

Development of Awareness:

The Power of Society and Men in the Saudi Women's novel (1958 – 2011)

Submitted by:

Khalid Abdulaziz Aldakheel

To the University of Exeter

As a thesis for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Arab and Islamic Studies

October 2012

This thesis is available for Library use on the understanding that it is copyright material and that no quotation from the thesis may be published without proper acknowledgement.

I certify that all material in this thesis which is not my own work has been identified and that no material has previously been submitted and approved for the award of a degree by this or any other University.

..... (Signature)

Abstract

This thesis investigates two of the most important themes concerning women's problems that have been tackled by Saudi female novelists between 1958-2011 with special attention to the development of their thoughts about the issues from stage to stage. To investigate the two powers over women explored in Saudi women's novels, the works have been divided into four separate and important stages and each stage has its own thematic and stylistic characteristics.

The thesis consists of seven chapters starting with an Introduction, in which the importance of studying the subject is detailed; the theoretical framework and the methodology of this study is also discussed. A section is devoted to reviewing previous studies of the Saudi novel in general, as well as studies published on the women's novel. The status of women in Saudi society is discussed in Chapter Two which covers the structure of Saudi society, women's education, women's employment and the effects on the status of women in Saudi Arabia of the events of September 11th, 2001.

The other four chapters are divided according to the stages of development of Saudi women's novels. In each chapter, two novels are analysed: the first novel represents the first theme examined in the thesis, which is the authority of society over women. The second novel represents the second theme, which is the Saudi novelists' vision regarding the relationships between the sexes in Saudi society. In addition, a section in each chapter is devoted to an examination of the characteristic of the themes in each stage by comparing and contrasting sample novels with the case study novels. The conclusion summarises the most important points of this research with reference to the findings of this study. It also suggests some further research in the field of Saudi literature.

Acknowledgement

In the name of Allāh, the Most Gracious and the Most Merciful

Firstly, al-Ḥamdu li-Allāh, all praise to Allāh for his blessing and for giving me the strengths to complete this thesis.

Next, I would like to express my sincere gratitude to all those who helped me to complete this thesis.

I am deeply indebted to my supervisor, Professor Ian Netton who agreed to supervise me even though he had a busy schedule and time was short. Words are not enough to thank him for his important support and guidance throughout this work which have a remarkable influence on my entire thesis.

Furthermore, I want to thank Professor Rasheed El-Enany for his supervision and guidance at the beginning of my study, which encouraged me to go ahead with my thesis. I also wish to thank Dr Cristina Phillips for her supervision and support.

I am especially indebted to my mother, father and brothers for their continuous prayers, encouragement, and support, which helped me to accomplish my goals.

I owe my loving thanks to my wife Bassmah for her endless help, support and encouragement.

Dedication

It is a pleasure and an honour, for me, to present this thesis.

To my mother Lolo, my father Abdulaziz, my wife Bassmah and my children.

I dedicate my thesis with love and gratitude to them all.

Table of Contents

Abstract	2
Acknowledgement	3
Dedication	4
Table of Contents	5
Transliteration	7
Abbreviations	8
Chapter One: The Social Status of Women in Saudi Arabia	9
1. Introduction	9
2. The status of women in the structure of Saudi society	11
3. Intellectual Life and Women in Saudi Arabia	13
4. Women's Education	18
4.1. Teaching in Kuttābs:	19
4.2. Organised Private Education	20
4.3. Formal Education for Women:	22
4.4. Women's higher education:	26
5. Women's employment	28
6. The Effects of the Events of September 11th, 2001, on the Status of Women in Saudi Arabia	29
7. Conclusion	34
Chapter Two: Introduction	36
1. Hypothesis	36
2. The importance of studying this subject:	36
3. Theoretical framework:	38
4. The methodology of the study:	41
5. Literature review:	44
5.1. The Saudi novel	44
5.2. Critique of the Women's Novel:	49
5.3. The academic lectures:	60
6. The structure of this study:	61
Chapter Three: First stage: The Early Beginnings (1958-1979)	64
1. Introduction	64
2. Women's Novels Published in This Stage	69
3. The Most Prominent Women's Issues in the Novels of the Early Stage:	70
3.1. The Power of Men and the Weakness of Women	70
3.2. The Issue of Marriage	83
4. Comparisons and Contrasts	94
5. Conclusion:	101
Chapter Four: The Establishment of the Saudi Women's Novel (1980-1989)	103
1. Introduction	103
2. The most prominent women's issues in the novel in this stage:	106
2.1. Women's right to see their children after divorce	106
2.2. The emotional traumas that cause relationships break down	114
3. Comparisons and Contrasts	122
4. Conclusion:	132

Chapter Five: The Coming of Age of the Saudi Women’s Novel (1990-2001).....	134
1. Introduction.....	134
2. The Most Prominent Women’s Issues in the Novels of the Coming of Age Stage:...	137
3.1. The Search for Freedom	137
3.2. Women’s Betrayal	153
3. Comparisons and Contrasts.....	168
4. Conclusion	179
Chapter six: Popularisation of the Saudi Women’s Novel (2002-2011)	181
1. Introduction.....	181
2. The Most Prominent Women’s Issues in the Novels of Popularity and Extension	184
2.1. Women’s Self-proving:	184
2.2. The Effects of the Tribal System on the Formation of the Relationships between the Two Sexes	200
3. Comparisons and contrasts	213
4. Conclusion	231
Chapter Seven: Conclusion.....	233
1. Primary Sources:	241
2. Secondary Sources:	242
3. Unpublished thesis:	246
4. Electronic Sites:	247
Appendix.....	249
Diagram No.1: The Power of Society.....	249
Diagram No.2: The Power of Men	250
Diagram No.3: Style with Reference to the Power of Society and the Power of Men	251
B. Tables	252
1- The novels published at the First stage: the Early beginnings of Saudi women’s novel.....	252
2- The novels published at the Second stage: the Establishment of Saudi women’s novel	252
3- The novels published at the third stage: the Coming of Age of Saudi Women’s Novel.....	253
4- The novels published at the fourth stage: the Popluarisation of Saudi Women’s Novel.....	254

Transliteration

1. Consonants

Arabic	Transliteration	Arabic	Transliteration
ء	°	ض	d
ب	B	ط	t
ت	T	ظ	z
ث	Th	ع	°
ج	J	غ	Gh
ح	H	ف	F
خ	Kh	ق	Q
د	D	ك	K
ذ	Dh	ل	L
ر	R	م	M
ز	Z	ن	N
س	S	هـ	H
ش	Sh	و	W
ص	Ṣ	ي	Y

2. Vowels

Arabic Short Vowels	Transliteration	Arabic Long Vowels	Transliteration
اَ	A	إ	á
اُ	U	و	ū
اِ	I	ي	ī

3. Diphthongs

يَ	Ay	ؤ	Aw
----	----	---	----

Abbreviations

ed.	Edition
n d.	No date
n p.	No place
n pub.	No publisher

Chapter One: The Social Status of Women in Saudi Arabia

1. Introduction

It may be true to say that the subject, ‘what is a woman?’ is one of the most difficult topics of discussion today. Many studies in different subject areas⁽¹⁾ have studied ‘woman’ as a living organism and as a social member, sometimes siding with her and sometimes siding against her. However, all these studies have not reached a meeting point and no doubt analysis of this problematic and complicated subject will continue for some time to come. This study attempts to make a contribution to the question of ‘what is woman?’ by exploring how Saudi novelists see the status of women in society. It will focus on certain issues that have been raised in Saudi women’s novels by following the stages of the development of these novels. Genuine expression comes from the heart and can articulate real suffering; and this suffering motivates artists to create works that invite us to share their experiences. Therefore, it is important, at the beginning of any study of Saudi women, to clarify their situation in Saudi Arabian society before looking at the issues played out in their novels. The cultural and social status of women should be elucidated in order to show the influences that they experience in their lives. In addition, it is necessary to examine and realise men’s beliefs about women in the Saudi community. As with any study of literature, Saudi women’s novels must be examined in the context of their origin. Therefore, this chapter will introduce Saudi women in Saudi society.

Saudi Arabia is one the largest Arab countries. It spans approximately 2.25 million square kilometres and occupies about 80 percent of the Arabian peninsula.⁽²⁾ It holds a strategic position because it is surrounded by eight countries, the Red Sea in the west, and the Arabian Gulf in the east. The countries bordering Saudi Arabia are, Iraq and Kuwait to the north; Jordan to the northwest; Bahrain (offshore), Qatar, United Arab Emirates, and Oman to the east; and Yemen to the south’.⁽³⁾ Its strategic position arises from its location since it is adjacent to many countries and this provides an easy connection between them. In addition, it is located in the crossing zone of the routes to the south of the Arabian Peninsula. Moreover,

⁽¹⁾ For example, Cantarow, Ellen, *Moving the Mountain: Women Working for Social Change*, (New York, The Feminist Press, 1980), Ardener, Shirley, *Defining Females: the Nature of Women in Society*, (London: Croom Helm Ltd, 1978) and Davis, Kathy and others, *The Gender of power*, (London: SAGE Publications Ltd, 1991).

⁽²⁾ See: Long, David, *The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia*, (Florida: University Press of Florida, 1997), p 2.

⁽³⁾ Ibid. p 3.

it occupies a central position among Islamic countries; and furthermore all Muslims must go there to fulfil the obligation of Hajj.⁽⁴⁾

Due to its large area, Saudi Arabia boasts different regions and each region has a completely different character and climate. The west of Saudi Arabia is affected by the Red Sea and the east is affected by the Arabian Gulf where the relative humidity is more than 85 percent and frequently 100 percent for extended summer periods. Also, the climate in southern Saudi Arabia is affected by its high mountains in °Asīr; and southern Ḥijāz receives an average rainfall of 300 millimetres. The middle of Saudi Arabia is a dry desert, with average temperatures of 45°C; but readings of up to 54° C are common.⁽⁵⁾

Before the establishment of Saudi Arabia, there were three important regions in the Arabian Peninsula; each of them had its own customs and traditions. According to the differences between its regions, there were differences between them in their connections with other countries; for example, people in the Ḥijāz associated with people of different nationalities before Najd did. It is important to take the differences between regions into consideration.

Saudi Arabia is one of the most important countries in the Middle East because of its geographical location, its energy, economy and its holy cities of Makka and al-Madīna. Geographically, it is divided into three regions: the Ḥijāz which is about 700 miles long lying on the shore of the Red Sea and containing the two holy cities, Jeddah, and al-Ṭāʾif⁽⁶⁾, Najd in the centre, containing the capital city of Saudi Arabia, Riyadh⁽⁷⁾; and °Asīr in the south towards the borders of mountainous Yemen⁽⁸⁾.

⁽⁴⁾ See: Ḥabīb, °Azīz. *Al-°Ālam al-°Arabi min al-Muḥīt ʾila al-Khalīj: al-Mamlakah al-°Arabiyyah al-Suʿūdīyyah*, (Cairo: Maktabat al-Anglū al-Misriyya, 1975), p 5.

⁽⁵⁾ See: Metz, Helen. *Saudi Arabia: A Country Study*, (Washington: Library of Congress, 5th ed, 1993), pp 57-58.

⁽⁶⁾ See: Al-Zahār, Najāh. *Taʾlīm al-Marʾah fī al-Mamlaka al-°Arabiyya al-Suʿūdīyya wa Izdihāruh fī °Ahd al-Malik Fahad*, (Jeddah: Dār al-Muhammadi, 2003), p 12.

⁽⁷⁾ See: Metz. p. 53.

⁽⁸⁾ Ibid. p. 51

2. The status of women in the structure of Saudi society

As it has been already noted, due to the large size of Saudi Arabia, there are differences in traditions and customs between the regions. It has also been mentioned that, for certain reasons, the people of the Ḥijāz are more educated than the citizens of other regions. Accordingly, the status of women inside Saudi society varies between regions, and therefore women in the Ḥijāz contributed to the cultural movement at an early stage. Consequently, it is important to consider the differences between regions while examining the structure of Saudi society. Additionally, different generations are relevant when studying women's status in Saudi Arabia because each generation takes on a different character.

In 1926, the founder of Saudi Arabia, King ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz (1873-1953) emphasised that the country should be based on the Qurʾān and Sunnah. King Fayṣal (1906-1975) endorsed this when he declared that 'our constitution is the Qurʾān and our law is the Sharīʿa of Muhammad (God's peace and blessing be upon him). Our system of government is based on the interests of this country Saudi Arabia, where such interests do not conflict with the principles of our religion and the Sharīʿa'.⁽⁹⁾ Accordingly, each king of Saudi Arabia asserts this principle when he assumes his duties as a king.

On the other hand, Saudi society is structured from different groups, and tribes represent the social majority. Because the majority of people are from tribes, Saudi society is considered a tribal society in which the tribe or the family controls and guides people. Before 1913, the majority of people were nomadic and obeyed the orders of their tribes; and naturally, this became a very serious problem for King ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz. Therefore, he attempted to change the way they thought and lived by building settlements for them. This involved building many settlements for the different tribes; for example, al-Aṛṭāwiyya which was the first settlement established in Saudi Arabia. It is founded for the Muṭayrī tribe in 1913.⁽¹⁰⁾ According to Pascal Menoret, 'There were 52 settlements by 1920, 62 by 1923 and 120 by 1929'.⁽¹¹⁾ However, this action did not solve the problem of the power of the families and people's loyalty to their tribes although it helped to reduce the strength of the tribal society. As a result, the tribal communities moved to their new locations while still practising some of their

⁽⁹⁾ Sohrab, Muhammad, *State and Society in Saudi Arabia*, (New Delhi: Global Media Publications, 2008), p 51.

⁽¹⁰⁾ See: Menoret, Pascal, *The Saudi Enigma*, (Beirut: World Books, 2005), p 87.

⁽¹¹⁾ Ibid, p 87.

traditions and customs even though some of these were against the doctrine of Islam. The outcome was that the order of tribes continued to guide people and put pressure on them.

The power of the tribes made the members of its society subservient to it, even when they were not convinced that it was right or just. According to the system of the tribes, when the citizen does anything against its customs, he or she would face the tribe's punishment, which in many cases differed from the punishment laid down in the law. There were many ways of punishing people in this kind of society; for example, the tribe might demonstrate its anger or sarcasm, it might humiliate the wrongdoer, and it might even take measures of revenge.⁽¹²⁾ The family plays an important role in bringing up children in a tribal system in which the child receives and practises ancient traditions from his or her father or mother and where he or she learns the traditions and the behaviours of his or her community. Women in the tribal community were highly valued in tribal society because they were the repository for the honour of the family and the tribe. Therefore, as Menoret points out, women were considered to be blessed and nobody was allowed to spread rumours about them.⁽¹³⁾

However, because Saudi Arabian society placed such great focus on women's status and behaviour, women suffered from its pressure and control, so it is no exaggeration to say that the power society exerted over its women was even stronger than the the government's power. The history of Saudi society played an important role in making women's issues very sensitive and from this point it became extremely difficult to make changes. The differences between the status of women living in the desert and others living in cities supports this: for example, nomad women are allowed to drive cars while women living in cities are not.⁽¹⁴⁾ Therefore, most of the difficulties that women face are generated by the power of Saudi society and because of the sensitivity surrounding women's issues.

On the other hand, it is true to say that the strength of the tribal system does not obliterate the power of the Islamic religion in Saudi society; rather, the problem is the confusion between the doctrines of Islam and traditional habits and customs. Islam has emphasised the position of women because it aims to stamp out harmful traditions that existed before Islam. It asserts

⁽¹²⁾ See: al-Tall, Ghassān, *Al-Mujtama' al-^cAshā'irī*, (Amman: Dār al-Kindī, 1999), pp 17-18.

⁽¹³⁾ See: Menoret. p.99.

⁽¹⁴⁾ See: al-Āghā, Farīda and al-Māni^c, 'Ā'isha, *Dirāsah Istiqṣā'iyya bi sha'n al-Buḥūth al-Mu'addah 'an al-Mar'ah fi Manāẓamat al-Khalīj al-^cArabī*, (Beirut: Al-Mu'ssasa al-^cArabiyyah liddirāsāt wa al-Nashir, 1984), p.58.

the equality of men and women in many ways, that is, men and women should receive the same punishment for the same crime; but society does not adhere to this. For instance, a case was reported in Riyadh, concerning two girls who were arrested by al-Hay³ah⁽¹⁵⁾ because they were found in a flat with two teenaged boys. Al-Hay³ah asked their father to come and take them home but instead, their brother arrived with a gun and killed them. The surprising aspect of this story was, that according to an electronic newspaper's comments which praised the action of the girls' brother, some people supported him. One of the comments was that, "He is born from a man! Allāh bless him because what he has done is considered as a legal action...".⁽¹⁶⁾ This case emphasises the confusion between Islam and social customs and it illustrates one of the important aspects of women's problems.

3. Intellectual Life and Women in Saudi Arabia

The 1960s witnessed the emergence of educated women in the public arena; and this was a result of the rise in women's education in Saudi Arabia. On May 1st 1965 Khairiyah al-Saqqāf started her column in the *Riyadh* newspaper and wrote the first article by a woman as a regular correspondent. The title of the column was *Zāwīyatī* (My Corner) and it was the first step for both Saudi woman and the newspaper in the Saudi cultural field.⁽¹⁷⁾ However, before that, the Ḥijāz region had witnessed the first Saudi novel written by a woman which was entitled, *Wadda^ct Āmālī* (I said good bye to my hopes) by Samīra khāshuqjī (1935-1986) published in 1958.⁽¹⁸⁾ Since previously, men had dominated the field of literature, readers were now able to appreciate the female writer's form and style, as well as the insistence on a woman's right to be alive due to, in al-Saqqāf's words, the deep feelings expressed in female writings. Before writing her column, she wrote under the pseudonym of Insān (a human being). Her decision to publish under her own name in 1965 was a sign that she no longer accepted the idea that it was a disgrace for a woman to write.⁽¹⁹⁾ But by declaring her thoughts and opinions about the status of women in the country al-Saqqāf's decision could be seen as a

⁽¹⁵⁾ This is the Islamic organisation established in 1940 for the purpose of making sure that the Islamic doctrine is implemented in public, for example, in markets, streets, etc.

⁽¹⁶⁾ See al-Surayyī^c, °Abd al-Rahmān. "°Ishrīnī Qatal Shaqīqatayh" *al-jazirah newspaper* July 06, 2009, 13430, Accessed 3 June 2010 <http://www.al-jazirah.com/2009/20090706/lp9.htm>

⁽¹⁷⁾ See: al-Ghadhdhāmi, °Abd Allāh, *Ḥikāyat al-Ḥadātha fi al-Mamlaka al-°Arabiyya al-Su°ūdiyya*, (Morocco: Al-Markaz al-Thaqāfi al-°Arabī, 2nd ed, 2004) p 133. Also see: Menoret. p.183.

⁽¹⁸⁾ See: al-Rifā^ci, p 27.

⁽¹⁹⁾ See: Al-Ghadhdhāmi. p.134.

crucial turning point at the beginning of the involvement of Saudi Arabian women in intellectual life.

In the mid-1970s, foreign travel became popular, whether for study or for enjoyment, and it affected the development of the country. Scholarships were made available for either short-term or long-term study in different academic disciplines and about one hundred thousand students used the opportunity. The most important aspect was the contact between Saudi people and the American world, which had an influence on Saudi society.⁽²⁰⁾ It also affected the Saudi cultural field by transporting the cultural movement in Saudi Arabia to a new stage, that of ideological and intellectual struggles. These struggles started with the critical literary issues that did not concern the general public but turned into bitter struggles between the modernists and the conservatives.⁽²¹⁾

In the lead up to the Second Gulf War in 1990, the level of discussion between intellectuals became higher as they transcended the simple issues, such as women's education, and moved on to ideological and intellectual matters. There were many issues raised to public discussion such as the cultural background of the stream of modernism and its impact on the beliefs of society.⁽²²⁾ The reason behind this was the rise in people's education since most of the participants in these discussions were PhD holders or were lecturers at Saudi Universities. In addition, many writers had been affected by reading non-Saudi writers whether they were from Arab countries or from the West. The intellectual struggles between conservatives and modernists appeared, in the beginning, through the articles in Saudi Arabian newspapers when, in order to resolve its financial problem in 1985 the *al-Nadwa* newspaper, (which was about to declare its bankruptcy), made a decision to allow anti-modernists to publish their opinions. Most of the Saudi Arabian newspapers were a platform for the modernists since they published only a few articles written by the conservatives with whom they disagreed.⁽²³⁾ The arguments continued in the newspaper until 1988 when °Awad al-Qarnī (1956-...)⁽²⁴⁾ published a book under the title, *al-Hadātha fī Mīzān al-Islām* (Modernity in Islam's Scales).

⁽²⁰⁾ See: *ibid* pp. 165-167.

⁽²¹⁾ See: Lacroix, Stephane, *Awaking Islam: The Political of Religious Dissent in Contemporary Saudi Arabia*. (Harvard: President and Fellows of Harvard College, 2011), p 135.

⁽²²⁾ See: *ibid*. p.134.

⁽²³⁾ See: *ibid*. p.139.

⁽²⁴⁾ °Awad al-Qarnī was appointed as a lecturer at al-Imām Muḥammad Ibn Sa'ūd University in 1981 in Riyadh where he gained his PhD in Islamic law in 1996. He taught at the University's branch in Abhā; South of Saudi Arabia which is now called King Khalid University.

According to Stephane Lacroix, the book, ‘became widely popular, partly because al-Qarnī had persuaded Ibn Bāz (1912-1999)⁽²⁵⁾ to write a preface in which he approved the book’s content’⁽²⁶⁾ and this raised a huge debate within Saudi society. The writer introduced the roots of modernity, and then he mentioned the well-known modernists in Arabic criticism and literature. He contested their ideas from his point of view and his understanding of Islam, and asserted their danger to Saudi society and to Islam. One of the arguments discussed in his book concerned their plan to change the status of women in society, which appeared in his criticism of Muḥammed al-Ḥarbī’s poem of 1987. He argued that al-Ḥarbī aimed to ask women to remove their ḥijāb and mix with men, which he thought unacceptable.⁽²⁷⁾

‘Abd Allāh al-Ghadhdhāmī (1946-...)⁽²⁸⁾, was one of the modernists attacked in al-Qarnī’s book because he published his famous work entitled, *al-Khaṭī’a wa’l-Takfīr: min al-Binyawiyya ilā al-Tafkīkiyya* (Sin and Expiation: from Structuralism to Deconstruction). This book is considered to be one of the most important books since it opened the gate to the intellectual struggles as it was, ‘inspired largely by Western theorists particularly Roland Barthes’.⁽²⁹⁾ Al-Ghadhdhāmī referred to the influence of al-Qarnī’s book on a large part of society especially the students in Saudi Arabian universities.⁽³⁰⁾ He emphasised that people in Saudi Arabia were angered by the publication of *Modernity in Islam’s Scales* and he mentioned al-Qarnī’s announcement that 80,000 copies were sold in the first week of publication. Because of this book, he faced hostility that almost led to violence.⁽³¹⁾ This intellectual movement could be seen as the preface to the ideological discussion which took place during the Second Gulf War. In addition, it helped Saudi society to understand a variety of opinions and different ways of thinking, even though in some cases, the reaction was very strong.

The 1990s witnessed a peak in the discourse of the stream of *al-Ṣaḥwa al-Islāmiyya* (Awakening Islam) both during and after the Second Gulf War; and during this time,

⁽²⁵⁾ ‘Abd al-‘Azīz Ibn Bāz was born in Riyadh and is considered to be one of the famous Muslim scholars of the Twentieth Century. He was the President of Senior Scholars in Saudi Arabia from 1993 until he died in 1999.

⁽²⁶⁾ *ibid.* p.140.

⁽²⁷⁾ See: al-Qarnī, ‘Awaḍ, *al-Ḥadāthat fi Mīzān al-Islām*. (Cairo: Dār Hajr, 1988), p 70.

⁽²⁸⁾ Al-Ghadhdhāmī is one of the most famous critics in Saudi Arabia and he published about twenty books on Arabic literature and criticism.

⁽²⁹⁾ Lacroix. p 135.

⁽³⁰⁾ See: Al-Ghadhdhāmī .p.280.

⁽³¹⁾ See: *ibid.* .p 15.

intellectual arguments concerning many political and social issues were made public. The two preachers, Safar Al-Ḥawālī (1955-...)⁽³²⁾ and Salmān al-°Awda (1956-...)⁽³³⁾ represented the Islamists by presenting lectures in mosques, and recording cassettes or publishing books and articles in newspapers which voiced their objections to the participation of the US army in Saudi Arabia in the Second Gulf War.⁽³⁴⁾ Although many other matters were also discussed, this issue was the most important raised at that time. Importantly, the Saudi media and women in Saudi Arabia were also debated; and the subject of ‘woman’ was one of the most important topics.

It is useful at this point to offer an example of the kind of debates of wide social interest that became very heated. Novelist and politician, Ghāzī al-Quṣaybī (1940-2010)⁽³⁵⁾, published letters under the title of *Ḥattā lā Takūn Fitnah* (Lest There Should be Discord) which was a reaction against the books and cassettes that Salmān al-°Awda, Nāṣir al-°Umar (1952-...) and °Ā°id al-Qarnī (1959-...) had disseminated in order to attack secularization.⁽³⁶⁾ Al-Quṣaybī gathered a large number of proofs from the Qur°ān and Ḥadīth to demonstrate their faulty understanding of the situation and he emphasised that the nation did not live in normal circumstances because of the war and it, therefore, needed to unite the members of the nation.⁽³⁷⁾ He mentioned the “issue of women” as a debatable problem and that society, and the preachers, since they form such important elements of society, should seek to find solutions to the issues that affect women. He believed that the question of whether women should be educated had been settled but that the curriculum needed to be suitably developed. In the same way, the question of whether women should work outside the home had been settled but the sectors in which they should work still needed to be discussed.⁽³⁸⁾

⁽³²⁾ Safar al-Ḥawālī was one of the most famous preachers in Saudi Arabia during the Second Gulf War where he published books about the American interests in the Arabic Gulf. He got his M.A. from Islamic University in al-Madīna and the title of his thesis is *Secularization and its Effect on the Islamic Life*.

⁽³³⁾ Salmān al-°Aūda is one of al-°Ṣaḥwah’s preachers and because of his activities, he was released from his duties at the al-°Imām University in 1993.

⁽³⁴⁾ See: Menoret. p. 124.

⁽³⁵⁾ Ghāzī al-Quṣaybī represented the modernists in this intellectual struggle. He was appointed to different high positions in the country; for example Minister of Health, Minister of Labour and Saudi Arabian Ambassador to the United Kingdom.

⁽³⁶⁾ They published many books and cassettes attacking some writers in Saudi Arabia for example; *Ḥatta lā Taghraḡ al-Safīnah* by Salmān al-°Aūda and the cassette of *al-Sakīnah al-Sakīnah* by Naṣir al-°Umar.

⁽³⁷⁾ See: Al-Quṣaybī, Ghāzī, *Ḥattā lā Takūn Fitnah*, (n p: Dar al-Nadwa, No d), p. 8.

⁽³⁸⁾ See: *ibid.* p.7.

In 1992 Abd al-Rrahmān al-Jibrīn reacted against al-Quṣaybī's letters by publishing his book under the title of *Risālat al-Iṣlāḥ* (A Treatise on Reform). This book is divided into two parts: the first part concerns the struggle with secularization and secularists and the second is a disputation with the Quṣaybī's letters. He mentioned many points in answer to al-Quṣaybī, but it is important to identify the main points he made about the "woman issue". He objected to the offering of job opportunities without consideration of religious criteria and he mentioned the health sector where men and women work together in one place as an example of the rejection of Islām's doctrine. In addition, he condemned the women's demonstration in Riyadh and women's demand for the right to drive cars as part of an integral plan to corrupt Saudi society.⁽³⁹⁾ The fact that he attempted to raise the topic of women's rights was because of the view that secularists planned to destroy society by spreading corruption and that women were a prime target in their plan of action.

Because of the disputes between the Islamists and the liberals, an unprecedented event occurred in Saudi Arabia. In November 8th, 1990, approximately 50 women demonstrated in al-^Ulawayyā street in Riyadh by driving cars, and demanding the right to drive. They were arrested and lost their jobs because most people were against what they did. For example, the students of one of the demonstrators refused to attend her lectures at King Sa^Ud University.⁽⁴⁰⁾ 'The women were suspended by royal decree from their teaching jobs at the women's section of King Sa^Ud University'.⁽⁴¹⁾ However, they returned to their position at the University two years later.⁽⁴²⁾ Some of these women got higher degrees in western countries and there was a connection between them and the people who are considered by the stream of al-Ṣaḥwa as secularists. ^UAzīza al-Mānī^U and Fawziya al-Bakr, who were lecturers at King Sa^Ud University at the time, were the organisers of this demonstration and were known through their articles which defended women's rights. It seems that the demonstration was organised by different liberal circles in Saudi Arabia whether they were men or women.⁽⁴³⁾ This demonstration might be seen as the first *practical* action by women demanding their rights since they called for justice in their publications and writing corners at the newspapers.

⁽³⁹⁾ See: al-Jibrīn, Abdurrahmān, *Risālat al-Iṣlāḥ*, (Beirut: no Pub, 1992), p 66.

⁽⁴⁰⁾ See: Murphy, Kim, "Saudi Women Drivers Facing Islamic Wrath" September 12, 1990, *Los Angeles Times*. Accessed 5 July 2010 http://articles.latimes.com/1990-11-12/news/mn-3273_1_saudi-arabia

⁽⁴¹⁾ Ibid at http://articles.latimes.com/1990-11-12/news/mn-3273_1_saudi-arabia

⁽⁴²⁾ See: Lacroix. p 163.

⁽⁴³⁾ See: ibid. p.163.

The Government refused their demands, showing that Saudi society had not yet accepted the idea of women drivers. The Ministry of the Interior directed the ‘Ulamā’ Commission to refuse the women’s demand and to emphasise that women were forbidden to drive cars. About 15 years later, the statement of Prince Nāyif (1934-2012), the Minister of the Interior in Saudi Arabia, clarified the real reason behind the refusal of this demand. He asserted that women’s right to drive cars was a public matter and that it was not the appropriate time for discussing the problem, and he emphasised that the Government would deal with the topic according to the public’s interest.⁽⁴⁴⁾ Reading between the lines of his statement, it seems that the public’s opinion was very important in making such a decision, but the prince did not mention that women were not allowed to drive cars because the country’s constitution is derived from Islam.

The issue of driving in Saudi Arabia is still a problem for women and society and the issue rose to the surface again at the time of the Arab revolutions. New technology contributed to the call for women’s right to drive when a group of women started a campaign called, “Teach me how to drive so I can protect myself”, and the call for this campaign appeared on the Facebook website. In late May 2011, the activist Manāl al-Sharīf drove her car in al-Khubar with Wajiha al-Huwaydir who filmed her driving and posted it on Youtube.⁽⁴⁵⁾ In the video, al-Sharīf stated that, ‘This is a volunteer campaign to help the girls of this country to learn to drive ... at least in times of emergency’.⁽⁴⁶⁾ As a result, it seems that women will drive cars in Saudi Arabia but only at the right time, when general social opinion is in favour.

4. Women’s Education

Education is one of the most important components of the development of any society because it raises awareness amongst its members. Islam, ‘encouraged women to learn and the prophet Muhammad made available a special gate at his house for women who wanted to

⁽⁴⁴⁾ See: al-Zaydān, Khālīd, “Mawḍū‘ Qiyāda al-Mara’ah li’l-Sayyāra Yajib Allā Yakūn Qaḍiyya Bayn Fi’ah wa Ukhra’”, June, 13, 2005, *Riyadh newspaper*. Accessed 16 March 2010 <http://www.alriyadh.com/2005/06/13/article72002.html>

⁽⁴⁵⁾ See: Al-Huwaider, Wajeha. "The Saudi woman who took to the driver's seat" *France24*, May 23, 2011. Accessed 12 Oct 2011 <http://observers.france24.com/content/20110523-saudi-woman-arrested-defying-driving-ban-manal-al-sharif-khobar>

⁽⁴⁶⁾ Al-Shihri, Abdullah, “Manal al-Sherif, Saudi Woman, Detained For Defying Driving Ban”, *huffpost world internet newspaper*, May 12, 2011. Accessed: 17 Dec 2011 http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2011/05/21/manal-al-sharif-saudi-arabia-driving-ban_n_865120.html

learn about Islam'.⁽⁴⁷⁾ Arab women's illiteracy is the reason behind the non-participation of women in political and social activities, but on the other hand, there are many studies which emphasise that the rise in education of women is the reason behind their delaying marriage which, as a result, is affecting the organisation of the family.⁽⁴⁸⁾ It is useful to highlight, briefly, the history of women's education in order to elucidate the development of the Saudi beliefs that affect women's behaviour.

Before reviewing women's education in Saudi Arabia, there is a very important question that needs to be answered: why was women's education delayed in Saudi Arabia? And the answer seems to be that the Saudi community's culture played an important role in delaying women's education. A large number of studies have examined the social influences on women's education; and one of these shows that Arab people believed that:

- 1- Educating girls weakens their femininity and it is more important for them to study what is perceived as women's work, for example, cooking and sewing.
- 2- There is no need for women to be educated because, in the end, they will be taken care of in their husbands' houses.⁽⁴⁹⁾

This kind of understanding dominated Saudi society for a long time and caused women's education to develop very slowly, through several stages, so that people could acclimatise to the idea of the importance of educating women.

4.1. Teaching in Kuttābs:

Teaching women in Kuttābs played an important role in their education in the 1940s and 1950s and it was the only means of educating women at that time.⁽⁵⁰⁾ Kuttābs were traditional Qur'an schools consisting of a room in the teacher's house for teaching the Qur'an, reading and writing.⁽⁵¹⁾ These Kuttābs for women were supervised by a lady who usually taught

⁽⁴⁷⁾ Abukhalil, Sa'ad. *The Battle for Saudi Arabia: Royalty, Fundamentalism, and Global Power*, (New York: Seven Stories Press, 2004), p 150.

⁽⁴⁸⁾ See: Zakarya, Khidr. *ʿAn al-Waḍʿ al-Ijtimāʿī li'l-Mrʾa al-ʿArabiyya*, (Damascus: Al-Ahālī, 1998), p 71.

⁽⁴⁹⁾ See: al-Afandī, Mā'sa, *al-Mu'thirāt al-Ijtimāʿiyya wa al-Iqtisādiyya wa Ta'lim al-Marʾah*, (Riyadh: Dār al-ʿUlūm, 1983), pp 74-75

⁽⁵⁰⁾ See: Bū Bshayt, Al-Jauharah, T'lim Al-Mrʾah Al-Su'ūdiyya : al-Tārīkh wa al-Wāqīʿ wa al-Taḥaddiyyāt. In *al-Mrʾah fī al-Su'ūdiyyah: Ruʾā ʿĀlamiyya*, (Riyadh: Dar Ghayna', 2008), p 31.

⁽⁵¹⁾ See: Al-Zahār, Najāh, *Bidāyāt al-Hyāt Al-ʿIlmiyya wa al-Adabiyya li'l-Mrʾah fī al-Mamlaka al-ʿArabiyya al-Su'ūdiyya*, (Jiddah: Dār al-Muhammadi, 2003), p. 34.

girls,⁽⁵²⁾ and this kind of education was an extension of the ways children were taught before the establishment of the nation. The facilities of the Kuttābs depended on the ability of the teachers, resulting in differences between the organisation and facilities of one Kuttāb and another. Also, there were differences between the curricula for boys and girls. For instance, girls were taught some, "knowledge and skills considered to be appropriate for woman's role as a wife and as a mother,"⁽⁵³⁾ while boys were taught the principles of mathematics. Kuttābs were funded by the parents who paid the teachers' salaries, though some teachers worked as volunteers. There were many Kuttābs in cities and even in some villages; for instance, Makka had 43 Kuttābs.⁽⁵⁴⁾

In spite of the superficial approach to girls' education of these traditional schools, the Kuttābs prefaced further stages in female education in Saudi Arabia. Many teachers who contributed to women's education at that time had graduated from Kuttābs. Although traditional schools did not reach the whole country, they acted as a basis for convincing people about the importance of educating women.

4.2. Organised Private Education⁽⁵⁵⁾

As previously mentioned, teaching in Kuttābs initiated female education and led to the next stage, which was that of organised private education. These schools were built by the efforts of parents or non-governmental institutions while the budgets of these schools were supplied through student fees together with funding from the Saudi Arabian government. Thus the government contributed to the provision of teaching materials and it also organised the curriculum⁽⁵⁶⁾ in their plan for the establishment of women's education. The first private school was established in Makka in 1942; then this kind of school prevailed in the important cities of the country such as al-Riyadh, Jeddah and the Eastern Province.⁽⁵⁷⁾ However, the government did not dare to establish any formal schooling at that time because of hostile social opinion.

⁽⁵²⁾ See: Bubshait. p 30.

⁽⁵³⁾ Al-Hazzaa, Abdulaziz, *Scenario Projections for Women in Saudi Arabia: the Changing Status , Educational and Employment Opportunities by the Year 2010*, (Minnesota: University of Minnesota, 1993), p 94.

⁽⁵⁴⁾ See: Bubshait. p 30.

⁽⁵⁵⁾ It is called in Arabic "التعليم الأهلي المنظم"

⁽⁵⁶⁾ See: al-Zahār, Najāh, *Bidāyāt al-Hayāt Al-ʿIlmiyya waʿl-Adabiyya liʿl-Mrʿah fi al-Mamlaka al-ʿArabiyya al-Saʿūdiyya*, p 135.

⁽⁵⁷⁾ Bubshait. p.131.

In addition, there were some students and families who were not satisfied with the approaches of these schools to teaching women so they decided to teach their daughters outside the country in foreign schools and universities. It is worth noting that some of the women novelists completed their education in Egypt, for example Samīrah Khāshuqjī or in Britain, like Hudā Al-Rashīd.⁽⁵⁸⁾

At the beginning, the issue of women's education was so sensitive that any person who supported the idea of women's education wrote under a pseudonym. The government did not allow public discussion of this issue because they thought that it was not yet the right time. For instance, Abdulkarīm al-Juhaymān (1912-2011) reported that when he was editor-in-chief of *Akhhār al-Zahrān* newspaper, he published an essay demanding education for women. The writer of the essay was unknown but Abdulkarīm al-Juhaymān took responsibility for publishing it and the result was that the newspaper was closed, he lost his job and he was placed under arrest for four days.⁽⁵⁹⁾

At the end of the 1950s, the Saudi government permitted discussion of this issue in the newspapers in order to get the public's reaction before making a decision.⁽⁶⁰⁾ There were many voices demanding an end to this debate on the pretext of closing the door to evil. According to Abukhalīl, 'They argued that education could corrupt morals and bring about a breakdown of the family'.⁽⁶¹⁾ There were some people who described women's education as a great disaster; they travelled from city to city asking people to fight against it and they went to the mosques to warn people against accepting the idea. Therefore, people felt it wise to avoid discussing this issue with others for fear of being accused of deviation, although they believed women's education to be necessary.⁽⁶²⁾

One of the factors that helped to influence the government's decision on women's education was that male students began to study abroad in the 1950s. 'A group of educated middle-class young men became advocates of women's education and mounted a press campaign for

⁽⁵⁸⁾ Interview with Hudā al-Rashīd in London, 12-11-2009.

⁽⁵⁹⁾ See: al-Washmī, Abdullah, *Fitnat al-qaūl bita'lim al-Banāt fī al-Mamlaka al-°Arabiyya al-Sa°ūdiyya: Muqāraba Dīniyya wa siyāsiyya wa Ijtīmā'iyya*, (Casablanca: al-Markaz al-Thaqāfī al-°Arabī, 2009), p 17.

⁽⁶⁰⁾ See: al-Washmī. p 97.

⁽⁶¹⁾ Abukhalīl. p. 150.

⁽⁶²⁾ see: al-Washmi. p 16.

schools for girls'.⁽⁶³⁾ This idea contributed to the formation of a new, more positive opinion about women's education, that was in opposition to the dominant idea; and as a result, people were at last able to support it in public and write about the important issue.

One of the consequences of sending students to study abroad was the phenomenon of marriage to foreign educated women. 'Men who married foreign wives claimed that they were looking for educated wives who could understand their needs and raise their children in the modern style'.⁽⁶⁴⁾ This phenomenon may have awakened some people to the dangers of keeping women in ignorance, so they started to listen to others' opinions. The result was that there was a change in attitude in that there was now a part of society that could accept women's education and believed in its importance.

4.3. Formal Education for Women:

A royal decree signed by King Fayṣal Āl Sa'ūd, issued in 1959, announced the establishment of girls' schools to teach them the Qur'an, religion, beliefs, morality, domestic sciences and child care. These schools were single-sex schools, separate from boys' schools, and administered by *al-Ri'āsa al-Āmma li-ta'lim al-Banāt* (The General Organisation for the Education of Girls). This decree was signed by King Fayṣal who ordered that the 'Ulamā' supervise these schools and organise their programmes and that they should consult with the Muftī Muḥammad Āl al-Shaykh.⁽⁶⁵⁾ However, the struggle between advocates and opponents of women's education continued. Although al-'Ulamā' supervised girls' schools, opponents used the discourse to argue that according to religion, educating women was forbidden. Furthermore, because the issue of women's education became a real problem in society, it led to a call for punishment and some of the opponents permitted the murder of the head of girls' education in a village near al-Qaṣīm.⁽⁶⁶⁾

It is worth noting that women were denied education in Najd and the south of Saudi Arabia. However, the Ḥijāz had enjoyed a better educational system before this, for several reasons. One reason for this was religious, in that the Ḥijāz contained the most important cities in

⁽⁶³⁾ Al-Manea, Azeezah, *Historical and contemporary policies of women's education in Saudi Arabia*, (Michigan: The university of Michigan, 1984), p 82.

⁽⁶⁴⁾ See: *ibid.* p.85.

⁽⁶⁵⁾ See: Bubshait. p.34.

⁽⁶⁶⁾ See: Al-Washmi, p 18.

Islam, Makka and al-Madīna. Islamic studies had been taught in their mosques since the seventeenth century, which meant that the citizens of these cities had long been aware of the importance of women's education. Another reason was economic; because of the importance for Muslims of the two mosques, the cities offered a successful environment for trade. Therefore, people in this area lived a relaxed life compared with people in Najd which gave them the opportunity to think about the matter carefully and make the right decision for their daughters.⁽⁶⁷⁾ Thirdly, society in the Ḥijāz was multicultural because it, 'was influenced by immigrants from different Muslim countries who came to the holy cities'.⁽⁶⁸⁾ Furthermore, some of the people who came from other countries had been educated so they contributed to the awareness of the citizens of Makka and al-Madīna.

Al-Ri'āsah started to do its job in the 1960s⁽⁶⁹⁾ by establishing girls' schools around the country, although it faced difficulties due to the position of its opponents. An example of this was that citizens in some villages opposed the idea and fought anyone who came to open girls' schools in their area. It seems that some people were still violently fighting against the idea of women's education in different cities of the kingdom. An example of this is that when the delegate of al-Ri'āsah came to al-Zulfī to establish the first school there, the local citizens wanted to punish him and throw him out. Fortunately, he managed to placate them and escaped to the police station, but, nevertheless, they asked the police to punish him.⁽⁷⁰⁾

Another problem that Al-Ri'āsah faced while establishing girls' schools was that many people stopped their daughters from studying in the schools. They thought that educating women in schools was giving women the opportunity to go outside their homes and that was a sin.⁽⁷¹⁾ Al-Ri'āsah did not impose compulsory education for girls because they thought that the advantages of educating women might lead to a voluntary change public opinion. In 1962, a large delegation from the Qaṣīm region came to Riyadh to meet King Fayṣal demanding a ban on the establishment of girls' schools in their city. However, King Fayṣal did not accede

⁽⁶⁷⁾See: Al-Manea. p.76.

