
The Socio-Cultural Structure in Ihsan Abdel-Kodous's 'I'm Free "Ana Hurrah"' and Mona Al-Marshoud's 'You Are Mine "Anta Lee"'.

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ABSTRACT: *Although 'You Are Mine "Anta Lee"' is the first published novel by Dr. Mona Al-Marshoud, in 2007, it can be considered one of the most crucial and critical novels in modern Saudi Arabian literature. It defines the meanings of love, war, horror, fear, safety; and it signals and documents the different stages of, where we are introduced to a family living in an indefinite place in the Arab world. This family suffers from the bitterness and disasters of wars and its consequences. The events of the novel spread over fifteen years, where people change between the vicissitudes of life. On the other hand, 'I'm Free' written by Ihsan Abdel-Kodous in 1954 depicts the concept of freedom for Arab women in the mid of the twentieth century. In 'I'm Free', Amina tries to prove that Arab women are capable of and responsible for their freedom; as she tries to avoid being a slave to the obsolete traditions of her society and even mocks them. She lived most of her life neglecting the sovereignty of males over females, but in the end, she finds her freedom with Abbas, the only man whom she loves and respects. Amina (1954) and Raghad (2007) are Middle Eastern ladies who lived in the prison of traditions. They keep asking their selves several questions about their independent entities away from the males. As for Amina, she tries to formulate the right idea about women, though she neglects the traditions of her society. The concept of freedom for women in the Middle East has made them always hesitant about their relationship with men. Sometimes they get very close and other times, women create a kind of distance.*

KEYWORDS: the Arab world, you are mine, anta lee, love, socio-cultural structure.

INTRODUCTION

Depending on the aphorism that the writer or poet is a product of his/her environment, this is necessarily reflected in literary works. The literary works highlight the features of the environment and its privacy to discover social exclusion, economic, cultural and even psychological aspects of society through analyzing the artistic work. This environment produces the social behavior of the individual within his society, where he learns values, ethics, and various standards of life and culture starting from the family, school and then to the society. Recently, society has been affected by the subsequent results of wars and the rapid exchange of political regime; this in turn affected the intellectual development, political rights, and freedom of expression. Since the writer is a mirror of his society, he also has been affected and subconsciously has participated in the new trend that prevailed in his society to ensure his identity and to face different corruptions. So, this paper tries to highlight the effect of society on its people and the backgrounds of literary works.

Through Amina and Raghad, Abdel-Kodous and Al-Marshoud try to build a true identity of Arab women, and they want to create a new image of love inside the Arab society. Al-Marshoud believes that stereotypes are fake, forged and form a misinterpretation of Arab women. To uncover the different characters, Raghad and her cousin, Al-Marshoud senses a unique space and suggests that within this space lies a new world where Arab women can discover and reshape their characters. This space will erase the limitations of time and place. Raghad is the female protagonist who needs a new insight in her life that is only obtainable through a new atmosphere or by revealing her love to Walid. She keeps a romantic view of Walid, through his harsh manners. On the other hand, Walid neglects her presence, and he neglects her as a female. This crucial point created a kind of nightmare for Raghad. As a female, she wants her man, Walid, to notice her and to love her. However, social restrictions and traditions kept them apart most of the time as they live as complete strangers.

Abdel-Kodous's Amina and Al-Marshoud's Raghad are both victims of their societies, they are prisoners of local traditions. The victim's theory, as it is known in the references of anthropological studies, depicts that the victim is always "imperfect", so she needs someone to represent her, and since she is always "weak", she also needs to protect the strongest party in that distorted relationship. Thus, professional interwoven net of power relations is drawn, in which the savior "protagonist" represents the merciful defender, exaggerates to be the spokesperson of what a woman cannot say by her own. This is exactly what Amina of Abdel-Kodous saw in Abbas and what Raghad saw in Walid, looking at them with ambiguous and conflicting feelings, fearful about her freedom, and looking at them with honor and reverence for his seriousness and the aura of prestige that surrounds him since they were young. Amina seeks in Abbas's character a safe fortress, a compassionate and kind enough to throw herself in his arms to feel safe.

Aims of the study:

At a higher level, *You Are Mine* and *Ana Hurrah* are perfect examples of the novelists' concept of socio-cultural background or rather the social aspects of the Arab world. This paper tries to highlight the social conditions of the Arab world especially during wars. Penetrating the Arab culture and traditions was not easy for Arab novelists, as they hold various restrictions through the events of the novel. The reader can sense their backgrounds and the limitations; however, both Abdel-Kodous and Al-Marshoud excelled in showing a platonic love story and social independence interwoven within two Arab ladies living under the control of traditions. The novels are clear examples of the different societies and the reaction of their people towards changeable issues.

