

Social Transformations in the Women's Short Stories in Egypt, 2011-2017**Mohammed Almahfali**Center for Middle Eastern Studies
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Social Science Faculty, Lund University, Lund. Sweden**Abstract**

This study primarily draws on genetic structuralism in unraveling social transformations embedded in short stories written by Egyptian authoresses. It also makes use of feminist concepts given that the content in question is written by Egyptian women writers and hence blends general social transformations with those affected by feminism. Four Egyptian authoresses were selected for this study along with samples of their literary works, written between 2011 and 2017, in an attempt to unpick the social transformations taking place in the short story during that critical period. The study shows that social transformations begin with the subject that is aware of those transformations embedded in the short story and taking different forms. It, in addition, underlines the impact and significance of the setting and how it is used by the women writers to locate and shed light on those transformations. Moreover, there are two types of social transformations, namely negative transformation, embodied in the deterioration of social relations or any undesired behavior, and positive transformation, characterized by the awareness of the subject of the sources of power in relation to the act of change and the influence of the revolutionary action on it. In addition, feminist conceptions are shown to be used in resisting male dominance and its relation to social oppression.

Keywords: Egypt, genetic structuralism, social transformations, sociology of literary, women's short stories

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Studying social transformations in literature:

Investigating social transformation in literature requires systematic mechanisms that combine literature and literary criticism on the one hand and social analysis mechanisms on the other hand. Therefore, we have considered the use of Lucien Goldmann's (1967) tools of genetic structuralism since he believes that we cannot separate any work, cause or theory from the cultural context from which it originated and in which it grew and developed. In addition, each individual work is seen as a contribution to understanding this comprehensive and universal history (Shhayyed, 1982, pp. 76-77). This theory is based on that principle, and hence we believe it is the most capable of dealing with social transformation within the short story. According to Alhusami, (2013):

The subject matter consists of two main elements, namely social transformation and narrative, each of which belongs to an independent field of knowledge. The former is associated with sociology and history, while the latter belongs to literature. No successful reading of this subject will come about without a systematic approach that ensures the link between both of them. That can be achieved through genetic structuralism given that it is a more advanced approach than both structuralism and the reflection theory and compensates for their shortcomings. Hence, the literary text is not seen as a closed structure that is disconnected from the context of its production as seen by structuralism, or as a mechanic reflection of the dynamics of the society as the reflection theory believes (p. 13).

It combines between structuralism which believes that the text has its own rules, while the society, together with its dynamics and transformations, has direct effect on its production.

Genetic structuralism utilizes a number of procedural mechanisms that are seen as systematic instruments to comprehend the content of the text and grasp its literary and social implications at the same time. Hence, world view is one of the most significant procedural terminologies. Goldmann (1980) defines "world view" as

Coherent and unitary perspective concerning man's relationships with his fellow men and with the universe. Since the thought of individuals is rarely coherent and unitary, a world view rarely corresponds to the actual thought of a particular individual. Thus, a world view is not a given empirical reality, but a conceptual instrument for doing research; an extrapolation constructed by the historian which, however, is not arbitrary, since it is founded on the structure of the real thought of individuals (p. 111).

It combines the individual consciousness present in the (Egyptian) authoress' consciousness and the individual's view of the society, universe and existence around him. This view, in a way or another, affects the creation of the literary work comprehensively. Furthermore, world view is suitable for the study of social transformations in literature owing to the fact that it is the most capable of observing them through surpassing the isolated individual and tracking the movement of the slow transformations of the society in the literary text, which condenses the social transformations in an area easy to observe and monitor Goldmann, (1980, p.112). In conclusion, Goldmann does not see the world view in its traditional sense which likens it to a conscious perception of the world, a deliberate intended perception. Rather, for him, it is how he feels about and views a certain reality or the intellectual pattern that precedes the process of production. What is critical is not the writer's intentions; rather, it is the objective signification that the production

gains regardless of its creator's intentions or even against them. It is obvious that this separation between the objective signification and the intentions is not definitive in that sense, but the precise distinction that this separation makes allows for a multi-faceted and sophisticated interpretation (Pascade, 1986, p. 48). This means that the writer or author should not be judged based on his or her declared or hidden political views. However, the ideological patterns of the text itself, that is, the separation between the world view of the author and the world view of the text, show that we have a narrative literary text that has its own world view, and that sets out from the social reality that the writer lives in.

