

## **Negative Representation of Women in Some Selected Arabic Stories**

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### **Abstract**

This study investigates women's negative representation in four short stories written by Arab authors. This combination of stories is examined in light of the theory of French liberal feminism by Simone de Beauvoir - a French feminist. It offers an insight into how societies in these stories have never accepted women who used to be treated differently than men. Due to this discrimination, men participate in all walks of life. Women have largely remained prevented from influential contributions, for they, in these stories, symbolize inadequacy, dependence, maternity and shame bearer as if they were everything except humans. This phenomenon has appeared under 'feminism.' The data of this paper were analyzed using a descriptive-analytical approach —the process of using current and historical data to identify trends and relationships. The study opens with a portrayal that explores the movement of persecution and its relationship with culture. Findings showed how this has driven the female character to live under some adverse psychological effects and indicates two external factors that reinforce violence against women.

**Keywords:** Broken spirit, Feminism, short story, Simone de Beauvoir

### **Introduction**

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Women and men are defined based on their biological constitution, class, race, and physical and mental abilities. Once they are born, their responsibilities and destinies are shaped. For a long time in several communities, the complete picture of males' missions lay in being the intellectual, powerful and holding authority to take the sustenance of their families. The definition is increasingly based on humanity. This picture of feminism has taken a wide part everywhere since the eighteenth century. Even though many feminists and scholars have been carrying out many studies since then and their attempts to equal opportunities for both genders, many societies and perspectives would not have changed. This paper illustrates how some of these societies, particularly Middle East communities, still negatively represent women. The beating heart and the primary vision of this sample is *the Passive Women Portrait* from the Arabian anthology.

This anthology, named Arab women writers, contains short stories by forty women writers from the Arab world. All those forty stories are classified into eight parts, each with a title matching the stories. The original version of this book is available in Arabic. It was edited and translated into English by Dalya Cohen-Mor, who earned her Ph.D. in Arabic language and literature from George Town university in Washington and her M.A. in English language and literature from the State University of Utrecht in the Netherlands. This book introduces English readers to Arab women's ways of life, thoughts, and creative expression as they mark the world of literature. It also provides a good opportunity to expand their knowledge by introducing them to some countries that have been neglected for ages and creating a strong bond between people from different nationalities.

All stories chosen for this paper are common in their sight of misrepresenting women. For instance, in part one with the title Growing Up Female, the story chosen from this section is "The Slave" by Najiya Thamir (1926-1988), who was born in Damascus into a family of Tunisian origins. She was working in broadcasting and journalism. She published four volumes of short stories, two books of plays, a collocation of essays and a book for children. Her story, *The Slave*, depicts the experience of growing up female in traditional Arab society. In this story, a fatherless girl is adopted by a selfish woman who enslaves and prevents her from a life of her own, eventually breaking her spirit. Then in the fifth part is the story of 'The Spider's Web' by Ihsan Kamal, born in Egypt in 1935 and a founding member of the Egyptian Writers' Union and the Story Club. Her story focuses on the issue of Childbearing. The primary task of women in society and as the main purpose of marriage is childbearing, which greatly impacts women's life. In part six, the story addresses the issue of self-fulfillment. Arab women have traditionally occupied the private domain of the household. The culture shock awaiting an Arab woman who returns to her homeland after a stay in the West figures in "Bittersweet Memories" by Zabya Khamis, born in Abu Dhabi in 1958. She earned her B.A. degree in political science and philosophy. Then she worked toward her Ph.D. at the University of London. She has published nine books of poetry, three collections of short stories, and two volumes of translation from world literature.

Later, in the seventh part, the title Customs and Values endures the issue of the Lebanese civil war destroying the fabric of society and depicts a woman's daily confrontation with the horror of an explosion, shooting, killing, and looting in the story of 'The Future' by Daisy al-Amir, born in Baghdad in 1935. She received her B.A from the Teachers' Training College in Baghdad and studied for a year in London. She is a writer of short stories. She has published seven volumes since 1964.