Theory and Method:

The sociocultural approach is a hypothesis that tries to investigate the comments that a society makes to a person improvement. This hypothesis stresses on the interaction between *individuals* and the culture of the society in which they live. Also, the sociocultural approach proposes that human knowledge is generally a social matter. It has been developed from the work of psychoanalyst Lev Vygotsky, who believes that guardians, caregivers, peers and culture, to a great extent, are responsible for creating higher arranged functions. According to Vygotsky, learning gains its premise in association with other individuals. Once this has happened, the date is at the certain point coordinates on the individual level. According to

Vygotsky, children are born with the essential primitiveness of knowledge. Each culture provides them with its main traditions of what is called “tools of mental adaptation”. These tools permit children to utilize their fundamental mental capacities in a way that’s versatile to the culture in which they live. In addition, whereas one culture might emphasize memory methodologies such as note-taking, other societies might use tools like updates or repetition memorization. Vygotsky declares: "Learning is more than the acquisition of the ability to think; it is the acquisition of many specialized abilities for thinking about a variety of things."(Vygotsky, 1978, p.83)

Discussion

The main features of the theory of reflection are clearly found in the novels, which are characterized and dominated by a state of closure. In *You are Mine*, the family is totally closed to the society and there is no notice of any relationships with other families within the society. Maybe the novelist does not want to delve into other details that might increase the length of the novel, and focus only on the love story between Walid and Raghad and the obstacles that face them.

The second feature stands out as a conservative family that maintains its customs, traditions and values. This shows at the beginning when her uncle took care of Raghad after the death of her parents, a custom that is given to the uncle to ensure the impact of customs on the society and the legitimacy of its application. This custom does not conflict with religion, but rather supports and legitimizes it in the early days of the coming Raghad for her uncle's house. It was a difficult time for the family and because of the lack of acclimatization and her continuous crying especially at night, which made Walid worry about her health. Walid suggested that they bring her back to her aunt's house: “Why not return her to her aunt to take care of her? Maybe she prefers it, his father got upset and said: No, Walid, she is my niece and I am in charge of her care from now on, it is a matter of time, and she will get used to our house.” (Al-Marshoud, 2007, p.4, Translated by me)

Unlike Raghad, Abdel-Kodous’s Amina tries to break the rules and the traditions of the society. This is what causes us to arouse questions about the limits of the boldness that the novel supposed to transcend the discourse of Amina, so that we can actually describe it as progressive, or that it changed something in the prevailing mentality and stereotype of the role of women in society, Did this novel, *I'm Free*, break the fold of traditional discourse, or did it return Amina, who has become a symbol of all women to a stereotype despite all the achievements she accomplished? Abdel-Kodous’s Amina is nothing more than a modern edition of Naguib Mahfouz’s Amina. Within the succession of time, nothing has changed from what is expected of her. Rather, these texts are clear humiliation to all the achievements made by women:

She did not care about anything, as she lives far from all this in her own world. She is the only one who knows her sky, earth and secrets. Above all, she is confident in herself perhaps to the point of vanity, confident in her beauty, in her intelligence, in her talents. She has ideas and concerns greater than her and older than her age, her beauty, smartness, and self-confidence could not relieve anything. (Abdel-Kodous, 1954, p.18, Translated by me)

It is true that it was a class movement that started up by the hands of aristocratic women “the class of dignitaries and notables”, and here lies an aspect of economic power that creates men's community silent about the cultural salon of a princess in which she receives male scholars and thinkers. It becomes obvious that men cannot criticize or attack fiercely what a classy lady does due to her material and moral status and its affiliation with a wealthy family. On the other hand, women achieve real gains that are undeniable at least in the charitable, social field, sports and artistic activities that were strictly forbidden for women at the time. Throughout *You are Mine*, Raghad's independence and privacy are clearly neglected. Because she lives in a society that does not allow the female to freely act or live as she wishes without being deterred or restricted. Despite all the bounty and pride in which she lived and the greatest attention; the family surrounded her by laws and rules. The rules are ranging from the power of her uncle moved to the authority of her cousin Samer, her fiancé and Walid's brother, without any desire to get to the margin of freedom, freed from obscuring inside the house and after breaking up with Samer, she becomes under the authority of Walid.