The second instrument utilized by genetic structuralism is related to *conscience réelle* and *conscience possible* (real consciousness and possible consciousness). Each writer has his or her own view of reality and how it can be and what transformations he or she wants to take place in the society in consideration of all the difficulties and obstacles that inhibit that process. Here, we have a binary opposition as Goldmann, (1980) states:

we may, then, conceive of social life as a totality of the processes through which groups of individuals try to achieve a satisfying and coherent equilibrium with their social and natural environment. The facts of consciousness constitute an essential and interdependent part of this effort. These processes, along with their conscious element, come into conflict with innumerable incidental or structural obstacles that make up the empirical environment. Furthermore, these obstacles do not remain purely external but have a distorting effect on the consciousness of the subject (P. 65).

It is clear that real consciousness is facts that are real through either historical accumulation or those that create a current reality before the social class and its relation with the surrounding society. As for possible consciousness, it is what this social class, together with its associated procedures, aspires to achieve in order to attain this transformation.

The third instrument is the so-called reification adopted by György (Georg) Lukács, (1971) For him the human activity, represented in commerce and economy, is objectified and becomes a commodity, which gains natural and social rules. Later, the human activity becomes independent of people, and commercial values become the norm so as to deprive the activity of its human aspect which becomes embedded in commodities. Besides, industrialization grows incessantly and deprives the workers of their human qualities and individuality. Further, the random flow of work leads to the termination of the worker's attachment to the product and transforms his work to a special function that is automatically repeated. Due to the modern psychological and social breakdown which includes the mechanization of reasoning, the psychological quality of the worker is separated from his whole personality and identifies with computer systems. Consequently, man becomes an automatic part of a system divorced from consciousness and human activity. What is more, man, along with his social relationships, disappears and is replaced by objects and exchange values.

The procedural terminologies of genetic structuralism operate according to systematic regulations starting from identifying a different sense of significant structure seeing that we should, while dividing the subject, begin with the idea that every human reality is related to the process of forming structures. As a result, this division is supposed to offer the possibility of taking into

account the approximate totality of elements and relations. Mental and emotional structures as well as behavioral structures are always historical structures, some of which mutually affect the others and integrate within structures that contain and include them. The result is that there is no need to stop analyzing when writing or when it comes to the writer's product or individuality, or even when it comes to collective consciousness (Pascade, 1986, p. 48). Here, Goldmann's, (1967) understanding of significant structure is evident, and this concept differs from structuralism that sees that each work has its own structure and internal rules which make it independent. He believes that the significant structure of the text is not isolated from the historical dimension nor is it limited to the writer's individuality. Significant structure of genetic structuralism is not limited to the text; it, instead, includes its social and cultural surroundings.

Having identified the significant structure, genetic structuralism adopts understanding and explanation. Understanding involves internal description of the relations that constitute a system for the text, whereas explanation involves the genetic process to be introduced to a broader structure (Goldmann, 1980, p. 18 ; 1977, p. 5). This means that structuralism in its conventional sense focuses on understanding, i.e. understanding the internal relations of the text, while explanation includes the social aspect by linking the internal relations of the text with the context of its production and the relations that fall within its context.

Feminism and social transformations:

This study attempts to draw on feminism not as a theory or a technique of reading a text, but it seeks its general guidance as an approach. The study does not adopt the rules of feminism in analyzing texts. However, it uses it since the studied content is written by women, and some feminist illuminations will be made use of during analysis in accordance with the guidelines of genetic structuralism given that feminism is not a methodology and does not have special tools. According to Alrwali, (2002), this is due to the fact that;

This approach does not follow a specific theory or procedure in the western world; nonetheless, its practices have multiple and diverse perspectives and points of departure. It also makes use of the psychological theory, Marxism and post-structuralist theories. In spite of its pluralistic tendency, there are certain concepts that bring this chaos together, such as, and most importantly, gender differences in the production of literary works, their forms, content, analysis and assessment (p. 330).

This means that if feminism is adopted as an approach by some of the studied texts, it will be dealt with by means of another methodology, namely genetic structuralism. Feminism is not a specific methodology or a number of technical procedures that can be followed; it is a general approach that focuses on feminist issues. As Tyson (2006) states:

Because feminist issues range so widely across cultural, social, political, and psychological categories, feminist literary criticism is wide ranging, too. Whatever kind of analysis is undertaken, however, the ultimate goal of feminist criticism is to increase our understanding of women's experience, both in the past and present, and promote our appreciation of women's value in the world, (p.119).

Feminism as a concept should be addressed before engaging in the details of analysis. It is according to Muhammad (2015):

a set of intellectual and philosophical perceptions that seek to understand the roots and causes of discrimination between men and women in order to improve women's status and increase their opportunities in all fields. Feminism is not mere ideas or baseless intellectual conception. On the contrary, it is based on facts and statistics on the situation of women in the world and it traces discrimination they are subjected to whether in terms of the distribution of wealth, positions or opportunities or even in terms of the basic needs of life, such as food, education, shelter and others. Thus, feminism is an awareness founded on material facts and not merely an identity (p. 13).