The approach of this study goes through the descriptive analytical methodology. It begins with the analysis of culture on increasing negative attitudes towards women. Then, it outlines the psychological effect caused by this oppression. Finally, it points out external factors as a primary source of this oppressive atmosphere.

## **Feminist Theories**

The majority of feminist theories are about women; however, as Tyson mentions at the beginning of her book, *I am Not a Feminist* could produce for this paper another perspective. Holding French liberal feminism theory by Simon de Beauvoir-French feminist- might aid in the capacity of those four stories. This theory focuses on the difficulties women face in their intellectual, cultural, political, social and practical life and how they can get beyond them. Owing to women being born as females, they have to follow the oppression that has come out for many ages under the term of gender inequality which prevents women from having education or involvement in any side of life. The researcher thinks those boundaries continue because women do not raise their voices against all the injustice applied to them. Hence this survey will look at some examples of this inequality among women in Arab countries. Generally, all those three trends of this study mentioned above are going to be expressed below in the results part.

"It is about women's exclusion from equal access to leadership and decision-making positions in the family as well as in politics, academia and the corporate world" (Lois Tyson.2006. p.85).

The primary task of a woman in traditional societies is getting married. In this regard, Colette Guillaumin (2002) states that the function of women in society is as property that can be exchanged or taken away according to the tradition known in a particular society in the name of marriage (p.116). According to Cristian Delphy (2006), marriage is a labor contract that ties women to unpaid domestic labor, commonly trivialized as housework (p. 114).

Other women's tasks are having children, taking care of the house and serving the family. Beauvoir (2006) appears to say, "despite the patriarchal's assumptions to the contrary, women are not even born with a maternal instinct" (p. 113). This is fair enough to comprehend that what makes a woman a wife and mother is the values and beliefs recognized hundreds of years ago.

In addition, the primary form of oppression of women is seen as other negative opposites and objects. For example, Hélène Cixous (1997) observes that if women are born to be passive, men are born to be active (p.117). It is such an obvious denying of women's subsistence. Moreover, Luce Irigaray (cited in Joy, 2006) reports, "in a patriarchy, women are merely tokens, markers, commodities in a male economy (p.119). A Man needs a beautiful woman in his hand to impress other men.

Move to another point, Julia Kristeva (2006) expresses that "any theory that essentializes women that posits essential-inborn, biological characteristics for women misrepresents their infinite diversity and leaves them vulnerable to the patriarchal essentialization of women as naturally submissive and overly emotional"(p.119-120). Women's biological characteristics do not allow them to be involved in other activities. It needs to provide them equal access.

Bhasin (1996) informs that the patriarchal system controls the field of productive power or labor women, women's reproduction, women movement, property rights and other economic resources (p.3)

According to May Ziadeh (2021), liberty for a woman consists of two elements: education and work. Education that contributes to educating, rationalizing, intellectually and scientifically elevating her, refining her temperament, and developing her faculties and talents. Moreover, the work achieves her freedom in its deep meaning.

## Objectives

The primary purpose of this project is to exhibit and analyze the oppressive images drawn by some Arab authors on women and how this series of oppression affects women's behavior. It is an attempt to understand the oppression of women as a relevant issue in societies today.

## Research questions

1. How is the negative representation of women represented in these selected stories?
2. What type of feminist oppression is offered in these texts?
3. What would occur if the movement of misrepresenting was perpetuated in the long term?
4. What are the factors that would aid in reinforcing oppression against women?

## Method

The researchers analyzed these four stories using the descriptive analytical method to combine available facts and analyze them to critically evaluate the material with the description of the events and characters. It shows the connection between the theories and facts to reach the final version of this portrayal. The data of this research are taken from the four stories with other resources in order to bring to the reader some of the feminist issues and events that shape women's lives and looks into various concept operated by entire societies.

