

Fadia Faqir *The Cry of the Dove* (2007): Identity Wandering between Tradition and Modernity**Wafa Kheira LASRI**Department of English, University of AbouBekr Belkaid
Tlemcen, Algeria**Wassila HAMZA REGUIG MOURO**Department of English, University of AbouBekr Belkaid
Tlemcen, Algeria**Abstract**

It is widely known that Western invasion brought new ideologies over colonized countries, from eradicating its traditions to impressive news reforms. Thus, the colonized country becomes torn between former traditions and newly modern perspectives. In this respect, the focus of this research paper will fall over as it witnessed Western imposition over its society that tried, in its turn, to maintain a traditional lifestyle, while there were attempts for change. Hence, the researcher attempts to shed light on Jordan-as it sways between traditions and imposed reforms- through the literary work of Fadia Ahmed Faqir, whose main motivation resides in the strong messages she conveys in her novel *The Cry of the Dove*. Thus, the concern of this paper is how far carrying a double identity affects people's sense of belonging? In this respect, the article introduces a hint of the author's life embodied in the protagonist Salma, who carries a swaying identity torn between tradition and modernity through her adventures. Salma moves forward and backward through time, then she- the protagonist-wins a voice in a foreign country and adopts a new standard of living, releasing herself from the cultural boundaries of Jordan. Salma is naïve but loses her original identity while she had an opportunity to be a wife, with her husband who travels to provide for his family. But she flies to Britain rejecting the double life she leads between her traditional and modern habits. As this paper submits, the addressees should depict the impact of living a double identity adopted by a traditional character living in an imposed body and culture.

Keywords: Cultural boundaries, double identity, social change, tradition vs. modernity, Western reforms, women's oppression

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Introduction:

For writers, Literature is a means to tackle issues dealt with in real life, from political problems to personal ones. Thus, the novel has been relating to society throughout centuries, which gives literature new reasons to take distinct horizons and perspectives in writing, until it deals with issues of postcolonialism in order to picture unspoken Western impositions and resistance in literary works authors. Postcolonial literature, as a new movement, is the writing which has been – as Ashcroft claims - “affected by the imperial process from the moment of colonization to the present day” (1989, p.2). In this respect, many authors collaborate within literature, such as Arudhati Roy, whose novels reflect indigenous modes of invention and creation besides many others, who characterize postcolonial literature as a literature of change, invention of new words and styles to communicate how a special behavior, in a sense, has been forced upon them.

Much of postcolonial literature attempts to restore the voices that have been silenced for a remarkable period of time. Literature justifies actions as violence against those who resist colonial rules. As an answer to this, a category of human beings has been gathering its strengths, a voice from Africa, another from India, and many others from colonized countries; all voices are female ones. The post colonial literature impacts not only men but women as well. Using the English language as means of self-expression, women write about the way men and society oppress them; they explain that being a woman means she has no role in society, so she is marginalized. As a result, post colonial woman literature deals with social differences between men and women in a male dominated society. Though postcolonial women literature is criticized, it still attempts to widen its roots to win a space among men, for instance, the best known writers Leila Aboulela, Nawal al-Saadawi, Edna O’Brian, Fadia Faqir and Assia Djebbar.

This research paper will be dealing with the impacts that affect Middle Eastern societies – especially Jordan- by Western invasion that carry huge and political difference over Jordan, meaning that Jordan has been trying to stick to its traditions, but Western colonialism resumes the change, especially Arabic novels.

Westerners affect other countries too, but Jordan is known by its rude applications of political, traditional and religious rules, even if it costs the dearest person of one’s life; rules are rules. Its famous women writers expose this country: Fadia Faqir and Layla Habaly.

In discussion of general matters facing women in the Middle East, the lifestyles and conditions are often lost. Westerners perceive Middle East as passive, weak and veiled. The oddness that might occur here turns around the type of causes women are put into, and the kind of literature occurred in that era. Jordan, as a subject matter to study, demands answers about its context as a Middle East society.