⁽⁶⁸⁾ Ibid. p.77.

⁽⁶⁹⁾See: Bubshait p. 34.

⁽⁷⁰⁾See: Al-Washmip 32.

⁽⁷¹⁾ See: Ibid. p 34.

to their demand, but instead, allowed them to choose whether they wanted their daughters to be educated.⁽⁷²⁾

The idea of giving parents a choice succeeded to the extent that many opponents changed their minds and allowed their daughters to go to school after they saw the results. One of the opponents of girls' school came back 40 years later to look for a job for his daughter after she graduated from university.⁽⁷³⁾ However, the disadvantage of allowing choice was the resulting high illiteracy rate among Saudi females. The percentage of illiterate females above the age of fifteen in Saudi Arabia in 1980 was 97,7%⁽⁷⁴⁾ which shows that society's objections to women's education took a long time to overcome. The percentage of Saudi Arabian women's illiteracy decreased in 2003 when it was 27%.⁽⁷⁵⁾

Clearly there were difficulties facing the establishment of women's formal education that led to the postponement of this step. These difficulties arose because educating women was an unacceptable idea to large segments of Saudi society. Therefore, the issue of women's education was contentious both before and after the introduction of formal education for girls.

To get to the root of this problem it is important to examine the differences between religion and custom. This problem arose from traditions and customs of Saudi society, not from the religion of Islam,⁽⁷⁶⁾ even if opponents used Islamic discourse to support their stance. The 'Ulamā' in Saudi Arabia supported establishing schools for girls, while its opponents continued to use the same discourse. The reason behind this reaction may be that there was confusion in their minds about the differences between Islam and the traditions that they observed in their daily life. Therefore, they were not ready to receive any new ideas in their society, even ones aimed at the development of their country.

The victim of this argument was 'woman', because she had to remain silent even though the problem was hers. Some women expressed their ideas about women's education, demanding the speedy establishment of schools in their city so that they could benefit from them in their

⁽⁷²⁾See: Al-Hefdhhy, Yahya, *The Role of Ulama (Islamic Scholars) in Establishing an Islamic Education System for women in Saudi Arabia*, Florida State University, Thesis, 1994, p 69.

⁽⁷³⁾ See: Al-Washmi. p 167.

⁽⁷⁴⁾ See: Zakariya. p.72.

⁽⁷⁵⁾See: Bubshait p. 38.

⁽⁷⁶⁾See the attitude of Islam of women's education: almunajjed, Mona, *Women in Saudi Arabia Today*, (London: Macmillan Press Ltd, 1997), p 17.

own lives. However, women who expressed their opinions on this issue in newspapers wrote under pseudonyms⁽⁷⁷⁾ thus showing the power of social pressure. Fathers used their power to control their daughters and planned their futures without listening to their needs. One such father travelled from one village to another when he heard about the opening of girls' schools. The reason behind this was to find a village without a girls' school because he feared that people would put pressure on him to send his daughter to school.⁽⁷⁸⁾

After al-Ri'āsah resolved the problem of the social rejection of women's education by leaving the choice to parents, it focused on the means of developing education for girls. It began with a budget of only two million Saudi Riyāls in 1960, whereas the budget for boys' schools was 12,268,000 Saudi Riyāls in that year. al-Ri'āsah's budget increased eight-fold in its first four years. The number of female students, also rose by approximately five times in the same period from 11,812 in the first year to 50,000 in 1965.⁽⁷⁹⁾ 'By 1980 the number of students registered in the elementary schools was 311,725. A comparison with 1947, in which there were 215,454, shows that 20,000 students were added every year'.⁽⁸⁰⁾

To summarise, it is apparent that women's education in Saudi Arabia was established gradually, passing through five stages and keeping in step with developments in Saudi society's awareness. Firstly, girls were taught in Kuttābs even though the number of girls studying in these places was small. Secondly, formal education for boys started in Saudi Arabia but then they were sent to study abroad which prepared their society to accept education in general and increased the public's awareness of the importance of education. After that, the establishment of organised private schools for girls was allowed, supported financially by the government. The fourth stage was the establishment of optional formal girls' schools emphasising the role of the 'Ulama' supervised by the Mufti Muḥammad Ibn Āl al-Shaykh. The last stage was the integration of al-Ri'āsah into the Ministry of Education in March 2002.⁽⁸¹⁾

⁽⁷⁷⁾ See as an example: al-Qaṣīm Magazine 19-10-1960 No.45 p.5. Under the pseudonym of B.Gh. also see the same magazine 13-12-1961. No.103. Under the pseudonym of Sārah

⁽⁷⁸⁾ See: al-Washmī. p. 166.

⁽⁷⁹⁾ See: Al-Hefdhy. pp.71,72.

⁽⁸⁰⁾ Ibid. p.72.

⁽⁸¹⁾ See Al-Washmī. p.164.

The struggle over the principle of women's education had ended and society moved on to discuss what girls should learn. As mentioned above, the royal decree of 1959 laid down the subjects taught in these schools and allocated responsibility for designing the curriculum. The 'Ulamā' in Saudi Arabia continued supervising al-Ri'āsah whose curriculum was criticised in many studies. It was claimed that the subjects in the girls' curriculum did not develop their powers of thought and that they were designed only to fill empty papers. An example which clearly illustrates the problem of the difference between girls' and boys' education can be seen in the reading book for Year One: Ahmad writes and 'Umar reads in the boys' book while in the girls book 'Afāf sews and Susān cooks.⁽⁸²⁾ Also, all texts in the Year Seven reading book were written by men except one which was a text written by the Andalusian poet Ḥamdūna; in the footnote, they mentioned that there is disagreement about the attribution of this text to her.⁽⁸³⁾

The issue of the girls' curriculum became a subject for public debate in the last two decades, and it has been argued that it was designed to consolidate male supremacy. Although the curriculum was programmed for females, most of its topics were relevant to males which did not help to fulfil women's femininity.⁽⁸⁴⁾ In addition, the perception of women's absence from the curriculum is evident throughout the topics chosen. For example, there were twenty texts in Year Eight addressed to males and none addressed anything to females.⁽⁸⁵⁾

4.4. Women's higher education:

As a result of the success of girls' education in primary and secondary schools, society was assured that education for daughters was a very important matter. King Sa'ūd University started to offer courses for women in 1961 but they studied only as affiliated students.⁽⁸⁶⁾ Public awareness became keener and 'pressure increased to create a university for girls'.⁽⁸⁷⁾ The first girls' college in Saudi Arabia was established in Riyadh in 1970 and in 1975, girls' colleges of education were founded in the more important cities of Saudi Arabia, such as

⁽⁸²⁾ See: Al-Mūshī, Sālīma. *Al-Ḥarīm al-thaqāfi bayn al-Thābit wa al-Mūtaḥawil*, (Riyadh: Dār al-Mufradāt, 2004), p 23.

⁽⁸³⁾ See: *ibid.* p.26.

⁽⁸⁴⁾ See: Al-Mūshī. p.27.

⁽⁸⁵⁾ See: *ibid.* p.26.

⁽⁸⁶⁾ See: Bubshait p. 41.

⁽⁸⁷⁾ Al-Mouhanis, Zakiah, *Higher Education for Women in Saudi Arabia*, University of San Francisco, thesis, 1986, p 33.

Makka, Dammām and Jeddah.⁽⁸⁸⁾ ‘By the beginning of 1979, the administration had established junior colleges to train women for teaching in the intermediate and secondary schools’.⁽⁸⁹⁾

Today, the number of female students in higher education has increased dramatically in all Saudi Universities. For example, by 1995, the number of female students in King Sa‘ūd University was 20,655; in Imam Muhammad bin Saud University it was 7,606; and in King Fayṣal University 7671 students attended.⁽⁹⁰⁾

Later, the number of high school graduates increased and the institutions of higher education were unable to offer work opportunities for the graduates as teachers. In addition, society needed women to do other jobs rather than teaching such as nursing and social work. Therefore, Universities and the Ministry of Education took the serious step of establishing community colleges for girls. The first college was established in Tabūk in 2000; then more than twenty community colleges were founded in Saudi Arabia. The number of female students in these colleges reached 6,882 students in 2005.⁽⁹¹⁾

Al-Ri‘āṣah opened post-graduate programmes for women in 1976 to train them to teach in girls’ colleges of education, and to offer opportunities for women to learn and work at Saudi universities. The number of post-graduates registered in 2005 was more than four thousand female students in all Saudi universities.⁽⁹²⁾

There was no social objection to higher education because since the 1960s there was an increase in awareness of the benefits of education. Also, it is noted that the number of female students has steadily increased every year, which demonstrates that society has realised the importance of educating women. As a result, society avoided one of the most divisive problems it has known since the creation of the Kingdom. In addition, the benefit of offering opportunities for women to learn and work is that it develops their powers of thought in such a way that now Saudi women are able to discuss their issues and offer their opinions. Also, higher education opens the door for women to read important writers and write about their

⁽⁸⁸⁾ See: al-Mouhanis. p 34.

⁽⁸⁹⁾ See: ibid. p.34.

⁽⁹⁰⁾ See: Bubshait p 41.

⁽⁹¹⁾ See: ibid p 42.

⁽⁹²⁾ See: ibid. pp 43-44.

ideas academically. Therefore, women have begun to participate in the literary movement in Saudi Arabia by expressing their emotional and social sufferings through various literary forms.

5. Women's employment

Islam teaches equality between men and women in their rights relating to trades and possession; a woman is also independent in her own business. Women, therefore, have rights in all financial practices such as selling, buying and transferring. However, there is a problem in Saudi Arabia in that women's perceived weakness is exploited and they often tend to be deceived in money matters.

There is an association between women's education and women's work because before education, women were not qualified to work. Also, the Government did not offer jobs to women before issuing the royal decree. In 1960 al-Ri'āsah established 15 primary schools for girls and offered 114 opportunities for women to work as teachers. The number of Saudi teachers in these schools had been 14 and the new appointments for women established governmental work for Saudi women in Saudi Arabia.⁽⁹³⁾ Subsequently, the opportunities for women to work increased dramatically from 14 teachers in 1960 to 130 teachers in 1963. In 1996, the number of Saudi women teachers reached 135,584.⁽⁹⁴⁾ In 2003, the number of Saudi women in the education sector was 237,940 which was approximately 84% of the total number of women working in the governmental sector.⁽⁹⁵⁾

The Government also attempted to open the door for women to work in other sectors of government; for example, in hospitals, at the Ministry of Social Affairs and in the media.⁽⁹⁶⁾ However, women still faced difficulties for social and practical reasons but most of these difficulties stemmed from the strength of social traditions. Restrictions within the family constituted one of these problems, because when a woman found a suitable job, she sometimes faced opposition from her husband or father whom traditionally, she had to

⁽⁹³⁾ See: al-Dukhayyil, Wafīqa, *ʿAmal al-Marʿah al-Suʿūdiyya*, (Riyadh: Maktabat al-Malik Abd al-ʿAzīz al-ʿĀmma, 2000), p 93.

⁽⁹⁴⁾ See: *ibid.* pp.93.101.

⁽⁹⁵⁾ See: Al-Juraysī, Hudā, *al-Marʿah fī Sūq al-ʿAmal*. In *Al-Mrʿah al-Suʿūdiyyah: Ruʿā ʿĀlamiyya*, p 85.

⁽⁹⁶⁾ See: *ibid.* pp. 163.186.

obey.⁽⁹⁷⁾ Secondly, there is the problem of transportation since women are not allowed to drive and their relatives may not be willing to take them to work. Thirdly, there is the problem of rumours; people in Saudi Arabia show contempt for women who work in a job requiring them to be in contact with men;⁽⁹⁸⁾ for example, in a hospital or in the media.

In addition, there are practical reasons why women are not encouraged to work; for example, there are no financial incentives because Islam obligates men to feed their families. Also, some families do not need money and women, therefore, do not need to work. Secondly, there are limited opportunities for women because they commonly work in the women's sectors.⁽⁹⁹⁾ These difficulties have resulted in an increase in the number of women working in the education sector because girls' schools are considered to be the most suitable places for Saudi women. Women's education is the biggest sector that is separated from men, but the disadvantage of this is that very few women work in other jobs; in 2003 the percentage of women working in sectors other than education was a mere 7,5%.⁽¹⁰⁰⁾

On the other hand, women contribute to investment in Saudi Arabia, though the number of female investors is still low. In 2003, the Chamber of Commerce in Saudi Arabia announced that the number of women registered was 2,398, which amounts to 5.8% of the total. Furthermore, because of the limitations in their investment experience, they are concentrated in small projects.⁽¹⁰¹⁾

6. The Effects of the Events of September 11th, 2001, on the Status of Women in Saudi Arabia

The events of September 11th, 2001 prompted a revolution in the social and cultural movement in Saudi Arabia, which instigated many changes in many sectors. The revolution raised big questions about whether the sectors of the government gives citizens their rights and prepares good members of society. These events also resulted, in an indirect way, in a reconsideration of the Islamic discourse that had dominated for a long time. It is important to examine the changes that happened for women in Saudi Arabia after the events of September

⁽⁹⁷⁾ See: Al-Āghā, Farīda and ʿĀʾisha al-Māniʿ, p 51.

⁽⁹⁸⁾ See: *ibid*, p 51.

⁽⁹⁹⁾ See: *ibid*, p 51.

⁽¹⁰⁰⁾ See: al-Juraysī. p 85.

⁽¹⁰¹⁾ See: *ibid*. p. 86.

11 in order to see its impact on women writers. Discussion of women's rights, one of the most prominent social issues, underwent a significant change in both the government and popular culture. The freedom to discuss and criticise the problems facing society was the most important factor in prompting change. The freedom to criticise is fundamental to the ability of the country to open its eyes to the real problems that the Kingdom faces, to propose different solutions and to choose the best one. In the educational system, for example, since September 11 Saudi intellectuals, 'have begun freely to debate in the press the content of such reforms'.⁽¹⁰²⁾ They emphasised that in general the curriculum does not prepare students to find suitable jobs after graduating from these schools.

In addition, the curriculum has been criticised outside the country, especially in the United States where it is believed that it encourages pupils to practise violence against western countries. It was maintained that there was an over emphasis on the teaching of religion and the Arabic language: 30 percent in primary schools, 24 percent in secondary schools and 14 percent in high schools.⁽¹⁰³⁾ However, the majority of Saudi intellectuals, whether Islamists or liberals, refused to countenance any interference by other countries in their educational system. They defended its aims and asserted that many Saudi intellectuals had graduated from Saudi Arabian schools.⁽¹⁰⁴⁾

Both opinions alerted the Ministry of Education to the need to revise its curricula and make changes to improve them. After adding some amendments to the content of the curricula, the Ministry of Education unified the curricula for boys' and girls' schools in 2003.⁽¹⁰⁵⁾ This happened after the integration of al-Ri'āsah into the Ministry of Education in 2002 which eliminated the independence of al-Ri'āsah. This idea strengthened education in Saudi Arabia, since it removed the separation of efforts. It also supported the Ministry of Education to draw its plan for boys and girls by unifying responsibility for education.

Criticism, after the events of September 11, also resulted in the positive measure of giving women the right to be leaders. The first step was the appointment of Nūra al-Fāyiz (1954-...)

⁽¹⁰²⁾ Menoret, p 202.

⁽¹⁰³⁾ See: *ibid.* p. 198

⁽¹⁰⁴⁾ See: *ibid.* p.198.

⁽¹⁰⁵⁾ See: al-Sayf, Muḥammad, Al-Ṭullāb wa al-Ṭālibāt fi Manhaj Wāḥid wa Lughat Wāḥidah. *Al-sharq al-Aūsaṭ newspaper*. Saturday 20 September 2003.

as the Deputy Education Minister for Girls' Affairs in 2009.⁽¹⁰⁶⁾ Al-Fayiz is the first Saudi woman to occupy a ministerial position, which illustrates how serious the Government came to view Saudi women's status. This royal decree is considered to be an important decision, and one which acknowledged Saudi women's ability to take responsibilities and to participate in the development of the country. This action encouraged ministers to promise to give well-educated women the opportunity to be appointed to higher status jobs. °Abd al-°Azīz Khūja (1942-...), the Minister of Information, has announced that the doors of his Ministry are open for women to occupy its higher positions but this is, however, conditional on their qualifications and abilities.⁽¹⁰⁷⁾

On September 25th, 2011, King Abd Allāh (1924-...) referred, during his speech in Majlis Ash-Shura (The consultative council in Saudi Arabia), to his decision about the participation of women in Majlis Ash-Shura as members, starting in the following term. He emphasised that the reason behind this decision was that he refused to marginalise the role of women in Saudi society. The King's speech mentioned that the decision was made after consulting with the °Ulamā° and the participation, therefore, was according to the Islamic criteria.⁽¹⁰⁸⁾ In addition, according to the King's speech, women had the right to run, and vote in the council elections.⁽¹⁰⁹⁾ This decision opened a huge debate among the °Ulamā° and the intellectuals in Saudi Arabia; for example, Sheikh Šāliḥ al-Luḥaydān (1930-...), who is one of the well-known members of the Senior Religious Authority and the previous president of the High Judiciary Council of Saudi Arabia, showed indirect objection to this decision emphasising that he had not been consulted even though he was eligible for consultation according to his long history in the Senior Religious Authority.⁽¹¹⁰⁾

It is also significant that the Saudi government realised the importance of establishing connections with other countries in order to benefit from their experience and understand their civilisations. Therefore, the Saudi Government took steps to provide for the education of

⁽¹⁰⁶⁾ See: "al-Malik °Abd Allāh Yujadid al-Dawla wa Ṭumūḥāt al-Mujtama'" *Al-Riyadh newspaper*. 14846, Feb 15, 2009. Accessed: 12 April 2010 <http://www.alriyadh.com/2009/02/15/article409691.html>

⁽¹⁰⁷⁾ See: "Abwāb wazāratī maftūḥa" *Al-Ḥayat newspaper*, August 23, 2009.

⁽¹⁰⁸⁾ King Abd Allāh speech "King Abdullah: We refuse to marginalize the role of women in society On homeland .. Woman member of the Shura Council and municipal councils". See: al-Balawī, °Abd al-Salam, "Fī Yaūm al-Waṭan.. al-Mar'at °Uḍw fī al-Showrā wa'l-Majālis al-Baladiyya" September 26, 2011, 15799, *al-Riyadh newspaper*, Accessed: 23 Nov 2011 <http://www.alriyadh.com/2011/09/26/article670109.html>

⁽¹⁰⁹⁾ See: *ibid*, <http://www.alriyadh.com/2011/09/26/article670109.html>

⁽¹¹⁰⁾ This has been taken from al-Jawāb al-Kāfi's programme (The Sufficient Answer) on al-Majd channel in September, 30, 2011.

students abroad by opening the King ʿAbd Allāh scholarship programme. The number of students studying abroad reached 150,000 males and females,⁽¹¹¹⁾ and is regarded as the most important project in the history of higher education in Saudi Arabia.

This programme started at the beginning of King ʿAbd Allāh’s era, in 2006, at a cost of seven billion Saudi Riyals. This higher education programme is divided into five stages. Higher education establishments have chosen about 26 countries according to Saudi Arabia’s needs for development. In addition, higher education establishments selected the academic subjects needed by the Kingdom so that students are able to contribute to the development of their country.⁽¹¹²⁾ This programme gives equal opportunity to men and women so that women have the right to learn and study abroad. In addition, women can choose any subject that they are interested in rather than being restricted to working in the educational sector.

One of the changes after the events of September 11th was the foundation of the King ʿAbd al-Azīz Centre for National Dialogue. The royal decree to found this centre was issued in July 2003 and it was established as a national independent institution. The aim of establishing this centre was to spread the understanding of dialogue between the members of society and to make such dialogue an important feature of social life. Also, it aims to establish a basis for national unity in Saudi Arabia in spite of the fact that people have different opinions.⁽¹¹³⁾

This centre started in Riyadh where the first meeting was held between 15-18/7/2003⁽¹¹⁴⁾ followed by the founding of the Centre.⁽¹¹⁵⁾ As the national meetings progressed they attracted people’s attention; and it was noticed that the number of citizens following these meeting had increased from one meeting to another, due to extensive media coverage. Therefore, awareness of the importance of dialogue started to spread.⁽¹¹⁶⁾

⁽¹¹¹⁾ See al-Ghāmīdī, Asmahān, “al-Mamlakah Istathmarat al-ʿuqūl” September 22, 2012, 16161, *Al-Riyadh newspaper*, Accessed: 22 Sep 2012: <http://www.alriyadh.com/2012/09/22/article770177.html>

⁽¹¹²⁾ See: the announcement of the deputy higher education minister for scholarship in “al-Mūsā: Barnāmaj Khādīm al-Haramayn al-Sharīfayn Ḥaqaq Najāḥan Bāhīran” June, 22, 2009, *Albilad newspaper*, Accessed 23, June 2010: <http://www.albiladdaily.com/news.php?action=show&id=31047>

⁽¹¹³⁾ See: Markaz al-Malik ʿAbd Abd Allāh li’l-Ḥiwār al-Waṭanī min Wījhat Naẓar al-Mujtamaʿ, (Riyadh: Markaz al-Malik ʿAbd Abd Allāh li’l-Ḥiwār al-Waṭanī, 2007), p 4.

⁽¹¹⁴⁾ See: “al-Liqāʾ al-Waṭanī al-Awwal li’l-Ḥiwār al-Fikrī” June, 15-18, 2003, Accessed: 11 June 2010: http://www.kacnd.org/first_national_meeting.asp

⁽¹¹⁵⁾ See: Markaz al-malik ʿAbd Allāh lilḥiwār al-Waṭani. p 40.

⁽¹¹⁶⁾ See: *ibid.* p.40.

It was clear to observers that women were beginning to attend the meetings because more and more of their issues were being addressed. Ten women participated in the first national meeting which was about *Fighting Fanaticism and Extremism*, along with seventy four men.⁽¹¹⁷⁾ However, thirty five women participated in the third national meeting which equalled the number of men.⁽¹¹⁸⁾ People in Saudi Arabia started listening to women and hearing their opinions on different issues in the country. In addition, the King ‘Abd al-‘Azīz Centre allocated one of the meetings entirely to women’s problems under the title of Women's Rights.⁽¹¹⁹⁾

The foundation of the Human Rights Commission was one of the consequences of the events of September 11th. It was established in March 2004 under the supervision of the Council of Ministers and the decision of its foundation detailed its functions.⁽¹²⁰⁾ Although there is a big question mark about the supervision of the Council of Ministers, it is thought to be a very good way of considering human rights. Time and popular effort will have the responsibility for separating this commission from the control of government.

The Commission has begun to carry out its duties in Saudi Arabia and “the rights of women” is one of the most important matters it oversees; since there are many problems facing women in Saudi society and the Commission is attempting to address them. One of the phenomena for Saudi women is child marriage, which often happens in rural or urban areas which lack education. The families practice the custom of marrying their young daughters to old men, for money. The Commission is concerned about this problem and they co-operate with other governmental sectors to eliminate it.⁽¹²¹⁾ Another example of the Commission’s efforts on women’s behalf is their attempt to address the problem of unemployment among Saudi women which affects 36 percent of graduates. They demanded that opportunities were

⁽¹¹⁷⁾ See: “al-Liqā° al-Waṭanī al-Thānī li°l-Ḥiwār al-Fikrī” Accessed: 19 June 2009
http://www.kacnd.org/second_national_meeting.asp

⁽¹¹⁸⁾ See “al-Liqā° al-Waṭanī al-Thālith li°l-Ḥiwār al-Fikrī” Accessed: 19 June 2009:
http://www.kacnd.org/third_national_meeting.asp

⁽¹¹⁹⁾ See “Third National Meeting” Accessed: 19 June 2009 : http://www.kacnd.org/eng/Third_meeting.asp

⁽¹²⁰⁾ For more details see the website of the Human Rights Commission in this link:
<http://nshr.org.sa/tabid/146/Default.aspx>

⁽¹²¹⁾ See: The announcement of the president of the commission, The periodical of Human Rights Commission issue number 20. p.12.

created so that graduate women could work in suitable jobs; and they referred to the successful experience of women working in different sectors in the Saudi Government.⁽¹²²⁾

The events of September 11th 2011 played an important role in the development of the movement towards the wider publication of works by women writers in Saudi Arabia. The events raised many questions about religion, education and women, leading to the publication of many books in these areas. The main objective for publishing these books is to construct an attitude to the events of September 11th. For example, many women writers have published novels after these events; and when we compare the number of novels published after September 11th to those published before, we find that the former outnumber the latter despite the shorter period of time. It has been emphasised that these events played an effective role in awakening women in Saudi Arabia to participate in answering the questions raised after the events.⁽¹²³⁾

7. Conclusion

It is clear that the status of women in Saudi Arabia has undergone noticeable development since the introduction of girls' education. Because of the intellectual movement observers saw great improvements in women's rights that had been limited by a lack of awareness in Saudi society. However, it is clear that there are some obstacles in the way of the development of women's status in Saudi Arabia although the Saudi Government has shown its concern by establishing institutions to serve society, and recognising that women are an important section of the community. Islamic doctrine remains the most important engine that leads women from one stage to another and Islamic discourse, therefore, takes the lead in any work done for women.

Saudi society itself presents women with difficulties by imposing many kinds of restrictions on them; yet, confusion between Islam and social tradition is one of the obstacles in the way of elevating women's status. Therefore, allowing the media to broadcast women's voices discussing the difficulties they face is one of the ways of increasing social awareness. Also,

⁽¹²²⁾ See: *ibid* p.2.

⁽¹²³⁾ See: *al-Rifā'ī*, p.54.

the ideological struggles between intellectuals in the Saudi cultural field contribute to raising women's awareness about their problems.

As a result, Saudi Arabian female novelists who feel and understand the many problems facing women in their country attempt to illustrate these difficulties in their novels. In Saudi Arabia the novel is considered to be one of the most effective means of expressing issues because observers are able to see the public's reaction to them. For example, the novel entitled, *Banāt al-Riyāḍ* (The girls of Riyadh) has raised an important question about the status of girls in Saudi Arabia not only among the critics but also in society as a whole.⁽¹²⁴⁾ This suggests that when the novelists deliver their message to readers it has the effect of shocking them. In general, it is true to say that women writers supported the development of the women's movement in Saudi literature.

⁽¹²⁴⁾ See more details about this novel p 232, 233 in this thesis.

Chapter Two: Introduction

1. Hypothesis

Since 2002, there has been an increase in the number of novels published by women novelists in Saudi Arabia,⁽¹²⁵⁾ which is a fact that raises a variety of questions: Why was there an increase in the publication of women's novels during that particular time? Has women's awareness of their problems been developed in their novels? What are the factors that contribute to the development of the work of Saudi female novelists and what aspects of this development can be discussed? Are these works of sufficient artistic value to place them in the Saudi Arabian literary landscape? In the light of these questions, it is necessary to examine the phenomenon and to trace its origins.

2. The importance of studying this subject:

In the last decade, as the number of published novels grew, women's literature has become an important subject, particularly due to the concern this literature has generated amongst critics in Saudi Arabia. The considerable number of published Saudi women's novels invites critics' attempts to interpret the rise of this genre at this particular time. In comparison with their interest in reading and writing poetry, female authors have demonstrated greater interest in producing novels. It is well known that two Saudi women novelists turned to writing novels after they had published their first collection of poems; a clear sign that women have begun to establish themselves in this specific literary form.⁽¹²⁶⁾ Furthermore, Saudi women play an important role in the emergence of the Saudi novel as a whole even though most critics ignored this crucial role before the new millennium.

⁽¹²⁵⁾ The novels published from 2002-2011 are listed in this thesis. See: pp 190-192.

⁽¹²⁶⁾ Zaynab Ḥafnī and Bashā'ir Muḥammad published their first novel after publishing their collection of poems. For more details, al-Rifā'ī, Khālid, "Thaman al-Shukiyāta: Bashā'ir Bi-Milād Basha'ir "1", April 21, 2008, 244, *al-Majalla al-Thaqāfiyya*, Accessed 20 Jan 2010

<http://www.al-jazirah.com.sa/culture/2008/21042008/read47.htm>

Through the experience of studying women's novels, the importance of discussing women's issues outlined in novels written by Saudi female novelists becomes obvious. Its importance can be broadly divided into the following categories:

Firstly, women in Arab societies protect their privacy, which distinguishes them from women in other societies and this preference is derived from a variety of effective authorities. Primarily, their instinct for privacy stems from the Islamic teachings, which is the most important authority for women. Secondly, the traditions and customs of societies in which they live dictate the rules that must be obeyed. However, women's sense of privacy has the effect of encouraging Saudi intellectuals, especially men, to write about women's issues and their needs from the male perspective. Yet, given women's natural predisposition of being more capable of addressing their own specific issues, it seems logical to explore their novels in order to understand these issues from the woman's point of view.

Secondly, some literary critics argue that the artistic value of a novel is the main criteria for its classification, since novelists cannot properly convey their message unless their works demonstrate adequate artistic value. For example, if a story seems to be absurd, it might be problematic to view it as a novel even though the author described it as such. Similarly, although there are many stories published in Saudi Arabia as novels with an explicit claim found on the cover presenting the story as a "novel", critics tend to often dismiss this claim, if they do not believe that these stories fulfil the artistic aspects of the novel. Therefore, an analysis of the artistic value of Saudi women's novels help to navigate us through different stages of qualitative development of Saudi women's novels and to recognise factors that play a role in the artistic awareness of Saudi novelists.

Thirdly, an analysis of the Saudi women's novel offers an insight into the development of women's novels at each stage. In addition, the reader can see the correlation between the development of Saudi society, the novel as a literary form and the women's voices in addressing their issues.

Fourthly, through studying the way women's issues are presented in the Saudi women's novel the reader acquires understanding of how women's awareness has been developed. As explained later, the Saudi female novelists represent large segments of their society

encompassing different regions, tribes and classes. Furthermore, by contrasting the various stages, the reader is able to understand the influences on this development, whether direct or indirect.

Fifthly, by examining women's issues in novels written by Saudi women the connection between the development of the novel, the burgeoning of the novelists' own society and the advancement of the expression of women's needs is revealed.

3. Theoretical framework:

This thesis focuses on tracing novels written by Saudi women and highlighting their development throughout their history in order to discover the development of Saudi women novelists' awareness and the extent to which they have kept up with their societies at different stages. Therefore, it is appropriate to adopt feminist literary theory as a theoretical framework in this thesis, since it derives its subject from the creative literary works of women. The importance of studying Saudi women's novels stems from the importance of hearing their voices and reading about their needs and demands within Saudi society, particularly provided that one of the most important instruments for expressing these issues is the art of the novel. Looking carefully at the changes in societies around the world, especially in Arabic countries, we will see that feminist movements have developed via the efforts of critics who recovered women's artistic works and studied them to understand their progression.

In this regard, Elaine Showalter, as one of 'the most influential American critics of the second wave'⁽¹²⁷⁾ of feminist criticism, has made a considerable contribution to the study of women's literature. She refers to two types of feminist criticism; 'the first type is concerned with women as reader, which Showalter labels "feminist critique". The second type deals with women as writer',⁽¹²⁸⁾ through Showalter's emphasis on the importance of rereading women's literature. Furthermore, she reflects on the history of British women's writers and classifies their works whilst reaching a conclusion that British women's awareness has passed

⁽¹²⁷⁾ Selden, Raman, Widdowson, Peter and Brooker, Peter. *Reader's Guide to Contemporary Literary Theory*. (London: Pearson Education Limited, 5th ed, 2005), p 127.

⁽¹²⁸⁾ Moi, Toril, "Sexual/Textual Politics: Feminism Literary Theory", in Eagleton, Mary, *Feminism Literary Theory*, (Oxford: Basil Blackwell Ltd, 1986), p 191.

through three important phases called by her as the ‘feminine’, ‘feminist’ and ‘female’ stages. During the ‘feminine’ phase, (dating from about 1840 to 1880), women writers in an effort to equal the intellectual achievements of male culture internalised its assumptions about female nature. In the ‘feminist’ phase, (from about 1880 to 1920 or the granting of the right to vote), women were historically enabled to reject the accommodating postures of ‘femininity’ and used literature, ‘to dramatise the ordeals of wronged womanhood. In the female phase, ongoing since 1920, women reject both imitation and protest two forms of dependency and turn instead to female experience as the source of an autonomous art, extending the feminist analysis of culture to the forms and technique of literature’.⁽¹²⁹⁾ Showalter attempts to follow the novels in each stage to find the characteristics of each phase. In this regard, it is important to see how women’s literature is different and special, in order to reach this goal. Showalter emphasises that it is necessary to return to the history of women’s literature and restructure it to discover some women writers who have become obscure. This kind of study supports the continuity of women’s literary production through tracing and evaluating it from decade to decade instead of ignoring many women writers and focusing exclusively on examining women’s works of a certain level of perceived quality.⁽¹³⁰⁾

Through her definition of feminist literary criticism, Showalter stresses the idea of women as producers of literature, since she refers to the subjects of feminist literary criticism: the history, themes, and structure of literature, etc. She also includes in the subjects of feminist literary criticism the ‘psychodynamics of female creativity linguistic and the problem of a female language; the trajectory of the individual or collective female literary career; literary history; and of course, studies of particular writers or works’.⁽¹³¹⁾ Showalter uses the term ‘Gynocritics’ to refer to the study of these subjects concentrating on texts written by women.⁽¹³²⁾ In her book *A Literature of Their Own*, Showalter looks at the way in which women’s self-awareness appears in their writing and how their self-awareness has been translated into a literary form.⁽¹³³⁾

⁽¹²⁹⁾ Showalter, Elaine, “Towards a Feminist poetics”, in Showalter, Elaine, *The New Feminist Criticism: Essays on Women, literature and Theory*, (New York: Pantheon Books, 1985), pp 137-139.

⁽¹³⁰⁾ See: *ibid.* p 137.

⁽¹³¹⁾ *ibid.* p 128.

⁽¹³²⁾ See: Humm, Maggie. *Dictionary of Feminist Theory*, (New York; London: Prentice Hall/Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1995), p 116

⁽¹³³⁾ See: Showalter, Elaine, *A Literature of Their Own: British Women Novelists From Bronte to Lessing*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1977), p 12.

Clearly, Elaine Showalter's theory applies to issues concerning western women's writers in terms of a patriarchal society of the 18th and 19th century. At this point, it is worth reiterate that there are and always have been clear social, political and cultural differences between Saudi society and British society. However, much of her comments might be as well applied to women's writings in Saudi Arabia during the decades that are a focus of this thesis given that the basic elements of her theory addresses similar issues: the history, the literary works, and the development of women's awareness. Similar to the way Showalter divides British women's novels into three stages according to the characteristics of their development, this thesis categorises Saudi women's novels into four stages according to the characteristics of the development of two pertinent themes that this thesis focuses on. In addition, in a way that Showalter refers to the factors that affected the development of British women's awareness, this thesis considers the factors contributed to development of the consciousness of Saudi women's novelists from one stage to another stage. In her article "Women's Time, Women's Space writing The History of Feminist Criticism", Elaine Showalter emphasises the idea that her theory could be possibly applied on the literature of women anywhere:

'In addition to having a broad social and intellectual base, feminist criticism is unusually wide in scope. It is not limited or even partial to a single national literature, or century; it is interdisciplinary in theory and practice'.⁽¹³⁴⁾

Therefore, the analysis of women's novels has been adopted by Arabic criticism, whereby Arab critics use the Showalter method to analyse the writings of Arab women. It is clear to see, when the critics focus on the history of Arabic women's writings, the value of tracing their works and of considering the development of women's consciousness. In her attempt to study the history of women's awareness, Alanoud Al-Sharekh adopts Elaine Showalter's work by diving the stages of Arabian women writers' development into three discreet parts whilst entitling each stage in the same way as Showalter: the feminine, the feminist and the female. Al-Sharekh emphasises that the structure of her book is, 'based on the work of Elaine Showalter, *A Literature of Their Own*, her research on British women writers in which she

⁽¹³⁴⁾ Showalter, Elaine, Women's Time, Women's Space Writing the History of Feminist Criticism, in Benstock, Shari, *Feminist Issues in Literary Scholarship*, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1987), p 31.

suggests that there are three phases in the evaluation of the novel as a form of female artistic expression'.⁽¹³⁵⁾

Another work in Arabic criticism which adopts feminist literary theory to study women's novels is Rifqa Dūdīn's book entitled, '*Khiṭāb al-Riwāya al-Niswiyya al-ʿArabiyya al-Muʿāṣira: Thimāt wa Taqniyāt* (The Discourse of Modern Arabic Feminist Novel: Themes and Techniques). He emphasises that he adopted the criteria of feminist criticism as the methodology of his study. The author refers to Showalter's work as an important milestone in the history of feminist criticism.⁽¹³⁶⁾

4. The methodology of the study:

Maintaining Elaine Showalter's theory as a point of reference, this study hinges on the observation of women's novels in Saudi Arabia historically, dividing the observed period into four important stages. Representative novels have been selected at each stage in order to highlight the most important women's issues in the female novelists' perspective, and to trace the development of their awareness of women's issues. An analysis of Saudi women's novels reveals a trend followed by female novelists, whereby they address women's problems through a criticism of two social powers: the power of their society and the power of men. Therefore, the thesis focuses on these two important powers in order to explore the development of women's awareness in terms of tackling these social authorities. It is worth pointing out that there is an overlap between the two powers that has to and will be taken into consideration while treating these issues.

The four stages into which the observed period have been divided were formed according to the theme and the artistic value of the analysed novels where each stage has its own thematic aspects, (i.e. we shall discuss different themes and their artistic value). Historical events play an important role in the formation of each stage, and therefore this study will highlight the character of historical circumstances at the beginning of each stage.

⁽¹³⁵⁾ Al-Sharekh, Alanoud, *Angry Words Softly Spoken: A comparative Study of English and Arabic Women Writers*, (London: Saffron Books, 2006), p.12.

⁽¹³⁶⁾ See: Dūdīn. Rifqa, *Khiṭāb al-Riyāyya al-Niswiyya al-ʿArabiyya al-Muʿāṣira: Thimāt wa Taqniyāt*, (Amman: n pub, 2007), pp. 9-21.

Specifically, this study focuses on the way that female novelists treat women's problems, hence it is appropriate that the observation adopts an eclectic method when choosing the representative novels at each stage. The analytic method is another critical tool adopted in this study; this method is used when exploring the artistic value of the work and highlighting hidden meanings.

Considering the vast number of women's novels, an analysis of all the novels by this thesis would be impossible; therefore, it is logical to adopt an eclectic method. This study divides women's issues into four stages whilst each stage starts and ends with a discussion of the thematic, artistic and historical issues influencing writings in general and women's novels in particular. The stages are as follows:

- 1- Early beginnings (1958-1979).⁽¹³⁷⁾
- 2- The Establishment of the Saudi Women's Novel (1980-1989).⁽¹³⁸⁾
- 3- The Coming of Age of Saudi Women's Novels (1990-2001).⁽¹³⁹⁾
- 4- The Popularisation of the Saudi women's novel (2002-2011).⁽¹⁴⁰⁾

As mentioned, due to practical considerations, covering all the women's novels written during the period cannot be achieved, therefore, an obvious question arises: how to select a representative sample of the novels. The approach adopted in this study follows four carefully considered steps:

First: To collect all the novels in the stage and then placing them in order according to the date of their publication, thus the reader is made aware of the number of novels and novelists in each stage.

Second: To exclude novels that do not cover issues that are a focus of Saudi female novelists work, especially since one of the main concerns of this thesis is the development of Saudi

⁽¹³⁷⁾ The author of this thesis agrees with the division of al-Rifā'ī who calls it *al-Riyāda* and Jarīdī who calls it *al-Bidāyāt* as the 1958-1979 is the first stage of Saudi women's novels. Al-Wahhābī expands it to 1980.

⁽¹³⁸⁾ Jarīdī disagrees with this period since he argues that the second stage extends from 1980-1999 and calls it *al-Nuḍj*. Al-Wahhābī dates it from 1981-1991. This thesis agrees with al-Rifā'ī's division and title as he calls it *al-Ta'sīs*.

⁽¹³⁹⁾ This thesis refers to 2001 as the end of this stage because of the importance of the events of September, 11th 2001 and its effects on Saudi society and its literature. It agrees with al-Rifā'ī's title as he calls it *al-Izdihār*.

⁽¹⁴⁰⁾ Jarīdī and al-Rifā'ī refer to 2000 as the beginning of a new stage whereas al-Wahhābī stopped his critique at the third stage of his division which is between 1992-2002. The main reason for starting this era from 2002 is the events of September, 11th 2001. Al-Rifā'ī calls this stage *al-Intishār* and Jarīdī calls it *al-Thawra*

female novelists' awareness of two problems that tax Saudi women in society, the two authorities, men and society.

Third: Not to include stories that do not fulfil the accepted artistic aspects of the novel as many critics dismissed them as such even though their writers have presented them as novels.

Fourth: To choose the representative novels at each stage according to four important criteria: the quality of the novel, the value of the novelist at the particular stage, the way women's issues are treated and the way issues in the novel are supported by at least another novel at the same stage.

These standards may raise an objection in a sense that they might present a wrong picture of these stages when light is thrown on the 'best' novels in the stage and the stage is then judged according to them. However, the novels of each stage are in general artistically close so that the artistic features are considered while classifying the stages. Importantly, the novels that do not fulfil the aspects of the novel are excluded from the study. In addition, when a representative novel is chosen, the issues explored in the novel must be supported by another novel in the same stage to make the issue clear for the reader, and furthermore, to give a clearer picture of the stage in question. Therefore, a section called Comparisons and Contrasts in each chapter is devoted to examining whether the characteristics are supported by other novels or not.

The title of the thesis mentions the word "Saudi" and thus, it is important to refer to the meaning of this word in this thesis. There are some critics who exclude the novelists who live outside the country, even though their nationality is Saudi Arabian. These critics do not consider such writers to be Saudi novelists because they believe that their works do not represent the nature of Saudi society. The meaning of the word "Saudi" in this study is classified according to a novelist's nationality regardless of her place of residence; for example, even though Hudā al-Rashīd has spent most of her life in London,⁽¹⁴¹⁾ she is included in this study, as her nationality is Saudi Arabian. On the other hand, there are some

⁽¹⁴¹⁾ From an interview with Hudā al-Rashīd in London 12- 11- 2009.

novelists who spend their life inside the country but their nationality is not Saudi Arabian; hence they are excluded from this study.

After the classification of women's novels at each stage, one novel representing each theme will be chosen as an example of the novels belonging to a particular stage. This selected novel will be analysed thematically and artistically to answer the question as to how the artistic techniques articulate women's problems. The writers should treat the issue by using novelistic techniques to clarify the problem and to capture the readers' attention. The artistic tools that the novelists employ in order to express their attitudes towards the issues will be highlighted and analysed. The analytic method is grounded in the style that the novelist selected to express her viewpoint about the issue that she wants to tackle. Therefore, the analysis focuses on the most important techniques that the novelists employ to clarify the issues in their fictions. In addition, the analysis reveals the weak and the powerful points in the novels in terms of employing the novel's techniques that can indicate features of the stage artistically and thematically.