The primary data begins from introducing lifestyle of the main characters and describing the conditions that led them to be neglected. This neglect is a form of oppression which has never been accepted since ages. Lois Tyson finalizes this image by Simone de Beauvoir theory " one is not born a woman; one becomes one" (p. 96). This idea indicates the society and surrounding environment are what make a female a woman with responsibilities for their homes, husbands and children is the culture.

Then the secondary data summarizes the influence this phenomenon creates to the characters. There would be consequences for each move and action people in these stories perform and it is essential first to identify the surrounded atmosphere. This technique aids in the discovery of this discrimination impacts. Simone de Beauvoir emphases that all oppression creates a state of war without exception. Therefore, this is a representation for the huge damage this injustice produces.

The final data concludes the secondary factors regarding one of the stories. It studies the series of events and how these causes prevent the main character from feeling hopes and passions she was fighting for. This prevention which was made by people and society brought out an oppressive atmosphere. Hence it is crucial to consider each detail to form the final image. This theory classifies this paper into three division that will be discussed in the results part.

## Results and Discussion

## **Cultural influence on women's oppression**

De Beauvoir's previous statement defines that the recognition of culture influencing behaviors, lifestyle and the way we look at specific issues has played a leading role in increasing the rate of controversy everywhere. The culture produced by previous people directs us in various directions, which we can sense does not fit the present time due to the improvements and progress operating the entire world. The stories illustrated in this section are *bittersweet memories* (Bahrain) and *the spider's web* (Syria), both are different stories in their context, yet they share the exact impact of culture on the case of negative portrait towards women. The story of *bittersweet memories* explains how the protagonist was treated differently according to her appearance, which was changed in the country she traveled to. This discrimination started in a Western industrial city. It ended up in the airport atmosphere that made her feel this oppression. In contrast, *the spider's web*, which is the oppression applied by the protagonist herself, demonstrates the protagonist's desire to be a mother to guarantee her husband's, long-lived love.

Beauvoir argues that culture has a fundamental impact on women dealing. Most of our actions rely on previous knowledge. Culture is the circle of religion, food, customs, languages, values and beliefs, and it is inherent. *Bittersweet Memories* story is a symbol of alternations due to culture. Al-Jawhara, the protagonist returning home from an American city, talked with a European man named Patrick, sharing a little information about the culture and standards of her birth country. Starting telling him that a woman is incapable of traveling alone, having a chat with a male, also they have to put on certain customs outside. Due to his travels around the world, he evaluated women from many aspects and looked at how they behave, think and react, which led him to believe in women's liberty. Patrick is such an open-minded person and in full belief in women's liberation on all sides; therefore, he was shocked when Al-Jawhara was telling him all these limitations occurred to women and how otherwise she looked different from all women in that country as the author described people's opinion about her there below:

Al-Jawhara seemed to him like a *hour* who had emerged from the tales of the Arabian Nights, wearing Western clothes and jewelry. She was *Scheherazade*, liberated in the Western sense of the word. He was astonished to see a woman from this country with two arms and short hair dressed in pants and an elegant shirt. He thought all women in this country looked like black tents in which nothing moved except a pair of lizard eyes, always downcast. How was he to know that he would be dazzled by Al-Jawhara? She was a different kind of *hour*, one who looked like any European woman he knew, except for her Middle Eastern features. (Zabya Khamis, p. 218)

This is the way other people looked at women in Bahrain. In the statement above, the author may infer that Al-Jawhara broke those limits when she traveled alone without an escorting male to another country, where she found that women were treated differently when she chatted with a male and when she traveled without a black cloak. When all passengers entered the airport area to check their passports, men in white flowing robes occupied the front of the line while the women with their children stood in the rear. Al-Jawhara stood out of place. Although this was her first home visit in six years, she faced an oppressive atmosphere that she had to wait for several hours due to her appearance. A police officer, at last shouted at her to bring him the passport. She gave him the passport. After he checked her name and the number carefully then, he started questioning her informing the statement below:

"Where is your cloak? Where is your husband? where is the close male relative escorting you? Do not you have a family that you are traveling alone?"(Zabya Khamis, p. 219)

Tyson expresses customs as a main source for the impact on women, informing, " clothing still promotes patriarchal ideology"(p. 91). This shows the unfair treatment against Al-Jawhara for her clothes. This is what has been happening since the 18th century. It is an uninterrupted ceaseless patriarchal behavior that should be stopped. What Al-Jawhara faced was unfair. No woman wants to be in her position. According to de Beauvoir, no man has the right to mistreat any woman, for what she lived at that moment would make her regret returning to her birth home. Unless she finds peace and respect in the place where she was born and with the people she is surrounded by, she would not like staying in a place where she received violence and self-abasement.

What is written above expresses how unexpectedly Al-Jawhara struggled. In order to complete her master's degree, she lived for six years in one of the American countries. She might learn a lot about their culture and how they behave, participate, and gather. Hence, she felt like one of them and desired to change. All those alterations cost her to lose her value in her country. This all shows the huge cultural impact on the sight of misrepresentation, which is no longer acceptable to many, particularly women.

Equally important *The Spider's Web* story has its view culturally. The fundamental function of women known for hundred years is maternity. This story explains Simone de Beauvoir's (2006) another theory "despite patriarchy's assumptions to the contrary, women are not even born with a maternal instinct. Patriarchy tells them that they are unfulfilled as a woman if they do not have children" (p. 97). Hence this clarifies women's desire to be a mother, for they want to guarantee their lives. The story opens with a woman named Ghada who notices a spider web for the first time in her room ceiling. She was surprised to find it out while she was lying in her bed, thinking of her endless tragedy and whispering to god:

"Is it difficult for You, O God, to grant me a child? You give others dozens, and nothing is hard for You, if You want it. You, then, simply don't want it. But why? You have wisdom in everything. What is the wisdom in my childlessness? (Ihsan Kamal, p.172)

Her powerlessness shows how the idea of a culture in which women have to bear children greatly impacts their thinking. She had a total belief that if she had a baby, that baby would save her marriage and reinforce the bonds between her and her husband, as she stated:

"One child, O Lord, with whom my husband and I would be de- lighted, and with whom we would reinforce the bonds of love that exist between us--or rather, that existed between us."(Ihsan Kamal, p. 172)

...or rather, that existed between us, she had already broken off the relationship between her and her husband. She felt hopeless that her husband would not continue loving and caring for her, she made a scene from her imagination and started to live it by herself. All that happened due to the permanent rules written for them of being a mother. Her reaction proves Simone de Beauvoir's (2006) claim that " women are trying to escape their freedom to fulfill their potential in the world" (p. 97). If Ghada thought of herself in any position except a mother, she would have released herself from the limitation of thinking of other consequences

of not having children. Even though her husband stated that he did not think about it too much, and what was important was her because she meant a lot to him. She doubted his words as she believed that he still seemed young and looked handsome, so he could get married anytime and have kids. She kept thinking and thinking that she could not even sleep. Once, she noticed a spider's web in her room while lying, and it seemed so strong that it did not form from day to night.

Ghada, known for her obsession with cleaning among other women looking for any fault for her and talking between them about what could make her busy, does she have a baby, had seen this web and was totally surprised, for this web looked different from others. Meanwhile, she found something to spend her time on, which was thinking about how she could not notice this before. She searched and came up with many guesses about whether many spiders or their creation made this web last for long, but all her attempts at guessing failed. Then she remembered I'tidal's - the daughter of her husband's paternal uncle - phrase that house without children is more fragile than a spider's web.

These words stuck in Ghada's mind and she started thinking about whether her home was as tender as the spider's web. She went on to consider I'tidal's words, which led her to consider that I'tidal was willing to get married to Saeed, so she felt jealous of her. It was such a ray of hope that what I'tidal said was incorrect and that she could keep her relationship with her husband strong.