Or a methodology. Based on that, it is, however, considered as a general approach, a way of thinking or, in other words, a new ideology on which many actions are built taking into consideration these basic premises. Therefore, feminism can be made use of along with other methodologies depending on its basic philosophy.

This research does not principally aim to analyze feminism nor does it derive from a feminist perspective. Rather, it explores social transformations within a narrative content authored by women. Here, we feel it is important to distinguish between three main terminologies which many researchers tend to use interchangeably, namely *female*, *feminine* and *feminist*. *Female* indicates that the product is attributed to women, i.e. any literary product that makes no reference to a specific theory. Therefore, it cannot be used to refer to the theory aiming to defend women in writing. As for *feminine*, it refers to a number of biological and cultural qualities acquired by women from their context as a result of their upbringing and education, such as shyness and exaggerated coyness which distinguish them from men. *Feminist*, on the other hand, refers to one of the postmodern theories that is based on ideological principles and aims to revisit the relationship between the two poles of the human race, i.e. male/female or man/woman. Moreover, it endeavors to refute the assumed tendency of man's centrality against an outcast and absent margin which is woman (Wasel, 2016, p. 94). If we are to locate our study within the framework of this distinction, we can say that it falls within these three terminologies. This is owing to the fact that our research is mainly concerned with women's creativity and will deal with feminist issues in these works given that these issues are seen as pillars of social transformations. What is more, short stories are rich in feminine qualities which the researcher can unravel in those works.

Shedding light on feminism in the short story requires investigating the relation between feminism and language where events, ideas and relationships take a linguistic representation in the first place and are social-referential secondly. This is because within feminism, language creates hypotheses about gender and other disciplines. Therefore, critical analyses of language use are central to feminist analysis. The most serious objections to titles and forms of address include the formal ones (Miss and Mrs.) and the informal ones (my baby and my love) (beautiful, whore and honey), as well as the use of the general term *man*. The objections also include belief systems and religions, which give supremacy to men. Women writers have questioned the possibility of writing in a language, patterns or forms that are heavily abundant in patriarchal cultural hypotheses that may not be adequate to express women's knowledge and experience (Kolmar, 2012, p. 94). Here, language has different feminist manifestations that can be recognized by the analyst by means of methodologies which have the ability to examine the language and establish relations in cultural and social contexts. The short story, however, seems to focus on "tracing the minute details which

are consistent with the nature of the feminist story because the entry of women into the field of creativity through the movement for subject-liberation in society opens doors that have been closed for centuries" (Alhusami, 2013, p.338). This brings the short story, transformations and feminism together and makes women's movement and struggle part of the social transformation within the narrative text.

Transformation between subject and society:

The relationship between the individual and society can be explored given that this relationship can reveal the extent to which the individual is able to recognize any imbalance and to cause positive transformation from their own perspective which may represent their view as well as the society's view of the world. The reader can detect how the subject views the world through the actions of the fictional character, particularly when this character plays the main role in the story. In this case, the subject is not isolated or dependent; rather, it is an integral part of the society. As a result, we can say that it represents the society, can speak on its behalf and can detect its flaws when it uncovers its secrets precisely.

The subject is aware of the society's view of the female body, which is a negative view in actual fact. The character is aware of that, but instead of resisting it she surrenders and prefers to escape. AS we noticed in *Altajrubah aliscotlandyiah* (the Scottish Experiment) by Al-Nashouqi, (2016):

Since the age of nine and above, going to the sea has meant a swimsuit, a black one of course, that conceals the vast spaces of my body. Although sea water makes it feel light on me, people's looks at the seashore make it feel very heavy on me. So, and because of that, unconsciously, I've found myself refraining from digging holes or building sandcastles and looking for the farthest beach umbrella to disguise myself wearing a sunhat and sunglasses, listening to music and reading a book in order to avoid people's eyes (p. 11-12).

The dilemma, however, is not here; it lies in the fact that the subject interacts with the society and embodies its negative view of the female body. Even though the character does not approve of that, she becomes an agent of the society and surrenders to its will while watching her body in the mirror. Social control becomes inside the subject not outside of it. The character embodies the society and surrenders to it. "Despite my best efforts, my body has become the talk of the town: *you are gaining weight! Be careful! You've lost weight! Be careful not to gain weight again!* Consequently, all the time, I see other people's bodies in my mirror" (Al-Nashouqi, 2016, p. 12).