Abdel-Kodous's Amina and Al-Marshoud's Raghad are no more than a reflection of Mahfouz's Amina though different ages. Mahfouz's Amina, wife of "Si El Sayed", used to sit under his feet, washing them for him after returning from a long evening, knowing that he was cheating on her. She was confined to her home, since she got there as a young bride, and she never left it except with Si El-Sayed to visit her mother. She is not politically educated. Politics, diplomacy, and government and parliamentary positions were male stuff not for women. When he is under the control of alcohol, he may tell her some details about politics. Her political ignorance has reached such a level that she cannot differentiate between the Egyptian and the English occupant. She does not know why she should hate The English occupant. However, she was punished when she decided to go out to visit the shrine of Al-Hussein, “She is the only woman who did not cost him anything... none of his emotions, nor anything of his money. He imposed himself on her life when he wanted, and she did not accuse him when he came, and she did not protest when he withdrew. She was like a barren beach that has nothing if the waves of life came or receded him.” (Abdel-Kodous, 1954, p.27, Translated by me)

Amina of Mahfouz was subjected to a traffic accident because she was unaware of walking in the streets that she did not know. the woman, the housewife, and the mother of children, who sought to fatten her daughters with what was called the "magic plaques" that brought from Al-Attar to prepare them for marriage when obesity was the standard of female beauty, which was determined by male standards. The image of women is formed by men, as they seek to meet the image drawn to please male sovereignty. Her daughters were also carrying the burden of homework in order to become skilled housewives.

As for Raghad, she was unconsciously dominated by Walid, and she wants to make every detail that might delight him. Walid's control over Raghad can be clearly detected through his constant attitude to prevent her from marrying Samer, his brother, or any other man without his approval; a thing that she can never comprehend. The reader can fully understand that no one can stand for the strength, roughness and domination depending on his physical qualities. But, deep inside he is a delicate child who lives in a body of a rough man. This can explain his deep love, but his love is prisoned inside his heart. This may be due to the strict rules of the Arab society in general and the Gulf society in particular. Male roles differ from those of the female, the male child develops a deeper sense of responsibility, leadership and self-reliance,

while the female in Eastern societies in particular does not develop these roles. Most Arab females pay the taxes of femininity, without having the right to accept or even to discuss it. This kind of ideas and obsolete templates increase the sovereignty and dominance of males; which enhances the harness and subordination of femininity by urging females to stay in the planned circle for them and never get out. According to Al-Marshoud, "Sometimes, we find ourselves willingly sacrificing things for the ones we dearly love, and the ones who truly deserve our sacrifice... And how many times we felt regret, because we were very stingy with that sacrifice?" (Al-Marshoud, 2007, p.25, Translated by me)

In addition, most novelists try to penetrate the society through mentioning the names of streets, places and many other things. But in the case of Dr. Mona Al-Marshoud, names of characters, streets or districts are never mentioned in the novel as she merely mentions the description of the cities. Even when Samer, Walid's brother eloped from his country to another; they never mentioned the names of both countries. In addition, Al-Marshoud tries to transfer to the readers the horrible scenes of war, without giving them and kind of information about this war or its reasons. By doing so, the novelist aims to justify the unstable conditions of Walid's family and the psychological conditions of Raghad, the heroine of the novel. Also, maybe Al-Marshoud wants to save herself the trouble of discussing one of the three taboos; politics: According to Tripp:

Saudi Arabia, with its stringent censorship and highly conservative attitude to the arts, is not often considered at the forefront of Arabic literature but in recent years has begun to produce more innovative and compelling fiction. The quality of past Saudi Arabian writing is also being celebrated more openly as the profound legacy of these writers, who managed to write despite being ostracized by the state, becomes evident. (Tripp, 2003, p.1)

The psychological status of Raghad and Amina due to their social conditions forms their characters and creates the dilemma of the novels. Because of the complicated conditions of her upbringing, the separation of her parents and her upbringing as an orphan in her aunt's house, Amina left her aunt's house as stubborn and hard as if she becomes a hater of the world. This psychological background in the history of the character was exposed in the novel. Amina's undeclared longing for freedom makes her a challenger of the society more than a defender of her rights. Likewise, she was likened psychologically to the image of the father, like a flying bird. He is an irresponsible man, so she admired him and wanted to live according to his roles. Amina appeared in the dress of a masculine figure as if by such a rebellion she wanted to fight the man and take his place. There is no true authentic freedom cry that comes from an oppressed person fighting her battle on a solid and firm ground against the sexual tyranny that places her always in the margins of the society. She feels that she stands on moving sand with distracting and confusion. To increase her psychological conflicts, incidents of sexual harassment of a ten-year-old girl have influenced her and became an enemy of men:

Amina's stubbornness gathered all at this moment, she entered her room and began reviewing her days since Ahmed came to her, and she revealed things that were vague before. She loved his talk and his character, but she had never noticed that in all of his conversations he deliberately refuted her views to overcome her. he deliberately tries to

erase her personality. she accepted his victory because she did not notice that he was doing this on purpose. She used to let him impose his personality, because she did not compare his personality with her or tries to set the boundaries between them. (Abdel-Kodous, 1954, p.97, Translated by me)

These psychological problems are extended to the political status in the Arab world that can the characters. Through *You Are Mine*, the novelist does not want to discuss the conditions of a family, but of the Arab world as a whole where, according to her point of view, there is no political stability or injustice. The consequences of political instability in the Arab world can be clearly viewed in the case of Mr. Nadim and his imprisonment, torture and his death inside the prison due to his political opinions. The story of Mr. Nadim, his imprisonment, his torture and his death inside the prison are only identical images of many Arabs. Samer's story with the secret organization is simply a reaction to injustice that expresses pressure on a man and may lead him to avenge his dignity and pride. The most prominent thing in the novel remains the love of Raghad and Walid through which we can establish our perception of the movement of cultural patterns.