After she convinced herself of this, she decided to clean the ceiling from the web; however, she was incapable and powerless. She held on to justifying her powerlessness with the duties she had done from the morning until this moment. She delayed this task for another time. Simone de Beauvoir (2006) resists that "if a woman seems to be the essential being which never becomes the essential, it is because she fails to bring about this change"(p. 97); therefore, it is significant to note that her failure is only an excuse not to rub the web out because that web was what entertains her in her husband absence either way, she would not think of it too much. Ghada did not even consider changing herself to the best version of herself. What is happening is torture involves not being a complete woman, afraid of losing her marriage and the only home she belongs to. Once again, she still thought of not having children leading her to stop doing home duties, lose her passion for everything and come into a common point between her and the spider web, which was the frailty of their homes.

With days' passage, she raised her hand to God and expressed her love towards God, and even though she cannot have children, she still thanks and love God. Now her last wish from God is to recognize whether her husband still loves her or this love turns to mercy. The spider kept weaving its web, so that it became wider despite her decision to remove it, and Ghada was moving at home as if she had no spirit, only body. Saeed once arrived home and got closer to her, and she repeated saying:

"When would you do that, what are waiting for, why do not you hurry up and lessen my anxiety" (Ihsan Kama, p. 176)

After all, she asked him to break up with her while he showed anger and prevented her from having this conversation again. At last, the phone rang; the caller was I'tidal's mother requesting to thank Saeed for his effort to try fixing the problem between I'tidal and her husband and to stop claiming he could no longer bear her stubbornness and endless badgering. Ghada could not reply. She just replied that it could not be. Then she hung up quickly and returned to the kitchen to accomplish the job she was delaying. She cleaned the ceiling and eliminated any trace of the spider's web. Her fear of losing her marriage made her

depressed, and with no desire to do anything but her jealousy, she restored her power and passion for getting her husband's love when she felt she was about to suffer a loss.

All written above, the way the author uses the symbol of the spider's web in this story demonstrates patience and persistence due to its hunting technique of setting webs. This was a hidden message that Ghada needed to wait until the appropriate moment, and she would have a baby. Similarly, this symbol asks people to heal the unresolved emotions and memories that keep jumping into their lives as it reminds Ghada of I'tidal, who was keen to marry Saeed. Both gathered with the traditional outlook of having a baby and keeping her marriage continuing without any mention to her parents as a source to seek as though her family is about her husband. In the end, the way she led herself to break her spirit to prove her capacity to strengthen the bonds between them was a reflection of the community's culture.

### **Psychological effects due to this oppression**

This section will examine the story *Najiya Thamir (The Slave)* which is regarded to the theme of growing up as a female with considering the psychological impact of it on the main character Amina. Generally, psychoanalytic feminism discusses patriarchy's influence on women psychological experience and creativity which is not limited in social, political and economic oppression; it also emphasizes on women's psychological repression at the level of the unconscious. Luce Irigaray (2006) notes "woman live in a world in which virtually all meaning has been defined by patriarchal language, they might not realize it but woman do not speak as active originators of their own thoughts"(p. 101).

The story begins with a fatherless girl named Amina. she knows that she has an uncle who could not accept her presence as he brought her to a family consisting of two married sisters living at the same house to take care of her. One of those sisters has two daughters while the second one cannot have children, so that she took the responsibility of her. She was about a year when she heard her new family talking about her biological mother that she was still alive and she got married with children after a few years of her father death. For this, her uncle took her from her mother.