5. Literature review:

Through the examination of the resources related to the Saudi novel, we can see that studying women's novels might be split into three clear sections. The first section focuses on the study of the Saudi Arabian novel in general, that is, on the books or theses published to date on the Saudi novel regardless of the sex of the novelists. The second section concerns the academic resources devoted only to Saudi women's novels that exclude male authors. The third section concerns critical collections containing academic lectures published by the literary and cultural associations in Saudi Arabia by different authors. Looking at the history of the resources published in women's literature, it is possible to chart and critique the historical development of women's novels

5.1. The Saudi novel criticism in general:

There are many works that examine women's novels through the literary context as a whole in their effort to chart the history of the Saudi novel. Even though some of these works refer to a portion of the women's novels, most of them ignore the role of female novelists in the

emergence of the Saudi novel. This part will shed light on the most important general resources that focus on the Saudi novel and the number of women's novels referred to in each book.

We may firstly consider *Fann al-Riwāya fī al-Mamlaka al-ʿArabiyya al-Suʿūdiyya bayn al-Nashʿat waʾl-Taṭawur* (The Art of the Novel in Saudi Arabia Between the Growth and Development) by al-Sayyid Muḥammad Dīb. The first edition of this book was published in 1989 and, according to the writer, it is the second book to date on the Saudi novel after the publication of al-Ḥāzmī's book *Fann al-Qiṣah fī al-Adab al-Suʿūdī al-Ḥadīth* (The Art of story in the modern Saudi literature).⁽¹⁴²⁾

Due to the artistic features of the novel and its date of publication, the writer divides the development of the novel in Saudi Arabia into three stages: the first attempts, self-assertion and the development and modernisation.⁽¹⁴³⁾ The writer also critiques the Saudi Arabian novel thematically and artistically.⁽¹⁴⁴⁾ Then he chooses six novels as a sample to be analysed under the title of the applied samples. Although the writer mentions, in the bibliography, fourteen novels written by eight female novelists, he analyses, in his field study, the works of only four women novelists. In the conclusion, the writer refers to the value of women's participation in writing novels such as Samīra Khāshuqjī specialising in the emotional novel.⁽¹⁴⁵⁾

Another example of a general resource is a thesis entitled *The Novel in Saudi Arabia: Emergence and Development 1930-1989: A Historical and Critical Study* by Sulṭān al-Qaḥṭānī. The thesis is divided into five chapters. The first chapter concerns Saudi Arabia and the novel in which the writer goes back to the era before the emergence of the novel as a literary genre. In addition, he mentions the stories which are not classified artistically as

⁽¹⁴²⁾ See: Dīb, al-Sayyid, *Fann al-Riwāya fī al-Mamlaka al-ʿArabiyya al-Suʿūdiyya bayn al-Nashʿat al-Taṭawur*, (Cairo: Al-Maktaba al-Azhariyya liʾal-Turāth, 2nd ed 1995), p 7.

⁽¹⁴³⁾ See: Dīb. pp.9-12.

⁽¹⁴⁴⁾ The theme has been critiqued in the second chapter where he divides the theme in the novel into five subjects: the didactic novel, the social novel, the historical novel, the emotional novel and the political novel. Also, he judges the Saudi novel artistically, when he follows the structure of the novel through the events, characters, style, setting and time.

⁽¹⁴⁵⁾ See: Dīb. p.367.

novels, for example *Ghādat Umm al-Qurā* (The girl of Umm al-Qurā) by Ahmad Riḍa Ḥūḥu 1947.⁽¹⁴⁶⁾

In Chapter Two, the author lists and explains factors that affected the appearance of the Saudi novels, namely education, journalism, printing, publishing and the rise of the educated class.⁽¹⁴⁷⁾ The writer notes a contentious issue in the Saudi literary field in Chapter Three entitled ‘Pioneers’ in which the writer discusses the authors who are considered to be pioneers of the novel in Saudi Arabia. According to al-Qaḥṭānī, such pioneers are ʿAbd al-Quddūs al-Anṣārī (1906-1983) in *al-Tawʿamān* (The Twins) (1930), Aḥmad al-Subāʿī (1901-1984) in *Fikra* (An Idea) (1947) and Muḥammad ʿAlī Maghribī (1914-1996) in *al-Baʿth* (the Resurrection) (1948).

In Chapter Four entitled ‘The First Appearance of Narrative Art’, al-Qaḥṭānī discusses the Saudi Arabian novel in the period 1959-1979 whilst when referring to seven novelists of this period he mentions three female novelists: Hind Bāghaffār, Hudā al-Rashīd and ʿĀʿisha ʿAḥmad. However, there is no analysis of the novels as such, as they are discussed through summaries of their stories. Unexpectedly, the author does not include Samīra Khāshuqjī despite the fact that she is considered to be one of the most important Saudi female novelists. The reasons why Khāshuqjī was ignored will be clarified in Chapter Three of this thesis.⁽¹⁴⁸⁾

Chapter Five discusses the Saudi novel in the 1980s and starts by listing the novels in this period. There are seventeen novelists mentioned at this stage, yet only two are female: Amal Shaṭā and Ṣafīyya ʿAnbar.⁽¹⁴⁹⁾ Following the list of the novelists of the period, the writer divided the works into two groups:

- 1- The first group were novelists influenced by Jūrjī Zaydān (1861-1914)⁽¹⁵⁰⁾ and this influence can be seen in such works as Muḥammad Zāri ʿAqīl in his story *Amīr al-Ḥubb* (The Prince of Love).⁽¹⁵¹⁾

⁽¹⁴⁶⁾ See: Al-Qaḥṭānī, Sulṭān. *The Novel in Saudi Arabia: Emergence and Development 1930-1989: A Historical and Critical Study*, (Glasgow: Unpublished Thesis, University of Glasgow, Department of Arabic, 1994), p.6.

⁽¹⁴⁷⁾ See *ibid.* pp.19-38.

⁽¹⁴⁸⁾ See p 68 in this thesis.

⁽¹⁴⁹⁾ See: *ibid.* p.110.

⁽¹⁵⁰⁾ Jurjī Zaydān is a well-known Lebanese writer and novelist. He is the founder of al-Hilāl magazine (1892-1914) and he published many books and novels.

- 2- The second group were novelists influenced by the modernists, both of Arab and foreign origin. For example; Hudā al-Rashīd read the original writing of Western novels and Amal Shaṭā was influenced by the translations of these works into Arabic and all of them read the famous Arab novelists such as Najīb Maḥfūz (1919-2006).⁽¹⁵²⁾

The practical methodology adopted in this book is descriptive since the author spends the major part of the thesis describing the events of the novels.

Thirdly, a thesis published by Mohammed Alhasoun entitled *Social Criticism in the Saudi Novel: 1990 - present day*. The main focus of the writer, apparent in the title, is on the Saudi novels published in the period of 1990-2007 and he also focuses on the novels criticising Saudi society. Al-Ḥassūn stresses that ‘the significance of the present thesis stems from the fact that it is an investigation of both Saudi fiction and society since its focus is a literary theme closely intermeshed with vital social issues’.⁽¹⁵³⁾

The writer divided his thesis into six chapters. In the first chapter, he introduces the thesis by explaining the importance of the study and the reasons behind choosing this topic. Furthermore, he states his objectives and highlights the previous studies and then outlines the methodology for analysing the novels. In Chapter Two, the writer provides a general background of Saudi Arabia from a historical, political, geographical and social point. The writer continues by exploring novels prior to 1990 in Chapter Three. It is worth noting that the author dedicated more than one hundred pages to introduce his study, which might consider as a defect in the design of the thesis. Thus, the discussion of the thesis’ main topic commences in Chapter Four in which the writer separates male and female novelists whilst tackling the most prominent social questions in the post-1990 Saudi novel. Al-Ḥassūn refers to the reason behind creating this division as being relevant to ‘the different nature of the questions handled and of the methods pursued by Saudi male and female novelists respectively’.⁽¹⁵⁴⁾ This view is central to the reason for choosing the topic of this thesis, that is, an examination of how Saudi female novelists explore their issues and treat them in a

⁽¹⁵¹⁾ See: *ibid.* p.113.

⁽¹⁵²⁾ See: *ibid.* p.114.

⁽¹⁵³⁾ Alhasoun, Mohammed, *Social Criticism in the Saudi Novel: 1990-present day*, (Unpublished thesis, University of Exeter, 2008), p 16.

⁽¹⁵⁴⁾ *ibid.* p.132.

different way than previously. In addition, the Chapter Four addresses three social questions as dealt with by five male novelists. The first topic concerns class distinctions and marginalization in Saudi society; this topic is represented by *al-‘Uṣfūriyya*, (The Lunatic Asylum) by Ghāzī al-Quṣaybī and *Fikhākh al-Rā’iḥa*, (Traps of Scent) by Yūsuf al-Muḥaymīd. The second topic tackled in this chapter is the relationship between a man and a woman which was addressed by Turkī al-Ḥamad in his novel *Jurūḥ al-Thākira* (Scars of Memory) and ‘Abdu Khāl in his novel *Fusūq* (Corruption). Fundamentalism and religious extremism is the third topic to be treated in this chapter and the writer chooses two novels: *Rīḥ al-Janna* (Winds of Paradise) by Turkī al-Ḥamad and *al-Irhābī 20* (The Terrorist Number 20) by ‘Abd Allāh Thābit.

In Chapter Five, al-Ḥassūn turns to the most prominent social questions in the post-1990 Saudi novel written by female authors. Three social issues analysed in this chapter includes male dominance, where he chooses *Unthā al-‘Ankabūt* (A Female Spider) by Qumāsha al-‘Ulayyān and *Wijhat al-Baūṣala* (The Direction of the Compass) by Nūra al-Ghāmīdī as a representation of a work tackling the issue; sexual relationships with the novels entitled *Sitr* (Screen) by Rajā ‘Ālim and *Banāt al-Riyād* (Girls of Riyadh) by Rajā al-Ṣānī^c used as an illustration of these category of issues; finally racial and inter-tribal regional discrimination is the last social issue tackled in this chapter with two women’s novels as this issue’s representation this problem. The first novel is entitled, *Jāhiliyya* (Times of Ignorance) by Laylā al-Juhanī and the second novel is *al-Baḥriyyāt* (A Touch of the Sea) by Umayma al-Khamīs.

In addition to the aforementioned, the writer devotes a section in Chapter 5 to comparison and contrast of male and female novelists’ representations of social concerns.⁽¹⁵⁵⁾ The writer stresses that female novelists are different than their male counterparts in terms of their concerns about women’s rights. In addition, through their treatment of social issues, women use the romantic style, especially when they tackle sexual relationships. The writer also noted that female novelists tend to use poetic language, which is one of the most remarkable aspects of their novelistic style; however, he points out that al-Ṣānī^c’s language in her novel is

⁽¹⁵⁵⁾ See: al-Ḥassūn p.305.

simple.⁽¹⁵⁶⁾ On the other hand, the writer refers to the similarities between male and female novelists by emphasising the point that they both use the ‘colloquial or a simple version of literary Arabic in preference to classical Arabic’.⁽¹⁵⁷⁾ The issue of the importance given by society to the right to choose a partner is another similarity between both female and male authors in their novels. The writer also refers to other similarities in both themes and techniques.⁽¹⁵⁸⁾

The significance of al-Ḥassūn’s research for this thesis stems from the presentation of Saudi male and female novelists as separate entities, in order to clarify the differences between the two sexes in the way they choose and present social issues. However, it differs from this thesis through its focus on social issues rather than on the development of Saudi Arabian female writers’ awareness of women’s problems, which is a subject of study of this thesis. Thus, this study depends on the historical line as an important tool in the choice of the representative novels whereas al-Ḥassūn does not choose the novels according to the date of publication.

5.2. Critique of the Women’s Novel:

The studies devoted to the women’s novel emerged in the middle of the last decade when in 2005 Abd al-Raḥmān al-Wahhābī submitted his thesis about the history of women’s novels in Saudi Arabia; since then, the number of similar publications have increased. In this part, we will present the most important books focusing on the analysis of women’s novels.

The first example in this section is a book entitled *Women’s Novel in Saudi Arabia: Its Emergence and Development in a Changing Culture* by Abd al-Raḥmān al-Wahhābī. It is an unpublished work that has been divided into six chapters in which the author charts women’s novels in Saudi Arabia from the beginning of 1960 until 2002. He analyses Saudi women’s novels by dividing the work into a study of three generations: the first generation covers the period between 1960 - 1980, the second generation runs between 1981 - 1991 and the third generation extends from 1992 to 2002. In Chapter One of this work, the writer emphasises that the aim of his study is to,

⁽¹⁵⁶⁾ See: *ibid* p. 307.

⁽¹⁵⁷⁾ See: *ibid* p. 308.

⁽¹⁵⁸⁾ See: *ibid* pp. 309-310.

‘determine the role of historical development, and its affect on society by relating the works of individual women novelists as they appeared (including the types of novel and themes) to cultural developments in society, bearing in mind the fact that the novelists have been writing in individual styles, which reflects their individual culture and attitudes. Different categories of writing can be seen in the work of each of these novelists in terms of their themes or styles. One voice may dominate the whole of a text and determine its categorisation, or many voices may appear in any one individual novel.’⁽¹⁵⁹⁾

The writer chooses ten novelists to represent the women’s novel based on the importance of their contribution to the development of Saudi women’s novels. Al-Wahhābī entitles Chapter Two, ‘The Appearance of the Feminine; the Appearance of Women’s Novel’. He attempts to emphasise the idea that the emergence of novels written by women is linked with the nature of historical and ideological development of Saudi society, and to prove his argument, the researcher chooses two novelists representing the period 1960 – 1980. The first selected novelist chosen in this chapter is Samīra Khāshuqjī who is the first female writer to appear in the literary field in Saudi Arabia. In the first section, the writer indicates how Khashuqjī called for women’s liberation and for the right to appear in public life. ‘The second section listens to the voice of characters seeking women’s rights’.⁽¹⁶⁰⁾ In section three, the writer discusses how the novelist pictures ‘man’ and stresses the problem of ‘masculinity’. The second novelist discussed in this chapter is. Her writing technique is examined through the way dialogue is employed in her novels. In the second section of his analysis, Al-Wahhāb argues that the most important theme in Hudā al-Rashīd’s novels is cultural criticism.

Chapter Three is entitled ‘The Development of Saudi Women’s Novel: Heart and Mind’ and it deals with the first part of the second generation of female novelists. The novelists chosen in this chapter as an early example of this generation are Şafyya °Anbar and Amal shaṭā. The first novelist’s work is introduced as unreal since her characters ‘represent a withdrawal from reality’.⁽¹⁶¹⁾ Al-Wahhāb emphasises that Şafyya °Anbar depicts the romantic and thought lives of the women in order to highlight the differences between men and women. The writer believes that there is a similarity between each of her novels, therefore he examines the role of memory in creating a link between them. In contrast, Amal Shaṭā illustrates how society

⁽¹⁵⁹⁾ Al-Wahhābī, Abd al-Raḥmān, *Women’s Novel in Saudi Arabia: Its emergence and development in a changing culture*, (Unpublished Thesis, University of Manchester, 2005), p.14.

⁽¹⁶⁰⁾ *ibid.* p. 80.

⁽¹⁶¹⁾ *ibid.* p. 133.

has changed, especially in her last two novels. The writer refers to the development of her novels in terms of the narrative structure: 'This chapter also examines the different aspects of the female character in Shata's novel, that is, ethnicity, the identity of a woman in a family context, and the contribution of the heroine'.⁽¹⁶²⁾

In Chapter Four, the writer shifts his focus on to the second part of the second generation of female novelist in a chapter entitled 'The Development of Saudi Women's Novels: Style and Structure Reflect Different Thinking'. Al-Wahhābī takes two novelists as an example of the development of Saudi women's novels. The first is Bahiyya Būsubayt who uses a direct approach to convey her messages, hence al-Wahhābī's predominant focus on the language and the structure of her works.⁽¹⁶³⁾ He also refers to the theory of Islamic Literature,⁽¹⁶⁴⁾ which was formulated in the 1980s, as having an important effect on her novels which can be seen in the didactic approach used in her fictions. The chapter also discusses a different, symbolic style which came to prominence in the 1980s when Rajā' °Ālim appeared. The reasons behind the development of °Ālim's style at that time and the question concerning the value of this type of writing are analysed in this chapter as well. This chapter further examines the picture of women in these types of novels and how the writer employs history and legend to deal with women's issues.⁽¹⁶⁵⁾

The title of Chapter Five is 'The Movement of Society and the Movement of the Novel: Women and the Novel after the War'. In this chapter, al-Wahhābī suggests that the second Gulf War had an important affect on the development of society and accordingly, on the novel, whether written by a male or a female. The number of novels written by women in this generation increased and in fact was higher than the number of novels written by male authors. The writer emphasises a change in women's style and themes, arguing that during this period, they adopted a bolder style and started to address sexual themes. Laylā al-Juhanī, Qumāsha al-°Ulayān and Zaynab Ḥafnī are the novelists chosen to represent the third generation of women's novels.

⁽¹⁶²⁾ *ibid.* p. 133.

⁽¹⁶³⁾ See: *ibid.* p 192.

⁽¹⁶⁴⁾ The concern of Islamic Literature is the content of the product whether it is poetry or prose; theorists require that this literature must carry Islamic principles. See: Ṣubḥ, °Alī, Ma°ālim al-Adab al-Islāmī. In Ṣubḥ, °Alī, Sharaf, Abd al-Azīz and Khafājī, °Abd al-Mun°im, *al-Adab al-Islāmī: al-Mafhūm wa'l-Qadiyya*, (Beirut: Dār al-Jil, 1988), p 10.

⁽¹⁶⁵⁾ See: *ibid.* p 252

The writer concentrates on the Saudi women's novel in general and he examines its history, its connection with society and its different themes. In addition, since his study stops at the end of the third stage i.e. in 2002, that the writer does not include a fourth stage in his research, thus his study does not examine the effects of the events of September 11th, 2001 on Saudi women novelists and their work.

Second examined book in this section is *Al-Riwāya al-Nisā'iyya al-Su'ūdiyya: Khitāb al-Mar'ah wa Tashkīl al-Sard: Saudi Women's Novel: Women Discourse and the Formation of Narrative* by Samī Jarīdī. This book was published in 2008 and approximately 370 pages are divided into seven chapters. The first chapter presents a historical background in which the writer examines the beginning of the Saudi women's novel and the most important stages in its development. He also presents several factors which impact upon the appearance of the women's novel in Saudi Arabia and its development.⁽¹⁶⁶⁾

The title of Chapter Two refers to an artistic study that focuses on 'setting' and 'streams of consciousness.' Instead of treating this issue in Saudi women's novels, the writer focuses on a theoretical criticism of the two terms 'Setting' and 'Stream of Consciousness.' This chapter contains 58 pages in which he reserves 5 pages to the examination of these techniques in Saudi women's novels.⁽¹⁶⁷⁾ An analysis of language and the formation of narrative takes place in the third chapter in which he discusses these techniques through two important formations:

- a- The Individual formation: this concerns the letters or sentences that are relevant to the setting and indicate one meaning.
- b- The structured formation: this is tackled on three levels: the inspired language, poetic language and dream allegory.

Chapter Four highlights characterisation and narrative formation, whereby writer refers to the character in terms of its connection with the setting in two parts: static formation and dynamic formation. The event and the narrative formation are analysed in Chapter Five in which the writer addresses these aspects through the connection between the setting and the events. These issues are tackled in two parts: total formation, meaning the central event of the novel, and partial formation that denotes events when they split into small parts.

⁽¹⁶⁶⁾ See: Jarīdī, Sāmī, *Al-Riwāya al-Nisā'iyya al-Su'ūdiyya: Khitāb al-Mar'ah wa Tashkīl al-Sard*, (Beirut: Mu'asasa al-Intishār al-'Arabī, 2008), p.13.

⁽¹⁶⁷⁾ See: *ibid.* pp 78-110

Chapter Six emphasises time and setting by arguing a connection between them and narrative formation. The writer tackles this issue through three elements. The first form of time is time direction, which means the form of events duration, whether it is inversed, not inversed, or circled. The second form is time structure, which concerns the way that time is presented and whether it stopped, jumped or coincided. The third form is dialectic of the self and time, which means the struggle between a 'self' who is still able to resist and 'time' which tries to destroy the self.⁽¹⁶⁸⁾ The significance of the formation of the narrative takes place in the last chapter and is treated by addressing five levels of significance: the political significance, the social significance, the psychological significance, civilised significance and the historical mythical significance.

A third example in this section we examine *Ṣūrat al-Rajul fī al-Riwāya al-Nisuiyya al-Sa'ūdiyya: Ru'ya Thaqāfiyya Jamāliyya* (The picture of man in Saudi women's novel: Cultural Aesthetic Vision) by Maṣṣūr al-Muhawwis. This book concerns the picture of men in Saudi women's novels which the writers examines in two parts:

Firstly, the book examines cultural types of 'man' pictured in women's novels. He divides this part into three chapters in which he attempts to cover the patterns of 'man' in Saudi women's novels.

The First Chapter focuses on the idea of man's behaviour in the Saudi women's novel and he refers to five kinds of behaviours: firstly, the picture of 'bossy man' which is rooted in a culture which glorifies the man because he has value in himself and woman is dependent upon him.⁽¹⁶⁹⁾ The writer indicates seven novelists to clarify the picture of this type of man in women's novels. Secondly, the picture of 'humiliated man' which is the opposite of the first picture, and he finds this picture in women's novels in two forms: man who is humiliated by his society and the man who is humiliated by his family. In addition, he finds two kinds of humiliations: the psychological humiliation and the social humiliation, but he does not understand or explain this politically, or intellectually.⁽¹⁷⁰⁾ The writer refers to 12 novelists to discuss this picture but he gives only basic reference to the idea without attempting a deep

⁽¹⁶⁸⁾ See: *ibid.* pp 238-274.

⁽¹⁶⁹⁾ See: Al-Muhawwis, Maṣṣūr, *Ṣūrat al-Rajul fī al-Riwāya al-Nisuiyya al-Sa'ūdiyya: Ru'yah Thaqāfiyya Jamāliyy*, (Riyadh: Mu'asasat, Al-Yamama, 2008), p.45.

⁽¹⁷⁰⁾ See *ibid.* p.82.

analysis. Thirdly, there is the picture of the ‘frivolous man’ who appears in two characterisations: a man who has different relationships outside his home and a man who shows irresponsibility towards his family’s needs. Fourthly, there is the picture of ‘positive man’ who rejects tradition and supports women. Fifthly, there is the picture of the ‘dream man’ who exists outside the consciousness of the novelist and only appears when the novelists employ a stream of consciousness to escape from psychological and social problems.

The Second Chapter concerns a picture of man in terms of his relationship with women and the writer divides this chapter into four sections. The first section focuses on a woman’s father and this character appears in the novels as a supportive character that participates in the movements of the events. Also, he can appear in some parts of the novel to fulfil a specific artistic aim; for example, he attends while his daughters are educated. The writer emphasises that the figure of ‘father’, in women’s novels, is limited to either the positive or the negative father.⁽¹⁷¹⁾ Section two concerns the picture of a woman’s husband which is most apparent in women’s fiction. The writer stresses that this picture appears in two forms: the positive husband and the negative one.⁽¹⁷²⁾ Section three presents the picture of the son in women’s novels and he refers to the well-known tradition of putting the son’s needs before the daughter’s. The writer refers to the helpless son who is used to put pressure on the partners and he also indicates the positive son. This character is used symbolically, to reveal the novelist’s rejection of the idea of a “man leading her life”. The last section in this chapter is the picture of a brother who is depicted both positively and negatively.

The Third Chapter in this part discusses the psychological opening, which focuses on a picture of man revealed by the events of the novel. The chapter is divided into four sections, in which the author specifies the first section for the ‘affiliated man’ whether his affiliation is to his region, tribe, religion or doctrine.⁽¹⁷³⁾ In the second section, the writer attempts to follow the picture of ‘expatriate man’ according to the issues behind his emigration, whether for external reasons, such as a man who does not have the Saudi nationality, or a psychological matter which comes from his personality.⁽¹⁷⁴⁾ The picture of the man who is looking for freedom takes place in the first section of this chapter in which the writer

⁽¹⁷¹⁾ See: *ibid.* p.176.

⁽¹⁷²⁾ See: *ibid.* p. 195.

⁽¹⁷³⁾ See: *ibid.* p. 254.

⁽¹⁷⁴⁾ See: *ibid.* pp. 268-278.

describes different types of freedoms that appeared in women's novels; for example, the presentation of a character looking for absolute freedom, or seeking freedom of speech.⁽¹⁷⁵⁾ The last section is about the man who has a dual personality and describes how women's novels suggest reasons behind the problem and explore the effects on the characters, especially women.⁽¹⁷⁶⁾

Secondly, it examines the aesthetic formation for the picture of man in women's novels.

This part is divided into three chapters concentrating on the artistic value of Saudi women's novels in terms of drawing the picture of 'man'. In the first chapter, the writer follows the female novelists' approach to drawing their characters. Here, his analysis attempts to determine the connection between the narrator and the character which is clarified by the presentation of the narrative, such as first-person narrative or third-person narrative.⁽¹⁷⁷⁾ He also refers to the value of dialogue in terms of drawing the character of the man in women's novels. His analysis of characterisation and symbolism takes place in the third section of this chapter where he indicates the value of employing symbol to draw the character of man artistically.⁽¹⁷⁸⁾ In the following two chapters, the writer refers to the value of time and setting to portray the character of man.⁽¹⁷⁹⁾

Fourthly, *Al-Riwāya al-Nisā'iyya al-Su'ūdiyya: Qirā'a fi al-Tārīkh wa'l-Mawḍū' wa'l-Qaḍiyya wa'l-Fann* (The Saudi women's novel a reading in the history, theme, issue and art) by Khalid al-Rifā'ī. This book was published in 2009 and consists of approximately 500 pages. The writer attempts to classify the stages and most important turning points that women's novels in Saudi Arabia have passed through. However, these classifications appear in the introduction of the book only and he does not clarify its features while analysing the novels in the field of study.⁽¹⁸⁰⁾ The writer divided the Saudi women's novel into four stages solely to simplify the study,⁽¹⁸¹⁾ but his analysis does not follow his classifications. In addition, the author includes some short stories in the list of Saudi women's novels such as

⁽¹⁷⁵⁾ See: *ibid.* p. 285.

⁽¹⁷⁶⁾ See: *ibid.* p. 316.

⁽¹⁷⁷⁾ See: *ibid.* pp.325-333.

⁽¹⁷⁸⁾ See: *ibid.* p. 362.

⁽¹⁷⁹⁾ See: *ibid.* pp. 363-403.

⁽¹⁸⁰⁾ See: al-Rifā'ī, Khālīd, *Al-Riwāya al-Nisā'iyya al-Su'ūdiyya: Qirā'a fi al-Tārīkh wa'l-Mawḍū' wa'l-Qaḍiyya wa'l-Fann*, (Riyadh: al-Nādī al-Adabī, 2009), p 39.

⁽¹⁸¹⁾ Interview with the author in Riyadh 12-9-2009.

Dhikrāyāt Imra'ah by ʿAhd ʿAnānī in the second stage and *Sirr fī Aʿmāqī* by Bahiyya Būsubayt in the third stage.⁽¹⁸²⁾

The book is divided into three chapters:

The First Chapter discusses the themes of the Saudi women's novel in five sections. The emotional novel is the first theme discussed since it is interpreted as 'every novel that the emotion becomes the main subject for it which controls its language, the movement of its events, its characters and the emotion dominates the reader'. There are three representative examples of this type of novel.⁽¹⁸³⁾ In addition, the didactic novel is interpreted as the kind of novel which aims to reform society and to this end, the novelist converts into a preacher instead of concentrating on the artistic value of the novel. The novelist chosen to represent this type of novel is Bahiya Bū Subayt with her two novels *Dura min al-Aḥsāʾ* (1988) and *Imra'ah ʿalā Fawhat Burkān* (1996).⁽¹⁸⁴⁾ Furthermore, the social novel refers to novels that focus on criticising the problems of society and ways of treating such problems. The writer divides this kind of novel into two parts: firstly, the novel described society in particular period and secondly, the novel of characterised formula that criticises society through one of the characters.⁽¹⁸⁵⁾ In addition, the Islamic novel cannot be explained without the definition of Islamic literature, which is defined as the artistic effective expression about human, life and existence from the vision of Islam. Finally, the insurrectionary novel which refers to the novel which aims to stage a revolution in society in order to remove it and found an alternative one.⁽¹⁸⁶⁾ The writer chooses three women's works to represent this type of novel: *Mazāmīr min Warāq* (2003) by Nidāʾ Abū ʿAlī, *Hind waʾl-ʿAskar* (2006) by Badriyya al-Bishr and *al-Qirān al-Muqaddas* (2005) by Ṭayf al-Ḥallāj.

The Second Chapter, which is divided into two sections examines some of the ideas contained in the novels; the first is devoted to the comparison between two authorities: generality and speciality to form a picture of the man. The writer attempts to make a

⁽¹⁸²⁾ See: al-Rifāʿī, p 44 and p 47.

⁽¹⁸³⁾ See: al-rifāʿī. p.67.

⁽¹⁸⁴⁾ See: al-rifāʿī. p.99.

⁽¹⁸⁵⁾ See: ibid p. 117

⁽¹⁸⁶⁾ See: ibid p.177.

statement about the nature of relationships between man and woman, and then moves on to create the picture of man in the Saudi women's novel. This picture is analysed in two ways: in the positive picture of man and the negative picture of man. The represented novels here are, *Qatarāt nim al-Dumū*^c by Samīra Khāshuqjī and *Hind wa al-^cAskar* by Badriyya al-Bishr. The second section in this chapter is entitled, 'Women's Issues in the Saudi Women's Novel' in which the writer attempts to concentrate on the most important issues in women's novels according to his view. The first issue is the one where women seek a place for themselves in patriarchal society and this is presented as the main issue in all women's novels. The second issue is equality or the requirement of rights. He focuses on two kinds: equality in creative writings and equality in society, and he chooses three novels to represent this issue.

The Third Chapter discusses the aspects of the artistic Structure' and this includes four sections that cover approximately 200 pages. The first section concerns characterisation and has been divided into three parts: the circle, types of character and ways of introducing characters. The meaning of circle is relevant to the reader, since it connects with the participation of the reader in a culture. He tackles this by dividing the circle into three parts: the social circle, the mythological circle and the psychological circle. Following this, the author refers to Forester when he divides the characters into two types. Then he moves to ways of introducing the characters, which are: the descriptive way, the graphic way and the internal monologue. The 'language' discussion takes place in the second section where he attempts, at the beginning, to make a statement by giving Saudi women's novels two circles: the pronounced language and the literary language. He chooses different women's novels to represent this aspect. 'Time' is the third section in this chapter and the writer tackles this issue in three parts. The first part is 'tendency' which has been given three temporal trends: sequential upward tendency, sequential downward tendency and the nested time. The second part in this section focusus on the order of 'time', in these novels. 'The place of Setting' is the subject of the last section of this chapter and this has been tackled in three essential parts: types of setting, the setting's function and the formation of setting.

The writer concludes by presenting the most important consequences, divided into two sections:

The first section concerns special consequences that focus on the results reached through the plan of the study, as there are outcomes described in each chapter. One of these is that he believes that Khāshuqjī is the founder of the Saudi women's novel, and this is for two reasons: the outrun, because she is the first Saudi woman who published a novel, and divination because she influenced women in Saudi Arabia to write novels.⁽¹⁸⁷⁾ Another special result mentioned in the conclusion is relevant to the artistic value of the Saudi women's novel. He asserts that there is a lack of narrative consciousness which causes an increase in the number of women's novels although he cannot trace any phenomenon that deserves praise.⁽¹⁸⁸⁾

The second section concerns the outcomes resulting from reading and following novels written by women. The writer suggests that there is a special creativity in women's work that can be distinguished from men's, and this is apparent in their attention to emotional themes as well as in the artistic form, seen in the predominance of tragic events coupled with sad language.

A fifth examined book is *al-Rajul fi al-Riwāya al-Nisā'iyya al-Su'ūdiyya: al-Ṣūra wa'l-Dilāla*. (The man in the Saudi women's novel: the picture and significance) by Nūra al-Qaḥṭānī. This book consists of approximately 190 pages and the writer chooses the period 1990-2003 for her field study, for she believes that the 1990s have not yet been covered well by academics.⁽¹⁸⁹⁾ This book focuses predominantly on the status of women in Saudi Arabia and the appearance of the Saudi women's novel. Following the introduction, the book is further divided into three chapters.

The first chapter deals with a negative view of man in his relationships with woman in the Saudi women's novel, and paints a negative picture of man as father, brother, husband and son. While analysing this negative perception of a man, the writer attempts to discover the attitude of the novelists or their view of men in their society.⁽¹⁹⁰⁾ The writer then continues with a more positive picture of man in the Saudi women's novel in the next chapter; and she

⁽¹⁸⁷⁾ See: *ibid.* p.459.

⁽¹⁸⁸⁾ See: *ibid.* p.464.

⁽¹⁸⁹⁾ See: Al-Qaḥṭānī, Nūra, *al-Rajul fi al-Riwāya al-Nisā'iyya al-Su'ūdiyya: al-Ṣūra wa al-Dilālah*, (Damascus: Dār al-Qalam, 2009), p 10.

⁽¹⁹⁰⁾ See: *ibid.* p. 42.

returns to the same characters for the purpose of viewing them in a positive way.⁽¹⁹¹⁾ In Chapter Three, her analysis concentrates on the role of the novels' techniques used to portray the negative and positive picture of a man. She believes that the direct form dominates Saudi women writers' style. Therefore, she argues that there are many weak areas in Saudi women's novels, since the novelists focus on expressing their thoughts, hence scarifying to a certain extent the artistic value of their literary works.⁽¹⁹²⁾

Sixth book in this chapter's analysis is *Nisā' bilā Ummahāt: al-Dhawāt al-Unthawiyya fī al-Riwāya al-Nisā'iyya al-Su'ūdiyya* (Women without mothers: feminine-selves in the Saudi women's novel) by Samāhir al-Dḍāmin.

This book consists of 400 pages and the writer, as she mentions herself in the introduction, focuses on the novels published in the 1990s and the following decade.⁽¹⁹³⁾ The main aim of this book is to explore the achievements of the Saudi women's novel with an understanding of the novelists' privacy and their stand on the most important aspects, issues and concerns through an analysis of its discourse and the revelation of the aspects of self-consciousness.⁽¹⁹⁴⁾ After the beginning which offers a theoretical introduction to the definition of self-consciousness, she divides her book into three chapters.

The first chapter concerns the conditions of creation and reception; the author argues that women's self-consciousness underlies women's desire to be liberated from men, a wish which finds expression in their literary works.⁽¹⁹⁵⁾ The writer then turns to the history of women's self-consciousness in the novel where she emphasises that the novel is the best literary option for women to express their thoughts and experiences, as it gives them the opportunity to convey their ideas and to express their emotions without facing pressure from society.⁽¹⁹⁶⁾ The writer attempts to follow the critics' argument about the existence of the difference between men's and women's writing. Then, she deals with the process of women's writing. She argues that the theme of women's writing is based on resistance and

⁽¹⁹¹⁾ See: *ibid.* p. 91.

⁽¹⁹²⁾ See: *ibid.* p. 13.

⁽¹⁹³⁾ See: al-Dāmin, Samāhir, *Nisā' bilā 'Ummahāt: al-Dhawāt al-'Unthawiyya fī al-Riwāyya al-Nisā'iyya al-Su'ūdiyya*, (Beirut: Al-'Intishār al-'Arabī institution, 2010), p.18.

⁽¹⁹⁴⁾ See: *ibid.* p.16.

⁽¹⁹⁵⁾ See: *ibid.* p.83.

⁽¹⁹⁶⁾ See: *ibid.* p.90.

explicit criticism, and the technique of their writings mainly favours the poetic and emotional styles.⁽¹⁹⁷⁾

In Chapter Two, the writer attempts to reveal the history of the women's novel in Saudi Arabia from the early beginnings until 2010 with the aim of examining the development of women's self-consciousness.⁽¹⁹⁸⁾ She refers to the artistic tendencies of women's discourse in the beginnings of the Saudi women's novel and thinks that they are twofold: the melodramatic tendency and the realistic tendency. However, the 1990s witnesses the transformation of the women's novel from being a 'beginning' to being well established. This specific stage has three tendencies: the classic, the renewal and the modern tendency.⁽¹⁹⁹⁾

Chapter Three is entitled 'The consciousness discourse in the Saudi women's novel' which focuses on the most important themes in women's novels. The writer believes that two themes are most prevalent and they should be analysed. The first theme is women's resistance to alienation, and the writer's argument relates to women's situation, i.e. when they live or think; and their situation is not of their own volition but stemming from a powerful society. Therefore, since women need freedom and humanity, they are not treated in the way they deserve. She distinguishes between two forms of women's alienation: the alienation of will and the alienation of consciousness.⁽²⁰⁰⁾ The second theme discusses a female intellectual crisis in fictional discourse and it commences by presenting the male intellectuals' viewpoints about the situation and the contrast between male and female intellectuals' crises. In this regard, the writer believes that the suffering of a female intellectual in this kind of society is more than double that of a male intellectual.⁽²⁰¹⁾ The writer analyses this theme through five Saudi women's novels.⁽²⁰²⁾

5.3. The academic lectures:

A book published by the Literary Cultural Club in Jeddah in 2007 contains 17 lectures presented by Saudi critics about the women's novel in Saudi Arabia. The title of this book is

⁽¹⁹⁷⁾See: *ibid.* p.131.

⁽¹⁹⁸⁾See: *ibid.* p.141.

⁽¹⁹⁹⁾See: *ibid.* pp.216-231.

⁽²⁰⁰⁾See: *ibid.* pp.239-267.

⁽²⁰¹⁾See: *ibid.* p.298.

⁽²⁰²⁾See: *ibid.* p.303.

Khiṭāb al-Sard: al-Riwāyya al-Nisā'iyya al-Su'ūdiyya (Narrative Discourse: Saudi women's novel) edited by Ḥasan al-Nu'cīmī. The first lecture concerns the period prior to the beginning of the Saudi women's novel by 'Alī al-Shadawī in which he refers to the emergence of the novel in Saudi Arabia and the status of women in their country. The next 15 lectures are devoted to an analysis of women's novels, whereby each lecture examines one novel. This book also includes the discussions and comments of the audience in these lectures. ⁽²⁰³⁾

Ḥasan al-Nu'cīmī concludes this collection with a lecture about the discourse of exclusion and inclusion in the Saudi women's novel. He asserts the importance of reading women's novels from the viewpoint in the writer's discourse and concludes by emphasising the idea that a woman cannot separate her writing from her crisis with man. ⁽²⁰⁴⁾

By considering the abovementioned studies on the women's novel, it appears that the two most important themes that Saudi female novelists deal with are: the authority of society and the authority of men over women. Therefore, this thesis aims to analyse the development of the novelists' perception of both types of authorities from the emergence of Saudi women's novel until 2011. This analysis covers the development of women's ideas and the style they employed to express their thoughts on various themes; by doing so, the author of this thesis reveals the factors that affected women's perception of society and men and also inescapably influence their style of writing.

6. The structure of this study:

This research is divided into seven chapters as follows:

The first introductory chapter presents the main hypothesis of the study and underlines the importance of studying the Saudi women's novel. In addition, this chapter clarifies the

⁽²⁰³⁾ Fifteen novels are analysed in this book: *Ghadan Sayakūn al-Khamīs* by Hudā al-Rashīd, *Qaṭarāt min al-Dumū'* by Samīra Khashuqjī, *Ādam Yā Sayidī* by Amal Shaṭā, *al-Barā'a al-Mafqūda* by Hind Bā Ghaffār, *Basmah min Buḥayrāt al-Dumū'* by 'Aisha Zāhir, *Wahaj min Bayn Ramād al-Sinīn* by Ṣafiya 'Anbar, *Al-Lla'na* by Salwā Damanhūrī, *Masrā yā Raqīb* by Rajā 'Ālim, *Wijhat al-Bawṣala* by Nūra al-Ghāmidī, *'Uyūn 'Alā al-Ssamā* by Qumāsha al-'Ulayān, *Imr'ah 'Alā Faūhat Burkān* by Bahiya Bū Subayt, *Al-Firdūs al-Yabāb* by Laylā al-Juhanī, *Mazāmīr min Waraq* by Nidā Abū 'Alī, *'Indamā Yantiq al-Ṣamt* by Ḥanān Muṣṭafā Kattū'a and *Taūba wa Sulayyā* by Mahā al-Fayṣal.

⁽²⁰⁴⁾ See: al-Nu'cīmī, Ḥasan, *Khiṭāb al-Iqsā' wa'l-Iḥlāl fī al-Riyāya al-Nisā'iyya al-Su'ūdiyya*. In al-Nu'cīmī, Ḥasan, *Khiṭāb al-Sard: al-Riwāyya al-Nisā'iyya al-Su'ūdiyya*, (Jeddah: al-Nādī al-Adabī, 2007), p 668.

theoretical framework and the methodology adopted in this study. Examples of previous studies are presented under the title 'Literature Review', which is divided into three parts.

The second chapter, which represents an introduction to the study, offers a brief overview of the development of the women's status in Saudi society in order to increase the reader's awareness about the changes that have affected society, especially regarding the women's issues, namely women's education, women's employment and the influence of the events in the aftermath of September 11th, 2001 on the status of women in Saudi Arabia. All these issues are thus discussed in this chapter.

Chapter Three marks the beginning of the main part of the thesis. Since this chapter deals with the first stage of the development of the Saudi women's novel, it is entitled "The Early Beginnings (1958-1979)". Two novels that are chosen to represent this stage express Saudi women's perception of two main issues: the power of men and the weakness of women, and the issue of marriage.

The fourth chapter is entitled "The Establishment of the Saudi Women's novel (1980-1989)". It considers the development of women's awareness, and their decision to choose to address women's problems; to illustrate this, two novels have been chosen to examine issues relating to the problem of "Preventing Women from seeing their Children after Divorce" and "The Emotional Traumas Causing Relationship Break Down".

The title of Chapter Five is "The Coming of Age of the Women's Novel (1990-2001)" which is indicative of the third stage in the development of women's novels. Two novels have been selected to represent the women's novels' progress, namely "The Search of Freedom" and "Women Betrayed".

Chapter Six covers the fourth stage of the Saudi women's novel's development and is called "The Popularity and Extension of the Saudi Women's Novel (2002-2011)". Two novels represent two issues in this stage: "Women's Self-proving" and "The Effects of the Tribal System on the Formation of the Relationships between the Two Sexes".

Before concluding each chapter, the author of this thesis in the section entitled ‘Comparisons and Contrasts’ examines the characteristics of each stage by comparing the sample novels with the representative novels analysed in the chapter.

Chapter Seven represents the conclusion of the thesis, and as such, it summarises the most important points of the research with reference to the findings of the study. It also suggests directions that a further research in the field of Saudi literature might and should follow.

Chapter Three: First stage: The Early Beginnings (1958-1979)

1. Introduction

Before looking at the beginnings of the Saudi women's novel, it is important to refer to the establishment of the novel in general in Saudi Arabia, in order to understand the position of the women's novel in the context of the Saudi literary movement. It is also important to compare the roles that women and men played in laying the foundations of the novel in the country. In their analysis of the history of Saudi literature, certain critics have not acknowledged the role of women in the foundation of the Saudi Arabian novel. Instead, they have argued that the Saudi novel, as a literary genre, was founded by Ḥāmid Damanhūrī (1922-1965) when he published his novel *Thaman al-Tadhīya* (The Price of Sacrifice) in 1959⁽²⁰⁵⁾, although Samīra Khāshuqjī (1937-1986) had published her first novel *Wadda'at Āmālī* before this, in 1958, and this issue needs to be discussed in an exploration of the reasons behind this (seemingly) deliberate neglect of women's writing during the initial stages of the Saudi novel.

