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A PSYCHOANALYTIC APPROACH TO THE NOVEL OF NAWAL EL SAADAWI TITLED *MÜZEKKİRAT TABİBE*

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Abstract

The novel titled *Müzekkirât Tabibe* (Memoirs Of A Woman Doctor) begins with the return of a female doctor to her childhood by focusing on the psychological trauma that she had experienced as a result of the sexual discrimination imposed on herself against her elder brother. The hero of the novel fights for protecting her selfhood against the society, traditions and men on one hand and hates her womanhood and despises her female weakness on the other. She comes face to face with the tragedies of life and the problems of women in her clinic. She becomes aware of the fact that many things that she had experienced in her childhood had left deep traces in her unconsciousness and that some experiences which she had thought were experiences specific to herself were indeed the reflections of the neurotic disorder of the whole society.

The purpose of this study is to examine the said novel which tells the life of a nameless woman who had in the Egypt of the 1950's, which has been accepted as an unordinary life compared with the period in which she lived despite the tight structural patterns of the traditional order, in the light of the psychoanalytic theory of literature.

Keywords: Egypt, Novel, Nawal el-Saadawi, Literature Theories, Psychoanalytic.

INTRODUCTION

The novel of Nawal el Saadawi titled *Müzekkirât Tabibe* takes up the experiences of a young female doctor who questions her past experiences by returning to her childhood in that she focuses on the psychological trauma which she had suffered as a result of the sexual discrimination between herself and her elder brother. While the hero of the novel had at first thought that the trauma that she had suffered in the past was only a intrafamilial situation had later brother became aware of the fact that this situation is not restricted to her own family structure but is rather the reflection of a social order which is maintained all over the society with well-established traditions and customs.

In the preface to the English translation of the novel which has been published in 1988, El Saadawi has stated that she had written it when she was a young woman and a new graduate of the medical faculty and that she had tried to reflect the feelings and experiences that she had undergone both as a working woman and a mother. The novel had been published as a serial novel in the magazine "Rose el-Yusuf" in Egypt in 1957 before it has been printed as a book in 1960 and instigated significant reactions both in Egypt and the Arabic world. El Saadawi narrates those reactions with the following statement:

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“Some critics have evaluated this book as a revolutionary feminist novel which asserts that the Egyptian women are exploited both at the social level in general and inside the family and the institution of marriage in private sphere. Rose el-Yusuf had published the novel by excluding some parts of it upon the request of the official censure authority. I later tried to publish it together with the excluded parts but the publisher absolutely didn't accept to publish the novel in its original form. I was young and unexperienced in those times and moreover I was dying for seeing my book in a printed form and so accepted it in its censored form. (el Saadawi, 1988: Introduction).

Even in its censored version and despite all heavy criticisms the novel brought to day light the social status of women in that period and their subjection to repression. However, against the rumours that the novel is an autobiographical novel which contains sections from the life of the author, the author is compelled to confess that the novel is not an autobiographical one and that the characteristic features of the woman who is the hero of the novel is only a fiction despite the fact that they reflect the characteristic features of herself and many Egyptian women alike. She defends the view that this novel is not a revolutionary feminist one and is only a fiction:

“In those years I hadn't read any works of the feminist literature which took up the women's struggle or social status in the contemporary societies. I began feeling an interest in that area only afterwards” (el Saadawi, 1988: Introduction)

The fact that el Saadawi was compelled to confess that her work in which she told the life of a female hero who had an unordinary life was totally fictive seems inevitable considering the social conditions of the period in which she lived. The society is indeed very sensitive about extraordinary heroes. Many novels published during the 1950's and 1960's have been subjected to the same treatment especially because of the extraordinary female heroes and in each case it had been necessary for the authors to confess that the novel was a totally fictive one.¹

It is possible to see that the novel contains autobiographical features despite the fact that the author had confessed that it is a fictional novel. We may even say that the majority of the events, which are dealt with in the novel, especially those related to the childhood years coincides one-to-one with the autobiography of the author. Both women have had a problematic childhood period and both of them had become aware of the fact that the traumas that they had suffered in their adulthood were in fact caused by some bad memories related to their childhood and have decided to confront with those memories again.

In this context it is possible to examine the novel by means of the psychoanalytic theory which attempts at analysing the tight relation between the artist and his/her work basing on some spiritual reasons that lie in the unconsciousness.

