Hanim grows more and more wrathful thinking about her son being with Clara in a hotel while he knows his mother is coming to London from Egypt. Asya jumps to explain that Saif was staying in the flat they are in before she came. He and Clara went to a hotel to leave the flat for his mother, his brother and his wife and the latter's mother to feel comfortable. Adila Hanim gets angrier at Asya's defence of Saif and Clara his girlfriend (Ibid. 109) while she, his own mother, is attacking him. She thinks that Asya should be the one to worry about the situation more than his mother does with her husband being with another woman.

When Adila Hanim turns to face Asya, the latter attempts to draw "*a small smile on her face"*. She notices that Asya has changed. She harks back five years ago since they have last met to remember Asya's face and she believed that indeed her daughter-in-law has changed. Thus the first journey into the past starts with Adila Hanim's remembering Asya's face five years ago and noticing that Asya has changed. Then Adila Hanim backed with a flow of stream of consciousness recollects when Asya first came in to her house and they hugged each other. They parted with tears in their eyes. For the third time Adila Hanim's thoughts stress that Asya has altered. Her black hair is having more waves than it did in Cairo where they first met. Her skin is paler though and *"the face newly defined, as*

though it had been sculptured out of its old childish roundness. But above all, the detachment, the holding back, to be seen in the eyes and in every stance of that slim body. Oh ,child, child, whatever has happened to you?", Adila Hanim thinks desperately and regretfully.

So here is a picture of the old Asya and the new one in one passage. Adila Hanim considers Asya as her own child. She compares Asya's old portrait with the new one. First she remembers Asya's face five years ago, and then she reminisces the first time she met her in Cairo and noticed that her skin is paler now. Asya's sculptured face designed a *"detachment"*. Her whole body told a story of change and sadness. Adila Hanim breaks her stream of consciousness web for a while to carry on her conversation with Asya. She blames Saif for not having stayed with her in the flat.

Yet Asya defends him again mentioning that the flat is already overcrowded with Hussein, Saif's younger brother, Mira his pregnant wife and Souma Hanim Hussein's mother-in-low. Besides, there is only one bedroom in the small flat. He left it and went to a hotel with Clara to make them comfortable. Adila Hanim, still cooking, explains to Asya that she has left Cairo to mend things between her and Saif. She did not want anyone else to accompany her. Moreover, Mira's mother came to shop for the baby in London. Adila Hanim (Ibid. 110) does not miss confess her being extremely bothered having so many people in the flat sharing a narrow space.

Now it is Asya's turn to study Adila Hanim's face in order to scrutinize the changes on it. Again the five years period returns to stand as a land mark for change: *"although the brown hair still bravely holds its colour, the face is more troubled and lined than she remembers"*. Then the narrator turns to Adila Hanim's thoughts as she thinks about Asya. She must feel her daughter-in-law's *"new found hardness"* and she is determined that she *"must be hurt by it"*. The writer uses a technique of 'intertwining consciousnesses'. Yet Asya does not seem to feel the hardness. She senses the urgent need to embrace her Tante Adila and sit down and cry with her. However, with all this mutual mother and daughter love and care, Asya is not able to utter the words that Adila Hanim wants to hear. Adila Hanim came from Cairo to London just to hear those confessions from Asya and yet Asya abstains from speaking or confessing herself to her mother-in-law.

At this level of narration a third character jumps on stage. It is a *"small black kitten"* that is *"chasing his tail"*. He seems to enjoy his time there. Asya is watching him and

thinking that he is *"fortunate"* having his tail as it is the only thing he needs there. Going back to a near past Asya remembers having already seen the black cat eleven days ago when she came to this flat to hand Saif his mail that kept going to her address. She had seen the black kitten shouldered by her husband. Saif informed her that the kitten belongs to Clara for she had found and adopted him. Asya also remembers that Saif mentioned Clara would have liked to meet her but she had gone out (Ibid. 111). Clara is Scottish and as Asya can see from her photo frame on the desk her face is *"dreamy, creamy"* and is *"oval"* with a *"tumbling mass of auburn hair"*. Asya's stream of consciousness is interrupted back to the present as Adila Hanim speaks again. She mentions again that she did not speak to Clara when she met her in the flat. Adila Hanim had to offer tea for Clara as she was a guest in her home. That was all she could afford as a forced attention granted to a stranger. *"But apart from that I pretended not to even see her",* she assures. Asya protests suddenly and confirms again that Clara is not to blame. Adila Hanim raises her voice wiping her hands by her apron. She faces Asya enquiring why the latter keeps defending her husband's girlfriend. Asya does not find words to utter. Adila Hanim is out of her mind and asks Asya for more explanation. Asya then feels compelled to explain that Clara is not the first woman in Saif's life. She is not going to be the last one either. Clara, Asya confirms *"is just not terribly important"*.

Besides, she and Saif had already left each other. Adila Hanim cannot believe nor accept what Asya says. She calls Saif and Asya's leaving each other *"a little quarrel"* that *"will pass"* and she describes Clara as a *"red-haired tart"* that Saif will get rid of soon. Asya protests as her Tante Adila calls Clara a tart and explains that what Saif did is very *"normal"* in the society where they live. Besides she insists that Clara met Saif as *"a single man—separated"*. Above all, Asya thinks Clara loves Saif and the latter is sure he will marry her. Tante Adila says Saif will have to kill her before marrying such a woman. She confirms not being able to understand how a woman can marry a man and be responsible for his marriage ruin. Adila Hanim thinks that living abroad has been the main cause for Asya's 'strange' behaviour: *"Living abroad has addled your brains, child. That's what's happened"* (Ibid.112).

Thus, what do Asya's resilience and calmness mean? How could she defend a husband who is still married to her and dates other women? How can she defend the woman who, according to Adila Hanim, has snatched her husband from her? Does she perceive things differently from Adila Hanim the old Eastern woman? Is living for so many years abroad

to blame? What about Asya's pride as a woman and her feelings? Does she really find her husband's behaviour normal and what about her relation to Saif? Is it still a husband/wife relationship or has it transformed into a mother/son relationship? One notices this phenomenon in *Mandy* when Asya confirmed to be jealous of Mandy but she did not want to exchange places with her. It was just the fact of having Saif caring for Mandy that saddened and pained her. She seemed to accept Mandy's love for Saif for the latter is irresistible. Now, she also admits Clara loves her husband and the latter is sure he will marry her. What kind of woman is Asya? Is she a 'cool' westernised woman? Or has she turned into a carefree submitted woman allowing everything and anything to come her way and ruin her life? Does she still love Saif and pretend not to care if he had other women in his life or not? Asya could be too proud to express her real feelings and prefers suffering in silence. She might have transformed into a submissive woman allowing her husband to enjoy his harem. She could be fearful of being labelled Eastern and old fashioned in the West so she just takes it as a normal thing.

Soueif character Asya has been labeled an oriental turning western like her own creator and like many writers who chose English as a means of expression other than their own mother tongue. Like Soueif Buchi Emecheta has been sharply criticized having chosen English as a code of expression and not her mother tongue. Ogunyemi Chikwenye Okonjo underestimates Emecheta's early works confirming that they embody an *"ambivalent attitude"*. She asserts that Emecheta's ambivalence unveils an *"English strain in her attitude towards life"* that stands in perpetual conflict with her Africaness. She adds that the novelist's works encompass an arena of forces that divides her apart. Ogunyemi goes so far as to affirm that Emecheta *"Writes about African with a Western sensibility"* (Chikwenye, 1988, p. 65).

Asya's stream of consciousness returns another time on stage to mark Asya's preoccupation with the black kitten as she keeps watching him flicking its tail, pouncing at it and losing track of it. She thinks of coming to this flat and if it was worth at all. She is sure Adila Hanim is struggling to make her say things she does not want to. She chooses to defend Saif and justify his actions as normal. Asya still ponders if it is at all possible to *"stand here and say she'd been unhappy for years?"* Is it possible for her to confess that she too has *"known"* a man and left him? Is it easy for her to *"Say she loves Saif but she has to be free?"* Could it be the price she is paying for remaining free and living in a Western country? She had known Gerald and now has left him. So she wants to be on

equal footage with her husband. A man is allowed to know other women than his wife and so does the wife. She can know other men and still remained married. She and Saif have not divorced to prevent what has happened now from taking place i.e. Saif's mother knowing about it and coming to London to fix things between them.

Asya recollects once again turning to the past when Saif called her to announce that his mother was coming, she and Saif knew up front that Adila Hanim was coming to fix things between them. She intends to save their marriage. Saif ensured Asya then that if she did not want to go and meet his mother he would tell her. Asya confirmed that she would like to see her Tante Adila. Saif refused to go for he expected the confrontation with his mother to be tough and *"hellish"*. Asya concentrates on her being *"here"* with her Tante Adila whom she missed so badly and that she is avoiding an intimate conversation with her.

She delves further in the past and her memory remembering the time she spent in the Madi's kitchen (Saif's family home). The kitchen in Saif's flat reminds her of that kitchen (Ibid. 113) back in Cairo where she had spent a nice time. The little kitten Asya keeps watching here also reminds her of three cats there snoozing under the pear tree. Every detail in the flat's kitchen reminds her of the food that Dada Nour (Saif's Nanny) prepared with her daughter. She used to prepare food with the help of Adila Hanim. Asya thinks again about her Tante Adila calling Clara a tart and not thinking about her as one too when she visited them at their home in Cairo before being married to Saif. She spent days in the Madi's home without her own parents knowing. She also used to *"vanishing into his [Saif's] room for the afternoon"*. Adila Hanim used to tell her that if she loved Saif she would love her automatically. Now Asya lets those words reverberate in her ears as the truth still dwells there which is the same truth that she hides from Adila Hanim. *"She looks at her mother-in-law's grieving, betrayed face"*. Asya cannot face the truth. It means to her the sum of every tiny detail of *"the last nine years"*. She does not imagine how the truth can be told. She wonders if telling it would make things easier. She believes it is Saif's mission for this is his own family. She wants them to keep the version he chose for them to keep. *"May be he prefers the cad's role to that of the injured husband"*.

Asya's eyes now turn to concentrate on the black kitten as he plays with *"a stray pistachio nut"*. Asya looks preoccupied with this little black creature as she follows his movements wherever he goes even when she is thinking. He reminds her of Clara and how poor and unlucky she must have been to meet Saif's family on "*a disciplinary expedition"*.

Asya then remembers her husband's girlfriends Mandy, Lady Caroline and now Clara who has medieval features. It feels strange that Asya has only seen Clara's photo (Ibid.114) and yet she feels that she has seen her before. She is sure that Clara is dreaming about a home in Egypt. However Asya is certain that Clara will be back to her country after two months—*"possibly with a black cat"*.

Attention is turned back to Adila Hanim who is still cooking and watching Asya concentrating her gaze on the black kitten. She expresses her surprise at Clara's keeping a special comb for *"that cat"*. Asya remembers again that when she came to the flat she found Adila Hanim with Mira's mother sharing the same kitchen. Each one of them insisted she is the one to prepare dinner and do all the washing up. Asya focuses her gaze again on Tante Adila and remembers that the latter lost her mother when she was five. The then five year old child Adila had to look after her father and her elder brother *"because she had never been and never can be in a house run by another woman"*. On the other hand Souma Hanim (Hussein's mother-in-law) is *"too well bred"* to leave Adila Hanim alone in the kitchen with both the cooking and washing up although the kitchen is too narrow for two people to share. Souma Hanim could not bear seeing Adila Hanim *"slave over the sink and the stove. Both of them are sharing one apron, one carving knife and one grater"*.

Adila Hanim returns on stage speaking about Saif and what she will tell him when he comes to see her. She would also let Hussein his younger brother speak to him. (Ibid.115) Asya warns her Tante Adila that Saif might not be coming. Yet Adila Hanim is sure he will.

Another character now appears on stage who is Mira Hussein's wife. Mira is five months pregnant after seven months of marriage. Mira feels advantageous as compared to Asya for she is about to give birth to a baby and become a mother. Asya her, counterpart, has been married for five years *"and has only a miscarriage to her name"*. She knows she is important especially when the baby started *"to kick inside her"* (Ibid.116). Mira feels her importance growing and knows she has a word to say about Asya and Saif's conflict. She asks Asya to come to her bedroom for she has a few words to tell her. Asya is stunned at the freedom and importance this woman grants herself. Although she has met Asya an hour ago, Mira thinks she has her word to say about Asya's broken marriage. At Mira' bedroom Asya sits waiting for Mira to start her speech.

As regards the psychoanalytical meanings of mothering a frequent and repeated pattern in fiction by black writers is the link tying mothers to children that could be regarded as a further focus on stereotyping women as reproductive entities. Toni Morrison's depiction of Eva in *Sula* (1982) is of a mother who is dynamic, a source of authority in the family, and a pivotal public figure (1982. p. 34). The same picture reappears in *Call Me Woman* (1985) Ellen Kuzweyo's most challenging and influential novel written by a South African woman interpreting identity. She describes women as *"mothers those who have gained the right to social naming, "women"* as *"fallen mothers"* those who have lost the right to social recognition and *"women as an essentially political category"* (Lewis, 1992, p.37). She champions women as bread winners and brave. Yet, she sticks to their label of victims of oppression.

She can afford a stream of consciousness flee (Ibid. 117) probing Mira's face. She thinks Hussein could have chosen a better girl *"than this puffy, solemn"* one. *"He is very good looking—the handsomest may be of the three Madi brothers".* He has always known a lot of girls at the club and college back in Cairo. She remembers sharing jokes with Hussein and watching football matches, had dinner together at their home, and camping together in the north of England. Hussein makes a stranger of himself now, sitting in the living room not speaking a word to her. He had just shaken her hand coldly when she came. She felt he was puzzled and annoyed to see her.

As she sits in Mira's bedroom, Asya can behold *"a dark path"* on the carpet. It is the black kitten again. Asya seems happy to see him again and plays with him. Mira feels so distant and unimportant there that (Ibid. 118) she starts speaking. She confesses knowing there were problems between Asya and Saif. Asya confirms that problems were over between her and her husband. Mira insists that she heard the couple decided to leave one another.

The narrator focuses the spot light on the black kitten's position vis-à-vis Asya. He lies on his back, *"pawns raised, waiting to strike at Asya hovering hand. Even its belly is jet black".* Asya insists that she and Saif had already left one another a year ago. Asya feels tired of binding while playing with the cat so she put Satan—for this is how Clara called him—on her knee. The kitten holds Asya's attention for hours while Mira is still trying to play the skilful diplomat telling to Asya that she still loves Saif. Asya then answers impatiently that she loves Saif but not as her husband. Mira does not get Asya's point and

asks for more explanation. Asya is still concentrating on Satan stretching comfortably on her knee as her thumbs play with his black fur. She stops for a few minutes to wonder what the (Ibid. 119) strange woman sitting next to her is trying to achieve, meddling in her own life. She thinks Mira over self-confident and nosy. She feels it extremely hard to explain details of her life to anybody. She however explains that she and Saif remained separated for a long period of time and that they do not love each other as husband and wife. *"One loves people in different ways",* Asya confirms.

Mira feels her importance grow higher and attempts further questions. She allows herself to wonder why Asya has not thought of having a baby from Saif although she is twenty nine. Asya now is stroking Satan the black kitten and says bluntly: *"No"* to Mira. Silence overwhelms the bedroom and confirms there is nothing else to be said. Both women remain silent. Mira is still lying on the bed her hands folded on her gigantic belly. She thinks she has done her duty. She has heard though that Asya "*is beyond reach"* and she is going with another man. Yet Adila Hanim denies this and hurries to defend her first daughter-in-law. Tante Adila turns to a fool when people discuss Saif and his wife.

Asya feels transported away from where she is. She takes time to wonder again laying bare a stream of consciousness leap. Stroking the black kitten she wonders if she really does not want Saif's baby. She welcomes the image of a child she had imagined once to settle in her memory again. It is the same child whose picture she sheltered as she lay on the sofa hoping he will hold on in her womb. She imagines him as a two year old child *"wearing soft, dark, velvet pants and a white T. shirt, his face round and serious and dark eyed like in the photos of Saif as a baby"*. The child has plump, bare feet, resting on the wooden floor. He is busy playing with a toy she cannot distinguish as the child is leaning against the arm of the chair. Asya had a miscarriage five years ago. The child would have been six years old now had he lived (Ibid. 120).

As Asya stands up, the kitten jumps off her knee. She watches through a window and prevents herself from thinking about the past. She keeps ensuring herself that it is all over including her marriage. Even Saif is better now and had forgotten about it. He is having new girlfriends. She thinks of herself as a nine years interlude in Saif's life. She is not even jealous of his girlfriends. She even knows some of them who used to be her own friends like Nicholas and Jenny and who strived to hide that truth from her. She thinks of Clara as a poor girl who adopts stray kitten and is cursed by a whole family's disappointment.

At that time Adila Hanim comes to the bedroom where Asya and Mira are to announce that dinner is ready. She is still expecting Saif to come although Asya confirms he will not. Besides, Adila Hanim and Mira's mother have spent so much time preparing food for the whole family. Adila Hanim bothers to bring all the food she had prepared alone from the kitchen for everybody to eat. She (Ibid.124) expresses her deep sorrow as Saif did not come. She thinks that Saif could have excused himself from coming. She confirms that she is never to force him to come if he does not want. She adds that she has never obliged him to do whatsoever thing he did not want to. *"Never in his life has it been possible for anyone to make Saif do anything except what he has already inside his own head"*. Asya feels very embarrassed. She decides to quit sooner before Adila Hanim starts to speak about Saif again. She wants to escape after the tea is served. She would have loved to have Saif around sharing food with the rest of the family and holding scraps of food to the kitten.

Satan is now on the table sniffing the aroma of the food. Hussein bursts angrily cursing the black kitten. He takes Satan furiously by the neck and throws it to bump into the wall. Asya stands up terrorised and asks Hussein what he has done to the kitten. *"You've broken him. You've broken his back"*. Hussein sits down ignoring Asya. She however rushes to Satan and looks at him pityingly not even attempting to touch him for fear of breaking him further. Satan makes strenuous efforts to stand up slowly. His legs start to shake as he gets up and quits the room. Asya takes her bag and gets ready to leave. Although Tante Adila begs her to stay and finish her dinner, she leaves. She shouts that what Hussein has just done is shameful (Ibid.124-125).

Asya is now on the brink of crying as she drives her car to Blake's Hotel. She (Ibid.126) asks to see her husband and he comes down smiling. Asya begs Saif not to leave the kitten there in the flat *"because Tante Adila does not like him and Hussein is treating him badly"*. Saif looks surprised that all that could happen to the cat in a few days. Asya confirms that he could have been dead. Saif jokes that his brother has just missed killing a cat. Asya begs him not to leave him there for Hussein threw him at the wall and broke his back. Saif says he cannot bring a cat to the hotel besides they are staying only for a couple of days. Saif grows bored. Asya imagines what he is thinking about. *"Here's another attack of the dramatics: another of the theatrical fits"*. Asya does not care what he is thinking about and feels she is about to cry. She says that Clara *"will be miserable is something happens to him"*. Saif searches for cigarettes in his pocket and asks Asya if she

really is worried about Clara. (Ibid.127) Asya's tears start to flow on her cheeks as she turns away. She thinks of going back to the flat and save the kitten. *"It isn't right to leave Satan with these people. It simply isn't right".* She confirms out of breath.

Satan is another narrative that confirms the double edged portrait of Soueif's female characters as, on the one hand, weak, nostalgic about their pasts, and male dependent. On the other hand they seem resilient, motherly, strong being able to give love and be loved and care for their loved ones.

III. 8. Soueif's Female Characters Echoed in Fielding and Woolf's Works:

Soueif's characters also behave like Henry Fielding's as the latter's concern throughout his fiction had been to attract readers' attention to the dilemma and suffering of the eighteenth century women in England. They were not allowed political rights and voice, they were considered socially insignificant. His heroines served to stress women's plight in a barren social environment. The writer pinpointed this predicament by introducing female characters who are absent i.e. *"those who are not actually in his plot."* The absence of those characters focus on another overwhelming feature of the Victorian society which is to allow the myth of the *"perfect, domestic woman"* to endure. Fielding stressed the issue of 'female erasure' from society *"to the detriment of supposedly moral and spiritual values such as silence, modesty, soft and calm temper and patient mind, and invisibility."* These 'virtues' are also essentially required to fit a 'good wife' for once married, a woman's identity and legal rights are absorbed into that of her husband's (Wilputte, 2000, p. 324-325).

Also like most of Soueif's female characters' relation with their husbands, Virginia Woolf's Mrs Clarissa Dalloway's relation with her husband is hectic and controversial (Lamont, 2001). Woolf translates this pointing to the absence of sexual relations in their marriage (Woolf, 1953). Their marriage is invaded by images of travel and feelings of distance. Although the distance between wife and husband seems to widen the gulf of their relation, Clarissa senses an attachment to Richard through a "*thin thread…which would stretch and stretch as [he] walked across London"* (Ibid.112)

As for Western female characters' exoticisation of Eastern ones that overwhelms Soueif's *The Sandpiper, Satan, Melody* and *Mandy,* Clarissa Dalloway describes the character Sally Seton as: *"an extraordinary beauty of the kind she admired, dark, large-*

eyed, with that quality which she always envied; a sort of abandonment, as if she could do anything; a quality commoner in foreigners than English women" (Woolf, 1953, p.33).Woolf labels Sally as the stereotypical *"exotic"* beauty and impulsive *"foreigner."* Sally has French origins. Even Clarissa's daughter Elisabeth could not escape her mother's 'estranging' of a foreigner as she 'exoticises' Elisabeth and sets her miles away from her mother (Lamont, 2001, p.170).

> Was it that the same Mongol had been wrecked on the coast of Norfolk…had mixed with the Dalloway ladies, perhaps, a hundred years ago? For the Dalloways, in general, were fair-haired; blue eyed; Elisabeth, on the contrary, was dark; had Chinese eyes in a pale face; an Oriental mystery: was gentle, considerate still (Woolf, 1953, p. 122, 23). She is "a pioneer, a stray venturing… (Ibid.136)

An idea of freedom emerges when speaking about Woolf's Clarissa Dalloway and her daughter's travel. Clarissa's is described as a journey that is "free-spirited and daring." She likens it to a pirate's adventure (Lamont, 2001, p.171).

III. 9. "*I Think of You*": A Memory's Salvation

The story starts with a first person narrator, a woman again, uttering the following sentences from a past time pilfered from her memory (Soueif, 1996, p. 131*):"I think of you often. I think of you often and I remember…"* So, the narrator insists on thinking of somebody and remembering. The narrator carries on remembering the remembered person's nanny as she comes in her room with a tarha on her head hiding her face. The nanny's eyes are ruined with cataracts, which prevents her from seeing the person the narrator is remembering clearly. That person is the narrator's best friend. Now, the narrator recalls the remembered person's husband as he turned from the phone. It was an extremely dark Cairo night that the narrator compares to a *"black velvet"* touch she would have experienced had she reached out her hand through the window. One considers the use of the past gearing narration from the outset as the first sentence suggests: *"I remember"*.

Coming back to the present, the narrator mentions that now she is sitting in (Ibid. 132) a room invaded by the odour of incense recalling fragments of her best friend's life. So, *I Think of You* is a story divided into two intertwining tales narrated by the same woman. One tale takes place in the past and it concerns the narrator's ill friend who is a woman too. The other takes place in the present and it concerns the narrator's stay in the hospital. The narrator now concentrates on the figure of a cleaning woman in the room where she is.

Her friend's image comes to overwhelm her mind constantly. She sees her *"sitting up in bed, splendid"*. On her head is *"a turban of emerald silk"*. She watched her dear friend from the sofa were she was sitting as her face was scarcely lit by a feeble lamp as she lay on her bed. She compares the person laying there to a *"Barbarian Queen, Medieval Matriarch"*.

The narrator describes herself now as *"beached in a strange country",* lying on a bed with four women in the same room. She wonders what these four women would think of her friend if they knew her. They all wear grey and brown garments that are identical. Their hair is hidden underneath a *"dense black cloth, and more black cloth is folded back on top of their heads ready to veil their faces at a second's notice"*. The narrator's friend lay on a bed on a "*raised dais"* and the bed clothes were covered with *"a huge grey-and-white fur rug"*. The narrator wears a light dress yet her *"body was warm with new life"*, meaning that she was pregnant. Her friend though had a *"dark red woollen cloak"* on her shoulders and her *"tapering fingers"* that were narrower still than she remembered them, were *"still tipped in defiant scarlet"*.

She compares the luxurious bed her friend lay in, the fingers tipped in defiant scarlet and the grey and brown identical garments and black cloth on the women's heads. Those were the women she was obliged to be with. She wears *"a white cotton night dress smocked, buttoned to my throat"*. The dress has wide sleeves and is light to counter balance *"the dark layers that they wear"*. Her hair as compared to theirs is unveiled and loose. She mentions that: *"I have nothing with which to secure my hair"*.

So, far a comparison has been drawn between the narrator, her friend and the five women in the room. Her friend she compares to a Barbarian Queen and a Medieval Matriarch alluding to her power and resilience. Her friend's bed clothes are covered with grey and white fur and her finger tips are dyed in defiant scarlet. The narrator wears a light smocked dress and her hair is not covered. However, the five women in the bed in her room have their covered in black and wore grey and brown identical garments that insured their posture as *"solid bulk"*. An idea of entrapment and freedom is being alluded to here mentioning light vs. solid garment, covered vs. closely wrapped hair. She mentions again that her friend's hair was *"wrapped in emerald silk"* that refers further to luxury and wealth. She then describes *"a narrow black hairline"* peeping at the top of her front. At

the back of her head showed a *"thin smoky tendril"* that seemed to escape the wrapped rest.

Here the narrator pinpoints to the franchise of freedom her ill friend was trying to reach imprisoned in her sickness bed. The tendril was looking for support. Next, the narrator shifts to mention her friend's fifteen years son who came in the room caught by the odour of incense. She also introduces her friend's dog watching her with "*sad, uninterested eyes. Her son reached her elevated bed to kiss her and left"*. The narrator compares her friend's elevated bed to Cleopatra's reminding her of those nights, afternoons and mornings *"of kingly caresses"* and of what she was enduring on her bed (Ibid. 133).

She tries to quit her bed and starts noticing her changing body. She once had perfect toe nails and now they look like *"ten small badges of shame"* besides her enormous belly. Her ankles are swollen. She hears a man's cough announcing his entering the room. The four women in her room rush to cover their heads with their veils and make sure there is no possible sound. She stands with difficulty reaching the curtains as the man discreetly walked to his wife's bed with lowered eyes. The narrator says that she is not allowed to move at all. She merely attempts at small walks around her bed and draws the green and yellow curtains. She puts one curtain on the other *"to complete my isolation*". The narrator's freedom is still limited by her being pregnant on her ninth month and not allowed to move for there are risks to her life and the baby's. She feels isolated and cornered. After the short slow walk around her bed, the narrator returns to her bed. The feeling of tears flooding on her face overwhelms her. She plainly confesses: *"I do not want to be here"*.

She shifts back to the description of her ill frail friend. She describes her hands as *"thin and fine"* (Ibid. 134) with blue veins protruding from her skin. She had well skilfully shaped eye brows and "*deep black eyes"*. Illness prompted her cheek bones to be more prominent than ever. Her mouth did not change *"wide and strong, the full lower lip tensing as you pulled your cloak more closely around you"*. Her friend's mother suffered both age and her worries about her ill daughter stood there near her daughter's door way. Her husband was also there lighting a cigarette. The sick friend afforded picking up the evening paper and discussing a review *"animatedly"*. The narrator expressed her surprise at her friend's effort and yet she recognised her friend's strength.

The narrator shifts to speak of the Filipino nurse smiling as she stands between the curtains. She tells the narrator that she must breathe some fresh air otherwise she will feel hot. She notices that the man who came to see his wife was gone yet the women there are still speaking in a low voice. The nurse advises the narrator not to cry and that everything will be all right.

The narrator asks her friend a question as though she was there in the room with her: *"Do you cry, my dear? I've never seen you cry. And yet, I think I can hear the great, wrenching sobs—late—late in the night, when all the house is asleep".* And here goes the story of the ill friend who looks like a Barbarian Queen and Medieval Matriarch and a Cleopatra. It is the story of a strong woman wrapped in green emerald silk and fur and whose finger tips are dyed in defiant scarlet. The same *"woman who animatedly"* affords reading a review paper is suffering on a sickness bed wrapped in a dark red shawl around her shoulders.

Now a woman in the narrator's room quits her bed to spit in a sink and she walks towards the latter's bed. She asks her not to weep. She asks her why she weeps (Ibid. 135). The narrator just shrugs frailly for fear of howling if she opens her mouth. She asks her then if she does not speak Arabic. The narrator confirms she does although her voice turns to a mere feeble whisper. The narrator cannot recognise the age of the woman for she has her head wrapped in that black cloth. She asks her if she is pregnant and the narrator confirms she is, nodding. She then asks her what the problem is with her. The narrator whispers *"high blood pressure".* The woman comforts the narrator that God has everything in his hands. The narrator just nods. The woman then asks her if she wants her to raise the bed a bit so that she can sleep comfortably. The narrator shakes her head meaning *"I do not want to be comfortable".*

Yet, the woman shakes the bed slowly and arranges it so that the narrator feels comfortable. The latter thinks the woman curious and kind too. Yet the narrator insists she does not want to be comfortable. *"I do not want anything except not to be here".* She wants to be with her daughter. Her daughter constantly asks on the phone why she and her mother must remain separated. The narrator's daughter is but five years old and yet *"she chooses her words with care"*. The narrator longs to be with her daughter remembering her swimming in her cool pool and protecting her from the sun. She strives to feel and hold her daughter's foot while she sleeps and wants to imagine what she is dreaming of (Ibid. 135).

The narrator moves to her friend's story again. As she stood at the window, she could see her friend's driver and her old doorman kneeling in prayer inside her friend's gate. She was sure that they prayed for her too. Her husband walked to her bed and had a look at her drip.

Back to the narrator's bed, she notices the Filipino nurse coming back accompanied by a young man wearing a white coat. The woman who came to see her is back to her bed. The man with a white coat is a young doctor who speaks with a Syrian accent. He asks the narrator not to cry because it is bad for her. The narrator shapes *"a polite smile"* on her face and gestures to him that everything is all right. Again the young doctor reassures the narrator that *"all things are in the hand of God"*. The narrator cannot utter a single word. She simply confirms: *"I do not trust myself to speak"*. Her neighbour (Ibid. 137) in the compound insisted that she could have a crisis at any time. She ensured that the narrator must be in a hospital otherwise she could die. She refused to go to a hospital for exams were drawing near and she wanted to be with her students at that time.

Yet, the narrator's neighbour insisted to bring her to this hospital for a check-up and she stayed here for she had very high blood pressure. Her neighbour kept her daughter and allowed the latter to phone her mother twice a day. The narrator confirms: *"My daughter is the reason I would prefer to stay alive. She, and this other, uncelebrated child inside me, clinging tenaciously to life"*. So, here is the story of life struggling to defy death. A woman lays sick on her death bed and another is carrying life within her fighting to take another breath to remain alive. Her daughter and the unborn child within her womb are the only reason that keeps her out and clear from death.

Back to the narrator's friend story, she remembers when the latter's husband and the doctor left the room and she stayed alone with her friend. She put the hot water bottle that was on the fur rug under the cover and covered her friend again. She put her hand on her friend's shoulder and suggested to rub her back. Her friend accepted sighing with relief. The narrator sat on her friend's bed her swollen belly touching her friend's spine. She felt her child kick inside her. Here is a magnificent painting Soueif draws of death meeting life as the narrator tries to keep her friend out of death being so near of it. She wonders if her friend felt it too. She rubbed her friend's back sweetly. This closeness and touching comforted the narrator too for she wished it go on for hours (Ibid. 138).

Back to the narrator's bed, her doctor is standing near her holding a hypodermic. He ensures her that she is making her health worse pushing her blood pressure too high. He injects her with valium and asks her to sleep. The narrator feels her body sliced into pieces and too heavy for her to lift and support. Her hands are swollen, her fingers are formless, and she can hardly move them. She cannot find a position to sleep or sit comfortably. Her body is stranger to her. She has to be very careful to every single movement she makes for any movement could mean her making her health in danger of death. Besides, it means pain and discomfort for her. Her left arm hurts and she has to pay attention because the drip is attached to it and it risked being blocked. She feels her breasts heavy touching the skin of her chest. The tight bra she wears suffocates her ribs and her lungs.

She has to ease the elastic lifting the tight bra to breathe. She wonders what people would think of her watching her *"arms stretched out to the sides?" "A suffering figure, arms stretched out to the sides? Or do Christian images—even this one—not exist for them at all? They are probably not into images. Our religion is of the Word not the Image"*. The narrator compares her suffering to the Christ's being crucified and waiting for death. She strengthens the power of this image building to it from the beginning of her description of her body's position and the way it hurts and becomes stranger to her. She also alludes to the reaction of the people there watching her. According to the narrator's opinion these Muslim people, she belongs with, do not approve of images especially Christian ones. Islam is of the Word not of the Image. Finally, she decides to relax and not worry for anger constituted a danger for her (Ibid. 139).

The narrator shifts to describe the room where she is. She finds herself alone in a *"not unpleasant"* room. Both bed clothes and walls are white. She sees no *"oranges or browns"*. She receives phone calls from her parents in Cairo and her husband in London. She also has a TV in the room and between it and the window she can read a notice both in Arabic and English: *"Under no circumstances you must be alone with male doctor. Call sister urgently if male doctor approaches you for examination"*. She considers the notice funny and copies it into her note bed. The narrator feels so isolated and deserted from the outside world: *"I am alone and so, unobserved, I can hold onto what is left of me"*. She senses her being left alone and abandoned and yet she still struggles for there is enough strength in her to carry on. She still holds on to life and hope for she *"pinned up the painting of a big, bright butterfly"* her daughter brought her on her first visit. She has her exam papers next to her so that she corrects them whenever she can. She confesses that the

body she has now is no more the one she used to have and yet she still carries on washing it carefully and *"spray it with eau de toilette and dab moisturising lotion"*. She makes strenuous efforts to reach some parts of her body to wash them.

This determines her strict movements. The nurse comes to detach her from the drip as though imprisoning Cyclopes, another giant or monster. *"I let myself carefully off the bed"*. She walks slowly towards the bathroom. She continues taking care of her strange new body brushing her hair, and moves to her face to make it as attractive as she can. She traces a black pencil line *"along the puffy eyelids"* and put some mascara and lip-gloss. She comes back to her room and finds the bed has been made for her and a nurse helps her to get into it. The nurse insists that she should not move at all and rather let her wash her body. She reattaches her drip, measures her blood-pressure, temperature and pulse and then reassures her that everything is all right.

The narrator now is lying on her bed weak and nauseous and yet she is prepared for the doctor's morning round with all what she needs round her: her bed jacket, note pad and exam papers. The group of nurses, men and women, and doctors *"sweep into the room"* and stand next to the foot of her bed. Starting with the men's group the narrator counts a consultant in his *"white robes and black and gold abaya centres the others. There is a nurse to hand in the notes"*. There is an Indian registrar with a tightly shuttered face, another Sudanese doctor who she thinks looks like Othello and whose face is *"grieving"*. Besides there stand three local doctors. These are women with only dark eyes left to be seen to the narrator *"through the slits of their black veils"*. When all the doctors and nurses are gone the Filipino nurse guesses the narrator's arm must be stiff for the doctor should have injected the valium in her bottom and not in her arm; He simply felt afraid to ask her, she confirms (Ibid. 139-140).

The narrator now turns to remember her ill friend's weak body. It was so frail that she could sense every vertebra individually. She rubbed her friend's back down to the spine in a circular movement, pressing her shoulder and her neck then she turned back to her spine. She confessed she felt like cradling her like a baby. She also wanted to kiss her friend's head and hands and weep over her. Yet, she just supported her friend's back with her belly and hands rubbing her back. She thought that tomorrow she had to leave. She wondered if her friend would still be here when she came in the summer. She still would have liked to

say things and ask about many things. Her friend said to her one time they met: *"Do you remember when we had lunch at the Meridian seven years ago?"* (Ibid. 141).

Back to the present in the narrator's room, the nurse forbids her to go down the stairs at five as she disengages her drip. The narrator protests against forbidding children to go up into the patients' rooms. She eases herself up the bed, wraps her body in the black abaya and her head in the black tarha and walks carefully out of the room. She goes down stairs in the waiting room particularly in the *"women's corner"*. Her daughter comes to visit her and climbs on her knees. The narrator says that *"she strokes my uncovered face and buries my mouth in her small plump palm. She plants big wet kisses on my eyes, my cheeks, my nose and my mouth"*. This is the painting Soueif draws of the mother daughter encounter. It is a mixture of ultimate possession enhanced by the power of love and affection they felt mutually one for the other. A group of silent women is eyeing the mother and her daughter through their veils.

The narrator now talks about her fourth day in the hospital. A woman walks to her bed wearing a loose grey garment and the familiar black veil on her head and face. She brings her a covered dish and makes sure nobody is looking at her. She asks the narrator is there are no men in there and the latter confirms there are not any. Then and only then the woman uncovers her face and greets the narrator with the Muslim greeting: *"Peace be upon you"*. The narrator the greeting: *"And upon you, peace and the mercy of God and His blessings"*. The woman wears *"of course"* no make-up and has *"a young but not particularly fine face"*. She says she brings the narrator some food that is different from the hospital's *"tasteless"* food. The narrator thanks her and the woman enquires why nobody comes to visit the latter. The narrator ensures that she has *"no people here"*.

This confession urges her to feel self-pity and strong desire to weep and yet she does not. She resists. The woman asks if the narrator is really married to an English man while she is Muslim. "*How can you marry an English man?"*, she wonders. The narrator confirms that her husband embraced Islam. She then asks her if she lives in England and the narrator confirms she does (Ibid. 142). The woman is surprised at the narrator's living in England: *"How can you* (Ibid. 143) *live there? They are all animals there"*. The narrator insists that *"they are people like us"*. Yet the woman ensures that the people there in England live like animals. The narrator denies that and keeps persuading the woman *"they are people like us"* and that there is good and bad wherever one goes and lives. The woman carries on:

"They copulate on the streets there". The narrator answers that she has lived there for a long time and has never seen people copulating on the streets. The woman ensures she saw this in films her husband brings home. The narrator then replies that such films do not represent the truth. *"They are made only to excite people's appetites"*. She then wonders if the narrator's husband is good to her and the latter confirms he is. Then the woman leaves the narrator's room.