The neglect of women in the history of the Saudi novel is, in fact, mirrored by the neglect of women in the history of the Arabic novel in general. Many critics of Arabic literature would agree that the first novel of quality in Arabic literature was *Zaynab* (1914) by Muḥammad Ḥusayn Haykal (1888-1956)⁽²⁰⁶⁾. However, it is reasonable to refer to the precursors of the novel in Arabic literature, which were the stories published before *Zaynab*. There were 13 stories written by women,⁽²⁰⁷⁾ including that written by Zaynab Fawwāz (1844-1914) who was the real pioneer of the Arabic novel, and who published *Ḥusn al-ʿAwāqib* (Good Consequences) in 1899.⁽²⁰⁸⁾ According to Buthayna Shaʿbān, who investigated this literary historical issue, when she asked Muḥammad Dakrūb, who studied the history of the Arabic novel to explain the reasons behind critical dismissal of women's writing; he answered, 'The

⁽²⁰⁵⁾ See for example Al-Qahtanī, Sultan. p.69.

⁽²⁰⁶⁾ See: Haykal, Muḥammad. *Zaynab*. Dar al-Maʿārif. Egypt. 5th ed. 1992. . p.7.

⁽²⁰⁷⁾ Some of the novelists who published these novels are: Zaynab Fawwāz when she published: *Ḥusn al-ʿAwāqib* (1899) (The Good Consequences) and a few years later, *al-Malik Qawrash* (The King Qawrash), Labība Hāshim when she published *Qalb al-Rajul* (1904) (The heart of Man) and *Shīrīn Ibnat al-Sharq* (1907) (Shīrīn: The Daughter of East), Labība Mikhāʿil when she published her novel *Ḥasnā' Sālūnik* (1904) (The beautiful girl of Sālūnik), Farīda ʿAtāyā when she published her historical novel *Bayn ʿArshayn* (1912) (Between two Thrones) and ʿAfīfa Karam when she published her novel *Badīʿa wa Fuʿād* (Badīʿa and Fuʿād). There is no date of publication of this novel but she published it when she was thirty years old and she was born in 1883 which suggests that she published this novel in about 1913. See: Shaʿbān, Buthayna, *100 ʿĀm min al-Riwāya al-Nisāʿiyya al-ʿArabiyya*, (Beirut: Dār al-ʿĀdāb, 1999), pp.45-59.

⁽²⁰⁸⁾ See: *ibid.* p.47 and 62.

only reason that I can think of is that writers, including me, believe, in a subliminal way, that the literature written by women is not important⁽²⁰⁹⁾.

Buthayna Sha[‘]bān refers to another reason behind the exclusion of women’s novelists in the list of pioneers in the history of the Arabic novel, and that is that, whenever a woman’s novel has been discovered in the history of Arabic literature, the only question directed towards the researcher by literary critics will concern the artistic merits of the novel. Therefore, she went through the novels written by Arab women before 1914 and analysed them to prove their artistic value. In addition, she refers to women’s awareness of the importance of a novel’s techniques when she mentions Zaynab Fawwāz’s thoughts outlined in the introduction to her novel when she said: ‘since the literary novels are the most important type of writings which reflects a person’s thoughts and it entertains and benefits; and since the novels reformulate the reality, I decided to write this novel with my hope to be useful and enjoyable’.⁽²¹⁰⁾ This sentence reveals the novelist’s objectives in writing the novel in 1899; she linked her writing with the literary field, and she considered the reader’s enjoyment as one of her aims when writing a novel. A result, of these women’s novel being published and the inclusion of both men’s and women’s works is that researchers have been encouraged to pay more attention, in an objective way, to the history of the novel in Arabic literature as a whole; and thereby the history of the novel has been reformed. Elsadda refers to Sha[‘]bān’s argument about the marginalisation of women’s writings in Arabic literature. She argues that ‘the processes of inclusion and exclusion in the canon were regulated by the symbolic power of the liberal national elite whose cultural imaginings shaped the literary canon so as to represent their own worldview and their ontological and cultural conflicts, as well as their aspirations for the future’⁽²¹¹⁾

The novel as a new literary form in Saudi Arabia, begun due to the influence of various factors such as education, journalism and publishing.⁽²¹²⁾ In addition, the translations of English and French novels by Egyptian and Lebanese writers has been very effective in

⁽²⁰⁹⁾ See: *ibid.* p.62.

⁽²¹⁰⁾ See: *ibid.* p.48.

⁽²¹¹⁾ Alsadda, Hoda, *Gender, Nation, and Arabic Novel: Egypt, 1892-2008*, (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press Ltd, 2012), p xx.

⁽²¹²⁾ See: Al-Qahtanī. pp 18-44.

identifying this new literary genre in Saudi Arabia.⁽²¹³⁾ Furthermore, the novel was established in Arab countries where the most famous Arab writers had published their popular fictions; and therefore, Saudi writers had most likely read them. The Saudi Arabian literary field was filled with the novels published by Arabic writers such as Jurjī Zaydān (1861-1914), Nuqūlā Ḥaddād (1878-1954) and Najīb Maḥfūz.⁽²¹⁴⁾ There were many reasons behind the delay in the appearance of the novel in Saudi Arabia which relate to the nature of the Saudi people. One of these reasons was the fear of social punishment, especially since some of the novels could be interpreted by readers as autobiographies of novelists.⁽²¹⁵⁾ The Saudi novel, as a literary form, did not appear suddenly; rather, it developed gradually until it reached a state of artistic quality in 1958. °Abd al-quddūs al-°Anṣārī in *al-Taw°amān* (The Twins) 1930, Aḥmad al-Subay°ī in *Fikrah* (An Idea) 1947 and Muḥammad °Ali Maghribī in *al-Ba°th* (The Resurrection) 1948 were considered to be pioneers of the novel in Saudi Arabia⁽²¹⁶⁾ even though these works, artistically, could not be considered to be novels because the didactic objective insists on such stories that have a negative effect, on the plot of these works. Critics who have studied these stories argue that the writers have met the didactic side but have ignored the artistic angle.⁽²¹⁷⁾ However, the value of their works came from their attempt to write novels without the benefit of a model in their country and, therefore, their works were important in preparing the way for writing novels in Saudi Arabia and in encouraging other writers to think about writing in this form. Also, they were important in that they stimulated critical discussions about these works; for example, Muḥammad Ḥasan °Awwād wrote an article about *al-Taw°amān* in 1933 and published a critical book entitled *Khawāṭir Muṣarraḥa* (Declared Thoughts) in 1940.⁽²¹⁸⁾ As a result, the period between 1930-1958 was considered to be the precursor to the emergence of the Saudi novel.

Many Saudi critics argued that *Thaman al-Taḍḥiya* (The Price of Sacrifice) by Ḥāmid Damanhūrī represented the stage of technical maturity of the novel in Saudi Arabia.⁽²¹⁹⁾ They

⁽²¹³⁾ See: *ibid.* p.65.

⁽²¹⁴⁾ See: Al-Ḥāzimī, Maṣṣūr, *Fann al-Qiṣṣa fī al-Adab al-Su°ūdī al-Ḥadīth*, (Riyadh: Dār Ibn Sīnā, 3rd ed, 2001), p 32.

⁽²¹⁵⁾ See: Al-Manāṣira, Ḥusayn, *Dhākirat Riwayāt al-Tis°imīyyāt*, (Beirut: Dār al-Fārābi, 2008), p.41.

⁽²¹⁶⁾ See: *ibid* pp

⁽²¹⁷⁾ See: al-Ḥāzimī, p 35. See also: Al-Subayyil, °Abd al-°Azīz, Bid° al-Riwayā al-Su°ūdiyya, *Aḥwāl al-Ma°rifa* magazine, 31-12-2003. p 75.

⁽²¹⁸⁾ See: Al-Qaḥṭāni, p.7.

⁽²¹⁹⁾ For example: Sultān al-Qaḥṭāni p.15. See also, al-Subayyil. p.74.

argued that this was the first novel to concentrate on its artistic value and showed the influence of the senior writers such as Najīb Maḥfūz on its structure.⁽²²⁰⁾ Surprisingly, they ignored the role that Samīra Khāshuqjī played in the emergence of the Saudi novel in general; sometimes by neglecting to mention her name or her works, as Sulṭān al-Qaḥṭāni and Muḥammad al-°Uwayn did,⁽²²¹⁾ and sometimes by emphasising that her novels did not picture Saudi society and that she did not represent Saudi Society. Ḥasan al-Nu°mī has argued that the 1980s was the real decade of the beginning of the Saudi women's novel and he related the exclusion of Samīra Khashuqji's novels to her experience of life outside of the country. Another reason he gave in support of his argument was that women in Saudi Arabia did not enjoy the benefit of formal education until the beginning of the 1960s, which was the date that Samīra's novel was published, so, the question is, how could a woman write a novel when she was not qualified to read and write? He believed that this did not make sense and it is not logical.⁽²²²⁾ Moreover, Khayriya al-Saqqāf supported this argument when she said: 'I do not think that Khāshuqjī's novels belong to the literature in Saudi Arabia, except via the identity of the writer, because her writings circulated among people who did not represent society in Saudi Arabia because she lived in Beirut, Egypt and Europe'.⁽²²³⁾ However, Samīra Khāshuqjī started writing novels under the pseudonym of Bint al-Jazīra (Daughter of the Peninsula) and this was a sign of her affiliation to her country. The lack of formal education for women is not a reason for rejecting Khāshuqjī's novels as a Saudi writer because in fact there were private schools in Saudi Arabia for women before the introduction of formal education and, furthermore, Khashuqjī had her essential education in one of these schools in Medina.⁽²²⁴⁾ The settings that she used in most of her novels were placed outside the country but critics are advised to analyse her novels in order to find the reasons behind this choice, because it does not necessarily prove her alienation from the nature of Saudi society. Prince Nawwāf bin °Abd al-°Azīz, who introduced one of her novels, attempted to find an artistic reason behind choosing the Egyptian and Lebanese dialects in the dialogue in most of her novels. He concluded that the reason for choosing another dialect, different from the

⁽²²⁰⁾ See: Haddārah, Muṣṭafā, Qīṣat Nsh°at al-Riwāya al-Su°ūdiyya, *Al-Majallah al-°Arabiyyah*. p.90.

⁽²²¹⁾ See: al-°Uayn, Muḥammad, *Kitābāt Nisā'iyya Mutamarrida : Ru°iya Tārīkhiyya wa Naqdiyya liKitābat al-Mar°a al-Su°ūdiyya*, (Riyadh : n Pub, 2009), pp 52-67.

⁽²²²⁾ See: al-Nu°mī, Ḥasan, *Al-Riwāya al-Nisā'iyya al-Su°ūdiyya Bayn °Iqdayn*, In *al-Riwāya wa Tahawwlat al-Ḥayāt*, (Al-Bāḥa: al-Nādī al-Adabī, 2008), p 140.

⁽²²³⁾ See: al-Saqqāf, Khayriya, *Dilālāt al-Makān fi al-Naṣṣ al-Riwā'i °ind al-Riwā'iyya fi al-Mamlaka al-°Arabiyya al-Su°ūdiyya*, *°Ālam al-Kutub* 21, (Oct and Nov 1999), p 3.

⁽²²⁴⁾ See: *Ḥuqūl Magazine*: a special issue about Samira khāshuqji, Al-Nādī al-Adabī, Riyadh, September. 2007. 91.

language of the Arabian peninsula, was that she wanted to picture an example of a society which defended women's rights.⁽²²⁵⁾

In addition, there were disagreements among critics about the date of the publication of Khāshuqjī's first novel, and they also disagreed about its title; whereas they were all in agreement about the dates of the men's novels in Saudi Arabia⁽²²⁶⁾. These observations, as al-Rifā'ī argued, add weight to the notion of intentional exclusion of all feminine literary works⁽²²⁷⁾ even though these works were essential for dating the birth of Saudi Arabian fiction writing. Sāmī Jarīdī emphasises that Khāshuqjī is the pioneer of the artistic novel in Saudi Arabia because there were no novels with a similar technique or artistic level before the publication of her first novel.⁽²²⁸⁾ It is fair enough to consider Samīra Khāshuqjī, with Hāmid Damanhūrī, as the founders of the novel in Saudi Arabia.

It was apparent that the beginnings of the novel started in 1930 in the Ḥijāz region with the publication of *al-Taw'amān*, and this was an important factor in the beginning of the women's novel in Saudi Arabia because this attempt prepared the ground for further attempts. In addition, Samīra Khāshuqjī lived for a long time outside of the country, for example, in Egypt, before she published her first novel and this may be another factor that inspired her to write it. During that period, the Arabic novel began to flower due to the work of well-known novelists such as Najīb Maḥfūz and Iḥsān 'Abd al-Quddūs which gave Khāshuqjī the opportunity to benefit from the many fictions published in the 1950s.

Besides the above, the issue of women's liberation was flourishing at the time and was discussed as an important subject in the cultural and social fields in Egypt, through the famous writer Qāsim Amīn (1863-1908) 'who was the first man to address this issue at

⁽²²⁵⁾ See: Samīra Bint al-Jazīra, *Dhikrayāt Dāmi'a*, (Beirut: Zuhayr Ba'labakkī, n d), p 7.

⁽²²⁶⁾ Various critics mention that there is some disagreement about the date of publication of Samīra Khāshuqjī's first novel. Some cite 1958, others, 1959, 1960 and 1963. They, also, disagree about the title of the first novel; for example some argue that the first novel written by Khāshuqjī was *Dhikrayāt Dāmi'a*. 'Abd al-Ruḥmān al-Wahhābi said 'the first novel Dhikrayāt Dāmi'a (Tearful Memories) by Samīra Khashuqjī was published in Beirut in 1960' (Al-Wahhābi. p. 81).

⁽²²⁷⁾ See: Al-Rifā'ī, khālīd, *al-Riwāyah al-Nisāi'yah al-Su'ūdiyyah*.

Al-Nādi al-'Adabī. Al-Riyadh. 2009. p 37.

⁽²²⁸⁾ See: Jarīdī, p 15.

length'⁽²²⁹⁾ in 1900. When Khāshuqjī was in Egypt in the 1950s, this idea had become widely discussed by well-known women writers as well, such as Durriyya Shafiq who started tackling women's issues in the 1940s. She argued, 'against the entrenched chauvinism of men, and against the inherited disrespect for women's rights and freedom'.⁽²³⁰⁾ There were many women writers treating this issue widely via publishing books or newspaper articles, and Samīra Khāshuqjī can only have been influenced by these popular activities. As a result, external and internal factors came together to aid the emergence of the Saudi women's novel. Also, these factors played an important role in exposing the issues that Saudi women novelists selected for discussion, in their novels.

2. Women's Novels Published in This Stage

This chapter will focus on women's issues in the first stage of the Saudi women's novel to find out how women started to write novels and how their novels developed. One of the reasons behind dating this stage is that all Saudi women writers at that time had received their education outside of their own country, which gave them the opportunity to discover more open societies and to read women's works from other countries. The fact that they had been educated outside of the country had an effect on Saudi women's writings, either on the theme or on the form, an issue that we shall clarify later in the analysis. Another reason for dating this stage is that all the novelists in this period had lived or worked in the al-Ḥijāz region which was the only region in Saudi Arabia whose women wrote novels.

This stage extended from 1958, the date of the publication of Khāshuqjī's first novel, to 1979, the date of the publication of ʿĀ'isha Zāhir Aḥmad's novel *Basma min Buḥayrāt al-Dumū'* (A Smile from Lakes of Tears). There were ten novels published in this stage, as they are shown in the appendix. See (p. 252)

⁽²²⁹⁾ Jayyusi, Salama, Modernist Arab Women Writers: A Historical Overview. In *Gender, nation and community in Arab women's novels*, Majaj, L, Sunderman, P and Saliba, T, (New York: Syracuse University press, 2002), p.8.

⁽²³⁰⁾ *ibid*: 17.

3. The Most Prominent Women's Issues in the Novels of the Early Stage:

The two novelists that have been selected to represent this stage are Samīra Khāshuqjī, who initiated the beginnings of not just the women's novel but also the Saudi novel in general; and Hudā al-Rashīd, who moved a step further in the development of the women's novel since she represented an important turning point in the Saudi women's novel.

3.1. The Power of Men and the Weakness of Women

Samīra Khāshuqjī's novel *Qaṭarāt min al-Dumū*^c. (Drops of Tears)

3.1.1. Introduction

Elaine Showalter's theory hinges on strict attention to following the history of women's novels in order to show the changes that novelists themselves experienced through their novel-writings. She suggests that there are different areas in the novels that researchers can analyse in order to explore the development of women's works, such as theme, structure, , linguistics and female creativity. In addition, the history of the novel is one of the most important areas outlined in Showalter's theory; and this thesis will look at the progress of Saudi women's novels and link it with the development of Saudi society.⁽²³¹⁾ Through the analysis of the novels chosen to represent women's work at this stage, we can examine such features as theme, since the techniques used by the novelists show the areas of the development of the women's novel in the next stage. Since the main focus of this thesis is to trace the development of women's awareness of their issues, this part of the thesis will examine the ways in which Saudi female novelists tackle women's themes at the beginning of the development of the Saudi women's novel. In addition, the artistic value of Samīra Khāshuqjī's novel *Qaṭarāt min al-Dumū*^c. (Drops of Tears) will be analysed since it is an example of her way of delivering her theme to the reader and through this analysis we can see the artistic features of the women's novel during the first stage.

As previously mentioned, Samīra Khāshuqjī is considered to be the pioneer of the women's novel in Saudi Arabia because she was the first Saudi woman to write a novel, and also because she continued to write after publishing her first novel while many other Saudi writers stopped after the first publication, such as ^cAbd al-Quddūs al-Anṣārī, Aḥmad al-Subā^cī and Muḥammad ^cAli Maghribī. Samīra Khāshuqjī was born in 1937 in the Ḥijāz region in Makka,

⁽²³¹⁾ See: Showalter, Elaine. Toward a Feminist Poetics, in Showalter, Elaine. *The New Feminist Criticism*. p.128.

after which her family moved to al-Madīna where she had her primary schooling. In the middle of the 1950s her father sent her to study in Alexandria where she gained a B.A. in Economics. She died in 1986.⁽²³²⁾

Khāshuqjī is placed at the top of the list of first generation of Saudi female novelists who had most of their education outside Saudi Arabia which means that they were influenced by Arabic culture, especially Egyptian. It is recorded that the first phase of women writers started with a distinguishing sign, that is, they use a male pseudonym. This also applied to British women writers⁽²³³⁾ as well as Arabic women novelists in the feminist phase.⁽²³⁴⁾ However, Khāshuqjī started her writing by using a female pseudonym Bint al-Jazīra (A daughter of peninsula) that is, she hid her name but she declared her sex and her nationality since the word “daughter” refers to her sex and the word “peninsula” refers to her nationality which, is Saudi Arabian. Hiding her name may be interpreted as the fear of disclosing her name as a novelist at a time when she and her family might face problems. The purpose of declaring her sex and her nationality may be considered to be a bid to change the dominant idea about women at the time, that is, they did not participate in the field of literature.

The reasons for selecting this novel can be divided into two parts. The first relates to the novelist herself since she was the most important writer of the stage. She started to write novels and encouraged women in Saudi Arabia to write, by publishing six novels during that time. In addition, she played an important role in awakening women in Saudi Arabia by issuing a magazine that concentrated on women’s concerns, called *al-Majalla al-Sharqiyya*, in 1978. Also, she published a book entitled *Yaqaḏat al-Fatāt al-‘Arabiyya al-Su‘ūdiyya* (The Awakening of the Saudi Arabian Young Woman) which aimed to support women’s issues and their literature, according to her own vision.⁽²³⁵⁾

The second relates to the novel entitled *Qaḏarāt min al-Dumū‘* which will be analysed in this chapter. This novel represents, generally, women’s novels at this stage in that it deals with women’s issues. It also pictures the old Saudi society from the novelist’s viewpoint because it is her only novel set in Saudi Arabia.

⁽²³²⁾ *Huqūl Magazine*, p.91.

⁽²³³⁾ See: Showalter, Elaine. “Toward a Feminist Poetics”, in Showalter, *The New Feminist Criticism*. p.137.

⁽²³⁴⁾ See: Alsharekh. p.45.

⁽²³⁵⁾ See al-Rifā‘ī. pp.38-39.

3.1.2. Aspects of Male Dominance (Patriarchy):

Through this novel, the novelist attempts to explore woman's problems inside Saudi society. The novel reveals the weakness of a woman in a society in which she does not have the right to make her own decisions or to her own volition. The protagonist is a woman named Dhikrā, who has lost her power of speech because of her father's behaviour and the stress placed on her by her society. According to the events played out in the novel, this specific condition may have been chosen to symbolise the situation for women who had no option than silence.

Khāshuqjī attempted to portray men in ways that supported her point of view and revealed the problems that women face in Saudi society. Therefore, men in this novel are introduced through two important approaches: firstly, through portrayals of men seen to have a positive attitude towards women, and who are often pictured as one of the main characters of the novel. However, although these characters have positive attitudes to women, they are negative in terms of having a right of decision-making or of changing social beliefs and therefore, they are unable to help the women in this type of society. For example, °Āmir, a character in this novel, falls in love with Ruqayya but he decides to leave her because he fears that someone might discover their love story.⁽²³⁶⁾ Also, doctor °Āṣim falls in love with the protagonist but his father comes to Dhikrā demanding that she stays away from his son which demonstrates that the father controls his son's decisions.⁽²³⁷⁾

Secondly, there are characters with a negative attitude to women and these characters are introduced as enemies of women; and their actions in the novel are seen to be against women. These characters often have the authority to make decisions or to change the events of the novel to work against women's rights. For example, with the support of his society, Maḥjūb has the right to kill his wife.⁽²³⁸⁾ Also, °Āṣim's father succeeds in destroying the relationship between Dhikrā and his son °Āṣim.⁽²³⁹⁾

It is important to categorise the aspects of man's dominance according to the plot of the selected novel to realise the viewpoint of the novelist. This novel concentrates on the

⁽²³⁶⁾ See: Khāshuqjī, Samīra, *Qaṭarāt min al-Dumū'*, (Beirut: Zuhayr Ba'labakkī, 2nd ed, 1979), p.50.

⁽²³⁷⁾ See: *ibid.* p.114.

⁽²³⁸⁾ See: *ibid.* p.56.

⁽²³⁹⁾ See: *ibid.* p.114.

struggles that women undergo in this kind of society, and these can be divided into three categories. This division reveals the dominant feature in the theme of the novels published in this stage which is that the novelists attempt to merely show the status of women in the society through the events of their novels rather than allowing the protagonists, that carry their points of view, express their opinion directly. Therefore, the author's method of addressing this problem, is that the reader, receives her point of view through the events of the novel rather than the protagonists' dialogue.

3.1.2.1. The Disparity Between Husband and Wife

The novel starts with the story of an old man named Maḥjūb who married a young girl called Ruqayya who is 20 years his junior.⁽²⁴⁰⁾ Khāshuqjī uses the flash-back technique to clarify this character's suffering by going back to explain the reasons for Ruqayya's marriage. After the death of her father she lived with her uncle who did not care about the age difference when Maḥjūb asked to marry her; her uncle was only interested in the financial benefit that marriage would mean for him. The reader realises the superficial approach of using flash-backs, which was one of the techniques used in the early stages of the women's novel. The writer's way of handling an artistic technique was simple in that at times she used a third person narrator to remove the events from narrative time to the past which meant that she could ignore the logical sequence of events. The need for a specific event in the novel should be via an artistic form; for instance, one of the characters could relate this important background information through the dialogue or through a stream of consciousness.⁽²⁴¹⁾

Via its events, this novel tackles the disparity between husband and wife through an emphasis on the problem of child marriage, which can be seen through three important aspects. Firstly, the events show a lack of compatibility between husband and wife. Secondly, the consequences of such a marriage are played out in the novel. Thirdly, through the events described in the novel, the novelist examines the reasons behind this kind of marriage.

⁽²⁴⁰⁾ See: khāshuqjī, *Qatarāt*, p.13.

⁽²⁴¹⁾ See: Matshakayile, *F, The Flash-Back and the Flash-Forward Techniques in Ndebele Novels*, (Zimbabwe: University of Zimbabwe, 2001), p 190.

Many studies have shown the issue of men's dominance in the family as a symbol of the authoritarian tendency in political systems.⁽²⁴²⁾ Therefore, the novelist attempts to use the example of the experiences of one family in order to criticise the whole of society. By following the events of the novel, the lack of equality between the couple becomes apparent through an exploration of their differing thoughts and concerns. An example of this can be found in the dialogue between Maḥjūb and Ruqayya when she admits that she was not happy about marrying her daughter, Dhikrā, to ʿĀmir because she was too young, while he insisted on giving her in marriage.⁽²⁴³⁾ Also, the reader can discern the characters' differing thoughts via the conversations between couples, for example when Maḥjūb was sick and was coughing and Ruqayya was looking after him. She was crying and asked him to go to Riyadh to see a doctor but he shouted at her and did not listen to her advice. It is important, here, to emphasise that through this scene, the novelist wants to point out the difference between two Saudi generations, that are represented by Maḥjūb and Ruqayya, in terms of the practice of going to the doctor when there is a health problem; and the difference in their attitude indicates the differences between them. In addition, Khāshuqjī explores the negative side of child marriage by introducing the lack of love between husband and wife. Therefore, when Ruqayya sees a more suitable man for her, she falls in love with him because since they are the same age, they have similar views and concerns; and the result of all these similarities is love.

On the other hand, the novel shows the tragic end resulting from an equal relationship between ʿĀmir and Ruqayya. Although they fell in love, they both appreciated that the situation was impossible for them, so ʿĀmir decided to leave the area and while he was saying goodbye and explaining his decision to Ruqayya, Maḥjūb overheard him and, using his dagger, killed his nephew.⁽²⁴⁴⁾ The tragic consequences did not stop here, though. The next day, some people took Ruqayya outside and stoned her until she died in front of her daughter who then collapsed in shock.⁽²⁴⁵⁾ One of the reasons why critics tend to criticise the depiction of Maḥjūb's rather exaggerated reaction is that it does not represent Saudi society.

⁽²⁴²⁾ See: al-Shuraym, ʿAdnān, *al-Abb fī al-Riwāya al-ʿArabiyya al-Muʿāṣira*, (Irbid, ʿĀlam al-Kutub al-Ḥadīth, 2008), p. 19.

⁽²⁴³⁾ See: Khāshuqjī, *Qaṭarāt min al-Dumūʿ*, pp. 31-32.

⁽²⁴⁴⁾ See: Khāshuqjī, *Qaṭarāt*, p. 56.

⁽²⁴⁵⁾ See: *ibid.* p. 58.

It seems that her portrayal shows confusion between society's practices and Islam's punishment for adultery.

As previously mentioned, the reason for Ruqayya's marriage was money; however, this novel asserts the existence of another reason for child marriage, that of saving women from corruption. This is shown through the dialogue between Ruqayya, Maḥjūb and Dhikrā, about her marriage to her cousin °Āmir even though she was 11 years old. When Ruqayya tries to persuade her husband to forget his daughter's marriage he shouts at her and says:

- Marriage is a cover for women.⁽²⁴⁶⁾

The reason why the novelist employs this sentence in this scene, may refer to a very deep cultural feeling in society; that giving daughters in marriage is generated by the fear of disgrace⁽²⁴⁷⁾ and not to a concern for their daughters' future. The father's insistence on his daughter's marriage appears a second time when he asks his nephew directly to marry her, and °Āmir replies:

- But we are too young to marry and there is no need to be in a hurry.
- What do you mean, son?

Then °Āmir repeated the same sentence; and the old man says:

- I swear to God you will comply with my judgement otherwise I will leave the whole area.⁽²⁴⁸⁾

The use of this dialogue is important since, it works as a device used to clarify the plot of the novel and it also played its role in developing the events of the novel and drawing out the characters.

The novelist introduces the issue of child marriage in another novel in which she showed it to be an important factor in the failure of marriage. It appears in her novel *Warā' al-Ḍabāb* (Behind the Fog) (1956) where all the protagonist's problems were attributable to her marriage when she was 15 years old to a selfish, rich man.⁽²⁴⁹⁾ The relationship ends in

⁽²⁴⁶⁾ See: *ibid.* p. 31. **The Author of the thesis has translated all the texts of the sample novels from Arabic.**

⁽²⁴⁷⁾ See: al-Ḥashr, °Āisha, *Khalf Aswār al-Ḥaramlik*, (Beirut: al-Dār al-°Arabiyya Li'l-°Ulūm, 2007), p 19.

⁽²⁴⁸⁾ See: Khāshuqji, *Qaṭarāt*, p. 36.

⁽²⁴⁹⁾ See: Khāshuqji. Samīra, *Warā' al-Ḍabāb*, (Beirut: Manshūrāt Zuhayr Ba°labakkī, n d), p 18.

divorce because she finds him sleeping with a woman in the next room to hers, whereon she decides to leave the house immediately.⁽²⁵⁰⁾ As a result, all the difficulties that Ruqayya's character faces in her life were the consequences of this painful experience. In addition, the novelist emphasises the reasons for marrying off young daughters and the consequences of this, as she did in her previous novel, which emphasised the importance to Khāshuqjī of tackling this issue.

3.1.2.2. Women's silence:

Women's silence may be the product of male hegemony, as Maggie Humm has observed, 'women's voices have gone unheard, masked by male power realities incorporated into language'.⁽²⁵¹⁾ Khāshuqjī attempted to characterise the silence of women as a significant problem facing women in society. The protagonist of this novel was struck dumb accidentally and the reason for her speech difficulty was shown as her father's and her society's power over women. At the beginning of the story, the events unfold quickly. Dhikrā cries because some cruel people came to her house and took her mother away. They also take Dhikrā to see her mother being stoned, but she cannot tolerate the sight and she collapses. When she recovered, she was unable to speak, to the consternation of all around her, including her father. Mahjūb tried to treat her by taking her to Riyadh but the doctor told him that there was no hope that she would ever speak again. Consequently, her father registered her to study at the Institute for the Deaf and Dumb and she remained dumb until the end of the story.

It is necessary to look beyond the novelist's choice of such a specific condition for her protagonist and to explore whether it contains a special meaning that the novelist wanted to deliver to the reader. It is apparent from the events of the novel that the protagonist's escape from a cruel and unfair society to an inner world embodies her objection to this society. The novelist attempts to clarify the real reason why the women in this society are silent. Furthermore, although Dhikrā experienced the power of speech and then the problem of dumbness, she was aware that even when she was able to speak she could not change anything around her. For instance, when her father decided to give her in marriage even though she was only 11 years old, she could not change his mind so she did not have any

⁽²⁵⁰⁾ See: *ibid*, p 20.

⁽²⁵¹⁾ Humm, Maggie, *The Dictionary of Feminist Theory*, (Wheatsheaf: Practice Hall/Harvester, 2nd ed, 1995), p.267.

option but to cry.⁽²⁵²⁾ Through the narrative, the novelist, is able to articulate the issue of women's silence which she linked with men's power over women. Consequently, she tends to employ the symbolism of the protagonist's inability to speak in order to express her view of the dire status of women in this society and their silence.

It could be said that by employing this symbolism, the novelist makes an artistic error, since the reader might notice certain confusing contradictions in the events of the novel, which has the effect of weakening the plot. One contradiction is that the main character of the story has a specific problem in some parts of the novel while the problem disappears in other parts of the plot. When Dhikrā is struck dumb at the beginning, the reader has the impression that she is deaf and dumb because her father shouts at her but she does not hear him. Also, The novelist confirms this by emphasising the problem via the dialogue between Maḥjūb and his friend in Riyadh when he says:

- This is your daughter who has become deaf and dumb because of your bad behaviour'.⁽²⁵³⁾

However, in other parts of the story, Dhikrā appears able to hear but cannot speak, for example, when Doctor 'Āṣim explains how she could work as a nurse in the hospital and how much her salary would be. Also the novelist confirms this through the dialogue between the protagonist and her colleague Samā' who says: I notice that you are preoccupied; what are you thinking about? Then Dhikrā writes: Yes, I am preoccupied because I am in love⁽²⁵⁴⁾.

In addition, the novel that the protagonist published at the end of the story, entitled *Memoirs of a Dumb Woman*, is a clear indication that her difficulty is her lack of speech, but not her lack of hearing. This contradiction reveals an uncertainty about the nature of the character's difficulty, and is one of the defects of the novel since it shows the novelist's lack of a tight control on the material in the early stage.

Another aspect related to the issue of women's silence in society, is that the novelist referred to the problem that men's allegations against women are believed without investigation of the evidence. The novelist creates two characters that see the stoning of Ruqayya and see her

⁽²⁵²⁾ See: Khāshuqji, *Qatarāt*, p 32.

⁽²⁵³⁾ See: *ibid*, p 66.

⁽²⁵⁴⁾ See: *ibid*. pp.85-86.

daughter collapse. She does so not only in order to emphasise her point of view about this event but also to show that women are not believed in society whereas men are believed immediately. The dialogue between them runs:

- Brother, do you think this elderly man is truthful in his claim?! And should any claimant be believed?
- And should he pay the penalty for his allegation?
- Is this why he should be punished? Whose law is that? Punishment in Islamic laws is stipulated; no single condition exists? A woman has been victimised because of this crazy man.
- There was a man killed before this woman...⁽²⁵⁵⁾

The dialogue continued in this vein and it is full of unanswered questions, which criticise the tribe's position in this case, and which represents society in this novel; and also represents Samira Khāshuqjī's own viewpoint. It is important to be noticed here that this scene clarifies the novelist's point of view about the power of society over women in a direct way but the reader can see, also, her caution in expressing her view. The novelist here makes the criticism by men not women and this shows the characteristic of the first theme in Saudi women's novel since the world of her novel pays most attention to the status of women in Saudi society. The two male characters eventually make their judgement about the chief of the tribe, when one of them says:

- The case was referred to the chief of the tribe.
- What was his verdict?
- He judged what you saw but he did not see it.
- I swear he is an unfair chief. What was his evidence and if the man's indictment was true, should the woman and the man be killed with no evidence nor witnesses?!
- The chief is an intimate friend of Sheikh Mahjub.⁽²⁵⁶⁾

The events of this novel show that there were differences between killing °Āmir and killing Ruqayya, which confirm the novelist's viewpoint about man's dominance that she expresses in her novel. Immediately following the event the husband kills the man, an action that would

⁽²⁵⁵⁾ See: *ibid*, p 61.

⁽²⁵⁶⁾ See: *ibid*.p.62.

normally be seen as the crime of murder; on the other hand, in order to emphasise the power of the whole system over her, the woman's death, ordered by the chief, is considered to be legal. Also, the whole of society is seen to be participating in the woman's death because they stoned her in front of her daughter whereas one man, the husband, committed the murder. As a result, the novelist attempts to make a strong criticism against society and the powerless position of the women within it. Also, she employs the events and the characters to strengthen her case and to reveal the bad practices against women in the symbolism of women's silence. The silence of women appeared at the point when Ruqayya, although in the right, nevertheless could not defend herself and could not prove her innocence because she does not have permission to speak.

However, the novelist makes an artistic error at this point, by leading the events of the novel according to her point of view. The effect of this is that the reader cannot help but notice that characters are sometimes created in order to confirm her point of view and sometimes, the structure of the novel is interrupted by the device. It seems that Samīra Khāshuqjī did not plan her novels before writing; rather, she focused on the theme while neglecting the artistic form. Her other novels share this weakness. For example, according to al-Ḥāzimī, her first novel *Wadda't Āmālīi* depends on coincidence to develop its events without a logical sequence.⁽²⁵⁷⁾

The message relating to women's silence that the novelist might want to convey is that although they are currently under pressure from society to be silent, women will eventually break their silence and articulate their views in society. Furthermore, women do have points of view regarding their position and they should be listened to and respected; but society refuses to hear them so they wait for the opportunity to air their voices and spread their ideas. This idea can be read in the life of the protagonist who faced many difficulties in her life, starting from her mother's murder, her loss of the ability to speak, the loss of her good reputation and, finally, the loss of her lover because his father does not accept her as a suitable wife, which resulted in her lover's death in an accident. In spite of these difficulties, society admired her when they read her ideas after the publication of her novel "Memoirs of a Dumb Woman".

⁽²⁵⁷⁾ See: al-Ḥāzimī, Ḥasan, *al-Baṭal fī al-Riwāya al-Su'ūdiyya*, (Jāzān: Al-Nadī al-Adabī, 2000), p.23.

In the last sentence of the novel, shows the direction of events that the novelist wants convey, which is that the protagonist and her lover are victims of their society's practice. It is worth mentioning that she does not criticise society directly, rather she focuses on her protagonists. Therefore, the protagonist expresses her dissatisfaction about society and mentions that the aim of her writings is to reform her status and her lover's; as she says when she remembers him: 'My love, Dhikrā will live in your memories.. it is engraved in my heart via letters of light, even if they act as fire between my ribs, my pen translates them as pages that shine for reforming the situations of which we were their victims'.⁽²⁵⁸⁾

Here, the novelist attempts to emphasise the meaning of women's 'silence' by constructing a dialogue that contributed to the building of the picture of women in the novel. In each dialogue between Maḥjūb and his wife, the reader is able to realise the power of man and the weakness of woman through the language that they use. The idea of men's power is noted in Khāshuqjī's novels; for example, *Wadda't Āmālī* (1958) where the novelist showed the father's cruelty, his power over his wife and the influence of his power on their son. This kind of cruelty appears in many events played out in the story, the clearest example being the scene where his wife was ill. For example, before she died, he seemed not to care about her illness and when he came to ask his son to go back to college, he said about his wife: 'she is fine, just a few days and she will be great, so you must go to your college for your tests'.⁽²⁵⁹⁾

3.1.2.3. Lack of respect for women

The novel demonstrates a lack of respect for women in different ways and this was, and still is, an important issue that women writers in Saudi Arabia are trying to express. The novelist uses language as a powerful technique to criticise this situation and to reveal the discrimination that the community practises against women; that is, she attempts, via language, to bring the matter to the attention of society. Language plays an important function in clarifying this matter, whether through the narrative or through the dialogue. The novelist confirms the issue in the narrative by using words that imply anger or derision; for example: He angrily said to her⁽²⁶⁰⁾ and the elderly man scornfully said.⁽²⁶¹⁾

⁽²⁵⁸⁾ See: Khāshuqjī, *Qatarāt*, p.121.

⁽²⁵⁹⁾ See: Khāshuqjī, *Wadda't Āmālī*, p 26.

⁽²⁶⁰⁾ See: Khāshuqjī, *Qatarāt*, p 40.

Also, the novelist uses language in her narrative that suggests woman's weakness against man's decisions and articulates the lack of respect for woman, even in some of the vital decisions about her life or her future. For example, when her uncle gave Ruqayya in marriage to the old man Maḥjūb, the narrator uses the verb 'raḍakhat' "رضخت" which means 'she acquiesced'.⁽²⁶²⁾ The result of the word she uses to describe the woman's position is that the reader infers the way that women are dealt with and can read the signs that the novelist is trying to show. The narrative clearly contributes to highlighting this issue in another novel written by Khāshuqjī which expresses her concern about women's problems. For example, she relates the problem of adultery to the lack of respect for women which appeared in her novel *Warā' al-Dabāb*. The protagonist of this novel sent her husband a long letter articulating her feelings about his request that she return home:

If you knew that you have killed one being, suppressed a heart and ripped a conscience...

If this feeling penetrates yourself...

If you keep this thought in your mind ...,

You will be the most miserable man in the world.

I confided in you as a child who trusts his mother, but you have wasted this trust...⁽²⁶³⁾

In addition, the novelist attempted to use dialogue to demonstrate disrespect for women, in the scene where the character Maḥjūb does not use polite language with his wife in everyday life. This lack of respect is shown when the husband does not mention the wife's name when calling her, instead calling her 'Yā Ḥurma' "يا حرمة" which means: 'oh woman'. This practice was in common use in society and the novelist uses it in all the conversations between Maḥjūb and his wife,⁽²⁶⁴⁾ thereby exposing the lack of respect for women. Through the conversations between the husband and wife, the novelist criticises a common phenomenon in Saudi society at that time which was the shame of mentioning a woman's name or of calling her by her name.⁽²⁶⁵⁾ Therefore, the reader could not recognise her name from the

⁽²⁶¹⁾ See: *ibid*, p.40.

⁽²⁶²⁾ See: *ibid*. p.21.

⁽²⁶³⁾ See: Khāshuqjī, *Warā' al-Dabāb*, p 21.

⁽²⁶⁴⁾ See: *ibid*, p 31, 40 and 41.

⁽²⁶⁵⁾ See: al-Ḥashr, *Khalf Aswār al-Haramlik*, pp 73-75.

dialogue so the narrator, for critical purposes, mentions her name in the narrative to give a clear sign of the lack of respect for women.

As mentioned above, there were many shortcomings in the beginning stage of the novel in Saudi Arabia, in relation to a focus on theme and the neglect of technique. It has been noted that the novelist made irrelevant digressions that had the effect of weakening the plot of the novel and breaking the sequence of events in the novel. Khāshuqjī interrupts the narrative many times to explain the Bedouins' way of life, an explanation which should have been integrated into the narrative for example, through description or dialogue. For instance, when she tells the story of Maḥjūb's family travelling to the village of al-Kharj to attend the wedding of their relative, she digressed to explain how Bedouins celebrate weddings, when the narrative runs: Bedouins have their own traditions and costumes. They are similar in some of their weddings and different in others according to their wealth... there are wedding nights extended and celebrated for a few days...⁽²⁶⁶⁾ Also, irrelevant digression appears in Section Two when she explains the importance of camels and sheep to the Bedouins: A Bedouin considers his camels and sheep the source of his income, so he loves them as much as his children ...⁽²⁶⁷⁾

In another relevant extension point, the novelist made a direct statement to explain some of the Bedouins' behaviour with women, which is a clear defect since, as the tools of the novel were not able to carry out their function, the novelist resorts to making a direct statement. For example, she shows women's position in Saudi Arabia since generally, women cannot sit with men and cannot see them, even if they are their relatives. She says: According to the Saudi norms, Saudi woman is veiled so she cannot mix with her closest male relatives except her brothers and husband.⁽²⁶⁸⁾

This statement should appear through the focalisation of the novel where, as Baldick explains, it is, 'the kind of perspective from which the events of the story are witnessed'.⁽²⁶⁹⁾ The narrator of the novel ought to be objective and she should not interfere in order to

⁽²⁶⁶⁾ See: Khāshuqjī, Qaṭarāt, p 28.

⁽²⁶⁷⁾ See: *ibid.* p. 23.

⁽²⁶⁸⁾ See: *ibid.* p. 19.

⁽²⁶⁹⁾ Baldick, C. *Concise Dictionary of Literary Terms*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 3rd ed, 2004), p 89.

interpret the events of the novel; her point of view should appear through the characters of the novel, or the reader should be able to deduce her opinions through the events of the story.⁽²⁷⁰⁾

To summarise, as has already been discussed, Elaine Showalter's theory emphasises that feminist criticism focuses on different areas of women's writings. According to her theory, the theme of the novels is one of the most important subjects to be studied in order to trace the development of women's writings. It appears that the Saudi female novelists who opened the door for Saudi women to participate in writing novels are Saudi women who have lived in the Ḥijāz region and who have had most of their education outside Saudi Arabia. The first theme to be tackled in Saudi women's novels in the first stage was the problem of society's authority over women. It is clear that the representative novel written by Khāshuqjī shows the poor status of Saudi women in order to criticise society. It seems that the reason for focusing on society's practices is that the novelists in this stage want to diagnose the problem and see its bad effects regardless of its factors. As has been shown in the analysis above, Khāshuqjī commits some artistic errors in her novel which may be because this is the nature of the beginnings. However, as it appears above, the weak points in her novels' techniques are not enough to exclude Khāshuqjī's novels from the circle of literature as it has been claimed because it contains the main aspects of the novel.