Then she realizes that she is a stranger at her new house with her new family, and there is no blood connection between them. She was a little child and saw her aunt's two daughters go to school, whereas she did all her duties, from cleaning, cooking, and washing the dishes. She noticed the distinguished treatment of her aunt's daughters in food, clothes and education. All these actions are going to be kept in her unconscious mind. She once encouraged herself to ask her mother why she had been treated differently when she did not attend school. Unexpectedly her mother replied that her father preferred that his daughter stayed at home and asked her not to mention this subject again, yet she looked for her right. This time her adoptive mother angrily reminded her of something she did not have, saying: "You do not have a birth certificate"(Najiya Thamir, 2005, p. 56).

Those words would definitely be offensive and painful to Amina, for a birth certificate is significant to prove names and ages, to prove that there is a life. She kept on asking herself questions then she asked her mother when she was little. As she grew up, she was being got rebuked and criticized for her misbehaving that led her to keep her mouth shut as if this is not a reflection for their treatment. She buried her unanswered questions inside her because she felt this insult and did not want to be offended again.

Time passed, and she was getting older, so she got her birth certificate when she was thirteen. Her passion was more assertive this time to educate, so she found a new place where reading and writing were taught. She requested that her mother attend this program for two hours a day after she accomplished all the tasks. It is expected what her mother's reaction



would be, but this time she uses her trump by recalling Amina's age, and she is a young girl now and how shameful it is going to be if she began attending school at that age as if there is a specific age for learning. Besides, her father would not allow her to leave home alone for her safety. Despite this frustrating environment, her passion and struggle for studying did not end up. It was a competition for her, and in the end, she demanded to be the winner. This confirms Tyson's (2006) famous speech that "the unconscious desire is always seeking our lost object of desire"(p.29). This was not very pleasant for Amina due to her distinguishing her aunt's daughters from her. She asked her mother why their father did not prevent them from studying, and her mother was content with saying that each father has their way of raising children. To satisfy Amina's desire to learn, she offered her a chance to let her nieces teach her at home. Initially, they rejected her because they were busy and promised their aunt to teach her on holidays. Amina became happy for this, a ray of hope to be intellectual and reveal the chains of ignorance. They started to teach her, and she was doing well even if she missed a little, and they laughed at her. Her optimism encouraged her to do her best in her studies and household chores. Her mother commented:

"You and your studying. What have you gained? Now you are even more stupid and ignorant than you were before"(Najiya Thamir, p. 57)

Psychologically, this phenomenon (underestimating others) is a method that a person resorts to in response to her/his frustration as a result of her/his inability to achieve his/her motive. This what the mother was suffering from but she did not realize it. That education gives stupid expression is totally wrong. It is the way which leads everyone to their independence.

Amina reached twenty years old. She was pretty, tall, slender and capable of reading and writing. Several men came to propose to her for marriage, yet they got a refusal that they were not suitable for her. Her mother wanted a high-ranked man for her daughter because she was skilled in-home work and she looked beautiful. Her cousins were talking and said their aunt did not understand that her daughter's beauty did not affect the position of the man her daughter was going to marry because, in the end, she raised her like her daughter. She heard this phrase all the time 'like her daughter!' and she knew that she could never be like her daughter. As Her mother continued refusing the men who asked her hand, she comprehended that what her mother demanded was not a good man for her, it was the service she offered. If Amina had left home, no one would have served them. She was nothing except an enslaved person who was chained to pay for what they had doubts about. She accepted that she would never be a genuine member of this house. She last informed me:

"And then? what is the difference between these bars that surrounded me and grave? Would not grave be more merciful and gentler?"(Najiya Thamir, p. 58)

The author's ending the story is outstanding that she leaves the reader with many questions. What happened later, have Amina done what goes through many readers minds? Why Amina mentioned the grave? Had she Committed a suicide or it was only for comparing?