The narrator resumes talking about her ill friend and her taking refuge from the July heat in the air-conditioned coffee shop in the Meridian. She and her friend *"drank chilled white wine"*, ate tomato and artichokes vinaigrette. The narrator and her friend enjoyed their meal watching the sun shining on the Nile. She told her friend about how she loved her husband and how he tended her like her own mother when she had flu. *"He even read me a silly little fairy story"* to cheer her up. The narrator's friend told her to marry him and not to hesitate when he asked her to marry him. Yet, the narrator enquired about how she would marry a man she was never to speak to in her own language fro he was English. She could not stand not living in Egypt, she complained. Her friend replied: "*Egypt will always be there for you"* (Ibid. 144).

Back to the narrator's hospital room, a Scottish matron comes to recheck her pulse. She says she should have morphine and forbids her from going down stairs again. The narrator protests for not letting children to come up stairs. She complains about not being able to see her daughter. The Scottish matron insists that the narrator's body is like "*a compression chamber"* and every single movement she makes worsens the pressure on her baby. The narrator replies furiously*: "what about tension? What about misery? What about loneliness?"* The Scottish matron replies: *"They are animals these people…animals. They don't understand a thing. They think if they have rules it makes them civilised"*. She asks her to rather pay attention to her baby and not minding such people for she is to quit this hospital soon.

The narrator mentions that she receives phone calls from her students and she receives flowers from them. They suggest taking her daughter to their homes to play with children there. Yet, nobody could bring her daughter to her. She also says that her husband phones her every day. He could not be given a visa to come and visit her. He ensures her that she will soon get out of *"that damned place"* and go back home. Now she is correcting the

exam papers and having to stop each time to take her breath and readjust the elastic of her bra (Ibid.145).

She goes back to speak about her ill friend. She mentions her leaving her friends' house that was overwhelmed with lights. She hugged her friend's husband on the street for he was also her friend. The narrator's mother informs on the phone that her ill friend went to America and that she was back not doing well. The narrator recalls wondering one day as she was thinking of her friend: *"Do you think of death? You must do. You must know you are dying. Half your stomach taken out, the needle pasted to your hand ready for your next feed"*. All the members of her family mobilised to make her feel better and yet nobody dared to mention that their daughter suffered from cancer that spread voluptuously into her body.

Her husband said that his wife did not know she had cancer and yet she did know the narrator believes. She made him believe she ignored the type of ogress illness she had and was waiting for death patiently. The narrator's mother abstains from calling her for three days. On her tenth day in the hospital she calls and answers the narrator who is extremely worried about her friend's health. Her mother begs her not to make things worse for her and the baby. She ensures her that for her friend nothing more is to be done for *"...Everything possible was done"*. Next, when the nurse comes to check her blood-pressure with the Sudanese doctor he finds it has risen very high. He scolds her on crying too much: *"why do you make yourself so unhappy? But it may still be possible to have a normal delivery"*. The narrator worries about her baby and the doctor confirms that she is *"in the eighth month and the baby will be fine"* (Ibid. 146).

On the back of her friend's frail hand the narrator remembers gazing at the needle penetrating the blue vein. She compares it to her own hand now on which all details disappeared. She lies and listens to her baby's movements. The baby is not moving and the narrator starts to imagine he ran out of breath as the cord that connects them does not deliver the oxygen he needs. She thinks rather: *"No, as I fail to deliver the oxygen he needs"*. She tries to awaken him rubbing her belly slowly to make him kick it. Now, she tries not to think (Ibid. 147) of her friend. Yet, the tears well up her face while a cluster of images invades her mind. She remembers five years ago sitting in the paprika with her husband and when *"he was still in love with me"*. He held her hand and put it near his mouth and touched her thighs. She strives to be five years old and play in the sun shine on

her grandmother's carpet. She wants to go back to the time when she celebrated her nineteen birthday party with all friends. She remembers her newlywed friend dancing and holding a bunch of white lilies and blue iris. She strives to be home.

It is night and the telephone rings. The narrator tries to reach for it and at the same time calm her speedily beating heart because it caused more pressure on the baby. She wonders what is to happen next. It is a man's voice that answers back saying he is one of her admirers: a well-wisher or one of her doctors. She cannot recognise the voice because the man speaks only English. The man says that he knows the narrator cannot quit her bed. He continues: *"Would you like me to be with you? Your breasts are very big now. They hurt you, don't they? If I suck them I can make them better—".* The narrator just puts the phone down and never answers again. She decides to put the receiver off and yet when she remembers her daughter might call, she put it back again (Ibid.148).

On the eleventh day of her stay in the hospital, the narrator's daughter calls her to ask if she still likes the butterfly's painting pinned on the wall. The narrator confirmed she still does. Her daughter asks again: *"if it will always be nice"* and her mother ensures it will. Her daughter then enquires if her mother will never hate it and her mother replies that she will always adore it. As she puts the receiver back the narrator a strong rush that she compares to *"a distant sea breaking against rock"*. As the receiver is back she is still struggling with *"the rushing waves"*. She thinks of the time after all this happens and senses some fragments remaining. Her teeth start to chatter so loud and hard that she feels her skull reverberating following the sound. Although her stomach is empty she feels bile mounting to her throat. She senses a wetness flowing from her and she ignores whether it is water or blood. She is completely unaware of what is going on around her and she hardly hears voices around, and *"hands holding, mopping, wiping and carrying"* her. Now, she is in a room full of *"fierce white light"* where she meets Othello doctor and the *"mad-eyed Syrian"* and many other busy people around. A *"churning and grinding is kneading her body from the waist to groin"*. Needles are penetrating her arms and back (Ibid. 149).

Suddenly a voice announces to her that her husband wants her to know he is on the phone and that he says he will always be with her. She feels pain and expresses it when *"an angel in a black veil"* comes to her to comfort and says she must be courageous. She speaks of slipping under a roaring tide of noise and pain and then she the woman's voice reciting seemingly *"unending verses of Quranic comfort"*. Finally the baby comes out

fighting his way out. She describes him as a brave baby. The nurses took him to an incubator that keeps him warm and silent, that which she does not feel. She speaks of doctors *"working hard at her for three nights and days and finally she now lies at her "old bed"* clean, calm and empty, as *"they delivered me a warm, soft bundle"*. As she explores the bundle she discovers, "*I folded back the flowered wrappings and saw for myself the breathing brown body, the cut cord, the downy head, the long black lashes, the curled fingers and my name on the tab around his wrist"*.

Her daughter phones her to announce she is coming to get her off the hospital. The mother ensures she cannot wait until tomorrow. The daughter enquires about the exam papers and her mother confirms that they are all corrected. The daughter expresses her extreme joy to go back home and *"show the baby to daddy"*. The mother is overjoyed to go home again at last tasting the sweetness of a unique feeling of freedom (Ibid. 150).

The narrator refers to the Meridian restaurant when she was with her friend and the Nile behind glittering in the sun. She asks her friend and wonders how she can be married for nine years and hold passion immutable. *"And how about romance?",* she enquired. *"Can one really trust being in love?"* Her friend confirms that things change with time. Yet, *"sympathy, kindness and good will remain",* and at last if people are wise enough: *"May be they are the lasting part of love. My husband has those. And now your man, from what you say, has them too."* The narrator ends the story with a sad yet hopeful note describing her friend further. She possessed everything she asked for: *"confidence, high cheek bones, a long running play"*, and a happy second marriage. She still thinks of her on Friday nights as the door of her lit-up house is open to the garden. She remembers her friend moving between her guests, her husband, her pets, her children, her mother, and her servants. She watches her as she speaks drinks and eats food and she watches her *"lightly draw the fine-lined patterns that pull so many lives together. My dear-Oh, my dear, you made it look so easy"*.

The protagonist in *I Think of You* felt the same freedom when giving birth as the one Ahdaf Soueif expresses hardly able to word her opinion after Mubarek was sacked. She asserts that liberty is so dear that she could not truly voice her opinion in words. She likens it to life giving as pregnant women decided to call their daughter 'liberty'. She stresses:

> I'm just completely overwhelmed. And I was just trying to try to, you know, write my copy for tomorrow's article, but I just — I can hardly breathe. You know, you can hear all the joy cries. The phones just won't stop ringing, people just saying congratulations. You know what I first thought? I thought, I have seen two women in Tahrir Square sort of fully pregnant and waiting to deliver, and they've been saying, you know, "When it comes, when it comes, and I will call my daughter 'Liberty.'" And my first thought was that they can now have their babies. Oh, boy, you know, I mean, it's not over. We have to be careful. We have to really sort of, you know — the work begins now (Democracy Now, 2011).

Conclusion

In *The Sandpiper* Soueif pictured portraits of her female protagonists as timeless Eastern and Western phoenixes geared by the power of remembrance, their maternal instinct, and the constant search for love and care. Soueif utilised many narrative techniques to allow readers delve into her protagonists' life stories. She used stream of consciousness technique to unveil past lives in *The Sandpiper* uncovering the life of a British woman feeling homeless in Egypt. Soueif also used numbers, senses like smell, sight and touch to help narration move forward. By the end of the story the narrator remembered that there was another space unknown to the whipping waves that is the hot sands of the desert. *"ten feet beyond the edge"*. She recalled too that the beach knew of the "*cold currents just there—do you see?"* as she addressed an unknown audience "*where the water turns a deeper blue"*. This painting the narrator attempted to add to the old one to complete it. This décor one might understand as a reply to the violent waves and beach harming those immutable sands that they are not as mighty as they thought they are. There still are spaces that they ignore and waters and sands that fled their authority and were free from their grip. The narrator could be alluding to her own entrapment and her own new and unveiled self that she might reveal for a world that do not know her.

Soueif made Western women and Eastern ones picture one another via a process of exoticisation and devaluation like in *Mandy* and *Melody*. *Mandy* was a narrative that is divided into three parts which were recounted by two women Asya and Mandy. Both women's stories intertwine as they concern a woman, her husband and his girlfriend. The story was written in the form of two letters and an extract of a journal. Both women: Asya and Mandy loved the same man and needed his care. Asya loved him as a husband and son and could not bear seeing him with another woman being sure no woman could make him

happy. Mandy loved him for caring for her and spending his money on her. Both women's lives interfered with one another dragging along Asya's past and the 'happy' years when she was with a husband who was used to knowing women other than her.

The last scene featured Asya moving to her window to watch the tree and the sky she watched a month ago. Going back to the past again Asya recollected Saif out of the same window and she thought that he would never be coming again. Asya missed her husband and how they used to sit on the same armchair. She could not help remembering Gerald her boyfriend who was different from Saif. Mandy's name is the title of the narrative depicting a shared life between two women bound by the same man. *Mandy* stood for Mandy's inability to be the centre of Saif's life being imprisoned within Asya's souvenirs. And yet, the open window Asya is watching through beholding Saif could stand as a flicker of hope and the stage where Saif will be back to his wife. Asya kept the window open and her heart too hoping for a possible change.

Soueif used various narrative techniques to tell Melody's story. A first person narrator namely a Western woman living in a hot Muslim country was the one to witness the details of the little girl's story. Senses incarnated by smell and hearing that the odour of jasmine and laughter and dancing that Melody and Ingie stood for were also called for to foster narration and make readers part of it. The jasmine scent foreshadowed the death of Melody and the ceasing of laughter and dancing determined the effect of the silencing of such a lively little girl by death. The author also calls for Melody's mother Ingie's narration and description, Elaine's, the narrator's friend and the flower-shop-man's. The narrator addresses readers as "we", "us", "women", speaking to a "you". Throughout the narrative she insists on readers to "mind", "remember", "smell", "hear", and "feel" the details of her story. Melody is the story of a little, now dead, girl who used to fill the air with her musical presence.

It is also the story of Ingie her Eastern mother who was presented as trapped, limited, and a 'slave' of her husband 'like the rest of the Muslim women' according to the narrator. It is also the story of a Western woman who narrates it and feels confined too, though she does not admit it. She has to live in a country where she thought she was buried and she had to pay a price for such a burial which is being a mother. Melody is the story told by a woman about other women. The narrator, a Western woman, hoped to draw the striking difference between her and the Eastern confined women and yet she was as entrapped as

they were. She succeeded in involving readers' empathy with this Eastern woman and also with her own story. Both women are still alive and still fighting for life in a land they feel buried in. Their children are the only source of life remaining there.

The Water Heater features the dilemma of a young man called Salah caught between piousness and temptation. The ultimate victim of this turmoil was his sister Faten, a coy girl who abided by her brother's rules. Salah seemed to finally find his way out to God's salvation accusing his sister of sin and obscenity. He sentenced her to stay at home, quit school and get married at the age of sixteen. Nobody would discuss his decision for he was the man of the house. Time past was to elevate the tension in Salah's mind and remind him of the angel he used to be and transform into the ghoul he did not know. The metamorphoses had been built up so quickly that Salah could no longer resurrect his old self. He was about to lose everything and reach the abyss.

The only way out to salvation and to cling on to the happy past was to incriminate his own sister and delete his present and start afresh. He had to recall the past to find his own self again, release his own self and imprison others and thus believing in the Machiavellian principle that the end justifies the means.

Chez Milou was the story of a decaying woman watching her youth and life going with the wind of a dear dream of marrying a man she once loved. The only man Milou loved never cared about her nor did he love another woman. Milou's only home is her restaurant that bears her name. The story ends with the crucial question Milou asked to Farah which is about her reaction if a man she loved and showed her love to ignored her. Farah admitted that she would ignore him too. Then the story ends with tendresse rhythms and music reverberating in both Milou's and Farah ears. Both ladies expected an answer from the same man to confirm his love for them.

Readers travelled back to Milou's past to reveal the story behind her sternness, grimness, lack of movement and her dwelling a single woman taking care of her old father.

Journeys to Milou's past life offered readers an opportunity to know the story of a disillusioned woman who missed her share of care and love because of a man. Milou witnessed the passing of her entire life in vain because Philippe did not care to answer the question Milou had asked and awaited an answer to. Milou awaited Philippe's answer to her love and care for him. Connecting the present to the past had unveiled another potential

'victim' of Philippe's charms who is Farah. Farah too expected an answer from Philippe thinking he had a tendresse for her and expected him to marry her.

This presents the possibility of setting an open ending to the story suggesting that Farah could endure the same misery and shame as did Milou years ago. Or Farah might live happily with Philippe the way Milou was not.

Milou springs on pages like a battered phoenix delving into the labyrinths of her past to reconnect with the present featuring young Farah. This leads to a flicker of rebirth of that feeling of love listening to the notes of *tendresse.* The memory keeps Milou alive. She might refer to the same word whenever she feels miserable and out of place. It was the conversation with Farah that prompted Milou to resurrect the sounds and feel of tendresse that ends the story in a rather optimistic tune.

Satan is the story of Asya. It is a narrative that of a battered woman transformed by her husband's adventures with women into a careless strange woman. She surrenders to loneliness and attempts seeing men in her turn to appease her pain but in vain. She is hampered by her pride and her years living in a Western country as an Oriental woman to confess her love for her husband and her gnawing jealousy Asya looks for a possible solace in meeting her mother-in-law. She thought that would stand as a mother's love resurrected. Yet, nothing seemed to recuperate her lost love life with her husband and her past. Her mother-in-law constituted that dear past she cradled to become true again and drag her out of her abyss facing the empty present. Asya, however, felt her past a stranger and everything that stood for it. She was a childless woman who failed to save her marital life.

Another element Asya tried to clutch to save her past life and to stand as a familiar element was the black kitten named Satan. Asya kept her concentration fixed on the kitten for hours of narration. She could have sensed a resemblance with him as she and he were the only strangers in the house. Asya cocooned the kitten as though her own child. Yet the kitten ended being thrown out broken and motionless. This incident caused Asya to leave the house were her in-laws were and go to the hotel to mourn Satan's pain and her own. In the hotel was Saif, her estranged husband and one of his girlfriends. Asya appears again as a devastated woman in front of her husband. She came to protest about carelessness and violence done to a kitten that belonged to Clara one of Saif's girlfriend's. That was one of the greatest ironical situations one must sense and experience in a woman's life. One could

also sense irony in the Madi's, these Orientals, failing to care for a small poor kitten. That could also mean that even Satan could not be safe with them.

I Think of You was the story of two women. The narrator, one of the two, was pregnant and stuck alone in a room in an unknown country. She recounted her story and her ill friend's as the latter suffered from cancer. The narrator bore pain, isolation and death. She could write back to death clinging to life, write back to isolation and forgetfulness using her memory and extract happy souvenirs, and she could write back to an immutable shabby portrait that her world was about to slip into holding on to hope and release from all the pain she endured. Life won the battle back at the end as the narrator gave birth to her baby boy.

The Sandpiper like *Aisha* reinvents Soueif's characters as new women clinging to life and fighting to win their agency back from the ashes of patriarchy and submission. They are represented as life sources fleeing death and oblivion.

Chapter four examines Soueif's second novel *The Map of Love*. The focal points, as in the previous chapters, are the representations of female protagonists and the use of time past. However, in this novel, the author offers more liberated and independent female protagonists whose portraits repudiate the one favourite stereotypical image of Oriental vs. Western women venerated in the West.

Notes to chapter three

1) In Shreiner novel *The Story of an African Farm* the phenomenon of women's inexistence for men is poetically pictured in a marvellously drawn comparison between the two: *"Men are like the earth, we are the moon; we turn always one side to them; and they think there is no other, because they don't see it- but there is"* (1883, p. 217).

2) Another example of mothers described as harsh and not worthy being called mothers in literature is Undine Edith Wharton's protagonist in *The Custom of the Country,* described as the worst mother character in literature. Undine is made an unsympathetic character by her creator. She is one of *"the worst mothers in literature as she seems totally incapable of any sort of maternal feelings for her son";* a feeling a woman should be born with according to domestic and societal decrees (Kowaleski-Wallace, 1991, p. 48). This, critics labelled Undine's *"failed maternity"*. Both female and male readers are likely to get transported by a narrative that could entice a misogynist reaction. Such a reversal from authorial to reader's misogynist attitude will unveil the readers' fictional response and representation of woman.

3) Simone de Beauvoir stated how a biological female is bound to become "*a woman"* by adhering to specific traits: *"To be feminine is to appear weak, futile, docile. The young girl is supposed not only to deck herself out, to make herself ready, but also to repress her spontaneity and replace it with the studied grace and charm taught her by her elders. Any self-assertion will diminish her feminity and her attractiveness".* (Beauvoir, de, 1951, p. 314)

4) Denied all her rights to freedom by her rigid parents, Ashjan the teenage female protagonist in al-Rikabi, 'Abd al-Khaliq's short story *Ghuraf Ashjan (Ashjan Rooms)* decides to cover herself entirely wearing thick stocking and covering her hair with a headscarf (Ghazoul, 2004, p .8) *"And so she was able to be by herself for the first time in a room of her own, a room whose walls are her body, whose doors are her arms, and whose window is her face"* (al-Rikabi, 1998, p. 16). The feeling of restriction and narrowness led Ashjan to seek further isolation in the confined space of her body. Ashjan concluded that as long as she remains a woman open to blame and banishing. She is terrified and tempted by of masculinity (Ghazoul, 2004). "*She loses her sense of reality. She falls prey to paranoia and protects herself by denying herself the meagre space she is granted, since she fears that it too will be removed, in the pattern of ever decreasing freedom"* (al-Rikabi, 1998, p. 16).

CHAPTER FOUR

The Map of Love: A Portrait of Timeless Female Protagonists

CHAPTER FOUR

The Map of Love: A Portrait of Timeless Female Protagonists

Time is a river which sweeps me along, but I am the river.
(Borges, 1964, p. 187)

Introduction:

This chapter entitled, *The Map of Love: A Portrait of Timeless Protagonists*, is divided in two parts. Part one answers the following queries: How important is time past to Soueif's novel *The Map of Love?* How did she manage to conjure up a ubiquitous and regenerating time past besides utilising a kind of 'cooperative narration' involving her protagonist female characters to tell one story? How could the author unveil a web of intermingling narratives to liberate her female protagonists from anonymity, unveiling them to the world as united and prominent voices? Part two concerns the representations of female characters in Soueif's *The Map of Love* that will be dealt with in detail later in this investigation. Before one delves into the investigation of *The Map of Love* Soueif's second novel, one needs to mention that this novel:

> was placed on the Booker list for 1999, while other British-connected Arab authors also achieved prominence. Hanan al-Shaykh, Ghada Karmi, and Leila Aboulela, each had their work either serialised or presented and discussed on BBC radio in the early 2000s. All of this suggests that a combination of topicality, and the openness of publishers and prize committees to new 'ethnic' material, created an environment favourable to the rewriting of both Anglo-Arab and Arabic texts in translation into an enlarged literary canon. (Nash, 2007, p.16-17)

Nash also adds:

> Contemporary Anglophone writers use English rather than Arabic as the language for their fiction/ autobiography for a variety of reasons including personal preference, avoidance of cultural restriction and censorship, and to optimise ex-posure. For some ethnic Arab writers, embedded within an English-speaking environment either in their own country of origin or in Britain, English is virtually a native language and therefore a natural one to write in (p.12). Nash labeled this phenomenon *"the inter-nationalisation of literatures"* (p.13).

As a recipient of two different cultures, Ahdaf Soueif is engaged in making different cultural grounds meet throughout her writings, or as Soueif herself describes it, in exploring the *Mezzaterra* (2004) which refers to the construction of a meeting point for diverse cultures and traditions, a common ground. This mutual ground is not competitive; rather it offers an enrichment working at both sides of the construction. Ahdaf Soueif herself describes the common ground as follows:

> [The Mezzaterra is] a territory imagined, created even, by Arab thinkers and reformers starting in the middle of the nineteenth century when Muhammad Ali Pasha of Egypt first sent students to the West and they came back inspired by the best of what they saw on offer. Generations of Arabs protected it through the dark time of colonialism (Mahjoub, 2009, p. 57)

Susan Darraj, who has written plenty of articles on Arab-Muslim feminist writers, believes that Soueif's *"lush style is often described as exotic and foreign by her Western readers, while her sexual imagery and themes arouse the ire of some Egyptian readers who do not want to claim her as 'one of their own'"* (2003, p. 91). This translates the reception of Ahdaf Soueif as an outsider by both sides. Interviewed by Drraj about the issue of hybridity Soueif understands that *"there are so many hybrids now, people who are a little bit of this and a little bit of that. The interesting thing is what we make of it, what kind of hybrid we become and how we feel about it"* (Malak 2003, p. 148). Ahdaf Soueif was a child who was born in Egypt and grew up and was educated in the West. Her opportunity to read Arabic literature was narrow in comparison with the Western literature that she could read while still a child. Ahdaf Soueif does not deny that, during her youth, she read more literature in English, since it was the first language that she learned to read in (Massad, 1999, p. 88). Now she is living in England, which renders her exposure to Arabic literature less frequent. However, Soueif admits the influence of Arabic literary writings that have influenced her oeuvres, nonetheless. She explains:

> I still remember the air of excitement in the house when *al-Liss wa al-Kilab* (*The Thief and the Dogs*) came out, as my mother was one of the main critics who wrote about Naguib Mahfuz. […] I read al-Tayyib Salih, I read Naguib Mahfuz, I read Yusif Idriss and Fathi Ghanim, a lot of current poetry, but in the end I read more English. (Massad, 1999, p. 88)

Part One: A Story of Timeless Female Phoenixes:

Introduction

In part one the focus is on Soueif's use of non-linear time. Soueif avails herself from the use of linear time movement to liberate her narrative from an obsession with such time and, therefore, allows readers concentrate on the story. This is the main reason why particular attention is put on the exploration of the element of time first and then the probing of characters' representations second in *The Map of Love*. The leitmotif behind such a de-concentration of linear time could be to highlight the elements that bind the story and characters together. This does not entail that time is not important. This means that a writer's choice of time and narrative structure is hugely dependent on priorities they set writing a story. In *The Map of Love*, Soueif makes use of an intricate time and narrative structure. The use of time past proves ubiquitous and is the main element that reveals the aspects of intertwining narratives that oscillate between past, present and future. This refers to the phenomenon of time understood as co-existence and not as linear entity referred to in the introduction to chapter two. The use of narrative is also of utmost importance as the writer makes use of myriad techniques. These techniques consist in the utilisation of an omniscient narrator, first person narrator, internal monologue, comments from the characters and their descriptions, Epilogues, dialogue, and indirect discourse. It is a story that her female protagonists piece together. One remembers *Aisha* explored in chapter two (p.90) also as an amalgamation of female characters' narratives.

IV. 1. A Story of Timeless Female Phoenixes:

The Map of Love starts with Ahdaf Soueif's using the third-person narrator. That entails the presence of an omniscient narrator who knows everything from the beginning to the end of the novel (2000, p. 4).This ubiquitous narrator calls the reader's attention from the outset unveiling a fragmented tale. That is why this omniscient narrator admits, at the beginning of the novel, that it consists of *"fragments of a life lived a long, long time ago"* (Ibid. 4). This means that the past is immensely important to the events of the novel in general and to the events of the present in particular. Moreover, the omniscient narrator insists that the events taking place in the past, happened *"a hundred years ago"*.

The ubiquitous presence of the past is striking from the outset featuring in the opening epilogue: *"Even God cannot change the past"* (Agathon 447-401 BC) (Soueif, 2000, p. 3). This entails that the past is fatal. It has a huge impact on the present. The first scene in the novel echoes a woman's voice from the past, *"a hundred years ago"*. A British woman whose, *"voice"* is now speaking to someone, a *"her,"* namely the first-person narrator Amal, appealing to her and invocating her to answer. Right from the beginning, the past is there to mingle with the present, highlighting Anna's life and story. It is part and parcel of Amal's life and story (Ibid. 4).

The novel starts with an introduction of the protagonists: Anna and Amal. Anna speaks from the past and Amal listens in the present. Amel cannot help picking up her pen and answer so that a shared story of many lives starts. This results in the birth of a story of this woman from the past, Anna, that is narrated through the eyes and contemplation of another woman, Amal, the first-person narrator, in the present. Amal encounters the past through Anna's journal, newspapers and articles. Anna's trunk lands in Amal's hands, which is brought to her by an American journalist, Isabel Parkman sent by her brother Omar who lives in The United States. Isabel is Anna's grand-daughter, the daughter of Jasmine daughter of Nur. Amal is Isabel's cousin for Amal's uncle Sharif al-Baroudi, brother of Layla, Amal's grandmother, married the British Lady Anna Winterbourne.

One reaches the conclusion that Amal is reading Anna's diaries and memoirs. This act of reading is an active one for Anna's memoirs are partly fragmented and Amal's immediate and urgent task is to reconnect with them and then put them in their coherent order to be presented to the reader. The reader is also asked to be an active reader who links the past to the present to portray one picture of all the events. Thus, as the third-person narrator points out, Amal *"reads and lets Anna's words flow into her, probing gently at dreams and hopes and sorrows she had sorted out, labelled and put away"* (Soueif, 2000, p. 4).

The omniscient narrator controls everything in the novel, from beginning to end. The constituting parts of the novel are labelled: *"A Beginning," "An End of a Beginning," "A Beginning of an End"* and *"An End"*. This means that these parts are included in the text of the novel in various places namely the beginning, the middle and the end. Moreover, this omniscient narrator, who inaugurates the novel, brings it to an end with the last part entitled "An End." Darraj perceives *The Map of Love* as:

> a textual tapestry that weaves together several parallel stories: the titles of the book's four units ('A Beginning,' 'An End of a Beginning,' 'A Beginning of an End,' and 'An End') hint at the epic proportions and tremendous historic scope of the tale about to unravel (2003, p. 101).

This takes place despite that the events in the other twenty-nine chapters of the novel are narrated in the first-person. One is to deduce that the omniscient narrator acts as the "intrusive narrator" (Hawthorne, 2001, p. 155) who is called for at certain points in the novel to unveil certain facts and to comment on certain events. This the novelist utilizes to avail the reader of any misunderstanding or enigma as far as the events of the past as well as the present are concerned. In addition, the omniscient narrator informs readers that the events of the past begin in 1896 (Soueif, 2000, p. 5), which witness a whole century elapsing before Amal discovers Anna's diaries. These diaries were written mostly in English and French, and some of them were written in Arabic: "*sixty-four pages of neat Arabic "ruqᶜa script";* these were written by Layla, Sharif's sister and Amal's grandmother (Ibid. 4-5).

The writer gives the following date: Cairo, April 1997 as a date in the present to mark the beginning of Amal's narration. Reflecting on the month when the act of decoding Anna's diaries takes place which is spring, *"the spring of 1997,*" (Soueif, 2000, p.10), one is to conclude that it is a season of regeneration and rebirth, as though Ahdaf Soueif intends to give Anna another life through the gathering of the various pieces of her diaries and then reinterpreting them through the eyes of Amal in spring.

Amal starts narration as first person narrator speaking about life and how flimsy and improbable it is, and how *"life-thirsty human beings are*". Then she shifts to a dream she has had featuring her uncle Sharif wandering in his house while she was there. Then Amal goes back to Anna's journal that is dated autumn 1897 in England. It starts with Anna's confessions about her love for her British husband Edward and how she strived to make him happy and be a faithful wife (Ibid.11). Anna's revelations are interrupted by Amal's comments in the present about how familiar and so alive Anna is and also the hundred years that separated her from the present: "*What difference do a hundred—or a continent—make?"* (Ibid. 12-13-14).

Narration resumes with Anna describing her life with Edward, her relation with her dead mother and father and with her father-in-law Sir Charles. After her mother's death, her father was sad, but he never mentioned her on the other hand. Anna's father and his friend Sir Charles, Edward's father, met only to talk of public and political issues concerning India, Ireland, the Queen, the Egyptian Canal, "*the Rebellion, the Bombardment and the Trial. They never spoke of [her] mother"* (Ibid. 13).Next, *"a few months ago,"* after her father's death, Anna attempts to know if her father and her mother shared a happy marriage. Yet, she never receives a clear answer from Sir Charles later: "*I expect so, my dear. She was a fine woman. And he was a true gentleman"* (Ibid. 13). This return to Anna through her memory is recounted by the omniscient narrator and further highlights the frequent visits to time past.

Narration shifts to this date: Cairo May 1997. It features the time when Amal meets Isabel and tells her about meeting Amal's brother Omar. Then, the date turns back to February 1997 in New York when and where Isabel meets Omar and falls in love with him from the first sight (Soueif, 2000, p. 16-23). A" parallelism" between what Anna felt in 1897, i.e. in the past, and what Isabel goes through in 1997, i.e. in the present seems striking. Soueif devotes the second chapter to Isabel. The past witnessed Anna's heart in trouble, which made her sad. In the present, Isabel's heart is also suffering due to her love for a man, Omar al-Ghamrawi, Amal's brother, who is fifty-five and is old enough to be her father, as a friend of Isabel points out (Ibid. 17-18). So, through this "parallelism", Soueif constructs a connection between the past and the present (El-Enany, 2010, p. 9).

The story resumes with chapter three again in Cairo, May 1997 with Amal's obsessions with Anna's story. She decides to *"piece a story together"*. It became possible for Amal to *"piece"* together Anna's story (Soueif, 2000, p. 26) as it is presented in the novel: through Anna's diaries and through other means – "*browsing"* books at the British Council Library, Dar al-Kutub and second-hand bookstalls besides getting cuttings from old issues of *The Times* .Amal believes:

> I got to know Anna as though she were my best friend – or better; for I heard the worst and the best of her thoughts, and I had her life whole in front of me, here in the box Isabel has brought me. … I read what others wrote of her and she became so present to me that I could almost swear she sits quietly by as I try to write down her story. (Ibid. 43-44)

Thus Amal, the first-person narrator, moves the reader back in place and time. The date shifts to March 1899 in London whereby Anna is in the South Kensington Museum. Then, narration shifts to Anna's journal speaking about Edward and his sudden illness after his return from the Sudan. She mentions her visit to the set forth museum and her admiration of Mr Frederick Lewis's paintings (Ibid. 26-27).

Lewis draws traditional Eastern scenes, like a harem, and yet he refused to report them in the mythical old frame which Western audiences were used to. Ahdaf Soueif admits Lewis remained the only Orientalist painter that pictured "the truth about the spirit of the place" (Soueif 2008). He thus avoided age old stereotypes of the Orient. Darraj agrees with Ahdaf Soueif's view and believes that, although Lewis showed the East in a truthful way, allusions to these paintings and Anna's reference to the British translation of Arabian Nights "indicate how deeply England was drowning in its culture of orientalism – a culture that allowed the English to imagine the Arabs as exotic 'other', and thus as people who lacked morals and dignity" (Darraj, 2003, p. 102)[1]. In *The Map of Love*, Ahdaf Soueif revisits these archaic Victorian ways translating into the West's representation of the East and its culture. The beginning of the novel displays a Victorian lady's encounter with Eastern characters dwelling in Lewis' paintings of the Orient. Soueif was not content with such traditional encounter but she utilised Anna as a confirmation of the disguise of the truth about the orient Western painters learned to paint and further demystify it through Anna's report of a different painting.

Soueif wrote an article for *The Guardian* in which she confesses her own fascination with Lewis' works by admitting that:

> [o]f all the 'oriental' paintings I had come across, only those of Lewis beckoned me in. At the simplest level, the world he shows is a happy one, filled with sunlight, people, animals, flowers, food. But something else is transmitted from his surfaces: empathy. Lewis lived in Cairo for 10 years, and 'went native' in adopting Egyptian dress. But that wasn't it. Edward Lane did the same, and I find his work unreadable. […] Lewis's truth, expressed in colour and brushstrokes, was a truth about the spirit of the place. (Soueif, 2008)

Anna's confessions about her past life with her husband meet the following date: March 20 1899 when Edward died. Anna then laments the loss of her husband who she thought

struggled for an *"unjust cause"* dying in the name of the British Empire. Edward suffered the impact of the atrocities he witnessed in the Sudan at war with Britain (Ibid. 35). Sir Charles warns his son against going to Sudan knowing that he was not going there to fulfil an honourable mission as Edward believed. Soon Edward becomes disillusioned after living the massacre The British committed there in 1898. Edward suffered spiritually because he is a man of principles yet he was bound to do things that deceive his beliefs. Sir Charles has predicted the atrocities that would result from such a mission. However, Edward's 'principles' propelled him into taking part in it. That is what Sir Charles tells Anna after his son comes back from Sudan only a ghost of his previous soul: *"I told him, though. I told him this was not an honest war. This was a war dreamed up by politicians, a war to please that widow so taken with her cockney Empire – Ah, what's the use?"* Anna's worries about her husband soared as she writes in her diary:

> Oh, I do so completely out of fear for my husband now, for if it is true and if he took part in those terrible deeds, he who puts honour above all else and truly thought that in embarking on this expedition he embarked on a brave and honourable task, I cannot now see how he can put it behind him. (Soueif, 2000, p. 35)

Yet Edward died in 1899.The story carries on in the present with Amal's comments about Anna's deep pain and regrets, as a childless and parentless mother. Amal is with Isabel in her Cairo apartment then Isabel points to the fact that Anna has lived alone though she had Edward as a husband. She comments on her great-grandmother's grief. Isabel then speaks about her dying mother Jasmine. She mentions that she has not been close to her and regrets this as did Anna for her husband (Ibid. 38-41).

Narration turns to Anna's anger with Edward for she thought he could not be more careful to cause his father such an enormous pain. Amal resumes speaking about Anna as a best friend and how familiar her story is. *"She became so present to me that I could almost swear she sits quietly by as I try to write down her story"* (Ibid. 42-43-44).

With the journal entry dated (January 14 1900) Anna speaks about her efforts to put grief away. The death of her husband Edward had a tremendously bad influence on her for quite a long time. She lived days, weeks and months believing that she was partly to blame for his death for she did not attempt any understanding of him. Had she tried, this could

have soothed him of his ailing soul. Thinking about that caused a huge fear to dwell in her mind: that she could have failed him in death as she had in life:

> A happy man would not leave his home and go seeking death in the desert. A well-loved man would not die with horrors eating silently, secretly at his mind. If she had loved him better, perhaps he would not have needed to go to the Sudan. (Soueif, 2000, p. 41)

However, Anna was not the cause of Edward's death for she tried hard to comfort him, but he could not answer her sincere attempts. That's what Amal thinks as she answers back to eradicate Anna's responsibility of such a harsh situation: *"What's done is done, I want to tell her. How can you reach someone who does not want to be reached?"* (Ibid.44). This inability of the couple *"to be reached"* resulted in a physical and spiritual severance. Their marriage could not bear such alienation. Anna spends *"ten months"* in grief over her husband's death. She fell ill for quite a long time. Then she could let herself go in Rome with her friend Caroline and release her grief seeing "*the door by which* [she] *might return*" to the world and to life again. She could notice flowers and colours around her again:

> I found, nestled in a dark corner under the spreading branches, one last cluster of blossom like a small pink chandelier and I was overcome with gratitude as though it had stayed to say to me, Look! It is not too late. (Ibid. 45)

This regaining of hope and the belief that "*it is not too late*" empowers her to meet life again and reject death and grief: "*I was able, once more to take pleasure in the wondrous colours, the tranquillity, the contentment with which they are infused. And I wondered, as I had wondered before, is that a world which truly exists?"*. Spring was there for her to renew and fix a battered life (Ibid.46).

Time shifts back to the present when Isabel wonders about Anna's grief asking Amal about how long it could have taken Anna to forget about it. Isabel also expresses her surprise at having a woman living alone in Egypt as Amal does. While in a stream of consciousness wave, Amal remembers her life with her husband and children: *"once upon a time in England in a house out of a Victorian novel"* (Soueif, 2000, p. 48).

Then time present flies to New York City, March 1997 unveiling a description of Isabel and Omar's first rendezvous in a restaurant as Isabel narrates to Amal. The former reveals her love for Omar and his carelessness and avoidance attitude towards her (Ibid. 50). Next, Isabel recounts how she tells her mother Jasmine about meeting Omar. Jasmine belongs to another world of the past and souvenirs and forgetfulness of the present (Ibid. 51). She thinks about her dead husband, dead son, and her lover Omar that she had to give up though she loved him. Besides, Omar was younger than her (Ibid. 54). The three ladies meet and experience love and sadness, weakness and strength (Ibid. 49).

Narration continues with Amal as first person narrator recounting Anna's description of her trip to Egypt starting from Alexandria with her British friends headed by her friend James Barrington, and encouraged by Sir Charles. Sir Charles wrote to the British agency in Egypt to take care of her (Ibid. 56-58). Amal mentions that this narration should stem from one of Anna's letters to Caroline the latter's friend. The letter is not dated. Amal remarks that there was no mention of Anna's grief. One comes to the realization that Anna recounts her experience of Egypt to her friend Caroline (Ibid. 56-58) and to Sir Charles (Ibid. 60-62), and to the reader as well, in the form of letters. To back up Anna's designing of Egypt's portrait in 1900 and complete it Amal goes to *al-Ahram*'s office, a well-known Egyptian newspaper, and fumbles into the archives of that period to allow her *"to re-imagine"* and *"to re-create"* (Ibid. 59) the Egypt that Anna encountered at the beginning of the twentieth century in order to enable Isabel to see it and experience it, as Anna came to see it and experience it.