Psychoanalytic approach² is a method of analysis that reveals the deepest spiritual happenings, personal concerns, fears, repressed aspirations and pains (Eagleton, 1990: 199). A work of art arises out of the phantasies living in the unconsciousness of the artist According to Freud, each individual has some wishes and desires but he/she can't have the possibility to satisfy those wishes freely since he/she lives in the society and is obliged to comply with the rules of the society and is consequently compelled to repress his/her desires. However it is quite difficult to give up those desires totally even if they are repressed and these repressed

¹ As examples of the novels which were published in the said periods and of which authors were compelled to confess that they were not autobiographical novels we may cite al-Jamiha (The Defiant Woman) by Amina al -Said published in 1950, Ana Ahya (I Live) by Leyla Baalbekki published in 1958, I'tirafat Imra'a Mustarjila (Confessions Of A Masculine Woman) by Su'ad Zuhayr published in 1960 and al-Hubb Wa-l-Samt (Love And Silence) by Anayat al-Zayyat published in 1967

² The science of psychoanalysis which was developed by Sigmund Freud at the beginning of the 20th century for the purpose of analysing the unconsciousness of individuals has later influenced numerous disciplines and led to the emergence of a theory of literature directed at the analysis of the works of art and literature. Sigmund Freud has laid the foundations of psychoanalysis with his book titled *The Interpretation of Dreams* published in 1900. See Freud, Sigmund, *The Interpretation of Dreams*, Standart Edition 4/5, Hogard, Londra, 1900.

desires open themselves to the outer world out of the author's world of dreams and become concretized in the works of the author. Thus, what induces the author to writing is his/her desires that he/she couldn't reveal and was forced to repress and consequently those desires shall reveal themselves in the work of art in a disguised form by finding a means of doing it (Moran, 1999: 152).

Freud's psychoanalytic approach focused on the duality of consciousness and unconsciousness³ has been used by giving particular importance to the psychological situation both of the author and the characters in the novel; in literary analysis for a long time. Such themes have been examined like the psychology and world of unconscious of the author and the manner in which he/she had reflected his/her sexual complexes in his/her art and whether there is a connection between his/her psychological situation and the characters in his/her works .

According to Freud, there is a tight relation between the creative action of the artist and neurosis and the role of unconsciousness in the artistic creation must be determined. Likewise, there is also a close relation between the artist and dreaming and for that reason the artist is sort of mentally ill, i.e he/she is neurotic. "He/she is full of wishes and desires that he/she can't satisfy in the real world. He wants to realize those desires but he/she is deprived of the means to attain them. So he/she distances himself/herself from the reality with a sense of sourness caused by the failure to realize his/her aspirations and concentrates all his/her interest and energy on the realization of his/her wishes in the world of dreams (Moran, 1999: 151-152).

The analytical studies which were based on the psychoanalytic approach of Freud that was focused on the artist, have, after a while, been disapproved by some critiques the grounds that such a type of analysis might not reflect the unconsciousness of the artist fully and consequently it would be an unfair approach both for the work of arts and the artist. The main reason of that denouncement is based on the increase of the efforts to correlate the psychological motives lying under the problems, which are expressed in the work of art, with the biography of the author as a reflection of the real lives. That situation has given rise to the reaction both of authors and the critiques on the grounds that the principle of "respect for private life" was violated and the personalities of the artists were exhibited.

"The genre of psycho-biography has been criticized because it has gave rise to speculative discussions on the life of the artist. The artists were displeased with the exhibition of their personalities and the art critics on the other hand defended the view that it was inappropriate to have such an approach towards the author and the work of art. Those approaches depart from a definite principle of "respect for the private life" and the ethical views and concludes in rejecting the idea that there might be secret psychological motives and reflections from the real life events under the content of a work of art, or in defending the view that knowing such correlations could not contribute to understanding the work of art (Cebeci, 2004: 8).

According to Holland it is obvious that a work of art is to a great extend a product of the phantasies in the unconscious of its creator. For that reason if a work of art serves for hiding a secret phantasy and expressing it covertly as in the dreams, then the revelation of the basic elements underlying the work of art shall bother its creator since it shall end in spoiling the game (Holland, 1968; Cebeci, 2004: 9).