3.2. The Issue of Marriage

Hudā al-Rashīd's novel; *Ghadan Sayakūn al-Khamīs* (Tomorrow will be Thursday)

After examining the first theme in the Saudi women's novel through analysing Khāshuqjī's novel *Drops of Tears* in the previous section, the second theme treated by Saudi female novelists focuses on the idea of the relationship between men and women in Saudi society. Through her study of British women's literature, Elaine Showalter has drawn attention to distinctive signs in each stage of women's works to clarify the features of the development of their writings.⁽²⁷¹⁾ Since one of the most important subjects of women's literature, as Showalter argues, is the theme of literary product,⁽²⁷²⁾ this section will continue to discuss the second theme of Saudi women's novels as it appears in the second of our case study novels which is Hudā al-Rashīd's novel *Ghadan Sayakūn al-Khamīs* (Tomorrow will be Thursday).

⁽²⁷⁰⁾See: al-Ḥamdānī, Ḥamīd, *Binyat al-Naṣṣ al-Sardī*, (Beirut: Al-Markaz al-Thqāfī al-ʿArabī, 2nd ed, 1993), p 47.

⁽²⁷¹⁾See: Showalter, *Toward a Feminist Poetics*, pp 137-139.

⁽²⁷²⁾ See: *ibid.* p.128.

Hudā al-Rashīd is a well-known novelist in Saudi Arabia. She had most of her education abroad, attending primary school in Lebanon for two years from the age of six with her brother and sister while they lived in a property belonging to her school. Then she continued her primary education for two years in Cairo, followed by a further two years in Alexandria. She attended secondary school in Saudi Arabia and then high school in Damascus and Lebanon.⁽²⁷³⁾

Hudā al-Rashīd started her career in 1971 as an anchor on Jeddah's Radio and at the same time was an editor of *‘Ukāz* newspaper. She experienced social pressure when she was on Radio Jeddah so, unfortunately, she was not successful in this position. In 1974, she moved to London to work in the Arabic Service of BBC Radio. Then she continued studying, gaining a B.A. from Buckingham University in 1992, a Master's degree in Media from London University in 1993 and another Master's degree in linguistics and translation from the School of Oriental and African Studies, London University, in 1995.⁽²⁷⁴⁾

Hudā al-Rashīd's father encouraged education for women and, because he was not satisfied with women's education in Saudi Arabia, he decided to take his children to study abroad and this, therefore, affected their ideas and culture. She read many writers of Arabic literature, such as Iḥsān ‘Abd al-Quddūs, Ṭāhā Ḥusayn and Najīb Maḥfūz. She emphasised that studying in Egypt was an important factor in the development of her creative ability to write her first novel because she was influenced by the literary revolution in Egypt at that time.⁽²⁷⁵⁾ In addition, looking at other cultures and understanding British civilisation contributed to the development of her thoughts and the expansion of her mind, as was apparent in her novels, which we shall examine later.

The second novel selected from the early stage of the Saudi women's novel is *Ghadan Sayakūn al-Khamīs* (Tomorrow will be Thursday): the selection is made for two reasons. Firstly, this novel is the most important novel of this stage from a literary point of view; some critics identified this novel as the beginning of the women's novel in terms of artistic quality. They consider Khāshuqji as the pioneer of the women's novel in Saudi Arabia, whereas al-

⁽²⁷³⁾ Interview with Hudā al-Rashīd in London 12-11-2009.

⁽²⁷⁴⁾ See: al-Rashīd, Hudā, *Wa min al-Ḥubb*, (Cairo: Dār Qibā' al-Ḥadītha, 2008), p 7.

⁽²⁷⁵⁾ Interview with Hudā al-Rashīd in London 12-11-2009.

Rashīd is considered to be the founder.⁽²⁷⁶⁾ Secondly, this novel concentrated on women's struggle in their society so the issue of women's problems is very clear to the reader. In comparison with other novels published during this stage, the reader can perceive the clear objective of the novelist and the logical sequence of the plot.

3.2.1. The theme of the novel

The main theme of this novel is the culture of traditional marriage, which formulates the nature of relationship between the sexes in society. The marriage tradition in Saudi society is that, when daughters reach marriageable age, mothers take them to attend special events. This is not for enjoyment but, rather, to display their daughters before mothers whose sons are also of marriageable age and are looking for wives. In the high social class especially in the Ḥijāz region, girls can contact men who want to marry through meetings arranged by parents or relatives.⁽²⁷⁷⁾ Through this novel, the novelist tries to emphasise that this practice concentrates on the appearance, not the substance, of the person, and is a situation which may lead to an unsuccessful relationship. This is the starting point for the novelist and she attempts to treat this important issue by using the artistic tools of the novel. In her treatment, the novelist uses a careful discourse, which was an intelligent way to convince the reader at that time. This careful discourse appears through her characterisation and dialogue, which will be explained later in this section. The use of careful language and discourse may be the result of al-Rashīd's understanding of her discourse's receivers and their way of receiving it.

Through the events of this novel, the novelist presents the dominant problem of her society. For example, the social pressure that the protagonist Nawāl faces, which takes three forms:

- 1- The invitation to see a man in her friend's house; and when she, eventually, realises the reason for this, she becomes angry and does not respond to it.⁽²⁷⁸⁾
- 2- The stress that her mother causes her which she expresses when she emphasises that they agree on all things except the idea of her marriage.⁽²⁷⁹⁾ It also appears through the

⁽²⁷⁶⁾See for example: al-Rifā'ī, pp 42-43.

⁽²⁷⁷⁾ See the details of marriage in: Long, David, *Culture and Customs of Saudi Arabia*, (Westport: Greenwood Press, 2005), pp. 66-68.

⁽²⁷⁸⁾See: al-Rashīd, Hudā, *Ghadan Sayakūn al-Khamīs*, (Cairo: Rūz al-Yūsuf, n d), p 17.

⁽²⁷⁹⁾See: *ibid.* p.19.

dialogue with her mother when she is in the hospital, where she says, ‘your marriage is more important than my health’.⁽²⁸⁰⁾

- 3- The conversations between Nawāl and her friend’s husband when he tries to remind her that her youth would soon come to an end and she should find a partner while she is still young.⁽²⁸¹⁾

Furthermore, the novelist emphasises the existence of this problem in society by presenting another character’s anxiety which appears in the dialogue between Nawāl and Samīra, when Samīra says: Of course, I will appear on the television and all can see my beauty; then I will marry’.⁽²⁸²⁾ This sentence, in fact, clearly summarises the point that the novelist wants to make about women in a society that is influenced by the dominant ideas about women’s marriage. Therefore, the novelist insists on exploring the deep roots of the problem in Saudi society when the protagonist’s friend Lamyā’ emphasises that the traditional method is the best way to find a husband.⁽²⁸³⁾

3.2.2. Characterisation

The novelist concentrates on the protagonists’ characters and the dialogue to treat this issue and to present her point of view. E. M. Forster emphasises the skill that a novelist needs in order to persuade the reader of his viewpoint. He says: ‘For me the whole intricate question of method resolves itself not into formulae but into the power of the writer to bounce the reader into accepting what he says’.⁽²⁸⁴⁾ He referred to the critic, Percy Lubbock’s opinion on the issue of point of view in the novel: ‘I take to be governed by the question of point of view the question of the relation in which the narrator stands to the story’.⁽²⁸⁵⁾

Through her portrayal of the main character in her novel, Hudā al-Rashīd, attempts to introduce her point of view and it is, therefore, very important to see how she draws this character. The protagonist, Nawāl, is described through the events of the novel as a ideal girl and thus she carries the viewpoint of the novelist. She is characterised as having continual

⁽²⁸⁰⁾ See: *ibid*, p 36.

⁽²⁸¹⁾ See: *ibid*. p.27.

⁽²⁸²⁾ See: *ibid*. p.16.

⁽²⁸³⁾ See: *ibid*, p 17.

⁽²⁸⁴⁾ Forster, E. M., *Aspects of the novel*, (Victoria: Penguin Books Pty Ltd, 1963), p 86.

⁽²⁸⁵⁾ *Ibid*, p.85. Also, Lubbock, Percy, *Craft of Fiction*, (Milton Ketnes: Lightning Source UK Ltd, 2009), p 112.

uncertainty about everything around her, and her mind, therefore, is full of questions concerning the problem of women's status, their feelings and their social communication. She is worried about herself and her future because of the situation of women in her society. She thinks about her father's strength and her mother's weakness and this disturbs her while she analyses the actual status of women.⁽²⁸⁶⁾ Because she worries about everything around her, she is a lonely woman who always asks herself questions without finding any answers. This particular characteristic is seen in the dialogue between Nawāl and her friend Lamyā' through which the character of Lamyā' certainly contributes to clarifying some aspects of the protagonist. Nawāl says:

- I, at least, enjoy reading.. Meditation.. Thinking.
- This is the result; it is clear to me; worrying all the night because of enjoying meditation and thinking.⁽²⁸⁷⁾

The novelist pictures Nawāl as a wise, serious, calm and balanced woman who is distinctive in her ability to understand different situations and to put everything into the right perspective. This appears in her attitude to her friend Samīra's smoking and Nawāl asks her why she does it, saying:

- Why?
- To prove to people that this is what I am; whether I smoke or not.
- Would you go this far to care about people?!!
- Vice versa, to the contrary, because I do not care about them or their opinions. This is what I am as you see me.
- This is to prove that they are the centre of your thoughts ...⁽²⁸⁸⁾

The novelist continues to clarify the character of the protagonist to prepare the reader to sympathise with Nawāl and to convey her message. One of the protagonist's most important characteristics is that Nawāl is described as an objective woman who defends the customs of her country and, through this, the reader can identify the real motivation for her position. This is not hostility towards men, rather, it is defending the truth and understanding women's

⁽²⁸⁶⁾ See: al-Rashīd, *Ghadan Sayakūn*, p 11.

⁽²⁸⁷⁾ See: *ibid*, p 12.

⁽²⁸⁸⁾ See: *ibid*, pp 14-15.

needs so she successfully reflects the relationship between a man and a woman.⁽²⁸⁹⁾ This characteristic is demonstrated when Nawāl is at a wedding and she hears one of the students of the American University in Beirut saying:

- One of the foreigners is as a thousand men of my country.
- Who is this loudmouth?! She asked Samīra
- One of the students of the American University in Beirut.

Then Nawāl asks her :

- What are you saying about the men of your country?
- Why do you condemn what I say while you see them despising us and respecting foreign women...?

Then Nawāl says:

- You are not better than them in spite of your education if you can be so rude.

When her friend Lamyā³ asks her to leave her and join another group, Nawāl says to Lamyā³ sharply: Have you heard what she was saying?! Do not you care about this matter?⁽²⁹⁰⁾

By portraying an ideal picture of the protagonist especially in terms of her attitude to men in her country, the novelist emphasises that she wants to build a bridge in order to deliver her ideas to them. In short, she does not want to attack men through direct criticism; rather, she wants to diagnose the problem and to clarify it with the intention of convincing them.

The protagonist is also characterised by her job, since she works as a newspaper editor in the political analysis department, which is not normal for a woman in the society of the novel. When Aḥmad, another character in the novel asks Nawāl about her job and she tells him about it, he replies:

- Your appearance does not suggest politics; far from it.
- What is the relation between looks and the type of your work or your degree?!(²⁹¹)

⁽²⁸⁹⁾ See: *ibid*, p 113.

⁽²⁹⁰⁾ See: *ibid*, p 33.

⁽²⁹¹⁾ See: *ibid*, p 38.

As a result, the novelist's approach in describing the protagonist does not appear in a direct way, rather, the reader receives it through the events and dialogue in the novel so that her character can be deduced. As Lodge argues, the facts about her character, 'emerge gradually, diversified, or actually conveyed, by action and speech'.⁽²⁹²⁾ Also, the characters of the novel play an important role in clarifying the protagonist's characteristics, whether through direct contact with Nawāl or through describing her in conversations, such as in conversations between her friend Lamyā^o and her husband which is one of the artistic functions of the dialogue as it contributes in drawing the characters.⁽²⁹³⁾ The reader receives all the aspects of the main character in a positive way even though some of her characteristics are presented in a negative way by other characters. For example, her friend Lamyā^o and her husband describe Nawāl as a scrupulous woman, because she rejected their invitation after she understood the reason behind it, and because of this, seemed not to understand tradition. Maḥmūd says: Nawāl is worried and divided between what is and what should be.⁽²⁹⁴⁾

It has been noted that when she characterises her protagonist in her novel, Hudā al-Rashīd does not describe Nawāl's physical characteristics. Whilst following the events the reader cannot find any indication of the main character's appearance; there is no description of her height, eyes, ears, nose; the reader is merely told that she is beautiful.⁽²⁹⁵⁾ This raises an important question, as to why the novelist focuses on the emotional features of the protagonist and ignores her physical features, even though critics emphasise the importance of this sort of description.⁽²⁹⁶⁾ To answer this important question, it is necessary to go back to the central issue that the novelist attempts to tackle, which is that society does not understand the aim of marriage and they, therefore, focus on appearance and ignore the importance of essence. The protagonist appears, in many parts of the novel, to express her discomfort about this problem and she tries to present her reaction to it.⁽²⁹⁷⁾ For example, when Nawāl and Maḥmūd discuss an arrangement to meet someone who was looking for a wife, the dialogue runs:

- Wouldn't you want to have a home? Maḥmūd said.

⁽²⁹²⁾ Lodge, D., *The Art of Fiction*, (London: The Penguin Group, 1992), p 68.

⁽²⁹³⁾ See: Kāzīm, Najm, *Mushkilat al-Ḥiwār fī al-Riwāya al-ʿArabiya*, (Irbid: ʿĀlam al-Kutub al-Ḥadīth, 2007), p 77.

⁽²⁹⁴⁾ See: al-Rashīd. *Ghadan Sayakūn*, p.18.

⁽²⁹⁵⁾ See: ibid. p.37.

⁽²⁹⁶⁾ See for example: Hawthorn, J. *Studying the Novel*, (London: Hodder Arnold, 5th ed, 2005), p.109.

⁽²⁹⁷⁾ See for example: al-Rashīd, *Ghadan Sayakūn*, pp 14,17, 29 and 38.

- I am looking for a home where I can feel my identity.
- But you do not help yourself.
- I know but I do not know what to do.
- We are ready to help you.
- By arranging meetings!
- Wouldn't you see him through these meetings?
- False vision.
- It is possible to see him again.
- To increase its falsity?⁽²⁹⁸⁾

Through this dialogue, and the central idea of the novel, the reader can appreciate the reason behind ignoring Nawāl's appearance, as an artistic device related to the goal of the novel.

Lodge has asserted that,

there is no rule or regulation that says a novel may not shift its point of view whenever the writer chooses; but if it is not done according to some aesthetic plan or principle, the reader's involvement, the reader's "production" of the meaning of the text, will be disturbed.⁽²⁹⁹⁾

Because she concentrates on emotions and feelings to describe the main character, the novelist suggests that the most effective method one can use to gain a happy life and a successful marriage is to look at the partner's qualities, and not to focus on outward appearance. Therefore, the novelist introduces a distinguished female character that believes in her principles and defends them; and her looks are not portrayed because they are not important. Consequently, the novelist focuses on the issues she uses to support her point of view, and she omits a description of Nawāl's physical characteristics to support her point of view as well, which indicates that she uses her artistic tools and aesthetic plan in an intelligent way.

As previously mentioned, Hudā al-Rashīd has prepared the reader to receive the message through her protagonist who is described as a distinguished woman who sticks to her principles and defends them. At the same time, she uses dialogue as an important technique to articulate her viewpoint about the issue of marriage in her society. Although the dialogue contributes to describing the protagonist's characteristics, it also plays an important role in revealing the issue at the heart of the novel and clarifying aspects of the problem of marriage

⁽²⁹⁸⁾See: al-Rashīd. *Ghadan Sayakūn*, pp. 28,29.

⁽²⁹⁹⁾ Lodge. p.28.

in the society in which the novel is set.⁽³⁰⁰⁾ The formulation of the issues laid out in this novel requires some aspects to appear through the use of dialogue and it is important to see how the novelist introduces the issue and how she treats it. Through the dialogue it appears that society has moved a step forward and that it is necessary for it to understand this change and move with this development. Nawāl's speech emphasises this idea; for instance, in the dialogue between Maḥmūd and Nawāl when Maḥmūd says:

- You are dreaming or you live in another world that does not belong to ours. The girls of your age got married and became mothers when they were sixteen and seventeen years old and this average is fine when compared to the past, when they used to get married at nine, eleven, twelve or thirteen and the last which was a spinster.
- This is ridiculous and your opinions are more ridiculous; there is no reason to feel that proud while you compare the past to the present; the past had its own reasons and justifications.⁽³⁰¹⁾

In some parts of the dialogue, the reader can see the idea that people should leave the past and start a new stage. Hudā al-Rashīd also asserts the importance of understanding the value of the modern era.⁽³⁰²⁾ Further, through the dialogue, she introduces the disadvantages of practising traditional marriage. She mentions that the idea causes the problem of inequality between the spouses and lack of understanding of each other, because they do not see each other or talk with each other enough before marriage. The dialogue between Maḥmūd and Nawāl explores this; that is, she emphasises that being a spinster in people's eyes is better than being a spinster with a man because both are mentally far apart from each other. She, also, explains her belief about marriage, which is based on the need for mutual understanding when she says:

- Spinsterhood means the lack of feeling for the other person who lives with you; deprivation of the feeling of love for this particular person who is the only one you would love to share with, no-one else; it is one being in which they both complement each other...⁽³⁰³⁾

In addition, the protagonist, through the dialogue, stresses that these meetings are not enough to decide whether they are suitable for each other because each of them is keen on showing

⁽³⁰⁰⁾ See: al-Wahhābi, P 112. He studies the value of the dialogue in Hudā al-Rashīd's two novels but the focus here is on the role of the dialogue in clarifying the issue of marriage.

⁽³⁰¹⁾ See: al-Rashīd, *Ghadan Sayakūn*, p 30.

⁽³⁰²⁾ See for example: *Al-Rashīd. Ghadan Sayakūn*, pp 20, 40.

⁽³⁰³⁾ See: *ibid*, p 28.

their best but their essence, however, does not change.⁽³⁰⁴⁾ As a result, the protagonist's dialogue contributes to highlighting the problem often seen in traditional marriage, which is, the lack of understanding between the partners, whether about their emotions or their thoughts.

On the other hand, through the dialogue, the reader can realise another problem of traditional marriage, which is the matter of disrespect for women. Nawāl's speech stresses this problem in two ways: one is the feeling of embarrassment if she sees him, which is articulated when Nawāl becomes angry and says: If I come, I will feel embarrassed even if I try to hide.⁽³⁰⁵⁾

The dialogue also presents a disrespect for women, an issue which appears in many parts of Nawāl's language where she compares women to goods, that are displayed in the market for sale. Nawāl emphasises that society is responsible for this problem because girls' families prepare them at home to be seen as items waiting for someone to buy them. This is demonstrated in the conversation between Aḥmad and Nawāl when she says:

What do you expect from a girl if she is prepared as an item for sale?⁽³⁰⁶⁾

As a result, it becomes clear that al-Rashīd employs dialogue as a significant technique to clarify her viewpoint about the problem of relationships between men and women in Saudi society. A possible interpretation of the novelist's insistence on this particular technique relates to her main purpose, which is to suggest to the reader that talking together is an appropriate way for partners to understand one another, to protect each other's rights and to achieve a successful marriage. Therefore, the novelist resorts to quiet conversations between characters in which a wise and fair woman whose arguments are based on convincing proofs contribute to developing the argument. It is noticeable that the protagonist who carries the novelist's point of view does not resort to anger during her conversations in order to attract men's attention and prepare them to accept her ideas about marriage. Hence, directing women's discourse at men in society might be considered as one of the features of the first stage in general and al-Rashīd's novel in particular since she is very careful when she describes the main character and chooses her language in dialogues.

⁽³⁰⁴⁾ See: *ibid.* p.17.

⁽³⁰⁵⁾ See: *ibid.* p 17.

⁽³⁰⁶⁾ See: *ibid.* p 51.

3.2.3. The end of the novel

It is important to consider the end of the novel and to understand the symbolism that the novelist employs in this special ending. Critics note that a novel may end happily or sadly; Hudā al-Rashīd's novel ends sadly because of the consequences of Nawāl's and Aḥmad's experiences. Nawāl dreamed of marrying a man who had his education in America or Europe because he would be someone who could understand what she needs.⁽³⁰⁷⁾ She did, in fact, find him and they fell in love and, when he asked her to marry him, she accepted. However, he left her when she needed his support on the death of her mother, because of his confusion about marrying her, which he realised when his sisters visited him, and he thought about the primitive life of his origins. He finally returned to her when he had overcome his confusion but she rejected him. As a result, the reader can see that the end of the novel is sad for the protagonist, Nawāl, who wanted to change the conventional idea of marriage, and it is also sad for Aḥmad, who during the course of the novel, reverted to the traditional idea of marriage.

However, it is important to look carefully at the end of the main issue if one assumes that there are two conflicting and different points of view in the novel. The first point of view relates to the dominant, traditional views on marriage and many of the characters of the novel represent this view, such as Lamyā³, her husband, and Nawāl's mother, but the most important character who represents this idea is the character, Aḥmad. The second point of view is the new idea of marriage and the character who represents this is the protagonist, Nawāl. In spite of the sad ending for the protagonists, the new idea of marriage succeeded because Aḥmad, who represents the traditional idea, returned to Nawāl and told her that he had made a mistake. Even though she forgave him and excused him she rejected him. Consequently, his return to Nawāl symbolises the strength of the truth that the protagonist carried through the events of Hudā al-Rashīd's novel.

To summarise, as Showalter's theory suggests, the focus of this section is on theme; that is, the writer's point of view about the idea of marriage in the traditional society and the extent of employing the novel's techniques to highlight the problem. It becomes clear that the emergence of Saudi women's awareness about the problem of 'normal' relationships between

⁽³⁰⁷⁾ See: *ibid.* p.14.

the two sexes has some characteristics. It seems that the novelist, in order to tackle the problem, directs her discourse at the men in her country; but she is very careful in her characterisation of the protagonist to convince a patriarchal society influenced by men. This fits with Showalter's idea: 'if we study stereotype of women... and the limited roles women play in literary history, we are not learning what women have felt and experienced, but only what men have thought women should be'.⁽³⁰⁸⁾ It seems that the reason behind directing her discourse to the men in her country and which called her to portray the perfect woman, Nawāl was because of the pressure on women in society and the lack of trust in women's ability to choose her husband. It appears, that when we analyse Khāshuqjī's novel, *Hudā al-Rashīd* uses the same method when she attempts to highlight the problem without criticising the political system which contributes to the continuation of the problem.

4. Comparisons and Contrasts

The most apparent feature in the two themes of this stage is the idea of novelists' concern about the presentation of women's status in their society. This presentation can be inferred as the diagnosis of the problem that threatened women, and makes it clear for the reader. Therefore, observers do not notice direct criticism of society or men made by the characters that carried the author's point of view. The novelists of this stage may want to stress the idea of women's status as that is like saying to society, 'this is the situation of women in our society'. From this point, in order to prove this idea it is important to see the similarities and differences between the novels which tackled the women's two problems in this stage, that is, the power of society over women and the relationships between the sexes in society, and how other novels present them. Therefore, this section is devoted to finding out how these two themes are represented in other novels that appear in the early beginnings stage.

It is important here to refer to the emphasis in the methodology of the thesis that novels that do not tackle women's problems will be excluded from this research. Therefore, the novel entitled *al-Barā'a al-Mafqūda* (Lost innocence) by Hind Bāghaffār, the novel entitled *Barīq 'Aynayk* (Glitter of your Eyes) and the novel *Ma'tam al-Ward* (Funeral of Roses) by Samīra Khāshuqjī are excluded because they revolve around issues which are not related to our two

⁽³⁰⁸⁾ Showalter, Elaine. "Toward a Feminist Poetics: Women Writing and Writing about Women", in Eagleton, Mary, *Feminist Literary Theory: a Reader*, p 189.

specified themes. The first novel is classified as an adventure novel and is about a girl who runs away from the police to prove that she is innocent of a murder charge.⁽³⁰⁹⁾ In addition, the novels *Barīq ʿAynayk* and *Maʿtam al-Ward* are romantic novels. The events of the first novel revolve around love amongst aristocratic families⁽³¹⁰⁾ and the second novel is based on love letters between the two lovers.⁽³¹¹⁾

The novel entitled *Qaṭarāt min al-Dumūʿ*. (Drops of Tears) by Samīra Khāshuqjī contains the idea which is analysed in the beginning of this chapter that appeared in the representative novel of the first theme; the power of society over women.⁽³¹²⁾ Therefore, it is important to emphasise the common characteristic that dominated most women’s novels published in this stage by referring to the similarities between the two novels. This characteristic is identified through the focus of Saudi female novelists, in this stage, while presenting the problem. It seems that when novelists present events to show women’s status in their society they do not criticise eastern men or the culture of eastern society. Hence, they use the events played out in their novels to show the features of their own society and the men in society. The method of introducing the men’s characters reveals that Saudi female novelists are concerned to show women’s status. The characterisations of men appear in two ways as they are drawn in Samīra Khashuqjī’s novel *Waddaʿt Āmālī*; Wajdī represents the positive type of man but he, nevertheless, is portrayed as a weak person who cannot change the status quo and cannot defend women’s rights . On the other hand, his father represents the negative type who is cruel and has authority over his wife.⁽³¹³⁾ The first picture appears in many scenes of Khāshuqjī’s novel *Waddaʿt Āmālī* in which Wajdī does not show any reaction when he sees his father’s unkindness towards his mother.⁽³¹⁴⁾ Another example of Wajdī’s passivity appears when his mother needed him to support her when she was in bed with a serious disease. Although his mother is ill and losing consciousness, her father asks him to go back to his college and he obeys his order.⁽³¹⁵⁾ On the other hand, the character who represents a negative attitude about women is Wajdī’s father and the novelist shows some aspects of this man to show how men in society deal with women. This character is described as a person who does

⁽³⁰⁹⁾ See: al-Qaḥṭānī, Sulṭān, pp 84 -90.

⁽³¹⁰⁾ See: Dīb, p 60.

⁽³¹¹⁾ See: *ibid*, pp 164-167.

⁽³¹²⁾ See: pp 72-86 in this thesis.

⁽³¹³⁾ See: khāshuqjī, Samīra. *Waddaʿt Amālī*. (Beirut: Manshūrāt Zuhayr Baʿlabakkī, n d), pp.11-15.

⁽³¹⁴⁾ See: *ibid*. pp. 14-16.

⁽³¹⁵⁾ See: *ibid*. p. 26.

not care about his wife even at the time when she needs him most. When the wife is in bed with a serious disease, he does not care about her needs as he comes home for only one hour in the afternoon and he also asks his son to return to college showing no feeling towards his wife in this matter.

In comparison to the novel *Basma min Buḥayrāt al-Dumū*^c (A Smile of the Lakes of the Tears) (1979) by ʿĀʾsha Aḥmad, the events of Khāshuqjī's novel reveal how women suffer in their society. ʿĀʾsha Aḥmad explores her protagonist's suffering through the main event of the novel, her mother's divorce and its consequences; for example, it prevents Afnān from living with her mother, and this comes about through her father's power derived from his culture.⁽³¹⁶⁾ In addition, Khāshuqjī's novels show the picture of passive men who sympathise with tyrannised women as a weak person who can not change women's status. This characteristic is clearly shown in ʿĀʾsha Aḥmad's novel where Afnān's brother Māzin cannot change his sister's status under her father's rule, until he dies. This appears when the narrator portrays Māzin's reaction after he is told that his sister Afnān has been separated from her mother and Māzin's reaction is acquiescence.⁽³¹⁷⁾

Furthermore, one of the similarities between the novels of this stage is the picture of a character in the novel which represents the ideal woman. A woman with this character does her best to keep her home stable whereas the man does not care. Since this idea appears in the novel *Qatarāt min al-Dumū*^c via Ruqayya's character who looks after her husband,⁽³¹⁸⁾ it is also clear that Wajdī's mother is keen to keep the status quo. This is demonstrated in a scene describing a disagreement between the couple where the son, arriving home, hears his father shouting loudly at his mother. However, even though Wajdī has seen this action, the mother continues to defend her husband when her son asks her about it.⁽³¹⁹⁾ In addition, Aḥmad's novel *Basma min Buḥayrāt al-Dumū*^c is keen to show the protagonist Afnān's suffering after moving to her father's house. By highlighting her suffering, the writer shows not only that the protagonist obeys her father but also that patience is her only way to resist. There are many scenes that show the father's power over Afnān; for example, she works hard in her father's house even when she is ill, and he often shouts at her or lashes her with a whip until she

⁽³¹⁶⁾ See: al-Subḥī, p.192.

⁽³¹⁷⁾ See: Aḥmad, ʿĀʾisha, *Basma min Buḥayrāt al-Dumū*^c, (Jeddah: al-Nādī al-Adabī, n d), 24.

⁽³¹⁸⁾ See: p. 76 in this thesis.

⁽³¹⁹⁾ See: Khāshuqjī, Wadda^ct. p. 22.

bleeds.⁽³²⁰⁾ Portraying women in this way suggests that the status quo does not give women the opportunity to discuss men's decisions because their domination in the home is derived from society itself. This exposition invites readers to see a distinctive feature of this stage played out in the first theme, which leads to the diagnosis of the problem, that is, the clarification of women's problems and their suffering.

The diagnosis of the problem appears also in the second theme tackled by Saudi female novelists in this stage, which are the difficulties in relationships between the two sexes. Since the novel *Ghadan Sayakūn al-Khamīs* by Hudā al-Rashīd uses a careful discourse to express the novelist's opinion about marriage, the novels tackling women's problems in this stage clarify this feature. In comparison with al-Rashīd's novel, the novel *Warā' al-Ḍabāb* (1965) by Samīra Khāshuqjī emphasises the novelist's opinion by showing women's status in terms of their relationship with men, through a careful discourse. In order to see the apparent feature of the theme in this stage, it is important to highlight the novelist's presentation of the problem to the reader. The story revolves around a girl who experiences four love stories and all of them fail; and this failure invites her to choose to be a nun in a convent. The events of the novel reveal that women in society cannot live a stable and romantic life with men. This concept is inferred by the results of the protagonist's life and not through a direct emphasis by the protagonist, a method that forms the distinctive feature of this stage.

The analysis of Hudā al-Rashīd's novel shows that the narrative reveals that the novelist wants to arouse the reader's sympathy. Khāshuqjī's language also clarifies women's status in terms of her relationship with men. This is demonstrated through the reaction of the protagonist when she knows that her husband betrayed her with other women; she does not care about the betrayal and tolerates it for her son's sake. The world of this novel suggests that women are unable to resist such injustices and they are even unable to speak about them, as is suggested in the narrative:

- She knew her husband repeatedly betrayed her and she did not feel it to be an extraordinary revelation, but she felt deep pain.⁽³²¹⁾

⁽³²⁰⁾ See: Aḥmad, *Basma min*, pp 25, 26

⁽³²¹⁾ See: Khāshuqjī, *Warā'*, p 19.

In this novel, the writer attempts to present four types of men in society and all of them do not fulfil the needs of the protagonist as a woman. The first is her first husband who treats her cruelly and always betrays her with other women.⁽³²²⁾ The second is the person who is kind to her but he does not care about her feelings even though he knows how much she loves him.⁽³²³⁾ The third type is the jealous person who because of his jealousy tries to kill her and commits suicide.⁽³²⁴⁾ The fourth man is the person she chooses to marry after her divorce and who, when he knows that she cannot have children, starts to see other women.⁽³²⁵⁾ In contrast, the novel *Dhikrayāt Dāmi'a* by Samira Khāshuqjī shows an ideal man who makes sacrifices for his lover when he lets her continue her life after he has an accident which resulted in deafness.⁽³²⁶⁾ After his accident, he hides his name and keeps himself away from his lover in order that she can enjoy her life with a man who can hear.⁽³²⁷⁾ However, even though the novelist portrays this man in a positive way with regard to his lover, she still refers to his passivity when he obeys his father's demand that he travels abroad for seven years and leave his lover; and this reflects a characteristic of this stage.⁽³²⁸⁾

By looking at the titles of the novels of this stage, the reader can see clear evidence that they tend to diagnose women's problems through showing their situation. From this perspective, we can see that the novelists do not attempt to attack the patriarchal society or men through direct criticism. The titles of the six novels that addressed the two themes are: *Wadd't Āmālī* (I said goodbye to my hopes), *Basma min Buḥayrāt al-Dumū'* (A smile of the lakes of tears) *Qaṭarāt min al-Dumū'* (Drops of tears) *Ghadan Sayakūn al-Khamīs* (Tomorrow will be Thursday) *Warā' al-Dabāb* (Behind the fog), *Dhikrayāt Dāmi'a* (Tearful Memories). It is clear that these titles focus on women's situation in their society since they either focus on sadness or hopes for the future.

As previously discussed, the novels of this stage are similar in terms of the style of writing. For example, Samira Khāshuqjī's novel, analysed earlier in this thesis, shows superficial weaknesses in the writing style which, it has been argued, is one of the characteristics of the

⁽³²²⁾ See: *ibid.* pp.18-22.

⁽³²³⁾ See: *ibid.* pp.54-70.

⁽³²⁴⁾ See: *ibid.* pp.115-154.

⁽³²⁵⁾ See: *ibid.* pp.182-196.

⁽³²⁶⁾ See: Khāshuqjī, Samira. *Dhikrayāt Dāmi'a*. (Beirut: Manshūrāt Zuhayr Ba'labakkī, n d), p.128.

⁽³²⁷⁾ See: *ibid.* p 157.

⁽³²⁸⁾ See: *ibid.* p 62.

novels at the beginning of the stages. It is clear that this is a dominant flaw in most of the novels of this stage, and it is useful to give some examples to explore this feature. The structure of the events of the novel around the idea of coincidence is clearly noticed in most of the novels in this stage. Khāshuqjī's novels are an example of this method and it seems that structuring the novel by this method can prevent the events from flowing in a logical sequence. In her novel *Wadda't Amālī*, Samīra Khāshuqjī uses coincidence to show how the protagonist meets his lover when he returns with a gift for his mother and sees a girl in the street being congratulated for escaping injury in a car accident. He sees her as beautiful and attractive and when she looks at him, she takes a taxi saying her address loudly to the driver; and the protagonist feels this is directed at him.⁽³²⁹⁾ This kind of sequence occurs many times in this novel.⁽³³⁰⁾

In comparison with other novels in this stage, it seems that structuring events around coincidences is usual. For example, the protagonist of Khāshuqjī's novel *Warā' al-Dabāb* meets two characters by coincidence and lives with them which is the basis for two love stories. Wafīq calls her and asks her to meet him even though she had not met him before.⁽³³¹⁾ Also, Sāmīḥ meets her in a hotel's lobby in Paris by coincidence⁽³³²⁾ then he meets her again in Lebanon also by coincidence.⁽³³³⁾ Al-Ṣubḥī points this out in her analysis of 'Ā'isha Aḥmad's novel and she refers to the effect on the novel as it results in a loss of vitality in the conflict.⁽³³⁴⁾ Narratives that depend on a coincidence may have the effect of weakening the plot of the novel since it is not convincing. Therefore, al-Qaḥṭānī emphasises that 'Ā'isha Aḥmad's novel has no real plot.⁽³³⁵⁾

The employment of 'time' in the narrative of the novels in this stage is simple and is such that the reader cannot see the novelists' mastery while employing it. This is understandable since we know that this is the beginning stage of Saudi women's novel. Most of the women's novels in this stage witness an accelerated speed of time does not synchronise with the events of the novels. This suggests that novelists do not have sufficient skills to utilise the concept;

⁽³²⁹⁾ See: Khāshuqjī. *Wadda't Amālī*. pp.27-29.

⁽³³⁰⁾ See: *ibid.* pp.38.39.

⁽³³¹⁾ See: *ibid.* p 115.

⁽³³²⁾ See: *ibid.* p 133.

⁽³³³⁾ See: *ibid.* p 166.

⁽³³⁴⁾ See: al-Ṣubḥī. p. 139.

⁽³³⁵⁾ See: al-Qaḥṭānī, Sulṭān. p.92.

hence, sometimes sentences referring to time scales are used in a superficial way. For example, in Khāshuqjī's novels, the reader can recognise sentences such as, "one year has passed",⁽³³⁶⁾ "three years have passed",⁽³³⁷⁾ "the years have passed",⁽³³⁸⁾ "a month has passed",⁽³³⁹⁾ "days followed by days have passed",⁽³⁴⁰⁾ "after five years",⁽³⁴¹⁾ "Two years have passed",⁽³⁴²⁾ "The days passed followed by weeks and months",⁽³⁴³⁾ "Years and years have passed",⁽³⁴⁴⁾ Abbreviating time in the novels is an important technique, sometimes used in good novels; as Mahā al-Qaṣrāwī has emphasised, there is no narrative without abbreviating time.⁽³⁴⁵⁾ However, it seems that most Saudi women's novels in this stage have not employed the technique professionally. This style is criticised by Īmān al-Subḥī in her article *al-Khiṭāb al-Īdūlūjī: tajsīd al-Ṭalāq Baṭala* about the novel *Basma min Buḥayrāt al-Dumū^c* by ^cĀ'isha Aḥmad.⁽³⁴⁶⁾ She emphasises that the weakness of the narrative is that the novelist uses shorthand by using these types of sentences.⁽³⁴⁷⁾

The setting of the novels which tackled women's problems reveals the characteristic of themes played out in the novels published in this stage. Through examining them we notice that the events of most of novels either take place outside Saudi Arabia, such as Egypt and Lebanon or the events of the novels take place in an unnamed location. Only two novels are set in Saudi Arabia; *Qaṭarāt min al-Dumū^c* by Khāshuqjī and *Basma min Buḥayrāt al-Dumū^c* by ^cĀ'isha Aḥmad. Khāshuqjī calls the setting of her novel *Qaṭarāt min al-Dumū^c* Najd which is a desert in the middle of Saudi Arabia and she does not mention the country, which may indicate that the events of the novel are played out before the establishment of Saudi Arabia. What supports this argument is that it describes a society where they decide to kill the victim according to the tribe's judgement and not to the government's law. Being abroad, the setting of the novel may support what we suggested previously since the novelists were

⁽³³⁶⁾ See: Khāshuqjī. Warā' al-Ḍabāb. p. 144. Also see: p 213.

⁽³³⁷⁾ See: ibid, p 165.

⁽³³⁸⁾ Khāshuqjī. Wadda^t Āmālī. p.65.

⁽³³⁹⁾ See: Khāshuqjī. Wadda^t Āmālī. p.47.

⁽³⁴⁰⁾ See: Khāshuqjī. Warā' al-Ḍabāb. p. 198. See also Khāshuqjī. Wadda^t Āmālī. p.21, p.80, p 89 and p 95.

⁽³⁴¹⁾ See: Khāshuqjī. Warā' al-Ḍabāb. p. 210.

⁽³⁴²⁾ See: Khāshuqjī. Wadda^t Āmālī. p.25.

⁽³⁴³⁾ See: ibid. p.37.

⁽³⁴⁴⁾ See: Aḥmad, ^cĀ'isha, p 17.

⁽³⁴⁵⁾ See: al-Qaṣrāwī, Mahā, *Al-Zaman fī al-Riwāya al-^cArabiya*. (Beirut: al-Muassasa al-^cArabiya li al-Dirāsāt wa al-Nashr, 2004), p. 231.

⁽³⁴⁶⁾ See: al-Ṣubḥī, *Al-Khiṭāb*, p.193.

⁽³⁴⁷⁾ See: ibid. p.193.

careful not to criticise Saudi society in this stage. This may be because society had not yet understood that women are able to write novels and Saudi female novelists want to slowly build a bridge between them and their society.

To summarise, through an overview of the novels written during this stage, it is clear that Saudi female novelists tackle two themes: the power of society over women and women's relationships with men since they sense a need to diagnose the problems but not to create an enemy. The choice of a suitable discourse reveals the novelists' understanding of the nature of their society's thoughts and culture. This argument opposes some critics' points of view that some novelists writing in this stage do not represent the nature of Saudi society.⁽³⁴⁸⁾

5. Conclusion:

Clearly, the first stage of the Saudi women's novel lasted for 21 years, making it the longest stage. It extended from 1958 to 1979 and all the novelists writing at this stage received their education abroad. Samīra Khāshuqjī is the pioneer of the Saudi women's novel because she was the first woman to publish a novel in the country and also because she insisted on continuing to write even when some of the male writers had stopped writing. The main value of this beginning stage was that it encouraged Saudi women to have the confidence to write novels and Samīra Khāshuqjī played an important role in that. It has been noted that the focus of the writers at the beginning of this stage was on themes which tended to make some simple artistic errors but by the end of the stage the novel had moved forward to reveal themes through the use of artistic tools such as those used by Hudā al-Rashīd. Although Hudā al-Rashīd's novel is artistically distinguished during this stage, it is hard to categorise her as a representative novelist of the next stage because her way of treating the problem fits with novels published in the first stage since they focus more on criticising traditions and customs than the whole system. Moreover, she was unique since it was some time before other female novelists appeared; therefore she did not create a stream of novelists. That is, she published her novel in 1976 but the next stage did not begin until 1980. Also, there are commonalities between her novel and the novels written in this stage that have been mentioned in this chapter, such as the foreign settings of the novels and the use of dialogue which has a

⁽³⁴⁸⁾ See the discussion of this idea in p 69 in this thesis

reference to dialects that are not from the Arabian Peninsula. In addition, the novelists writing during this stage were foreign-educated and were completely influenced by international, as well as famous Arabic writers, which causes some Saudi Arabian critics to describe the works by some female novelists of this stage as unrepresentative of Saudi Arabian society.

The novelists in this stage attempted to address women's issues and tried to express their points of view about the role of women in society according to the development of the country. The focus of the novelists at this stage was on both problems; the power of society over women and the relationship between men and women. They tackle the two themes via articulating their opinions about the patriarchal system in the family and society. Although this patriarchal system is a small part of political practice, the novelists could not criticise their country's political system because Saudi women have no position in politics. This is also the early beginnings of a stage in which Saudi women novelists started to treat women's problems superficially. The didactic objective is the most important aspect of the novel in this stage, as it was clearly demonstrated in Khāshuqjī's novel. This stage laid an important foundation to prepare women writers for the following stage, which will be examined in the next chapter. It is noticeable that during this stage the novelists attempt to express their ideas whilst bearing in mind the reaction of men in their country; at this stage, the concept of thinking independently has not yet appeared.

Chapter Four: The Establishment of the Saudi Women's Novel (1980-1989)

1. Introduction

Before looking at the issues explored by women novelists during this stage, it is important to consider certain more general aspects of Saudi women's novels so that differences between this stage and the previous one can be identified. Furthermore, in order to understand how the women's novel developed in Saudi Arabia it is useful to have a general idea of the novels published during this stage so that they can be compared with novels published during the first stage. In addition, it is worth mentioning the social and historical factors that help the reader to date this stage and to understand the extent of the development of women's awareness in terms of tackling women's problems. It would also be useful to look at the changes that occurred in Saudi society during this time.