Amal regrets not being there to guide Anna and make her enjoy her visit to her own country. Amal later makes sure of the date Anna visited Alexandria September 28 1900 for it coincides with the arrival of the New Greek Archbishop, Fotios, to his patriarchal seat in Alexandria. On her part, Anna mentions the new Patriarch of the Greek Orthodox Church arrived at Alexandria (Ibid. 60). Anna's first letter to Sir Charles dates September 1900 Alexandria. She mentions her happiness at visiting Alexandria a day after. She describes the place for him. Anna starts another journal September 28 on the same day speaking about Edward and how he must have seen the same places when he visited Alexandria four years ago. She regretted not being with him. She thought that had she been with him fragments of that frozen relation could have melted away (Ibid. 62-64). Amal wonders if Anna really knew what Alexandria means to Egypt. She says that she *"can see her now"*

sitting at the window of her apartment in this city that encircles a portion of the Mediterranean where the Pharaohs—the great lighthouse of Greek Alexandria once stood.

Isabel speaks of making a film of Anna's story but Amal does not want Anna *"taken over by some actress"*. Amal describes Anna sitting at her window, the time is night. She gives details of her clothes, hair, style, the décor of her apartment. The use of human senses is frequent in narration as Amal sees, hears, speaks, and feels the other characters of the story. The same technique is used y Soueif in *The Sandpiper* stories earlier in Chapter two.

The date shifts to Cairo November 8 1900 (Ibid. 66-67) to reveal the contents of another of Anna's letters to Sir Charles. Anna moved to Cairo. She tells about the places she visits with her nurse Emily; bazaars and souks. Amal rushes to describe Emily as a British maid full of fear in an Oriental souk (Ibid. 68) pushing her fertile imagination farther back in time[2].

In a letter to Caroline Bourke dated Cairo November 14 1900, Anna describes Cairo as a wonderful city (Ibid.69) and Amal immediately comments on Anna's thoughts mentioning that it is impossible to tailor a country and a people you do not know your own way (Ibid. 70). Anna answers that she strives to know more about native life: "*But I feel it would be a little odd to come all the way to Egypt and learn nothing except more about your own compatriots"* (Ibid. 71). Thus, it is important to consider the spiral movement guiding the structure of the novel as the past calls and the present answers back.

Soueif makes her readers go back to the present, Cairo, May 1997, to meet Amal, the first-person narrator, sitting in her bedroom, where she reads and contemplates Anna's journals and letters and looks at pictures that date back to the beginnings of the twentieth century. Amal has one mission in mind that is to rebuild and deliver Anna's story from anonymity:

> I'd been in my bedroom, working, as is usual with me now, on my Anna project, reading on the period, looking at pictures, trying to imagine. … I think of the table by the window as 'Anna's table' and it is covered with her papers. I've arranged them chronologically as much as I could; the undated sheets I've compared to dated ones and matched the paper. They stand in twelve piles, one for each year – … The journals stand alone. I have tried not to read through them, to read only one year at a time. But then I know how the story ends. I

> don't think it matters. We always know how the story ends. What we don't know is what happens along the way. (Ibid. 74)

Henceforth, Amal is to discover "*what happens along the way";* which is also an opportunity for her to discover history and her own self. She is still in her apartment and Isabel comes to her. They discuss Anna's story, the possibility of making a film out of it and Isabel's project of describing Egypt in the millennium when they go to a restaurant (Soueif, 2000, p. 74-79). Isabel wants to learn Arabic and so does Anna according to the part of the journal that Amal stops at (Ibid. 81).

Cairo 25 January 1901 (Ibid. 86): in a letter to Sir Charles Anna continues her description of her stay in Cairo, her visits to churches and mosques, particularly of a church built upon the towers of the Roman Fort of Babylon in the old Christian district to the South of Cairo. Amal mentions her visiting the same church on a school trip. Amal feels the same living presence of the Virgin Mary as *"natives believe our Lady left her heritage there as a token when she appeared in the year 969 to the Patriarch Abraham"* (Ibid. 87).

The three characters experienced alienation and deception in the past with Amal as a divorced woman, separated from her children and living alone in a country she barely recognises. Anna recovers from her husband's abrupt death with feelings of guilt and loneliness. Isabel worries about her mother's ill health and possible death and a love life she strives to make come true. Yet the three characters aspire to the future. Anna heads to Egypt a country where she is to know love, motherhood and reunion. Amal strives to write the story of Anna and her own travelling in time and space. Isabel hopes to know love and to become a mother.

The omniscient narrator recounts that Anna avoided offence in the Khedive's Ball, wearing a covered dress because Moslem notables were supposed to attend the party. The people present at the ball are: Harry Boyle the Oriental Secretary at the agency, James Barrington the Third Secretary, Mr Rodd the First Secretary, Mrs Butcher, Mr Douglas Sladen and Mr George Young, Mr William Wilcox (Ibid. 94-96). Mr Boyle's opinion about Egyptians and how they were ruled is the following: he thought Egypt had never witnessed efficient ruling or more prosperous days than those of Lord Cromer's reign (Ibid. 97). Mr Sladen also expresses his extreme suspicion towards *"effendis",* educated

Egyptians whom he thought they are not up to the level of adopting ideas of liberty and democracy and he was also *"suspicious of their French education"*. Mr Sladen had another opinion about 'real' Egyptians. He believed that only Copts can claim to be Egyptians for they are *"descendants of the Ancients*". However, Copts are few and have no influence. He thought that *"Mohammedans"* are all Arabs and have recent history in the country. Mrs Butcher, a distinguished character according to Anna, answers him sharply that the special character of the *"Ancients"* could still be said to be part of *"the Egyptians of today character*" (Ibid. 98). Yet, Mrs Butcher remonstrated that the particular character of the Ancients is rather degraded by the "*new Egyptians propensity to falsehood, [and] their ability to bend with the wind"* (Ibid. 99). Mr Harry Boyle and Mr Sladen thought the natives were unable to rule themselves for they had *"no integrity and no moral fibre"*. It seemed that foreign rule is part of their fate. Yet, Mr Young confirms that Egyptians' national character does exist, yet awareness to its existence is still blurred. This is how natives, the foreigners, the uncivilised Easterners were identified and represented by the upper class refined Westerners.

Amal reads Anna's letter to her father-in-law dated Cairo March 10 1901 with mixed bitterness and pride. Her Egypt is a mother, *"mother of civilisation*". She imagines Mr Young *'dark haired'* and with a likeness for the ironical. She wants to say to him that Egyptians knew very well that they are Egyptians and that they fought for the liberation of their country and got it. She wants to say to Harry Boyle that he does not understand a scrap of Egyptian *"fellaheen"* (farmers) these people who wanted to live in peace and to own their own land. She thinks about the man in the street and how striving he is to get a decent place to live in and food for his children (Ibid.100-101). She ponders about the current situation of poverty, wars and terrorism. She strives to be part of the story in the past, to enter its stage and be one of its actors and she still connects her being in the present to it.

March 10 1901: Anna confesses, as though to reassure Amal, that she is a different Westerner, that she was convinced that her destiny lay bare in front of her informing her about a *"connection to Egypt"*. She could sense it whenever discussions turned about this country. Also were of great influence Frederick Lewis' paintings featuring Oriental scenes. Those paintings were to stand as solace to her grief bearing Edward's strange and sudden illness and death. Egypt resurrected Anna's appetite for life (Ibid.102).

Anna's journal dated March 12: Anna had been abducted by young Egyptian effendis disguised as a man trying to cross the desert to The Suez with Sabir an Egyptian servant of Mr Barrington. Anna seemed to like the adventure, being taken to a secluded house built of stone, eyes bandaged by unknown foreign abductors (Ibid. 108-109). Amal comments on Anna's calm reaction that she dreamed of such a thing to happen, poised as she were, facing an unknown lot at the hand of foreigners. She wonders how in such difficult circumstances a woman would sit in a storeroom and write. Now she was to be sent to al-Baroudi Basha's father in the district of Hilmiya and meet Layla Amal's great grandmother (Ibid. 110).

The first time Layla's narrative appears, read by Amal, is when she comments on her meeting Anna in her father's house. Layla thought she had a man in the house and later discovered that it was a woman, an *"English woman and an important one"* (Ibid.111). The servant informs Layla that Anna wanted to visit 'the real Egypt', to go to the Sinai to visit *"Deir Saint Katrin",* (Saint Catherine House) sit at coffee shops and listen to stories (Ibid.112).

Cairo June 29 1997: Amal turns to speak about her family thinking about her great grandmother Layla married to her maternal cousin Husni al-Ghamrawi. Amal's father is Ahmad al-Ghamrawi Layla and Husni's son. Amal's mother Maryam al-Khalidi had Palestinian origins (Soueif, 2000, p. 116-117). She speaks about her younger brother Omar being sent to America to study. She expresses her regrets of not having spent many more years with her mother before she died (Ibid.119) as she went abroad. Then Amal takes Isabel to visit Egypt especially to see the Mu'allaqah. They saw Noah's Ark and family (Ibid.120).

Narration carries on with the omniscient narrator when (Ibid.123) Amal's servant informs her that the school in Tawasi was closed by the government because the young teachers were accused of being terrorists. The school was built by Mustafa Bey al-Ghamrawi Amal's great grandfather and his nephew Sharif. They intended the school village to teach both children and adults attended by Husni al-Ghamrawi Amal's grandfather. The school has been running for ninety years.

Egypt July 6 1997: Anna's story sparks again as Amal tells Isabel about the meeting between their great grandmothers Layla and Anna. Amal harks back to the day she spoke to Omar on the phone and she told him about Anna's tapestry *"a long strip of woven*

fabric" and "*Pharaonic tapestry "*that pairs with the one she has hung in her study (Ibid. 132).

Amal fuses Anna's narrative with Layla's to make it one. Her imagination is there to complete what has not been said by the protagonists of the story she strives to write. "*When I read the journals I feel as if I'm there, a hundred years ago. I'm putting together the whole picture and I know everything that happened and wasn't written down"* (Ibid. 133). As her brother, Omar, recalls, it is Amal's *"imagination"* that allows her conjure up this fusion and to enable her feel that she is present and living with them[3].

Time and narration shift back (Ibid. 134) to Anna's journal dated March 13: Anna speaks about her waking up in al-Baroudi's house. She describes Layla as an Egyptian lady; the first she had seen without the black cloak and the veil. She admired Layla's delicately chosen clothes and described her as a Houri (a female angel). Anna was grateful to this Egyptian lady who took care of her to the extent that she felt safe at her hands (Ibid. 135). Layla, on her turn, described the scene of the meeting. She saw Anna as a beautiful European woman. Layla apologised to Anna for the circumstances of her abduction and that she was to be free as soon as her brother Sharif Pasha comes to her father's house. She expresses her surprise at Anna's courage and naturalness showing no sign of being abducted. She describes her as sympathetic with a quick and curious mind.

Both ladies shared details of their families (Ibid. 137). Anna's account draws a very generous Layla with distinguished appearance *"formal courtesy of her gestures and melodious intonation of her voice"*.

Then, Layla is to tell the story of the coming of Sharif. He was very angry at the young effendis' abduction of Lady Anna and described it as a huge mistake (Ibid. 138-140-141). At the same time comes Anna's account of Sharif's meeting. She noticed that she had seen his face before at the Costanzi in Rome. She thought him *"Proud as a devil*". He had to convince a rather intrepid and headstrong Anna to accompany her to her hotel the day after (Ibid. 142-143-146).

14 March 1901: the omniscient narrator leads narration again when Layla thinks it is a pity Anna went away tomorrow. *"She imagined so many things they could do together"* (Ibid. 149). Layla delves into a stream of consciousness wave being with her brother and

son Ahmad. She ponders about Sharif and his proposal to accompany Anna to see The Sinai Desert and especially Saint Catherine because she was a foreign woman, British, in particular. Ideas start to settle in her mind about Sharif as an eternal bachelor. Layla had been seven at the time when her brother accompanied his young bride to her home. He simply could not live (Ibid. 150-151) with a princess he did not understand. She could not understand what life meant for him. He could not feel love in their union which he labelled a "*transaction of convenience sanctioned by religion and society"*.

Anna is harking back to the day she asks Sharif about when he fell in love with her. Sharif confirms Anna's feelings that they had met before in the Khedive's Ball and he confessed that Anna behaved better than some of the others. Yet, Sharif fell in love with Anna when (Ibid. 153-154) he saw her at his father's home.

One returns to al-Baroudi's house with Layla (Ibid. 155) speaking to her brother in Anna's presence. He discusses with both ladies the conditions of Anna's return to her hotel in Cairo and how she will first go to The Sinai to visit St Catherine's. The conversation goes on in French. *"French is presented as a third language that short-circuits the political power imbalance between English and Egyptian characters"* (Moore, 2008, p. 151).

Sharif decides Anna will travel as a young French man called Armand Demange. Back to Anna's stream of consciousness as she thinks about the first time she met Sharif (Soueif, 2000, p. 157), Anna believes he chose the name of the French man because he thought of the opera at the Costanzi. He enquires if Anna missed her life in England and she assures him that she was meant to be with him.

In another letter to Sir Charles dated March 14; Anna expresses her extreme delight at having met the Baroudis and her contentment at having the possibility to understand Egypt *"this country which has for so long held such an attraction for me"* (Ibid. 159).

The three heroines—*"as is only fitting in a story born of travel",* extracted out of a trunk, paved their ways towards different journeys. Anna Winterbourne headed towards The Sinai and Isabel Parkman and Amal al-Ghamrawi took the Upper Egypt road to Tawasi in the governate of Minya (Ibid. 164-166). The journey to Tawasi feels and proves tiring; dust, traffic, and terrorists risk. Yet Isabel puts all her trust in her friend

Amal. An American in the Egypt desert means danger, kidnapping and blood spilled in the village (Ibid. 170). Isabel feels she has been thrust into an unknown world and far from any familiar spot she had ever witnessed. She surrenders to Amal's, the Egyptian, protection like a child to a mother. The countryside was nothing like the places she used to visit. Only fields, animals, donkeys, horses, goats, camels and also barricades (Ibid. 171-172).

When Isabel and Amel reach the old Baroudi house in Tawasi, Isabel feels like coming home. Amal traces back pictures of her childhood: the furniture, the photographs, and the pictures. They even find the watercolours signed by Anna. When they reach (Ibid. 173) the portraits both ladies recognise Sheikh Muhammad Abdu, Layla al-Baroudi, members of al-Ghamrawi family and Sharif Basha al-Baroudi. The women from the fellaheen liked Isabel and ask Amel to teach Isabel Arabic and she on her turn will teach them English (Ibid. 174).

Isabel faces Sharif al-Baroudi's portrait. It reminds her of Omar al-Ghamrawi. She finds the same proud, handsome and distinguished man. She remembers once asking Omar about his involvement with the terrorists as people thought. Before she travelled to Egypt he gives her Anna's journals and the Pharaohnic tapestry. Isabel agrees on the spot because Amal is his sister and because his sister will keep them linked together. Then Omar and Isabel discuss their private lives. Omar has been married and has kids and also has Isabel, but she has no children (Ibid. 178-183). Isabel quits her remembering web to let it rest with the past for a while. She confesses to Amel back in their home in Tawasi, that she loves her brother Omar and that she could not think of anything else but him. Isabel knows that he does not quiet share these strong feelings towards her as she does towards him. Yet, besides the years separating them Isabel wants him so much.

Omar and Isabel's love story is suspended for a while to mention the incident with the villagers clashing with the police because the latter tried to put them out of the lands. According to the new law, the fellaheen will be obliged to pay rent to land lords for their staying there. The police beat and embarked the villagers. The women in the village come to see Amal to get their men back. Amal promises *"to speak to the government"* (Ibid. 187-188). As Amal is thinking about the people of her village she is impatient to go back to Anna's journal and to accompany her to The Sinai.

Amal resumes her narration telling about Anna's journey to the Sinai desert. In 15 March 1901: Anna is in The Sinai with Sharif Basha. A fire is lit where Anna sits in a man's clothes looking at Bedouins preparing food. Sabir asks Anna if she is happy being where she wanted to be. In the Sinai the Sahara was dressed in tents, decorated by camels and fire. Anna's own account of the desert springs forth to complete the picture. She has never imagined the Egyptian desert to be what she sees now. No books or stories have prepared her for the scenes she witnessed: *"the land, the sea, and the sky, all stretching unbroken and united"* (Ibid. 190).

The story goes back to the scene when Layla was preparing Anna for her trip to The Sinai with her brother. Layla combs Anna's hair to fit the Kufiyya that is to be put on her head to pass for an Arab man with the rest of Bedouin clothes. Anna regrets Layla's not coming with her for the latter had a baby to attend to (Ibid. 191-193). She expresses her sincere apologies for causing any nuisance to Sharif. Yet, Layla assures her that it is ok for it was he who offered to accompany her. Now one witnesses Anna's account of her going out of the Baroudis' house and climbing a carriage with Sabir. She has her Arab man's clothes on and a woman's black gown on them. Anna is to travel first as a veiled woman to Alexandria on a train. Her countrymen and women do not recognise her under the black veil. She feels the veil is liberating as she could watch everyone and anyone, yet no one could know who she was. When Anna, Sabir and the servant reach The Suez on a boat, Anna is to transform herself to become a man. Soueif now stresses the phenomenon of disguise. Then the three men (Anna included) are to meet Sharif Basha. The men ride camels and reach the desert. (Ibid. 196)

July 12 1997: Amal is keen on going back to Anna's world, sharing with her the pleasure of her journey in the desert. She is impatient to travel to that different space and time *"away from [her] my own"* people. She switches back to the present to remember the detained fellaheen of her village. Amal promised *"to speak to the government"* and finally finds out a family friend Tareq 'Atiyya, a successful businessman with tight relations to government officials. Tareq promised to solve the problem immediately (Ibid.200-201).

Isabel wants to visit Sharif Basha's house that became a museum. Amal agrees to take her there. Once in the three storeys house *"the feel and smell of the past wraps",* Amal thinks (Ibid. 205). When Isabel mentions that she is back to The States in August to see

Omar and her mother, Amal asks her whether Jasmine ever mentioned her grandmother Anna. Isabel confirms that she did. *"She used to say Anna had set a pattern for the women of our family: they would all marry foreign men and live far from home"*. Anna married an Egyptian, her daughter Nur married a French man and Jasmine married an American. Isabel married an American and divorced from him and now she is in relation with an Egyptian. Isabel then recollects how the news of her divorce with Irving did not surprise her mother. Jasmine expected the rupture of the relation for the couple was not happy living together.

When the evening comes, Amal rushes back to join Anna and her journal, following the journey in the desert with Sharif on 16 March 1901 (Soueif, 2000, p. 206). Anna enjoys her evening of "*revelry and fantasia"* in the desert. She is impatient to meet her friends and relatives in England and ensure them that her *"adventure was not foolish or rash"* (Ibid. 215). Sharif Basha enquires why Anna came to Egypt. She responds that the paintings in Kensington museum and "*their world of light and colour*" brought her to this wonderful land. She mentions that Edward was ill when she used to go there. Anna confesses she regretted his desolate and troublesome death. Yet, Sharif assures her that Edward must have done what he thought was right, fighting for the empire.

Cairo 13 July 1997: Amal thinks about her husband and the time they enjoyed together then the "*desolate spaces we would later inhabit".* She tries to find a place for Tareq 'Atiyya in her 'empty life'. There has been no man in it since her separation with her husband in England. She imagines Anna and what she was putting on, and what she was thinking, remembering her time with Sharif. Sharif was another man who lived a sad life and who could not be comforted. Yet, he could let his thoughts free to discuss somebody's private life, to accompany Anna to a place she longed to visit. He could afford an adventure full of danger. This makes Amal remember Isabel and how hurt she would feel with Omar not sharing her love for him. Yet, Isabel has made strenuous efforts to win Omar back. "*She wants to surprise him [Omar] when she goes back [to The States] by her grasp of things Egyptians"* (Ibid. 218-219).

It is 15 1997 July (Ibid. 234) and Amal is pondering about how to get through the hardships and traps in one's life. She is confident that there must be light at the end of the tunnel for each one to make of their lives. Yet, sometimes this possibility proves shaky and difficult. One positions one's self around a particular spot, yet the world around changes so

fast that one rushes to overcome whatever alteration passed one by. However, the past is different and there lays the beauty of it, Amal thinks. She sits in her room surrounded by the past:

> On the table: journals, pictures, a candle-glass, a few books of history. You leave it and come back to it and it waits for you—unchanged. You can turn back the pages, look again at the beginning. You can leaf forward and the end. And you tell the story that they, the people who lived it, could only tell in part". (Soueif, 2000, p. 235)

Yet, the history of that story could change with one's conception of it after having read it several times or may be with its mingling with other stories.

3 April 1901: Anna is worried about having received no message from Sharif Basha after their journey to the desert. She goes back to al-Baroudi's house to meet Layla and embrace as two dear sisters with tears in both ladies eyes (Ibid. 235).

Back to the present Amal is following the story as she discovers a new Anna for the latter expects novel things from life. She meets Egyptian ladies with Layla and becomes friend with them. Anna's happiness is so great that a prospect of going back home felt feeble and improbable for her nurse Emily (Ibid. 237). She expected more that newness and happiness. She awaited love (Ibid. 238). The following day (4 April) Anna confirms her awaiting asking Layla about news of her brother and whether the journey caused him trouble. Layla denied any disturbance having occurred to Sharif Basha's work because of his absence. Despite her indefinite joy, Anna confesses her missing and longing to go back to England again especially in April when trees and flowers blossom.

(Cairo 8 April1901) In Layla's account of her brother and Anna's visit to The Sinai she mentions Anna's growing thirst for adventure and her surprising courage. She feels Anna's interest in her brother (Ibid. 243). In her turn Layla asks her brother about how he found Anna and he contended himself of saying that she was a good rider. Sharif finally asks Anna to marry him declaring to her his huge love in a letter signed (Cairo 5 May) that reached her hotel and left her bemused and elated (Ibid. 250-251).

Back to the present (Ibid. 254) Amal is holding her great uncle's letter in her hand. She imagines how he wrote it and what he was wearing. Amal sees him standing at the window of his study at his house in Hilmiyya, clothed in European dress. She tries to piece out the whole picture of her great uncle Sharif al-Baroudi and beholds *"a man, tall and vigorous*

and alive, a man who filled a room when he entered". She thinks she is in love with her own uncle. Amal already knows him from her father Ahmad's account of him, from Layla's, and from Anna's. He reminds her of her brother Omar. She tries to draw him as close to reality as she could. She strives to "*write about Sharif Basha al-Baroudi as the man I imagine he must have been"* (Ibid. 255).

Tawasi 7 April 1901: Sharif Basha sits surrounded by nature and his land, holding *"the rich black soil thoughtfully in his hand"*. He ponders on the vast hectares of land, displaying sugar cane and tries to imagine how the same land looked like two, three, four thousand years ago. He recollects the scene in the desert and fancies it has the same spell as does the one in front of him. Sharif wonders if Anna would be pleased with him in this place as she was with him in The Sinai. The children's cries around remind him of the school that he and his uncle built for the children of the village. For his sake and for all the respect they had for him they allowed the children to be out of the fields for two hours. These are the events that led him to write the letter (Ibid. 255).

April 12 Cairo 1901: Sharif tries to imagine Anna with her own people in some evening party, speaking her own language and enjoying the presence of some young handsome British officers. He could not imagine how he came to think that he and Anna could go along with one another (Soueif, 2000, p. 262). Anna must have forgotten about him, he thought. She must have considered him part of her exotic journey into Egypt. On his way home with his driver in his carriage (Ibid. 266) he imagines Anna in her hotel room and feels she is not happy.

He saw her standing next to the mirror and beheld his face there, his image behind Anna's body. *"He stands so close that he could feel the warmth of her body, can smell the scent rising from her liberated hair"*. When he would reach home, he imagined, he would meet Anna on his way to the library, expressing her anxiety over his being late home (Ibid. 269). He can no longer stop thinking about this woman that made him *"think once again of love*". He thinks well of Anna this serious British Lady (Ibid. 270-276-277). Sharif tells his secluded father about his intentions of marrying an English woman. The latter does not object. Then Sharif tells his mother (Ibid. 278-279) who resists a bit in the beginning then consents, considering the nature and character of Anna whom she respects.

This part is entitled *"Beginning of the End"* that carries on narration in the company of the omniscient narrator. It concentrates on fate and how people come to know and love each other across space and time.

1 May 1901: Layla rushes to her brother to urge him speak to Lady Anna about his love for her for Anna intends to go back to England (Soueif, 2000, p. 283). Layla ensures him that Anna has been waiting for five weeks for a word from him. She thinks her brother can make Anna happy and that he should hurry to confirm his love for her and his intention to marry her (Ibid. 284) first by writing a letter to Anna. On the same page one reads Layla's account of what she told her brother to marry that woman she considers a friend. Layla knows that if Sharif lets Anna go, he will remain alone for the rest of his life (Ibid. 285). The conversation between Anna and Sharif about when they fell in love with one another and they were sure it was in the garden of St Catherine is also mentioned. They both believe their meeting and later their union was meant to be.

Back to the present Isabel comes to visit the Baroudi house, which is now a museum, for a second time. It is the house where Anna and Sharif met for the first time "*a hundred years ago"* (Ibid. 292). Besides, at the same old house, Isabel is there to imagine what happened in it years ago. Isabel has an urgent aim in mind which is to relive the past and relate it to the present. She also longs to show Omar, the man she loves, how much she knew about Egypt. She starts with taking photos of the different parts of the house: *"Time and time again she framed a scene in her viewer, adjusted her focus on the empty halls and clicked. She would surprise him with these photographs. She would surprise him with how much she knew"* (Ibid. 293). Later as she is wandering in the house, she meets a woman in *"loose blue and white garments"* who welcomes her, sees *"a tall wooden loom*" and the tomb of Sidi Haroun, and encounters another woman "*in the usual loose black smock of the working-class woman"* (Ibid. 294) besides an old man whom this woman calls Sheikh Isa.

Isabel speaks to Sheikh Isa and the old woman, Ummu Aya, who offers her a drink, cold and hot. The Sheikh, who subtlety advises her to care more care for her mother, enquires if she loves the latter. Isabel replies positively that she loves her (Ibid. 295).Then, Ummu Aya tells her that she "*will come back"* to Egypt; Isabel is to leave next day since she has *"to go home and see [her] mother"* who is *"not well*". Moreover, they speak about the man Isabel loves and her willingness "*to speak to him*" (Ibid. 299). This is precisely what she encourages her to do. She also urges her to be more practical in order to be able to win

his love: "*you adorn yourself and scent yourself and sit with him in a comfortable way – and you are a woman and you know the rest –'"* (Ibid. 300). As she is about to leave, Sheikh Isa prays for Isabel – *"'go. May God light your path, and give you that which you hold in your heart and compensate your patience with all good'"* – and Ummu Aya puts something in the holdall of her camera (Ibid. 300), which later turns out to be the third panel of Anna's tapestry, and asks her to follow the footsteps of her heart – *"'Don't forget your things, ... and let your heart guide you"*. This Soueif speaks about again on pages (495, 500).

This scene featuring Isabel and the Sheikh in addition to the two women seems to prove as though the shots were patches from a fantasy or a dream vision. Later in the novel, in chapter 19, Amal takes Isabel to the old house where this meeting took place with one hope in mind which is to meet the same people there. Yet any of the people Isabel believes to have seen were really there. The caretaker of the shrine, the tomb and the mosque assures Amal that there is neither Sheikh Isa nor Ummu Aya nor the other woman. The old Sheikh died *"about a year ago"* and the waqf [religions] has not appointed another one to replace him yet (Ibid. 307). Henceforth, the scene Isabel has lived and experienced in this place turns to be a vision or a day dream. Yet "*she was certain that she had pushed open a door and entered the shrine. She had sat there drinking Seven-Up and by her account, conversing with a strange sheikh, a cheery serving-woman and a woman dressed like Madonna in a painting"* (Ibid. 307). Consequently, what the caretaker claims infuriates Isabel, Amal remarks: "*Isabel is upset"*. In the car she says: "*I do not understand this. They were there. I saw them. I talked to them." "Isabel,"* I say, *"sometimes I think of people, or places, and the image is so strong that I'm quite shocked when I realise it was only in my head." "They were there*,' Isabel says, *"just as you and I are here"* (Ibid.308). There is nothing to prove what Isabel saw for the people she met died years ago. But, later on when she accidentally finds the third panel of Anna's tapestry in her camera's holdall, things appeared clearer to her and she realised that she was not actually daydreaming and that she may have really seen them after all. This point, though unrealistic is to be tackled later in this research.

The first person narrator resumes the narrative with Anna's journal (Ibid.302). On 6 May 1901: Anna is to be married to Sharif. She goes to his mother as he requested to meet her and his sister. He was impatient to have her as his beloved wife (Ibid.306). Amal feels

sometimes surprised to find herself in her room with Anna's journal waiting for her to read and move the story on. She is in the house where Anna and Sharif had been hundreds of years ago and exchanged kisses and sweet words. She knows that if she had to walk out of the flat, she would have returned to the present. She is sure that the journal spoke to her. Anna spoke to Amal and wrote the journal for her. On her turn Amal conversed with Anna in her head. *"At night, in my dreams, I sit with her and we speak as friends and sisters"*.

Cairo 12 May 1901 (Ibid.308) Anna writes another letter to Sir Charles and did not want to tell him that the perspective of returning to England seemed an unreality and a mirage. She speaks about her efforts to learn Arabic (Ibid.309). Amal thinks that Anna's life and the people in Egypt prove more real to her than those friends in England. They "*receded in her mind"*. She believed that had Anna stayed in England she would never have got rid of her grief.

17 May: Anna mentions that she removed Edward's ring and put it together with the ring she gave him in a safe place (Ibid.310). Anna welcomes the change that overwhelms her life. She wants

> to bid farewell to the past, in as much as that can be done, and lay it to rest. Anna imagines Edward's reaction to her marrying again. She thinks that Edward would not have objected to it. He would be rather indifferent happy for me and relieved for himself

She is building an endless distance between her and the people she had known and cared for all her life. Her friend Caroline could also have made friends with Sharif and also her father and mother. At last, Anna and Sharif sign their wedding contract surrounded by family and friends and backed by the benediction of Sheikh Mohamed Abdu. They also undertook a civil marriage in the agency in the presence of Lord Cromer (Ibid.318).

5 August 1997: Amal knows that Isabel is determined to have Omar as a lover (Ibid.328) and Omar in a phone conversation with his sister insists that he "*can't take her on"*. *"I am too old"*.

May 1901 Layla recounts (Ibid.330) the event of her brother's wedding. She expresses her extreme delight and the family's to finally make this union real. Amal tells about her brother Omar's sad wedding. Omar married an American in America without his family

(Ibid.333-334). Then he divorces her. 26 May 1901: Anna expresses her extreme delight being married to Sharif and having his family as her own relatives (Ibid.335).

10 August 1997: Amal has Isabel on the phone feeling desperate about her mother's illness and missing the days she could have spent with her. She also expresses her deep wishes to have Omar love her as she does love him.

Tareq Attiya asks Amal to go a restaurant and she consents. He finds her more beautiful as a fully-fledged woman. Amal thinks of how much time she has spent alone without a man in her life. Besides Tareq is a married man with kids (Ibid.338).

18 August 1997: Isabel recounts her meeting with her mother Jasmine. The latter is ill and delirious. Jasmine speaks about her husband Jonathan (Ibid.342) then she remembers Omar and how young he was when she met him. She loved him, yet she had to leave him because she had her own family and her daughter Isabel. Then Isabel calls Omar to inform him that Jasmine died and he offers to meet her in his apartment where he makes love to her (Ibid.343).

Amal speaks about Isabel to her brother Omar who comes to visit her in Egypt. He mentions his love for Jasmine, Isabel's mother. Jasmine decided to end their relation. Omar tells Amal that Isabel reminds him of her mother (Ibid. 358-359). Yet, 15 September 1997: Omar tells Amal that the woman he would like to be with needs to know everything about the past. *"She does not have to know the future"* (Ibid.391).

10 May 1905 (Ibid.392): Anna expresses her tiredness and sleeplessness bearing her child. Yet, she is happy as the whole family is. On her part, Layla announces Anna's pregnancy towards the end of 1904. Layla confesses that she, her mother, and the rest of the family are grateful to Anna for bringing the entire home such great happiness and liveliness. And in her letter to James dated 12 May 1905, Anna tells him that she expects a baby in June (Ibid.393). Layla also announces that Anna is being delivered of a little baby girl they called Nur al-Hayah (Light of life) who brought light into the family's lives (Ibid.400).

October 1905: Anna is very happy with her baby and her husband's love and care for both of them (Ibid.401-403). In a letter to James dated 20 November 1905, Anna tells him about a tapestry she started working on. "*It is to be a tapestry six foot wide by eight foot long, made up of three panels"*. The tapestry *"shall depict the Goddess Iris, with her*

brother consort God Osiris and between them the Infant Horus and above them a Quranic verse". January 1906: Anna mentions her extreme joy having Nur al-Hayah by her side and her caring husband who intends to plant so many trees for his daughter to protect her from heat. Anna cannot help see her husband and daughter everywhere even in her dreams (Ibid.404-406). As for Amal (Cairo 18 September 1997) her dreams are mingled with *"confusion of times and places*". She dreams of being in the courtyard of al-Baroudi's house with Nur and her own children. She realises that she has already been in that house and felt relieved to have finally found it.

Amal loves this place and plans to mend whatever battered items and places in it that time has left forsaken. She feels her mother's presence and she was not home sick anymore. She also senses Omar's delight at having her children and all the others there in the same home (Ibid.407). When she wakes up, Amal decides to drive to Tawasi. On her way the police stop her and warn her about a bomb having exploded a few minutes ago. A suicide bomber killed many tourists. Amal escapes to Tawasi to see the school working, to see her garden and the fields and also be with Anna (Ibid.408).

In another letter to Sir Charles dated 30 April 1906; Anna describes her joyful life with her husband and child. All the members of her family are caring about the child and spoiling her (Ibid.410).On her turn Amal in her old house in Tawasi remembers her elder son when he was three months. Then she recollects when her children uttered their first words and when they put on their school uniforms. She almost envies Anna's delight with her united family. She sees the little baby girl with her black hair, her violet eyes and how she creeps in the house. She also watches her father Sharif relaxed enjoying his daughter and wife's company (Ibid.411). Amal is content having the school open again and the children of her village resuming classes again thanks to Tareq Atiyya's intervention.

14 June 1906: Anna tells the story of the people in the village of Denshwai. Some British officers decided to shoot pigeons in the village and confronted the villagers who refused to have foreigners breaking the laws of the country (Ibid.424-25). The confrontation caused the killing of people from both sides and the condemnation of the villagers to the gallows.

Then it is Isabel's turn to be pregnant as she informs Amal that she is three months pregnant. She thinks all was meant to be. Amal is very happy to hear the good news. However, Omar is very upset because he is fifty five and he already has children. Omar

tells Isabel his previous affair with her mother Jasmine. Isabel feels surprised at first but then she tells Omar that it is further proof that their relation was meant to be. Omar realises that "*I was in too much of a hurry. I didn't realise my real mate hadn't been born yet"* (Ibid.442).

Villagers from Amal's village in Tawasi are arrested by the police because of the killing of tourists in Luxor (Ibid.436). Amal is in her home in Tawasi thinking about the people in her village detained and probably tortured by the police. She finds solace in Sharif Basha's portrait as she starts to connect what happened in Tawasi with what went on in Denshwai. She wishes to be in her uncle's arms. Then Tareq comes to see Amal and ensures her that the villagers have been released as he intervened for their freedom (Ibid. 443). (18 November 1997) Tareq expresses his liking for Amal and that she is becoming more and more beautiful (Ibid. 444) Yet, Amal is very upset and refuses such an affair to take place with a married man (Ibid. 446). Amal dreams of being with Sharif Basha in the same bed. He allows her to kiss and embrace him. She feels at home near him. As she wakes up, Amal consoles her loneliness looking at her uncle's portrait and Anna's. She calls Anna her friend and believes that she wrote everything for her.

Layla and Anna describe Ahmad, Layla's son, as a pleasant and caring boy, good at playing the piano and learning the Koran. Amal has never been able to see her father in the child described by Anna and Layla. Yet, in the house in Tawasi she discovered and remembers him as citing the Koran for his own pleasure, working in the garden. She has never witnessed pride and regret in his eyes in the portrait as she often sees them on Omar's face as he conducted piano concerts for millions of people to watch (Ibid. 458).

Anticipating the future (Cairo 22 June 1910) in letter to Sir Charles Anna expresses Sharif Basha's fears about his daughter's future if he dies before her. He asks Anna to take her to England because she will be more secure (Ibid. 459) for life would be harder to bear for her with him not here. It is the same date the Russian novelist Tolstoy dies and Anna expresses her extreme sadness hearing about her favourite novelist's death[4].

Tawasi March 1997: (Ibid.460) Isabel tells Amal in a phone call that she has read Omar's letter for Jasmine written thirty years ago. She is not sure about how to feel about them. Then in an E-mail she ensures her that she feels better about them. It is as though those letters were written for her "*If people can write across space, why they cannot write across time too?"* After all, Jasmine was her mother (Ibid. 468).

Tawasi 15 July 1998: In an E-mail to Amal Omar announces the birth of his son Sharif. *"The baby is fantastic and Isabel is a devoted mother"*. Isabel announces her arrival with the baby Sharif to Tawasi. She will bring the fabric Omar wrapped for his sister (Ibid. 476).

Cairo 2 August 1998: Amal is with the baby and Isabel in old al-Baroudi's house. She relearns what being a mother is and how babies are sweet and delicate. Isabel ensures Amal that Omar belongs to Sharif forever and she senses he is drawing nearer to her after the baby's birth (Ibid. 479-480). Omar "*is conducting in Sarajevo, in the ruins of the National Library*" (Ibid. (Ibid. 488) on 8 August 1998 and he is supposed to be in Cairo "*in a couple of weeks*." The second panel of Anna's tapestry that Omar sent with Isabel features "*Isis, mother of every king, queenly in poise, on her head the cow-horn crown and the sun-disc of Ra. Her arm is stretched out, but her hand is missing"* (Ibid. 488), which entails that another panel is still missing. This is the piece that may complete the picture and complement the meaning and the value of the tapestry that Anna wove in the past. In the meantime Isabel, *"is delighted"* for having carried the panel in which Isis, *"her namesake*" is portrayed. She becomes delighted to think of the panel as another proof, "*a sign*," that she and Omar were "*meant*" (Ibid. 489) to be together. Amal tells Tareq later, that she and Isabel were two mothers to Sharif.