The researcher analyzes the whole story on the trend of the psychological impact of misbehaving towards women on the protagonist Amina. According to Cherry (2022), unconsciousness is the main tool and vital in human beings. He classifies instincts into Life instincts which relate to basic survival and reproduction such as food, shelter, love, and so many others, and the dead are the outcomes of an unconscious wish for death. When Amina was running to achieve her passions, she was satisfying her life instinct, but when she realized

that she could not go on for some reason, she went through stages that led her to the death instinct. All the effects are explained below:

| The issue  | Background  | The scenes  |
|------------|---|---|
| Isolation  | Ami Rokach (2019) states that isolation occurs during life transitions and he comments "if reactive loneliness is painful, chronic loneliness is torturous"(Rokach: <a href="https://www.apa.org/monitor/2019/05/ce-corner-isolation">https://www.apa.org/monitor/2019/05/ce-corner-isolation</a> ) | Amina's biological family who did not want her and gave her to another family which made a big change in her destiny is the main factor that led her to be psychologically affected. Then begins a new life with a new family whose distance whether emotional, physical or mental one contributes in making her feel that there is no one to stand beside her. In the long run this permitted her losing her confidence. |
| Depression | Depression which is defined as a mood disorder that causes a persistent feeling of sadness and loss of interest   | The sequence of Amina's passion loss is totally obvious in the summary written above. Starting with her desires to learning although the disruptive atmosphere. Then as she got older, she learnt how to read and write. At last, her mother constant frustration drives her to acquiesce to the current situation which results unwanted actions.  |
| Suicide    | It is known as the act of intentionally causing of one's death  | The end of the story expresses that there is a crime committed. Based on the evidence collected, it shows that Amina suffers a lot psychologically including isolation and depression which create a huge influence all over the world. These issues are always known to drive to death.  |

To fit this part with Luce Irigaray's opinion, "Women live in a world in which virtually all meaning has been defined by patriarchal language, they might not realize it, but women do not speak as active originators of their thought" (p. 101). Amina was incapable of sharing her notion that whatever parents decide for their children is what must happen. Both her adoptive mother and father wrote a future for her. They must have known the consequences of their view; otherwise, they are responsible for what happened to her. They broke a soul; they ended a life.

### **The external factors on woman violence**

A conflict would be defined in this part as a political phenomenon that can refer to wars, revolutions or struggles which may involve the use of force. These issues are used as an excuse for people to break woman's hopes and desires. They drive them to spiritual violence. The story of this section refers to how women are blamed even if they did something for themselves and how the environment, they lived in contributed and found a resort to put all the responsibility of this conflict on them. This story, named *The Future*, illustrates the external factors reinforcing violence against women.

To begin with, purchasing a dress from a girl who was afraid of being known, and without recognizing whether it would fit her or not, she took it hidden. As spring and autumn were about to come, she was keen to take what suited these times; however, it was wondered, in the light of this war, will she be able to wear it. She went home and notified her fault for buying that dress, whereas the war attacked the entire country. She was like each person waiting for the news. She had bought the dress from the apartment next to hers because all the commercial shops had stopped working. It was summer, and the dress was for autumn. Some heroes fighting for the country either stayed alive or got kidnapped. When all these scenes came to her mind, she felt guilty that she bought a dress while other people died. She was blamed:

"How could she have bought a dress when minutes ago she was wondering how she could possibly get hold of bread for the next few days"(Daisy al Amir, p. 249)

It is explained here that this girl is the reason behind this crisis and the coming one as she bought this dress and decreased the country's economy. Unless she purchased, the country would be safe from the first point of view.

people's curiosity about her financial source, despite it is from her own source, made them forgot the entire issue of war and put her in their primacy. She wanted to tell them that this dress is not stolen and she will wear it either next spring or autumn, she wanted to shout and say that she did not steal and she would not do this either.