The mirror turns into a space where people scrutinize the female figure and dictate their views to her. However, transformation comes later through love which makes this woman strong and through the same mirror which represents the negative view of the society. Transformation here is manifested in the fact that the mirror portraying her body in a negative way changes its perspective as a result of some positive understanding expressed by one member of her society. According to the short story of Al-Nashouqi (2016):

Anyway, seeing people in my mirror lasted [with me] for years until I managed to drag them away a little in order to see myself [in the mirror]. After that, I met Ahmad who happened to fancy fat women. Of course, that was a serious blow to beauty models. Since

then, I have started to see totally different things in my mirror: film scenes and happy dreams and I am the heroine in all of them" (p. 14).

This woman was a captive of the society's perspective, which turned her into an agent for the society watching and fearing herself. Nonetheless, because of love, she was able to overcome all of that because love made her change her perspective, which used to represent the perspective of the society as a whole.

The controversy here is not limited to the society's beauty standards for women or the notion that beauty is relative. It is more about how the subject surrenders to the will and standards of the society and how the subject can become subservient to that society. She, however, at some point, can overcome that and develop her own perspective. Nonetheless, that requires someone who changes the concept from within the society itself as Ahmad did when he made her change her concept of beauty.

Space and social transformations in the short story:

The space in the short story is deemed as a tool for social transformations, where the authoress can employ it to capture social transformations. It, moreover, may sometimes blend with the subject so that it is difficult to tell one from the other. For example, one woman writer describes how happy occasions transform and become fewer, indicating the misfortune of her country, than those during her mother's days. "Happy occasions are subjected to cutbacks— exactly like my country" (Al-Nashouqi, 2016, p.26). She is describing happiness which has become scarce in the life of the subject in a fashion that mirrors the status quo of the country as a whole. The place and setting here are an extension to the subject and an indispensable part of its complete form.

In order to avoid portraying social reality in a straight and direct way, a woman writer may resort to using the setting in different ways. For example, in her *Doolab mu'tem* (a dark wardrobe), Nahla Karam depicts the social transformations associated with the society's view of women through presenting lengthy dialogues between items of clothing inside a wardrobe, which greatly reflects social life outside it and how social views and perspectives on wearing clothes have changed to negative perspectives. "The short skirt said sadly 'I fit you both (addressing the coat and the jacket) and am ready to go out with either of you. She doesn't wear me much anymore. She says I only fit in some clean places" (Karam, 2017, p. 14). This dialogue sheds light on the transformations of the subject. The girl in this story used to put on those clothes but not any longer now. The authoress then details the reasons behind this transformation as the dialogue goes on. This story is rich in descriptions portraying the girl's inner transformations through conversations between her clothes, and how her ideas, feelings and decisions have changed through dialogues taking place in a narrow wardrobe. Some of the transformations are related to the girl herself, whereas some others are associated with the society. Nevertheless, the story does not state this directly; instead, it makes use of creating an imaginary dialogue between clothes inside a narrow place like a wardrobe. This has special significance in exposing the negative transformations taking place in the society.

The setting can also offer a glimpse into the social aspect and its transformations, where the subject decides to search for freedom even if the future is uncertain. "She returned after her holiday month and decided to leave her family and travel to Dubai, a new country with a rather

vague future but a financially and professionally secure one. That will make her feel safe and make her father rest in peace after he passed away. She may find a margin of freedom in living on her own – or she thought so" (Al-Nashouqi, 2016, p. 19). The authoress has shown how the place can provide freedom. However, it gives her freedom one time and deprives her of it another time; it also provides her with financial security now but brings her a vague future. This description provides a general overview of the setting of both places, i.e. Egypt the place she will move from and Dubai the place she will move to.

Social transformation between progress and regress:

The theoretical introduction of this study has shown that social transformation has two forms: a progressive or positive social transformation and a regressive or negative social transformation. These two forms can be traced within the woman Egyptian short story, and they reflect the authoress' view and her ability to depict these transformations not only through her own perspective and understanding of reality but also through her view of how to overcome this reality.

Negative social transformation:

Negative social transformation in the Egyptian short story is shaped by different combinations of elements that the story actually observes. It reflects the existing reality, which is filled with a number of negative aspects that are present in the short story. Recognizing this negative reality is not presented directly as a journalist or a social researcher usually does. It is, rather, shown in a certain artistic fashion highlighting the writer's ability to make use of this negative reality and to create a narrative work of art, which can reflect the social reality on the one hand and contribute to arousing collective consciousness to overcome this miserable reality on the other hand.