³ The theory of psychoanalytic criticism which had begun with Freud has lost its author-centered character within the course of time and became an approach focused on the work of art thanks to the analytic psychology developed by Jung and a new dimension has been added to the analysis of Works of art by adding the collective unconsciousness of humanity to the personal unconsciousness of the author. While Freud dealt only with the personal uncounsciousness his pupil Adler mentioned the importance of the family and social environment and Jung added the concepts of the collective unconsciousness and arche-type and Lacan based his analysis on the intersection of language, which is means of creating the work of art and psychoanalysis. For psychoanalysis and psychoanalytical criticism of Works of literature See Chares , *Psikanalizin Temelleri*, Çev: Işık Savaşır-Yusuf Savaşır, Ankara, Yankı Matbaası, 1977; Wright Elisabeth, *Psychoanalytic Criticism*, Routledge, Londra 1991.

In this context Eagleton has widened the field of psychoanalytic critique from the subject to the object by stating that four important factors must be taken into consideration as an object in a work of art, which is to be subjected to a psychoanalytical analysis , namely the author, the work of art, formal structure and content of the work of art and the reader.

Fictional Narration and Biographical Reality: *Müzekkirât Tabîbe*

The hero-narrator who is a nameless young doctor hates her femininity and despises her female weakness as a result of some bad memories that she had experienced in her childhood . This hatred turns into a struggle against men and the male-dominant society within the course of time. She comes face to face with the problems of women and the difficulties associated with being a woman in the society through the woman who come to her clinic. After a while she decides to review her life in the way to find her true self and at that stage she discovers the desire to fall madly in love with a man who understands her and does not see her merely as a body. She engages in a quest to realize that desire and accepts the marriage proposal of an engineer who had lost his sick mother after having been effected by his looks which suggested the need for affection. However she sees that her husband tries to put pressure on her after a while and decides to divorce her.

She is sad not because of having put an end to a marriage that didn't go well but because of having seen how the society looks at a widow living lonely. She is impressed from the warm behavior shown by a doctor friend in the hospital but after a while she notices that the man approaches her only with a sexual desire. One day she unvoluntarily goes to his home and observes how that man who is very polite and restrained when he is among people but turns into an animal when he stays tete a tete with a woman inside four walls. (el Saadawi 1985: 67-68). Then she quickly leaves the home.

On one side she burns with the desire of finding the image that breaks out storms in her soul and divides her sleep but on the other hand she regrets for making wrong choices continuously for the sake of the thing that she had searched for. She fully dedicates herself to her work and patients. She is now one of the recognized doctors of the country .

An emotional intimacy begins between her and a famous musician with whom she has got acquainted during the celebration party of a professional organization just at the first contact and she invites him to her home the next day. Just at the moment that they begin to talk the telephone rings and they go out together to intervene in a patient in a emergency state. The doctor is very sorry for being unable to do anything for her patient who is about to die and becomes very affected by that patient's handing to him the money which he pulled from under her pillow as if everything went very well. When they return home, the doctor whimpers by leaning her head on her friend as if she was crying for the first time since years , having been deeply affected what they had just experienced.

Nawal el Saadawi⁴ who was born in a small village in the north of Cairo in 1931 is one of the nine children of a conservative father working in the ministry of education of Egypt and a housewife who was forced to comply with the traditions just like every other Egyptian woman. She had three brothers and five sisters. Despite the fact that she didn't experience the intrafamilial sexual discrimination very intensively as in many other middle and lower class Egyptian families she became witness to many vivid cases of discrimination between boys and girls both in the families in her environment and those in the society in general (el Saadawi, 2007: 18) and depicted the social sexual discrimination in all her works.

⁴ See for her life and works, Saadawi, Nawal: *A Daughter Of Isis*. Translated by Sherif, Hetata Bettina, Aptheker Zed Books, Londra 1999; Saadawi, Nawal, *Walking Through Fire*; Translated by Sherif Hetata, Zed Books, London 2012; Malti Douglas, Fedwa, *Men, Women and God(s): Nawal El-Saadawi and Arab Feminist Poetics*, University of California Press, Berkeley 1995.

When she was six years old, she had a very painful experience that she felt as a torture every time that she remembered. She became familiar with the reality of circumcision⁵ which was very widespread in Egypt in those years and which the majority of the Egyptian women, including her grandmother, mother, sisters couldn't understand what it was good for. She expressed that painful memory with the following words after years :

"This wound in my body has not only not recovered since my childhood but also left behind a deep mark in my soul. (el Saadawi, 1998: 74).