To begin this chapter, there is a central question that ought to be raised which concerns the changes in women's novels written at this stage compared with those of the earlier period. This question can be examined in two important ways; firstly, it is necessary to look at how writers have changed; and this can be achieved through a general overview of the novelists of the stage. Secondly, changes in women writers' techniques and styles can be examined via an analysis of the works chosen to represent novels written in this period. Through studying the changes in the writers and their writings, the reader is able to detect the development of the awareness of Saudi Arabian female novelists, whether they appear at this stage generally or through their awareness about women's problems, which they explore in the events described in their novels.

An earlier chapter discussed how Hudā al-Rashīd's novel plays an important role in the development of women's awareness. Her novel *Ghadan Sayakūn al-Khamīs* may be considered to be a link between the two stages whether in the theme, where it was clear and focused or in the way she treats the theme.⁽³⁴⁹⁾ Together with Amal Shaṭā, Hudā al-Rashīd is considered to be a most important novelist in this stage of the women's novel following the publication of her novel *‘Abath* at the beginning of 1980s. Since the publication of Amal Shaṭā and Hudā al-Rashīd's novels in the same period, as shown in the table p. (252) , the idea of women's rights which is

⁽³⁴⁹⁾ See the analysis of this novel in Chapter Three in this thesis. pp 86- 96.

important in their novels, has matured as shall be discussed later in this chapter. This maturity appears in the emergence of a new style of treating women's themes.

The dating of this stage has been considered by al-Wahhābī, Jarīdī and al-Rifā'ī whose research addresses the history of women's novels in Saudi Arabia. All the writers agree that the year 1980 is the beginning of a new stage in the Saudi women's novel but al-Rifā'ī argues that his dating is not concerned with exploring any artistic characteristics, but with a division of the stages in order to facilitate the study of the women's novel in general.⁽³⁵⁰⁾ Therefore, his research does not consider the development of the women's novel in the history of the novel, rather, he studies all the women's novels as if they were belonged to a single stage.⁽³⁵¹⁾ However, through a deeper reading of the novels of both stages the reader can detect certain differences between them which has the effect of distinguishing the stages from each other whether they appear in the stages in general, or in the development of the novelists' tools in tackling women's themes, as shall be discussed in the course of this chapter. Al-Wahhābī emphasises that there are some features which distinguish the generation that their first appearance is in this stage when he states:

‘The changes that appeared in Saudi society during this period are reflected in the outlook or style of works of novelists... The women writers of this time contributed to the establishment of the novel as a new form of cultural discourse in Saudi literature’.⁽³⁵²⁾

Even though this stage lasted ten years, only half the length of the previous stage, the number of novels published, that is, nine, was too close. On the other hand, a number of new novelists appeared during this time, which was a sign that the novel was becoming a popular for women in Saudi Arabia. As the table in the appendix (p. 252) shows, Hudā al-Rashīd and Hind Bāghaffār were writers that appeared in the first stage but the other five novelists were newly published. However, the most important novelist of the first stage, Samīra Khāshuqjī, stopped writing, even though she had published six novels during the first stage.

As it was in the first stage, the Ḥijāz region of Saudi Arabia retained its position as the primary area for novelists at this stage, but it was not the home of all the novelists writing during this

⁽³⁵⁰⁾ See p 28 in this thesis.

⁽³⁵¹⁾ His book has been viewed in the literature review. See pp 28-29 in this thesis.

⁽³⁵²⁾ al-Wahhābī. p.133.

period as it had been previously. Al-Mantiqa al-Sharqiyya (The Eastern Province) was the home of one novelist, Bahiyya Bū Subayt, who published *Durra min al-Aḥsāʾ* (A Jewel from al-Aḥsāʾ) in 1988. The reason behind the importance of this Province in the novel at this time may be a consequence of women's education in Saudi Arabia since it had been established 20 years before the beginning of this stage. The influence of women's education on Bū Subayt is obvious in the events of her novel since it revolves around the life of a female teacher. This also appears in al-Ḥijāz where most of the novelists grew up and received their education.⁽³⁵³⁾

In addition, during this stage the debates about women's status in society became widely discussed by the intellectuals in Saudi Arabia. As it has been argued earlier in this thesis, these discussions took place through either the writers' column in the Saudi Arabian newspapers or through the publication of books.⁽³⁵⁴⁾ It is known that participants in those debates were the men in Saudi society but nevertheless they contributed to the increase of the Saudi Arabian women's awareness of their problems especially since women started to read, which was a result of women's education in the country. In spite of their reticence about their problems in the 1980s when they did not participate directly in the debates, women did have opinions, which can be gleaned from the themes in their novels.

In contrast to the previous stage, Saudi Arabia appears in the setting of most of the Saudi women's novels at this time, a factor that distinguishes this stage from the previous one. The title of Bū Subayt's novel indicates a Saudi Arabian city al-Aḥsāʾ from the Eastern Province which is the setting of the events of her story. In addition, most of the novels themselves take place in Saudi Arabia, such as *Ribāṭ al-Walāyā* by Hind Bāghaffār and *Lā ʿĀsh Qalbī* by Amal Shaṭā.⁽³⁵⁵⁾ Therefore, it is noteworthy that Saudi Arabia was more likely to appear in the novels of this stage than in the novels of the first stage. Saudi Arabia can also be seen as the place of publication of Saudi women's novels, since al-Rifāʿī has recorded that 60% of the novels in this stage had been published in Saudi Arabia whereas only 20% had been published in Saudi Arabia in the previous stage.⁽³⁵⁶⁾ This suggests that women's novels were welcomed by the publication houses in the country, a direct consequence of their popularity amongst novel readers.

⁽³⁵³⁾See: al-Rifāʿī. p. 44.

⁽³⁵⁴⁾See: pp 41-42 in this thesis.

⁽³⁵⁵⁾See: al-Rifāʿī. p. 45.

⁽³⁵⁶⁾See: al-Rifāʿī. pp 44-45. The definition of Realism in literature 'is the portrayal of life with fidelity'. See Cuddon, p 728

During this stage, the themes of the novels became more diverse, since the novelists began to tackle such subjects as social, emotional and cultural issues. Moreover, the novelists of this stage tried to use different methods of treating their themes; for instance, Rajā' °Ālim utilises the symbolic tendency and Bahiyya Būsabayt prefers realism.⁽³⁵⁷⁾ Therefore, while the Saudi women's novels in the first stage were not welcome either inside or outside the country, the novels of the second stage were regarded as important works, both in Europe where Rajā' °Ālim won the Award of Honour in the Ibn Ṭufayl Competition in 1985 in Madrid⁽³⁵⁸⁾ and locally, where many of the novels were dealt with in critical writings in Saudi Arabia, such as Sulṭān al-Qaḥṭānī's writings.⁽³⁵⁹⁾ This is a sign that female novelists writing in this period began to prove themselves through their work inside the Saudi Arabian literary field.

2. The most prominent women's issues in the novel in this stage:

In this chapter, two novels have been chosen to represent the women's novel in this stage; the first has been chosen in order to examine how Saudi female novelists express their point of view about the power that Saudi society holds over women and the representative novel is *Ghadan Ansā* by Amal Shaṭā. The second novel has been chosen to tackle the problem of the relationships between the two sexes and the representative novel is *°Afwan Yā Ādam* by Ṣafiya °Anbar. Through the analysis of both novels, the reader can see the development of how Saudi women writers express their thoughts about women's issues.

2.1. Women's right to see their children after divorce

Amal Shaṭā's novel *Ghadan Ansā* (1980) (Tomorrow I Shall Forget).

2.1.1. Introduction

Elaine Showalter's theory hinges on the study of the history of women's writings so that important areas of women writers' development can be seen. She asserts that it is important to gather these writers' works and to classify them in order to reach a clear picture of women's history. The themes that are played out in women's novels are one of the most important things that need to be

⁽³⁵⁷⁾ See: al-Rifā'ī. p.45.

⁽³⁵⁸⁾ See: °Ālim, Rajā'. Arba'a Ṣifr, (Jeddah: al-Nadī al-Adabī al-Thaqāfī, 1987), The cover page.

⁽³⁵⁹⁾ See: al-Rifā'ī. p. 45.

studied - because through examining their themes, the development of women's thoughts and their awareness, can be realised. From this standpoint, this section will examine aspects of the changes in the women's novel through the analysis of Amal Shaṭā's novel mentioned above which has been selected to represent Saudi Arabian women's novels in terms of identifying the problem caused by the effects of the power that Saudi Arabian society holds over women.

The reason behind choosing this novel to represent the women's novel at this stage is related to the value readers placed on it when it was published in the first year of the 1980s, at the beginning of this stage. Her novel *Ghadan Ansā together* with Hudā al-Rashīd's novel *Abath* highlights the movement of the novel from the beginning stage to the next stage and marks the establishment of the women's novel in Saudi Arabia. Since Hudā al-Rashīd has been chosen as a representative novelist in the first stage, it is appropriate to select Amal Shaṭā's novel to represent the women's novel at this stage.

Amal Shaṭā was born in Makka of a cultivated family which supported her through secondary school up until the time that she had graduated from medical school.⁽³⁶⁰⁾ In addition to the novel mentioned, Amal Shaṭā published three novels; *Lā 'Ash Qalbī* (1989), *Ādam Yā Sayidī* (1997) and *Rajul min Al-Zaman al-Ākhar* (2006).

This novel focuses on one aspect of male dominance, by demonstrating a tendency in men to use their power to control society without considering others. It also portrays the power of the rich over the poor and the way that, because they are rich, they are able to own things even when they have no moral right to them. Women are shown to be some of the victims of this power. This is especially true of the female character in this novel, Tīmā, who comes from a poor family living in a poor country.

The novel revolves around the story of Tīmā, who comes from the island of Java in Indonesia, and who married a Saudi man named 'Abd al-Majīd while he was in Java on business. Deciding to return to Saudi Arabia, he deceives his wife and takes their three year old daughter, which leaves Tīmā to face an uncertain destiny. Her quest to find her daughter causes her to suffer psychologically, socially and economically. It was not until fifteen years later that she finally saw

⁽³⁶⁰⁾See: Abū Niḍāl, Nazīh, *Tamarrud al-Unthā fī Riyāyat al-Mr'ah al-'Arabiyya wa Bibluḡhrāfiyā al-Riyāya al-Nisuiyya al-'Arabiyya*, (Beirut: al-Mu'assasa al-'Arabiyya li'l-Dirāsāt wa'l-Nashr, 2004), p.194.

her daughter, Islām. Her husband, who was old by now, begged her forgiveness but, looking at him tearfully, she replies: “Tomorrow I shall forget”.

However, because the chain of events is broken in Chapter Eight, the novel appears to lack a cohesive plot. The story depends on three characters; the main character in Chapters One and Two is Islām and the protagonist is Tīmā (Islām’s mother). The central theme of the novel which concerns the way these characters hold together over time because of the relationship between them, is logical, but, the introduction of the main character of Chapter Eight, Nawāl (the head teacher of Islām’s school), breaks the development of the events.⁽³⁶¹⁾ The reader can see no connection between this character and the direction of the action, nor does the introduction of this character make any contribution towards clarifying the issues played out in the novel. Although the events of a good novel can be narrated outside the chronological order, with gaps or absences, the use of this technique should be technically proficient, that is, it should relate to the overall frame of the novel. The events of the novel should always be plotted.⁽³⁶²⁾

It is worth noting that the technique of breaking the chain of events in this novel appears in a different way than it did in the previous stage. As has been discussed in the analysis of Khāshuqjī’s novel in Chapter Three, the artistic errors are superficial in the first stage; for example, they are achieved through direct address to the reader when they are not relevant to the events.⁽³⁶³⁾ These kinds of flaws have been noted in the works of most of the Saudi female novelists of the first stage. Imān al-Ṣubḥī emphasises that ‘Ā’isha Aḥmad’s novel *Basma min Buḥayrāt al-Dumū* (1979) lacks an artistic plot so that she returns these superficial errors to the nature of the beginnings.⁽³⁶⁴⁾ However, breaking the plot in Shaṭā’s novel cannot be classified as a superficial error. Clearly, the presentation of the whole of Nawāl’s life in one chapter interrupts the development of the events of the main story because the reader can only see a small connection between the characters since Nawāl is the head teacher of Islām’s school. In addition, the novelist attempts to make the story of Islām and her mother as the reason for the change of the head teacher’s life and behaviours. Although for some reasons the novelist has made much focus of this event in the novel, she does not succeed.

⁽³⁶¹⁾ See: Dīb, p 229.

⁽³⁶²⁾ See: Hawthorn, Jeremy, *Studying the Novel*, (London, Hodder Education, 5th Ed, 2005), p 112.

⁽³⁶³⁾ See: pp 84-85 in this thesis.

⁽³⁶⁴⁾ See: al-Ṣubḥī, Imān, “al-Khiṭāb al-Idulugī: Tajsīd al-Ṭalāq Baṭalan”, in al-Nu^cnī, Ḥasan, *Khiṭāb al-Sard: al-Riyāya al-Nisā’iyya al-Su^cūdiyya*. p 192.

The novelist presents the events through the omniscient narrator since it appears that she, ‘has a full knowledge of the story’s events and of the motives and unspoken thoughts of various characters’.⁽³⁶⁵⁾ The effect of this technique is that even though the narrator is not part of the story, she knows everything, that is, she describes the characters and their thoughts, even Islām’s feelings about her father. This becomes apparent when Islām, having just met her mother, takes a good look at her father and starts to think about him.⁽³⁶⁶⁾ At this point, the author introduces events through a third person narrator, and at the same time reveals Islām’s inner thoughts which are central to the theme of the novel. However, in the major part of the novel the characters tell their stories to each other using the first person; for example, in Chapters 3 – 7 and 9 – 10 when Tīmā explains her suffering to her daughter, the theme that occupies most of the novel.

A relevant point here is that the novelist starts the novel with an event that actually takes place near the end of the story by using a third person narration in order to hold the reader’s attention. The event describes the moment when Tīmā, finally reaches Islām’s school, and asks for her daughter. When the protagonist completes her story in the first person narration then the novelist changes the mode and continues to describe the events that began the story by speaking in the same voice as in the beginning of the novel. It seems that the novelist’s aim is to convey the end of the story in an objective way that distances the characters so that they do not lead the direction of the action according to his or her view. For example, one of the main concerns of the novel, the theme of the male character’s regret, is used to suggest the kind of behaviour that harms women and to present an objective account of the conclusion of the events, free of the protagonist’s viewpoint. In addition, this technique contributes to making clear the changes in the daughter’s feelings when she goes back home after the school time to see her father.

The novelist’s use of different types of narration, which has been discussed above, is considered to be one of the most important aspects of the changes that appeared in Saudi Arabian women’s novels at this stage. It is important because it shows a development of an artistic awareness in Saudi female novelists who have begun to tackle women’s problems via an understanding of different types of narrative.

⁽³⁶⁵⁾ Baldick, p.178.

⁽³⁶⁶⁾ See: Shaṭā. p. 38.

2.1.2. The theme of the novel

It is important here to explain the purpose of classifying this as a representative novel of the first theme to be analysed in this stage, that is, the problem of society's power over women. The character °Abd al-Majīd might be considered to be a symbol of the power of society; because of his selfishness he destroys the relationship between a daughter and her mother. The reason for creating a girl child (Islām), and not a boy to be one of the main characters of the novel may be to suggest that it is illogical that men's power over women in society works to prevent wives and daughters from having any rights. Even though this novel refers to the relationship between the sexes, it is hard to classify it as a representative of the second theme because the main focus of the novel is the outbreak of a social phenomenon that appeared at that time, which shall be discussed later in the chapter. It is also difficult to discuss this novel in terms of the second theme because it describes society as giving men the power to make decisions that are harmful to women.

In this novel, the novelist attempts to tackle an important issue which was prevalent in Saudi society at that time, especially in the Ḥijāz region. The problem was that business-men went to poor countries on business and married women only for the purpose of keeping their house for them and meeting their sexual needs.⁽³⁶⁷⁾ This can be seen as an aspect of the development of women's novels in this stage where the novelist focuses on a certain problem in the context of local society. In contrast with the novels of the previous stage, this novel can be classified as the first women's novel that demonstrated the courage to stand up against the society and uncover their flaws. Even though the events of the Samīra Khāshuqjī's novel *Qaṭarāt min al-Dumū*^c and °Ā'isha Aḥmad's novel *Basma min Buḥayrāt al-Dumū*^c are taking place inside the country, Shaṭā's novel differs from them in its clear articulation of a problem and courage to challenge a specific social group in her society.

Through the novel's characters Shaṭā suggests men's power by characterising them as cruel and unjust. Men are presented, as in most women's novels,⁽³⁶⁸⁾ in two ways. Firstly, they are drawn as cruel characters who oppress women by exploiting their power in contrast to women who are shown to be weak, such as °Abd al-Majīd and Alintū (the restaurant owner). Secondly, they are presented as negative characters who, although not particularly pleased by their own behaviour at

⁽³⁶⁷⁾ See: Dīb. p. 227.

⁽³⁶⁸⁾ See: for example Chapter Three which refers to how Khāshuqjī pictured men in her novel *Qaṭarāt min al-Dumū*^c.

the same time fail to help women, like Manṣūr (°Abd al-Majīd's driver) and Tankū Damanhūjī (°Abd al-Majīd's neighbour in Indonesia).

It is important here to discuss the events leading to the divorce in order to see how the novelist pictures °Abd al-Majīd as representative of one type of man and to compare the issue of divorce with the problem she attempts to treat in this novel. The story of the divorce begins with the father's decision to abscond with his daughter to Saudi Arabia, by deception.⁽³⁶⁹⁾ The novelist describes Tīmā's efforts to be more close to her husband, for example by learning Arabic in order to communicate with him.⁽³⁷⁰⁾ In this way the novelist compares men and women in terms of their level of respect for each other. While Tīmā worked hard to gain his love, °Abd al-Majīd, was thinking about leaving her when he had completed his business. Although the novelist tackles the issue of divorce by introducing it as a devastating event in people's lives, it is not a major issue in the novel because her focus is on the more important effects of separating children from their mothers. Therefore, the effect of divorce on the protagonist's feelings is not stressed; rather, it is used to develop the events of the story. When Tīmā was told that °Abd al-Majīd had left her, she desperately looked for her daughter and was shocked when she realised that her husband had taken her away.⁽³⁷¹⁾

To have maximum effect, the issue is presented in two ways related to the female characters' suffering, while the ending of the novel conforms to the ideal that the most ill-used people triumph in the end. The first way of presenting this issue is the affect on children themselves when they are separated from their mothers as it is revealed through Islām's story. When she knew the truth, she tells her mother how she missed her warm-heartedness. The sentence the novelist employs to describe this situation is used in the title of Chapter One of the story to press home its effect on the child's life and its importance in clarifying the theme. Islām says in this scene:

- I felt warmth and kindness in your arms ... the flow of love from my depths and from your depths.⁽³⁷²⁾

⁽³⁶⁹⁾ See: Shaṭā, Amal, *Ghadan .. Ansā*, (Jeddah: Tihāma, 1980), p 115.

⁽³⁷⁰⁾ See: *ibid*, p 106.

⁽³⁷¹⁾ See: *ibid*, p 117.

⁽³⁷²⁾ See: *ibid*. p.31.

The novelist employs the monologue technique when she elucidates the daughter's feelings about the separation from her mother. This technique describes the change in Islām's image of her father after seeing Tīmā which is in direct contrast to her former view of him. Before this meeting, Islām thought that °Abd al-Majīd was a great man but after she meets her mother, he appeared to her to be a man without conscience. Through an inner monologue, she thought about his reasons for leaving her mother. She asks herself: 'Where was his conscience when he threw my mother into the waves of life?'⁽³⁷³⁾ In addition, she had formerly believed that her father was honest, but when she met her mother, she realised that he had been lying. When she asked him to tell her about her childhood, she muttered to herself: 'Go dad! Let's begin the journey of scandals! Let me see your face for the first time while you are lying!'⁽³⁷⁴⁾ Through the use of this technique, the novelist attempts to reveal the effects of Saudi society's practices represented by the contradictions in °Abd al-Majīd's character. This scene uncovers the father's character for the reader since he seemed to have been a man with principles but his daughter gradually realises the true picture.

Furthermore, the monologue is utilised to describe Islām's lonely childhood without a mother. Through this technique, she remembered her need for someone to comfort her. For example, when she woke in the night her father, far from reassuring her, shouted at her to go back to bed.⁽³⁷⁵⁾ This scene underlines the cruelty of a man who ignores a child's need of her mother. In a women's novel written in Arabic, this technique has the effect of emphasising the feminine discourse which condemns a society controlled by the men who formulate all the rules.⁽³⁷⁶⁾

The second effect of presenting this issue in the narrative is that the novelist pictures the ill effects of the separation on the mother herself. Tīmā dedicated herself to finding her daughter; this meant that she had to leave her own country and face many difficulties. The extent of her suffering is brought out through the novelist's concentration on small details. For example, she is hospitalised after an accident, she is confined to a psychiatric hospital following the shock of losing her daughter,⁽³⁷⁷⁾ she works as a servant with a rich family⁽³⁷⁸⁾ and she has her money stolen.⁽³⁷⁹⁾

⁽³⁷³⁾ See: *ibid.* p.38.

⁽³⁷⁴⁾ See: *ibid.* p.39.

⁽³⁷⁵⁾ See: *ibid.* p.42.

⁽³⁷⁶⁾ See: Dūdīn, Rifqa. *Khiṭāb al-Riwāya al-Niswiyya al-°Arabiyya al-Mu°āšira*. (Amman: Amānat °Ammān al-Kubrā, 2008), p.472.

⁽³⁷⁷⁾ See: Shaṭā. p. 118.

⁽³⁷⁸⁾ See: *ibid.* p. 151.

⁽³⁷⁹⁾ See: *ibid.* p. 154.

In addition, the protagonist is presented as a desperate woman who wishes to die. Her suicidal thoughts continue even after seeing her daughter, which works to emphasise the extent of her suffering. When she relates her story to her daughter, Tīmā repeats several times: I do not know why I did not die! When Islām countered: Did you not want to see me, Mum?! Tīmā was mortified, saying: I only lived to see you! Please forgive me, daughter!⁽³⁸⁰⁾

It is important to recognise the common technique used in the ending of the Saudi Woman's novel, both at this stage and in the previous one.⁽³⁸¹⁾ Most women novelists tend to end their stories, which usually deal with social issues or relationships with men, with confessional scenes in which men admit their mistakes and plead for forgiveness. The phenomenon is seen twice in this novel. The first occurs when Alintū stole Tīmā's money and refused to return it; she cried and asked God for revenge, then Alintū was burned.⁽³⁸²⁾ Before he died, he acknowledged his mistake and returned her money.⁽³⁸³⁾ There is also a tendency to rely on contrived coincidence in the action, and it is used to emphasise the consequences of injustice towards women. The second example can be seen in the ending of the novel, where °Abd al-Majīd regrets his actions and asks Tīmā for forgiveness.⁽³⁸⁴⁾

To summarise, since Elaine Showalter suggests that it is necessary to study women's writings in order to recognise the most important changes that appear in their writing, this section has focused on tracing the changes apparent in the first theme, which concerns society's authority over women. °Abd al-Majīd's character represents social power since this power appears to determine the fate of women and their future; and furthermore it also determines their relationships with their children.

Through an analysis of Shaṭā's novel it becomes clear that the technique of treating the problem of society's power has developed during this stage. One of the aspects of this development appears in the style of women's writing since the novelists have passed the stage of the early beginnings to the stage of the establishment. Therefore, some Saudi female novelists have rejected the

⁽³⁸⁰⁾See: *ibid.* p. 117.

⁽³⁸¹⁾ I have mentioned this specific ending in Hudā al-Rashīd's novel *Ghadan sayakūn al-Khamīs*. p. 98. Also, this idea appears in many women's novels such as Samīra Khashuqjī and Šafiyya °Anbar.

⁽³⁸²⁾See: Shaṭā. p. 155.

⁽³⁸³⁾See: *ibid.* p. 158.

⁽³⁸⁴⁾See: *ibid.* p. 176.

superficial artistic errors that distinguish the previous stage because they have benefited from their education and they have been able to learn from the novels of the previous stage. It is noticeable that the use of 'the monologue' in Amal Shaṭā's novel has been clearly developed since the first stage of women's writing.

In addition, through deep study of the problem tackled in Shaṭā's novel, the reader can see the development of women's participation in taking on the specific social matters apparent in society. This can be seen when the novelist addresses, by way of the main issue, a general social problem, namely the effects of this kind of businessmen's marriage on their children. This means that the Saudi female novelists writing in this stage began to react to important social matters in their society through their understanding of the situation. As has been noted, one of the flaws seen in Khāshuqjī's work is that her novels do not represent Saudi society;⁽³⁸⁵⁾ but by this stage, it appears that novelists have begun to address some of the problems. Furthermore, the novelist did not focus only on women's problems locally; rather, she defends women's rights in general when she appeals to the reader's sympathy in order to share the protagonist's feelings even though she is not an Arab woman.

2.2. The emotional traumas that cause relationships break down

Ṣafiyya °Anbar's novel °*Afwan yā Ādam* (Excuse me! Adam) 1986.

2.3. Introduction

Since the previous section focused on the issues related to the power that society exerts over women which were tackled by female writers in Saudi women's novels, this section will examine the development of the treatment of the second theme, which concerns the relationships between men and women in Saudi Arabian society. The analysis of the second problem as women see it and as portrayed in °Anbar's novel will be discussed with Elaine Showalter's theory in mind. As Showalter asserts, one of the most important subjects that feminist criticism ought to research is the history of women writers; and to do this it is necessary to shed light on women writers' ways of addressing their themes in order to recognise the most important changes that appeared in their work during the establishment of the Saudi Women's Novel.

⁽³⁸⁵⁾ This idea was discussed earlier in this thesis. See: p 69.

This novel was chosen to represent women's novels at this stage because the novelist, Şafiyya °Anbar, is highly valued amongst the Saudi literary circle. She has published six novels, the first one being °*Afwan Yā Adam* (1986). Al-Wahhābī considers Şafiyya °Anbar's first four novels to be an examination of the relationship between man and women and the injustices that men mete out to women.⁽³⁸⁶⁾ Therefore, the importance of selecting this novel is that it represents the way that women writers have treated the theme of relationships between men and women which shall be analysed later in this section.

Şafiyya °Anbar was born in al-Madīna into a high class family. She started writing in journals when she was 15 years old, in *al-Yawm* newspaper then in *al-Manhal* magazine, and was head teacher of a primary school in al-Dammām. She lived in London for 37 years then she moved to al-Dammām where she lives now. She has published six novels.⁽³⁸⁷⁾

This novel revolves around the emotional relationship between the protagonist, Şafā°, and the character Bāsīm. The story begins when Şafā° looks for a specific tape of Umm Kulthūm's songs in a music shop and the sales assistant tries to tempt her to other types of music. When she decides to leave he implores her to listen to a song by his friend, Bāsīm; she enjoys it and wants to listen to it again. Then the assistant shows her his friend's picture, explaining that the friend is a journalist. She follows his writings and sends him a letter asking him to lend her his book, which he does. After she gets to know him through his writings, she asks him to meet her during her family's visit to his village. They meet each other, exchange visits and fall in love. She learns that he has been disappointed in love in the past, but they continue to meet and travel together but when Şafā°'s father is taken to hospital she is unable to call Bāsīm. However he visits her and they continue to talk on the telephone until he decides to return to his village. Although they agreed that they would call each other the following day, Şafā° is prevented from calling him because guests arrive at her family home. Upset by this, he returns home and refuses to answer her calls. As a result of this misunderstanding, she decides to focus on her job hoping that work would help her to forget her feelings. He writes love letters in his newspaper, which she reads without feeling until she hears that he has fallen ill. She cannot resist contacting him after hearing this news, and when he hears from her he asks to resume their relationship, but she refuses.

⁽³⁸⁶⁾ See: al-Wahhābī. p 136.

⁽³⁸⁷⁾ See: Badr, Quşay, "an interview with Şafiyya °Anbar", January 30 2006, *Al-Thawra Newspaper*, accessed 17-2-2009. http://thawra.alwehda.gov.sy/_archive.asp?FileName=49899781720060129133040

2.3.1. The Theme of the Novel

Through the themes in this novel °Anbar attempted to tackle a most important issue for women in her country namely, the nature of relationships between men and women, and through the events of her novel, the reader can see that Şafiyya °Anbar makes a point about the problem. Al-Qaḥṭānī explains the author's concern for women's issues and the reason behind it when he states that, 'the author is writing for a female audience and couching her feminist ideas in this frame is probably the easiest way to reach a female audience in the Arab world'.⁽³⁸⁸⁾ In order to understand the main ways in which, during this stage of women's novels, female writers treat the most important issues for women in Saudi society, it is important to look deeply into the main issue that this writer attempts to tackle.

The novelist uses the first person narrator where the protagonist, 'appears as the 'I' recollecting her own part in the events related ... as a witness of the action... the narrator is also the central character'.⁽³⁸⁹⁾ The writer's use of this technique may help to explain the main theme of the novel because it makes women's feelings clear, and helps the reader to understand women's needs. In addition, this technique reveals what women think of men, whether this is a positive or a negative image. This technique also allows the use of an internal monologue in many parts of the novel, a technique that helps to highlight her views on relationships between men and women, which we shall discuss in the analysis of the novel. As noted above, the events of the novel are simple; therefore, it is possible to say that the novel's plot is structured via a focus on the conflicts between both protagonists' opinions and on the protagonist's feelings about men's behaviour.

The theme explores the emotional relationship between man and woman, a theme that is considered to be one of the most important issues tackled by Saudi women writers. The theme gives the impression that women suffer because men do not understand them or their needs. The title of the novel gives us a clue to the main issue that the novelist wishes to examine; and furthermore, her accusation is directed at every man since the name 'Adam' refers to all men. In addition, the narrator tends to typecast as her way of judging all the men in her society as being responsible for the failure of emotional relationships and for the destruction of love; for example,

⁽³⁸⁸⁾ Al-Qaḥṭānī. p.170.

⁽³⁸⁹⁾ Baldick. pp.97-98.

she uses the term, “Eastern man”⁽³⁹⁰⁾ and she describes men in general, rather than as individuals.⁽³⁹¹⁾

Through the ways that she treats this issue the novelist, portrays the nature of relationships between man and woman in Middle Eastern countries as being influenced by traditions and costumes. She always refers to traditions as a crucial factor in the failure of emotional relationships between lovers, whether the failure is due to men or women; for instance, when Ṣafā’ thinks of the moment that they met, she says:

... Because of my Eastern values my mind overcomes my feelings. God! What should I do? I long to go to him and the traditions are stopping me.. Society.. Society.. Principles ... why is pure and true love stalked by a curse in my country?⁽³⁹²⁾

The narrator expresses her protagonist’s problem through monologue, which differentiates between her desires and her culture. The way that the protagonist and her lover behave with one another reveals how Eastern women tend to avoid a sexual relationship, so when Bāsīm kisses her, she becomes very angry and shouts at him,: ‘Haven’t I told you that you’re crazy? What type of women do you think I am?’⁽³⁹³⁾ However, through her inner thoughts, it is clear to the reader that she knows it is her own fault that she denies him, when she says: ‘why is real and true love stalked by a curse in my country?’ The monologue is also a means of clarifying the distinction between the inner life of the protagonist and its outer projection. This distinction is reflected in her dissatisfaction with society’s conventions, but, at the same time, she is unable to disobey these traditions.

What is relevant here is the way the novelist portrays parental practices with daughters, and shows that parents mistrust them. This kind of mistrust is examined, when Ṣafā’ falls in love with Bāsīm, meets him in the park one day and comes home very late and her father asks her where she has been. When she explains that she has been with one of her friends, he asks for her friend’s name. Then she replies: “Do you not trust me, Dad? You have granted me this trust”. Family protection

⁽³⁹⁰⁾ See: °Anbar, Ṣaffiya. °*Afwan yā °Ādam* . (Eygypt: Dār Miṣr Liṭṭibā°a, 1986), p.79.

⁽³⁹¹⁾ See: *ibid.* p.61.

⁽³⁹²⁾ See: *ibid.* p.50. See also pp. 42, 43, 52 and 80.

⁽³⁹³⁾ See: *ibid.* p.116.

is one of the issues that women face in Eastern society. The novelist attempted to portray the effect of such protection as placing girls under pressure when they want to express their emotions.

She also focuses on describing the feelings of men and women to emphasise the main issues outlined in the novel. In order to understand the novelist's viewpoint on this issue, it is important to look at how she pictures the male and female characters in the story, and the reasons for this. The novelist presents Eastern man in different ways, for example, by using narrative, dialogue or stream of consciousness. She describes the Eastern man as a dictator who wants everything to be under his control and according to his desires. This appears in many parts of the story, whether directly or indirectly; for instance, when a male character does not wait for the female character's permission before he acts. This is clear when Bāsīm asks Şafā' to put his head upon her shoulder saying: Can I put my head on your shoulder? The protagonist narrates: 'Then he put his head on my shoulder without waiting for my answer'.⁽³⁹⁴⁾ Although this action is just a small detail in the flow of the novel's events, it carries an indication of negative males which appears in the context of criticising men. This invites the narrator to comment on this action. Another example of men's control is when Bāsīm always calls Şafā' and sets the time of their next meeting without asking if it is convenient for her or listening to her opinion. This causes her to ask herself a question: 'Where is my will?'⁽³⁹⁵⁾ This kind of behaviour is one of the reasons for the failure in emotional relationships between lovers and, is the reason why the last thing that the protagonist says to Bāsīm after he asked her: 'Is this the last meeting?' is, 'We may meet, but without previous arrangement or Eastern controls.'⁽³⁹⁶⁾

Through the events of the novel the reader can recognise that there are differences between how male and female protagonists initiate contact with each other so, while they both need to be loved, Şafā' always asks that Bāsīm keeps their love safe. However, Bāsīm shows his need for Şafā' through his column in the journal but he cannot swallow his pride and call her, even though he is at fault and his behaviour causes their separation.⁽³⁹⁷⁾ The portrayal of these issues works to emphasise that in order to put men on a higher level in a relationship women always carry the responsibility for safeguarding it. Therefore, the main character always asserts that men view

⁽³⁹⁴⁾ See: *ibid.* p.52.

⁽³⁹⁵⁾ See: *ibid.* p.37.

⁽³⁹⁶⁾ See: *ibid.* p.158.

⁽³⁹⁷⁾ See: *ibid.* p.147.

women as odalisques in the caliph Hārūn al-Rashīd's palace and that she does not accept this.⁽³⁹⁸⁾ This idea can also be seen in Hudā al-Rashīd's novel ° *Abath* where the events of the novel convey the idea that woman must safeguard the relationship otherwise love will be lost. When Nūf, the main character in al-Rashīd's novel, neglected some of her duties to her husband, he immediately married another woman, even though they were in love before their marriage and, on the wedding night, he had promised that he would never marry another woman.⁽³⁹⁹⁾

The novelist attempts to examine the concept of love between man and woman, and suggests that they differ in their understanding of love. Through the events in the novel that lead to the end of the relationship she emphasises that if a woman deals with a man on his terms, she will lose either her lover or her respect. Through her portrayal of Bāsim, she draws a man who will take but not give. Şafā° understands Bāsim's character and she deals with him accordingly, when she says:

I realised also that I have to place no boundaries between us... And accordingly, this is how I shall deal with him from now on.⁽⁴⁰⁰⁾

Here the writer points out that the problem for women in Saudi society is that women are expected to give herself to her lover but should not expect anything in return. Therefore, she has two choices: she can give herself, which results in her being seen as a cheap woman, or on the other hand, if she does not give herself to her lover it indicates that she does not love him.⁽⁴⁰¹⁾ The narrator suggests that the successful woman, in terms of her emotional relationship with a man, is the woman who manipulates his emotions, because she deals with him according to his nature.⁽⁴⁰²⁾ Although the result of this behaviour is shown through the monologue; it also appears through the narrative at the end of the novel when she decided to break off the relationship and Bāsim asks her to think again and expresses his love and his need of her. However, she rejects him because she wants to keep her self-respect, saying: 'A person without respect cannot love'.⁽⁴⁰³⁾

Another aspect of the Eastern man's love drawn in Bāsim's character is that he is uneasy or unsure about his love, even though he asserts that he loves her many times. The narrator emphasises this in different parts of the novel such as when her intuition tells her that because he is uneasy he is

⁽³⁹⁸⁾ See: *ibid.* pp.43,133 and 156.

⁽³⁹⁹⁾ See: al-Rashīd, Hudā, ° *Abath*, (Cairo: Maṭābi° Rūz al-Yūsuf, 1980), p 7.

⁽⁴⁰⁰⁾ See: ° Anbar. p.39.

⁽⁴⁰¹⁾ See: *ibid.* p.127.

⁽⁴⁰²⁾ See: *ibid.* p.127.

⁽⁴⁰³⁾ See: *ibid.* p.157.

not ready to love.⁽⁴⁰⁴⁾ In addition, the novelist stresses a change in him in various situations either in his emotions or in his dealings with her.⁽⁴⁰⁵⁾ Another important point related to this is that he is not confident about his decisions concerning his relationship with a woman, because his decisions are influenced by his Eastern nature. This is shown when Bāsim is in the swimming pool and he asks Ṣafā³ to swim. She refuses not because she does not want to but because she knows that an Eastern man would not want people to see her in her swimsuit. He then insists that she change but when she is just about to get into the water he orders her back.⁽⁴⁰⁶⁾

The novelist also describes women's emotions when he fails to back her up when she expects him to support her. Through her portrayal of her protagonists, it is clear that the writer blames men when relationships fail. She also suggests that women are honest and loyal so they contribute to the success of the relationship.⁽⁴⁰⁷⁾ To support this view, she paints a positive picture of her protagonist since she is able to understand Bāsim's needs and is available to him.⁽⁴⁰⁸⁾ Because she understands Bāsim, Ṣafā³ is portrayed as having the kind of disposition that is important to him; and this is shown when the author describes Ṣafā³ as warm-hearted. This part of her character is shown in her feelings for her lover, either through her actions or words. For example, when Bāsim has a high temperature, her feelings of concern for him become clear and she looks after him until he recovers.⁽⁴⁰⁹⁾

It is clear also that the novel contains attempts to understand the nature of a Eastern man and woman, which reflects a development in women's thoughts about relationships between the sexes and because Saudi female novelists attempt to tackle this theme in their novels during this stage, this may be considered to be one of the aspects of their artistic development. Through a careful reading of 'Anbar's novel, the reader can see a kind of psychological analysis of western men and a prescription for women which shows them how to deal with them. This suggests a change in the way Saudi female novelists begin to treat the problems facing women in a patriarchal society at this point in their development.

⁽⁴⁰⁴⁾ See: *ibid.* p.69.

⁽⁴⁰⁵⁾ See: *ibid.* pp. 105,124.

⁽⁴⁰⁶⁾ See: *ibid.* p.111.

⁽⁴⁰⁷⁾ See: *ibid.* p.31.

⁽⁴⁰⁸⁾ See: *ibid.* p.25.

⁽⁴⁰⁹⁾ See: *ibid.* p.55.

Another aspect of Saudi female novelists during this stage is clearly apparent in the change in the novelists' form of discourse on men. During the first stage, novelists tend to be careful in any discourse on men especially when they tackle the theme of relationships between the two sexes. Furthermore, through her measured dialogue, the picture of Hudā al-Rashīd's protagonist attempts to build a bridge to the men in her society. There is a change in this discourse at this stage, since Ṣafīyya ʿAnbar directly addresses the idea that men's behaviour towards women is the main reason behind the failure of romantic relationships.

The end of the story re-emphasises the problem that the novelist attempts to address, and she does this through the dialogue between Bāsim and Ṣafāʿ which concerns the history of the nature of men and women. The protagonist blames Bāsim's behaviour for the failure of their relationship; and even though she admits that he loved her it was not long before the features of 'Eastern man' appeared. When Bāsim asked her why she wanted to end their relationship on a sad note, and pointed out that they could change it to a happy one, he reminds her that she was also an Eastern woman who loved sadness and tears. She replies:

- Remember Satan was a man not a woman.
- Do not try to appear innocent. History records that you removed me from heaven.
- And history records that you were the first to introduce killing into the world.
- This is your fault Ṣafāʿ. You have not educated us.
- What can we do if you always go back to your evil nature?⁽⁴¹⁰⁾

In this scene the novelist gives a clear indication that, genetically, men cannot help their nature and that is responsible for destroying love between lovers. However, the novelist does not convince the reader here since Satan is not human and not a man, but a jinni⁽⁴¹¹⁾ and therefore Ṣafāʿ' s accusation seems over exaggerated. If the novelist means 'a male' rather than 'a man' and if this is what she wants to convey, then it seems that she commits a linguistic error.

To conclude, this section concentrates on the ways that women novelists tackle the problem of the relationships between the sexes in Saudi society and the novel chosen to represent this is *ʿAfwan Yā Adam* by Ṣafīyya ʿAnbar. As Elaine Showalter suggests, the themes worked out in women's writings are the most important subjects for feminist criticism to examine in the study of the

⁽⁴¹⁰⁾See: *ibid.* p.157.

⁽⁴¹¹⁾ The Quran refers to this in *Surat al-Kahf*, Part 15, Āya 50, p 299.

history of the development of women's writing. Therefore, this chapter focuses on an analysis of some of the changes in the themes found in the women's novel and in the style chosen to address these themes during this stage. It seems that the intellectual struggles between conservatives and modernists in the 1980s had an effect on the development of women's minds and raised an awareness which is reflected in their literary efforts.⁽⁴¹²⁾

3. Comparisons and Contrasts

It has become clear, through the analysis of the two selected novels that represent this stage, that Shaṭā and °Anbar used a different method to treat the two pertinent themes in contrast with the previous stage. For instance, by defining and eventually criticising a dominant problem Shaṭā becomes more involved in deeper interaction with her society, which was uncommon in the previous stage. Similarly, °Anbar abandons the rather cautious method of treating the issue of relationships between the two sexes which appeared in the previous stage. In contrast, she applies a sharp and direct criticism on the nature of Eastern men and their psychology. The change in the style of both novelists demonstrates their renunciation of the simple and superficial approach that was a hallmark of the previous stage. In addition, the authors present an increased understanding of various techniques in writing a novel. Based on the aforementioned, this section is devoted to comparing and contrasting the novels written in this stage, in order to examine how much the characteristics of the method used by the two aforementioned authors are representative of other novels at this stage.

However, before one can proceed with comparing and contrasting different novels, it is necessary to mention that there are some novels published in this stage that can be excluded from this study, as they do not tackle the themes this thesis focuses on. One such example is Hind Baghaffār's novel *Ribāṭ al-Walāyā* (Hostel for Needy Women) (1987) which is considered to be a documentary novel, 'based on documentary evidence.'⁽⁴¹³⁾ Furthermore, the purpose of publishing this work, according to the novelist, is to record the valuable traditions of Jeddah in Saudi Arabia and its people.⁽⁴¹⁴⁾ Therefore, the novel contains many photographs as a form of documenting Jeddah's history through pictures of people, their clothes, jewellery, buildings and so on. Another

⁽⁴¹²⁾ There is an historical review in this thesis about the debates that took place in the 1980s and the subjects of these debates. See: pp 41-42 in this thesis.

⁽⁴¹³⁾ Cuddon, p 233.