As for Azza Rashad's short story *Rasael bizahri alghaib* (2016) (letters from the unseen), it presents a number of cases that offer various examples of social disintegration, which are abundant in the story with nothing in common between them apart from social disintegration. These different examples shed light on social disintegration and show how an old man, for example, deceives God by his false repentance and piety and how a young girl hides her contraceptive pills and practices prostitution in secret (Rashad, 2016, p. 6). The main characteristic of this kind of behavior within the society is paradox, which is observed between the individual, society and God. The old man is deceiving God, and the woman hides her birth control pills to show people that she is a decent woman, while in secret she is a prostitute. The major dilemma here lies in the fact that the society is living with two personalities, a false one that people can see and a real one which is hidden.

Other stories provide details that highlight the authoress' awareness of the status of the working class in society, where one of the characters describes how what he earns is not enough to meet the minimum requirements of life, and hence he has to find another job. "For two years, and due to the increasing demands of life, he has been working extra hours for a private company that offers open working hours" (Tabbalah, 2016, p. 3). The demands of life have increased, while income sources are evaporating; thus, searching for an overtime job becomes a goal in itself. Work is no more part of the joys of life. Consequently, social reality turns into a machine that does not stop running, and the subject is not devoted to its special needs.

The search for a job as shown in the previous paragraph is an essential part of the life of the individual in the community of the story. Notwithstanding that, the authoress elaborates on the job search and its associated difficulties, which are presented in an artistic fashion that generates an interesting irony. For example, in Nahla Karam's *Nujoom fi saqf alhujra* (2017) (stars in the ceiling of the room), the authoress describes a girl who has got a job in her dreams while sleeping not in reality. The young woman says "I stood up and started running all over the flat shouting loudly 'I finally got a job'. My mother came out of the kitchen and questioned about the company that offered me the job. I told her it was no ordinary job but a dream job. She became even happier and asked me about the job which no one could dream of. I told her the truth and didn't stop jumping in my place. She kept silent and didn't show any excitement. I told myself all of them never believe in trying strange things until someone adventurous like me does that, and they become ordinary things over time, and everybody will do them then. I thought I would solve the problem of unemployment if my idea spread" (Karam, 2017, pp.11- 12). So, the job is a dream but a happy one. She informs her mother that the job is not a normal one; rather, it is a dream job so as to increase her mother's joy since it is an imaginary employment. She finally reveals to her mother that she has just seen it in a dream turning her mother's joy into grief. The authoress portrays the individual's struggle in search of a job. Even in dreams, finding a job is absolutely exhausting. Nevertheless, she sees this as a solution to the problem of unemployment, i.e. confronting employment by dreams and inventing jobs in dreams.

The short story can also track social inequality through observing the little details of daily life and observing the individuals' behavior and language. For example, in Nahla Karam's *'Osfour alfuraq* (the bird of separation), the authoress mentions social inequalities between two families who are related but are separated due to their social and financial differences. Although they are two sisters, each one of them has a different lifestyle. These differences are mentioned through observing the little details and their significance in the society, including the car, the driver, the club, the TV with various channels and the bird that the father bought from America. One of the two sisters' daughters bathes and dries her cat using a hairdryer. People in the society themselves are deprived of such a privilege of bathing in a bathtub. Another difference is manifested in the use of language by the driver who treats each daughter of each sister differently. He uses language differently with each of them. For example, he addresses one of them saying Miss but not the other. He also carries her bag but never the other's bag (Karam, 2017, pp. 63- 72).

A reader of woman Egyptian short story can also realize the portrayal of a negative situation that may not be new to the society, but it constitutes a phenomenon that exacerbates from time to time in light of the society's inability to face and find solution to it. The Egyptian authoress' contribution is embodied first in observing this situation and second in confronting it using the special tools of short story rather than those of the social reformer.

In Nahla Karam's *Doolab mu'tem* (a dark wardrobe), the authoress depicts women's fear of harassment indirectly through an imaginary dialogue between items of clothing, which are considered secondary characters representing main characters in this society. Hence, a woman is evaluated according to her clothes not her personality. In addition, harassment increases or decreases based on the way she dresses. The authoress says "the pants replied and said 'she prefers me to you because you cause some men to touch her body with their dirty hands whenever she

puts you on. As for me, I protect her against them.' The skirt was annoyed by the response of the pants and said 'but you get dirty too ... why doesn't she wash me like she washes you?' The jacket interfered and said 'maybe the stains caused by those hands are not easily cleaned like the other stains!'" (Karam, 2017, p. 14). The way the society treats the woman, based on the clothes she wears, has been approved by the woman herself as it turns out that she has surrendered to the perspective of the society, neglected her clothes and started to dress according to the taste of the society not her own taste.

Furthermore, short stories portray familiar scenes of social transformation on public means of transport and the extent to which a woman can be harassed, which shows the possible consciousness of the woman. These stories also shed light on how the society perceives the woman as a commodity or a thing since values are lost, and the woman turns into a cheap and worthless entertainment object.