She found herself across women who were sent to see her for a prearranged marriage at the age of 11 as a result of the mediation of a neighbor woman who noticed that her breasts had begun to grow. She would maybe be a bride at that age and have children if her mother hadn't opposed to it with persistence (el-Saadawi 1998: 3-4). She never forgot that event as a bitter memory just like the pain of circumcision and revolted against forcing the girls to marry in early age at every opportunity.

Her father believed in the necessity of education of the girls just as much as the boys, however that belief weakened from time to time as a result of economic hardship. What the mother, who has been educated in the French schools, needed most was to let her daughters have an education. Both Nawal and her other sisters had an education at the University level thanks to the resolution of their mother. (el -Saadawi, 1998: 3). el Saadawi has been graduated from the psychiatry department of the medical faculty of that university with a degree and had the chance of caring for her patients as a doctor in the rural areas of Cairo as well as being interested with the social problems of the woman in the rural regions as a woman who had undergone painful experiences. In the meanwhile she was married her first love Ahmed Helmi, in 1955, whom she recognized and sympathized since 1951 and was her colleague as well as the father of her first daughter. The great love ended in divorce after only two years (el Saadawi, 2009: 34-35, 219).

Considering that she began writing her first novel titled *Müzekkirât Tabîbe* after having graduated from the medical faculty and that it has been published as a serial novel in the magazine *Rose el-Yusuf* beginning from 1957 before being published as a book in 1960, the coincidence between the biography of the author and the fictional events in the novel must be considered to be out of the question from 1958 onwards since it would be impossible for the author to reflect her life after that year in a novel which was published in 1958. However we must not oversee some details which makes the novel interesting. Because the hero of the novel had a marriage without love until she had found true love and encountered an intimacy based on sexuality even if it had not turned into a serious relationship. Eventually she suddenly met a man to whom she could dedicate her life just at the moment at which she had given up everything. Despite the differences in chronological order and the degree of interest in comparison to the hero of the novel, three men entered into the life of el-Saadawi in different times as well with all of whom she got married. Her first husband Ahmed Helmi is a man to whom, in her own words, she had attached herself with passion and got married. She had recognized him when he was only twenty years of age and wondered his belligerent spirit. Ahmed Helmi was a fervent nationalist, who struggled against the English occupation, and a freedom fighter (el Saadawi, 2009: 34-35

⁵ The origin of the female circumcision which is made in the form of cutting off a part of the female clitoris dates back to very old ages and it continues to be practiced in many Asian and African countries today. The fact that this method which was widespread in the pre-Islamic period also continued in the Islamic age has created a perception that it is a requirement of the religion. However there is no concrete evidence which confirms that female circumcision is an absolute requirement of Islam according to the majority of the Islamic scholars. However there are also some scholars who argue that despite the fact that there is no direct provision regarding the female circumcision other provisions of the religion must be complied with as well. For further information about the subject please refer to: Hansen, Henny Harald, *Clitoridectomy: Female Circumcision in Egypt*, Dansk Etnografisk Forening, 1973; Roald, Anne Sofie, *Women in Islam: The Western Experience*, Routledge, 2001, pg. 237-253; Skaine, Rosemarie, *Female Genital Mutilation: Legal, Cultural And Medical Issues*, McFarland & Company Incorporated Pub, 2005; Sa'dâvî Nevâl, *The Hidden Face Of Eve: Women In The Arab World*, Translate: Sherif Hetata, Zed Books, 2. Bsk., London 2007, pg. 170-175.

Her second husband Dr. Rashad with whom she got married as a result of the severe insistence of her family members was a colleague and fellow worker of her. The reason of her family's insistence was that he was a quite wealthy man. She couldn't endure that insistence and marries Dr. Rashad. However Rashad was an extremely conservative man who tightly adhered to the traditional values. He tries to keep the hero of the novel under his control just like her first husband, el Saadawi who fought for her freedom since her childhood cannot endure that tight control very long and divorces her husband (el Saadawi, 2009: 76-77). Finally she meets the love of her life in the year 1964. Sherif Hetata is the man to whom she attached herself not with the passion of youth but with true love in her mature age. Just like the true love of the hero of the novel, el Saadawi too is affected by the mature behavior of Hetata and they take a step towards a happy relationship that would last forty years.