1. Middle Eastern War and its impact on Arab Women

Arab world witnessed many wars for the most of the twentieth century. For varied reasons, Western colonial projects had an impact on regions in Ottoman Empire at the end of World War I, culminating until 1948. This period-according to every Arab in the region- marked the beginning

of the reign of terror and unsettlement, characterized by geographical and spiritual displacement. Therefore, the Civil War is imposed over men and women, whether victim ones, or unwilling participants. In this respect, political literature-a new genre- outlined interpretation of legacy of pain and displacement.

By evaluating past events, the researcher relates with the fact that Jordan witnessed extreme changes because of terrorists of the West. Therefore, the writer's concern is about Jordanian context as responsible for transgression of crimes, especially honor.

1.1 Jordan society

Jordanians' social life lies on the family; Nyrop (2008) details its importance:

The household is composed of Kinsman, and family ties ramify into the structure of clans and tribes. In principle and usually in practice the individual's loyalty to his family . . . overrides other obligations . . . often outweighs personal achievements in regulating social relationships. (Nyrop, p. 82).

The quotation communicates the idea that that good reputation of kinsmen must have good reputation. This concerns women beliefs that the dignity of a group is tied to its kin and when the status of women is good, it reflects a significant concept of honor both in Jordan and in the Middle Eastern society in general. Besides, Jordanian society is characterized by the deep roots in patriarchal tradition, which creates a deep fissure between men and women. Due to the scope of this paper, it is necessary to limit the dynamic feminine background. Hence, this section will maintain a focus on educational system and the occupation kept by women in order to mirror the status of women in Jordan. During Postcolonial era, Arab women were not given any voice or importance as they are seen as cook and raise children.

1.2. Women in Jordan

The long-established roles within households, Jordanian society incite women to attain certain occupations. Despite that they are low paid and are not granted much power in the work place, she is allowed to maintain her traditional household responsibilities without having total control on her money since the latter is controlled by the husband, and in rare occasion is used towards any means that can empower her. In some cases, women are submitted to crimes practiced over those who are not highly-paid, most of them are victims because they are dependent on their husbands who, in return, strike their wives of any "monetary freedom autonomous power, which directly results in her subjection in almost every other area of her life and reiterates her submissiveness to her husband and his standards." (Fargues, 2005, p. 38). In response to that, Miller adds: "Many times, this results in domestic violence, and in extreme cases involving family honor, the death of young women" (Miller,2009, p. 65). Lately, women are favored with some liberating movements towards the male domination and authority, but are futile, perhaps because of political representation of women in the Lower House of the Parliament.

From another perspective, and due to the Western influence over Jordanian women, many of them demonstrate their movements, through gaining place among men, and establishing organizations for protesting against issues related to discrimination in opposition to them. This organization pushes the government to adopt the UN's Convention on the Elimination of All forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), giving result to two articles, for the Article 9 concerns citizenship and the Article 16 having concern with equal rights in marriage, divorce and parenthood. However, issues like honor based violence, sexual harassment are issues with no solution that women keep skeptical once being outside home.

Women fail in competing with men in legislative and municipal elections because of the idea that women are inferior in Jordanian society when it comes to their ability in political work, so, men are better placed in such domain. According to Owemer (2012) "Because women lack the support of official and unofficial leaderships that affect the process of political participation, who do not aspire to the development of modernization due to the weak cultural, social, and religious pretexts" (p. 187). All in all, Political participation of women is an issue affecting not only Jordan but nearly the whole Arab world as well, but it is crucial in Jordan because women constitute half of the population in there.

2. Isolated Echoes

Nothing hunts a woman but her feelings most, as a result, some change their ways of looking: some sing, some establish institutions to help women and some include their words into history; becoming writers, all of them, believing to share their lived experiences and narrate their stories in a way or another, hoping to transmit a particular message, and for some, imagining a better world. The researcher is mainly concerned with what the Arab women writers try to say and what they do not.