You move according to certain signals, you are afraid of being mistaken about. They lead you somewhere you don't want to be. You go past glass-stained windows, with hidden shapes behind, one by one until you find yourself facing a huge metal door which seemed to be far away a moment ago. You feel overwhelmed by the crowds at the entrance, and you are afraid of getting smashed by the shoulders surrounding you like a sandwich filling. You hear a loud voice coming from behind roaring in bad language about trains and what happens on trains. You lower your back to avoid the eyes you feel staring at your cleavage. You cover your breasts with your arms. A young man comes from behind. You can notice his 'disturbing' handsomeness, while he passes in front of you whispering and wondering: has the train conductor arrived? You get confused and wonder whether to answer him or not? Before you utter a word, he comes near you very closely as a result of the overcrowding on the train coaches (Rashad, 2016, 62).

Reading those short stories shows that harassment on buses and public transport has become a theme that can be seen in numerous stories. While some stories present it as an ordinary scene, some others present it in a very ugly manner and consider it the cause of many problems that move from their general social dimension to the private individual dimension as well as the cause of many problems within the family. This is reflected in 'Afaf Tabalah's *Ahlam alayam almaridah* (the dreams of sick days), where the authoress depicts how some men take advantage of women in crowded spaces.

She woke up from her dream this time to feel some sort of warm moist on her thigh. The man sitting next to her managed successfully to choose a position that cornered her. She looked at all the faces around her. They were all busy thinking about their worries or dreams. And those who noticed that the man was harassing her pretended they did not. She felt as if she was being raped in public under the sight of everyone, and she couldn't shout. She was overwhelmed by a feeling of nausea (Tabbalah, 2016, p. 44).

We can seize the chance here to refer to the problem of not disclosing such incidents experienced by a wife to her husband for different reasons, the most important of which is fear. She is suffering as she was harassed sexually twice on the same day, which negatively affected her psychology and thus she could not respond to her husband. "Alas, if he knew that this body was abused twice today,

if she told him, it would help ease her pain and she would respond to him" (Tabbalah, 2016, p. 44). This story, therefore, exposes several social problems, the first of which is harassment and its associated psychological pressures affecting the woman, and the second is her fear to tell her husband about that, which may lead to another problem.

Harassment as a problem is not limited to reality only. It, rather, chases the woman in her dreams along with its accompanying elements in addition to the fact that the harasser escapes punishment even in dreams. "She is asking me about who I was swearing at in my dream. I told her about the tuk-tuk driver who chased me even in my dreams. He didn't run away like he did the other day after he touched my body near our street. But he ran away through some ropes dangling from the stars, and all men approve of that" (Karam, 2017, p. 9). The tuk-tuk escapes in reality and in her dream, and all men are the guardians of the harasser.

Positive social transformation:

Positive transformation is the second form of social transformation. We can trace this form of transformation in the woman Egyptian short story throughout several stages. The first is manifested in attempting to resist the negative reality in ways that do not ultimately result in a major change to that reality. It is, rather, a temporary change because it is a slight change that does not include the whole society. The second step is about understanding and recognizing the elements of power in the society that aim for positive change and revolution, and how that can transform things through a different perspective. We also notice how the woman can resist her reality and refuse to surrender to it, and how she can confront male dominance using different tools which the short story only provides.

Dreaming is considered a woman's first step and attempt to overcome obstacles in her society. She never stops dreaming at a time when the society never stops persecuting or confiscating her dreams. A woman's dream is a weapon she fights with as a first step to liberate herself from the shackles of the society. For example, in *Almaseer* (destiny), we realize how the heroine resists her society's suppression by means of dreams, from cradle to grave, and she never stops dreaming or yields to her society:

When she was a nine-year-old child, they asked her: what do you want to be? She replied: a musician. Her mother refused to take some money from their savings to buy her a musical instrument. The dream was buried alive in her heart. She cried and forgot about it. When she was a 13-year-old girl, they asked her: what do you want to be? She said: a famous tennis player. Her father didn't allow her to wear shorts, and she was not permitted to go to the club except with her brother. The dream was lost, and she controlled her temper and surrendered. When she became a 20-year-old young woman, they asked her: what do you want to be? She answered: a leader who leads people to freedom. They advised her not to speak about that in public or she would risk the chance of getting married because men don't fancy female leaders. The dream got lost in the crowd. She despaired and got married. When she became a 50-year-old woman, they asked her: what do you want to be? She replied: a prophet, I call for justice and defend the oppressed. For them, she seemed stupid. They mocked her and reminded her that the time of the prophets ended. The dream slipped through her fingers. She got weak and died (Tabbalah, 2016, pp.100- 102).