Back to the present, Amal and Tahiyya's daughter (Amal's maid) are discussing the two panels of Anna's tapestry. They conclude that the middle part of the tapestry, the third panel, is
"missing" and that this part "*would be their child*" [Isis and Osiris's child, Horus]. This part will also complete "*the aya," "the verse that Sharif Basha chose for Anna to weave,"* which reads, as Amal recites, *"It is He who brings forth the living from the dead"* (Ibid. 491).Thus, Anna's tapestry, when complete, encrusts in readers minds the idea of regeneration and resurrection looming large in this story of past and present.

After a few days and while she is searching for the camera to take a photo of baby Sharif who is fast asleep as Amal is holding him against her chest, Isabel finds the third panel of Anna's tapestry in the camera hold all (Ibid. 495). The panel pictures *"the infant Horus, small and naked and still with his human head – on which rests the hand of Isis, his mother. Above him, two words: 'al-hayy min el-(mayyit) – "The living from the (dead) –"* (Ibid.495).Consequently, the picture that Anna wove on the tapestry becomes complete.

The picture that Anna has drawn to incarnate resurrection is now complete. It also means that Amal's journey into the past is about to be complete as well.

Sharif Basha is killed before he reaches his house according to Layla's account. Sharif asks Anna in his last wish to bring up Nur like she was brought up and take her to England (Ibid. 500-504) 30 December 1913.Layla also tells about Anna's tapestry.

> On the day after my brother's murder she [Mabrouka] rolled up Anna's tapestry in three bags of muslin. One [that of Isis] she gave to me 'for Ahmad', she said, 'and his children after him'. The other [that of Osiris] she gave to Anna for Nur. I do not know what she did with the third [that of Horus]. The loom itself we carried into the shrine for my father would not allow us to remove it. Sometimes he sits at it, threading a ball of silk as he used to watch Anna do. But he has made nothing. (Ibid. 505)

This could explain, according to El-Feky, Isabel's earlier vision, the one she had at the mosque in the museum set up in the old house of al-Baroudis. He contends that the old woman that Isabel saw there is Mabrouka and the Sheikh is Sharif's father (2012, p. 24). Moreover, the panel that Umm Aya put in Isabel's hold all (Ibid. 300) is the third panel that Mabrouka kept with her, and Layla never knew "*what she did with*." El-Feky thinks it a "*supernatural element"* that has two functions*: "first, it complements the narrative of Anna; and second, it underlines the idea that Isabel could be seen as a resurrected Isis since she is the one who finds the panel portraying Horus"*, the symbol of regeneration, and since she is the one who gives birth to Omar's baby, Sharif or a resurrected Sharif Basha, (2012, p. 24) who stands for the future and for the *"regeneration"* within the family (Wynne, 2006, p. 64), as Horus stands for the future in the myth of Isis and Osiris.

The last part is entitled *"An End"* whereby the omniscient narrator resumes narration from Amal. Amal is hugely touched by Sharif's death (Soueif, 2000, p. 510).

> She has loved him like his mother, like his sister, like his wife, mourns him with fresh grief". She cannot help re-reading "I have tried, as well as I could, to tell her. But she cannot—or will not understand, and give up hope. She waits for him constantly. (Soueif, 2000, p. 510)

Amal cannot allow her story to have an end. No more letters are coming to Layla from Anna. How about Nur and Ahmad? She refuses to bury them in the trunk. She puts them on the table of her room to show them to Omar. She sits in her room with baby Sharif in

her lap feeding him. He reminds her of Omar her dear brother (Ibid. 512). She remembers that Omar is a public figure, beloved by many and also hated by many because of his political standings especially about Palestine (Ibid. 515). Crooning the baby, Amal falls asleep and then wakes up hearing herself cry her brother's name. She fears for his safety. The story's attempted end features the empty trunk in Amal's room and Anna's journal embracing Sharif and Anna's story. Isabel is also there and baby Sharif is sleeping in Amal's lap (Ibid. 516).

Conclusion:

In part one a special attention has been granted to the use of time by Soueif in *The Map of Love.* The narratives of her female protagonists appear as a knitted history of past and present intermingling. A significant characteristic of this novel is its use of past tense as the main engine of narration. This places it within the list of historical novels. Critics have expressed their admiration for the research Soueif must have undertaken to produce a fictional work that sticks to the truthfulness of significant events in Egyptian history. Massad (1999) praises her work relying on his investigation of *The Map of Love*. He points that:

> [AhdafSoueif] has familiarized herself with minute details about a period of Egyptian history (Autumn 1897-December 1913) that is not particularly well studied (except for the infamous shootings at Denshwai), as it is bracketed between two revolutions-the 'Urabi revolt of 1882 and the 1919 revolution-to which it is subordinated. The Mashriqi and Palestinian histories of the period are also meticulously revisited. From the beginning of the Zionist colonial project to the apex of Arab anti-Ottomanism, Soueif transforms history into a guide to the present. (Massad, 1999, 82)

The appearance of true historical figures like Qasim Amin, Mohammed Abdu, and Edward Said disguised in the character of Omar is further proof of Soueif's championing of the integration of history into fiction. Like Said Omar is a musician and an activist defending the Palestinian cause. Her preoccupation with language has also been prominent. The English and Egyptian characters in *The Map of Love* used French to communicate. And yet, Anna feels a great passion to learn Arabic. Soueif offers many examples of conversations between Anna and Layla analysing the etymology of Arabic words. The same story gets repeated a century later when Isabel is taught Arabic by Amal. Massad

believes that among the most intriguing elements that Ahdaf Soueif utilises to create an intellectual discourse is *"her creative use of etymology in explaining Arabic words, which constitutes one of the many delicate pleasures that the novel offers the reader"* (Massad 1999: 80). In these passages, Soueif skilfully includes clichéd descriptions concerning linguistic elements. Examples of such descriptions follow with illustrations from *The Map of Love*. Isabel and Amal explore the linguistic likeness among the Arabic words for mother (Umm), nation (Ummah) and religious leader (Imam) and they become conscious that these words are directly connected. Isabel understands: *"'So two incredibly important concepts, […] nationhood and religious leadership, come from "mother". The word goes into politics, religion, economics and even anatomy. So how can they say Arabic is a patriarchal language?'"* (Soueif, 2000, p. 165). In this excerpt, Isabel comprehends that the etymologic origin of words relating to a positive connotation is often connected with a feminine root (Malak, 2000, p. 158).

The examples stated earlier demonstrate Ahdaf Soueif's thorough responsiveness to the influence of language and translation. Thus, it is not unfamiliar that the concluding lines of *The Map of Love* concerns the challenging matters that the act of translating meets. The making together of Anna's intriguing life by Amal has come to its end. Anna's struggle to conduct a hybrid life has long puzzled Amal. She apprehends that her task of translating novels has been a tricky and long process. She found it difficult to render the meaning of words in a couple of them. The following passage clarifies it further:

> [Amal] has translated novels- or done her best to translate them. It is so difficult to truly translate from one language into another, from one culture into another; almost impossible really. Take that concept 'tarab', for example; a paragraph of explanation for something as simple as a breath, a lifting of the heart, tarab, mutrib, shabby, tereb, tarabatta, tarabattattee, Taroob, Jamal wa Taroob: etmanni mniyyah / I've wished / w'estanni 'alayyah / I've waited / 'iddili l'miyyah / I've counted […] . (Soueif, 2000, p. 313)

Soueif has received prominent consideration for her distinguished attempt to explore the linguistic and syntactic functioning of the Arabic language and the extracts that deal with translation. Yet, she also admits that translation encompasses more than merely coming across an appropriate substitute in another language. The power of language lies in more than its linguistic constituent. It includes culture which incites one to reconsider any attempt at translation without a serious consideration of it.

Chapter Four Part Two: The Representations of Female Protagonists as Phoenixes

Introduction:

This part answers the following questions: what are the different representations Soueif grants to her protagonist female characters? How does the writer depict her female characters both as confined, weak, and maudlin entities and as liberating and liberated forces emerging as female phoenixes? These representations of female protagonists are to be considered in relation to other characters, female and male, besides their relation to time and space.

Female characters and protagonists in *The Map of Love* are perceived as weak, battered and self-searching. Their present life seems stained by a past life of suffering and loss. On the other hand, they are portrayed as life sources, especially as mothers, encompassing other characters with a life boosting power, rebuffing death and standing as regenerating force and life, behaving as the phoenixes that Soueif meant them to be. They stand as the incarnation of beauty, resilience, power and reunion. The analysis in part two focuses on the exploration of the four female protagonists boosting narration in *The Map of Love* and creating the story. They are respectively: Amal, Isabel, Anna and Layla. Other characters' descriptions like: Zienab Hanim and Sharif's are to be included within the exploration to back up the probing of the portraits of the fore mentioned protagonists.

IV.2.1. Amal: The Outsider Insider Phoenix:

Amal al-Ghamraoui tells a story reading Anna Winterbourne's journals that are brought to her by the American Isabel Parkman who is an acquaintance of Amal's brother and who brought the journals to him from The USA to entrust them with Amal.

In her narration in Cairo April, 1997, Amal represents herself as *"spinning for dear life",* and worrying about it. She speaks about having children of her own inviting motherhood. This could be put there to tell readers that Amal is a mother just like Anna her British ancestor whose journals she is reading. Amal dreams about Anna; this strange familiar woman and her husband who is her own uncle Sharif Basha al-Baroudi (Soueif, 2000, p. 7). Amal the Egyptian female narrator stresses that this is not her own story:

> This is a story conjured out of a box; a leather trunk that travelled from London to Cairo and back. That lived in the box room of a Manhattan apartment for many years, then

found its way back again and came to rest on my living-room floor" that Amal "unpacked, unwrapped, [and] unravelled. (Ibid. 7)

Speaking of their life stories of love, time and family, Amal and Isabel's story is to start. Amal hears and sees Anna as a living real character. She feels Anna's heart lies open before her. Soueif unfolds Anna's mind and heart including fragments of her diary within the main texts. So the narration becomes Amal's and Anna's through the latter's own diaries and letters. Readers are granted Amal's narration through her thoughts and the original fragments of diaries and letters. Amal stresses the uselessness of distance and space between her and Anna. She feels Anna is one of the girls she grew up with in Cairo (Ibid. 12). Here are born the seeds of union, compassion and love between three ladies both stranger and familiar one to the other.

Amal confesses her obsession with Anna's brown journal. She has become real to her. She believes that Anna is part of her life (Ibid. 26). She senses Anna's mourning on the brown papers that she reads as Anna confesses that her husband had not died contented and that he did not die at peace (Ibid. 38). Amal feels helpless. She cannot persuade Anna a hundred miles of time and space left behind her that Edward's death was not her fault. She thinks of Anna as a best friend whose life and thoughts unfold in front of her saved in the box of papers that Isabel handed her (Ibid. 44). Amal convinces Anna as though she was present there in Cairo hundreds of years later: *"How can you reach someone who does not want to be reached?"* She tells Anna in Isabel's company that she should let life take over again. She almost convinces her to accept Lady Caroline's, Anna's friend, offer of a trip to Rome.

Amal constantly reminds herself that once upon a time she lived with a family; a husband who is separated from her and two children (Ibid. 45). All three female protagonists meet as lonely women lacking family and home. Amal hears and sees Anna trying to help her get over her pain as though they share one life and extract strength and endurance from this relation. Amal would have liked to show her *"foreign friend"* Anna, Egypt her own country that she hardly visits. Everything has changed in that country. She tries to re-imagine her country to create it for Isabel. She has long "*put herself under house arrest*" avoiding places and souvenirs that would remind her of family and children (Ibid. 58).

Amal senses force in all the persons dear to her. She confesses, Omar, helped her be her better self. She does not blame Isabel for her first love sight of him. He is made to be loved (Ibid. 49-50). Omar has *"no problem with identity"*. He feels he is all three together: Egyptian, American and Palestinian. She (Ibid. 64) longs to see Anna visiting Egypt. She calls her *"my heroin*". She refuses to make a film of her story as Isabel suggests. "*I want to keep Anna for myself; I don't want her taken over by some actress"* (Ibid. 65).

And yet, Amal sits in her apartment in Cairo and feels alone. She wishes her husband and children were near her (Ibid. 75). She speaks of herself and Isabel as orphans. Both are separated from their loved ones. Both miss love.

Amal's hope and power tightens when she speaks of Egypt as the mother of civilisation. She is saddened with all the wars that are tearing the world out. The war in Iraq, the civil war in Algeria devastated by terrorism and so is Egypt with its Jama 'ats, or Muslim brotherhood labelled by the government as terrorists (Ibid. 99). In the main Destiny gathered Amal with Anna who becomes a close and remote friend whose trunk has found her across a century and across two continents. With her American cousin Isabel, Amal sits talking and *"soothing wounds of our ancestors*" (Ibid. 104).

Amal thinks Anna an intrepid character. She probably wanted something out of the ordinary to happen to her when she had been abducted by Egyptian Effendis. Amal thinks at Anna's place about what would happen to her at the hands of her abductors. One could call it 'cooperative narrating' (Ibid. 109).

As further reinforcement of Amal's endurance and life seeking, Layla her great grandmother appears in Anna's narrative. Amal comments on Layla's narrative as the grandmother she tried to figure out. She imagines her as a twenty seven Egyptian lady married to her grandfather Husni al-Ghamrawi. He is a French-educated lawyer, and a member of Lord Cromer's talking classes. Amal expresses her love of her mother and the way she missed her and missed Palestine her mother's birth place. She misses a dead mother who reminds her of the cool and bright days and nights in Egypt (Ibid. 117-119). Throughout Amal's nostalgic behaviour towards the past, one is reminded of Soueif's characters explored earlier in *Aisha* chapter two and *The Sandpiper* chapter three. One remembers Aisha, Milou, and the unnamed British narrator in *The Sandpiper*.

Driving along Upper Egypt road, Amal tells the story of her grandmother to Isabel sitting together in a room in the Baroudi's big house. Amal confesses that she likes telling stories and therefore *"piecing things together*". She mentions the Pharaonic tapestry sent by her brother Omar as a gift which is a pair with the one hanging in her study. Amal declares that she is:

> ...taken over by this trunk. I'm particularly living inside it. When I read the journals I feel as if I'm there, a hundred years ago. I'm putting together the whole picture and I know everything that happened and written down. (Ibid.132-133)

The same overwhelming feeling that pictures Isabel and Anna as friends hardly as strangers was felt by Layla towards Anna (Ibid.135). In Amal's narration she expresses Layla's thoughts about the possibility *"that Anna had taken his* (Sharif's) *fancy"* (Ibid.150). Layla's brother who is Amal's uncle Sharif is deeply in love with Anna and both protagonists felt this sweet adoration in their hearts.

It seems as though the same story is back on stage when Soueif brings Amal and Isabel in the Baroudi's house where Anna and Layla met years ago (Ibid. 172). Soueif encrusts the importance of place as re-gathering the story and characters by reshaping, reframing and reconnecting them. The ladies search the house tracing back Anna and Sharif's spirits and their belongings. The house looks like a museum full of souvenirs from tableaus to furniture to photographs (Ibid.173).

Amal's present life is no less stuffed with surprises and challenges. In her narration she mentions going to Tarik Atiya a businessman and a family friend with links in the government to help her reopen the school in Minya. It is the same school her ancestors started. The school's teachers were accused of being terrorists. Tarek Atiya is the only man Amal knew after so many years of separation from her British husband. Her opportunity to gain a man's love again seems impossible. Tarek Atiya is married and had children and has an intention to do business with Israelis. Overwhelmed with worries Amal confesses: "*I do not believe I am living in a time-wrap, but I confess I find the events of a hundred years ago easier to deal with than the circumstances we are in today*" (Ibid. 118). In the meantime Amal recalls Anna's moment of peace and love with Sharif in the Sinai desert as though to flee her own present that seemed hard to cope with. She tries to feel and see what Anna felt and saw next to Sharif (Ibid. 219). She also thinks of Isabel and how

she regretted Omar did not care for her the way she did. Had he cared, Isabel would not have been hurt.

Amal's narrative continues and her search for love and reunion too (Ibid. 254). She holds her great-uncle's love letter to Anna and imagines every detail of him writing it at his desk and thinking about his beloved. Amal imagines what he wears and fences he is putting on the same European clothes as in his portrait hanging in Tawasi home. Amal thinks she is *"half in love with him, I believe—with my own great uncle*". From Layla's account, her great grandmother of Sharif her brother, Amal sees her own brother Omar. According to Anna's narrative Amal imagines "*the dark, enigmatic hero of romance (Ibid. 255) Amal considers the time that took Sharif to write to Anna and reveal his love to her. Two weeks after the Sinai journey "he pulled away it was from the impulse that drew him towards Anna*". He tried to forget about his heart travelling and working a lot. *"He had held himself in check*".

Yet, his feelings and heart betrayed him in the Sinai desert in the garden of the monastery of St Catherine. Anna *"took root in his mind and would not be shaken"...* (Ibid. 256). Events and narratives overlap as Amal reads in Anna's journals that Sharif Basha and his uncle will open a school in the village to allow the peasants' children, boys and girls, to be educated. The parents will have to spare their children two hours from the fields every day. It is the same school Egyptian government officials try to close in the present.

This propels Amal to decide to return to Tawasi and stay there for a while when Anna's story is finished. The story now reaches the point when the "*three heroines*" begin their journey in Egypt. Anna Winterbourne heads the Sinai in the company of Sharif al-Baroudi. Amal al-Ghamrawi and Isabel Parkman *"take the Upper Egypt road which will lead them to Tawasi, in the (Ibid.164) governate of Minya"*. Amal senses a great responsibility towards her land and people (Ibid. 297*). "There is so much there that she can do so much she can give and so much she can learn*". She believes the school is to be opened as soon as possible. She also thinks about how she can to eradicating fundamentalism designed by bearded young killers form the same country she is from that is Egypt. Driving her car and led by a stream of consciousness web, Amal remembers her children and how she misses them and longs to see them living on their grandfather's land. She even thinks of showing them Anna's story that is part of their family history (Ibid. 298). One senses that the novel

is a gigantic map attempting to unite people from different times and spaces. It is a journey swinging from despair to hope.

Amal is comforted again by the power of love. She cannot hide her huge happiness reading about Sharif and Anna's marriage. She feels love present there in the scene in the hall of the old house. It was in her grandmother's haramlek. "*My heart had beaten in time with Anna's; my lips had wanted her lover's kiss*", she confesses. Amal tries to bring herself back to the present. She believes Anna wrote her journal for her. "*For the sense of Anna speaking to me—writing down for me—is so powerful that I find myself speaking to her in my head"*. In her dreams, Amal speaks to Anna as friends and sisters. Besides, (Ibid. 307) she thinks that Isabel is a sensible and practical woman.

On the other hand (Ibid. 333) Amal recounts the consequences of Omar's marriage. It was a sad event for the family having their son *"marrying with his own head as if he had no kin"* in *"Amreeka"* (America). When Omar divorced it was much harder for his family to bear his loneliness and theirs. Omar explained to his mother the cause of his divorce "*We both discovered I was an Arab*".

Amal's re-gathering with love prompts her look at herself in the mirror "*with more interest than I have done for a long time*". She is no longer as she used to be: "*Passable*". Tareq finds Amal still more beautiful than ever. She thinks it has something to do with the past that renders her special. Tareq's love could be Amal's missed opportunity to know love and feel it. She hesitates to accept Tareq Attiya's help (Ibid. 339). She has never accented to allowing people meddle into her life. "*Is he taking over my life? It is so long since anyone has told me what I can or cannot do so. So long since anyone has intervened in my life"*. (Ibid. 340)

Amal cannot help think of Anna's feelings. She ponders over Anna's feelings when her nurse Emily decided to go back to England after Anna marries Sharif. She tries to feel Anna's anger or disappointment towards her journal. Anna might be happy, Amal thinks, with Emily's departure for then Lady Anna the British widow could finally end up with her past and enjoy her new life.

Amal also thinks of her brother Omar, thinking about Sharif her uncle. She describes Omar when he visits her *My brother speaks with vehemence. I've hardly ever heard him speak except with vehemence—each word underlined.* (Ibid.355)

Omar admits that he had an affair with Isabel's mother and that he was in love with her when he was a young boy. He is having a conversation with Amal about the woman he wants. He feels old:

> I am tired of explaining. If I am to be with a woman she has to be someone who knows it all. Someone who does not need to be told" .Amal answers: "Knows all what?" I ask, although I know what he means. "Everything" "What? Egypt, Palestine, America, your kinds, your music, the past, the future? Come on—""She does not have to know the future. (Ibid. 391)

Amal's *"dreams become(ing) a confusion of times and places"*. She cannot distinguish present from past or dream from wake. Aisha in *The Returning* also dreams of lost settings. Amal enjoys the happiness of a place she thought she has always known with characters swaying from past to present. It is a happy setting where she is surrounded by light and children. She dreams of meeting her mother while she is with Nur. When she wakes up it is the smoke of the bomb explosion that she witnesses. A man put a bomb in Cairo at Qasr el-Nil Bridge that killed German tourists (Ibid. 406-408). She immediately turns to think about Tawasi where she will be far away from everything. She will be with Anna who becomes politically aware as she discusses all events that take place in Egypt at the time with Sir Charles (her father-in-law) in her letters to him like the determination of Lord Cromer to be master in Egypt and the strike of law school students (30 April 1906) protesting against new British regulations.

On her part Amal tries to explain this insisting on Anna's part for her own people to come and visit Egypt (Sir Charles, Caroline Bourke). Amal asks if this is because Anna wants to make her life in Egypt more real linking it with her older one and experienced with people she loves. Amal thinks that though Anna married the man she loved in Egypt and had a child form him, she was completely cut off from her own people and she no longer spoke her own language. *"Does this cast a doubt over her life—make it seem provisional? And is this part of the reason why she adopts Egypt's cause with a more and more relentless fervour?"* She thinks of her own relation with Egypt and confesses that "*perhaps I was young and unaware"* (Ibid. 409).

Again Amal remembers her own children and her delight at having been a mother surrounded by them. They brought pleasure and solace to her heart with every detail of their presence. She tries to imagine Anna surrounded with her family. She also tries to feel

the love this British Lady is overwhelmed with. She sees the Baroudi family gathered and watches every single detail of Anna's account. "*In Anna's words I read her love for her child and Sharif Basha's grateful and amazed delight"* (Ibid. 411). Amal decides to stay with Anna and her story instead of going out. She speaks with wonder and admiration of the family's strong union. One senses she envies Anna and longs to be her and live her life (Ibid. 413). Her loving husband Sharif plants trees for his daughter Nur.

Life and love take the lead again as Amal discusses Isabel's pregnancy with Omar the baby's father. Isabel thinks the baby is to prove she and Omar are meant to be together. When Amal asks about his being in love with Jasmine, Isabel's mother years ago, Omar says: "*Yeah. I was in too much of a hurry. I didn't realise my real mate hadn't been born yet"* (Ibid. 442).

Endeared with admiration and liking, Amal speaks to Sharif's portrait in Tawasi, as though wanting him back near. She wanted to be in his arms:

> You see? You see? ya Sharif Basha?. I say, and the tears well up once more into my eyes. And his dark look back at me and behind them lay el-Tel elkebir and Umm Durman and Denshwai and it seems to me that he does indeed see and I want—oh, how I want to be in his arms (Ibid. 442).

Anna and Sharif's growing love story induces Amal to think about her own life without a man and without love. Her love for Tareq Attiya seems impossible for he is married and has children. Yet, he has always loved her and has confirmed this to her each time they meet. Tareq ensures Amal that she is the most beautiful woman he has ever seen and that she is never to grow old. He (Ibid. 462) advises her not to hide in Tawasi for it is a waste, (Ibid. 444) and Amal dreams of being with Sharif Basha as two lovers (Ibid. 446).

Amal misses being a mother (Ibid. 479). When Isabel and baby Sharif come to Tawasi she confesses that the baby touches her to the heart. *"I had forgotten how downy their hands are, how delicate their ears, how soft their skins. I had forgotten their scent"* (Ibid. 480). She describes Isabel after becoming a mother as still in love with Omar but no longer suffering from it. Omar belongs to Isabel partly. Isabel believes that Omar changed attitude towards her after baby Sharif's birth. She feels a new look in Omar's eyes and "*knew he belonged to little Sharif forever*". Amal confirms:"*…for we are women who learned from our mistakes".*

As further empowerment of reunion, Amal wants her brother Omar to print Sharif's article he wrote about the relation of East to West and makes a few changes to it so that he prints it under his own name. She imagines her brother with Sharif and in his arms; she does not want her story to end. She has slowed it down (Ibid. 488-492). She does not want to arrive at the end. Does she fear a go back to the present which is less mysterious, less alive, or is she reluctant to face reality?

An end is suggested: Amal loves Sharif like all the women he has known: his mother, his sister, his wife and his daughter. She is severed by his death. She mourns him. She re-reads Anna's remarks about her daughter who keeps hoping her father is coming back: *"I have tried as well as I could to tell her. But she cannot—or will not—understand and give up hope. She waits for him (Ibid. 510) constantly"*. No other letters are sent from Anna as she quitted Egypt to England after Sharif's assassination. Amal searches for letters in vain. She finds solace in little Sharif's presence (Ibid. 511). Amal is like a mother to him. She ties the thinking and dreams of little Sharif's reunion with his cousins; her own sons. As for Anna's story, Amal imagines a continuation. She wept for Layla's loss and wished Omar and Isabel lived in al-Baroudi's house so that the story will go on unfinished (Ibid. 513). She still perceives Omar as a lonely person and she worries about him like Layla and Anna used to worry about Sharif. Once more, Amal sees Anna sitting in the sunshine in al-Baroudi's house with baby Nur and Sharif united strongly by love (Ibid.515).

The novel ends with Amal's strong fear for her brother. She has constant fear that she might lose him. *"The sudden fear seizes Amal's heart is so strong that it jolts her off the sofa and to her feet". "Omar",* she cries out loud, *"my brother…"* The final scene pictures Amal with baby Sharif, trying to silence him (Ibid. 516).

One thinks of Amal's portrait and views that of a phoenix overwhelmed with love and a huge striving for reunion and renewal. Amal is the *Insider Outsider Phoenix* who could not help reshuffle the events of a story in the past into the present despite her fear of separation and loss of love. Her longing to be a mother once and again, loved and loving all the time, alive and generating life are vibrating throughout the story.

IV.2.2. Isabel: The Messenger Phoenix

Isabel Parkman described as the *"wary"* American journalist going to Egypt (Soueif, 2000, p. 6) "*has an early view of this land and particularly of its women: the veil, polygamy, women's status in Islam, female genital mutilation, [and] fundamentalists"*. Finally Isabel opts for coming to Egypt to do a project on the millennium. Isabel, the American is the one to bring her great grandmother's trunk Anna to Amal to forge a story out of it. She believes her own story belonged in those old documents. She senses a link might be woven between her and that Egyptian lady called Amal al-Ghamraoui.

Isabel's name, explains her father, encompasses two other names: Isa Bella; Isis the beautiful. She has the name of the first goddess, the mother of Diana and of all goddesses…the mother of the world. Here is another allusion to motherhood and mothers as bearers of life, beauty and continuation. Isabel reconnects with her father and mother, following the strings of her sad memories. Death springs to the surface of life as she recollects her absent dead brother and her mother Jasmine mourning him forever (Ibid. 22).

Siting with Amal in her home, Isabel also agrees that her great grandmother Anna is not to blame for the death of her British husband Edward. She remembers her own dying mother Jasmine; that tiny baby that Anna's daughter *Nur el Hayah* has given life to in Paris, is now about to die, suffering with Alzheimer. Jasmine has been a mourning sad woman (Ibid. 42-43). Here is Isabel *The Messenger Phoenix* who brought Anna's journals and letters from America to Egypt to Amal. She shares the same oscillating tableau from weakness to strength, and from loss to gain.

Isabel yearns for love that finally strikes untimed. Isabel's first meeting with Omar, Amal's brother, reveals her to be deeply in love with him. He announces to Isabel that he thinks he knows her before, like in a "*previous life*" (Ibid. 49). She announces her love for Omar to her mother Jasmine. Jasmine appears as an ill deserted woman dwelling in a lifeless plain room. Isabel does not care if the man she loves is fifty, yet *"he is very distinguished"* (Ibid. 51). Her distant mother *"with vanished beauty"* looking like a *"new-hatched chick*", had abruptly cut her hair. Omar is a divorced musician with grown up children. Isabel does not care if he does not love her. Both daughter and mother love the same man. Jasmine knew Omar as an injured young man whom she nursed and loved but had to give him up. She had to give up the man she once loved.

Isabel finds in Amal motherly love and tenderness. On their way to Tawasi Upper Egypt, Isabel surrenders to Amal's trust and nursing (Ibid. 166) as the latter defends her from the baking heat. Isabel feels like a child in the hands of Amal. It seems as though the same story is back on stage with Amal and Isabel in the Baroudi's house where Anna and Layla met years ago (Ibid. 172). Soueif encrusts the importance of place as re-gathering the story and characters by reshaping, reframing and reconnecting them. The ladies search the house tracing back Anna and Sharif's spirits and their belongings. The house looks like a museum full of souvenirs from tableaus to furniture to photographs (Ibid.173).

When Isabel reaches Sharif's portrait, the striking resemblance catches her attention. Sharif looks like Omar and Omar looks like Sharif his uncle. The proud and aloof gentleman in the portrait resembles the man she loves and longs to meet again. Isabel's stream of consciousness sends her back to one of her meetings with Omar in New York. It was the time when she was convinced that she loved him although he told her that he was divorced, had two kids and was as old as her father. Yet, she loves him (Ibid.178). Had he cared, Isabel would not have been hurt. Yet, Isabel wants to learn much about Egyptians and their way of life and to share Omar's world (Ibid. 219). Like Anna she wants to learn Arabic (Ibid. 81).

Isabel came to Egypt to write about it in the millennium. She is surrounded by Egyptian intellectuals curious to know about what the American coming to their country wants, doing a project on the millennium (Ibid. 219). She is eager to ask this category of people about the world's current events and the position Egypt stands in. These intellectuals discussed capitalism, oppression, lack of democracy and freedom of speech, poverty, idleness in Arab and Muslim countries. They also spoke about the American and Israeli supremacy and the Arab and Muslim leaders' dependence on these empires. They mentioned" *terrorism as a consequence of the absence of a national project"* (Ibid. 229). "*For the people to have a will it has to have a certain amount of space and freedom; freedom to question everything: religion, politics, sex*, Arwa Salih[5] said in the intellectuals' gathering. She used to be one of the leaders of the students' movement of the seventies (Ibid. 221).

Deena al-'Ulama, Ramzy Yusuf, Mahgoub al-Tilimsani, Dr Ramzy think that young people must struggle or their life will have no meaning in their part of the world. Arwa disagrees with Dr Ramzy's view that everything in Egypt will stay the same for the next

millennium. Arwa thinks things will get worse with an Israeli empire at stake. Deena hates the role of the victim played by the Arab and Muslim countries (Ibid. 222). Arwa thinks fundamentalists appeal to jobless, aimless and educated young people. At least they have a cause to die for (Ibid. 225). *"History*", Dr Ramzy says "*This is all*", he waves his hand. "*Nothing. Egypt has been here so long. It has seen many things. In the next millennium-it will still be Egypt"* (Ibid. 231). Following the intellectuals' discussion colonialism begot idle countries unable to rule themselves (Ibid. 224) as Mustapha al-Sharqawi, another intellectual present there, suggests (Ibid. 228) "*Islamists could be defused if we had a true democracy"*. "*True democracy means to show the Islamists on TV debating important issues in front of the people with Muslim intellectuals*", Mahgoub posits (Ibid. 220-21-22-23-231)[6].

Isabel thinks constantly about her ill mother. She is about to die. Isabel confesses to Amal that she wanted to know more about her mother's life "*As she saw it*". She needs Omar to be in love with her (Ibid.336-338). In her turn Jasmine recounts to her daughter Isabel her story with Omar the young lad she fell in love with. Yet, Jasmine had to let him go, though she felt like *"tearing part of my heart all over again".* Jasmine misses her dead boy Valentine. She could have loved Omar as a son. The first person Isabel informed about her mother's death is Omar who shelters her and relieves her (Ibid. 342-43). Isabel's worries much about him as a mother for Omar is involved in politics. He speaks loudly defending the Palestinian cause especially when it is too dangerous (Ibid. 344). And yet, (Ibid. 328) Isabel is eager to be with him even if the latter refuses to *"take her on"* because he thinks he is too old for her to be her father. Omar is fifty seven years old and does not want to go through another experience of loving, marrying and losing.

Life proves stronger than fear when Isabel announces to Amal that she is three months pregnant. Amal is extremely happy about the news. Isabel has been seeing Omar and enjoying their time together. Omar is very embarrassed about Isabel's pregnancy for he is fifty five (Ibid. 432).

Happiness revisits Isabel *The Phoenix Messenger* who sends an E-mail to Amal expressing her delight at reading Omar's letters to her mother Jasmine. She feels as though they were written to her. "*If people can write to each other across space, why can they not write across time too?"* She thinks Amal is generous and sweet and enquires after Anna as though she were really there (Ibid. 468).

Life is welcomed again with Isabel giving birth to little Sharif in 1998. Omar tells his sister Amal that he is very happy with the baby's birth. He describes him as fantastic and Isabel as a devoted mother. Even his kids are delighted with the baby (Ibid. 777). Isabel, as if in an attempt to answer Omar's fears about having a woman who knows it all ensures Amal that she understood and valued Omar's work either his concerns for politics or music. She made sure a home page was created for him to have all his articles published and read across the world. Omar has never told Isabel he loved her. Yet, he changed. He changed when he met the baby (Ibid. 481).

Isabel is more and more concerned with this correspondence across time and space as the story reaches its end. She wonders: "*If people can write to each other across time too"*. The whole novel is about writing to the past, resurrecting it and highlighting it (Ibid. 488-492).

Thus the portrait of Isabel *The Messenger Phoenix* is no different from Amal's. Her quest for love, reunion and meaning she found across time and space in a remote land that is Egypt. It is the same land that she knew so little about but that taught her love and connection. He could tie a strong links with Amal and Anna. She could resurrect Omar to life surrounding him with love and courage.

IV.2.3. Anna: The Fairy Tale Intrepid Phoenix

The opening scene echoes the sound of a past life cast by a female voice speaking to Amal. That voice is Anna's emerging from a remote past describing her sleeping child Nur al-Hayah as *"light of my life"*. The child is represented as hopeful, rejecting her father's death, Shraif' Basha's, and waiting for his coming back. This is what Amal discerns, reading Anna Winterbourne's journals. Anna, the British lady was Amal's uncle Sharif's wife.

Soueif depicts the representations of female characters relying on the narration of Amal as a first person narrator and one of her protagonists (Soueif, 2000, p.4). Motherhood and the female portraits as life bearers reverberate on the pages right from the outset beginning the tale with a mother's voice speaking about her child. This is followed by Anna's mother's physical description from one of her paintings falling within Amal's care and observation. The lady appears as blonde with a *"smooth clear brow, and oval face and delicate chin, smiling"*. She has eyes *"the strangest shade of blue, violet really"*. Her eyes

are said to speak loud with recognised strength and *"defiance"* (Ibid. 5). This is an allusion to feminine strength and outspokenness.

The story also begins with Anna's introduction of herself as a creature who does not believe in the power of the stars to govern our fate (Ibid. 10). That could explain how reluctant Anna was to be tied to an unknown power to determine and delineate her freedom as far as life living is concerned. Her portrait is to unfold describing a phoenix swinging between weakness and power, loss and again, separation, and reunion, death and life. Snap shots of her narrative geared by Amal's are to be unveiled according to their occurrence in the text to highlight the fore mentioned oscillation.

Anna's thoughts and heart unfold as she declares she loves her first husband Edward and how she wished to make him happier. Lady Anna *"strived to be a faithful and loving wife and companion"*, despite her limited understanding of men. She thinks of her husband as an unhappy creature (Ibid. 14).

The Fairy Tale Phoenix speaks also about missing her mother. Her mother dwells in her mind. She cannot remember her parents being together. Her mother had been alone all the time. Anna's mother is surrounded by light, smiling all the time. Her father appears to her when she is nine as though he had never existed before. Everything that life bore faded to nothingness and sadness after her mother died. Her father features as a sad man without her mother (Ibid. 13).

Anna worries about her husband Edward who was no longer himself after his return from the Soudan. Her husband suffers an *"illness of the spirit",* returning from an ugly war of the British empire in Africa. Yet Edward refuses to change despite his wife's continuous pleads to help him and understand him. His father, Sir Charles decides to take all guns away from his room and office for fear of suicide (Ibid. 27-28-29). Anna's fears increase as she forecasts something evil will come her husband's way. Anna struggles to bring life back to her ailing husband; to bring him back to himself. Yet she fails and feels she failed him (Ibid. 30-31). Edward took part in a dirty war in the Soudan in the name of the British Empire under the slogan *"civilise Africa in the interest of Europe"* (Ibid. 32).

Death is to interfere in life's stream as the cause of Edward's depression is revealed. British soldiers *"desecrated the body of the Mahdi whom the natives believe to be a holy man"*. The man's head was cut off in the name of civilisation. Anna's shock is the greatest

hearing that her husband took part of that bloody massacre in the Soudan where British soldiers killed and raped. She fails to make life overwhelm and win him back. Edward surrenders to death on March 1899. Yet, Anna still believes that Edward was just and honourable and never took part in such crimes (Ibid. 35).

Anna confesses that her husband had not died contented…he did not die at peace (Ibid. 38). She keeps blaming herself for not being able to rescue her husband from illness, evil, and death. Yet, she finds solace in Sir Charles's presence. Sir Charles is like a father to her (Ibid. 40). He voices his denial of what colonising empires in Europe did in Africa, sending daring articles to *The Times Newspaper* to assuage his son's death.

Life and hope are to visit Anna again as Lady Caroline's, Anna's friend, offer of a trip to Rome. Anna decides to return to the world, to welcome life again and accept the offer. She seems to go back to life as she decides to visit the museum and watch the paintings so dear to her heart and mix with the warm colours on them. Anna decides to enjoy the beauty of life again as she decides to visit the museum and watch the paintings so dear to her heart and mix with the warm colours on them (Ibid. 44-45).