To live into Arab women's writing in the twentieth century, going back to the latest half of the nineteenth is needed; the cultures over the Arabs heartland their worlds characterized by a climate of openness and acceptance of the new. Thus, it is easy to share Cooke's belief that male's writings differ from female's ones, for the former write about reflective of reality that need reform, while the latter's being less graphic, less violent and perhaps for that reason less known.

Lebdai in *Arab Women Lives* (2007); she mentions that today's Post-colonial African Literature has evolved by including themes such as duality, hybridity and self-analysis for ultimate purpose of (dis)covering and defining one's individuality and one's positioning in the course of "History". He cites many women writers dealing with distinct topics as confirms Bill Ashcroft in *The Empire Writers*: "Contemporary accounts . . . are beginning to assert the hybridized nature of postcolonial experience" (p. 35). This refers to the harshness of migration that causes both physical and psychological aches because of the impossible adaptations to new environment. As a result, post-colonial women writers tackle such issues and become the leaders.

It remains to be seen that women are finally captivated by uprisings that mark both the Middle East and the Arab countries. Abbas' *Revolution is Female: The uprising of women in the*

Arab world 2002 says that: “The moment was poignant one for the Arab feminists. Though few outside that the Arab world knows it, women’s radicalism in the region has long and deep roots that span more than a century”. Besides, it cannot be erased that Arab women’s writings are critiqued, though, but from a feminist perception, they feel a must to fight hard to gain recognition as artists. However, some of Arab women seem to be more feminist than others, since they engage with extra feminist themes than others. Literature written by women themselves brings to another dimension as the real experiences of life and hardship have a touch of femininity, not only in the Arab world, but in foreign one as well.

To be more precise, Fewzia Bedjaoui, in her distinct articles tackles a novel which mirrors all what echoes of women sound like. In one of her titles (*Trying to Belong*), she refers to Monica Ali’s *Brick Lane* as a story that debates the perennial of how the individual can remain constant and change, exploring the challenges that exist in identity and “femininity”, keeping the Indian traditional discourse. She (2011) argues that:

Writing for Indian women among other is a way of expressing feelings of suffering, loneliness, frustration, fear, alienation as well as hopes and dreams” while she sheds light on how men see the women writings: “The argument that women writers were not active in literary production is simply untenable, for the illustration of Kali publishing shows the opposite. Indian male critics may quickly point out that Western literary awards are not reliable indicator of the artistic achievement of women writers. (p.39)

As an appropriate way to sum up all what is said is that feminine writings and more precisely Arab writers tend to open doors to silenced voices, capable of saying a lot, hoping a better expectations through their writings, using whether “harsh” direct words or most of the time killing the beast by their sweetness of lines. Though the attempted works, male domination still remain, and though the Arab women writers still fight with their words. They may encounter some problems in dealing with stereotyped world, trying to belong, feeling urged to be adopted with social change.

2.1. Salma’s Belongingness

Linguistically speaking, Fadia Faqir seems to represent a suitable example with her book *Lost in Translation*, when referring to the difficulty of publishing in their countries and problems of translation while living in the West, trying to adopt the language of the other. So, Arab women writers living in the West feel urged to create a new shape of pen for writing, in another sense “an Arab book” in the culture of the other, since they are displaced in exile. *Pillars of Salt* is the instanced novel in which she inhabits transcultural and translinguistic position using proverbs, translated Arabic words, phrases as well as culturally specific moments and actions in her English texts. In this respect, Maleh’s *Arab Voices in Diaspora: Critical Perspectives Anglophone Literature*, says that:

What Faqir’s *Pillars of Salt* attempt at can best be described by what Miriam Cooke has identified in the work of other Arab women writers as “multiple critique” in which authors critique simultaneously the global system, their own political regimes and religions and

family contexts and the patriarchal vein that runs through them all and still remain wary of other 'desire to coop their struggles. (Maleh,2009, p. 242).

She confirms, thus, that: "Although the text empowers the Arabic reader, it does not mean at all to sugar-coat Arab women's oppression, while the West is already certain that such oppression exists and exults in seeing it displayed" (p.254) when dealing with Western Arab issues.