As a matter of fact, the erotic description in which Ihsan has exaggerated in various parts of the novel represents another humiliating image of a man who only sees a woman as a source of temptation for all young men of the neighborhood. Ihsan made Amina herself in several scenes a lustful person, bored of her "alleged" freedom. She rebelled against marriage, but endowed herself with kisses that did not exceed the limit of losing virginity. She wants a man to complete her femininity, which has been wasted along with her fake masculine behavior. Abbas is the man she has always aspires for; he is the one who can make her free from the restrictions of the society. as for Raghad, the reader may not notice any scenes of lust between her and Walid; this may be due to the different traditions of the societies.

On the other hand, different involved incidents must be explored, researched and found, even if there were no solutions that popped up at the surface; it is the duality that we seek. Through this duality scholars try to establish the perception of the movement of cultural systems in its two dimensions, the declared and the hidden ones. Keep in mind that the declared part of the events has been served critically and widely; the hidden one, which concerns the social background of the society, has also been criticized according to the socio-cultural criteria. The cultural structure does not differ much from the social one and they interchange in many points, because we cannot imagine human beings outside the social shell, which in turn imposes a certain culture character acquired from his family, society and surroundings. One cannot imagine a person with a culture that completely contradicts the culture of his family and society. The family is the primary representative of culture, and the strongest group that influences the behavior of the individual because it helps to conduct of his behavior, and form his personality.

A person's cultural behavior is manifested by his actions and his treatment of others along with his Lifestyle. Mona Al-Marshoud justifies her vision of the novel's character and personalities on the basis of her cultural background and the society she lives in, (Culture, Religion and Arabism). We cannot discuss liberalization and openness in a negative sense or stress breaking laws or customs as a part of western customs. Traditions may differ from one society to another, and the one of the sacred customs is the protection of women as an Arab cannot abandon his

wife or any of his family female members. For him, a woman represents his honor; and he deplors that liberal image of the battered woman that neglects all the values and ethics in European societies and see themselves as advanced and liberal. The novelist speaks of European society and what is shown on television with its corruption and dissolution and compares it with the Arab society. Even if the Saudi society transformed, evolved and moved from the mud house to the cement one and owned the furniture and luxury cars that came out of the rapid economic transformation, it remains a healthy desert society that does not easily and comfortably accept new things. This decay is not accepted by the Arab even before his conversion to Islam. Different scholars noticed that Arab character presented by Hollywood is not defined in a particular place or in a clear time, which makes it a total figure to include all Arabs everywhere. So, western civilization created a stereotype of the Arab character, depending on their environment and socio-cultural features.

This attitude will lead us to talk about Walid when State Security soldiers came to search for his brother Samer. He denounced their barbaric entry without preserving the sanctity of his home, especially Raghad's room. This aggressive act caused his madness and anger; and he entered in a battle with the soldier in which he may have been killed. According to Al-Marshoud, Walid explained his feeling towards Raghad through a specific situation when he says:

I looked around at the telephone located on the nearby table. Then I lifted it and threw it strongly towards the soldier, I hit him. Then the rest of the military turned their eyes to me. I saw only a brutal mob rushing towards me for a brutal attack. I left Raghad out of my hands. I blew towards them preventing their progress and avenging the violation of my house. (Al-Marshoud, 2007, p.575, Translated by me)

Walid responds to retaliate the violating of his house. For him, home does not represent walls and rooms but it represents Raghad, whom he did not like to be seen by anyone without a veil or cover-up. She is often represented through the novel wearing a cloak and black veil in front of strangers, especially her cousin Hossam when she stays in their house. Above all. There is an amazing secret about the reason of killing Ammar, as the question remained unanswered throughout the novel. But the reader can discover the answer easily, that Walid killed Ammar out of his jealousy. As Ammar kidnapped Raghad to provoke the nerve of Walid, eventually he succeeded in doing that. In response to her cousin Nahla when she cursed Walid and called him a wild criminal, Raghad replied:

My anger increased and I addressed her sharply. I do not allow you ... my cousin is not a serial killer If he had committed a crime in the past, he then, I watched my words and stopped talking. Nahla said defiantly, he is what? I did not dare to answer. Nahla looked at me seriously and said, He might do it again, I said stop it stop because you know nothing, you are all oppressive. (Al-Marshoud, 2007, p.504, Translated by me)