Two Oppressed Girls of Fiction and Reality

Freud explains his view on the emergence of a work of literature as follows : *"The author involuntarily goes back to his/her childhood as a result of an event that he/she confronts in his/her daily life and recalls an experience in his/her childhood. In this way a desire arises in her inside to revive a wish that she had felt in those years. And the author becomes makes a move for a narration to realize that wish which she had strongly felt. The process is completed with the joint use of the old and new material in his mind (Freud, 1900; Cebeci, 2004: 175).*

The novel begins, as Freud has told, with the return of the hero - narrator to the childhood years during which the first conflicts between herself and her womanhood had appeared. In those years during which she didn't know anything about herself and her sexuality, the only thing that she knew was that she was a girl. She even doesn't have a name! Her mother calls her "girl" from morning till evening and the only thing that she understood from that calling was that she didn't look like her brother and was not like him (el Saadawi, 1985: 1). She continuously begins making comparisons between herself and his brother from the moment onwards that she becomes aware of that discrimination : his hair is cut shortly and he wouldn't even need to comb it while her hair grows longer and longer and is combed, plaited and fastened with ribbons by her mother by reducing her to tears two times a day. Her brother goes out to the street without taking permission from anybody and returns home any time he wants while she is allowed to go out only rarely. The brother capers as he wishes and does not face any restrictions while she becomes the focus point of all eyes and reproached even if her skirts accidentally is drawn upwards her knees a little bit. And the hero confronts the feeling of seeing her body as something shameful already at the age of nine.

"I used be sad for myself and cry by retiring into my own shell. The reason of the first tears that I had shed in my life was not that my school grades were bad or that I had lost something valuable but that only my awareness of being a girl. I had cried for my womanhood at a time when I didn't know what meant what. Consequently a hostility had already arisen between myself and my female nature when I became aware of what the world was like (el Saadawi, 1985: 1)

Moreover, just during those times, when she was one day allowed to go out by her family , "she had felt a severe vibration throughout her body as she was capering and saw a red stain had contaminated to her legs, she was just about to faint and ran back home with fear and locked herself in the bathroom." (el Saadawi, 1985: 3). As she was still unable to understand what that desperate experience was all about, she becomes petrified out of fear and amazement when she looks at herself at the mirror:

"I got out of the bed, posed against the mirror and looked at the two small hills growing on my chest. I wish I could die just at that moment. I was totally unable to recognize this body which dragged me from shame to shame everyday and increased my weakness. What new changes waited for me in my body?" (el Saadawi, 1985: 4).

The childhood memories of the author is almost one-to-one identical with those of the hero. Although the discrimination between the girls and boys is not so hard as in many

Egyptian families, boys are much free in their behavior than girls. el Saadawi begins to question the differences between her brother and herself when she was only six-sever years old. One of the most important questions that confused her mind and for which she must have found an answer for was the source of that difference and why it was deemed necessary. She asked this question to her mother and father time and again but the answer she received was short and clear-cut in each case "That's the predestination imposed by Allah, the God" (el Saadawi, 2007: 18)

"If I saw my parents to be somewhat mild-mannered I insisted in asking the question: Why is this the predestination imposed by God? They would brush off by saying "because you are a girl and he is a boy". When they couldn't endure my insistence anymore." (el Saadawi, 2007: 18).

El Saadawi says that she had thought a mischief had taken hold of her and was very afraid when she waked up one morning at the age of nine and saw the blood leaking through her legs. She enumerates all possible alternatives about that malice which she tried to solve with her childish mind.

"Is it possible that three years ago they had forced her to go to the bathroom in a half sleepy mood and cut a piece among her legs again? Or had a demon or devil come in midnight while she was sleeping and taken her virginity, which is the only indicator of the chastity of a young girl, away?" (el Saadawi, 1999: 75).

She does not tell anything to anybody in the family because she was very afraid. She began to fear even more when a friend at the school named Maryam told her the story of the getting of Saint Mary pregnant to Christ the Jesus. Maybe God had deemed such a punishment suitable father her. She implored God to forgive her. She locks herself in the bathroom and begins washing away the traces of all her sins. However she sees that an even darker blood fluid begins leak through her legs without the lapse of even half or one hour. She tries not to leave the bathroom and be seen by anybody as far as possible . (el Saadawi, 1999: 75-76-77).