Anastassia Valassopoulos' *Contemporary Arab Women's Writing: Cultural Expression in Context*, deals with problems and prospects feminist Arab writers face, arguing that: "In her article "Publishing in the West: Problems and Prospects for Arab Women Writers", AmalAmireh argues that it is often easy to discern why certain works by Arab Women Writers succeed in the West and are embraced as somehow 'enlightening' . . . What has also been interesting is the way in which women writers have been critical for each other in terms of whom their work appeals to and why"(Valassopoulos 23). In her turn, Amireh uses Nawal el-Saadawi as an example of an established author and feminist, argues- pointing out the difficulties that Arab women writers have had in avoiding certain predictable responses-that:

I agree that el-Saadawi is popular in the West partly because her works have played into Western prejudices. But I do not think this fact should be merely used to dismiss her achievements. This current generation of Arab women writers faces the same problems of reception she has faced and will be better of reflecting as the historical factors behind this kind of reception than evaluating themselves at the expense of their predecessor. (Amireh, p.56).

In a nutshell, the telling of Arab women writers display a variety of themes, among them the delicate one about wearing the veil. Whatever approach, these women find finally the capacity to say that they are responding creatively and vigorously to the existed dilemmas, and that they can challenge the rapid social change through exposing abusive situations, raising controversial issues and criticizing many aspects of Arab society, with the goal of generating a constructive dialogue by both men and women. They gain their places in interpreting their personal experiences in sight fully and offer authentic accounts of realities of their lives. The use of their reasoning voices rise above the male-dominating space, and all this, believing on the ink falling down from their pens with an inch of distinctive, especially inner talents.

2.2. The Bleeding of Pens

With the appearance of literature, specific framework arecategorized by the recent impressive boosting narratives, produced in English by women authors who are Arab British/ American immigrants, or daughters of early Arab American/British immigrants. This category is widely recognized by Western critics and interested in by many academics and researchers. From Long years of British colonization in most Middle Eastern countries, 'Anglophony' did not make its appearance as it is the case with other South Asian and South African countries. Hybridity writings and the emergence of hybrid identities are favored after Bhabha. The list of writings produced by Middle Eastern Arabs-compared with the literature in French produced by North African (Algerian, Tunisian or Moroccan)-become one on the whole unimpressive challenges after that,

by increasing of English production by Arab writers, mainly like AhdafSoueif, Leila Aboulela, FadiaFaqir and others who either live in Britain, in the USA or between the US/Britain and the Arab world.

The methodology applied in the following literary analysis is the feminist qualitative research approach in literary studies with specific reference to Arab immigrant writers. The challenges faced by Arab women have been interpreted throughout their lines, attempting to give voice to the voiceless. How do they envisage their revolution of these challenges? Why women are challenged? The purpose of this paper is to provide a framework that can give an adequate account of challenges through evaluating solution found between the Arab women writers in the UK's lines.

To conclude, those women are dealing with such writings since they feel a kind of displacement, so they speak articulately to the diversity of Arab women wherever they are –to their ideas, desires emotions and strategies for survival. The works of those writers do not, in the name of unity and solidarity, gloss over socio-economic and political differences among the women they represent. In fact, difference becomes a site for investigating commonalities, since the works cited show a commitment to approaching the politics of location as a site for understanding particularized experiences within a global framework. Broadly speaking, all novels tend to enumerate characters through which the reader is given a chance to examine different context in which characters live, and all this, in order to shape contemporary Arab cultural identity.

3. Fadia's Shadow in *Salma*

The writings of Fadia Faqir scream the silence and pain that a woman passes through, because of male domination and harsh governmental laws, and the way that property owns a property, the way Arabs interpret the Islamic canons and known as a victim that owns her rights. The novel formally constructs empathy and compassion. Faqir utilizes *Salma* as a mirror of her life. More than any novel, Fadia uses descriptive themes in which she shows that *Salma* is affected with tastes of food, herbs, trees and flowers, and evocates language as in Lavender, ripe olive, orange blossoms, jasmine, sage tea, lentils, frozen fish sticks, spicy ghee butter sandwiches and many others. Was this done consciously? What does this tell us about *Salma*? A stranger in a country? England or Hima? In this respect, we will attempt to clarify some of the key words that Faqir uses as a reference to her being and beliefs.