⁽⁴¹⁴⁾ See: Bāghaffār, Hind, *Ribāṭ al-Walāyā*, (Jeddah: Dār al-Bilād, 1987), p .9.

novel that can be disregarded given the focus of this thesis is Rajā' °Ālim's novel *Arba' a /Ṣifr* (Four/ Zero) (1987). By and large, most of this author's literary products are considered to be leaning towards experimentalism. Thus, her novels, based on the definition of experimentalism in literature, 'entail the exploration of new concepts, techniques etc., which go beyond convention.'⁽⁴¹⁵⁾ In the case of *Arba' a /Ṣifr*, the novel is set in a unique world of the author's imagination where she creates characters which are not human. To illustrate this, the main character, the number Four, tries to send many letters to the number One Million asking for help. Furthermore, the novel is characterised by an advanced use of language and the author's strong sense of imagination, which is also the reason why this novel is seen as an important step in the development of the style of the Saudi women's novel.

Regardless of their exceptionality, the majority of Saudi critics have concurred that most of Rajā' °Ālim's novels are simply difficult to understand. In this regard, al-Manāṣira went as far as stating that he was suffering when he read *Arba' a /Ṣifr*, mainly because of the novelist's fondness, bordering on obsession, for narrative aesthetics, that is, it is directed exclusively at a special elite group of readers.⁽⁴¹⁶⁾ In addition, al-°Adwānī emphasises that Rajā' °Ālim's novels are considered by readers to be ambiguous since she is inspired by an Arabic heritage and she employs poetic texts that are characterised by high levels of imagination.⁽⁴¹⁷⁾ The idea of the ambiguity in Rajā' °Ālim's novels is emphasised by other Saudi critics such as al-Rifā'ī⁽⁴¹⁸⁾ and al-Shadwī.⁽⁴¹⁹⁾

On the other hand, it has been argued that the central issue of °Ālim's novel *Arba' a /Ṣifr* is women's problems. Al-Wahhābī draws attention to the fact that the title of this novel refers to the issue of men's right, according to Islamic law, to have four wives.⁽⁴²⁰⁾ The evidence for this argument is based on the appearance of the character Four, a female character in one of the dialogues in the novel. Al-Wahhābī refers to the following sentence in his argument:

⁽⁴¹⁵⁾ Cuddon, J.A, *Dictionary of literary terms and literary theory*, (London: Penguin Group, 5th Ed, 1999), p 296.

⁽⁴¹⁶⁾ See: al-Manāṣira, p 156.

⁽⁴¹⁷⁾ See: al-°Adwānī, Mu'jib, *al-Kitāba wa al-Maḥw: al-Tanaṣiyya fī A'°māl Rajā' °Ālim al-Riyā'iyya*, (Ḥā'il: al-Nādī al-Adabī, 2009), p 198.

⁽⁴¹⁸⁾ See: al-Rifā'ī, pp 346-348.

⁽⁴¹⁹⁾ See: al-Shidwī, °Alī, "Sirr al-Ghandarah: Qirā'a fī Riyāyat Masrā Yā Raqīb", in al-Nu'°mī, Ḥasan, *Khīṭāb al-Sard: al-Riwāya al-Nisā'iyya al-Su'ūdiyya*, pp 325-333.

⁽⁴²⁰⁾ See: al-Wahhābī, p 248.

“Did you remember it, Four? (hal tadhakkartihī Four? By writing the vowel i (kasra) under the letter tā’ (ت) an Arabic indication of the feminine, in the sentence, the character “One Million”, who asked the question, is revealed as a male character in the book”.⁽⁴²¹⁾

However, by revising the pertinent sentence in its context, it appears that this sentence is directed to the mother not to the number Four. The verb (ضَاع) (*Dā‘a*) which is in the following sentence indicates that the number Four is a male character, as otherwise, the novelist would use female version of this word (ضَاعَت) (*Dā‘at*). For one to better comprehend this, it is necessary to see how the passage appears in the novel:

- Did you remember me..?
Did you remember it? Four who was lost at the birthday of my sister? And you were looking at the door...?⁽⁴²²⁾

Another argument for excluding Rajā’ ʿĀlim’s novel is based on the fact that the novel does not tackle or discuss the issue of men having four wives, through symbolism. As Jeremy Hawthorn asserts, ‘a writer will create a symbol that has the meaning and significance that it does have only in the context of one particular work.’⁽⁴²³⁾ This is a very important insight as in the case of Rajā’ ʿĀlim’s novel, readers are not given much aid in form of the text itself to deal with the author’s ambiguous style of writing.

Having explained the reasons for the exclusion of certain types of novels from the focus of this section, we are now in a position to proceed with an analysis of the main themes observed in this stage. The first theme tackled by Saudi female novelists in this stage revolves around the extent of society’s control, and its pressure on women. As it is apparent from the analysis of *Ghadan Ansā* by Amal Shaṭā, the first novel in this stage, Saudi female novelists began to be more engaged in social issues through addressing specific problems in the Saudi society, whilst they did not lack the courage to criticise the state of their society.⁽⁴²⁴⁾

Another example of this new trend in female novels is Bahiyya Bū Subayt’s novel *Durra min al-Aḥsāʾ* (A Jewel from al-Aḥsāʾ) (1988) which deals with a common issue related to family affairs in the Saudi society where a husband’s family exerts enormous pressure over his wife after

⁽⁴²¹⁾ Al-Wahhābī, p 248.

⁽⁴²²⁾ See: ʿĀlim, *Arba‘a/Şifr*, p 197.

⁽⁴²³⁾ Hawthorn, p 124.

⁽⁴²⁴⁾ See p 113 in this thesis.

marriage. This pressure is manifested through the family's desire that the wife becomes pregnant quickly, that is, right after marriage. The novel is based on a story of an ideal woman who grows up in a stable family where she studies until she becomes a teacher. The protagonist then marries an ideal man. Her suffering begins right after the marriage, when society, represented by the husband's family, her friends and her neighbours, start to question her inability to get pregnant. In general, this novel is considered to be a didactic novel since its main concern is to give advice and provide information⁽⁴²⁵⁾ about her city al-Aḥsāʾ.

The most apparent similarity between this novel and Amal Shaṭā's novel is the idea of addressing women's problems which reflect reality in Saudi society. Thus, the very issue that Būsbayt addressed is a commonly known problem in affecting women's life and feelings. Furthermore, in comparison with the previous stage, the novelist treats this problem by attempting to show the effects of social pressures on women. This can be further clarified in the following points:

Firstly, the novelist shows the practices and perceptions of society through the portrayal of the way it deals with women after marriage. To illustrate this, the author presents many questions posed by 'the society' to the wife concerning her possible pregnancy such as: Are you pregnant? Why it has not happened yet? All the girls who married at the same time as you are already pregnant except you...why? Have you paid a visit to the doctor? Is your mother like you?⁽⁴²⁶⁾ The novelist criticises such practices by describing these questions as obtrusive or by likening them to 'missiles' directed at the protagonist's heart.⁽⁴²⁷⁾

Secondly, the novelist presents the pressure that society applies to the husband himself regarding the problem, even if he is happy with his wife. This is illustrated in a scene where the husband's mother visits, and whilst the protagonist is in the kitchen, she tells her son angrily: "A complete whole year now and no pregnancy"⁽⁴²⁸⁾ Such pressure over the husband also takes the form of the mother's request that he marry another woman if the first wife is sterile.⁽⁴²⁹⁾

⁽⁴²⁵⁾See: Baldick, p 66.

⁽⁴²⁶⁾ See: Bū Subayt, Bahiyya, *Durra min al-Aḥsāʾ*, (Riyadh: Mu'assasat al-Jazira, 1988), p 83.

⁽⁴²⁷⁾See: ibid, p 83.

⁽⁴²⁸⁾See: ibid, p 84.

⁽⁴²⁹⁾See: ibid, p 84.

The second theme tackled by Saudi female novelists in this stage is their perception of the relationship between the two sexes. It is clear through the analysis of Şafīyya °Anbar’s novel °*Afwan Yā Ādam* that the author directly criticises men’s conduct in interacting with women. This is an indication of a change in the novelist’s dealing with this theme. In comparison, her second novel *Wahaj min Bayn Ramād al-Sinīn* (A Flame through the Ashes of the Years) (1988) might be considered a repetition of her ideas in the first novel. The events of the second novel revolve around two cousins who have been in love with each other since they were teenagers. Their relationship is portrayed in the novel with all its ups and downs. The novelist, in referring to the issues affecting their relationships, attempts to show that the reasons for failures in love are man’s nature and traditional society, both of which are criticised by the novelist. In addition, she portrays the effort of women to keep their relationships healthy and working, yet the nature of men often sabotages this effort. It is worth mentioning at this point the similarities between Şafīyya °Anbar’s two novels as they demonstrate the most distinctive characteristics of the second theme of this stage.

At the beginning, it is important to mention the status of the protagonist in the second novel, who is a divorced woman. As the novelist narrates, divorce is not only unpopular in Saudi society, but there is a stigma attached to divorced women.⁽⁴³⁰⁾ What is relevant here is that the writer finds it necessary to explain that the protagonist did not have much say in her first marriage as the marriage was arranged under pressure from her family.⁽⁴³¹⁾ In other words, whilst she wanted to keep the promise to her lover that she would wait until he would return from his studies abroad, yet at the end she had no choice but to marry another man due to her family’s insistence. Similar to her first novel,⁽⁴³²⁾ the novelist complains about society and its attitude towards love. This is demonstrated through the monologue in the novel:

Oh our East, even though the grace of nature is stalking on your ground
 “Love”!⁽⁴³³⁾ ... this is our reality: the pure love is stalking as if it is a plague.⁽⁴³⁴⁾

⁽⁴³⁰⁾ See: °Anbar, Şaffīya, *Wahaj min Bayn Ramād al-Sinīn*, (Beirut: al-Dār al-°Arabiyya li’l-Mawsū°āt, 1988), p 14.

⁽⁴³¹⁾ See: *ibid*, p 13.

⁽⁴³²⁾ See p 121 in this thesis.

⁽⁴³³⁾ See: *ibid*, p 215.

⁽⁴³⁴⁾ See: *ibid*, p 216.

Even when her lover returns after a long time, the protagonist still has a problem with the nature of eastern men. This is also the main theme of the novel. It is essential to understand the novelist's point of view about men in her society which is manifested by the way she portrays the main protagonists in both novels. The novelist presents women in their relationship with men as loyal lovers whose main concern is the object of their love, whereby the women forget all the disagreements when their beloved have any difficulty. This can be illustrated in the following monologue: His sudden illness makes me forget everything... I was wondering how I forgave all of his mistakes.⁽⁴³⁵⁾

In stark contrast to the way the novelist perceives women, she criticises men's attitude towards women. In this regard, the novelist insists that all men are the same in their conduct with women. One example of this appears in the dialogue between the protagonist and her lover Amīn when she uses generalization to judge men in her society:

But you are like all men; if you are assured that you are loved, you will leave your lover without care until she is destroyed... A woman is like a rose if you do not water it, how can you enjoy its smell.⁽⁴³⁶⁾

Another aspect of men's behaviour in society criticised by the novelist is men's selfishness. This aspect appears in different parts of the novel and it is seen as a major reason behind women's suffering. Men's selfishness is demonstrated through the inequality between men and women, when the man permits himself what he forbids a woman from doing. This form of selfishness is criticised by the protagonist herself in the following part of the novel:

Contradicted memories are dripping on my head. Pictures are in front of my eyes, which I could not follow and arrange in my memory. I justify some of its attitudes, then I feel comfortable, then I seek some reasons for the others but I do not see anything except the man's selfishness that permits himself what he forbids his woman.⁽⁴³⁷⁾

It is worth mentioning here that the novelist, in her criticism, focuses on generalising the issue by including all men in her society. Certain degree of generalisation is characteristic in novels of this

⁽⁴³⁵⁾See: *ibid*, p 186.

⁽⁴³⁶⁾See: *ibid*, p 202.

⁽⁴³⁷⁾See: *ibid*, p 244.

stage. Through her treatment of the issue it seems that the novelist tends to analyse the eastern men's psychology via revealing his desires and aspects, which is also seen in her first novel.

°Anbar, addresses the idea of the role of women in their dealing with men from men's perspective in her first novel,⁽⁴³⁸⁾ and she returns to this issue in her second novel. The novelist emphasises that men in her society think that the role of women is akin to the role of women in Hārūn al-Rashīd's salon⁽⁴³⁹⁾ as he 'was well-known for his passion for his female slaves and his constant search for pleasure'.⁽⁴⁴⁰⁾ There are two important points made at the end of the novel which summarise the novelist's perception of the relationship between the two sexes. Firstly, the novelist's concentration on the idea that women will prove to men that they are capable of leaving their traditional roles, and become very powerful members in their society. Secondly, in the novel, the protagonist eventually breaks her relationship with the man she loves as he cannot understand woman's position in society except through her traditional role.⁽⁴⁴¹⁾

Hudā al-Rashīd is another novelist of this stage who also wrote in the first stage; her novel *Ghadan Sayakūn al-Khamīs*.⁽⁴⁴²⁾ °*Abath*, her novel for this stage, revolves around a man who marries his wife after a love story. She completely trusts his loyalty, yet he betrays her trust when he meets and later marries a Lebanese girl. Then, he eventually starts ignoring his wife and children. The first line in the novel is the first sentence from a letter written by °Abd al-Raḥmān to his sister Munīra where he promises to keep his love only for his wife and his children: I promise, oh my life,⁽⁴⁴³⁾ that I am not going to bring a stepmother to my children no matter what.⁽⁴⁴⁴⁾

When analysing certain details in the novel, the reader observes some differences between the two novels. This is particularly obvious from the way that the novelist treats the theme in her first novel *Ghadan Sayakūn al-Khamīs* where she simply presents the problem to show women's suffering in society. However, this presentation contains criticism of men through characteristics which suit the novels published in this stage. It is important to note these features to show what has changed in the novelist's method of conveying her discourse in this stage.

⁽⁴³⁸⁾See p 123 in this thesis

⁽⁴³⁹⁾See: °Anbar, Ṣaffiyya, *Wahaj min Bayn Ramād al-Sinīn*, p 247.

⁽⁴⁴⁰⁾See: al-Wahhābī, p 139.

⁽⁴⁴¹⁾See: °Anbar, Ṣaffiyya, *Wahaj min Bayn Ramād al-Sinīn*, pp 247-248.

⁽⁴⁴²⁾See p 86 in this thesis.

⁽⁴⁴³⁾ Literally, in Arabic, "أعدك يا أيامي"

⁽⁴⁴⁴⁾ See: al-Rashīd, Hudā, °*Abath*, (Cairo: Maṭābi° Rūz al-Yūsuf, 1980), p 7.

Firstly, the first change appears in the title of the novel as Hudā al-Rashīd chooses "عبث" ° *Abath* (Frivolity) 1980. By contrasting this title with the title of her previous novel, the reader can notice elements of criticism of men's conduct with women in the case of the title for the second novel, whereas the title of her first novel symbolises hope for a better future for women in society.⁽⁴⁴⁵⁾ Alternatively, the title of the first novel indicates careful discourse whilst the title of the second novel is indicative of a direct critique. Even though both novels present a change in men's thought and the effect this change has on women's suffering, the title of the first novel reflects women's hope, which mirrors the presentation of women's status, whilst the title of the second novel is based on the criticism of men's practices.

Secondly, it seems that in her first novel the novelist never describes the setting of the novel. This is a characteristic feature of the early stage of development of female novels. However, the place of setting of the second novel is clearly presented as Saudi Arabia, and this is emphasised throughout the novel in different ways; for example, the novelist indicates the place where the novel is set by mentioning the protagonist's consideration of marrying a non-Saudi girl.⁽⁴⁴⁶⁾ Also, she mentions the roots of his wife who is Saudi Arabian Ḥaḍramiyya which means that she originates from Ḥaḍramawt.⁽⁴⁴⁷⁾ Furthermore, the novel shows some of the characteristics of Saudi society such as a picture of female pupils after school time.⁽⁴⁴⁸⁾

Thirdly, in her first novel, al-Rashīd employs cautious discourse in the form of the picture of an ideal woman in order to convey her message to the reader. This picture appears in the section when the protagonist is portrayed as a defender of men in her society.⁽⁴⁴⁹⁾ However, this method changed in her novel published in the second stage as the novelist conveys her ideas based on the development of the novel's events. Hence, there is no character to carry her point of view. This suggests that in this stage, Hudā al-Rashīd' steers away from her attempts to gain society's sympathy as a method of delivering her message. As a result, the novel ° *Abath* contains elements of direct criticism, so characteristic for the novels published in second stage, that are aimed at Saudi men's behaviour. This is in clear contrast to the first stage, where her criticism is less sharp.

⁽⁴⁴⁵⁾ See: al-Qaḥṭānī, Sultān. p 94.

⁽⁴⁴⁶⁾ See: al-Rashīd, ° *Abath*, p.29.

⁽⁴⁴⁷⁾ Ḥaḍramawt is a Province in Yemen but many people who are from this region have Saudi nationality.

⁽⁴⁴⁸⁾ See: al-Rashīd, ° *Abath*, p.15.

⁽⁴⁴⁹⁾ See p 90 in this thesis.

The analysis of the two main themes of women's novels in this stage revealed new forms of approaching pertinent issues. In the first theme, the novelists address the problems as they observe them in their society. In the second theme, the novelists directly criticise men and their conduct. In addition, there are some new aspects of style used in the novels in this stage. These aspects can be summarised by making several points.

Firstly, there is change in the way that the novelists indicate their novels are clearly set in Saudi Arabia. The device of naming the place of setting is essential as it enables the authors to engage with society and its issues that are known to general public. As a result, whilst the events of most of the novels published in the previous stage take place outside the country, the second stage's novels are situated inside the country. This simple idea has been mentioned in the analysis of Hudā al-Rashīd's novel *‘Abath*, but what is significant is the way that the novelists in this stage employ the place of setting. Most novelists in this stage are keen to present their positive feelings about the place of setting as we mentioned in the analysis of Bā Ghffār's novel *Ribāt al-Walāyā*.⁽⁴⁵⁰⁾ To clarify, it is necessary to provide examples of the novels from this stage.

In her novel *Durra min al-Aḥsāʾ*, Bahiyya Bū Subayt introduces al-Aḥsāʾ city as very pleasant and in such a way that reveals her fixation on this place. There are many examples in this novel that demonstrate the affection for the country she describes. One such example appears in her description of the landscape around al-Aḥsāʾ such as Qāra mountain which is well-known for its coldness in the summer and its warmth in the winter.⁽⁴⁵¹⁾ In addition, she describes her protagonist's attitude towards the idea that most Saudi girls wish to have their honeymoon in Europe as negative, as she, an ideal woman, refuses her husband's offer for a trip to Europe, and prefers to spend her honeymoon in Saudi Arabia.⁽⁴⁵²⁾ Furthermore, the novelist includes pictures of many places in Saudi Arabia which help to underline the extent of her relationship to her novel's place of setting. This form of employing the place of setting is probably one of the reasons that invite some critics to classify the Bū Subayt's novel as didactic, as the reader can easily see that the portrayal of the setting is didactic not artistic.

⁽⁴⁵⁰⁾ See p 126 in this thesis.

⁽⁴⁵¹⁾ See: Bū Subayt, *Durra min al-Aḥsāʾ*. p 17.

⁽⁴⁵²⁾ See: *ibid*, p 75.

The presence of Saudi Arabia in Saudi women's novels in this stage is noticeable in comparison with the previous stage, especially as the places for the novel's events are described with great affection. Examples can be found in *Durra min al-Aḥsā'*, or in Safiyya °Anbar's novel *Wahaj min Bayn Ramād al-Sinīn*, where one of its protagonist's sentences underscores the above: "We lived in Jeddah, the most beautiful city in our beloved kingdom".⁽⁴⁵³⁾ However, it is important to emphasise that the employment of the place of setting in the novels of this stage does not represent an indication of the novelists' mastery, since it is used merely as a simple way to set the events. Even the authors' affection for a particular place is expressed directly which is a simple method of description.⁽⁴⁵⁴⁾

The second aspect of the new style used in this stage is a renunciation of certain superficial artistic errors which were a noticeable phenomenon in the first stage.⁽⁴⁵⁵⁾ For example, instead of structuring the plot of the novel on an unconvincing coincidence as in Samīra Khāshuqjī's and °Āisha Aḥmad's novels, the novelists in this stage structure their work logically. This is evident from the novels analysed in this chapter such as the Amal's Shaṭā and Safiyya's °Anbar, even though there are certain weak points in Shaṭā's novel as previously discussed.⁽⁴⁵⁶⁾ Regardless, the rest of the novels in this stage are structured logically. Since only Hudā al-Rashīd demonstrated her capacity to structure a logical plot in her first novel in the first stage, it is of considerable significance that most of the novelists in the second stage learned this technique. The few effective characters in her novel °*Abath* might be one of the factors that helped al-Rashīd to determine her focus, thus plot her novel logically.

In comparison, the plot of °Anbar's novel follows the same method that she used in narrating her first novel.⁽⁴⁵⁷⁾ To clarify, the novelist ties the events of her novel *Wahaj min Bayn Ramād al-Sinīn* to the revelation of the conflict between two paths; the first path is the protagonist's disagreement with Amīn. This conflict is depicted through a number of cycles wherein it continuously returns to normal a few lines later, until the end of the novel which witnesses the

⁽⁴⁵³⁾ See: °Anbar, Safiyya, *Wahaj min Bayn Ramād al-Sinīn*, p 43.

⁽⁴⁵⁴⁾ Some novelists in the third stage use a different method to employ the place of setting. See p 164 in this thesis.

⁽⁴⁵⁵⁾ See pp 102-103 in this thesis.

⁽⁴⁵⁶⁾ See p 112 in this thesis.

⁽⁴⁵⁷⁾ See p 120 in this thesis.

couple's separation. The second path, may be characterised as 'internal conflicts'⁽⁴⁵⁸⁾ since the protagonist's language reflects her contradictory feelings of her love of Amīn and her fear of the eastern man's behaviour.

In contrast to Hudā al-Rashīd's ability to write a logical plot in her novel *Abath*, the small number of the characters in the Bū Subayt's novel *Durra min al-Aḥsā'* do not help to create and maintain a coherent plot. Due to the novelist's insistence on the idea of promoting local tourism, some events and characters are redundant, and prevent action. To illustrate this, it is useful to compare two scenes in this novel to see the different impact they have on the novel's plot. The first scene is a conversation between the protagonist and her fiancé about where they will honeymoon. This scene is suitable for the development of the events of the novel as it concentrates on the main character of the novel. The reader also sees the pertinent topic as a logical issue to be raised between two couples planning to marry during the summer holiday. Therefore, the reader does not feel that he is being dragged through random events for ambiguous reasons; this helps the novelist to convey her message. Yet in the second scene, the novelist devotes about four pages to an ordinary character explaining to the teachers the most important tourist attractions in al-Aḥsā'.⁽⁴⁵⁹⁾ Such a style of narrating a story reveals the didactic purpose of the novelist which as a result, weakens the novel. Therefore, it may be said that artistically, this novel is more in line with the style used in the first stage novels.

4. Conclusion:

This chapter examined the way the women's novel had developed and moved forward in comparison to the previous stage. The first stage lasted for 21 years while this stage lasted only 10 years, and each stage saw a similar number of publications since there are ten in the first stage and nine in the second. It is clear that the novelists writing in the second stage had a greater understanding of Saudi society since most of them had lived and studied in the country and therefore used Saudi Arabia as the main setting for their novels' events. As in the previous stage, the novelists' main concerns were emotional and social; and the main issue tackled by Saudi female novelists was the relationships between men and women together with the problem of society's power over women. However, the novelists in this stage appear to be more interactive

⁽⁴⁵⁸⁾ Cuddon, p 175.

⁽⁴⁵⁹⁾ See: Bū Subayt, Bahiyya, *Durra min al-Aḥsā'*, pp 42-45.

with their society than the novelists in the first stage which is clearly apparent in Amal Shaṭā's novel. Also, the reader can see a change in the novelists' discourse on men; that is, during the first stage the novelists' protagonists attempt to convince men whereas the novelists of this stage accuse them.

Furthermore, evidence of a development is clear in the improved artistic value of these novelists' works, even though this improvement was limited. The value of their works can be seen generally because they successfully employed various techniques, which were not apparent in the previous stage. The method that the novelists writing during this stage use to address their themes may be considered as a new move in Saudi women's works as can be seen in Amal Shaṭā's novel which hinges on the change in the narrative technique; and as it appears in the Ṣafiyya °Anbar novel which utilises a psychological analysis to understand Eastern men. However, the reader can detect an artistic weakness in some of their works since, for example, some stories depend on coincidence in order to increase the effects of the events on the reader's feelings as was seen in Shaṭā's novel. The difference between the first and second stages is that coincidence was dominant in the first whereas it is absent in the second. Also, the novel *Durra min al-Aḥsā'* exaggerates the novelist's viewpoint at the expense of its artistic value and therefore, the reader cannot readily follow the development of events. Hence, some critics have described it as a didactic novel.

Chapter Five: The Coming of Age of the Saudi Women's Novel (1990-2001)

1. Introduction

The analysis of Saudi women's work carried out in the last chapter demonstrated a change in the language of female discourse on men; and the analysis also suggested that the Saudi women's novel became established during this period. This chapter will discuss the stage which is considered to be one of the most important in the maturity of Saudi women's literature in terms of both quality and quantity; and through the analysis of the represented novels, the distinguishing features of this stage will be examined.

There is no doubt that the Saudi women's novel should be read and explored with the general social and cultural context of Saudi Arabia in mind. The beginning of this stage witnessed the Second Gulf War (1990), an event that had a most important affect on the women's novel. Firstly, the war affected the whole of society. As Pascal Menoret has asserted, the new generation, 'had come into being a generation which understood that, unlike its elders, it would have to live in an uncertain world... Young Saudis had never felt as threatened as they did in the morrow of the second Gulf War'.⁽⁴⁶⁰⁾ In addition, Saudi society's exposure to the world through Satellite channels was synchronous with the Second Gulf War since society found it easy to see different cultures and receive new ideas in different fields.⁽⁴⁶¹⁾ Moreover, the Saudi government was widely criticised by the al-Jazeera channel which played an effective role in society's awareness.⁽⁴⁶²⁾ Furthermore, the first women's demonstration occurred during this period when certain Saudi women demanded their right to drive cars.⁽⁴⁶³⁾ Secondly, the influence of Saudi society is reflected in the cultural scene in Saudi Arabia which can be seen in the intellectual struggles between politicians, intellectuals, writers and poets. As has been discussed in previous chapters, the 1990s saw the peak of al-*Ṣaḥwa*'s stream in Saudi Arabia since articles in magazines and published books discussed their attitudes to these issues.⁽⁴⁶⁴⁾

There are critics who refer to the factors that impacted on the Saudi novels produced at that time; and one of the most important factors that they cite is the Second Gulf War, because it not

⁽⁴⁶⁰⁾ Menoret, p 195.

⁽⁴⁶¹⁾ See: *ibid*, p 35. Also, see: al-Qaḥṭānī, Nūra, p 28 and Jarīdī, p 30.

⁽⁴⁶²⁾ See: El-Nawawy, Mohammed and Iskandar, Adel, *Al-Jazeera: How the Free Arab News Network Scooped the World and Changed the Middle East*, (Cambridge: Westview Press Books, 2002), p 83.

⁽⁴⁶³⁾ Details of this action are discussed on p 44 of this thesis.

⁽⁴⁶⁴⁾ For a discussion of this, see p 43 in this thesis.

only created political, social and cultural changes but also the changes that extended to the field of fiction. Therefore, according to al-Manāṣira, Saudi novels were transformed in terms of their setting, time, language, characters and the events that were the product of the post Second Gulf War era in this decade.⁽⁴⁶⁵⁾ He discussed the value of the novels of the 1990s in his book *Dhākirat Riwāyat al-Tisʿīniyyāt: Qirāʾāt fī al-Riwāya al-Suʿūdiyya* (The Memory of the Novel of the Nineties: Readings in the Saudi Novels) (2008), and he devotes a section in this book, which was published in the *al-Jazīrah Newspaper* in September 2002, to answer the question, ‘Why the Novel of the 1990s?!’ which emphasises that the novel of the 1990s is the actual Saudi novel in terms of both quality and quantity, since it represents the brightest period in the Saudi Arabian novel.⁽⁴⁶⁶⁾

Accordingly, it is logical to recognise the influence of the Second Gulf War on the Saudi women’s novel and this has been widely discussed by literary critics in Saudi Arabia. Al-Rifāʿī argues that this stage witnessed an important turning point for the Saudi women’s novel in terms of both the theme and the artistic value.⁽⁴⁶⁷⁾ The turning-point that he mentions appeared in the middle of 1998 with the publication of *al-Firdaws al-Yabāb*. However, he dates this stage between 1990 and 1999 although he does not give specific reasons why he deems this point to be the end of the period. As discussed in earlier chapters al-Rifāʿī stresses that the only reason for his classification is to simplify the study of the women’s novel for the reader,⁽⁴⁶⁸⁾ which means that this classification is not grounded in artistic, thematic or historical reasons.

However, as it has obviously had an effect on the Saudi novel in general, the most important factor in the development of the women’s novel is the Second Gulf War. Al-Wahhābī argues this when he states: ‘In the era after the Second Gulf War, novels become the new literary phenomenon within artistic circles in Saudi Arabia. Thus novel writing gradually became a constituent of the cultural scene and many writers turned to this, even employing erotic styles, because this satisfied the market demand and added a new dimension. This created a great deal of media interest and conferences have been held to discuss this new trend.’⁽⁴⁶⁹⁾ Just as the Second Gulf War affects the style of the Saudi female novelists, it also appears in the events

⁽⁴⁶⁵⁾ See: al-Manāṣira, p 35.

⁽⁴⁶⁶⁾ See: *ibid*, p 34

⁽⁴⁶⁷⁾ See: Al-Rifāʿī, p 49.

⁽⁴⁶⁸⁾ See p 28 in this thesis.

⁽⁴⁶⁹⁾ Al-Wahhābī, p 269.

played out in some of the novels written during this stage; for example, in her novel, *‘Uyūn ‘Alā al-Samā’*, (Eyes on the Sky) (1999) Qumāsha al-‘Ulayyān refers to the effect of this war on the protagonist’s life. Also, the influence of this war appears clearly in Zaynab Ḥafnī’s novel *al-Raqṣ ‘Alā al-Dufūf* (Dance to the Tambourine) (1998).

Before starting an analysis of the novels chosen to represent this stage, it is useful to refer to the general aspects of the Saudi women’s novel. Through a general overview of the novels published for women in this phase, the reader can see some aspects that distinguish them from the previous stage. Firstly, this stage extends for twelve years during which thirty-one novels were published; and this means that the number of novels published is more than double the number published during the previous stage, which reflects the development of women’s novels in terms of quantity. In addition, twenty novels were published during the previous stages for over three decades, which is another sign of how far the Saudi women’s novel had developed. It also means that women found that writing novels was an appropriate way to discuss their issues and express their suffering. It has been noted that during this stage the first Saudi female writer switched from publishing a collection of poems to publishing a novel. As is seen in the above list, Nūra al-Muḥaymīd published her novel *Unthā Fawq ‘Ashri‘at al-Ghurba* (1998) the year after she published her first collection of poems entitled: *Nuqūsh fawq Saḥḥ al-Mā’* (Inscriptions on the Water’s Surface).⁽⁴⁷⁰⁾

Secondly, eleven new novelists first attempted to write in this stage in contrast to the previous stage when there were only six. The rise in Saudi women’s appetites for writing novels at this stage provides researchers with new evidence that women found this particular genre to be an excellent way of expressing their problems.

Thirdly, after Rajā‘ ‘Ālim in the previous stage won an award for her novel *Arba‘a Sifr*, the third stage witnessed three more awards to two novelists. Laylā al-Juhanī won al-Shāriqa’s award for her novel *‘The Waste Paradise’* in 1998.⁽⁴⁷¹⁾ Also, Qumāsha al-‘Ulayyān won the Abhā award for her novel *‘Uyūn ‘Alā al-Samā’* in 1999 and she also won the Arabic creative

⁽⁴⁷⁰⁾See: al-Rifā‘ī. p.49.

⁽⁴⁷¹⁾See: Sulaymān, Nabīl, *Asrār al-Takhyīl al-Riyā’ī*, (Damascus: Itihād al-Kuttāb al-‘Arab, 2005), p.101.

cultural award in al-Shāriqa in 2000 for her novel *Unthā al-‘Ankabūt*.⁽⁴⁷²⁾ The fact that women writers started to win competitions during this period seems to suggest a development in the artistic value of the Saudi women’s novel. Before discussing this stage it is important to refer to the table listed the authors, and the novels published in this period together with their dates of publication which are shown in the appendix (p. 253).

2. The Most Prominent Women’s Issues in the Novels of the Coming of Age Stage:

This chapter focuses on the development of the female novelists’ thoughts and writing styles through an examination of two themes that they tackle in many of the novels written at this stage. The first theme is society’s power over women and the novel chosen to represent this is *Unthā al-‘Ankabūt* by Qumāsha al-‘Ulayyān. The second subject to be discussed is the way the novelists address relationships between the two sexes and the novel chosen to represent this theme is *al-Firdaws al-Yabāb* by Laylā al-Juhanī.

3.1. The Search for Freedom

Qumāsha al-‘Ulayyān’s novel *Unthā al-‘Ankabūt* (A Female Spider).

3.1.1. Introduction

The historical observation of women’s writings is the backbone of Elaine Showalter’s theory on feminist criticism. The purpose of this is to recognise the most important phases of development that women’s writing has gone through. She emphasises that the themes explored in women’s novels is one of the most important subjects for feminist criticism. Therefore, this section will examine the changes in women novelists’ treatment of the first theme, which concerns society’s power over women.

Qumāsha al-‘Ulayyān is a well-known Saudi writer who has won various cultural awards such as the award for the Arabic Creative Novel in 2000 and the Abhā Cultural Award in 2008. She was born in Riyadh and took her BA in Chemistry from King Sa‘ūd University. Her literary works began with the publication of short stories such as *Khata’ fī Hayātī* and *al-Zawja al-*

⁽⁴⁷²⁾See: al-Faqīr, Sālim. *Al-Ru’iyya wa al-Tashkīl fī A‘māl Qumāsha al-‘Ulayyān al-Riyā’iyya*, (Al-Dammām: Dār al-Kifāh, 2011), p.7.

‘*Adhrā*’, and thereafter she progressed to writing novels that focused on the same issues that she had begun to explore in her short stories; namely, the problems women face in Saudi society when they want to be free.⁽⁴⁷³⁾

The reason for choosing this novel to represent the women’s novel during this stage is two-fold. The first point centres on the fact that this very important female writer published four novels during this stage. The second point is the importance of this novel because it represents a clear change in the way that the novelist tackles the problem of society’s power, which will be discussed in this chapter.

Through her treatment of women’s freedom al-‘Ulayyān reflects the development of how the women’s novel attempts to raise awareness of concerns which are specifically related to gender. Previous novelists had already examined the quest for freedom in their novels but al-‘Ulayyān’s novel could be said to present a noticeable change in the exploration of this theme. A study of Saudi women’s novels reveals a deep concern over a lack of progress in women’s journey towards freedom. For example, the search for freedom is apparent in the early stages of Hudā al-Rashīd’s novel in which the protagonist confronts the issue of marriage and the impact it will have on her status.⁽⁴⁷⁴⁾ However, it is easy for the reader to see the different ways in which each of these two novels portray the novelist’s response to the issues explored. Al-Rashīd chose one of the most important women’s issues at the time since the events of her story emphasises a woman’s right to choose her own husband. The writer uses her female protagonist’s conviction, asserted through cautious dialogue as a tool for examining the important issues explored in her novel. By contrast, al-‘Ulayyān suggests that violence is the best way to achieve women’s freedom; and she uses a murder to assert that resistance may be the only way for a woman to gain her freedom.

Even though artistically, there are different areas of weakness in the novel as will be discussed later on in this chapter, it is obvious that the novelist is as aware of the issues that she attempts to deal with as she is of the solutions that she suggests. The novel revolves around a girl who has a very dictatorial father and her conflict with him is mirrored in the conflict he also has with her brothers and sisters; and the novelist uses a first person narrative to relate the struggles

⁽⁴⁷³⁾ See: al-Faqīr, pp 5-15.

⁽⁴⁷⁴⁾ See the first chapter of this thesis pp 87-95.

between the protagonist and her father in order to achieve her freedom. This technique allows the novelist to show the protagonist's feelings and opinions about the problems that women face within a patriarchal society.

The novel starts with a sentence that makes direct reference to the issue which is at the centre of the novel. This didactic technique, which immediately exposes the writer's vision rather than letting the events of the novel reveal the problem to the reader, could be said to be an artistic flaw. The novelist's method clearly directs the reader to the theme that she wants to engage with, which presents a rather superficial start to the novel. The narrator says:

What is freedom? I am wondering what the meaning of this wonderful word is!! I am the woman who is tied by shackles and restrictions!! Is freedom happiness? Or is it freedom of speech? Or is it a revolt against social customs?⁽⁴⁷⁵⁾

This error is also apparent when the narrator describes the characters and reveals the characteristics of family members; that is to say, the novelist does not wait for the events to reveal their characteristics. For example, without offering any explanation she describes the father as dominant, despotic and dictatorial.⁽⁴⁷⁶⁾

3.1.2. The Theme of the Novel

The novelist attempts to present the issue of women's right to freedom through an emphasis on the status of women in a society in which they do not know their rights and even if they know them, they do not fight to gain them. Through the plot, the novelist explores two important points in her treatment of this theme:

The first point is that she depicts the *restrictions* that the family routinely impose on women, which are apparent in the description of the father's characteristics. The purpose of focusing upon these restrictions is to prepare the reader for the solution that the novelist later suggests. The novelist proposes the idea that in order to end their suffering women should fight for their freedom, even if this involves physical violence; and that this is the best solution to this problem. This type of treatment of the theme is considered to be a new development that

⁽⁴⁷⁵⁾ See: al-^cUlayyān, Qumāsha, *Unthā al-^cAnkabūt*, (Al-Dammām: Dār al-Kifāh, 7th Ed, 2010), p 9.

⁽⁴⁷⁶⁾ See: *ibid.* p.10.

appeared in the work of some novelists of this stage. The various facets of the restrictions upon women appear through the following:

Firstly; women do not have the right to choose their partners; rather, even when daughters refuse to marry someone, fathers have the authority to choose their husband and force them to accept them. The novelist attempts to show that a father chooses someone to marry his daughter for his own benefit and not in her interest. The novelist emphasises this matter in many parts of her novel in order to describe this problem to the reader. The problem arises when the protagonist chooses her future partner Sa[°]d, a wise, young, well educated poet, and who, more importantly, cares about people.⁽⁴⁷⁷⁾ He comes to ask her father for Aḥlām's hand in marriage, but the father refuses him and the reason for this rejection is that the father once saw him bring Aḥlām home from school. Through the conversation between Aḥlām and her father the novelist shows that this is a flimsy reason. He asks her severely: 'He took you home once then he came to ask to be engaged to you! What does that mean?!'⁽⁴⁷⁸⁾

Not only does the father refuse to allow her to marry the man she really loves but also forces Aḥlām to marry a man who is seventy years old. By introducing the old man into the story the novelist highlights the awful face of a father's attitude when he perceives his daughter to be little more than a commodity that can fulfil his greed and self-interests. The father says to Aḥlām:

Your future husband will pay a large dowry as agreed. I will give you a part of it and the other part is for me. It is my right! I have educated you and I gave you what you want.⁽⁴⁷⁹⁾

The novelist portrays a woman's psychology through the monologue following the rejection in order to convey a very powerful message, which is that not only is Aḥlām prevented from having any right to choose her future husband, but also she does not have the power to stop this injustice. By exploring the problem of women's inability to refuse this kind of injustice, the novelist wants to convey to the reader the huge problem that women face in Saudi society:

⁽⁴⁷⁷⁾ See: *ibid.* p.41.

⁽⁴⁷⁸⁾ See: *ibid.* p.139.

⁽⁴⁷⁹⁾ See: *Ibid.* P.170.

You deprived me of the right to choose, the taste of freedom and the feeling of love and happiness. You want me to be a tool for your injustice and cruelty... a tool you remove however you want... you can kill it, burn it or deprive it. You want it to be a flexible tool in your hands without choice and feelings. You want to decide my future and my siblings' future; and not as we want, and here is the result; they live miserably, suffering from having to obey you.⁽⁴⁸⁰⁾

The novel also attempts to show how her attitude is mirrored in the relationships between other members of the family and the father. This can be seen in the second chapter where the protagonist refers to the family's silence and the power the father has over their lives. She asserts that her father manipulates and controls all of their fates and decisions and there is not one person who is able to influence him through discussion.⁽⁴⁸¹⁾ As it has been argued, the crises a girl faces when she is forced to marry someone she does not want is a pivotal theme in novels concerning the patriarchal society. Patriarchal power not only controls women in society, but also men, and it profoundly and dramatically affects both sexes through the destruction of confidence, regardless of whether victims are male or female.⁽⁴⁸²⁾

What is relevant to this thesis is that the narrator portrays the father's inability to understand female sexuality when he agrees to accept the old man as a husband for his young daughter. When the narrator describes the details of the wedding night, it seems that the old man's failure during his sexual attempts is due to his reliance on his sexual supplements.⁽⁴⁸³⁾ This scene makes an important point because women dare not talk about their sexuality socially, although it is important to them. Female sexuality is taboo in Saudi society; women are seen as the sexual objects of men and are expected to keep quiet about their own needs. Therefore, when she breaks the silence and talks about her sexuality, a subject that is rarely, if ever, given voice in Saudi society, this young girl shows great courage.

It is worth mentioning here that bedroom themes and descriptions of sexual activity between two partners is one of the innovations that appeared in the novel at this stage. It is noted that during the two previous stages, novelists do not refer to sexual relationships at all. This

⁽⁴⁸⁰⁾See: Ibid. P.144.

⁽⁴⁸¹⁾See: ibid. p.20.

⁽⁴⁸²⁾See: al-Shuraym. p.109.

⁽⁴⁸³⁾See: al-^oUlayyān. p. 176.

characteristic also clearly appears in al-Juhani's novel, which is the next representation to be discussed.⁽⁴⁸⁴⁾

Secondly, the novelist empathises with widows and divorced women in a society where remarriage is not allowed, and consequently, does not even consider the idea that women may wish to marry again. This problem is explored in the story of the protagonist's sister, Badriyya, who had five children when she is widowed. Her deceased husband's brother comes to ask her father to marry Badriyya, but as the narrator explains:

But the widow and the divorced woman in my father's understanding cannot be married again; rather, she must be with her kids until she dies.⁽⁴⁸⁵⁾

Before she rolls back time to tell the full story of the sister and recounts the chain of events as they occurred, the novelist has the narrator utter the above sentence in the first paragraph of Chapter Five. This could be viewed as an artistic flaw, since the father's response is clear to the reader before the story unfolds. Some readers might feel that this narrative technique spoils the story and since the outcome is already known, the unfolding of events lacks excitement. In addition, it is slightly confusing that the novelist addresses the problem of her father's opinion of divorced women when the reader is unaware of any divorced women in the family. Furthermore, as discussed later in the analysis, the father does not allow his daughter the right to divorce. It can be said, here, that the didactic style is more apparent than the artistic style because the focus of the novelist is on the social matter of widows and divorced women.

Through Badriyya's character, who is as obedient and silent as she is beautiful and full of life, the novelist attempts to represent the traditional Saudi girl.⁽⁴⁸⁶⁾ The novelist is keen to describe Badriyya's nature both before and after the objection to her marriage; and it could be said that the reason for introducing the story of this sister, is to demonstrate women's weakness and the power that the father exerts over his daughters. When she introduces this event, the writer explains the sister's situation by showing the two sides of Badriyya's character, as follows:

- 1- Before the father's rejection of her marriage Badriyya was very happy. This happiness appears when Aḥlām asked her if she had any idea that the brother of her old husband

⁽⁴⁸⁴⁾See p 161 in this thesis.