Anna's first encounter with Egypt that Sir Charles described in his frequent narrations to her is from Alexandria. Alexandria, according to Anna, resembles more a European town than an African one. Amal would have liked to show her *"foreign friend"* Anna, Egypt her own country that she hardly visits.

In Anna's account of Egypt, and particularly Alexandria, she recounts to Sir Charles in her first letter, dated September 1900, relying on a *"superficial eye*". She finds the natives friendly and she visits the souks and port. She thinks of her late husband Edward who had been to the same place. Could her life with him have been different from the distant and reserved life she had had? She wonders (Ibid. 62).

Anna gets quickly involved in Egypt and its politics. In her next letter to Sir Charles, Anna mentions the *al-Liwa Paper* that speaks against occupation. Yet, Lord Cromer describes the paper as *"a publication of no significance*" (Ibid. 67). She wishes Sir Charles could see and enjoy the Egypt that she loved from first sight. This Oriental and exotic piece of the world teases her curiosity.

In her 1901 letter to Sir Charles, Anna confesses that she deplored the way the British spoke of Egypt writing books about this country she started to feel hers. Harry Boyle, or

HB, the oriental secretary at the agency, described the natives as unable to rule themselves (Ibid. 99). She speaks of Egypt as a place of peace. She finds solace and bounty in this country which she feels tightly fastened to. She thanks the divine power that led her to the South Kensington Museum to find Frederick Lewis's paintings describing oriental scenes. Those paintings snapped out of her nightmarish hours, days and nights during Edward's illness. The paintings were put there as though to convince her that:

> ...the world can be a place full of light and life and colour. When Anna felt ready for change she turned to Egypt. "And when the day came and it was deemed proper that I should travel---with the hope that distance and time and fresh and novel sights restore me to that healthy appetite without which we are incapable of being sensible to the wonderful gift of life---it seemed the most natural thing in the world that my thoughts would turn to Egypt. (Ibid. 101-102)

She despised the label *"abducted by the Arabs"* (Ibid. 105) for she was kidnapped by some Egyptian men and put into a carriage that was completely covered. Yet, those men were not interested in Anna's possessions nor did they mean to harm her. Their motives were political. They wanted to be heard by the Egyptian government. Anna is kidnapped with her Egyptian guide. She is looked after, nourished and kept clean. She was on an expedition in to the desert. She travelled disguised as a British man. Yet, her captors discovered she is a woman. The Egyptian kidnappers or *"effendis*" as Anna described them, decided to inform Sharif Basha of their deed (Ibid. 105). Anna was not the least afraid. She thinks about when she was on her way to Deir Saint Katrin in Sinai. She wanted to sit in a coffee shop disguised as a man and listen to storytellers and songs in Arabic (Ibid. 112).

After her abduction Anna (Ibid.134) awakens from what she describes as a peaceful slumber and feels as though she were in one of the paintings she contemplated in the museum in Britain. She describes Layla Amal's grandmother and Sharif's sister as an *"Egyptian and a lady*". Anna then labels her a Houri in whose house she felt safe. Anna's account of her awakening and meeting Layla bears huge gratefulness and impressiveness. She understands that the Egyptian lady who looks like one of the ladies in her favourite Frederick Lewis's Oriental painting is adorable.

She is eager to put her at ease with Layla's courteous gestures, her musical voice and the strange but real sense that they have met before. Anna discovers that the tale Layla is

telling her about her family and herself is not of "*the mediaeval East but very much of our times".* What strikes her is the fact that women there, meaning in Egypt, belong to Layla's social class, do not take their husbands' names. Layla sees no necessity for this. Anna learns that Layla's husband Husni is a lawyer who studied in Paris and Layla, the Egyptian woman also spoke French and knows much about politics and geography (Ibid.138).

Anna discovers that she knows so little about Egypt and that there are things she might never learn. Her abductors are young Radicals who kidnapped her to retaliate for the jailing of Layla's husband who voiced the Egyptian cause loudly. Yet, her hostess is by no means happy with what they did nor does her brother Sharif Basha whom she calls to end the ordeal (Ibid.138).

Anna is delighted to encounter the first sparks of love. She narrates her meeting with Sharif Basha at his father's house. Sharif Basha is a gentleman who speaks perfect French and has his sister's courteous manners. Yet, it is not the first time she sees his face. That explains the familiarity which she felt towards Layla his sister. Anna recognises that she met him at the Khedive's ball before her abduction. She then thought that the man was *"as proud as the devil".* (Ibid.140) Sharif Basha insists on driving Anna back to her hotel the next morning. Anna refuses to bother him, which infuriates the "*Oriental*" gentleman. She decides to return alone and not to disturb him (Ibid.141). Yet, Sharif Basha's gentleness gains over Lady Anna's stubbornness and she stayed in his comfortable and safe house until the next morning. Anna sleeps with the wish that Sharif Basha will be conscious that their "*eyes had met*…" (Ibid.144-45-46).

Anna starts a union with Egypt, a land that has embraced her and draws her back to life again. In her letter to Sir Charles dated March 1901, Anna mentions her new Egyptian acquaintances; an Egyptian lady and her distinguished brother lawyer called Sharif Pasha. She expresses her delight to meet such people and the urgency which she feels to know more about Egypt the country that "*for so long held such an attraction for me*" (Ibid.159). For the first time Anna confesses, she has met people like these, for the natives she happened to meet were servants (Ibid.159).

Place reshuffles memories and consciousnesses as Anna remembers the first time Sharif and her confessed their love to each other (Ibid.190). Anna is dazzled by the vastness of the desert in Sinai. That is a scene she would have never imagined when she read about the Egyptian desert. She could hardly describe Sharif. She could not find words

to write about him (Ibid. 191). Anna travels with him to the Sinai completely veiled and rediscovers her own people as "*exotic creatures*" on her way to Alexandria in the train station with Sharif Basha's servant.

She feels invisible and liberated, looking at people while they are unable to look at her. *"...I was invisible*", Anna confesses. "*Still, it is a most liberating thing, this veil. While I was wearing it, I could look whenever I wanted and nobody could look back at me*" (Ibid.195). Reaching the Suez Canal, Anna is to meet Sharif Basha again and had to dress in the robe and *"cloak of the Arab desert as a man*" (Ibid.196). She then rides a camel like the other five men who accompanied Sharif which made six men out of them. Although disguised and beyond her true identity as a British lady and a woman Anna prayed and felt *"peace of mind and peace of heart"* which were within her reach (Ibid.197).

Anna confesses her amazement and enjoyment of her adventure in the Sinai desert and how she was sorry her people there in England did not know anything about the beauty of that place and the importance of her journey (Ibid. 206). Sharif Basha has to persuade his Bedouin hosts that Anna dressed in an Arab man's clothes was a French young man whose father was one of his dear friends (Ibid. 207-209). Disguised in man's clothes she cannot enjoy the company of the women in the desert. Yet, "*she sees them as men do slight figures in long embroidered gowns, flitting about as though they handed the food*" to Anna and the rest of the men there in the desert.

Anna's view of the natives was fed by Thomas Cook's account featuring Arabs as Bedouins who are uncivilised and ignorant (Ibid. 209). Anna wished she could go without sleep entirely and that time could no longer stop so that she can record every instant she felt and each scene she witnessed. She enjoys her adventure and goes by riding to fulfil her journey into the desert with Sharif Basha as her guide. (Ibid. 210-211). Besides (Ibid. 212) Anna's endless thanking expressions and gratefulness to Sharif Basha about causing him inconvenience, he assures her that he did it with pleasure and that she could have made the journey on her own. Anna declares to Sharif that the journey would not have been the same if she had travelled with her own people. *"I would have remained within the world I knew. I would have seen things through my companions' eyes, and my mind would have been too occupied in resisting their impressions to establish its own…"* Sharif confesses to Anna that she is "*so insistent on making up your mind*". Anna confirms to him "*I have not given free rein to my will before*". There was a strong part of Anna that did not wish to be in the

company of her own people. She knows that their presence would have barred her true entry into the Sinai. She is so dazzled by the place that she feels that it could have been possible to experience one of the miracles of revelations there be it the land where Moses heard the word of God (Ibid. 213). Anna also thinks that had Edward come to Sinai as a pilgrim instead of going to the Sudan, "*he might have been alive today and at peace"*. Anna declares to Sharif that she came to Egypt because of some paintings she saw in South Kensington Museum. He concludes that she could have been in great trouble ad she confirms it. Anna's chief trouble has been Edward's painful death not for a just purpose. Although Sharif tries to persuade her that Edward did what he thought just for his empire, Anna returns *" I believe you have to know yourself first- above all before one takes any action or restrains one's self* (Ibid. 216). This constructs Sharif's impression about Anna: that she was wise, beautiful and courageous. He calls her "*Lady Anna who is never afraid".* Anna is represented as strong both as a man and as a woman (Ibid. 274).

Anna comes back to al-Baroudi's house; Anna is welcomed by Layla with tears in both ladies eyes. They kiss and hug as sisters. In her letter to Sir Charles Anna confesses that she regrets the simplicity of the desert coming back to Cairo. Her experience is immense and she cannot do it justice in a letter (Ibid. 236) Amal (Ibid. 237) commenting on the letter discovers a new Anna eager to know and to expect new things every day. She delves into Cairo society, trying to make friends with more Egyptian ladies (Ibid. 238). Anna enquires after Sharif Basha's return from the Sinai and hoping to get more from Layla who just mentioned that he said she rode extremely well.

In another letter to Sir Charles Anna mentions a awfully disturbing experience she had with a British man that she refers to as Mr "S" walking along the rue Qasr el-Nil passing by a coffee shop. The place was frequented by educated Egyptian gentlemen discussing politics. Mr S warned Anna from such people who "*embarrass[ing] every passing European gentlewoman with his bold and libidinous stare".* Anna disagrees with him yet he assures her that such behaviour is particular to *"native characters*" (Ibid. 239). Mr S also thinks that such people "*were all rascals who desired nothing more fervently than to dishonour a European gentlewoman"*. Yet, in her letter to her friend Caroline (Ibid. 242) in England Anna says that she prefers her new experience being in Egypt life. She enjoys her time and her new friends at al-Baroudi house. She expresses her longing to see Sharif or at least hear from him, but in vein (Ibid. 243).

In another letter to Sir Charles Anna mentions her discomfort at having Lord Cromer disagreeing with her being with Moslem company (Ibid. 247). Anna becomes less comfortable with her British friends. She tries to impress Lord Cromer speaking about her educated Egyptian friends and how Egypt starts to pay special attention to women's education thanks to them. Yet, Lord Cromer thinks that religious leaders in Egypt would never allow such a progress and that she should know Egypt better (Ibid.248)

Desperate about getting news from Sharif Anna decides to go back to England when the weather started to get warm in Egypt. Yet, Sharif Basha's comes to her declaring his love to her. Sharif is in love with Anna. He dreams of her graceful looks and admires her courage and kindness. Yet, Sharif avoids seeing Anna to forget about his love for her (Ibid.249). However, his heart grows fonder and jumps at his sister's suggestion to send a word to Anna because the letter is about to return to England (Ibid. 250) and he says *"us*" even before he gets her answer from Shepherd's Hotel where she lodged. Sharif (Ibid. 304) asks Anna if she is sure to marry him for she is to lose so much and she assures him that she is ready "*to give up so much*" to stay with him (Ibid. 305).

Anna removes Edward's ring and put it together with the ring she gave him into the felt purse her servant Emily gave her (Ibid. 309-310). She decides to bid farewell to the past and welcomes the great change that is about to overwhelm her life. Later when Sharif enquires about Anna's ring from her first marriage, she says that it is safely guarded in a purse with her journals. Although she permits Sharif to read them, he refuses (Ibid.158). She wants the marriage arrangements to be made "*al'egyptienne"* (the Egyptian) (Ibid. 311) *"as though I were an Egyptian"*. She decides not to change any aspect of al-Baroudi's life especially Sharif's She asks Sharif if they could stay with his mother after marriage. Anna longs to make him happy and everyone in the house. She also is eager to learn the Egyptian woman way of taking care of her home. She grows fonder of her new house and its people. (Ibid. 320-21-22)

The great day drew nearer for Anna. The day when she would be the wife of the man she loved. However, she feels extremely shocked and angry at Lord Cromer's hateful and racist behaviour having to conduct the marriage so that it can be recognised in Britain (Ibid. 320). Cromer is stunned at Anna's rage when he asks Sharif to sign an undertaking that he will not take another wife while he remains married to Lady Anna. (Ibid. 322) *"I*

was angry on behalf of my husband, but I was also angry on behalf of England—that Sharif Basha would think we all did not know how to behave" (Ibid. 328).

Despite of all, Anna could not help express her happiness "*And now, today, I feel as if—I hardly know how to describe it, but it is as if my body had been absent and now it is present. As though I am for the first time present in my body"* (Ibid. 334-335). She new life is always there to cover death: Anna confesses her great delight being *"Haram"* (wife of) Sharif Basha al-Baroudi "*And the oddest thing is that I am grown fond of my own limbs. The hands and feet that have served me these thirty years"* (Ibid. 350).

She addresses Sharif as "*my husband*" and she admits that she gave up everything dear to her for Sharif although he sometimes got mad at her like when Anna withdraws money from her personal account to buy clothes. However, Layla and Zeinab Hanim clear up the misunderstanding over Anna's withdrawing money from her bank account as they convinced her that what Sharif did is because he wants her to keep her own money for her own self for she is his wife (Ibid. 350). It is his duty to care about her needs and spend his own money to cater for them. As for Sharif, he asks Anna to send back the money to London to be spent for charity work. He also pledges her "*Let us be patient with one another*". The couple needs more time for mutual understanding (Ibid. 353).

Anna's heart grows fonder and the tie to Egypt closer. She wishes to become an Egyptian Lady imitating and admiring Zeinab Hanim, Sharif's mother. She finds Zeinab Hanim's company very dear to her heart and comforting. She even chooses *"Egyptian fashion"* to replace her European clothes for she finds the colours extremely suitable to her taste (Ibid. 348).

Anna and Sharif discuss politics. He involves her in his ideas and shares hers. He shows her the articles written in newspapers and discusses their contents with her. She dispenses of a honey moon because "*Sharif is change enough for me*". A warm friendship grows between her and her mother-in-law based not on conversation but on talks done together (Ibid. 349). She believes she has everything she needs i.e. "*Love*". She learns Arabic form her father-in-law and succeeds to get him out of his seclusion. She is no longer ready to describe her new life to her British friends and relatives (Ibid. 354). She felt more and more aloof from them. She meets two British ladies that she barely knew and they ignored her as she bides them good afternoon. Anna believes that resuming a normal relationship with her compatriots is out of question (Ibid. 361). In the main Anna speaks of projects to

be undertaken with some Egyptian ladies to start a women's magazine that deals with women's issues and emancipation. She also mentions the intention of her husband to build a school of fine art and to wish that she will have part in the planning (Ibid.355).

Anna wants to learn Arabic (Ibid. 89) to thicken the bond between her and her new family. She enquires about the word 'Mir'aah' or mirror and Layla explains. She also asks about the connection between mar 'ah or woman and mira'ah or mirror. Layla explains that the word mir'ah is linked to'ra'a' or see and could be linked to mar' or man/person. She also added that it might be because only people are visible in the sense that only they can see themselves. It could also be explained in such a way that woman allows everything to be visible and clear. She is transparent (Ibid. 377-378).

Anna was very proud of her man. She thinks that Sharif would not hear of submitting to other people's will. Sharif is a man who is ready to die for his country. He is never to accept living abroad for ever. "*He would be a man without a purpose; for his purpose, his vocation, is Egypt"*. (Ibid. 382-383). England was far from her and she misses Christmas there. Yet Sharif brings Christmas to her offering her a Christmas tree, presents and offering her an Ethiopian cross. She is so delighted with her new life that she confesses in a letter to her friend James that her British friends' number shrinks to a few people. Her only relatives and friends are her "*belle famille*" (in-laws). She discovered a new passion in weaving. She could be part of the world around and apart from it (Ibid. 385).

The fairy Tale Phoenix was admired by all the Baroudi family. Zeinab Hanim thinks her son a exceptionally lucky man marrying a woman like Anna: "*God has compensated you well for your patience"*. He can no longer remember the time when Anna did not exist. It seems she has always been there. Anna finds every detail in her new life and house familiar "*as though this was where she had always wanted to spend her days*" (Ibid. 386-387). She confirms that she has never learned so many things as quickly as she did in Egypt.

Her happiness reaches its peak when she falls pregnant in 1904. In both her account and Layla's there is every mention of her being surrounded by tenderness and care from all the members of her family. She refuses Sharif's offer to have a British physician looking after her or going to England to feel more at home. She felt so restless and afraid of the birth, yet she was very happy to be among her own people; Sharif's family (Ibid. 392-395). She

contributes to the work of a magazine entitled 'L'Egyptienne' with other Egyptian ladies and she has set up a fund to start a hospital (Ibid. 397).

Everybody contributes to rendering Anna's experience of pregnancy familiar. She felt strange to be pregnant "*strange to such an extreme degree*" yet it felt wonderful to her. Anna has had no experience of child birth either her own or anybody else's. Yet, she believes she rests in good hands; those of Zeinab Hanim and Layla. "*At times it seems to me that my baby is being placed in the balance against all the ills of the world"* (Ibid. 398). She declares to Sir Charles that she is so happy being surrounded by her Egyptian relatives that she is grateful to be alive every day (Ibid. 399). Anna praises Egyptian beautiful nature and hardworking people, grownups and children. She feels Egypt is a "*Land where God is unceasingly manifest*". Layla's is the one to announce Anna's giving birth. She says that Anna gives birth to a baby girl Nur al-Hayah who brings light to the family life. In one of her letters to Sir Charles Anna speaks about Nur. She describes her as precious and bringing "*fresh and clear pleasure into our lives*". Nur is strongly attached to her father and to her cousin Ahmad who appoints himself as her guardian (Ibid. 410).

When Anna learns about the catastrophe her own people provoked in the name of justice and civilisation, she weeps bitterly and confesses to Sharif that she is ashamed of being British. Yet, her husband confronts her and clears away any blame that could be set on her (Ibid. 432). She strives to stay courageous and busy and constantly occupied preparing for her classes and translating English articles for her husband. (Ibid. 436) Sharif allows Anna to meet foreign visitors so that both of them explain political conditions in Egypt to these visitors. They could both can clarify Egyptian standpoint and therefore allow foreigners to "*inform public opinion in their countries, as they are mostly people with some influence"* (Ibid.449).

In one of his speeches Roosevelt tells Egyptian elite in Cairo that "*it would take generations before they learned to govern themselves and to admonish them for religious fanaticism*" (Ibid. 456). Anna is surprised in one of her letters to Sir Charles that a president whose country stands for democracy and liberty has such offensive ideas (Ibid. 457). Yet, Anna ensures Sir Charles that Ahmad Bey Lutfi at the meeting of Hizb al-Ummah that Egypt has gained her maturity years before America existed. Roosevelt's speech is further evidence that the West holds ideas of democracy and liberty that they deny to other nations. Anna discovers after five years of marriage with Sharif that he loves

drama though he has pretended to mock it. The couple read novels together. Anna is so happy with her new life that in one of her letters to Charles she convinces him to come and visit Egypt; something she has often done. She reminds him that since she has made her journey to the Sinai, she has been convinced that nature has been brought close to her. She admitted to him that nature in Egypt is overwhelmingly present and that *"everything you do is determined by her and each passing minute is felt rather than made use of"* (Ibid. 464). She insists (Ibid. 466) in one of her letters to James her friend:

> Dear James, I read my letter and for a moment I wonder at myself and the distance I have travelled since those quiet years in England. I wonder that if Edward had not gone to the Sudan? What if Sir Charles had not come to Egypt in 1882 and so impressed me with his stories? How much is our life governed by the lives and past actions of others? But I shall not tire you with these thoughts. They are more entitled to a fire side chat, and that is something we are not likely to enjoy for some time—although I do yet hope that all my husband's and other's work should not go unrewarded and that by doubling and redoubling our efforts we shall indeed see the day when we all breathe a freer air. (Ibid. 466-467)

Anna becomes so involved in Egyptian politics that she helped translate a letter written displaying concerns over the situation in the Holy Land. The letter was introduced by Sharif Basha, translated into French by Layla and into English by Anna and sent to James Barrington in England to get it published in the West. The power of love empowered her with endless courage. She remarks that her love for Sharif widens to reach the whole world. She feels very happy and honoured to have backed her husband and eased his burden throughout the years they spent together. Yet, she has remarked that her husband wanted to spend more time with her and his daughter than be completely absorbed by his public life (Ibid. 476). Happiness enjoyed with children and wife (Ibid. 478) propels Sharif to think of giving up politics and public affairs in order to have his own private life devoted to his wife and children.

Anna appreciated literature. She reads *War and Peace* for the second time. She believes a second look is beneficial. She likes to go back to things old to feel renewal is still there moving with life and learning. Sharif clings to life more than ever for he wants to extend his life and happiness with Anna. He thinks it a pity that life could not be gone through again. Anna believes there happy life is meant to last forever (Ibid. 485). She sees Sharif in Nur all the time (Ibid. 486).

After Sharif's death Anna goes back to Britain and sends letters with news about Nur yet there was no word mentioned about her as though she ceased to exist (Ibid. 505). She did what her dead husband asked her; go to England and help Nur grow up far from conflicts and blood. Anna disappears smoothly to hand her story to Amal.

One met Anna as a devastated woman battered by the death of her husband Edward. She blamed himself for his death and wished she could be more there for him. Anna's life flourished when she decided to champion life over death and go to Rome and then Egypt to have another start. She encounters love, care and union meeting Sharif, the Egyptian Pasha and his family. She fought for justice and law with her husband until he died for it. Her strongest proof of life championing is her keeping diaries of her wonderful life with Sharif. She never denied to her daughter the possibility of her father's living for ever. Anna's story and Egypt's is to be saved and narrated by Amal.

VI. 2.4. Layla: The Egyptian Lady Uniting Phoenix

Amal inaugurates another narrative among the journals she found. The narrative is a script of her grandmother Layla Sharif Basha's sister (Soueif, 2000, p.109). Layla starts her narration describing her meeting with Anna. Layla's first impression of Anna as she lies asleep in her abductors' room about to be sent to the Basha's house in Hilmiya is of a man, an English man that turned to be a woman sleeping in her mother's haramlek (Ibid. 110-111). Sabir, Anna's Egyptian guide tells Layla that the latter is an important woman coming from a good and distinguished family. She rides like a man. When Anna was on her way to Deir Saint Katrin in Sinai, she wanted to sit in a coffee shop disguised as a man and listen to storytellers and songs in Arabic. The most important thing for Layla's was Anna's safety and comfort as she was her guest. She is to care for her until her brother Sharif comes back (Ibid. 112).

Layla opens her eyes in her mother's room and finds Anna looking at her. They decide to speak French as both of them know it. In her narrative Layla finds important (Ibid.136) to mention that there was no sign of fear on Anna's face nor was it her first interest to gain her liberty. "*She was completely natural in her looks and behaviour and so interested in her own abduction".* The house appeals to her and also the whole event. Layla hardly thinks of her as a stranger.

Layla thinks that it is rather Anna the strange guest that is more curious and very easy to talk to. She is sympathetic. Layla tells Anna details about her personal life and so does Anna. Anna's mother death, her father's sad life, her marriage and early widowhood, besides her respect and love of Sir Charles feature in her narrative to Layla. Layla is stunned with her guest's spiritual and physical beauty mentioning Anna's golden hair and her exclusively violet bright eyes (Ibid.137).

What strikes Anna is the fact that women there, meaning in Egypt, belong to Layla's social class, do not take their husbands' names. Layla sees no necessity for this. Anna learns that Layla's husband Husni is a lawyer who studied in Paris and Layla, the Egyptian woman also spoke French and knows much about politics and geography (Ibid.138). Layla is a woman who could explain the Egyptian cause clearly and with distinction; "…*she was a teacher of such wakeful conscience*", Anna thinks. She is by no means happy with what Anna's abductors did nor does her brother Sharif Basha whom she calls to end the ordeal (Ibid.138).

In Layla's account of the journey Sharif and Anna made to the Sinai desert she expresses her great delight to see Anna again and the latter's happiness to be with her. Layla recognises Anna's caring about her brother (Ibid. 243). She has never removed the possibility *"that Anna had taken his (Sharif's) fancy"* (Ibid.150) from her mind.

In her journal Layla expresses her utmost confidence that she has done the right thing convincing her brother to marry Anna. She is keen on keeping her as a friend. Anna brought so many new and good things to Layla's life. Her strong incentive to keep this union is her love for her brother Sharif. She encourages her brother to speak to Anna and to marry her. She ensures him that Anna loves him. She thinks that Anna has a big mind and that she is different from all women she had met. Layla convinces her brother of his being the right man for Anna and that he can make her happy and make her forget about her previous sad life.

She cannot bear see him alone for the rest of his life. Such a tender and loving man could make any woman happy (Ibid. 284-285). Layla and her mother Zeinab Hanim express their extreme delight hearing about her brother's engagement with Anna (Ibid. 306).

Layla's account of the wedding party depicts how beautiful Anna is and how she could be one of them. The house is full of flowers, sweets and guests and her brother feels the happiest man on Earth (Ibid. 330). Zeinab Hanim never felt as delighted as the night of her beloved son's marriage to Lady Anna. Layla cannot express her happiness having her brother marry the woman he loves. Sharif comes back to his family and house to fill it with life (Ibid. 334-335).

Layla expresses her opinion of Anna as follows: She believes her brother and Anna found happiness and joy in their union. According to Layla, Anna brought companionship to her mother and love to her son and warmth to her father's loneliness and confinement. Anna is different from what they knew about the British and she is not arrogant. They almost forgot she was British. Yet, Layla knew that her brother has no peace of mind for he cares about Egypt that suffers war and instability. Yet, he had Anna by his side to help him translate any document from British newspapers and use her connections in England to bring him any news about decisions that could be of any importance to Egyptians (Ibid. 373). Layla informs Anna that the Egyptian gentlemen in Sharif's house are discussing women, their emancipation and education, writing articles in magazines and newspapers about issues that are of great significance to them. Besides the author of the book *Al-Mar'ah al-Jadidah The New Woman*, Qasim Amin, is among the guests sitting with Sharif Basha (Souiff, 2000, p. 375).

Layla confesses:

> Our one concern, in those months, was for Anna and although she made it clear that she lacked no reason for happiness, our sensibilities constantly urged us to compensate her for the absence of a mother or a sister who would naturally have been with her at this time. (Ibid. 397)

An important element distinguishing Ahdaf Soueif's stories is the mingling of fictional and historical characters and events. This Soueif succeeds at achieving in two ways. On the one hand genuine historical people land in Ahdaf Soueif's novels and coexist with other characters. In the mean time the creation of some fictional figures is inspired though the lives of real people. In an interview with Joseph Massad (1999), Ahdaf Soueif points that she confronts her Western audience with a difficult mission which is that of having to untie history from fiction, because she has a willingness to scrutinize both possibilities and limitations of people's personal lives as influenced by certain historical circumstances.

Ahdaf Soueif states : “I wanted to map out my characters' lives against a genuine historical background. Why should I invent a historical background, when it's all there really” (Massad, 1999, p. 87). The willingness to integrate the private and the political layers presents a major characteristic of postcolonial writing (Malak, 2000, p. 146).

Layla is politically aware. She collects articles about the settlers and their activities helped with Anna for any possible English translation. She also listens attentively to Shukri Bey recounting about the settlers and the Palestinian people especially in Nazareth and (Ibid. 424) Bethlehem. Shukri Bey is Sharif Basha’s maternal cousin. Sharif Basha has childhood memories in the Holy Land (Ibid. 227-228-229). Besides, The British torture villagers to death hanging them one by one. These are the people who *“call themselves civilised*”, Ahmad Hilmi one of Sharif’s friends believes.

The Egyptian Lady Phoenix speaks about God’s gift sent to the Baroudi family i.e. Anna, being united. Layla mentions the special classes for ladies at the university on Fridays on its first year. Layla’s jokes and Anna’s remark that the “*harem had made a working woman of her*” (Ibid. 334-335). She (Ibid. 472) believes that politics is never to be avoided and that it is part of one’s life. She expresses her disgust of occupation as it hampered development, it slowed wishes for education, censored what could be published, decided for colonised people’s jobs and it held back the emancipation of women. It shrank the country’s chances of modernisation and development (Ibid. 473). Layla remarked an important aspect of her brother’s work fighting for the liberation of his country. “*I sensed a growing distance between him and his work—a distance of emotions”.* He loves living in Tawasi that a special place. It contains things that matter; people and the land. Sharif is lucky to have land that he can leave to Nur and her children. That land can keep them rooted to it and to each other. “*Land they can go to when the world gets too much”.* (May be foreshadowing Sharif’s death) (Ibid. 475). Sharif says to Layla “*You are young…and you have time”.* Layla got the impression that *“he wanted to slow time down*” to have more time to spend with the kids (Ahmad and Nur)

Finally it is Layla’s account that announces Sharif’s death. He had been shot. Three bullets had killed him. Two bullets ripped his stomach and one has been buried in his back. He confessed his gratefulness to his life with Anna before his death. He said goodbye to his beloved wife, daughter and family (Ibid. 501). He believed his life with Anna was

wonderful and that he loved her. Yet, he wanted her to go back to England and take Nur with her. He wanted her to bring her up like her (Ibid. 500).

One met Layla as *The Egyptian Lady Uniting Phoenix* striving for encompassing and containing the love of her dear ones. She is described as intrepid as Anna and ready to die for her country's Egypt cause. She helped shed more light on Anna's character and her brother's as she is part of the romance. Her story is blended with Anna, Amal, and Isabel's to make it one throughout space and time.

IV. 2.5. Sharif: The Uniting He Phoenix

The exploration of Sharif Pasha's portrait as the only *'he phoenix'* is to be included within the analysis of Soueif's female protagonists' portraits because he stands as a unifying force binding the female phoenixes further together. Each previous depiction refers to him as an eternal symbol of reunion, strength and resilience.

Everybody is used to thinking of Sharif Basha as bachelor, as a man who preferred to live alone. Nobody speaks to him about remarrying. That is what his own mother Zeineb Hanim, thinks about him speaking to her daughter Layla: "*your brother takes everything so seriously"*. "*He's read books and taken them seriously, he read your uncle's poetry, Urabi Basha, and it settled in his heart. He philosophises everything and there is no arguing with him"*. It had caused a scandal to return his bride to her family after six months. He blamed himself for such an event saying that the cause of their separation was that he could not make her happy. However the real cause has been that Sharif, "…*cannot live my life with a woman who has no key to my mind and who does not share my concerns*", Sharif confesses to his mother (Soueif, 2000, p.150). Sharif believes that owing to the difficult times they have been living in, one is to be interested in futile things (Ibid.151) of life such as the beauty of one's tablecloth. Sharif needed a woman who could understand him, corrects him when he is wrong. He repudiated convenience marriages. He wanted "*to love and be loved back*". That is what Sharif told his worried mother who is desperate about finding him a wife.

He remembers the first time he fell in love with Anna. Sharif confesses that the first time he saw her he fell in love with her. He noticed as well that she was not afraid of him when they met at his house in man's clothes. She was not afraid of the "*wicked Pasha who would lock you up in his harem and do terrible things to you"*. Such kinds of tales are in Anna's

"English stories", Sharif confirms (Ibid.153). When Sharif asks Anna about whether she missed her previous life she confirmed that she did not with an immediate no. *"I would not be anywhere else for the world*", she confesses (Ibid.157). When Sharif enquires about Anna's ring from her first marriage, she says that it is safely guarded in a purse with her journals. Although she permits Sharif to read them, he refuses (Ibid.158).

"*Sharif Basha has neglected his heart for so long that it had fallen silent. And now it speaks. It lies in wait for him and chooses its moment"* (Ibid. 266-269). He regrets Anna being English and et Anna made him feel love and life again (Ibid. 270). He thinks that there is seriousness about Anna and a depth to her. *"He admires the way she spoke of her dead husband"*. He believes he is a lucky man because Captain Edward Winterbourne is dead. Now, it is his mission to "*wipe him out—burn him out of her body and her mind so that Sharif reigns there alone"* (Ibid. 271). He still has a life to be made with Anna. Sharif speaks to his friend Ya'qub Artin Basha. "*I could see that she was inventing me. Piecing me together as we travelled"* .Y'aqub mentions Sharif as "*The Hero of the Romance"*. He thinks Sharif has the looks. Thinking about Anna: "*He had left a defiant, dishevelled creature in a man's riding clothes and returned to find a sunny, golden woman"* as he observed her at his house dressed in his dressing gown and play with his nephew Ahmed (Ibid. 274).

Zeinab Hanim, the tender loving mother, hesitates (Ibid. 280—281) about accepting her son's marrying a British woman. She thinks that Anna is good and straight. Yet, she is an English woman. This marriage with an Egyptian will cause both of them harm, considering Britain as a coloniser of Egypt. Yet, Zeinab Hanim warns her son from making Anna unhappy for the lady will surely give her own people to marry him (Ibid. 282).

> And whatever the English do, you will never burden her with the guilt of her country. She will be not only your wife and the mother of your children—Insha'Allah— (God Willing), but she will be your guest and a stranger under your protection and if you are unjust to her, God will never forgive you". Zeinab Hanim is very happy to have Anna as her son's wife. "Look at the wisdom of God my daughter, sending you from a far country to my son after those barren years. (Ibid. 334-335)

On 26 October 1911 (Ibid. 481) Sharif writes an article answering the following query: *What Attractions the East holds for Europe?* The first is economic as Europe needs markets for its products and jobs for its people. The second is religious, historical and

romantic as the land of the scriptures, of the ancients, and of fable. Such an attraction tempts The Europeans as distanced as they are. Their arrival to the Arab lands confronts them to people they do not understand and like. Three options are open to these Westerners: to change these strangers, to ignore them or to leave. Sharif cannot help think about Anna comparing her to her own people. She has great confidence in public opinion so that when people are made to see clearly, to understand all wrong doings can be fixed and *"history set on a different course"*.

In his article about the European and the East he calls him the romantic European who has set himself the mission of civilising 'primitive' people of the colonies as it is what he labels the White Man's Burden. This white man thinks of himself as reformer and saviour, ensuring the reign of peace and justice. This white has variegated definitions of the natives: *"backward people, lacking rational abilities and subject to religious fanaticism. People whose countries—the holy and picturesque lands of the East are too good for them"*.

How about the Orientals and their responsibilities in all this? The Orientals, especially the Egyptians he knows have been living in a land of mysteries and civilisation. They tried to find a place among modern countries, yet it seemed that this achievement hampered the developed countries interest there. There are Orientals who stood amazed by Europe's progress and lights yet it caused them to stand on the first step of the admirer's ladder for long. This article had been written by Sharif and translated by Anna (Ibid. 482-83).

Dealing with the relation of East and West Sharif confesses that too much has been learned from visiting Europe, studying in European universities and therefore opening ourselves to Western culture. In the meantime, Orientals chose the elements of that civilisation that best suited their own history, traditions and aspirations. He calls this "*the legitimate commerce of humanity*". Finally, he hopes the consciousness of both worlds could be united so that his words might find meaning and echoes. He confirms that such a unity is hard to be reached, yet every single word in his letter points to support this aim (Ibid. 484).

On his part Sharif senses if "*Perhaps it is time to set that life free"* after a life of fighting and struggle. He lost all his best friends: Mohamed Abdu, Qasim Amin and young Mustapha Kamel. He constantly attempts to remember that Anna is there and hope and life are also there. He thinks that Anna was meant for him. Nothing was to change. Everything was destined (Ibid. 499). However, Sharif regrets missing so many things. He thinks that

he may have offered Anna a more ordinary and simple life than he had (Ibid. 498). Sharif's regrets foreshadow his death as a hero of romances leaving a mourning lover behind and also a loving daughter.

Conclusion to Part Two:

Part two dealt with the exploration of female protagonists in *The Map of Love* as timeless phoenixes resurrecting from their own ashes. Portraits of these protagonists like tier narratives showed complementariness and relatedness. The exception noticed in this part is that a male phoenix portrait was included within the exploration which was Sharif's portrait. Sharif was darwn as the male character uniting and enlightening the portraits set forth. Ahdaf Soueif strived to blend opposite depictions of classic European and Eastern heroes in one character. She emphasises:

> I became interested in the idea of the romantic hero ... as in Mr. Rochester and Heathcliff, and all the characters that we find in Mills and Boon novels--tall, dark, handsome, enigmatic, a stranger, proud, aloof, yet you just know that if you can get close you'll find these depths of sensitivity and empathy and passion and tenderness, and so on. And this hero is very often kind of Eastern, but he isn't ever really Eastern. And I've read novels and stories where he's meant to be Egyptian and he really isn't at all. He's completely fake. Or they have to make him Christian because they can't go into the whole Muslim bit, but he's called Ali or Mohammed because that's what Easterners are called--very odd, pastichey things like that. And I thought, what if I make a hero who's larger than life, who's somebody I would think, Wow! And he's a real, genuine Egyptian, of that time, with the concerns of that period. (Soueif qtd. in Davis, 2007, p. 5)

Sharif, though dead, could be accounted among the uniting elements that solidified the phoenixes relation together. He is the husband, the brother and the uncle; the fading life that enlightened all the other characters.

Conclusion

Chapter four entitled *The Map of Love: A Portrait of Timeless Female Protagonists* was divided into two parts. Part one was entitled *A Story of Timeless Phoenixes* and part two *The Representations of Female Phoenixes.*

The focus in part one was on the element of time by Soueif and how the writer granted a huge importance to time past to blend the stories of all the novels characters together as one essentially those of its female protagonists Amal, Anna, Isabel, and Layla. Past, present and future were dissolved in one time dimension to unite lives together across time and space. Soueif used the stream of consciousness technique to delve into her protagonists' consciousness revealing their thoughts, fears, hopes and representations of other characters. She also utilized several points of view such as omniscient, and first person point of view to boost narration and allow her readers a thorough understanding of her characters. She also allowed her protagonists speak, laugh, give advice and sympathize with other protagonists a hundred years away from the present using senses such as sight and touch; the same technique she used in *The Sandpiper*. Amal the Egyptian protagonist was the one to gather the bits and pieces of the story and remap it again to stand as history to be read by future generations.

Part two focused on the representations of female protagonists as phoenixes and symbols of motherhood, life sources, and reunion. The character of each protagonist was explored separately according to their appearance on the story's stage. Amal was the first phoenix to be probed as *The Outsider Insider Phoenix.* Amal lived outside Egypt for a long time and indeed out of her history and story. She was allowed a return to the history and story through Anna's journals brought to her by Isabel, her American cousin, from America.