It is true that the will of the society has triumphed in the end; however, dreaming is the starting point of the road to positive transformation. It is the launching pad of the individual's actions towards freedom, art, support of the oppressed and change for the better.

If dreaming is seen as the first step in confronting bad reality in society, there is, yet, another step manifested in the realization and understanding of the status quo in a way that is different from how it was previously intended to be understood. It is a moment of revolutionary consciousness during which the subject redefines the surrounding things and objects and reinterprets them in their natural contexts. Al-Nashouqi (2016) says in her story:

I the undersigned admit that I have never waved my national flag since I was born except during the Africa Cup of Nations; that prior to January 25, I was convinced that [the] demonstrations could only affect the traffic; that the Egyptian people lost their civilization throughout the ages and that my national patriotism was limited to national films and songs that we inherited from the July 23 revolution until the great October victory" (p. 37).

We see in this extract a single incident, but it has got some implications that the authorities want the citizens to understand. However, the subject has evolved and begun to realize the meaning differently as shown in the table1:

Table 1. *Transformations of consciousness*

Incident	Previous understanding	Current understanding
Waving the national flag	Only during the Africa Cup of Nations	At all times
Demonstrations	Affecting the traffic	An instrument of expression and change
Egyptian civilization	Lost throughout the ages	Present and reviving
National patriotism	Only in songs and films	In everything

Consequently, the table above shows how the subject has realized its current potential to understand how things happen in their natural settings after successive regimes have falsified consciousness and spread a single understanding. The subject has now had its own understanding, which enables it to carry the banner of positive transformation heading towards a comprehensive revolution.

In addition, it is concluded that revolutions transform everything to familiar things. Trivial things become values. The authoress says in the previous story: "Egyptians have discovered the secret of life through which they transform plastic bags into homes, walls into portraits, mosque courtyards into hospitals, pavements into theaters and broadcast radio stations and banners into sarcastic news stations" (Al-Nashouqi, 2016, p. 38). This shows how the Egyptian citizen has transformed through the transformation of concepts inside him and has started to convert familiar

and ordinary objects into tools of production. He/she can make change using primitive tools. The important point here is the change in the conceptions which the authorities have wanted the citizens to acquire. The citizens' possession of their own concepts has made them creative in everything so as to find solutions to their problems at the economic, social and artistic levels.

Social transformation portrayed in the short story has been highlighted by the realization of the subject of its abilities in general. However, there is a realization of the potential of the female power in confronting the patriarchal patterns that overlap with the elements of power and interfere with the society as a whole. Besides, it can be said that in order for the woman to overcome the reality and recognize her power in that reality, she uses history. She recalls the history of women's power when they resisted men's oppression by counter-oppression, such as Shajarat al-Durr, a historical character, who made and faced death herself and confronted the society. She says:

die you bastards! You cannot kill me because I am already dead. I am not Scheherazade, who tells one story after another in order to live one more day. Rather, I am the daughter of death. I am death that you cannot escape. I will bury you all with my own hands. I am Sultana Shajarat al-Durr. I will seek revenge against every man who has beaten his wife and whose horse is more manly than he is. I will seek revenge against all villains who harass women; flies are cleaner than they are (Rashad, 2016, p. 14).

She has evoked two historical figures, namely Scheherazade and Shajarat al-Durr, who challenged patriarchal authority in order to survive. However, the former used tricks and cunning, while the latter used force. The latter is chosen to symbolize resistance for survival and struggle against patriarchy in its negative sense. The story uses Shajarat al-Durr's tongue to portray the social reality: "these are your streets, your time. This is similar to what happened during my time. Those in power recruited servants, boys and prisoners and claimed that these were public demonstrations" (Rashad, 2016, p. 16). The circumstances are the same; therefore, the authoress believes that the solution is a new Shajarat al-Durr, she evokes from history to face reality. Nevertheless, this will not last long due to the woman's fragile nature where she surrenders and instead of becoming Shajarat al-Durr, shocked by that reality, she becomes Virgin Mary. "Several months have passed since she disappeared. Just yesterday they said that a woman, who doesn't belong to our time, surrounded by a nimbus, was seen in Salah Salem Street, guarded by three dogs. She moved to the center of town, and she was suffocating due to the heat and crowds. She shouted: 'Clear the way for me my children ... I am the Lady of the Worlds ... I am Virgin Mary' " (Rashad, 2016, p. 18). Thus, it is evident that the woman may derive her power and might from history in order to change her reality, yet she cannot abandon her femininity which is filled with compassion, tenderness and sacrifice. She has tried to resist her reality by force; however, she still wants to benefit the others not just herself. Although she is fully aware of her reality and knows that it requires an equal power to change it, she chooses to utilize values, education and sacrifice to cause change. This is all embodied in the character of Virgin Mary.