Amazement of the hero of the novel with her growing breasts by seeing them on the mirror appears somewhat differently in the childhood memories of the author. . She tells that when she noticed that boys and even men look directly at her tiny breasts while she is on the way to and from the school she ran to the school or returned home as quickly as possible by hiding her breasts with her school.bag. This event has been one of the most important reasons for the author's hatred of all men during her childhood and youth periods. (el Saadawi, 1999: 118).

On the other hand , the enmity between the hero's ego and her female nature turns into an enmity against men, whose weak points she continuously tries to find, for the purpose of alleviating the weakness and helplessness of being a woman at least to a small extent. She even begins thinking that God hates girls and favors boys in every respect (el Saadawi 1985: 3-4).

"I was not going out anymore...I was escaping a mile from these peculiar creatures called man, who had a tough voice. I had created a private imaginative world of my own in which I had placed myself as the queen and assigned the men the role of silly and helpless creatures who were at my disposal at any moment. (el Saadawi, 1985: 6).

The insistence of her family to have her married to a much older man at a very early age stimulates the feelings of revolt inside the hero of the novel and she goes out of the house without getting permission for the first time and has her hair, which is seen as the symbol of femininity, cut. She is beaten very severely by her mother as a result of this behavior the result of which she haven't thought of but does not feel any pain. Just on the contrary he is very happy to see that the pressure that her mother had put her since years has ended with this beating. This is her first victory in her life, if not against men.

"I learned for the first time in my life what victory means. I understood that fear only brings defeat while courage brings victory... My fear against my mother has totally disappeared and consequently the mysterious atmosphere that led me to fear her had also dissipated. (el Saadawi, 1985: 11)

The author overheard the suggestions of one of their relatives to her mother who said "Nawal is growing and her age of marriage has come. Let's pray that God predestines a fortunate marriage for her" The women in the motherly and fatherly sides considers that proposal positively but her mother Sitti Zeynep opposes against the whole family by saying that her daughter Nawal is small yet and she first has to complete her education (el Saadawi, 1999: 155).

A significant anecdote draws attention in the author's childhood , which motivates her desire to have an education and become a doctor . She was in the second class of the primary school when her father introduced her to his friends in an environment in which he was chatting with them by saying "This is my elder daughter Nawal. She is very successful at school and wants to be a doctor when she is grown up. "When she hears the word "doctor" she notices how big a respect and wonder people feel to that profession and that magical word remains as a lesson for her. (el Saadawi, 1999: 118-119) and she actually graduates from the medical faculty of Cairo University with degree in 1955 and becomes a doctor .

On the other hand the event which has shaped the desire of the hero to be a doctor has taken place on the occasion of the visit of a doctor to their home for the treatment of her father. She sees that her mother looks at the doctor with respect and wonder, that her father has a helpless and miserable appearance under the control of the doctor and that her brother was seriously appalled. She decides to go to the medical faculty and become a doctor.

"I would let my mother tremble like a leaf out of fear of and respect for me, put fear in the heart of my elder brother and let my father appeal to me for help. I would prove to nature that I could cover the defects of the feeble body, which it had forced me to wear, with my inner and outer organs. (el Saadawi 1985; 18). I would imprison it into a steel cell which I had built with my will and intelligence (el Saadawi, 1985: 18).

Two Victorious Women of Fiction and Reality

The hero of the novel has succeeded to get rid of the fear from her mother after having been beaten by her for having cut her hair years ago. On the other hand what she feels against the father, or against men in general, is not only fear but also hatred in a severe degree. The degree of hatred changes parallel to some experiences that she would have in the later periods of her life. However she will overcome her fear totally when she finds many male carcasses in the dissection room under her hand in a totally defenseless state. She looks at the naked bodies of men with hatred and disgust. He shakes the bistoury in her hand towards a carcass and tears it to shreds (el Saadawi 1985: 19-20). Then she moves towards a female body and examines it for a long time. She looks at the two pieces of flesh which had turned into a torture in her childhood. They had flagged, shrunken and were about to dry like a footwear leather now.