Amal became the insider phoenix striving to know more about the story of her Baroudi family and that of Egypt for the Baroudi's were involved deeply in Egyptian politics like her uncle Sharif and her aunt Layla and many others. Amal came inside her story and history visiting Anna's the British story and history. She then was aquainted to the love story of her uncle Sharif and Anna that translated into another love story that of her brother Omar and Isabel. Amal became an insider into her own history and story thanks to love and a desperate search for union that one story brought together.

Isabel was the second Phoenix to be explored as *The Messenger Phoenix.* Isabel was the one to bring Anna's journals and letters from America given to her by Amal's brother Omar. She helped create a story of love and ones. Her curiosity triggered Amal's to know more about Anna. She wanted to know more about Egypt in order to tell the world about the history and people of that great country. She met and loved Omar the Egyptian activist

and struggled to make him share her love and resurrect another Sharif to the story so that it continues on and on alive and present.

Anna was the third phoenix to be probed as *The Fairy Tale Intrepid Phoenix.* Anna jumped as though from a mysterious story box to land in Amal's lap as a fairy tale British princess. Anna suffers her first husband's death and yet could champion life going to Egypt out of curiosity. She could forget about her parents' absence, especially her mother's, in Egypt the wonderful land that adopted her and let her meet Sharif her prince charming. Anna could go through all her pains embracing love as healer. She could unite a whole family together and also histories of two countries in war Britain and Egypt and make it one. Her courage and resilience allowed trans-pass all hurdles namely that of culture and geography to delve into her husband's land and culture. She became a translator of her husband's articles and promoted Egyptian woman's cause side by side with Layla Sharif's sister. Her love for Sharif blossomed giving life to their daughter Nur.

The fourth phoenix to be explored was Layla *The Egyptian Lady Uniting Phoenix*. Layla stands as the Egyptian lady who showed Anna the British another facet of Egyptian woman other than that of the submitted ignorant. She appears as an Egyptian educated and fashionable lady involved in the politics of her own country. Layla was also the uniting lady who brought two lovers' hearts together; Anna and Sharif's. She was the one to convince her mother to consent to the lovers' marriage despite their different origins and cultures.

Sharif Pasha's portrait was included within the female phoenixes portraits to be analyzed because he was the male character to bring together the female phoenixes together and who was granted a greater space as character than Omar's. Sharif was the darling of the ladies in the story. All female phoenixes admired him and gathered around discusses his courage, charm, and 'gentlemaness'. Omar existed in Sharif's shadow in the story and so did his son baby Sharif who was the one to prolong Sharif's myth as *The Uniting He Phoenix*.

A significant feature of *The Map of Love* is that the author seems to veil the present time to suffocation to highlight the power of time past. Every event in the present is met by its counterpart in the past and depends on it. Besides, Amal, one of the protagonists and narrators of the story seems 'defaced' by Soueif as she manifests no past and present other than that relating to Anna's story. Amal starts to think of her life, family, country and history only when she started reading Anna's diaries. Anna disappears after Sharif's death.

Soueif could have opted for such a ‘character defacement’ to meet her utmost aim which is the fusion of stories of the past with those of the present, mingling in one history, one family, and one country. She could have sacrificed the prominence of time present and first person narrator for readers to weigh the importance of the past to shape the present and the future in her story. This, readers are to achieve reading her stories backward in a non-linear circular movement. It could also stand as an incentive to restore every element in her story to life again as phoenixes being born of their own ashes from a remote past to a new present.

Notes to Chapter Four

1) This extends to the meaning of the word 'Muslim' which according to Ahmed:

> Obviously undergoing change under the pressures of politics and history. Our definition, this time, as Muslim, as inescapably Muslim- a term that today refers primarily not to belief, but rather, in the eyes of The CIA, The INS and of ordinary people, to something that is ineradicably there now, apparently- in our genes, names, our place of origin. (p.6)

2) The same picture the British had of an exotic Egypt The French had of Algeria. According to Lazreg:

> Orientalist view of Algerians: The French idea of the Orient became Algerian's new living space. From now on [from the time when Algeria was colonized] Algeria will be figments of the French imagination (1986, p. 36).

3) Empathy has been the driving force for telling Amal's story. It is principally Soueif's view of the relation between novelist and story:

> Our duty is to tell the story that's come to us in the most effective way possible. But we don't choose the story: we're drawn in where the feeling is deepest. A work of fiction lives by empathy – the extending of myself into another's, the willingness to imagine myself in someone else's shoes. This itself is a political act: empathy is at the heart of much revolutionary action. (Ahdaf Soueif: In times of crisis, fiction has to take a back seat)

4) Anna the British lady one of the female protagonists in *The Map of Love* expressed her sincere regrets the death of the Russian novelist Tolstoy in 1910. *The Map of Love* embraces echoes of Toltoyan novels as *Anna Karenina,* and *War and Peace* that Soueif herself admires. Soueif's *The Map of Love* and *In the Eye of the Sun* are like Tolstoyan novels stories about love and history that tell the tale of 'Egypt mother of all civilisations' as Amel another protagonist suggest it.

5) The Egyptian female writer Arwa Saleh was one of the most famous members of the students' movement in Egyptian universities during the early seventies. She published many articles in newspapers and magazines. She threw herself from the tenth floor in 1997 (Cairo Post)

6) For a comprehensive analysis of the history of Egypt see (Lutfi, A. A. M. 2007; Mansfield, P. 1972; Panayiotis J, V. 1969; & Thompson, J. 2011.

GENERAL CONCLUSION

General Conclusion:

The present research work entitled *The Representations of Soueif's Female Characters as Other, Suffocating/Liberated Female Phoenixes* was divided into four chapters. Chapter one entitled *Woman as Other: A Postcolonial, Feminist, and Literary Critiques* probed the concept of woman as Other from postcolonial and feminist standpoints. An understanding of the Other was presented considering it from psychological and relational terms. The Other turned as a subject of desire and everything that is outside the self. Yet, this does not exclude it from shaping one's development. Therefore, it is one's perception of the Other that determines the kind of identity that one develops.

The Other was also probed from relational terms aiming at viewing it as either completely stranger to understanding and communication or as a precursor to it. The main views discussed were Schutz and Simmel's. The first backed the first view and the second to the second view. One needs to view the Other as part of an ongoing process of communication shaping the strange and the same. Besides, it is an opportunity one is to experience of distancing one's self from the delineated confines of the self to a broader distance encompassing a larger space than one's own world.

The Other as Stranger and Different: A Postcolonial Perception probed the concept of the Other from a postcolonial perception. It analyses it as different and strange. An understanding of the terms postcolonialism and postcoloniality were offered as enlarging terms ready to include and exclude meanings rather than fixed ones. The Other was also explored as part of a series of binary elements including coloniser vs. colonised, embracing meanings such as orientalism, racism, representation, identity, crisis of identity, hybridity, and Diaspora. One's monocentric view of the world is the result of labelling others as complete strangers and threats to one's existence. One needs to widen the scope one one's perception to include different worlds and representations.

Dialogism as an Open Space to Understanding Otherness granted an alternative perception of one's coexistence with others based on a dialogic imagination mainly suggested by Bakhtin. This very perception does not exclude misunderstanding and difference from human interaction. It rather welcomes it as a prerequisite for fruitful and varied scopes of understanding.

On narrative as a means to understand Otherness allowed a different perception of the concept of Otherness that is experienced through fiction. One comes to the conclusion that reading narratives affords an intermingling between the otherness of readers, writers and characters in a completely new experience enriching one's imagination and altering one's views.

Woman as Other: A Feminist Critique attempted at a comprehensive analysis of women as other from a feminist stand point. Diverging views were offered considering women as opposed to men being submissive, dependent and weak. It also suggested a new portrait of women as agent of their own selves demystifying their age old stereotypical portrait. In the main *Woman as Other: Postcolonial Feminist Critique*, probed the same elements from a postcolonial feminist stand adding to the old portrait female entities that are pawns of eastern men and slaves of a tyrannical religion. This invited fallacies such as the notions of 'third world' and 'first world' women explored in *The Difference between 'Third World' and 'First World' Women*. The process of communication between 'west and rest' needs to be reconceptualised. 'First world' women issues should no longer regard 'third world' women as essentially 'different' and particular to this category. They must widen their scope to view such a category as women having similar concerns and challenges.

Representations of Women in the West: Religious, Literary, and Historical Implications examined the concept of woman from the set forth stand points. The main representations granted were woman as perpetrator of sin and sexual provocation inducing men into a lower world of sin and lust. Besides, women were viewed as competing with men for power and authority. One is not to over generalise this very portrait as the one immutable picture. *Western Literary Representations of Muslim and Arab Women* adds to the fore mentioned picture the oscillating portrait of Arab and Muslim women as veiled belly dancing slaves of Arab and Western men seeking constant salvation and support. Nevertheless, *Arab/Muslim Women Postcolonial Texts as Counter Discourses* offered counter texts to further defy their stereotypical portrait. Writers like Fatima Mernissi, Ahdaf Soueif, Assia Djebar, and Nawal el Saadawi, to name a few, contributed greatly in sometimes confirming and affirming that very portrait. And yet, they made their voices known and heard.

The last title in chapter one is concerned Ahdaf Soueif's view of her own position, and the writer's in general, as fiction writer or activist. She asserted that in time of crisis, a writer should turn to activism. She pointed as well to the eternal position of fiction writers as

constant reminders of the utmost importance of imaginary worlds to counter balance a sometimes confining and rigid world.

Chapter two entitled *Aisha*: A Child/ Adult Female Representation vs. Aisha as Foreigner and Exotic Character probed *Aisha* Soueif's first collection of short stories. The analysis focused on scrutinising the representations of the female protagonists in *Aisha* as on the one hand maudlin, weak, childish, exotic, and dependent entities nostalgic about a lost time past settling them as an Other, and on the other hand strong and resilient phoenixes struggling for their rights to be and their voices to be heard. The analysis also focused on Soueif's utilising a spiralling time technique allowing them to read time backward. The analysis also focused on the element of phoenix as a resilient mythical character resurrecting of its own ashes and the element of time as both linear and cooperative allowing its understanding as a dynamic entity. The narratives also cast woman as a source of energy and life demystifying their portrait as.There is always room for renewal, discovery, connection and learning to rebuild and reconnect with others. The writer pictured Aisha as the returning phoenix resurrecting from her ashes, saving her from death back to life and knowing and transcending the shell inside her cocooned self to reach the world outside.

Chapter two entitled *The Sandpiper a Mosaic of Eastern/Western, Trapped/Liberated Timeless Phoenixes* probed *The Sandpiper* Soueif's second collection of short stories. The analysis focused on the perceptions of Soueif's female protagonists both Eastern and Western as again once victims of men's forgetfulness, authority, selfishness, and violence and at another glimpse, powerful characters able to welcome life again and facing the unknown. *The Sandpiper*, like *Aisha*, is characterised by the use of a tricky time structure championing a time past over a time present that unveils it and informs it as complementary to it. *The Sandpiper* like Aisha reinvents Soueif's characters as new women clinging to life and fighting to win their agency back from the ashes of patriarchy and submission. They are represented as life sources fleeing death and oblivion.

Chapter Four entitled *The Map of Love*: A Portrait of Timeless Female Protagonists explored Soueif's second novel. Like in the previous works, female protagonists are presented as maudlin creatures singing the praises of a nostalgic past living centuries ahead of one another. Yet, Soueif allows them to tell one stories beyond history, war, differences, death, and time. Soueif could have at times confirmed the stereotype of the dependent Eastern female character a picture much welcomed by Western audiences as a symbol of sin, slavery,

sex object, and dependent on her male counterpart, especially in *Aisha* and *The Sandpiper*. She nevertheless, demystified this very picture in *The Map of Love* with characters like Amal, Anna, and Isabel. Also in *The Map of Love* Soueif could have sacrificed the prominence of time present and first person narrator for readers to weigh the importance of the past to shape the present and the future in her story. This, readers are to achieve reading her stories backward in a non-linear circular movement. It could also stand as an incentive to restore every element in her story to life again as phoenixes being born of their own ashes from a remote past to a new present.

One therefore, could read this very research work entitled *The Representations of Soueif's Female Characters as Other, Suffocating and Liberated Timeless Phoenixes*. *Case Study: Aisha, The Sandpiper and The Map of Love* as facets of portraits including that of woman as Other, female characters, and time as contradictory and complementary enlightening the set forth concepts as dynamic entities. One could understand the whole work as an interpretation of a vision picturing women and time as fluid and hybrid elements weaving intermingling texts.

One of the most important ideas propagated by these fiction works is the idea of change triggered by hybrid characters undergoing transformation and oscillating from points of weakness to those of strength dragging along their past, present and future. The three fiction works represent time as vibrant and dialogic communicating with character and space through different dimensions. Readers are invited to experience time journeys, visiting characters' lives and worlds.

Aisha, *The Sandpiper* and *The Map of Love* are only samples of an eastern female writer's standing as counter discourses to hitherto iconic master narratives. These very fiction works offer a widening spaces and horizons for comparison with other writers' texts to highlight both differences and similarities. They invite future research works comparing female characters in for example the Jordanian writer Fadia Faqir's *My Name is Selma*, the Algerian writer Asia Djebbar's *L'amour la Fantasia*, and the Egyptian Nawal el Saadawi's *Woman at Point Zero*. In all the set forth works female characters imagined as phoenixes resurrecting from their own ashes and ready for another story and life.

Such works by non-Western authors taught at Algerian universities could stand as very significant counter discourses to Western iconic texts long considered the epitome of literary texts. Algerian students and teachers could identify much deeper with characters and settings

presented in such works than with texts written in foreign contexts. This of course, does not entail the exclusion of texts produced by writers from different cultural backgrounds. This rather suggests a widening of one's scope to include and welcome new perspectives and challenges.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

BIBLIOGRAPHY (APA) Style

Works by the Author:

A. Fiction Works:

Soueif, A. (1983). *Aisha*. London: Black Swan
_____(1993). *In the eye of the sun*. London: Bloomsbury.
_____(1996). *The sandpiper*. London: Bloomsbury.
_____(2000). *The map of love*. London: Bloomsbury.

B. Non- Fiction Works:

Soueif, A. (2004). *Mezzaterra.* London: Bloomsbury
_____(2012). *Cairo, my city our revolution*. London, Berlin, New York, Sydney: Bloomsbury.

Fiction:

1. Abdel-Fattah, R. (2005). *Does my head look big in this?* Sydney: Pan Macmillan Australia.

2. Aboulela, L. (1999). *The translator*. Edinburgh, Polygon.

3...... (2001). *Coloured lights*. Edinburgh, Polygon.
4.……. (2005). *Minaret*. London, Bloomsbury.

5. Abouzeid, L. (1989). *Year of the elephant: A Moroccan woman's journey toward independence*. (Trans) Barbara Parmenter. Austin: University of Texas at Austin Press.

6. Achebe, C. (1986). *Things fall apart*. London: Heinemann.

7. al-Rikabi, A.(1998). Ghuraf Ashjan. In B. Al-Nasiri (Ed.), (pp. 5-16). Cairo: Dar 'Ishtar'

8. Al-Shayhk, H. (1994).*The story of Zahra*. (P. Ford, Trans.), New York: Anchor Books.

9. Atwood, M. (1972). *Surfacing*. New York: Fawcett Popular Library.

10. Bennett, A. (1995). (Ed). J. Wain. The Old Wives' Tale. Penguin

11. Bernard, J. (1982). The female world. New York: The Free Press

12. Bronte, C. (1960). *Jane Eyre*. New York.

13. Butler, Octavia. (1987). Dawn. New York: Warner Books

14. Cervantes, S. M. de. (1995). *The history of the ingenious gentleman: Don Quixote de la Mancha.* (B. Raffel, Trans.), New York: W. W. Norton, 1995.

15. Djura. (1991). *Le voile du silence*. Paris: France Loisirs.

16. Drabble, M. (1969). *The water fall*. New York: Fawcett Popular Library.

17._____ (1980). *The middle ground*. Toronto: Bantam Books.

18. Durrell, L. (1973). *The black book*. London: Farber and Farber.

19. El-Saadawi, N. (1983). *Woman at point zero*. New Jersey: Red Books.

20. Emecheta, B. (1976). *The bride price*. New York: Braziller.

21._____(1979).*The joys of motherhood*. New York: Braziller.

22. Faqir, F. (2007). My name is Salma. London: Doubleday.

23. Fielding, H. (1983). *Amelia.* In M.C. Battestin (Ed.), Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press.

24. Godwin, G. (1974). *The odd woman*. New York: Warner Books.

25. Gordimer, N. (1979). *Burger's daughter*. London: Jonathan Cape.

26. _____(1984). *Something out there*. London: Jonathan Cape.

27. Hawthorne, N. (1994). *The scarlet letter*. London: Penguin Books.

29. Jong, E. (1973). *Fear of flying*. New York: New American Library.

30. Joyce, J. (1994) .*Dubliners*. London: Secker and Warburg.

31. Kuzwayo, E. (1985). *Call me woman*. Johannesburg: Ravan.

32. Lawrence, D.H. (1966). *The plumed serpent*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf.

33. Lessing, D. (1963).*The golden note book*. New York: Bantam.

34. _____(1965). *Landlocked*. New York: New American Library.

35. _____(1973). *The summer before the dark*. New York: Bantam.

36. _____ (1975). *Memoirs of a survivor*. New York: Bantam.

37. Moore, C.L. (1940). *Fruit of knowledge*. Published in The Fantasy Hall of Fame, Harper & Row in 1998.

38. Morrison, T. (1982). *Sula*. London: Triad.

39. Shelley, M. (1965). *Frankenstein, or the modern Prometheus*. New York.

40. Shreiner, O. (1883). *The story of an African farm*. London: Chapman and Hall

41. Wharton, E. (1985). *The custom of the country*. New York: The Library of America.

42. Woolf, V. (1925). *Mrs Dalloway*. New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1953.

43. _____ (1953). *Mrs Dalloway*. Orlando: Harcourt.

Criticism:

1. Allen, G. (2000). *Intertextuality: The new critical idiom.* New York: Routledge.Authors.

2. Allen, R. (Ed.). (1997). *Yeats. W.B. selected plays*. Cave, Harmondsworth: Penguin Books.

3. Ashton, R. (1990). *The mill on the floss: A Natural history*. Boston: Twayne's Master Work Studies.

4. Barthes, R. (1975). *S/Z*. (R. Miller, Trans.), London: Jonathan Cape.

5. _____ (1977). *The death of the author: In image, music, text*. In S. Heath (Ed., & Trans.), New York: Hill and Wang.

6. Beaty, J. (2002). *The Norton introduction of literature*. (8th edition). W.W. Norton & Company. Contemporary Criticism. London: Edward Arnold.

7. Bloom, H. (Ed.). (1974). *Selected writings of Walter Pater*. New York: Columbia University Press.

8. Booth, W. (1961). Objectivity in fiction. In D. Lodge, (Ed.), *20th Century Literary Criticism* (pp. 565-581). London: Longman, 1996.

9. Brooks, P. (1984). *Reading for the plot: Design and intention in narrative*. Cambridge, MA, and London: Harvard University Press.

10. Chambers, R. (1984). *Story and situation: narrative seduction and the power of fiction.* Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

11. Chikwenye, O. O. (1988). Women and Nigerian literature. In Y. Ogunbiyi, (Ed.), *Perspectives on Nigerian literature* (pp. 60-67). Lagos: Guardian Books. 1988: 60-67.)

12. Chung, L. (1990). Sense and sensibility in the works of women poets in Taiwan. In H. Goldblatt (Ed.), *Worlds apart: Recent Chinese writing and audiences* (pp. 78-107). Armonk, New York: M.E. Shape.

13. Cooke, M. (2001). *Women claim Islam: Creating Islamic feminism through literature*. New York: Routledge.

14. Culler, J. (1981). Story and discourse in the analysis of narrative. In *The pursuit of signs: Semiotics, literature, deconstruction* (pp.169-87). London: Routledge &Kegan Paul.

15. Currie, M. (2007). *About time: Narrative, fiction and the philosophy of time*. Edinburgh University Press

16. Del, L. R. (Ed.). (1975). *The best of C.L Moore*. New York: Nelson Doubleday.

17. Drabble, M. (1983). A woman writer. In M. Wandor (Ed.), *On Gender and Writing* (pp. 69-77). London: Pandora Press.

18. Eagleton, T. (1976). *Criticism and ideology: A study in Marxist literary theory*. London: New Left Books.

19. Eliot, T. S. (1934). *After strange gods*: *A primer of modern heresy.* Faber & Faber

20. _____ (1975). *Tradition and the individual talent.* In F. Kermode (Ed.), *Selected prose of T.S. Eliot* (pp. 37-44). New York: Harcourt.

21. Esquer, G. (1925). *L'Algérie vue par les écrivains*. Paris: Simoun.

22. Faqir, F. (1994). Introduction to Hoda Barakat: The stone of laughter. In G. Nash, *The Anglo-Arab encounter* (pp. 120-125). Reading: Garnet.

23. Fielding, H. (1974). *The history of Tom Jones, a foundling*. In F. Bowers and M. C. Battestin (Eds.), Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press.

24. Forster, E. M. (1966). *Aspects of the novel.* London: Penguin Books

25. Gauch, S. (2006).*Liberating Shahrazad: feminism, postcolonialism, and Islam*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

26. Genette, G. (1980). *Narrative discourse*. (J. Lewin, Trans.), Oxford: Basil Blackwell.

27. _____ (1997). *Palimpsests: Literature in the second degree.* (C. Newman & C. Doubinsky, Trans.), Lincoln & London: University of Nebraska Press.

28._____(2007). *Discours du récit.* Paris: Seuil.

29. Gilbert, S., & **Gubar,** S. (Eds.). (1985). *Virginia Woolf: No Man's land. Binghamton*. New York: Vail- Ballou Press.

30. Ginzberg, L. (1967). The legends of the Jews. Vols. I-VI. Philadelphia: Jewish Publication Society

31. Goodman, N. (1968). *Languages of art*: *An approach to a theory of symbols*. Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill.

32. Gregory, L. (1926). *The Kiltartan history book*. London: Fisher Unwin.

33. _____ (1970). *The collected plays*. (Coole Edition, Vol. II). Gerrads Cross: Colin Smythe.

34. Hassan, W. S. (2011). *Immigrant narratives: Orientalism and cultural translation in Arab American and Arab British literature*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

35. Hawthorn, J. (2001). *Studying the novel*. London: Arnold.

36. Hemmings, F. W. J. (Ed.). (1974). *The age of realism*. London: Penguin Books

37. Jameson, F. (1981). *The political unconscious: Narrative as a socially symbolic act*. New York: Ithaca. Cornell University Press.

38. Kassem, C. (1985). *Flights of Fantasy: Arabic Short Stories*. In. M. Hashem, (Eds.) (pp. 9-18). Cairo: Elias Modern Publishing House.

39. Kernan, A. (1990). *The death of literature* .New Haven: Yale University Press

40. Keshavarz, F. (2007). *Jasmine and stars: reading more than Lolita in Tehran*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press.

41. Kohfeldt, M. L. (1985). *Lady Gregory: The woman behind the Irish renaissance*. London: André Deutsch.

42. **Kohlberg**. L. (1981). The philosophy of moral development: Moral stages and the idea of justice. Harper & Row

43. Kolodny, A. (1986). Dancing of a feminist literary criticism. In M. Pearsall (Ed.), *Women and values: Reading in recent feminist philosophy* (pp.291-309). Belmont, CA: Wadsworth.

44. Lawrence, D. H. (1919). *Reflections on the death of a porcupine and other essays.* In M. Herbert (Ed.), Cambridge: Cambridge University, 1986.

45. _____(1924). The spirit of place. In D. Lodge (Ed.), *20th century literary criticism* (pp.122-126). London: Longman, 1996.

46._____(1924). *Studies in classic American literature*. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1977.

47._____(1925). *Morality and the novel: A study of Thomas Hardy and other essays.* In B. Steel (Ed.), Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986.

48._____(1936). Why the novel matters? In D. Lodge (Ed.), *20th century literary criticism* (pp. 131-136). London: Longman, 1996.

49._____(1964). *The symbolic meaning: The collected versions of "Studies in classic American literature".* New York: Viking Press.

50. Leavis, F. R. (1955). *D.H. Lawrence, novelist*. London: Chatto and Windus.

51. Lodge, D. (1992). *The art of fiction*. London: Penguin Books

52. _____(Ed.). (1996). *20th Century literary criticism*. London: Longman.

53. Macherey, P. (1978). *Towards a theory of literary production*. . (G. Wall, Trans), London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.

54. Malpede. K. (Ed.). (1983). *Women in theatre: Comparison and hope*. New York: Drama Book Specialists.

55. Malti-Douglas, F. (1995). *Men, women, and god (s): Nawal El Saadawi and Arab feminism poetics*. Berkley: Berkley University Press.

56. Margolis, J. (Ed.). (1962). M. Black: Metaphor. In *Philosophy looks at the arts*. New York: Scribner's.

57. McClure, L. (1999). *Spoken like a woman: Speech and gender in Athenian drama.* Princeton: Princeton University Press**.**

58. Mc Dermott, E.A. (1989). *Euripides' Medea: The incarnation of disorder*. University Park: Pennsylvania State University Press.

59. Mitchell, W.J.T. (1981). *On narrative*. Chicago: Chicago University Press.

60. Moore, L. (2008). *Arab, Muslim, woman: Voice and vision in postcolonial literature and film*. London and New York: Routledge.

61. _____ (2009). *Arab, Muslim, woman: Voice and vision in postcolonial literature and film.* London: Routledge.

62. Moss, H. (1962). *The magic lantern of Marcel Proust*. New York: The Mac Milan Company.

63. Mulvey, L. (2000). Visual pleasure and narrative cinema. In E. A. Kaplan, *Feminism and film* (pp. 34-47). New York: Oxford University Press.

64. Murdoch, I. (1998). *Existentialists and mystics*. New York: Penguin Books.

65. Nash, G. (2007). *The Anglo-Arab encounter: Fiction and autobiography by Arab writers in English*. Oxford: Peter Lang.

66. **Ricoeur**, P. (1984). *Time and narrative*, (Vol. 1), (K. McLaughlin & D. Pellauer, Trans.), Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

67. Rilke, R. M. (1934). Letter of 16th of July, 1903. In *Letters to a young poet* (M.D. Herder, Trans.), New York: Norton, 1954.

68. Rosmarin, A. (1984). *The power of genre*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

69. Russ, J. (1972). What can a heroine do? Or why women can't write. In S. K. Comillon (Ed.), *Images of women in fiction: Feminist perspectives* (pp.3-20). Bowling Green, Bowling Green University Popular Press.

70. Sage, L. (1999).*The Cambridge guide to women's writing in English*. Cambridge University Press.

71. Sartre, J.P. (1947). Why write. In D. Lodge (Ed.), *20th century literary criticism.* (pp.371-386). London: Longman, 1996.

72. Shklovsky, V. (1965). Art as technique. In L.T. Lemon & M.J. Reis (Eds.), *Russian formalist criticism* (pp. 32-3). Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press.

73. Showalter, E. (1977). *A literature of their own: British women novelists from Brontë to Lessing*. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1977.

74. Smallwood, A. J. (1989). *Fielding and the woman question: The novels of Henry Fielding and the feminist debate (1700-1750)*. Hemel Hempstead: Harvester Wheat Sheaf.

75. Spacks, P. M. (1975). The *female imagination*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf.

76. Sukenick, L. (1974). Feeling and reason in Doris Lessing's fiction. In A. Pratt and L.S. Dembo, *Doris Lessing: Critical studies* (pp. 45-54). Madison: University of Wisconsin Press.

77. Todorov, T. (1966). The typology of detective fiction. In N. Lodge & D. Wood (Eds.), *Modern criticism and theory: A Reader.* London and New York: Longman, 2000.

78. Weedon, C. (2012). Tropes of Diasporic life, in the work of Nadeem Aslam. In P. A Jonathan (Ed.), *Metaphor and Diaspora in contemporary writing* (pp.20-38). Sell, Hampshire: Palgrave Macmillan.

79. Wellek, R., & Warren, A. (1985). *Theory of literature*. London: Penguin Books.

80. Welty, E. (1977). *The eye of the story*. New York: Random House.

81. Wood, M. (2005). *Literature and the taste of knowledge*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

82. Woolf, V. (1919). Modern fiction. In D. Lodge (Ed.), In *20th century literary criticism.* (pp. 86-92). London: Longman, 1996.

83. Zabel, D. M. (1985). (Ed.). *The portable Henry James.* London: Penguin Books.

84. Zeidan. J. T. (1995). The quest for national identity. In *Arab women novelists*: *The formative years and beyond* (pp. 226-227). Albany: State University of New York Press.

Books:

1. Abdo, Diya, M. (2009). How to be a successful double agent: (Dis) placement as strategy in Fadia Faqir's pillars of salt. In L. Al-Malah (Ed.), *Arab voices in Diaspora: Critical perspectives on Anglophone Arab literature* (pp.237-269). New York: Rodopi.

2. Abu-Lughod, L. (1991). Writing against culture. In R. G. Fox (Ed.), *Recapturing anthropology: Working in the present* (pp. 137-162). Santa Fe: School of American Research Press.

3. Afzal-Khan, F. (Ed). (2005). *Shattering the stereotypes: Muslim women speak out*. Northampton: MA: Olive Branch Press.

4. Ahmed, L. (1992a). The discourse of the veil. In G. Desai & S. Nair (Eds.), *Poscolonialisms: An anthology of cultural theory and criticism* 2005. (5th ed., pp. 315-338). New Jersey: Rutgers University Press.

5. Ahmed, L. (1992b). *Women and gender in Islam*. London: Yale University Press

6. Aijaz, A. (1992). Jameson's rhetoric of Otherness and the 'national allegory'. In *Theory*, *classes, nations, and literatures* (73-95). London: Verso

7. Althuser, L., & E. Balibar. (1970). *Reading capital*. (B. Brewster, Trans.), London: Left Books.

8. Althuser, L. (1971). *Lenin and philosophy*, *and other essays*. (B. Brewster, Trans.), London: New Left Books.

9. Amin, S. (1989). *Eurocentrism*. (R. Moore, Trans.), London: Zed Books.

10. Amireh, A. & **Majaj**. L. S. (Eds.). (2000). Introduction. In *Going global: The transnational reception of third world women writers*. New York : Garland.

11. Appadurai, A. (1991). Global ethnoscapes: notes and queries for a transnational anthropology. In R. G. Fox (Ed.), *Recapturing anthropology working in the present* (pp.191-210). Santa Fe: School of American Research Press

12. Ashcroft, B. (1989). *The empire writes back: Theory and practice in post-colonial literature*. London: Routledge.

13. Ashcroft, B., Griffiths, G., & Tiffin, H. (Eds.). (1986). *The empire writes back: Theory and practice in post-colonial literatures.* London: Methuen, 1989.

14. Babcock, B. (Ed.). (1984). Introduction. In *The reversible world: symbolic inversion in art and society* (pp. 13-36). Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

15. Badran, M., & Cooke, M. (Eds.). (1990).*Opening the gates: an anthology of Arab feminist writing*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

16._____(2004). *Opening the gates: an anthology of Arab feminist writing*. (Second Ed), Bloomington, Indiana University Press.

17. Bakhtin, M. (1934). Unitary language. In L. Burke, T. Crowley & A. Girvin (Eds.), *The Routledge language and cultural theory reader,* 2003. (2nd ed., pp.269-279). London: Routledge.

18. _____(1981). *The dialogic imagination.* In M. Holoquist (Ed.), Austin, Texas: University of Texas Press.

19. _____ (1984*). Problems of Dostoevsky's poetics*. C. Emerson (Ed., & Trans.), Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press.

20. _____(1986). *Speech genres and other later essays*. In C. E. Emerson & M. Holoquist (Eds.). (V. W. Mc Gee, Trans.), Austin, Texas: University of Texas Press.

21. _____(1990). *Art and answerability*. (K. Brostrom, Trans.), Austin, Texas: University of Texas Press.

22. _____ (1991). The *dialogical imagination: Four essays*. In M. Holquist & C. Emerson (Eds. & Trans.), Austin: University of Texas Press.

23._____(1993). *Towards a philosophy of the ac*t. In V. Liapunov (Ed., & Trans.), Austin, Texas: University of Texas Press.

24. _____(2002). *Speech genres and other late essays*. In C. E. Emerson & M. Holoquist (Eds., & Trans.), University of Texas Press.

25. Bartky, S. L. (1990). *Feminity and domination: Studies in the phenomenology of oppression*. New York: Routledge.

26. Basu, A. (1997). Appropriating gender. In P. Jeffrey & A. Basu (Eds.), *Women's activism and politicized religion in South Asia* (pp. 167-184). London: Routledge.

27. Baudrillard, J. (1983). *In the shadow of the silent majorities*. New York: Free Press.

28. Beauvoir, S. de. (1949). *Le deuxième sexe.* Paris : Gallimard.

29. _____ (1951).*The second sex*. In H.M. Parshley (Ed., &Trans.), New York: Bantam, 1961.

30._____(1952). *The second sex*. (H.M. Parshley Trans.), New York: Alfred Knopf.

31._____(1974). *The ethics of ambiguity*. (B. Fretchman, Trans.), New York: Citadel.

32. Belenky, M., Clinchy, B., Goldberger, N. & Tarrule, J. (1986). *Women's ways of knowing*. New York: Basic Books.

33. Bernard, J. (1981). *The female world*. New York: Free Press.

34. Bhabha, H. (1994a). *The location of culture.* New York: Routledge.

35. _____ (1994b). Introduction: Locations of culture. *In The location of culture* (pp. 1-18). London: Routledge.

36. Black, M. (1962). Metaphor. In J. Margolis (Ed), *Philosophy looks at the arts* (pp.216–35). New York*:* Scribner's

37. Borges, J. L. (1964). *Other inquisitions*. (R. L. C. Simms, Trans.), Austin: University of Texas Press.

38. Bourdieu, P. (1982). The production and reproduction of legitimate language. In L. Burke, T. Crowley & A. Girvin (Eds.), *The Routledge language and cultural theory reader, 2003*. (2nd ed., pp.467-477). London: Routledge.

39. Bracher, M. (1993). *Lacan, discourse and social change: A psychoanalytic cultural criticism*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

40. Buber, M. (1957). *The knowledge of man: A philosophy of the interhuman*. In M. Friedman (Ed.). (M. Friedman & R. Gregor Smith Trans.). New York Harper.

41. Bulfinch, T. (2006). *The golden age of myth and legend*. Great Britain: Wordsworth Editions

42. Bulkin, E., Bruce, M & Smith, B. (Eds.). (1984). *Semite VS Semite/feminist VS feminist, in, yours in struggle: Three feminist perspectives on anti-Semitism and racism*, Brooklyn, N.Y: Long Haul Press.

43. Burke, L., Crowley, T & Girvin, A. (Eds.). (2003). *The Routledge language and cultural theory reader*. London: Routledge.

44. Butler, J. (1990a). From parody to politics. In L. Burke, T. Crowley & A. Girvin (Eds.), *The Routledge language and cultural theory reader, 2003*. (2nd ed., pp.174-179). London: Routledge.

45. _____ (1990b). *Gender trouble: feminism and the subversion of identity*. New York: Routledge.

46. Cahoone, L. (1996). *From modernism to postmodernism: An anthology.* Cambridge, Mass: Blackwell.

47. Cameron, D. (1995). Naming of parts. In L. Burke, T. Crowley & A. Girvin (Eds.), *The Routledge language and cultural theory reader, 2003*. (2nd ed., pp. 205-216). London: Routledge.

48. Cantor, A. (1983). The Lilith question. In S. Heschel (Ed.), *On being a Jewish feminist: A reader* (pp. 40-50). New York: Schocken Books.

49. Castells, M. (1998). *End of millennium*. Oxford: Blackwell.

50. Chambers, C. (2011). *British Muslim fictions: Interviews with contemporary writers*. Basing Stroke: Palgrave Macmillan.

51.Charnay, J. P. (1980). *Les contre-orients, ou comment penser l'autre selon soi*. Paris: Sinbad.

52. Chaudhuri, N., & Strobel, M. (Eds.). (1992). *Western women and imperialism: Complicity and resistance*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

53. Chodorow, N. (1978). *The reproduction of mothering*. Berkley: university of California Press

54. _____ (1979). Mothering, male dominance and capitalism .In Z. Einstein (Ed.), *Capitalist patriarchy and the case for socialist feminism* (pp. 83-106). New York: Monthly Review Press.

55. Cixous, H. (1975). The laugh of the medusa. In L. Burke, T. Crowley & A. Girvin (Eds.), *The Routledge language and cultural theory reader, 2003*. (2nd ed., pp.161-166). London: Routledge.

56. _____ (1986). The laugh of the medusa. In E. Marks & I. de Courtivron (Eds.), *New French feminisms: An anthology* (pp. 245-64) (K. & P. Cohen, Trans.) New York: Harvester.

57. Cixous, H., & Clément, C. (1986). *The newly born woman*. (B. Wing, Trans.), Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

58. Clifford, J. (1986). Partial truths. In J. Clifford & G. Marcus (Eds.), *Writing culture: The poetics and politics of ethnography* (pp. 1-26). Berkeley: University of California Press.

59. _____(1988). *The predicament of culture: Twentieth century ethnography, literature, and art.* Cambridge and London: Harvard University Press.

60. _____ (1992). Travelling cultures. In L. Grossberg, G. Nelson & P. Treichler (Ed.), *Cultural studies* (pp.96-116). London: Routledge.

61. Coolidge, M. R. (1912). *Why women are so?* New York: Holt.

62. Davis, P. (1995). *About time: Einstein's unfinished revolution*, Harmondsworth: Penguin.

63. Derrida, J. (1978). *Spurs: Nietzsche's Styles*. (B. Harlow, Trans.) Chicago: Chicago University Press.

64. _____ (1981). Deconstruction and the Other. In Richard Kearney (Ed.), *States of mind: dialogues with contemporary continental thinkers* (pp. 138–142). Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1995.

65. Desai, G, & Nair, S. (Eds.). (2005). *Poscolonialisms: An anthology of cultural theory and criticism.* New Jersey: Rutgers University Press.

66. Dhaouadi, M. (2002) *Globalization of the Other underdevelopment: Third world cultural identities.* Kuala Lumpur: A.S. Noordeen.

67. Dinnerstein, D. (1977). *The mermaid and the Minotaur: Sexual arrangements and human malaise*. New York: Harper and Row.