To the researcher this girl wants to inform her existence and if a woman creates a hope, passion or dream to keep them spiritually alive, they would fight for it endlessly. Although she was incapable of holding a weapon and going to the war arena, she proved that her strong weapon laid in her heart and desires:

"She wanted to feel that life was going on. She wanted to experience the desire to possess. She wanted to prepare for days to come" (Daisy al Amir, p. 250)

The woman who sold the protagonist the dress had ran out a business from home because her husband and children's unemployment and necessity to look after them. In this way, the seller tried to justify her garment business by her need for sustenance. In contrast to the protagonist who had bought the dress which would not save her from hunger or any explosives. She folded the bag to reduce its size and not to attract attention and to forget that she was carrying a dress, a dress for her. At that time a car full of fighters passed through the street and shot into air to frighten people, but she was not afraid. Even though all the wounded and the deaths, she survived and once again:

"Did she have the right to buy a new dress and would she be able to keep it?" and the fighters? What did the word death mean to them, when they had experience the death every day, every hour, every minute for the past two years?"(Daisy al Amir, p. 251)

Each line, each word goes to the dress, to deaths, to war. Each line blames the girl for buying this dress. This clearly showcases the harsh and destitute conditions full of frustration and hopelessness. People explained this event as they wanted it to be. They did not realize that the girl was in the age when she wanted to survive and live the life as it must be lived in her age, with happiness, dreams and passions. She is in the age when she spread purity, innocent, life, and peace. She found a ray of light among this darkness but people stayed blind for all the brightness around them.

In the story, fighters, commanders and leaders fought each other and started throwing bombs that broke through the walls and windows. She was not afraid and did not escape. She stayed at her place without any movement, looking at people running away, finding a shelter to hide. Instead of running away after them, she touched her dress, which made her feel safe. The fight got stronger; the bombs and rockets increased. The fighters entered the building. One of them shouted at her, saying get into the shelter, but she was standing like a statue. The man repeatedly shouted that the shelter was the only safe place to hide. Because there was no response from her, the man was forced to shoot into the air. Again, she did not move. He got angry that he repeatedly shouted and realized that there was something she held. He asked her about it yet she tightly held it. He moved closer to her until she interacted:

"This is my future, my autumn, my spring. I am hanging on to it, and what I am afraid of is that you will take it away from me" (Daisy al Amir, p. 253)

The protagonist words emphasized that in spite of the fight she was surrounding by, she felt her dress as if it was her shelter because it represents her security and wishes. When the fighter got closer to her and he was about to take her dress she showed interactions as though she wanted to express that this dress was her life and her last source that kept her living.

To end this side, the explanation above introduces for all readers that whenever women desire to leave the darkness and free themselves from any spiritual injuries, there would be a few factors regarding Sakina's words (2017), "the patriarchal system that dominates society's culture causes gender gaps and injustices that affect various aspects of human activities; women have little influence or can be said to have no rights in general areas in society, economically, socially, politically and psychologically"(p.71-80). Hence these reflections of the area that produced this picture make them stuck in their place without making any progress caused by some reasons. This story indicates two main factors which reinforces violation against women including:

- The war as a main source that leads people to make them hopeless and criticizing women's moves as if they are responsible for breaking it out.
- The surrounding environment and people's limited thoughts.

### Conclusion

This paper focused on the negative representation of women, and based on the discoveries made throughout this study, the stories selected for it with the French feminism theory had categorized into three trends. Both *The Spider's Web* and *Bittersweet Memories* describe the impact of culture on creating an oppressive atmosphere against women. *The slave* by Najiya Thamir depicts women's life, mental state and behavior influenced by the emotional violence applied to the protagonist involving isolation, depression and suicide. Amina was a powerful woman with a strong will, but paying attention to the reality of women, she realized that she needed to give up and be the person they wanted to be. The last story, *The Future*, presents two main factors that reinforce the discrimination towards women, including the war and the surrounding environment with people's limited thought. The study laid a particular emphasis on the three main dimensions; cultural influence, the factors that increased the rate of violence and the psychological effects on this sight through which the female characters Amina, Ghada, and the protagonist of the story of *The Future* are discriminated, oppressed and humiliated by their male counterparts and that the major case, the constitute to women oppression. This research opens new vistas for further research to break new ground in women's oppression.

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