Abbas, in *I'm Free*, is the only one who can end the confusion of Amina and end her

darkness and misguidance. Abdel-Kodous mentioned in the novel a clear sentence, "This emptiness will only be filled with a man." Abbas represents a clear reference, the ideals and the symbol of culture for Amina. While Amina plays on the piano with her cousin, who is deprived of playing violin for parental authority controls, Abbas meets a group of his colleagues planning a revolutionary demonstration. The use of parallel montage here creates the latest paradox or visual contrast that highlights the meaning and clarifies it between tinkering with grandpa; the fake revolution over traditions and revolution that contains the salvation from traditions, "Love is the only honorable excuse for slavery. A person loves his country and becomes its slave, believes in the principle of becoming a slave, loves his mother and becomes her slave, and loves his friend to become his servant. But slavery that has no excuse is to marry a man who does not love him or get a job that does not Believe in it." (Abdel-Kodous, 1954, p.156, Translated by me)

The reader of *I'm Free* stands out clearly that the religious aspect holds a great deal of the incidents of the novel, as the novelist tries all the time to reflect her commitment to religion. She tries to present the main pillars of Islam, especially the prayer, reciting of the holy Quran and the dawn prayer which is a proof of a great deal of commitment, especially for Walid, who has been praying in the mosque since childhood and reciting the holy Quran. Through different situations, Walid resorts to the Quran to relieve him of his worries and pain and calm his anger and sadness. On the other hand, Raghad recites the holy Quran instead of reading stories, as Walid advises her when she was young. The novelist also mentions the travel of Walid's parents to perform Hajj, one of the rituals of Muslims. El- Marshoud, also, approaches the subject of the veil and covering-up, which is an old tradition among Arabs before Islam But Islam made it an obligation on Muslim women. Raghad ... turned to him saying " Yes father ". He did not speak, but raised his right hand and with his index finger and draw a circle in the air around on his face, then I understood what he meant and turned towards my room to wear a veil and a robe." (Al-Marshoud, 2007, p.51, Translated by me) Her uncle ordered her to wear a veil in front of Walid when he returned back from prison. This highlights the family's commitment to Islam and the obscurity and indecency that has been ordered in their home or outside it.

Through a critical reading of the novel, one question keeps popping; why did Al-Marshoud write this novel? In other words, what is the point of writing it? She was initially written under a pseudonym. Even her personal information is almost unknown: her birth, her city, her direction. Is the act of writing itself prohibited and fall into the framework of social and cultural privacy of Saudi Arabia? All inquiries lead to speculate that the novelist wants to highlight the phenomenon of digging in the depths, to tell us, read between the lines, not the lines themselves. She wants to focus on the problem that they live in a closed society that restricts women who are totally dominated by men, under the cover of religion and again under the pretext of tradition and customs. Arab women travel with a custody, marry because they must marry and have children because they must give birth etc. According to Tripp:

The cultural setting of Saudi Arabia is greatly influenced by the Arab and Islamic culture. The society is in general deeply religious, conservative, traditional, and family-oriented. Many attitudes and traditions are centuries-old, derived from the Arab civilization and Islamic heritage. However, its culture has also been affected by rapid change, as the country was transformed from an

impoverished nomadic society into a rich commodity producer in just a few years in the 1970s. (Tripp, 2003, p.122)

Like Al-Marshoud's title, *You are Mine*, the title of, "*I am Free*", with the pronoun "I" addresses women and urges them to revolt against the sovereignty of men. The tone of the confrontation appears early as readers of Abdel-Kodous, who provides a summary of his ideas in the text at the beginning, were accustomed to it. He briefly declares that there is no such a thing as freedom, and most of us are slaves to the principles that we believe in. We demand freedom to put it at our service. Before you ask for your freedom, ask yourself: For what purpose you will be given it? Obviously, it is not only Abbas who is giving lessons.

The tone of confrontation in *You are Mine* is missing despite the novelty of the novel and its modernization as if it affirms that Arab women have no right in many things like: engagement, marriage, love, choice, travel, rejection or even dreaming without the blessing of men (father, brother, husband, sponsor, etc...) and the society. Despite the development that has been taken place in Saudi Arabia at the institutional and constructional levels, women are surviving to gain freedom. On the other hand, other things that affect life and way of thinking have remained to a great extent static. Through the course of her novel, Al-Marshoud tries to send coded and revolted messages. By sending these messages, she seeks changing society's vision and way of thinking. Unlike the messages of *I'm Free* which are sharp and clear as a kind of a shocking revolt against men.