Another aspect that shows how the subject makes transformation within the society is the identification of the elements of power in attempting to stand up to male dominance from a female perspective. This is reflected first in showing and highlighting the woman's steadfastness in relation to her stances and beliefs in the face of the man's transformation. These stories shed light on the oppression the woman is subjected to as well as her steadfastness and the transformation of

the man. For instance, in the story of *Alshurfa alukhrah* (the other balcony), a young girl tells her story about one of her neighbors who she loved from school, and who moved to live in a flat in the building opposite to hers. His room has a balcony that faces her room. Their love grew; after a while, nonetheless, he asked her to change the way she dressed and to cover her hair. Even though she did what she was told to do, that did not protect her from being forsaken by him eventually. He moved to another room with a different balcony. He might have another beloved as well (Karam, 2017, pp. 37- 45). Positive transformation in this regard is embodied in the woman's ability to expose this paradox between the woman's sacrifice and the man's carelessness and between her steadfastness and his transformations.

What is more, the woman, living in a patriarchal society, has come to realize that there is a much more powerful weapon to confront the man with. This weapon is activated by depriving him of his masculinity by means of disclosing his impotence, which is seen as a curse for men who try to hide and cover it. Sexual potency is the yardstick against which a man's status and significance are measured. As a result, the woman punishes the man by his impotence which is a stigma in his society. "She leaves because she is tied like 'cattle' in the name of an illusion called love. Now she calls it trivial illusion. Love in the past was real and spontaneous but not anymore now. He is ill, and the symptoms of his illness are not limited to faking his sleep, being preoccupied with his work or ignoring her while she is lying next to him. He hides a memory stick containing the results of his medical tests which confirm his impotence after the mine where he used to work was hit by a landslide, which affected him badly. These symptoms are also manifested in the space of secrecy and privacy as if he is afraid of an enemy. A voice coming from within tells her that 'love' suffers from Parkinson's disease ... it is neither dead nor alive ... alas" (Rashad, 2016, p. 76) The woman in this example discusses the fate of this man who has lost it all. He has lost his manhood represented in his sexual potency. In addition, he has lost his feelings as love has died or suffers from Parkinson's disease as she said.

Another story shows how a man feels humiliated before a woman's desire as he cannot gratify that desire. A woman's view of a man who has not given her what she needs may make him develop an inferiority complex torturing him all his life:

Her lustful looks have disappeared and turned into disappointment as she has not been satisfied ... he begged Lillian to give him another chance, but she treated him like a mother, which was like a slap to his manhood. She confidently advised him to consult a doctor, and with a cold smile she gave him hope for treatment. He never thought of seeing a doctor. He did not have enough courage to speak about his weakness in front of anyone even a doctor. He did not quite trust that the doctor would not gossip with anyone else. People are meanly inconsiderate to the others' vulnerabilities as if they are trying to cover up their own weaknesses. He kept his secret painfully (Tabbalah, 2016, p. 44).

This woman does not speak about a single man's weakness but about men's weakness against a woman's desire who becomes an oppressor in a patriarchal society that is afraid of speaking about its weaknesses or even disclosing the matter to the doctor for treatment. In contrast to that, the woman is dominant and is not only capable of resistance but also of overlooking her desire and giving advice, guidance and remedy.

Conclusion:

This study basically based on Genetic Structuralism method to reveal political and social transformation in women's short story in Egypt after 2011, in addition to some feminist's principles because the studied collections have been written by authoresses. We use Genetic Structuralism terms, through four concepts; World View, Real consciousness, possible consciousness, and reification. the term of Social Transformation refers to social operations which change whole of society, that means all its systems such as political, economic, and family system...etc. in specific period as a result of cultural, economic, and political factors, overlap, and effect on each other.

The study concludes that the reader can monitor the subject's perspective towards the world through the action of characters, especially when this character plays main role in the text. Also it shows that the space is very important tool in short story writing can reveals the the shape and type of transformations within the society.

We found that the negative transformation appears in a number of pictures, such as Class Inequality through the Details, Disintegration of Social Relationships, and the harassment. While the positive transformation appears inside the women short stories in Egypt, through different phases, the first is the attempt to resist the negative reality, with ways lead to change it, the second is understanding of components of power inside society towards the positive change, and awareness of power elements towards the revaluation action. This process takes four steps to change: dream, understanding of self towards change, resistant of male's violence, and banishment of man.

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