68. Dretske, F. (1994). *Introspection: Proceedings of the Aristotelian society*. London: Penguin Books.

69. Durkheim, E. (1912). *The elementary focus of religious life*. (K. E. Fields, Trans.), New York: Free Press.1995

70. Evans, G. (1982). *The varieties of reference.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.

71. Fanon, F. (1965). *Algeria unveiled*: *A dying colonialism.* New York: Grove Press.

72. _____ (1967). *Black skin white masks*. (C. L. Markmann, Trans.), New York: Grove Press.

73. Feder, E. K. (1983). Womb envy as an explanatory concept. In J. Trebilcot (Ed.), *Mothering: Essays in feminism theory* (pp, 94-129), New Jersey: Littlefield & Adams.

74. Foucault, M. (1970a). The discourse of language. In L. Burke, T. Crowley & A. Girvin (Eds.), *The Routledge language and cultural theory reader, 2003*. (2nd ed., pp. 231-240).London: Routledge.

75. _____ (1970b). *The order of things*. London: Tavistock.

76._____(1977). *What is an author? In language, counter-memory, practice: Selected essays and interviews*. In D. F. Bouchard (Ed.). (D. F. Bouchard & S. Simon, Trans.), Ithaca: Cornel University Press.

77._____(1978). *A history of sexuality*. New York: Vintage Books

78._____(1981). The order of discourse. In R. Young (Ed.), *Untying the text* (pp. 48-78). Boston: Routledge.

79. _____ (1984). What is an author? In P. Rainbow (Ed.), *The Foucault reader* (pp.101-120). New York: Pantheon.

80. Freud, S. (1963). The uncanny. In P. Rieff (Ed.), *Studies in parapsychology* (pp. 19. 60) (Alix Strachey, Trans.), New York: Collier Books.

81. Friedman, M. (1987). Beyond caring: The demoralization of gender. In M. Hanen & K. Nielsen (Eds.), *Science, morality and feminist theory* (pp. 87-110), Calgary: University of Calgary Press.

82. Fuss, D. (1989). *Essentially speaking: Feminism, nature and difference*. Routledge: London.

83. Gadon, E. (1989). *The once and future goddess: An image for our time*. San Francisco: Harper and Row.

84. Gal, S. (1992). Language, gender and power: An anthropological view. In K. Hall, M. Bucholtz, & B. Moonwomon (Eds.), *Locating power: Proceedings of the second Berkley woman and language conference*, (pp. 153-161). Berkley, California: Berkley Women and Language Group.

85. Geertz, C. (1964/1973). Ideology as a cultural system. In *The interpretation of cultures*. New York: Basic Books.

86. _____ (1984). From the native's point of view: On the nature of anthropological Understanding. In R. A. Shweder & R. Le Vine (Eds.), *Culture theory: Essays on mind, self and emotion*, (pp. 257-275). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

87. Geesey, P. (2000). Identity and community in autobiographies of Algerian women in France.In A. Amireh & L. S. Majaj (Eds.), *Going global: the transnational reception of third world women writers* (pp.173-205). New York, Garland.

88. Ghazoul, F. J. (2000). The hybrid literary text: Arab creative authors writing in foreign languages. Cairo, Egypt: American University in Cairo.

89. Gilligan, C. (1982). *In a different Voice*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

90. Gilman, S. (1985). *Difference and pathology: Stereotypes of sexuality, race and madness*. Ithaca: Cornell University Press.

91. Gilroy, P. (2000). The tyrannies of unanimism. In G. Desai & S. Nair (Eds.), *Poscolonialisms: An anthology of cultural theory and criticism,* 2005 (5th ed., pp. 220-247). New Jersey: Rutgers University Press.

92. Gimbutas, M. (1982). *The goddess and gods of old Europe 6500-3500 BCE: Myth and cult images*. Berkley: University of California Press.

93. Goldwag, A. (2007). Isms and ologies. Difficult doctrines you've always pretended to understand. London: Quercus.

94. Goodwin, J. (1995). *Price of honor: Muslim women lift the veil of silence on the Islamic world*. New York: Plume.

95. Gordon, C, et al. (Ed.). (1972-1977). *Michel Foucault, power /knowledge: Selected interviews and other writings* (pp. 81, 98) (C. Gordon, Trans.) New York: Pantheon Books, 1972.

96. Gramsci, A. (1929). Normative grammar. In L. Burke, T. Crowley & A. Girvin (Eds.), *The Routledge language and cultural theory reader, 2003*. (2nd ed., pp. 280-284). London: Routledge.

97. _____(1968). *The modern prince and other writings*. (L. Marks, Trans.), New York: International Publishers.

98. Gumperz, J.J., & Cook- Gumperz, J . (1982). *Language and social identity*. New York, Cambridge University Press.

99. Hall, S. (1999). Thinking the Diaspora: Home thoughts from abroad. In G. Desai & S. Nair (Eds.), *Poscolonialisms: An anthology of cultural theory and criticism,* 2005 (5th ed., pp. 543-560), New Jersey: Rutgers University Press.

100. Hansen. Birger, P**.** (1993). Hannah Arendt: Politics, history and citizenship. Stanford University Press.

101. Haraway, D. (1991). *Simians, cyborgs and women: The reinvention of nature*. Free Association Books: London.

102. Harris, M. (1991). *Teaching and religious imagination*: *An essay in the theology of teaching.* San Francisco : Harper.

103. Hassard, J., & M. Parker. (Eds.). (1993). *Postmodernism and organizations.* London: Sage.

104. Hegel, G. W. (1770-1831). *The philosophy of history.* In J. Sibree (Ed., & Trans.), New York: Dover, 1956.

105. _____ (1807). *The phenomenology of mind*. (J.B. Bailie Trans.), New York: Harper and Row, 1967.

106. Herder, J. G. (1800). *Outlines of the philosophy of the history of Man*. (T. Churchill, Trans.) London: Johnson.

107. Hourani, A. (1979). *The emergence of the Middle East*. Macmillan.

108. Hunter, P. (1993). Women's power—women's passion: And god said, 'that's good'. In E. M. Townes (Ed.), *A troubling in my soul: Womanist perspectives on evil and suffering*, (pp. 189-90). Mary Knoll, New York: Obris.

109. Hutardo, A. (1989). Reflections on white feminism: A perspective from a woman of color. In S. Chan (Ed.), *Social and gender boundaries in the United States*, (pp. 155-186), Lewiston, and New York: The Edwin Mellen Press.

110. Irigary, L. (1977). When our lips speak together. In L. Burke, T. Crowley & A. Girvin (Eds.), *The Routledge language and cultural theory reader, 2003*. (2nd ed., pp. 184-188).London: Routledge.

111. _____(1985). *Speculum of the other woman*. (G. C. Gill, Trans.), Ithaca. New York: Cornell University Press.

112. _____ (1993). *Je, tu, nous: Toward a culture of difference*. New York: Routledge.

113. James, W. (1890). *The principles of psychology*. New York: H. Holt & company.

114. _____ (1967). *The writings of William James: A Comprehensive edition*. In J. J. Mc Dermott (Ed.) New York: Random.

115. Jameson, F. (1992). Postmodernism and consumer Society. In P. Brooker (Ed.), *Modernism/Postmodernism*, (pp. 163-79). London and New York: Longman,

116. Jan, Mohamed. A. R. (1983). *Manichean aesthetics: The politics of literature in colonial Africa*. Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press.

117. _____ (1985). The economy of Manichean allegory: The function of racial difference in colonialist literature. In H. Louis, Jr., (Ed.), *Race writing and difference*. Chicago: Chicago University Press.

118. Johansen, B. (1990). Politics and scholarship: The development of Islamic studies in the Federal Republic of Germany. In T. Ismael (Ed.), *Middle East studies: International perspectives on the state of the art*, (pp.71-130). New York: Praeger

119. Jones, V. (Ed.). (1990). *Women in the eighteenth century: Constructions of femininity*. London: Routledge.

120. Jules, M. (1939). *Satanism and witchcraft*. New York: Citadel Press.

121. Kachru, B. B. (1986). The alchemy of English. In L. Burke, T. Crowley & A. Girvin (Eds.), *The Routledge language and cultural theory reader, 2003*. (2nd ed., pp. 317-329). London: Routledge.

122. Kahf, M. (1999).*Western representations of the Muslim woman: from termagant to odalisque*. Austin: University of Texas Press.

123. _____ (2000). Packaging 'Huda': Sh'arawi's memoirs in the United States reception environment. In A. Amireh & L. S. Majaj (Eds.), *Going global: the transnational reception of third world women writers* (pp. 148–72). New York: Garland.

124. Kandioti, D. (1994). Identity and its discontents: Women and the nation. In P. Williams & L. Christmas (Eds.), *Colonial discourse and postcolonial theory* (pp. 376-391). London: Pearson Education.

125. Karlsen, C. F. (1987). *The devil in the shape of a woman*. New York: W.W. Norton and Company.

126. Kearney, R. (Ed.). (1984). *Emmanuel Levinas*. *Dialogues with continental thinkers: The phenomenological heritage.* Manchester: Manchester University Press.

127. _____(Ed.).(1984). *Jacques Derrida*, *Dialogues with continental thinkers: The phenomenological heritage*. Manchester: Manchester University Press.

128. _____(1998). *The wake of the imagination: Toward a postmodern culture.* Minneapolis: Minnesota University Press.

129. Kennedy, L. (1996). *Colonialism, religion and nationalism in Ireland*. Belfast: The Queen's University of Belfast.

130. Kleinbaum*,* R. (1977). Women in the age of light.. In R. Bridenthal & C. Koonz (Eds.), *Becoming visible: Women in European history* (pp.217- 235). Boston.

131. Kohut, H. (1978) .Introspection, empathy and psychoanalysis. *In the search for the self*, 1. (pp. 205-32).New York: International University Press.

133. Koltuv, B. B. (1986). *The book of Lilith*. York Beach, ME: Nicholas-Hays.

134. Koritz, A. (1995). *Gendering bodies performing art: Dance and literature in early twentieth century British culture.* Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.

135. Kristeva, J. (1986). *The Kristeva reader*. In T. Moi (Ed.), New York: Columbia University Press.

136. Kumari, J. (1995). *The white woman's other burden*. London: Routledge.

137. Lacan, J. (1977). *Ecrits*. (A. Sheridan, Trans.), London: Tavistock

138. _____ (1978). *The four fundamental concepts of psycho-analysis*. In J. A. Miller, (Ed.). (A. Sheridan, Trans.), New York: Norton.

139. Laing. R. D., Phillipson, H & Lee, A. R. (1966). *Interpersonal perception*. London: Harmondsworth.

140. Lakoff, G., & Johnson, M. (1980). *Metaphor we live by*. Chicago University Press.

141. Lakoff, R. (1975). Talking like a lady. In L. Burke, T. Crowley & A. Girvin (Eds.), *The Routledge language and cultural theory reader, 2003*. (2nd ed., pp. 154-160. London: Routledge.

142. Latifa. (2002). *My forbidden face: growing up under the Taliban: a young woman's story*. Paris: Virago Press.

143. Lawrence, D.H. (1921) .*Psychoanalysis and the unconscious*. New York: Viking Press.

144. Lazreg, M. (1994). *The eloquence of silence: Algerian women in question*. New York: Routledge.

145. Lehtonen. M. (2000). *Cultural analysis of texts*. (Aija- Leena. Ahonen & K. Clark, Trans.), News Bury Park, CA: Sage.

146. Levinas, E. (1987). *Time and the Other*. (R. A. Cohen, Trans.), Pittsburg, PA: Duquesne University press.

147. _____(1996). Martin Buber and the theory of knowledge. In *Proper names*, (pp. 66-74). (M. B. Smith, Trans.), Stanford: Stanford University Press.

148. Levi-Strauss, C. (1981). *The naked man: Introduction to a science of mythology, 4*. J., & and D. Weightman, Trans.), New York: Harper and Row.

149. Lewis, M. (1992). Interrupting patriarchy: Politics, resistance and transformation in the feminist classroom. In C. Luke & J. Gore (Eds.), *Feminisms and critical pedagogy* (pp. 167-191). New York: Routledge.

150. Lewis, R. (1996). *Gendering orientalism: Race, feminity and representation*. London Routledge.

151. Locke, J. (1690). *An essay concerning human understanding*. In P. H. Nidditch (Ed.), Oxford: Clarendon, 2008.

152. Loomba, A. (1998). *Colonialism/postcolonialism*. In J. Drakakis (Ed.), New Critical Idiom Series, London: Routledge.

153. Lloyd, D. (1996). Outside history: Irish new histories and the 'subalternity effect'. In G. Desai & S. Nair (Eds.), *Poscolonialisms: An anthology of cultural theory and criticism,* 2005 (5th ed., pp. 410-426). New Jersey: Rutgers University Press.

154. Lucas, J. R. (1989) *The future: An essay on god, temporality and truth*.Oxford: Basil Blackwell.

155. Lutfi, A. A. M. (2007). *A history of Egypt from the Arab conquest to the present.* (Second Ed.), New York: Cambridge University Press.

156. Lyotard, J. F. 1984. *The postmodern conditions: A report on knowledge*. (G. Bennington &B. Massumi, Trans.), Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

157. Malik, K. (1996). *The meaning of race: Race, history and culture in western society*. New York University Press.

158. Mannoni, O. (1956). The threat of abandonment. In G. Desai & S. Nair (Eds.), *Poscolonialisms: An anthology of cultural theory and criticism,* 2005 (5th ed., pp. 253-256). New Jersey: Rutgers University Press.

159. Mansfield, P. (1972). *The British in Egypt*. United States. Holt, Rinehart and Winston

160. McClintock, A. (1995). No longer in a future haven: Nationalism, gender and race. In *Imperial leather: Race, gender, and sexuality in the colonial contest* (65-88). New York and London: Routledge.

161. Menand, L. (2001). *The metaphysical club: A story of ideas in America*. New York: Farrar.

162. Miller, J. H. (2001). *Others*. Princeton, NJ, & Oxford: Princeton University Press.

163. Mills, S. (1991). *Discourses of difference: an analysis of women's travel writing and colonialism*. London: Routledge.

164. Minh-ha, Trinh *T*. (1989). Difference*:* A Special Third World Women Issue. In Trinh T. Minh-ha, (Ed.), *Woman*, *native*, *other*: *Writing postcoloniality and feminism*. Bloomington*:* Indiana University Press

165. Mohanty, C, T. (1991). Cartographies of struggle: Third world women and the politics of feminism. In C. Mohanty, A. Russo & Torres, L. (Eds.), *Third world women and the politics of feminism*. Indiana University Press, Bloomington.

166. Moore-Gilbert, B. (1997). *Postcolonial theory contexts, practices, politics*. Verso: London and New York.

167. Moore, H. (1994). *A passion for difference: Essays in anthropology and gender*. Cambridge: Polity.

168. Muhsin, Z. (1994). *Sold: One woman's true account of modern slavery*. London : Warner Books.

169. Natanson, M. (1974). *Phenomenology, role, and reason: Essays on the coherence and deformation of social reality*. Springfield, Ill: Thomas.

170. Newman, J. H. (1996). *The idea of the university*. In F. M. Turner (Ed.), New Haven: Yale University Press.

171. Omi, M, & Winant, H. (1994). *Racial formation in The United States: From the 1960's to the 1990's*. New York: Routledge.

172. Ong, A. (1988). "Colonialism and modernity: Feminist representations of Women in non- western societies". Inscriptions 3/4, pp. 79-93.

173. O'Neill, M. A. (1993). The mystery of being human together. In C. M. LaCugna (Ed.), *Freeing theology: The essentials of theology in feminist perspective* (141-151). San Francisco: Harper San Francisco.

174. Oyewumi, O. (1997). Colonising bodies and minds. In G. Desai & S. Nair (Eds.), *Poscolonialisms: An anthology of cultural theory and criticism,* 2005(5th ed., pp.339-361). New Jersey: Rutgers University Press.

175. Panayiotis J, V. (1969). *The modern history of Egypt*. University of Michigan: Praeger

176. Poole, S. (1842). *The English woman in Egypt: Letters from Cairo written during a residence therein 1842*, 3, &4, with E. W. Lane, Esq.3 vols. 1844-6 London C. Cox, 1851.

177. Porter, D. (1994). Orientalism and its problems. In P. Williams & L. Chrisman, *Colonial discourse and post-colonial theory*. New York: Columbia University Press.

178. Pratt, A. V. (1985). Spinning among fields: Jung, Frye, Levi-Strauss. In E. Lauter & C. S. Rupprecht, (Eds.), *Feminist archetypal theory: Interdisciplinary re-visions of Jungian thought*. Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press.

179. Ramusack ,B. (1990). Cultural missionaries, maternal imperialists, feminist allies: British women activists in India, 1865, 1945. In *Women's studies international forum 13*. (pp. 315-316). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

180. Rasack, S. (2008). *Casting out: The eviction of Muslims from western law and politics*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

181. Reis, E. (1990). *Damned women: Sinners and witches in puritan New England*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.

182. Ricoeur, P. (1970). *Freud and Philosophy: An Essay on Interpretation*. (D. Savage, Trans,), New Haven: Yale University Press.

183. _____ (1981). The creativity of language. In L. Burke, T. Crowley & A. Girvin (Eds.), *The Routledge language and cultural theory reader, 2003*. (2nd ed., pp. 340-344). London: Routledge

184. _____(1992). *Oneself as another*. (K. Blamey, Trans.), Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

185. Riley, D. (1988). Does a sex have a history? In L. Burke, T. Crowley & A. Girvin (Eds.), *The Routledge language and cultural theory reader, 2003*. (2nd ed., pp.167-173). London: Routledge.

186. Robinson, J. (1994). *Wayward women: A guide to women travelers*. Oxford: OUP.

187. Ruether, R. R. (1983). *Sexism and god-talk*. Boston: Beacon Press

188. Said, E. (1978). *Orientalism*. London: Peregrine Books.

189._____ (1990).Yeats and decolonization: In *Nationalism, colonialism, and literature* (pp. 69-95). Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

190._____(1995). *Orientalism.* London: Penguin Books.

191._____(2000). *Reflections on exile*. Harvard University Press.

192._____(2004). *Humanism and democratic criticism*. New York: Palgrave Mc Milan

193._____(2007). *Culture and imperialism*. London: Vintage Books.

194. Sartre, J.P. (1974). *The purpose of writing: Between existentialism and Marxism*. (J. Mathews, Trans.) New York: Pantheon University Press.

195. _____(1989). *Being and nothingness*. London and New York: Routledge.

196. Sarup, M. (1992). *Jacques Lacan*. Hemel Hempstead: Harvester Wheatsheaf.

197. Sasson, J. (2001). *Princess: A true story of life behind the veil in Saudi Arabia.* Atlanta : Windsor-Brooke Books.

198. Saville-Troike, M. (2003). *The ethnography of communication: An introduction.* Oxford: Basil Blackwell.

199. Schutz, A. (1944). The stranger: An essay in social psychology. In A. Brodersen (Ed.), *Alfred Schutz: Studies in social theory, collected papers* (II, pp. 91-106). The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1976

200. _____ (1970). *On phenomenology and social relations*. (1st ed). In H.R. Wagner (Ed.), Chicago: Chicago University Press.

201. Schulz, M. R. (1975). The semantic derogation of women. In L. Burke, T. Crowley & A. Girvin (Eds.), *The Routledge language and cultural theory reader, 2003*. (2nd ed., pp. 82-90). London: Routledge.

202. Sequoya, J. (1993). How is an Indian? A contest of stories. In G. Desai & S. Nair (Eds.), *Poscolonialisms: An anthology of cultural theory and criticism,* 2005(5th ed., pp. 290-310). New Jersey: Rutgers University Press.

203. Simmel, G. (1950). (1st ed.). *The stranger: The sociology of Georg Simmel.* In K. H. Wolff (Ed.), Glencoe, Illinois：Free Press.

204. Smethurst, P. (2000). *The postmodern chronotope*. Amsterdam & Atlanta: Rodopi.

205. Spender, D. (1980) . Language and reality: Who made the world? In L. Burke, T. Crowley & A. Girvin (Eds.), *The Routledge language and cultural theory reader, 2003*. (2nd ed., pp. 145-152). London: Routledge.

206. Spillers, H, J. (1984). Interstices: A small drama of words. In L. Burke, T. Crowley & A. Girvin (Eds.), *The Routledge language and cultural theory reader, 2003*. (2nd ed., pp. 297-204). London: Routledge.

207. Spivak, G. (1988). *In other worlds: Essays in cultural politics*. New York: Routledge.

208. _____ (1990). *The post-colonial critic: Interview, strategies, and dialogues*. Routledge: New York.

209. Souad. (2005). *Burned alive: The survivor of an "honor killing" speaks*. New York: Warner Books.

210. Spelman. E. (1990). *Inessential woman: Problems of exclusion in feminist thought*. London: Woman's Press.

211. Stasiulis, D., & Yuval-David, N. (Eds.). (1992). *Unsettling settler societies: Articulations of gender, race, ethnicity and class*. London: Thousand Oaks, New Delhi: Sage.

212. Suttie, I. (1935). *The origins of love and hate*. London: Harmondsworth.

213. Swift, Y. B. (2002).*Behind the burqa: Our life in Afghanistan and how we escaped to freedom*. New Jersey: Wiley.

214. Tannen, D. (1992). *You just don't understand women and men in conversation*. New York: Random House.

215. Thompson, J. (2011). *A history of modern Egypt from earliest times to the present*. New York: Knopf Doubleday.

216. Todorov, T. (1982). *La conquête de l'Amérique. La question de l'autr*e. Paris: Seuil.

217. _____(1984). *Mikhail Bakhtin: The dialogic principle.* (W. Godzich, Trans.), Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

218. Urry, J. (2000). *Sociology beyond societies*. London: Routledge.

219. Van der Broek, R. (1972). *The myth of the phoenix*. (I. Seeger, Trans.). EJ Leiden: Brill

220. Van-Pelt, T. (2000). *The other side of desire: Lacan's theory of the register*. New York: State University of New York Press.

221. Viswanathan, G. (1989). *Masks of conquest*. New York: Columbia University.

222. Vygotsky, L. S. (1987). *Thinking and speech*. In R. W. Rieber and A.S. Carton (Eds.), The Collected Works of L.S Vygostky. 1: Problems of General Psychology. (N. Minick, Trans.), New York: Plenum.

223. Walcott, D. (1974). The Caribbean culture. In G. Desai & S. Nair (Eds.), *Poscolonialisms: An anthology of cultural theory and criticism,* 2005(5th ed., pp. 257-264). New Jersey: Rutgers University Press.

224. Wa Thiong' O, N. (1997).*Writers in politics*. Oxford. James Carey

225. Weber, L. (2001). *Understanding race, class, gender and sexuality: A conceptual framework.* New York: McGraw-Hill.

226. Wertsch, J. V. 1980. The significance of dialogue in Vygotsky's account of social, egocentric, and inner speech. In *Contemporary educational psychology*, 5(pp. 150–162). Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

227. Whitlock, G. (2007). Soft weapons: autobiography in transit. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

228. Young, R. (1990). *White mythologies: Writing history and the west.* London: Routledge.

229. Zweig, C., & Abrams, J. (1991). *Meeting the shadow.* Los Angeles*:* J.P. Tarcher.

Periodicals:

1. Abdel-Hakim, S.S. (2002). Writing the self*,* scribing Egyptian women. *Alif: Journal of Comparative Poetics*, *22* (20), 107-126.

2. Abdel-Jaoued, H. (1993). Isabelle Eberhardt: Portrait of the artist as a young nomad. post/colonial conditions: Exiles, migration, and nomadisms. *Yale French Studies, 2* (83), 93-177.

3. Acker, J. (992). Gendered institutions: From sex roles to gendered institutions. *Contemporary Sociology, 21*, (5), 565-569.

4. Adler, A. (1935). Fundamental views of individual psychology. *International Journal of Individual Psychology, 1,* 5-8.

5. Aguayo, M. (2009). Representations of Muslim bodies in the kingdom: Deconstructing discourses in Hollywood. *Global Media Journal, 2* (2) 41-56.

6. Ahmad, A. (1987). Jameson's Rhetoric of Otherness and the national allegory. *Social Text, 1* (17), 3-25.

7. Ahmed, L. (1982). Western ethnocentricism and perceptions of the harem. *Feminits Studies,* 8 (1), 512-534

8. Allen, R. (1995). Arabic fiction and the quest for freedom: The quest for freedom in modern Arabic literature. *Journal of Arabic Literature*, *26* (1/2), 37-49.

9. Amiran, M. R. (1978). What women's literature? *College English, 39*, 6.

10. Amireh, A. (2000). Framing Nawal El Saadawi: Arab feminism in a transnational world. *Signs, 26*, (1) 215-249.

11. Andersen, M.L. (2005). Thinking about women: A quarter century's view. *Gender and Society, 19* (4), 437-455.

12. Badawi. M.M. (1993). Perennial themes in modern Arabic literature. *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies, 20* (1), 3-19.

13. Balkun, M. Mc Aleer. (2002). Phillis Wheatley's construction of Otherness and the rhetoric of performed ideology. *African American Review, 36* (1), 121-135.

14. Bardolph, J. (1995). Identité et frontières d'un domaine de recherche: l'exemple de la littérature d'Afrique anglophone (Tracing the borders of a literary field: The case of African literature in English. *Cahiers d'Etudes Africaines, 35*. Cahier 140, Encrages. 725-738.

15. Bhabha, H. (1984). The ambivalence of colonial discourse. *Discipleship, 28:* A Special Issue, (1) on Psychoanalysis, 125-133.

16. Brooks, L. (1999, August 2). Lifting the veil: Interview with Ahdaf Soueif. *The Guardian.*

17. Bronwer, J. (1995). Repositioning: Centre and margin in Julie Dashes' daughters of the dust. *African American Review, 29* (1), 5-16.

18. Burston. D. (1986). The cognitive and dynamic unconscious: A critical and historical perspective. *Contemporary Psychoanalysis, 22* (1), 133-57.

19. _____(1996). Conflict and sociability in Hegel, Freud, and their followers: Tzvetan Todorov's living alone together. *New Literary History, 27* (1), 73-82.

20. Chahine, Y., & Massad, J. (1999). Art and politics in the cinema of Youssef Chahine. *Journal of Palestine Studies, 28* (2), 77-93.

21. Cherif, E. S. (2003). Arab American literature: Gendered memory in Abinader and Abu- Jaber. *MELLUS, 28* (4), 207-228.

22. Cohen, T. (1978). Metaphor and the cultivation of intimacy. *Critical Inquiry, 5* (1), 3-12

23. Connolly, W. E. (1985). Taylor, Foucault, and Otherness. *Political Theory, 13* (3), 365-376.

24. Cooey, P. M. (1990). Emptiness, Otherness, and identity: A feminist perspective. *Journal of Feminist studies in Religion, 6* (2), 7-23.

25. Cook, M. (2000). Women, religion, and post colonial Arab world. *Cultural Critique, 45,*150-184.

26. Cutting-Gray, J. (1993). Hanna Arendt, feminism, and the politics of alterity, what will we lose if we win. *Hypathia, 8* (1), 35-54.

27. Darraj, S. M. **(**2003). Narrating England and Egypt: The hybrid fiction of Ahdaf Soueif. *Studies in the Humanities*, *30* (1), 91-107.

28. Dean, T. (1997). Two kinds of Otherness and their consequences. *Critical inquiry, 23* (4), 910-920.

29. Delehanty. A. T. (2001). Virtue, vice and Bakhtin: Can literature represent ethics better than philosophy? *Pacific Coast Philosophy, 36,* 32-47.

30. De Man, P. (1979).Autobiography as defacement. *MLN*, *94* (5), 919-930.

31. Dillon, M. (1999). Catholic identity: balancing reason, faith and power. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

32. Doody, M. A. (2000). Is literature dead? *MPLA, 115*(5), 1209-1221.

33. Dumamoto, C. D. (2002). Bahktin's Others and writing as witness to the eloquent 'I'. *College Composition and Communication, 54* (1), 66-87.

34. Eisenstein, Z. (2002). Feminism in the aftermath of September 11. *Social Text, 72, 20* (3), 79-99.

35. El-Enany. R. (2010, April 9). The map of love: A map without borders or barriers and with no crossing points. *Al-Shorouk*, (433).

36. El-Feky, M. (2012). Discovering the self and the Other: Narrative in Ahdaf Soueif's the map of love. *International Review of Social Sciences and Humanities*, 3 (1), 141-169.

37. Feder, E.K., & Lehrer, A. (1981). Semantic fields and the structure of metaphor. *Studies in Language*, *5* (1), 31-64.

38. Ferguson, A. (1994). Twenty years of feminist philosophy. *Hypathia, 9*(3), 197-215.

39. Ferguson, F. (1996). A reply to Todorov's living alone together. *New Literary History, 27* (1), 25-34.

40. Fletcher, J. (2003). Women and oaths in Euripides. *Theatre Journal, 55* (1), 29-44.

41. Frank, K. (1982). The death of the slave girl: African womanhood in the novels of Buchi Emecheta. *World Literature Written in English, 21* (1), 476-497.

42. Friedman, S. S. (1996). Uncommon readings seeking the geopolitical Woolf.

South Carolina Review, 29 (1), 24-44.

43. Galbin, C. (1997). In quest of a unified self: Race, hybridity, and identity in Elizabeth Langgaser's Der gan. *New German Critique*, *70* Special issue on Germans and Jews, 141-160.

44. Gallop, J. (1987). Reading the mother tongue: Psychoanalytic feminist criticism. *Critical Inquiry, 13* (2), 314-29.

45. Ghazoul, F. J. (2000). Iraqi short fiction: The unhomely at home and abroad. *Journal of Arabic Literature*, *35* (1), 1-24

46. Goetz, A. M. (1992). Gender and administration. *IDS Bulletin, 23* (1, 4) 67–72

47. Golley, N. A. (2004). Is feminism relevant to Arab women? *Third World Quarterly, 25* (3), 521-336

48. Greene, G. (1991). Feminist fiction and the uses of memory. *Signs, 16* (2), 290-321.

49. Gugelberger, G. M. (1994). (Eds). M. Groden and M. Kreishwirth. "Postcolonial cultural studies." In The Johns Hopkins Guide to literary theory and criticism. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press.

50. Gurevitch, *Z. D.* (1988). The other side of dialogue: On making strange the Other and the experience of Otherness. *AJS, 93* (5), 1179-1199

51. Haim, S. G. (1981). The situation of the Arab woman in the mirror of literature. *Middle Eastern Studies, 17* (4), 510-530.

52. Hamilton, M. B. (1987). The elements of the concept of ideology. *Political Studies, 35*, 18-38.

53. Hassan, I. (1988). Quest for the subject: The self in literature. *Contemporary Literature, 29* (3), 420-437.

54. Hassan, W. S. (2002a). Postcolonial theory and modern Arabic literature: Horizons of application. *Journal of Arabic Literature, 33* (1), 45-64.

55. _____(2002b). Arab-American autobiography and the reinvention of identity: Two Egyptian negotiations. *Alif Journal of Comparative Poetics,* (22), 7-35.

56. Hatata, Sh. (2003). The self and autobiography. *PMLA, 178* (1). Special Topic: America: The idea, the literature, 123-125.

57. Heaton, M. (1946). Stereotypes and real people. *The English Journal, 35* (6), 327-332.

58. Hernadi, P. (2001). Literature and evolution. *SubStance, 30* (1/2), Special Issue, On the origin of fictions: Interdisciplinary perspectives, 55- 71.

59. Holme, F. (1845, Feb). Mrs Poole's English woman in Egypt. Review of the English woman in Egypt, by Sophia Poole. *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, (LVII), 286-297

60. Irigaray, L., & Eshter M. (2004).What Other are we talking about. *Yale French Studies,* (104), Encounters with Levinas, 67-81.

61. Isser, W. (1975).The reality of fiction: A functionalist approach to literature. *New Literary History, 7*(1), 7-38.

62. Jacoby, R. (1995). Marginal returns: The trouble with post-colonial theory. *Lingua Franca,* 28 (3), 30-37.

63. Jameson, F. (1986). Third-world literature in the era of multinational capitalism. *Social Text*, (15) 65-88

64. Kamitsuka, M. D. (2004). Toward a feminist postmodern and postcolonial interpretation of sin. *The Journal of Religion, 84* (2), 179-211.

65. Kapchan, D. A., & Turner Strong P. (1999). Theorizing the hybrid. *The Journal of American Folklore, 112* (445), 239-253.

66. Kapoor, I. (2002). Capitalism, culture, agency: Dependency versus postcolonial theory. *Third World Quarterly, 4*, 647-664.

67. Kennelly, I. (2004). The intermingling of race, class, and gender: A theoretical commencement. Unpublished Manuscript. *Department of Sociology*: George Washington University.

68. Kinglake, A. 1844. The rights of women. *Quarterly Review, 75*(22), 95-125

69. Kolodny, A. (1980). A map for rereading: Or, gender and the interpretation of literary texts. *New Literary History*, *11* (3), 451-467.

70. Kowaleski-Wallace, B. (1991). The reader as misogynist in "The custom of the **c**ountry". *Modern Language Studies*, *21* (1), 45-53.

71. Kumaraswamy, P. R. (2006). Who am I? : The identity crisis in the Middle East. *The Middle East Review of International Affairs, 10* (1), 63-73.

72. Lamont, C. E. (2001). Moving tropes: New modernist travels with Virginia Woolf. *Alif Journal of Comparative Poetics,* (21), The Lyrical Phenomenon, 161-181.

73. Lash, S., & Featherstone, M. (2001). Recognition and difference: Politics, identity, multiculture. *Theory, Culture and Society*, *18* (2-3), 1-19.

74. Lazar, K. (1992). Jump and other stories: Gordimer's leap into the 1990s: Gender and politics in her latest short fiction. *Journal of Southern African Studies, 18* (4), 783-802.

75. Lazreg, M. (1988). Feminism and difference: The perils of writing as a woman on women in Algeria. *Feminist Studies, 14* (1), 81-107.

76. Lessa. I. (2006). Discursive struggles within social welfare: Restaging teen motherhood. *British Journal of Social Work, 36*, 283-298.

77. Lewis, D. (1992). Myths of motherhood and power: The Construction of "black woman" in literature, *English in Africa*, *19* (1), 35-51

78. Lippitz, W. (2007). Foreignness and Otherness in pedagogical contexts. *Phenomenology and Practice, 1*(1), 76-96.

79. Ludescher, T. (2006). From nostalgia to critique: An overview of Arab American literature. *MELLUS, 31* (4), 93-114.

80. Luke, C. (1994). Women in the academy: The politics of speech and silence. *British Journal of Sociology of Education, 15* (2), 211-230.

81. Mac Kay, N. (1983). An interview with Tony Morrison. *Contemporary Literature, 24* (4), 413-29.

82. Makdisi, S. (1995). Postcolonial literature in a neocolonial world: Modern Arabic culture and the end of modernity. *Boundary, 22* (1), 83-115.

83. Malak, A. (2000). Arab-Muslim feminism and the narrative of hybridity : The fiction of Ahdaf Soueif *Alif journal of comparative poetics, 20*, 140-65.

84. Malak, A. (2002). Arab-Muslim feminism and the narrative of hybridity: The fiction of Ahdaf Soueif. *Alif Journal of Comparative Poetics*, 20 (Special Issue): The hybrid literary text: Arab creative authors writing in foreign languages, 140-183.

85. Marsden, D. (1911). Bondwomen. *The Freewoman*, *19* (4), n. pag.

86. Mc Closky, H., Hoffmann, P.J., & O'Hara, R. (June,1960). Issue, conflict and consensus among party leaders and followers. *American Political Sciences Review*, 406-27.

87. McClure, J. A. (1995). "Postmodern/post-secular: contemporary fiction and spirituality." Modern Fiction Studies, 41(1): 141-163.

88. Massad, J. (1999). The Politics of desire in the writings of Ahdaf Soueif's: An interview conducted by Massad with Soueif. *Journal of Palestinian Studies*, 28 (4), 74-90.

89. Mehriz, S. (2000). The map of writing: An Interview with Ahdaf Soueif. *Alif Journal of Comparative Poetics,* 20 (Special issue), the hybrid literary text: Arab creative authors writing in foreign languages, 168-185.

90. Mellor, P. A. (2004). Religion, culture and society in the "Information age"'. *Sociology of Religion, 65*(4): 357-371. doi: 10.2307/3712319

91. Miller, H. J. (1982).The interpretation of Otherness: Reviewed works, the interpretation of Otherness, *literature*, religion, and the American imagination by G. Gunn. *The Journal of Religion, 62* (3), 299-304.

92. Mills, M, A. (2001). The gender of the trick: Female tricksters and male narrators. *Asian Folklore Studies, 60* (2), 237-258.

93. Mishra, V., & Hodge, B. (2005). What was post-colonialism? *New Literary History, 36* (3), 375-402.

94. Mohanty, S.P. (1989). "Us and them: On the philosophical bases of political criticism. *Yale Journal of Criticism, 2* (2), 1-31.

95. Mohanty, T. C. (1984). Under western eyes: Feminist scholarship and colonial Discourses, *Boundary 2*, 12 (3), 61-69

96. Murray, D. W. (1993). What is the western concept of the self: On forgetting David Hume. *Ethos, 21* (1), 3-23.

97. Naipaul, V, S. (2002). Two worlds. *PMLA, 117* (3), 479-486.

98. Narain, D. D. (2005). Writing 'home': Mediating between 'the local' and 'the literary' in a selection of postcolonial women texts. *Third World Quarterly, 26* (3), Connecting Cultures, 497-508.

99. Nealon, J. T. (1997). The ethics of dialogue: Bakhtin and Levinas. *College English, 59,* (2), 129-148.

100. O'Brien,E. (2004). Because she was a girl: Gender identity and the postcolonial in James Joyce's 'Eveline' . *An Irish Quarterly Review, 93* (370), 201-215.

101. Ogunyemi, C. O. (1983). Buchi Emecheta: The shaping of a self. *Komparatistiche Hefte, 8,* 65-77.

102. Okereke, G. E. (1994). The birth song as a medium for communicating women's maternal destiny in the traditional community. *Research in African Literatures 25* (3), 19-32.

103. Orfalea, G. (2006). The Arab American novel. *MELLUS, 31* (4), 115-133.

104. Osherow, M. (2000). The dawn of a new Lilith: Revisionary mythmaking in women's science fiction. *NWSA Journal, 12* (1), 68-83.

105. Ouyang, W. C. 2003. Metamorphoses of Scheherazade in literature and film. *Bulletin of the School for Oriental and African Studies, 66* (3), 402-418.

106. Paulson, W. (1993). Literature, knowledge and cultural ecology. *SubStance, 22,* 2/3, (71/72), Special Issue, Epistemocritique, 27-37.

107. Phillips, I. (2012). Attention to the passage of time. *Philosophical Perspectives, 26, Philosophy of Mind* , 278-308.