I'm Free is Amina's constant report or search for the meaning of freedom. In the introduction, Abdul Kodous himself acknowledged that his journalistic style was overwhelming his narrative style, and that if he wanted to write his own views in a lengthy article and put it in the form of a novel, he would broadcast about everything he wanted to present from his personal opinions. In the introduction to the first edition of the same book, he introduces human truth, "A free person is free to love whatever he wants or whoever he wants, but when he loves or when he believes, he gives up his freedom for the sake of his love and faith." (Abdel-Kodous, 1954, p.185, Translated by me)

This a clear male vanity, as if he possesses the keys to the absolute truth, as if he is the one who will teach the woman a lesson about what freedom is? How can she be free? It is more like a catalog or practical guide to women's freedom. This ridiculous method that puts the society in real crises that it did not overcome since the era of Qasim Amin, passing through the first two "Aminas", the wife of "Si" al-Sayyid, and the second companion "Si" Abbas. In this journey of research, Amina is nothing more than an echo of everything that is said and echoed in her heart about the meanings of freedom and how to reach it. In a scene that she hears from her Jewish friend "Vicky" that she must continue her studies, work and earn her strength to be free, she returns in the scene that follows this one to hesitate as if she is a parrot in an automatic manner repeating the same dialogue for her cousin. Amina represents a lost confused soul. It also rebelled against the traditions of society to the limits of going out and standing in the balcony and dancing, escorting the guys and girls of the Jewish neighborhood of Al-Zahir, "she is neither cold nor dead, but she is free in her feelings and emotions, and she will not allow anyone to dictate his will to this feeling or this emotion!" (Abdel-Kodous, 1954, p.72, Translated by me)

Literature is also a weapon with which we can change and revolt against the petrified and

negative habits of the society. Culturally, the novelist tries to urge women to revolt against a misconception of religion, a misconception of ambition and thought. The culture of Saudi society is hindered because it depends on pride and glory, eloquence, courage and looking back to past achievements. However, culture must be considered and supported because it will lead the society to progress and development. Literature is not only a mirror of the society, but it helps its individuals to fight for their legal rights and stability. According to Lewis:

Literature adds to reality, it does not simply describe it. It enriches the necessary competencies that daily life requires and provides; and in this respect, it irrigates the deserts that our lives have already become. (Lewis, 2019, p.1)

Saudi society has a cultural and social privacy that differs from other Arab and Islamic countries. This privacy prevents citizens from many things, depending on religious prohibition, but it remains a society that intersects with many other societies. They make mistakes as the rest of all humans. If they compare themselves to others, they will find that they are suffering some kind of repression and constraint. Some people unfortunately mix up religion with social customs and traditions to fulfill the idea of the privacy of the Saudi society. Through different ages, this idea of privacy has been reinforced to satisfy the male society; and to easily convince women that this is the true nature of the society. So, rare literary voices have come to the surface declaring that women have the same right as men and they hold a voice in their society. This hidden revolt of women will not neglect the privacy of the Saudi society, or neglect its customs and traditions. On the contrary, women will keep their responsibility towards their society and their families as well. The privacy of the Saudi society can be turned into a positive idea. This conflicting word, privacy, is necessary to provoke Saudi women to accomplish progress and continue their seek for success and individuality. According to Hayat:

In the Arab world in general, Islam is the main force that dictates the institutional norms, patterns, and structures of society. The primary sources for the legal framework are the Quran and the 'Hadith' (verbatim quotes of the Prophet Muhammad). Together, they establish the foundation of sharia law, which is widely practiced throughout the region. When Muslims speak of "privacy," they are often referring to a host of values that are foundational to both religious and cultural norms. Islam recognizes the importance of the fundamental human right to privacy (Hayat, 2007, p.137).

Saudi female novelists try to mimic a political reality, socialize and dive deep into the conditions of their society. The Saudi novel has also been influenced by the changes and transformations that have taken place in the world since the events of 9/11. The ideologies have been changed in addition to the significant contribution of publishing houses that have facilitated and expedited the spread of the novels. New techniques have been introduced in the writing of the novel and the use of symbol, perfect and poetic language. Saudi female novelists have become furious rivals to men in the amount of their novels' production. In short, the Gulf novel in general and Saudi Arabia in particular took a remarkable place in modern ages. Their conditions have massively changed from total marginalization in all areas of life to total participations in the battle of thought and achievements. Their concerns are no different from those of other Arab woman, as they were mainly concerned with some issues like: 'women and

men', 'ego and the other'. She also broke the barrier of silence as well as the misconception of religion. For decades, the society have made her pudendum, not even allowed to frankly express her opinions or even speak. According to Algahtani:

Since 9/11, a new generation of Saudi novelists, particularly women authors, has begun to attract the attention of readers and scholars in both the Arab and Western world. As the demand for Saudi fiction increased, Western publishers became increasingly interested in publishing translations. Despite the fact that some of these novels were initially banned in Saudi Arabia, they went on to attract a broad readership in the global marketplace, following their translation into English. (Algahtani, 2016, p. 1)