Beginning with FadiaFaqir's *You arrive at a Truth, not The truth: An interview with Fadia Faqir* by Lindsey Moore; Fadia explains the most influential factors that she pictures in *Salma*, beginning with the fact that she-Fadia- used to live next to an English club and that the Jordanian people never had the access in, thus, she pictures it in *Salma* when-in Britain- she is always looking into other people's gardens in England, since she is always on the outside. She-Fadia-adds that she hates the fact that her father urges her to put the veil and do her prayers at time; she responds to his behavior, she says: "all kinds of things that made me react against institutional religion" which means that she does the contrary of what her father asks her to do.

Next, Faqir mentions that her influence of her mother's liberality makes her able to express her needs, even if this reaction enters her to fight with her father. But the last one, which she characterizes as 'the biggest fracture in my life', is the verity that she loses her son, she says:

My father insisted on my marriage, but then pulled me out of it when it turned out to be a disastrous match. . . I lost custody of my son as a condition of my divorce. I broke down after that, after they took away my son . . . I went to University but if people spoke to me, I would consider myself as not worthy of their greeting . . . I was riddled with guilt. I started writing because it was perhaps a way to talk to my son perhaps it is a long letter to him, all of it.

Fadia Faqir pictures themes through the adventure of Salma, moving forward and backward through time. She portrays what a post-colonial woman can pass through and how such character as Salma can flee this condition to be killed at last, just as her sisters, who have committed honor crimes. Fadia wins voice in a foreign country and adopts a new life style.

The connection between past and actual generations illustrate that when the topic is about a woman, there are no boundaries in both time and place. The post colonial period has given birth to such women who do not know how to keep silent but yell their pains between their lines.

As a scale of this study, the message extends over several steps, as it is recommended the move from the general to specific, the story takes the top. As for the rest, they attempt to dig deeper between the lines until Fadia Faqir, and her relation with her main character. Being aware of what a post colonial literature wants us to know, themes vary from one setting to another, and eager to reflect such issues that affect women especially, Faqir pictures each theme at the level of possibility. History is part of each soul, and one of Salma gives answers to how a woman should free from oppression, from grief; that is to have a character, not to stay aside and cry as a baby, just as Salma did. Everyone commits mistakes, but we have to learn to pardon ourselves in order to know peace, Salma did not. The message seeks to empower women, to sparkle the inside of her capacity; to be a real feminist.

Conclusion

Wishing to represent the experiences of people and their societies in all works to mirror the society by using language, which is the medium of expression, holding the story as it is, the researcher can deduce that literature espouses, therefore, such interventions and hopes at documenting the lived experiences of a people. Curiously, one of the sharpest points comes to shed light on, is the literature written on women, since whenever feelings are found, it refers to the fact that this part of self-expression is shown through her writings, depicting the sense of belonging in her literary works.

Fadia Faqir, in her novel, diversifies in the use of a variety of cultural elements such as songs, beliefs and Arabic words, wishing to keep the original speech of characters. She uses as many descriptions as she can, as in:

I would watch how the sea woke up when touched by morning light, its colours changing from grey to corcel, to gold, then to turquoise. . . The sun would fight the darkness of the sea. The sunlight would win the day, filling the air with light. The dark-blue sea, exhausted, grew mossy around the edges. (72-3)

In a nut shell, several findings resume the concepts that have emerged during post-colonialism, which, finally, favor women to speak out and loud in a male dominated society, in addition to carry an identity free from ups and downs in terms of belonging, culture or lifestyle. Besides, the Western invasion over Jordan liberates and gives birth to a new kind of writing that has spread over the journals and even media.

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