"How simple and insignificant it now seems while it had the strength to determine the fate of a young girl and was a magical source of life that used to take hold of the minds of men" (el Saadawi, 1985: 21)

She had dedicated herself totally to science and learning. She thinks that she can fill her inner void, which shows up from time to time, in this way. There is nothing left to be afraid of since she had learned even the most intimate secrets about men. She tries to help and raise a consciousness in the women, who have problems , as she encounters them. In one night, during which she was doctor on call in the hospital, her spirit becomes upset when a pregnant woman dies while she is giving birth to her child . She decides to go away from the city as far as possible , in a psychological mood in which her belief in science has been shaken. She has no idea about the place to which she will go. The only thing that she knows is that she wants to

find an environment with peace of mind that would fill the increasing void in herself. She buys a house in a small village very far from the city and settles there. She feels relieved after a while but she is still ill at ease. Her pains which reappeared especially when she is alone, have almost turned into a nightmare.

A vehement sense of longing has taken hold of me, my body and soul; This was the aspiration of a virgin body which was thirsty for love and had get rid of the iron cell of the spirit the bridles that were put on which were released. I was madly wondering what would be the confrontation of a man and a woman would be like (el Saadawi, 1985: 43).

University years of the hero and her attempt to find peace of mind by listening to the voice inside her and settling in a small town away from the crowds and serving the people there is reminiscent of the period following the graduation of el Saadawi from the medical faculty during which she voluntarily served for raising the consciousness of women in the rural regions of Cairo. However the marriage process of the hero develops differently from the first marriage of the author. The author has married Ahmed Helmi, whom she had got acquainted with in 1951 while she was in the first year of the University, in 1955 and that marriage had ended in divorce two years later. The pair had a daughter named Mona from that marriage. el Saadawi always speaks with praise and wonder about him even though they had divorced in a short time.

The marriage of the hero with a sudden decision and then her divorce as a result of the impossibility to endure the efforts of her husband to put pressure on her is one to one identical with the consent of the author to marry her second husband Dr. Rashad, as a result of the insistence of her family and her divorce as a result of the impossibility to endure the repression imposed by and the caprices of his husband, just like in the manner that the hero of the novel had divorced.

In a period during which she feels herself in a void and searches ways of getting rid of it, the hero of the novel is influenced by the innocent and affectionate looks of a young engineer who struggles for the life of his old mother who is a hopeless patient. The man who remains totally forlorn after a while as a result of the death of her mother wanders around her like a child who looks for motherly affection and finally he proposes her to marry him by plucking up his courage:

"Would you marry me? He had asked that question to me by looking at me like a motherless child. This man has raised strong motherly feelings, human impulses and impulses of self-sacrifice in me. I felt that what has tied me to him was the fact that he needed me "(el Saadawi, 1985: 53).

Trying to understand what was happening she suddenly finds herself getting married to the young engineer in the presence of a sheikh. Everything was going well in the first months but the innocent engineer in need of affection turns into a rough and jealous husband. He is against her wife to work as the head of household. The woman shall sit at home and the head of household shall meet all her needs. Despite the fact that she couldn't give any meaning to such a big and abrupt change in the man with whom she had married just because she had pitied him and thought he had needed her, she endures her sufferings for a definite while to protect her marriage but knuckles down at the end as a result of the manifestations of his increasing inclination to appropriate her.

"Why did you lie to me?"

"I had wanted to possess of you."

"The image of weakness and deprivation in his eyes had disappeared and I had broken away with her.. A harsh and insolent expression has settled on the surface of her shallow eyes. These were not the looks of a powerful but an incapable man who had developed a sense of inferiority complex because he had accustomed to see himself as a

strong man like in the streets on one hand while felt that he was a pitiable one inside the home on the other. (el Saadawi, 1985: 59).

She is sad because she had finished her marriage but it was no more possible to live under the same roof with such a man. She tried to catch the peace of mind which, she previously had in the small village to which she had escaped and hidden herself, in the house in which she lived alone. However the nightmares that she had previously suffered reappears again. The image of a man whom she has never seen and knew kept her up almost every night. This situation leads her into new paths and she decides to seek an image about which she knows nothing. She has no idea about how and where she will find her. She had even no idea about whether that man really existed or not. Maybe this was only an imaginative being that remained from the world of dreams that she had created during her childhood. Although she behaves quite relieved and self-confidently in her immediate environment she observes that the looks of her male friends in the working environment are different and she learns the reason of that difference from a friend of her who is a surgeon:

"A married woman is much more free than a young virgin" (el Saadawi 1985: 66).