It is worth noting that Ihsan Abdul Kodous shows an intimidating contempt for fake freedom. In order to break the traditions of her family and her neighborhood, Amina had to commit a double crime, to reject religion first, then to engage in foreign culture and reject eastern culture. The tone of showing anomalies in customs was very high in the novel. Her tendency of speaking a foreign language is to find another freedom in the spaciousness of choosing the word that she wants to pronounce, " I know that we always use the foreign language when we want to express something that we are embarrassed to express in the Arabic language, because the foreign language for us is less explicit than the Arabic one." (Abdel-Kodous, 1954, p.66, Translated by me)

Another feature is Amina's desire to study in the American University, not the Egyptian ones, and her saturation with the American culture, which was mentioned in the text that it "preserves freedom from the ancient eastern traditions." In other words, shyness is an "eastern burqa" that is absent from the girl, who has separated from her roots and started throwing herself in the arms of a different civilization and culture. At a different line, Raghad herself rejects any different culture and sticks to her oriental one. She rejects to take off her scarf and she studies in her countries' university. Amina and Raghad are completely different, while they have the same purpose; seeking for freedom.

Despite being a modern novelist, Al-Marshoud, had a great deal of discretion in revealing the hidden and unknown matters that made her readers have several inquiries about the place and the time of the events in the novel. For her, Love is a crime, and freedom is a kind of blasphemy. To penetrate these prohibitions, it is necessary for the novelist to knock on two doors: either to write ambiguously without any identification or to use a nickname. This is precisely what Al-Marshoud did, she wrote the novels under pseudonyms, though did not deviate from the teachings of the Islam or customs and traditions of the East.

There are also women throughout the Khalij who candidly address gender inequality through their literary works, often risking their social reputations and even their livelihoods. Hissa Hillal, writing under the pseudonym of Remia, a Bedouin woman from the northern region of the Arabian Peninsula, uses a combination of social commentary, poetry, and fiction in her book *Divorce and Kholu' Poetry — A Reading of the Status of Women in Tribal Society*

—*Nabati Poetry as a Witness* (2010) to address issues that some women face in tribal society. (Wachsberger, 2017, P.3)

On the other hand, the sound of conscience that permeates whenever Amina brings a behavior that appears normal to a person who does not want anyone to interfere in her actions, it sounds like a melodious voice. At the end of the novel, readers find out that the lovers revolted against traditional marriage and lived for eight years under the same ceiling without being married. However, Amina completely abandons her dreams to become a house wife that she did not want to be for the sake of a selfish man. Rather, she even liked cooking and house cleaning and felt that home was her place. As described in the novel that she regretted her years of education and work, “There is no such thing as freedom as most of us are slaves to the principles the believe in and for the purpose they seek. We demand freedom to put it at the service of our purposes. Before you ask for your freedom, ask yourself for what purpose you will endow it?” (Abdel-Kodous, 1954, p.15, Translated by me)

Al-Marshoud 's novel asserts on the cultural and social privacy of Saudi society, and sometimes it expresses a kind of exaggeration. This exaggeration is not compatible with the modernism of novel, the openness and technological development. However, Al-Marshoud depicts the heroes of her novel as highly ethical and committed who do not belong to this generation. For her, the novels' characters are very rare in the new world. The novel's incompatibility with reality creates a kind of wonder and surprise. This mysterious atmosphere may arouse different inquiries about the real nature of Saudi Arabian society and its citizens.

In fact, the characters are the backbone of any work of art that create events and connects them together. In this novel the reader may note the presence of two prominent figures who are the main focus of the events and the source of pain, Walid and Raghad. Since Raghad pronounced Walid's name for the first time and said “lee”, you are mine, instead of Walid, he felt in turn that she is his own property. Also, he felt full responsibility for her all his life. Even when Ammar, Walid's enemy kidnapped her, he killed him for her sake. He has long lived accompanied by the hope of returning to Raghad to tell her how patient he was in prison, trying to tolerate the agony and humiliation to give her security. In turn, Raghad, the delicate and the most sensitive girl in her family, did not know Walid's feelings towards her. She was afraid that he would not share her the same feelings, especially when he was in prison. The psychological dimension of Raghad combines a strange contradiction from the kindness of Walid. His sense of sympathy towards an orphan girl, his cousin Raghad, has turned him to a man full of love and waiting for the perfect moment to show his love.

As for Amina, she feels that if she had met Abbas before, she would not have completed her studies in the university. Now, she vacuums, cleans, prepares Abbas's clothes and summarizes his books. Abbas a very traditional man and very oriental but his perceptions of the woman's role in a man's life are nothing more than a traditional perspective. Eventually Amina succumbs to him and kneels under his feet in the same way that her aunt used to do for her husband; there is no escape from slavery, "Freedom is a means, not an end ... If the path to freedom is difficult, then the path after freedom is more difficult." (Abdel-Kodous, 1954, p.144, Translated by me)

It is inevitable that the novel begins with Amina in the image of her surrendered aunt to the husband's tyranny and control, disgusting her sitting under her husband's feet, cleaning his shoes. Ironically, the novel ends with her completely melting in Abbas's personality, and sitting

under his feet helping him wear his shoes. As the novel suggests, Amina becomes another copy of her aunt. The novel extends the irony of Amina and the freedom she seeks. This is repeated with Ihsan in his short story "The Black Glasses" in which he also prosecutes a stereotype of a frivolous woman. There must be a strict man to show her the way, take her hand and get her back to the right path. In other words, mocking a woman as a free, sensible, and a rational entity.