108. Rabinowitz, P. (1987). Eccentric memories: A conversation with Maxine Hong Kingston. *Michigan Quarterly Revie*w, *26* (1).177-87

109. Radcliffe, S. A. (1994). Representing post-colonial women: Authority, difference and feminisms. *Area*, *26* (1), 25-32

110. Radhakrishnan, R. (1993). Postcoloniality and the boundaries of Identity.*16* (4), On "Post-Colonial Discourse: A Special Issue. 750-771

111. Rajab, A. (1976). Two short stories from Tunisia: M. Madaini, R. Y. Ebied., & M. J.L. Young. *Journal of Arabic Literature, 7*, 45-52.

113. Ray. R., & Korteweg, A.C. (1981).Women's movements in the third world: Identity, mobilization, and autonomy. *Annual Review of Sociology, 25*, 47-71.

114. Risman, B. J. (2004). Gender, a social structure: Theory wrestling with activism. *Gender and Society, 18* (4), 429-440. doi: 10.1177/0891243204265349.

115. Robertson, M. (1992). Voicing the feminine: constructions of the gendered subject. *Late Imperial China, 13* (1), 63-110.

116. Robinson, J., & Ross, S. (1990). Women, morality, and fiction. *Hypatia, 5*(2), Feminism and Aesthetics . 76-90.

117. Robinson, L. S. (1971). Dwelling in decencies: Radical criticism and the feminist perspective. *College English, 32* (8), 879-89. Retrieved from the ERIC database. (EJ038079).

118. Rottensteiner, F. (1984). Paul Scheerbart, fantast of "Otherness". *Science Fiction Studies, 11* (2), 109-121.

119. Rüsen, J. (2004). How to overcome ethnocentrism. *History and Theory*, *43*, 118-129

120. Said, E., & Rée, J. (1993). Peoples' rights and literature. *Alif, Journal of Comparative Poetics,* 13, 182-195.

121. Saliba, T. (2000). Arab feminism at the millennium. *Signs, 25* (4), 1087-1092.

122. Samhan, H. H. (1987). Politics and exclusion. The Arab American experience. *Journal of Palestine Studies, 16* (2), 11-28.

123. Sargent, E. M., & Watson, G. (2001). D.H. Lawrence and the dialogical principle. The strange case of Otherness. *College English, 63* (4), 409-436.

124. Schmidt, S.J., & Hauptmeier, H. (1984). The fiction is that reality exists: A constructive model of reality, fiction, and literature. *Poetics Today, 5* (2), 253-274.

125. Schutz, A. (1944). The stranger, an essay in social psychology. *American Journal of Sociology*, *49* (6), 499-507.

126. Shaffer, B. W. (1997). James Joyce and the problem of Otherness: Reviewed works: N.R. Davidson: James Joyce: Ulysses, and the construction of Jewish identity. Culture, biography, and 'The Jew' in modernist Europe. V. J. Cheng: Joyce, race, and empire. J. Valente: Joyce and the problem of justice. Negotiating sexual and colonial differences. *Modern Philosophy*, *95*, (2), 218-230

127. Shaheen. G. J. (2003). Reel bad Arabs: How Hollywood vilifies a people. *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science, 588,* 171-193.

128. Shakir, E. (1982). Pretending to be Arab, role-playing in Vance Bourjaily's 'the fractional man'. *MELLUS, 9* (1), 7-21.

129_____(1988). Mother's milk: Women in Arab-American autobiography. *MALLUS, 15* (4), 39-50.

130. Sheehi, S. P. (2000). Inscribing the Arab self. Butrus al Bustani and the paradigms of subjective reform. *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies, 27* (1), 7-24.

131. Shoemaker, S. 1969. Time without change. *Journal of Philosophy*, 66: 363-81.

132. Shohat. E. (1992). Notes on the 'post-colonial'. *Social Text, 31/32*, 99-113.

133. Solberg, R. (1983). The woman of black Africa, Buchi Emecheta: The woman's voice in the new Nigerian novel. *English Studies, 64* (3), 247-62.

134. Showalter, E. (1981). Feminist criticism in the wilderness. *Critical Inquiry*, *8* (4), 179-205.

135. Slater. D, (1992). On the borders of social theory: learning from other regions, *Environment and Planning: Society and Space 10*(3) 307 – 327.

136. Smyth, G. (1995). The Past, the post, and the utterly changed: Intellectual responsibility and Irish cultural criticism. *Irish Studies Review*, *2* (10), 25-29.

137. Srinivasan, P.(2007, Nov 31). The bodies beneath the smoke, or, what's behind the cigarette poster: Unearthing kinesthetic connections in American dance history. *Discourses in Dance, 4*(1), 4.

138. Steiner, T. (2008). Strategic nostalgia, Islam and cultural translation in Leila Aboulela's the translator and coloured lights." *Current Writing*: Text and Reception in Southern Africa 20(2), 7-25.

139. Suhr, E. G. (1976). The phoenix. *Folklore 87* (1), 29-37

140. Tidd, U. (1999). The self Other-relation in Beauvoir's ethics and autobiography. *Hypathia, 14* (4), 163-174.

141. Todorov, T., & Mack, L. (1986). Race, writing, and culture. *Critical Inquiry*, *13*(1), 171-181.

142. Touraine, A. (1989). Is sociology still the study of society? *Thesis Eleven*, *23* (1), 5-34.

143. **Turner**, B. S. (1989). From Orientalism to global sociology. *Sociology, 23*(4), 629-638.

144. **Turner**, F (1988). The Crisis in Modern Aesthetics. *Performing Arts Journal, 11* (2). 7-16

145. Umeh, M. (1980). African women in the novels of Buchi Emecheta. *Présence Africaine*, *116* (1), 190-201.

146. _____(1982). The joys of motherhood: Myth or reality? *Colby Library Quarterly*, *18* (1), 39-46.

147.Walker, G. F. (1987). The rhetoric and the new literary theory: Cognitive and cultural interaction. *Poetics, 16* (2), 103-208.

148. Wellek, R. (1978). The new criticism: Pro and contra. *Critical Inquiry, 4* (4), 611-24.

149. Waith, E. M. (1950). Manhood and valor in two Shakespearean tragedies. *ELH, 17* (4), 262-273.

150. Wassef, H. (1998, April 30). The unblushing bourgeoisie. *Cairo Times*

151. Wilputte, E. (2000). Women buried: Henry Fielding and feminine absence. *The Modern Language Review, 95* (2), 324-336.

152. Wilshire, B., & Wilshire, D. (1989). Theatre and the retrieval of the pregnant goddess as a paradigm of what is human or ultimate interculturalism. *Arts Journal, 11* (3), 22-35.

153. Wolker, R. (1996). Todorov's Otherness. *New Literary History, 27*(1), 43-55.

154. Wynne, C. (2006). Navigating the mezzaterra: Home, harem and the hybrid family in Ahdaf Soueif's the map of love, *Critical Survey*, 18(2) 56-66.

155. Yacoubi, Y. (2005). Edward Said, Eqbal Ahmad, and Salman Rushdie: Resisting the ambivalence of postcolonial theory. *Alif Journal of Comparative Poetics, 25*, 193-218.

156. Young, M. J. L. (1982). Some aspects of symbolic writing in the modern Arabic short story. *British Society for Middle Eastern Studies, 9* (1), 14-21.

157. Zaki, H. (1990). Utopia, dystopia, and ideology in the science fiction of Octavia Butler. *Science Fiction Studies.* 17 (2), 239- 88

158. Zine, J. (2002). Muslim women and the politics of representation. *American Journal of Islamic Social Sciences, 19*(4), 1-22.

Electronic Sources:

1. Ahmed, L. (2006). "A border passage" and some further thoughts and afterthoughts. Retrieved from http://sfonline.barnard.edu/heilbrun/ahmed_01.htm

2. Ahmede, H. (2007). Black and gray. Retrieved from http//ahmedehussain.blogspot.on/2007/01/interview_with_ahdaf_soueif.htm/

3. Al-Sudeary, M. A. (2012). Rethinking Muslim woman's agency in modern literature. *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science* . *2* (21), 69-81. Retrieved from http://www.ijhssnet.com/journals/Vol_2_No_21_November_2012/9.pdf

4. Ameri, F. (2012). Veiled experiences: re-writing women's identities and experiences in contemporary Muslim fiction in English. (Doctoral dissertation, Murdoch University). Retrieved from http://researchrepository.murdoch.edu.au/10197/2/02Whole.pdf

5. Atzori, E.(2012, April). Finding the Words... An interview with Ahdaf Soueif. *The Middle East Magazine*. Retrieved from http://www.erikaatzori.com/#!ahdaf-soueif/c1wzy

6. Babana-Hampton, *S.* (2002). Literary representations of female identity: feminisms in Arab-Muslim societies and clashing paradigms on conceptions of modernity, tradition, and selfhood. The *American Journal* of *Islamic Social Sciences,19* (4), 24-41. Retrieved from http://iepistemology.net/attachments/691_Ajiss19-4%20%20-Babana%20-%20Hampton%20%20Literacy%20Representation%20of%20Female%20Identity.pdf

7. Bibizadeh, R. (2013). Women in exile: Islam and disempowerment in Fadia Faqir's "my name is Salma". *The Journal of Humanities and Arts, 1* (1), Retrieved from www.harts-minds.co.uk/against-the-grain

8. Bosch, M. (2008). The representation of fatherhood by the Arab Diaspora in the United States. *Lectora*, *14,* 101-112. Retrieved from http://www.raco.cat/index.php/Lectora/article/viewFile/214989/285621

9. Burnett, P . (2000). Soueif talking about "the map of love" . Interview with Paula Burnett. Retrieved from www.brunel.ac.uk/faculty/arts/Enter Text/ 1.3 pdf/soueif 1. pdf

10. Dabashi, H. (2006, June 7). Native informers and the making of the American empire.
Retrieved from Al- Ahram weekly on-line.
http://weekly.ahram.org.eg/2006/797/special.htm

11.Davis, E. (2007). Romance as political aesthetic in Ahdaf Soueif's "the map of love" http://www.genders.org/g45/g45_davis.html

12. Democracy Now. (2011). Retrieved from
http://www.democracynow.org/2011/3/8/ahdaf_soueif_on_egypts_revolution_people

13. Cairo Post. Retrieved from
http://thecairopost.com/news/70908/inside_egypt/the-most-famous-people-who-committed-suicide-in-egypt

14. Carby, H. V. (1983). "White women listen!" Black feminism and the boundaries of sisterhood. Retrieved from
https://crabgrass.riseup.net/assets/163126/versions/1/carby%20white%20woman%20listen.pf

15. Fayad, M. (2007). Reinscribing identity: Nation and community in Arab women's writing." College Literature 22.1: 147-60. Academic Search Premier. EBSCO Host. UNR Library, Reno, NV. <http://0-web.ebscohost.com>

16. Glasgow, E. (1913, Nov 30). Feminism. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from
http://query.nytimes.com/mem/archivefree/pdf?res=9D02E6D61139E633A25753C3A9679D946296D6CF

17. Ghazaleh, P. (2001, November 14). Ahdaf Soueif: Different readings. Retrieved from http://weekly.ahram.org.eg/2001/559/profile.htm Al Ahram weekly on line 14 Nov 2001 Issue No 559

18. Halim, H . (1999, August 18). Translating Egypt. Retrieved from http://weekly.ahram.org.eg/1999/442/bk1_442htm\ AL Ahram Weekly 12-18 August 1999, Issue No. 442.

19. Hanssen, J. (2012). Kafka and Arabs. *Critical Inquiry, 39* (1), 167-97. Retrieved from http://criticalinquiry.uchicago.edu/uploads/pdf/Hanssen_KafkaArabs1.pdf

20. Kingslake, A. 2011.Eothen. Retrieved September 2011 from: http://www.manybooks.net/titles/kingslakeetext95eothen10.html

21. Kocić, A. (2010). Salem witchcraft trials: The perception of women in history, literature and culture. *Linguistics and Literature, 8* (1), 1 – 7. Retrieved from http://facta.junis.ni.ac.rs/lal/lal201001/lal201001-01.pdf

22. Liddle, J., & Rai, S. (1989). Feminism, imperialism and orientalism : the challenge of the 'Indian woman'. *Women's History Review*, *7* (4). 495-520. Official URL: http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/09612029800200185

24. Mahjoub, J. (2011, March 15). Jamal Mahjoub Interviews Soueif. *Guernica magazine of art and politics.* Retrieved from http://www.guernicamag.com/interviews/soueif_3_15_11/ (Guernica) Selmeyyah *Jamal Mahjoub interviews Ahdaf Soueif March 15, 2011*

25. Malcolm, J. (1986). The woman hated women. *The New York Times Book Review.* http://www.nytimes.com/1986/11/16/books/the-woman-who-hated-women.html

26. March, M. (2005, April 25). I have always looked at life as though it were a novel: An interview with Ahdaf Soueif. Retrieved from http://books.guardian.co.uk\news/articles/0,6109,1469891,00.htm/ April, 25, 2005

27. Marr, A. (1999, September 26). England, what England? *The Guardian*. September, 26, 1999. Retrived from The Guardian On line Archives. www.guardian.co.uk

28.Marsden,D. (1911). Bond women. *The American Journal of Islamic Social* Sciences 19,(4). The Egoist Archive.Web.

29. Martin, P. (2003). Said and done versus saying and doing: Gender practices, practicing gender at work. *Gender and Society, 17* (3), 342-366. Retrieved from http://people.stfx.ca/accamero/gender%20and%20health/concept%20of%20gender%20and%20health/said%20and%20done%20gendering%20practices.pdf. doi: 10.1177/0891243203017003002

30. Mayton, J. (2009). Ahdaf Soueif on politics, Middle East and writing. *Bikya Masr* Retrieved from http://www.masress.com/en/bikyamasr/1967

31. McEwan, J. (2001). "Review of The translator." December 6. IslamOnline. www. Islam Online.net.

32. Mehta, S. R. (2011). Exploring the post-colonial literary canon. *International Conference on Languages, Literature and Linguistics* (pp. 304-308). Singapore: IACSIT Press. Retrieved from http://www.ipedr.com/vol26/62-ICLLL%202011-L10088.pdf

33. Morgan, M. (2006, April 13). All strings attached. *Al-Ahram Weekly*. Retrieved fromhttp://www.ahdafsoueif.com/Articles/All_Strings_Atached.pdf

34. Mureen. O. (1999). Two writers speak about their work: Talks held at the Africa centre in November . Retrieved from http//www.afircacentre.org.uk/habari2.htm.

35. Nietzsche, F. (2009). "Supposing truth is a woman – What then?" Beyond good and evil. Trans Helen Zimmern. Retrieved from http//www.gutenberg.org/4/3/6/4363.

36. Rushdie, Y. (1999). Yasmine Rushdie met up the literati in London. Retrieved from http//www.egypnile/cleo_from_london.html

37. Said, E. (1983, July 12). Edward Said review of Aisha. *London Review*. Retrieved from http://www.lrb.co.uk/v05/n12/edward-said/edward-said-writes-about-a-new-literature-of-the-arab-world

38. Salahshour, N., & Salahshour, F. (2012). Representation of the east in western literature: A Critical discourse analysis of the travelogue Eothen. *Mediterranean Journal of Social Sciences, 3* (2), 531-541. Retrieved from http://www.mcser.org/images/stories/2_journal/mjss_may_2012/neda.pdf. Advance online publication. doi:10.5901/mjss.2012.v3n2.531

39. Shackle, S. (2012, May 30). N S Interview with Ahdaf Soueif on Souief's "cairo: my city, our revolution". Retrieved from http://www.newstatesman.com/politics/international-politics/2012/05/ns-interview-ahdaf-soueif-egyptian-author-and-activist

40. Sentov, A. (2009). The post modern perspective of time *in Peter Ackroyd's Hawksmoor Linguistics and Literature,* 7 (1), 123 – 134, UDC 821.111 – 311.2.09 Akrojd P. Retrieved from http://facta.junis.ni.ac.rs/lal/lal2009/lal2009-10.pdf

41. Simola, R. (2005). A journey to prison of two young women, Lemona and Firdaus. *Nordic Journal of African Studies 14*(2): 162–174. Retrieved from http://www.njas.helsinki.fi/pdf-files/vol14num2/simola.pdf.

42. Smith, S. E. (2007). "Defeating stereotypes of Muslim women." Diverse: Issues in Higher Education 24(17), 3 October. http://diverseeducation.com/article/9671c3/defeating-stereotypes-of-muslimwomen.html.

43. Soueif, A. (2008). Visions of the harem. http://www.theguardian.com/books/2008/jul/05/art.exhibition

44. Sunaina, M. (2008). Belly dancing*:* Arab-face*,* Orientalist feminism*, and* U.S. empire. *American Quarterly,* 60 (2), *317*-345. Retrieved from: https://www.google.dz/?gws_rd=cr,ssl&ei=UVTuU-3wFuO60QW_qIF4#q=wayneandwax.com%2Fpdfs%2Fmaira-arabface.pdf

45. The Next Step for Arab Societies: http://www.neareastquarterly.com/index.php/2012/03/24/interview-ahdaf-soueif-the-next-steps-for-arab-societies/

46. Trabelsi, H. (2003). Transcultural writing: Ahdaf Soueif's "Aisha" as a case study. Retrieved from http//social.chass.ncsu.edu/jouvert/V7i2/trabel.htm"

47. United Nations Development Programme and Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development. Arab Human Development Report 2002: Creating opportunities for Future Generations. New York: UN, 2002. Retrieved from http://www.arab-hdr.org/publications/other/ahdr/ahdr2002e.pdf

48. Webster, E. G. (2000). Recycling Zoraida. The Muslim heroine in Mary Shelley's "Frankenstein". *Cervantes, 20* (1), 133-56. Retrieved from http://www.h-net.org/~cervant/csa/artics00/garrett.pdf

49. White Review. (2012, March 22). Interview with Ahdaf Soueif. Retrieved from http://www.thewhitereview.org/interviews/interview-with-ahdaf-soueif/ (The white review)

50. Wiehardt, G. (2008). Interview with Alicia Erian. Retrieved from http://fictionwriting.about.com/od/interviews/a/aliciaerian.htm

51. Wrenn, H. (2010). The woman in modernism. *ELF2,* 9-13. Retrieved from https://www.uscupstate.edu/uploadedFiles/academics/arts_sciences/Language_and_Literature/ELFVol2wrenn.pdf

Manuscripts (Primary Sources):

Fitzpatrick, M. C. (1933). *Lactanti De Ave Phoenice*. (Doctoral Dissertation. Pennsylvania University). (M. C. Fitzpatrick, Trans.).

Appendices

Summaries of the Fiction Works

Summary of *Aisha*:

Aisha (1983) is Soueif's first collection of eight short stories whose summaries will follow respectively.

The Returning tells the tale of Aisha as a woman returning to her homeland Egypt after a six years absence. Recognition of old time, space and people seems impossible for Aisha, considering the devastating changes she encounters. She dwells nostalgic for every memory including that of her husband Saif with whom she entertains a controversial relation. At the end of the story Aisha decides to lock the door of her apartment twice and quits the reverberations of a gnawing past to start a new life.

1964 recounts the story of Aisha the teenager misfit. Aisha repudiates past and present and aspires to a better future vibrant with stories of exuberant and sexy women that she dreams of resembling. Aisha struggles in cold and 'cruel' England where she strives to belong as a strange Muslim but in vain. She longs for her warm days in Egypt and fails to belong anywhere including her own home. She decides to quit school and study at home despite her parents' stubborn refusal.

Knowing tells the story of Aisha as a child in Cairo and England. Aisha revels in an Egyptian exotic setting she feeds through her readings of stories like *One Hundred and One Night* featuring souks and fiends. Aisha defies her parents convincing them that the characters she encounters in stories appear to her when she is asleep. Despite her parents' constant denial of her imaginary world, Aisha sticks to her wonderland and childish ideas.

The Wedding of Zeina is the story of Zeina Aisha's nanny as a child bride. Zeina recounts to Aisha the dazzling events of her being prepared for her wedding night by old ladies.On her wedding night, Zeina struggles to escape her bridegroom cousin who is a child too. She fights him in vain as he ends by winning her sympathy and love back.

Her Man is the story of Zeina as a fully-fledged woman struggling to win her man back. Zeina mourns the death of her baby girl and strives to keep her only boy fit. Zeina decides to remain a strong woman tricking her co-wife, pretending to sooth the latter's fear on a windy night. She draws a bite on her co-wife's bottom and makes her man believe that it was the work of another man. Zeina wins her man back for her alone.

The Apprentice is the story of Yosri the only man protagonist in the whole collection. Yosri's mother fights to find her sons a fixed job. Finally, she finds a job for Yosri her youngest son, as a hairdresser in a women's salon. Yosri builds a name for himself following his employer's advice and the women customers, including Aisha, who strive to dress him and decorate him following their own tastes, as he, according to them, proves to have female 'délicatesse' and charm. Yosri ends a victim at the hands of males' lustrous desires, as a 'woman-boy'.

The Suitor tells the story of Mimi Aisha's Coptic friend whose mother is desperate to find a man for her. Mimi reaches twenty eight and is still single because she proves extravagant and

demanding looking for her prince charming. Mimi scrutinizes her suitors' appearances, clothes, and shoes. She ends by finding her prince charming an elegant Copt who ends to own a flat for prostitutes. Mimi's story ends by her marrying a man she does not know without examining his looks in order to have children.

The Nativity is the last narrative that tells the story of Aisha an attractive dark haired woman who has lived in England and goes back to be reintroduced to tribal Egypt. She struggles to keep her marriage alive striving to have a child. She decides to visit presents despite her nanny's advice not to surrender to people she does not know. Aisha gets acquainted to Farag a strongly built butcher who feels attracted to her as a luxurious stranger. Farag pretends to show Aisha what she has never seen, an Egypt she read about in books in a world of incense, dream, and exoticism. Farag rapes Aisha under the spell of hashish he made her try.

Summary of *The Sandpiper*:

The Sandpiper (1996) is Soueif's second collection of seven short stories whose summaries will follow respectively.

The Sandpiper: is the story of a British woman married to an Egyptian. This unnamed character mourns a marvelous past looking throughout the window of her bedroom and watching the sea. She strives to get a golden past back when she used to feel her husband's love and care. She feels lost and forsaken in a strange hot country she barely knows and tries to quit constantly. The presence of her only daughter seems to sooth her priceless losses. She finally decides to resist the unknown, being part of it and being a mother.

Chez Milou is the tale of an aging woman remembering a missed life and love. Milou inherited her father's restaurant named after her ***'Chez Milou '*** that becomes her sole and lonely world. Philippe has been Milou's dear lover who has never confessed his love for her or for any other woman. Milou spends her entire life crooning a sweet memory of Philippe the love of her life.

Mandy is the story of two women Asya the Egyptian Oriental and Mandy the Western American who love the same man Saif Asya's husband. Saif acquaints both ladies to one another. Asya and Mandy have preconceived ideas about one another each one trying to prove she is better. Mandy thinks Asya an oriental victim of men's authority and Asya thinks Mandy a Western aimless and worthless woman. Asya ends the story keeping memories of her lost marriage and her miscarriage at hand.

Melody is a story told by an American woman living in an unnamed hot Muslim country with her husband and son. She gets acquainted to a Turkish family whose daughter Melody attracts the attention of everyone who knows her. Melody's angelic fair looks dazzles the American boy who becomes crazy about her. The American narrator thinks Melody's Turkish mother worthless, a slave of her husband's desires, and an eternal housewife. She constantly reminds readers of the difference between Western liberated women and trapped Oriental ones.

The story ends by Melody's sudden and sad death, being run by a car. Melody's father blames it all on his wife's carelessness, films his daughter's tiny body in the morgue and keeps playing it for his wife to watch. He also obliges his wife to bear another child immediately after Melody's death.

The Water Heater is the story of Salah, a law student who strives to lead a pious life despite all the earthly temptations available for him. Salah endures 'evil whisperings' confirming his constant attraction to his sister Faten, described as a coy and very obedient young lady. He insists that she should carry on her studies and never marry young as her mother suggests. Salah is pictured, according to his own account, as an ideal young man at home, at university, and at the mosque where he often goes to pray. Salah struggles to keep clear of evil doings but in vain. He stops performing his five prays on time and feels more tempted and sexually attracted to his sister. One day temptation grows high in Salah's mind as he is alone with Faten. He approaches his sister, touching her on many parts of her body pretending to scold her on a supposedly 'sinful' magazine she had. Salah and Faten's mother comes on time to save her children from evil. Feeling highly perplexed, Salah lets his sister go deciding she should marry very soon. He finally performs his ablutions and gets ready to pray.

Satan is the story of Asya a desperate wife trying to save her husband's care from complete expiry because of her husband Saif's numerous girlfriends. *Satan* is a tale that gives readers more details about *Mandy* above that recounts the story of Asya and Mandy Saif's girlfriend. Asya goes to meet her family-in-law in Saif's flat in London, especially her mother-in-law that she loves and respects. Asya and her mother-in-law remember their bright days together as one family. On her turn, Asya remembers her past life and her lost opportunity to become a mother. According to her mother-in-law, Asya behaves in a peculiarly strange way allowing her own husband to date other women and speaking about them as normally as she did. In the very flat, Asya meets Satan, a small black cat that she grows attracted to. Satan proves to be one of Saif's girl friend's possessions. Satan appears very frequently during narration as Asya seems to like it very much. The story ends in Satan's being violently bumped to the wall by Saif's brother as the black cat allows itself to share diner with the family. Asya quits the flat feeling very touched by the cat's pain. She goes to her husband Saif, who stayed in a hotel with one of his girlfriends, to recount Satan's story in tears.

I Think of You is the tale of remembering a friend offers to her dead friend. It is the story of a pregnant woman alone in a hospital while her family is away from her. She struggles to keep away from death as she told the story of herself and her terminally ill friend's. The latter is spared courage and resilience through her friend's narration. The narrator is fighting pain suffering from high blood pressure that kept her tied to her own bed. Only the hope of giving birth to her baby boy and a reunion with her own daughter that kept the narrator alive. She also had her friend's power of resistance and fighting for life until death.

A Summary of *The Map of Love*

The Map of Love (1999) is Soueif's second novel set between England and Egypt. The novel tells the story of female protagonists Amal, Anna, Layla, and Isabel creating powerful bonds

between families and countries separated by hundreds of years and miles. The story is recounted by the set forth protagonists about the strong ties cemented by the love of Anna, the Egyptian lady, and Sharif, the Egyptian Pasha in times of war and tensions between England and Egypt. The story unfolds out of Anna's trunk containing journals and letters, brought by the American Isabel, handed to her by Omar, Amal's brother who also falls in love with Isabel. History, country, and family become one as love brings times and spaces together despite death and separation. Anna discovers Egypt as the mother of civilization different from the exotic land the British constantly drew. Her love for Sharif blossomed in giving birth to Nur, their only daughter. Omar and Isabel's love also flourished in giving birth to baby Sharif as further continuation of history and family ties. Despite Sharif Pasha's death the story of courage and love stays alive to be witnessed by future generations.

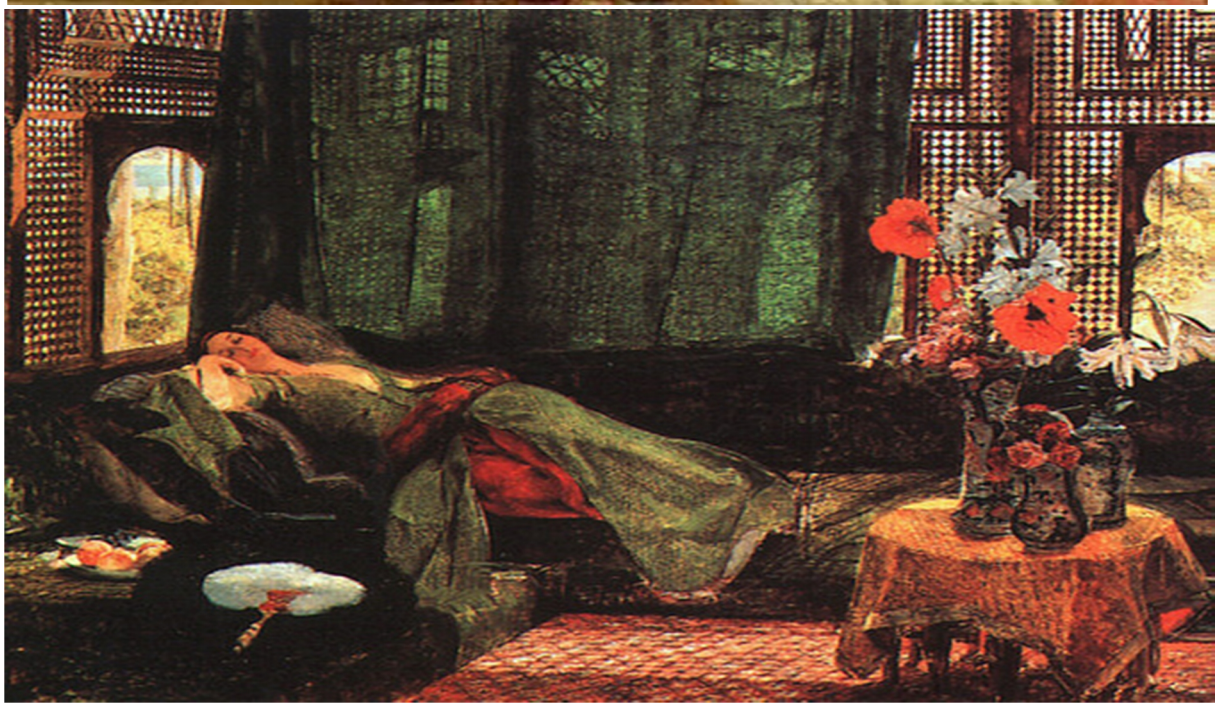
Paintings by Frederick Lewis Mentioned in “The Map of Love”

A Street in Cairo

Interior of a School: Cairo

The Lure of the East 1864

The Harem



The Siesta

The Arab Scribe 2

ABSTRACT

The representations of Arab and Muslim women, narrowly related to the perceptions of women in general, have long incarnated women as a strange Other and weak entities dependent on their male counterparts. Eastern women, in particular, have also been portrayed as sexual objects, sin perpetrators, and exoticised creatures feeding age old Orientalist fantasies.

The Egyptian writer and activist, Ahdaf Soueif, has long fought for the eradication of such stereotyped portraits painting different pictures of her female protagonists as liberated phoenixes ready to start life anew. The current research explores the myriad representations Soueif grants to the set forth protagonists in her fiction works respectively: *Aisha* (1983), *The Sandpiper* (1996), and *The Map of Love* (1999). However, one noticed that the author's perceptions oscillates between a demystification of the stereotyped portraits and a confirmation of them, sometimes picturing her female protagonists as limited, male dependent and nostalgic. This research also scrutinizes the writer's use of time past as an element of liberation of her female characters, granting them constant flashbacks to reconsider their past in order to better live and understand their present and future.

Chapter one focuses on the scrutiny of two important concepts, namely, Other and women, from postcolonial and feminist perspectives. It also explores understandings of keywords like strangeness, difference, stereotype, representation, crisis of identity, ideology, racism, essentialism, and hybridity. The concept of women has also been explored from a post colonial feminist critique perspective eradicating the difference between 'first world' and 'third world women'. Besides, this concept has been analysed from religious, historical and literary stand points.

Chapter two offers a scrutiny of the eight narratives constituting *Aisha*, Soueif's first collection of short stories. A special consideration has been offered to the 'double portrait' Soueif grants her female protagonists and the use of time past gearing narration forward. Aisha is knitted as a seemingly separate collection of female narratives centring on one character which is that of Aisha.

Chapter three investigates the same 'double portrait' in *The Sandpiper* Soueif's second collection of seven short stories. Yet, in this collection the author utilises Eastern and Western female protagonists and allows their stories to intermingle and travel throughout time to paint one single portrait which is that of resilient phoenixes resurrecting from the ashes of an uncertain nostalgic past.

Chapter four focuses on the same 'genus portrait' in *The Map of Love*, Soueif's second novel. However, in this novel the intensity of the dual picture falters as Soueif portrays female characters both, Eastern and Western that are ready to demystify the stereotypical portrait most cherished in the West, and that incarnates women as sex-objects, weak, and male dependent.

Résumé de la Thèse en Français

Les représentations des femmes Arabes et Musulmanes, strictement liées aux perceptions des femmes en générale, ont longuement incarné la femme comme un étrange 'Autre' et comme une créature faible dépendante de l'homme. Les femmes orientales, en particulier, ont aussi été perçues comme des objets sexuels liés à l'exhortation du péché, ainsi que des entités exotiques garnissant le vieux portrait orientaliste.

L'écrivaine et activiste Egyptienne Ahdaf Soueif a amplement lutté pour l'éradication de ces portraits stéréotypés, proposant de différentes images de ses protagonistes femmes comme des personnages libérés ressemblant a un phénix caractérisé par son pouvoir de renaitre après s'être consumé.

Ce travail de recherche explore les distinctes images avec lesquelles Soueif représente les protagonistes citées ci-dessus dans ses œuvres de fictions notamment : **Aisha** (1983), **The Sandpiper** (1996), **The Map of Love** (1999). Quoique, l'auteur semble osciller dans ses représentations entre une démystification et une confirmation de ces images stéréotypées, représentant parfois ses héroïnes comme des personnages limités, dépendants, et nostalgiques. Cette recherche étudie également l'utilisation du temps passé par l'auteur en l'imaginant comme un élément libérateur de ces protagonistes, en leur permettant des instants de flashbacks qui les incitent a reconsidérées leur passé pour mieux vivre leur présent et leur futur.

Le premier chapitre explore deux concepts importants notamment : 'Autre' et 'Femme' d'une perspective postcoloniale et d'une vision féministe. Ce chapitre étudie aussi les significations de certains mots clés particulièrement : étrangeté, différence, stéréotype, représentation, crise identitaire, idéologie, racisme, essentialisme, et hybridité. Le concept de Femme a également été analysé a travers une perspective postcoloniale féministe dans l'intention de bannir la différence entre les labels indiquant 'les femmes du tiers monde' et 'les femmes du premier monde'. Entre autre, ce concept a été examiné d'autres angles principalement : religieux, historique et littéraire.

Le deuxième chapitre entame une étude des huit nouvelles constituant **Aisha**, le premier recueil de nouvelles de Soueif. Une considération spéciale est prêtée au 'double portrait' que l'auteur confie a ses protagonistes femmes et l'utilisation du temps passé. **Aisha** est tissée comme, apparemment, une série de narratives séparées se focalisant sur un seul personnage féminin qui est celui de Aisha l'étrange exotique.

Le troisième chapitre est centré sur le même 'portrait double' dans **The Sandpiper**, le deuxième recueil de nouvelles de Soueif. Par ailleurs, dans ce recueil l'auteur invite des personnages féminins orientaux et occidentaux et permet à leurs histoires de fusionner et de voyager à travers le temps dans le but de peindre un seul canevas qui est celui de phénixes repêchés d'un passé nostalgique, résilients, et renaissants de leurs cendres.

Le quatrième chapitre trace la trajectoire du même portrait dans **The Map of Love** le second roman de Soueif. Néanmoins, à travers ce roman l'intensité de cette 'image double' faiblit quand l'écrivaine représente des protagonistes orientales et occidentales prêtes à éradiquer l'image stéréotypée ensemble en tours de force.

ملخص العمل بالعربية

أسندت للمرأة العربية و المسلم عدة صفات منها: الضعف، الخضوع لسلطة الرجل، الحث على الإغراء و الوقوع في الرذيلة. و لكن لم تختص هذه الصفات بوصف المرأة العربية و المسلمة فحسب بل تعدت لتحوي المرأة بصفة عامة.

عملت الروائية و الناشطة السياسية أهداف السويف على محو هذه الصورة النمطية و استبدالها بتمثيل أكثر مصداقية مصورتا الشخصية النسائية كبطالة متحررة قادرة على تجديد حياتها و الاعتماد على نفسها. غير أن السويف عمدت في بعض الأحيان إلى تثبيت الصورة النمطية السابق ذكرها في أعمالها حيث عرضت البطالات النسائية في صورة مطابقة لها. تظهر بعد بطلات سويف كشخصيات ضعيفة منساقة تتوق إلى استرداد الماضي بطريقة غير سوية. نجد هذا التمثيل مجسدا في جميع أعمالها خاصة (عائشة 1983) ، (زمار الرمل 1996)، و (خريطة الحب 1999).

يتطرق هذا العمل إلى استكشاف هذه الازدواجية في تمثيل سويف لشخصياتها النسائية و أيضا إلى فحص خاصية استعمال الزمن الماضي كمعبر لتحرير هذه الشخصيات من التمثيل الزائف و تعويضها بوصف أكثر تلاءما مع وضعها الرافض للانغماس في الماضي و الأوضاع الراهنة التي تحول بينها و بين التغيير.

الفصل الأول يتناول دراسة مفهومين مهمين أولها "الآخر" و "المرأة" من وجهات نظر بوستكولونيالية و منه أنصار الحركة النسائية كما يركز هذا الفصل على تعريف ألفاظ مثل: الغرابة، الاختلاف، التصور، أزمة الانتماء ، الإيديولوجية، التفريق العرقي، التهجين، الجوهرية، أزمة الهوية، و ما بعد الاستعمارية كما يدرس هذا الفصل معنى المرأة من زاوية تاريخية، دينية, و أدبية.

يتعرض الفصل الثاني لدراسة الصورة النمطية للبطلات النسائية في (عائشة) أول مجموعة قصصية لأهداف السويف ، يختص هذا الفصل بإبراز حيثيات التمثيل المزدوج و إبراز عائشة كمجموعة قصصية تحتوي على قصص متداخلة محورها شخصية امرأة واحدة.

يدرس الفصل الثالث نفس التمثيل المذكور سابقا في (زمار الرمل) ثاني مجموعة قصصية لأهداف سويف. و لكن في هذا العمل تقدم الروائية شخصيات شرقية بالإضافة إلى شخصيات غربية محققة بذلك تناسق بين قصص هذه الشخصيات حتى تبرز المرأة كأهم عنصر و ليس الانتماء الجغرافي لهذه الأخيرة كما يظهر الزمن الماضي كعنصر أساسي تحاول من خلاله البطلات استرجاع توازنها وفقا للتغييرات المحيطة بها.

أما الفصل الرابع و الأخير فيعالج مميزات التمثيل النمطي في (خارطة الحب) ثاني رواية للكاتبة غير أن في هذه الرواية تتلاشى فعالية هذا التمثيل و ذلك بتقديم الكاتبة لشخصيات أكثر توازن و قابلية على استئصال مميزات الصورة النمطية المليئة بالمغالطات.