She is aware that the said man looks at her totally with a sexual desire. However his manner of talk and behavior are very polite and moderate when he is in a social environment. For that reason she chooses to give to him an opportunity to see what will happen instead of resisting him immediately. In deed she is also unaware of what she wants. She had approached with affection to her former husband, who was weak and defenseless against her at the beginning and wanted to protect like a mother rather than a wife. However he had changed after a while and all the ties between them had been cut off when he had attempted to put pressure on her. On the other hand, this man, as different from her previous husband, tried to seem strong and was able to confess his real feelings without trying to hide them. The reason for her not to distance herself from this man despite knowing his true intention was maybe her decision to prove that she was stronger than him or that she thought that he had all the features that she had been seeking for:

"What did he want from me? Or what did I want from him? I wasn't sure but it was certain that I wanted something for men and myself which was not clarified in my mind (el Saadawi 1985: 66).

Her mind was so confused that one day she suddenly went to his home despite he didn't know exactly what he was doing. The man sees only one reason for her to come to his home and he begins to behave accordingly without losing time. According to him there is no need to seek for reasons for a woman's coming to a man's home at her own will. Consequently the woman sees how a man, who is very polite and moderate within society, losses his will and becomes vulgar when he is alone with the woman, and leaves the home thinking that he was not the one she had been looking for.

She totally dedicates herself to her job and patients with the feeling of sourness caused by the failure to find what she had sought for. She is now one of the most successful doctors of the country who is widely in demand. While sitting at a corner away from the people around in a party organized by a vocational organization, a lonely man sitting just beside her attracts her attention. The man is a famous musician. She gives him her personal card while leaving the party and tells him that he may call her whenever he wants to.

The doctor cannot sleep that night until morning. The man whom she continuously dreamed of had kept her up to such an extent that she couldn't sleep. She calls him and invites him to her home with the peace of mind of having recognized a man by whom she was influenced so much. She goes to the kitchen with excitement for the first time and begins preparing something to eat for the man. Her heart skips a heat like that of a young girl.

She runs to the door after a while after having heard the bell ringing as if it would displace her heart and takes her guest in. She feels that she has peace of mind near him and

gazes at him as if she has been looking to him for years. They sit down and chat for a long time. Despite the fact that she is quiet peaceful for the first time she stands up and makes the necessary preparations when she receives a phone call from an emergency patient. The man also wants to come with him. While the doctor cares for the patient the man runs around to meet the needs of the patient all day long. The patient is a leukemia patient who has no hope to live and hands the money, which he had hidden under his pillow to the doctor with thankfulness probably knowing that he will die after a short time. The doctor is very influenced by that behavior. He doesn't receive the money and tells the patient that she would do everything possible for him. The doctor and the man returns home together after a tiresome day. And the doctor begins whimpering and leans her head on the shoulder of the man whom she had been dreaming of since her childhood thinking of her helplessness against the situation of her hopeless patient, by putting aside the struggle to be powerful, which she had carried out for years. She had finally found a shoulder who is delighted at what she is delighted at and feels sorry for what she feels sorry and on which she can lean her head when she is psychologically upset.

Conclusion

Nawal el Saadawi who is one of the first and most important representatives of the feminist female Arab authors has written and is still writing many novels, stories and social-political articles about the discrimination suffered by the women in a male-dominant society whereas all those works may be regarded as different variations of the same theme. Her self-dedication to the problems of women in the Arabic societies had instigated severe criticisms but she nevertheless continued to describe the persecution and injustice that the women suffers as a result of the repressive attitude of the traditional social structure against them. In all the novels and stories of el Saadawi it is possible to meet a female hero who has been oppressed under the ruins of the traditions and customs, rebels against her living conditions and begins searching an identity for herself. Her novels are generally a half- autobiographical genre which blends reality with fiction and their heroes are mostly either a doctor or a student of medical faculty or a woman prisoner who waits for the execution of her sentence.

Although Nawal el Saadawi says that she has written her novel titled *Müzekkirât Tabîbe* just after she was graduated from the medical faculty and she does not accept the criticisms which describe her novel as a "revolutionary feminist novel" since she didn't know much about feminism during that period and her ideas about feminism were not clearly shaped we may say that this novel narrates the resolute fight of a female hero, who lived a problematic childhood period, against intrafamilial sexual discrimination and the repressive attitude of the society against women. The childhood experiences of the hero of the novel have been inspired from the life of the author to a great extent. Hence this interaction between the two lives is one of the most main subjects of the psychoanalytic theory which argues that there is a tight bond between the artist and his/her work of art.

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