Egypt is one of the leading countries with active feminist movements, and the fight for women's rights is associated to social justice and secular nationalism. Egyptian feminism started out with informal networks of activism after women were not granted the same rights as their male comrades in 1922. The movements eventually resulted in women gaining the right to vote in 1956. (Magdy, 2017, p.1)

Life is not that fair to satisfy all people. The novelists seek to describe the state of the emotional entity by placing it to different junctures, but they are very hard to be solved. These conflicts extend more than fifteen years ranging from death to war to peace, all in conjunction with an extended emotional complex related to Raghad-Walid and Amina-Abbas relationships. The writers referred to the readers with a third person narration, in a way that makes them psychiatrists or close friend of the characters. As a result, the characters, without embarrassment and shame, describe what is brewing inside them which makes the reader sees things from several angles.

The events of the *You are Mine* can be divided into two parts: the emotional and the narrative ones. the narrative are the events that began with the death of Raghad's father and her resort to her uncle Shaker, then the murder incident that led to the imprisonment of Walid and the demolition of the factory. After that family moved to another place away from the horrors of war. The events moved on till the travel of the parents to the pilgrimage trip and their death. The renewal of war was another incident that moved the novel to another angle of emotions; these confusing emotions helped increase the emotions. Walid was describing the horror of war:

We opened the door and went out to the courtyard and with us came out the fumes from the fire inside the house... then we saw the sky swimming in smoke, and the night was like a burning day .. Red .. and the stone is falling around us like rain .. While the world is teeming with successive explosions .. with every explosion there was an earthquake. what an earthquake!! (Al-Marshoud, 2007, p.574, Translated by me)

Ihsan's speech in *I'm Free* did not depart the framework of the society, which is an ideological propaganda for the Nasser's regime, which promotes free education and equality for all, and the freedom of women to work and go out to build society, but "with limits". However, the novelist opted for safety to avoid creating clashes with the society. He declares that Amina and

Abbas got married in prison after they were arrested holding incendiary posts against King Farouk. This happy ending interweaves the end of women's freedom.

You are Mine's emotional situations are skillfully described by the writer, where it was noted that she concentrated on short dialogues and large text of describing the characters' emotions. Sometimes it is hard to find a dialogue between two characters without a full description of their feelings. The novelist adopted the rule of "functions", which means the sudden turn of events, where she put Walid in a position that makes Raghad a barrier in their relationship. Then, she moves on to describe what is going on inside Raghad, turning the events upside down and free Walid. After that she puts Raghad in a position that prevents Walid of being close to her. Thus, she makes the reader a catalyst to compare the two situations.

Unlike the remarkable beginning of writing and a strong plot, the expected end was not realistic and was not professionally linked to the sequence of the presented events, but it was satisfying to the reader for the pain felt by what happened to the characters during the story, or perhaps an optimistic view of the writer only. From an emotional point of view, it is possible to say that the problem of Walid and Raghad is about their arrogance and secrecy for fear of sudden change.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The social and cultural study of a text is about deciphering the literary text and monitoring a set of codes that, in turn, help to monitor certain indications that may be apparent or include in the text itself. Social and cultural criticism have been the basis for the study of those embedded formats that need a precise reading between the lines and exploration, in a try to highlight and dive deeply into the Saudi and Egyptian societies. Most readers try to read the texts superficially and sympathetically, without trying to delve deeply into the incidents or the social background, but the social as well as cultural approach serve to dive us further to analyze the texts.

Abdel-Kodous and Al-Marshoud succeeded in penetrating the feminine planet, though they lived in two different ages. As for Abdel-Kodous, he has successfully portrayed the character of his Amina like a skillful sculpture. He can describe the emotions of a rebel female in the fifties of the Twentieth Century. In additions, he made a massive shift when he made her return back to the world of customs and traditions under the custody of a male, Abbas. He showed how a woman can return to her template through a man, though that man was the only reason that made her rebel in the first place. As for Al-Marshoud, the whole feminine conflict was easy in her novel, because Raghad did not exert any effort to rebel. Raghad wants to be noticed and to live with and for Walid. She is a weak character who needs love and care from everyone because of her psychological and affectionate issues. Though both writers lived in different ages, they skillfully proved that a female can change everything around her, if she has the motif to do so.

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