⁽⁴⁸⁵⁾See: *ibid.* p. 43.

⁽⁴⁸⁶⁾See: *ibid.* p.43.

had come to ask her father for her hand in marriage, whereupon she stared at her in astonishment and her face shone with happiness which she could not hide.⁽⁴⁸⁷⁾ Also, happiness appears in her face again when her sister Aḥlām asked her about her response which was to turn her face shamefacedly, and lift her hair unconsciously whilst smiling.⁽⁴⁸⁸⁾ It seems that the novelist portrays these characteristics of Badriyya to show two important meanings; her need to desire this man and her difficulty even to express her needs to her sister. In addition, her answer to Aḥlām's question highlights the passivity of Badriyya about the important decisions determining her future. Aḥlām asks her: Are you going to accept him Badriyya? Her answer is: It is up to my father, if he accepts I will accept.⁽⁴⁸⁹⁾

- 2- After the rejection of her marriage proposal, Badriyya's feelings have completely changed and this attitude appears on her face. The narrator describes Badriyya's situation after she emerges from her father's office when she tells us: 'But changed in only half an hour... she appears that she grew up at least ten years... the pallor and disorder appeared on her... the shine of her eyes and hope disappeared... my father destroyed her'.⁽⁴⁹⁰⁾

Here, the novelist attempts to convey the effects of the father's power over his daughter by presenting two different pictures of Badriyya. Hence, the reader can observe the character's external appearance, but at the same time she is described as having changed, emotionally. In spite of the fact that her father has broken her heart Badriyya is still reluctant to resolve her situation even though Aḥlām attempts to convince her to go back to discuss the decision with him.

Thirdly, the novelist depicts violence as one of the ways that fathers and husbands use to impose restrictions on daughters and wives. Both the father and the husband think that they can use violence as a way of 'educating' women. The author refers to this as a dangerous behaviour that threatens women and abuses their dignity as they move from childhood to adulthood. For example, the protagonist describes her father's violence when their neighbour tried to rape her when she was a child. Even though the attempted rape failed, Aḥlām cried

⁽⁴⁸⁷⁾See: *ibid.* p. 46.

⁽⁴⁸⁸⁾See: *ibid.* p. 46.

⁽⁴⁸⁹⁾See: *ibid.* p. 46.

⁽⁴⁹⁰⁾See: *ibid.* p. 47

and told her father about it. Instead of understanding her situation, he slapped her on her cheek, and this was followed by many more blows.⁽⁴⁹¹⁾ The novelist points out that the result of his lack of compassion especially for his child is that it tends to strike a chord in her heart which cannot be erased and indeed contributes to a deep rooted fear which lasts for the rest of her life.⁽⁴⁹²⁾ The impact of this violence affects all Aḥlām's decisions. For example, when heavy rain closes the school for the day, she misses a lift back home because the driver has already left, which leaves her stranded until the usual home time at the end of the day. However, one of the teachers and her husband offered to take her and her colleague to Riyadh; and her colleague agrees immediately. However, Aḥlām faces a dilemma because, remembering her father's violence, she is unable to make a decision which would resolve her problem. As a direct result of the fear generated by the childhood incident she remembers, she prefers to stay at school and brave the rain until the driver returns.⁽⁴⁹³⁾

This characteristic crops up again in other parts of the novel. For example, when the father marries a second wife, his first wife packs a bag to leave the house. Her husband meets her at the front door and asks her to calm down and take her bag inside but she shouts and he slaps her so harshly that she has to be hospitalised.⁽⁴⁹⁴⁾ The novelist continues to portray men beating women and the psychological effects when she tells the story of her sister Nadā. At this point in the novel, the father hears her screaming and after failing to persuade her to calm down, he resorts to violence in order to silence her by repeatedly slapping and kicking her. The long term effects of such violence may be observed in the novel after Nadā is diagnosed as suffering from schizophrenia.⁽⁴⁹⁵⁾

It is worth mentioning here that because she scatters many seemingly irrelevant events in order to stress her point of view, the novelist may have weakened the plot of the novel, as it suggests that perhaps she did not plan these events in any great detail. The reader notices certain artistic errors such as explanations and partial events, which tend to stop the development of the action at the expense of the novel's artistic value. This is seen when she shows the father's power during seemingly irrelevant events that are crammed into the novel.

⁽⁴⁹¹⁾ See: *ibid.* p. 14.

⁽⁴⁹²⁾ See: *ibid.* p. 14.

⁽⁴⁹³⁾ See: *ibid.* p. 32.

⁽⁴⁹⁴⁾ See: *ibid.* p. 16.

⁽⁴⁹⁵⁾ See: *ibid.* p. 23.

For example, in the story of Badriyya and her son, the problem of the protagonist's mother; Nadā's madness; the story of her brother and his son who had cancer. One of the most obvious examples of an irrelevant event is the story of the father's second wife, where the novelist devotes a whole chapter to relating the problems between them.⁽⁴⁹⁶⁾

Fourthly, the novelist emphasises that women suffer from neglect after marriage because the family does not protect them from their husbands, and this has the effect of perpetuating the problems caused by a husband's violence. The system of violence imposed on women, which has been passed down from father to son, is regarded as tradition, and accepted in the society the novel describes. This is clear when Badriyya returns to her family's house to request a divorce because her husband is a drunkard, and has beaten her so violently and regularly that his brutality causes a miscarriage. Although most of her brothers and sisters supported her in her divorce petition, emphasising that it is her right, her father asserts that:

We do not have divorced women in our family and it will not be. You are going to live with your husband and you will tolerate all of the difficulties, then you will die with him because my daughters whom I give in marriage never come back to my house... so get up and go to your husband.⁽⁴⁹⁷⁾

The novelist stresses her second point, with reference to the restrictions that men impose on women, in the notion of *absolute surrender* to the father's power in order to make the point that he represents the patriarchal system in Saudi society. The novelist exposes this problem to show that women are never going to be able to assert their rights if this kind of culture persists. Hence, she prepares the reader to consider and accept the solution that she suggests is the crucial and final solution. In every event outlined in the novel, whether it is central to or a part of the action, the novelist emphasises that when a woman comes into conflict with a man she will always have to give in and will not dare to demand her rights. This is apparent in the portrayals of all the female characters that are under their fathers' control, and can also be seen clearly in the characterisation of the mother whose reaction to any view is always the same:

“There is no power and strength but in Allāh ”.

⁽⁴⁹⁶⁾See: *ibid.* p. 57.

⁽⁴⁹⁷⁾See: *ibid.* p. 13.

This sentence demonstrates the kind of fatalism described in many literary works whenever oppressed characters attempt to justify the reasons why they have to adapt to reality and how they see their fatalism as a measure of their satisfaction and proof of the acceptance of their destiny.⁽⁴⁹⁸⁾ This sentence is repeated by the character who suffers from her father's power, as can be seen in the episode when the father beats Nadā on her feet and hands. He stops beating after she utters the sentence, and his response is:

The same as her mother's disease... Oh my God! She inherited this disease from her mother.⁽⁴⁹⁹⁾

Here, the father delivers the message that the novelist wants to share with the women that exist in and identify with, this kind of society, where as far as men are concerned, women's silence is regarded as a disease. Because his first wife was silent, he finds another woman and marries her and when his daughter is silent he describes her compliance as a disease. When she wants to marry, Badriyya's fate depends on her father's acceptance, but she has to surrender absolutely when he objects to the marriage. This is made clear when she says: It is up to my father! If he accepts I will accept.

The protagonist also appears to surrender when she recounts the story of her marriage and her sexual relationship at the beginning of her marriage. The narrator describes her absolute surrender in the words: I walk to an end which I have not chosen and to a life which I did not want.⁽⁵⁰⁰⁾ The novelist wants to demonstrate women's lack of freedom when she explains how the protagonist married the old man; and communicates this idea through her monologue about the loss of her freedom: I came to him unwillingly, humiliated and subordinate to do what he wants to me... I did not refuse anything and I did not argue...⁽⁵⁰¹⁾

As the novelist introduces the meaning of women's surrender, she also employs symbolism to stress the effects of submission. Al-Ḥassūn argues that,

The fact that Aḥlām was born in a psychiatric clinic where her mother, a schizophrenic, was undergoing treatment, does not help the reader much. It is not clear whether the novelist wishes this to explain Aḥlām's thirst for love and warmth as the result of having been emotionally deprived as a baby and semi-

⁽⁴⁹⁸⁾See: al-Ḍāmin, p 256.

⁽⁴⁹⁹⁾See: al-ʿUlayyān, p. 23.

⁽⁵⁰⁰⁾See: ibid. p. 175.

⁽⁵⁰¹⁾See: ibid. p. 181.

orphan, or whether she wishes to show her as also suffering some split-personality traits.⁽⁵⁰²⁾

However, the author's choice of schizophrenia as the disease that the protagonist's mother suffers carries a symbolic signification intended to convey the character's inner conflicts concerning her desire to change and her struggle with her duty to submit to a man's power.⁽⁵⁰³⁾ The reader will notice the symbolic employment of the place of setting as it appears, therefore, that the novelist wants through symbolism to assert that the protagonist was born into this situation and grew up with a specific problem that affects not only her status, but the status of all women in her society.

3.1.3. Steps to a Solution

After the reference to the restrictions imposed upon women and the taciturn acceptance of absolute surrender, the novelist introduces her thoughts about the possible solution to these problems. She highlights the need for women to try to achieve freedom through the portrayal of her protagonist's miserable life and through the picture of her sisters who are not able to gain their rights. At the beginning, Aḥlām's role was to be an observer and analyst of the interplay between the mother and her sisters. But, through her analysis of the situation, the need for freedom is clarified. Furthermore, details of ways in which women might strive for freedom are shown through the events of the novel where three important stages can be clearly identified:

Firstly, the narrator calls for others to join the revolution in order to gain their freedom and this stage occurs at a time when the protagonist thinks only about others' problems but she does not have any personal goals to fight for, herself. However, women do not respond in a positive way to this call for them to rally, and to fight for their rights, because every woman has been brought up to avoid challenging men and patriarchal power. The reason for this negative response to the call, as shown through the events of the novel, is that women in this particular society do not have the strength to fight men nor do they have a forum where they can discuss their decisions. The novelist is keen to stress this point through the events of the novel by demonstrating women's failure to contest a decision that has already been made.

⁽⁵⁰²⁾ Alhasoun, p 226.

⁽⁵⁰³⁾ See: al-Dāmin, p 256.

This can be seen for example, at the point where the narrator strongly recommends that her sister Su^cād requests her freedom from her husband by obtaining a divorce after he marries another woman. She assures her that if she achieves this, she can then become free and marry someone who loves and respects her.⁽⁵⁰⁴⁾ Su^cād's response is disappointing as, accepting her fate, she says to Aḥlām:

- Where can I go after divorce?! Your father will expel me of course... and my husband will not leave me in his house even one minute... Su^cād said
- No! No Su^cād! This is not life, which you live in. This is a slow death. You must revolt and ask for divorce...
- Aḥlām... please! Let me go in peace.⁽⁵⁰⁵⁾

This can also be seen in her sister Badriyya's attitude when she wants to marry her old husband's brother, which her father rejected:

- Are you going to acquiesce to him?! Aḥlām asks

Also adding:

- If you want my opinion, you have to resist and fight to the end... this is your right.⁽⁵⁰⁶⁾

Through these two scenes the narrator attempts to show that at the beginning she sought freedom calling for a peaceful revolution that could have changed the status of her sisters who represent all the women in her society. However, the women's reaction to her peaceful, non-violent call is disappointing because they do not have enough confidence in themselves to take a stand against men in the patriarchal society in which they live. When one of her sisters mentions peace the word indicates that any action they might take to fight the men would be futile as it is a battle that women can never win. The other sister describes her concern for her children and the quality of their lives when she emphasises that all she wants is a good life for her them.⁽⁵⁰⁷⁾ This may be true of course and it is a natural enough hope for one's children, but it also indicates that she lives in a state of panic and fear about what will happen next, especially if she is disobedient. This is obvious because she links a good life for her children with obeying her father's decisions.

In addition, the novelist shows that the protagonist discusses the matter of Badriyya's marriage with her father when he suddenly returns while she is actually trying to convince

⁽⁵⁰⁴⁾See: al-^cUlayyān. p. 116.

⁽⁵⁰⁵⁾See: *ibid.* p. 116.

⁽⁵⁰⁶⁾See: *ibid.* p. 48.

⁽⁵⁰⁷⁾See: *ibid.* p. 48.

her to return to her father and persuade him to reconsider this matter again. When he hears Aḥlām saying, “I will discuss this with him”, the father asks Aḥlām in a loud voice “what matter are you going to discuss with me Aḥlām?” Here, it seems that the author wants to emphasise his injustice as well as the issue of whether Badriyya has the right to marry again. The conversation ends dramatically when the father slaps her with two heavy blows and she falls to the ground, unable to speak, to scream or even to cry.⁽⁵⁰⁸⁾ In this way, the novelist suggests that the notion that a woman has the right to discuss her freedom with a man is unthinkable. The action is also symbolic of the way in which patriarchal culture silences not only this woman, but all women who dare to speak up for their rights, and the consequences of such disobedience is extreme violence since women must be punished for disobeying the law of the father.

Secondly, the next stage is a development of the first at the point where conflict arises between the protagonist and her father after he refuses to allow Saʿd to be his daughter’s new husband and instead gives her in marriage to an old man. The reader receives the narrator’s reaction via an inner monologue:

My father! I can refuse your unfair selection and I can revolt against all your decisions. I can escape or commit suicide to prevent you from taking over my life. But no!! Something inside me prevents me from doing that... maybe it is an interior desire for revenge.⁽⁵⁰⁹⁾

The idea that rebellion is the only solution to issues of injustice might be considered as an important step in the process of achieving justice and restoring women’s dignity; and because the narrator has insisted upon rebellion against patriarchal systems from the very beginning of the novel, the notion becomes the writer’s central focus. However, this idea also represents a noticeable change in the consciousness of the protagonist, because although at first she does not take any action she calls on others to fight for freedom and starts to think about standing up to men herself. At this stage she either thinks about peaceful revolution or when she thinks about violence, she recognises that any action must be hers. This attitude is evident in the protagonist’s choice of language, that is, in words such as ‘refuse’, ‘escape’, ‘revolt’, ‘suicide’ and ‘revenge,’ words that presage the emergence of a new kind of consciousness

⁽⁵⁰⁸⁾See: *ibid.* p. 49.

⁽⁵⁰⁹⁾See: *ibid.* p. 144.

and that this will involve women in the kind of rebellion that could indeed turn out to be physical.

The monologue is the technical means by which the novelist shows the shift in the protagonist's feelings and the emotional stages the protagonist experiences; that is, from thinking in general terms about the novel's main issue to thinking about the serious business of finding solutions. This shift is apparent when Aḥlām is in her class meditating on her problem:

...an ugly decline in my humanity, my dignity and my femininity, which leads me to death. It must be an action, it must be a rebellion, it must be liberation or I will end while I am bent and humiliated without principle or identity.⁽⁵¹⁰⁾

This kind of thinking constitutes a significant shift from a calm outlook to a violent one and it prepares the reader for the novelist's ultimate solution. The reference to her humanity, dignity and femininity is to justify the violent action she will take in her next step and it shows despair, having tried all the possible ways to solve her problem. Ultimately, the final solution is violence which she thinks is necessary because she believes that society does not value women's humanity, dignity and femininity.

Thirdly, when the protagonist kills the husband chosen by her father, the murder symbolises the destruction of the father's power and moves her closer to freedom. When her husband flirts with her, she pushes him away and says NO! Then he screams: "Are you crazy? Woman!" Then he tries again and she pushes him away again, this time with more force and hatred. The narrator continues to describe this scene:

He beat me and kicked me while my anger increased... until I forgot myself and the giant inside me got out and announced the end of the silent period... I pushed him with both hands... his madness increased when he saw my rebellion and my boldness... but I did not waiver. Then I picked up his thick stick which was lying on the floor and I brought it down on his empty head then I broke it in one strike... then he fell next to me and died.⁽⁵¹¹⁾

It is necessary to understand why the story ends with this tragic action. It represents a move towards the end of women's silence, expresses the need to break the cycle of fear, and puts an

⁽⁵¹⁰⁾See: *ibid.* p. 184.

⁽⁵¹¹⁾See: *ibid.* p. 195.

end to women's suffering within society by giving them freedom and a voice of their own. In short, dramatic changes need dramatic solutions. The violent killing of the husband not only dispatches the evil character in the novel but can also be seen as symbolic of the destruction of the patriarchal society, a system that is represented in the novel by the head of the family, the protagonist's father. It could be said that the novelist commits an artistic error in the over-explanation of the symbolic importance of the destruction of the father and hence the whole patriarchal system. It may have been more effective if she had trusted the integrity of the readers to deduce this meaning for themselves, but nevertheless the novelist clearly interprets her symbol when the narrator says: 'I killed him and I killed the evil and the selfishness and greed with him and I killed my father inside him'.⁽⁵¹²⁾ She also continues to emphasise this meaning in the conversation between her and her father when she says: 'What I have done is that I have broken my shackles and become free again! Do you understand, father?'⁽⁵¹³⁾

It seems that the novelist is not sure that the reader will understand the meaning in the death of the husband as she insists on interpreting it many times. For example, she repeats the symbolic meaning for the reader when her father asked her: 'Why did you do that? Aḥlām!' And her answer is: 'I did not kill my husband, I killed you Father!'.⁽⁵¹⁴⁾

In addition, the novelist attempts to show how the protagonist's violent action changes the patriarchal system by describing the character that represents this system as a very strong dictator, who becomes very weak in the end. His countenance changes to show a broken man whose tears, face and situation are described by the narrator as real tears on her father's face... tears that come from deep inside him, and drop on a pale face...⁽⁵¹⁵⁾

3.1.4. The value of the novel

It seems that this novel refers to a very important stage in the development of the women's novel in terms of a change in Saudi women novelists' consciousness and the stance that they take about their past problems.

⁽⁵¹²⁾ See: *ibid.* p. 197.

⁽⁵¹³⁾ See: *ibid.* p. 203.

⁽⁵¹⁴⁾ See: *ibid.* p. 203.

⁽⁵¹⁵⁾ See: *ibid.* p. 203.

Through its analysis of a social system which is based on men's dominance and which results in the oppression of women in order to prevent them from obtaining their rights or even having a voice in society, a new and emerging awareness has appeared in this novel. This novel speaks for women that were tyrannised by a society that gives men the power they hold over them. In this literary work, the novelist explores the issues of women's oppression through the appropriate of the melodrama. The search for female freedom within the theme of the problem of society's power can be said to be one of the most important issues explored in the history of Saudi women's novels, and indeed it could be argued that the women's novel had reached maturity in its examination of the serious and crucial solutions to the problem that the novelist wanted to explore in this work.

As a focus on theme is one of the most important things that Elaine Showalter suggests is crucial to the study of women's literature, this analysis refers to some important changes in Saudi Arabian women's writings in the fictional field. In terms of courage, the reader can detect two important innovations; firstly, the novelist's courage when she suggests solutions aimed at destroying the restrictions placed on women by a society that has put women under men's absolute control. Secondly, the novelist is courageous enough to describe the secret of sexual relationships; and even though there are few examples of this in the novel, her courage in this issue can be considered to be one of the changes that appeared in this stage.

On the other hand, as has been discussed previously, this novel includes many artistic errors, which could be said to have weakened the plot of the novel. There is no explanation for some of the events; and the unnecessary overworking of events in the novel has the effect of detracting from the excitement and tension that could have been built by holding some of the information back from the reader. The novel also includes many characters because the writer creates many irrelevant events, which tend to confuse the reader. Maybe the novelist should have had more faith in her readership's ability to understand the deeper meanings in the symbols found in her writing and maybe she should not have laboured the points in quite such a superficial way.

3.2. Women's Betrayal

Al-Juhanī's novel *al-Firdaws al-Yabāb* (The Waste Paradise) (1998).

3.2.1. Introduction

After the examination of the first theme treated by Saudi women's novelists in this stage, the focus will move to the second theme which concerns the various ways that Saudi female novelists express their viewpoints on the problem of women's relationships with men. As has been noted, one of the most important subjects for feminist criticism is the theme in women's writings. Laylā al-Juhanī's novel *al-Firdaws al-Yabāb* has been chosen to represent the second theme in the women's novel in the third stage. This novel sheds light on betrayal as a dominant social problem that not only threatens relationships between the sexes but also society itself.

Laylā al-Juhanī is a well-known novelist in Saudi Arabia. She was born in Tabūk, in northern Saudi Arabia, in 1969 and was awarded her BA in English Literature at King ʿAbd al-ʿAzīz University in Jeddah and an MA in teaching aids in 2000 at the Education College in al-Madīna followed by a PhD in 2009. She won al-Shāriqa's award for her novel *The Waste Paradise* in 1998. She has also published another novel, entitled *Jāhiliya*.

The reason for choosing this novel to represent the problem of the relationships between men and women is divided into two parts. The first part concerns the novel's artistic value as it is considered by some critics to be a very important turning-point in the Saudi women's novel's journey.⁽⁵¹⁶⁾ The second part is related to the theme of the novel which has been widely discussed by Saudi female novelists and this section argues that this is one of the best examples of novels that tackled this problem in this stage.

3.2.2. The theme of the novel

The events of the novel centre on the situation that the protagonist (Ṣabā) faces because her lover betrays her. She becomes pregnant after he promised marriage but when she tells him about her pregnancy, he refuses to marry her and decides to marry her friend Khālida instead.

⁽⁵¹⁶⁾ See: al-Rifāʿī, p. 49.

Therefore, she decides to abort and then commits suicide in a bid to end her sufferings. Before she kills herself, she informs her friend, and this forms the first four chapters of the novel. The next two chapters are written by her friend Khālida explaining her attitude to her friend Ṣabā's story, her own actions and her point of view.

The central focus of this novel is on a man who plays the role of lover to a woman only for his sexual enjoyment, and once he has had his pleasure, escapes to play the same role with another victim. The novel shows that in a practical sense, society itself motivates men to play this role by putting the responsibility for sexual relationships on women and not expecting men to share the guilt when things go wrong. The result is that in practice, society authorises betrayal, lies and disloyalty in the relationship between the sexes because it punishes women and excuses men. Even though this novel tackles the problem of the formulation of relationships between men and women in society, it puts society's power at the root of the matter. In the light of this kind of social practice, the novel is structured to address the issue, by tackling the problem of the betrayal of women in a wider sense, that is, the betrayal of women by society. The issue of women's betrayal in this novel is tackled in two important ways:

3.2.3. Women Betrayed by Society

The events of the novel, show that the novelist's message is that the social system is greatly responsible for the betrayal of women because it does not fulfil its duty to protect them. The novelist does this by pointing to certain social practices that let women down by failing to consider them as active members of society. This can be gleaned when the protagonist expresses her suffering in a particular way while contemplating her problems and this sentence comes from deep within as she remembers her conversation with Khālida:

- Is it not torment to be a woman?!!⁽⁵¹⁷⁾

The entire novel can be read as an answer to this central question as it focuses on women's position in society. The first example of society's betrayal of women is that it justifies men's sexual behaviour before marriage and views women's sexuality as a fault. The reader sees the

⁽⁵¹⁷⁾ Al-Juhanī, Laylā. *Al-Firdaūs al-Yabāb*. (Cologne: Al-Jamal Press, 1999), p.8.

reference to the collective conscience in society since it is generally understood that “if a woman falls in love before marriage, she will be accused of having more than one lover”.

The justification for men’s affairs appears in the novel in two forms:

Firstly, it appears in mimesis, which means that the theme is shown through the events of the novel:⁽⁵¹⁸⁾ ‘In this case, the narrative almost literally shows what was said in the reality evoked by the text’⁽⁵¹⁹⁾ For example, when the protagonist comes to °Āmir to tell him that she is pregnant he ridicules her, saying:

Nobody has forced you, and if you mean love, love is gone, lost, faded... if you mean the embryo, cheat another one or go and look for his father.⁽⁵²⁰⁾

This scene typifies society’s attitude because this kind of response is a major problem that women face when they become involved in forbidden relationships in a society that allows men to avoid the responsibility for their actions. In addition, this scene explores the issue when °Āmir pushes her and says:

If you can, go and say you are pregnant by me Ṣabā! I dare you. Do you hear me?! I dare you Ṣabā! Understood, woman?! Oh wise woman... love is rubbish, but that’s what you wanted. I told you before; nobody forced you.⁽⁵²¹⁾

This scene carries the novelist’s view that men are convinced that in this kind of situation there are no steps women can take to secure their rights. The reason for this is that society maximises women’s responsibilities but expects nothing of men. The protagonist lives alone and does not tell anyone about her problem, even her close friend Khālida.

Secondly, society’s justification for the way men behave also appears in the diegesis when the narrator’s voice is heard⁽⁵²²⁾ and in this case, the problem is clear because it is carefully articulated,⁽⁵²³⁾ for example, when the protagonist talks about her driver, Ḥasan’s, dreams, which advise him to return to his country and marry there. The main reason for the creation

⁽⁵¹⁸⁾ See: Baldick. p.66.

⁽⁵¹⁹⁾ Herman, Luc and Vervaeck, Bart, *Handbook of Narrative Analysis*. (Nebraska: Board of Regents of the University of Nebraska, 2005), p.14.

⁽⁵²⁰⁾ See: Al-Juhanī. p.6.

⁽⁵²¹⁾ See: *ibid.* p.7.

⁽⁵²²⁾ See: Herman and Vervaeck. p. 14.

⁽⁵²³⁾ See: Baldick. p. 66.

of this character is to present society's negative principles and to highlight them for the reader. Sarcastically, Ṣabā suggests that Ḥasan ascertains whether his future wife is a virgin before marrying her, because society would expect him to take this precaution.

Check the woman that you want to marry: maybe she has fallen in love and played⁽⁵²⁴⁾ too. Precaution is necessary and this is your right. It is your basic right. It does not matter if you play. But it does matter if she plays... It is a big matter.⁽⁵²⁵⁾

Khālida knows this, and after she learns that her friend Ṣabā has committed suicide, she criticises the social system's position on these issues, emphasising that society looks at things differently according to who the subject is. She blames society for the death of Ṣabā when she analyses her suicide:

A woman can choose a womaniser. If a woman suddenly discovers that her husband is a womaniser, she will tolerate it. However, men rarely marry promiscuous women ... any woman who gives herself without marriage is only a prostitute.⁽⁵²⁶⁾

This analysis is meant to probe the structure of a society which seems to have two different reactions to sex before marriage, based on the sex of the actor. If the actor is a man, society forgives him and he can continue to be a part of society, but if the actor is a woman, society will reject her and she will be regarded as a prostitute.

The stream of consciousness technique also plays an important role in clarifying society's attitude about a woman who is involved in a sexual relationship before marriage. It is clear, when the idea dominates the protagonist's thoughts, that it has the effect of restricting her from doing anything to resolve her problem. When she hallucinates she thinks that she meets her friend Khālida and has a conversation with her. Her hallucination has reference to collective consciousness, as it is 'the totality of beliefs and sentiments common to average members of society from a definite system'.⁽⁵²⁷⁾ Because she knows what society thinks about women involved in this problem, the narrator shows her fear of her friend's reaction should she hear the story from °Āmir and she imagines that her friend will believe him.

⁽⁵²⁴⁾ She uses the word "play" to mean having sex. This is an Egyptian expression because the driver is from Egypt.

⁽⁵²⁵⁾ See: al-Juhānī. P.55.

⁽⁵²⁶⁾ See: *ibid.* p.70.

⁽⁵²⁷⁾ Mitchell, G. Duncan. *A Dictionary of Sociology*. (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1968), p.32

- What do you mean? Khālida! Tell me, what did this cock say? Ṣabā asked
- He said a lot. He said that he is not the only man in your life.
- (...)
- And he said the baby in your womb is not his alone, but that three others have ejaculated their semen into your womb.⁽⁵²⁸⁾

The consequences of society's insistence on holding women responsible for everything sexual is conveyed through the monologue when she quietly meditating; she thinks about modern science, and how it has not yet invented anything to remove bad memories from the brain. Then she imagines that she enters what she calls the locked box (the brain) and finds faces, houses, streets, names, books ... and a single rose, which captures her attention, and she focuses on it. It seems that the rose is a symbol to the protagonist and the words are a symbol of society's accusations and her reaction to them. The novelist wants to emphasise the strength of the words (accusations) and their effect on Ṣabā. The rose stands alone among the details of the memory when she asks:

- How does the rose resist the falsity of the words?⁽⁵²⁹⁾

The narrator tries not to lose the rose, although it cannot reveal its secrets, but when she loses the rose and looks deeper into the brain, she hallucinates. The unknown faces from society shout fourteen sentences, at her. These words are examples of what she calls the artificiality of words, since they represent charges without evidence:

- Prostitute! Prostitute! How do you dare to stand in front of me now?
- Exile her from Jeddah.
- The curses of Allāh be upon her. She insists on her sin: stone her.⁽⁵³⁰⁾

The large number of sequential sentences that focus on the protagonist's faults represent society in these situations together with the pressure society places on Ṣabā (the woman), whereas °Āmir (the man) celebrates his engagement. The sentences convey the writer's point of view on how social systems control women's minds and reactions when they are faced with social issues. The novelist shows that the social system restrains the woman and forces her to admit her fault, defend herself or at least explain her sufferings.

The second aspect of social betrayal is society's *rejection of a woman even though she feels guilty and admits that she has made a mistake*. Society's neglect creates an obstacle which isolates women from society in these situations and this is clearly seen at the end of the

⁽⁵²⁸⁾ See: Al-Juhanī. p.48.

⁽⁵²⁹⁾ See: Ibid. p.45.

⁽⁵³⁰⁾ See: Ibid. p.46.

protagonist's story when she commits suicide because she believes that her problem cannot be resolved after her attempts to get °Amir to cover her scandal. The protagonist feels regret when she apologises to her unborn child which clearly signals her understanding of her fault:

I did not choose the right time for you. I followed the mess of love. And after this mess, the ruin always comes. In another word, death. And you, what a sadness, you must die.⁽⁵³¹⁾

This sentence indicates that the victim knows exactly what her mistake was, but she cannot admit it because her society is unforgiving. Therefore, even though she is honest and shows that she wants to rejoin society in any way possible her repentance would be rejected. The novelist attempts to make society aware of its mistake when it does not give honest women a second chance, even when they are valuable members of society and she examines the protagonist's thoughts concerning her actions when she says:

°Amir was an adventure and its consequences were inconsiderable. Its consequences are inevitably severe. Nothing changes. Everything was clear from the beginning.⁽⁵³²⁾

From this, the reader realises that the protagonist wants to make amends, and she utilises various techniques to convey the idea throughout the novel. One such technique is that the protagonist contrasts herself with her city Jeddah. Her employment of the city refers to an element of the modern novel where it shows the cities more perfect than the real cities through the struggle of the characters with themselves or with others.⁽⁵³³⁾ This is clear when the protagonist reveals her inner thoughts, using the city of Jeddah:

Jeddah is a woman, like me, but she is smarter than me. She does not hand her keys to others. Her lovers are many and each one thinks that he knows her, but actually he only knows one face.⁽⁵³⁴⁾

The use of spatial dimension refers to al-Juhani's mastery of her artistic tools, where the space of Jeddah is employed as one of the main characters in the novel.⁽⁵³⁵⁾ Jeddah appears in this novel to inspire different meanings, not all of which refer to the real city.⁽⁵³⁶⁾ Jeddah in

⁽⁵³¹⁾ See: Ibid. p.13.

⁽⁵³²⁾ See: Ibid. p.8.

⁽⁵³³⁾ See: Ṣaydāwī, Rafif, *al-Riwāya Bayn al-Waqi' wa'l-Takhiyīl*, (Beirut: Dār al-Fārābī, 2008), pp 153-154.

⁽⁵³⁴⁾ See: al-Juhani, p 23.

⁽⁵³⁵⁾ See: Sulaymān. p.101

⁽⁵³⁶⁾ See: Jarīdī. p. 121.

this novel is personified⁽⁵³⁷⁾ as a thinking and acting human being. In a deeper use, Jeddah is also employed as a symbol by the narrator herself when she says:

It is another unknown continent. Nobody has discovered it except a cock which pecks at her heart, then the water leaks and the sands, the coconut trees, the green ivy, the gulls, the books, the papers and people disappear.⁽⁵³⁸⁾

Since the picture of Jeddah, in its universal form, appears in this novel with a sad face in the same way that the protagonist appears in the novel, the novelist also colours the small details of the place with the feelings of the protagonist.⁽⁵³⁹⁾

Through this novel the author attempts to highlight the consequences of neglecting women that have made a mistake and she describes the type of behaviour that can save women from this kind of immoral action. She makes clear reference to the fact that when they err, society gives women two choices: to commit suicide, as the protagonist does, or, according to the narrator, as the smart girl does, to carry on, in spite of the consequences. By mentioning the smart girl, the novelist wants to emphasise that putting pressure on women in this way does not resolve the problem; rather, it makes it complicated and worsens the situation:

The smart girl is the one who plays a little! She plays far from the dangerous point. There are three kinds of play: a little play with clothes, play in between, half-clothed, and heavy play without clothes, like what I have played before.⁽⁵⁴⁰⁾

Through her treatment of the problem, the novelist reveals the negative consequences of society's betrayal:

The patriarchal system in society creates injustice as one of the consequences of betraying women, which can be seen in the result of the conflict between °Āmir and Şabā. Even though the protagonist admits that she is guilty, the lack of justice is described in the way a woman

⁽⁵³⁷⁾ For the definition of the literary term "personification", see Baldick, p.190.

⁽⁵³⁸⁾ Al-Juhanī. p.28.

⁽⁵³⁹⁾ See: al-Ḥāzmī, Ḥasan, *al-Binā' al-Fannī fī al-Riyāya al-Su'ūdīyya: Dirāsa Naqdiyya Taḥbīqīyya*, (Riyadh: Maṭābi' al-Ḥumaydī, 2006), p 377.

⁽⁵⁴⁰⁾ See: al-Juhanī, p 55. The novelist here refers to the sexual relationships between sexes. The meaning of the dangerous point in her account is the reference to the hymen. So she wants to say that the smart girl is the one who can have sex with men before marriage without breaking her virginity.

bears the consequences of her mistake and 'Amir's.⁽⁵⁴¹⁾ Although the man lies when he denies that he is the father of the unborn child, he marries and appears to be happy and safe from society's punishment, whereas the victim, unable to resolve her problem, turns to suicide. The sad and confused woman does not know where to turn when her lover lets her down and because there is no justice in society she knows that she will not be forgiven.

In addition, the novelist stresses the negative effects this problem has on the relationships between men and women in society and the enmity it creates between them. Instead of love, trust, understanding and loyalty, the relationship becomes cold because of the lack of love and it transforms into doubt and disrespect. This idea can be seen in Khālida's analysis of her friend's death, which demonstrates the depth of the novelist's language. When Khālida analyses her friend's suicide, it seems that she does not believe in love between man and woman. She attempts to interpret her friend's story by emphasising that love does not mean death and if the end of a love story is death then it is a disease in the heart. Khālida talks to Ṣabā after her death:

Since it caused your death, this is not love. It is just a worm that ate your heart away and taught you how to give up.⁽⁵⁴²⁾

It is clear that Khālida, who is introduced as a wise woman, does not believe in love in this society, which clearly suggests that the cold relationship between the sexes is because of the social system. Also, Khālida indicates the cold relationship between the fiancée and her fiancé when she mentions that she has doubts about him and she knows that he does not love her. In her mind, man is a dictator who judges according to his desires, rather than justice, and society supports him in this. The novelist wants to stress that the smart woman who wishes to survive in this type of society must know how man thinks, even if she knows that there is no place for love in his heart.⁽⁵⁴³⁾ The novelist emphasises that as the patriarchal system destroys the potentially beautiful relationship between man and women, it also destroys love in women's hearts and hence destroys love in society. When Khālida knows that her friend Ṣabā committed suicide, she expresses her attitude towards this by saying: '...

⁽⁵⁴¹⁾ See: Kashgharī, Amīra, "Qirā'ah fī Riwāya: Al-Firdaws al-Yabāb", in al-Nu'ami, Ḥasan, *Khīṭāb al-Sard fī al-Riwāya al-Nisā'iyya al-Su'ūdīyya*, (Jeddah: al-Nādī al-Adabī al-Thaqāfī, 2006), p 463.

⁽⁵⁴²⁾ Al-Juhanī. p.69.

⁽⁵⁴³⁾ See: *ibid.* p.69.

I will also denounce love, which leads us only to death. Love!! which has the germ of its death and our death'.⁽⁵⁴⁴⁾

Şabā comes to this conclusion when she imagines her driver declaring that he loves her. Her response reveals the way she values the concept of love in her heart, which takes the reader to the root of the novelist's point of view about love:

Do you love me?! Is there anything called love?! God disappoints you. You are looking at me now!! So open your eyes well and see the end of love. Love is rubbish.

These strong words express the narrator's feelings; she knows this experience and feels that there is no love in this kind of society. The novelist also supports her point of view through Khālida's remarks on this situation.

3.2.3.1. Women Betrayed by Men.

As mentioned above al-Juhanī's novel addresses the problem of women betrayed through a criticism of the social system. According to the novelist, men behave badly because society allows them to, and they derive their power from this system, whether it is direct, such as through education, or indirect, such as in social practices. The novelist refers to the problem women commonly face when they start relationships with men. The effects of this can be seen in two important ways:

Firstly, the novel portrays the emotional abuse or emotional manipulation. This problem is one of the most clearly defined matters in women's novels: women are suffering from relationships with men and are presented as emotional victims. Al-Juhanī tackles this issue by introducing ʿĀmir as a traitor who manipulates Şabā's emotions in order to fulfil his sexual enjoyment. When ʿĀmir's desires have been met, he rejects this relationship, using the fact that Şabā (the woman) cannot speak up and claim her rights.

The novelist chooses the first-person narrator to highlight this issue when the novel starts with Khālida's engagement party. She employs a stream of consciousness technique to describe the protagonist's struggle because if she tells her best friend to refuse him, she faces

⁽⁵⁴⁴⁾ See: *ibid.* p.69.

scandal.⁽⁵⁴⁵⁾ Male betrayal appears in its ugly form when the novelist uses the flashback technique in different parts of the novel to show the contrast between °Āmir before and after leaving Ṣabā. The narrator's memory flows, via the monologue, and recalls some events in her love affair with °Āmir when she sees his arm encircling her friend's arm like a snake.⁽⁵⁴⁶⁾ She also uses flashback when she mentions how he dismissed her after she told him about her pregnancy in order to show men's betrayal using their power in the society: Nobody has forced it on you, and if you mean love, love is gone, lost, faded... if you mean the embryo, cheat another one or go and look for his father.⁽⁵⁴⁷⁾

In Chapter Four, the narrator also goes back to her relationship with °Āmir when she describes the night that he enjoys her. By using this technique she aims to highlight the picture of a man of bad character, and the worst characteristic is his tendency to betrayal. The portrayal therefore uncovers the issue that she wants to address, which is that the man uses emotional manipulation to reach his immoral goal. The narrator gathers six examples from °Āmir's description of her love affair to express how far this relationship went:

- I love you.
- My god! How beautiful the woman I love!! Even the flowers grow on her shoulders and her forearms.
- Come here. Let me touch your forehead. You are now more beautiful than before.
- How beautiful the smell of the woman that I love! God bless her.
- Ṣabā, Ṣabā, I swear I love you.⁽⁵⁴⁸⁾

However, as the novelist wants to show, this kind of flattery is the instrument he uses to reach his goal, although Ṣabā thinks that he is honest. The novelist describes the woman, Ṣabā's naivety since she trusts the man °Āmir and gives him her body, unsuspecting that he is a traitor. Through the stream of consciousness technique, the narrator talks to Khāliḍa, describing how his emotions change:

... I did not know any man except the one who looked at me, when he stood next to you, with unlimited aversion after he embraced my body by unlimited love, or at least this was what I supposed.⁽⁵⁴⁹⁾

⁽⁵⁴⁵⁾ See: *ibid*, p 5.

⁽⁵⁴⁶⁾ See: *ibid*, p 5.

⁽⁵⁴⁷⁾ See: *ibid*, p 6.

⁽⁵⁴⁸⁾ See: *ibid*, pp 31-32.

⁽⁵⁴⁹⁾ See: *ibid*. p.8.

This refers to the conflict in his emotions, which led to the narrator's suffering: as she calls it, the "Hell of Contradiction".⁽⁵⁵⁰⁾ She tortures herself when she faces this major disappointment:

Everything contradicts everything; dreams with the reality, principles with conduct, the word with the act, and the worst thing is the contradiction of the present with the past.⁽⁵⁵¹⁾

Secondly, the novel shows men's distrust of women, so it presents another aspect of men's betrayal that is depicted as one of the issues considered to be an insurmountable problem for women in their relationships with men. The novelist insists that no man trusts any woman who has a love affair with a man before marriage, even if the man she loves is him. Although this idea is rooted in society's attitudes, the man who thinks it carries a large part of the responsibility for it because he knows his lover and he shows his love in different ways. The novelist tackles this from two different perspectives:

- 1- Society's distrust of women, which has been discussed.
- 2- Men's distrust of women.

The novelist attempts to examine the idea that the man does not trust the woman, even though she shows him her true emotions in order to assure him that she truly loves him. Instead, he uses this true love to fulfil his immediate needs and is indifferent about her fate.

Through exploring 'Āmir's characteristics in this novel, the reader can see the novelist's image of men, and one of these characteristics is man's suspicion of women. It appears first through his dealings with Ṣabā when he asks her to look elsewhere for her baby's father. The novelist succeeds in explaining the protagonist's loyalty to the reader, and the way 'Āmir returns her love with his suspicions. Al-Muhawwis declares that the aim in depicting the man in this way is to make the reader participate in 'Āmir's abhorrence and disgust.⁽⁵⁵²⁾ Distrust also appears directly, as an aspect of men's betrayal of women in Khāida's analysis of 'Āmir's personality when she states clearly that he has had previous relationships with women and that he ends them in this way:

⁽⁵⁵⁰⁾See: *ibid.* p.60.

⁽⁵⁵¹⁾See: *ibid.* p.60.

⁽⁵⁵²⁾See: Al-Muhawwis. p.120.

For °Āmir, my doubts about him were true. This is the style of his thinking, and this is the way, he finishes his outstanding matters. I watched all his previous relationships and I was sure that he would come back to me; not because he loves me but because he has never trusted anyone except me. ⁽⁵⁵³⁾

Through her analysis and Ṣabā's story, the reader can see how °Āmir betrays women, which can be examined in three ways:

- 1- °Āmir has had many relationships and he knows that they will not last and that all the women he knows will meet the same fate as Ṣabā.
- 2- The word 'love' is used in each affair, which is evidence that he uses it falsely.
- 3- He will marry Khālida even though he does not love her, and he betrays Ṣabā and others because he does not trust them.

The novelist presents this important theme perfectly because the discourse of her novel is delivered through her artistic tools. This novel reflects the great forward step that Saudi female novelists have made, whether in their awareness of the themes and the way they choose to treat them, or in the modern style of their novels. As mentioned in the analysis, al-Juhanī's awareness of her chosen theme appears through her understanding of the limitations of the problem, so that she does not hesitate to discuss publicly what is forbidden to be discussed; for example, her description of sexual intimacy. ⁽⁵⁵⁴⁾ As it has been discussed in the analysis of the first theme in this section and in relation to al-Juhanī's novel, the Saudi female novelists writing during this phase have rejected society's taboo when they describe sexual relationships. This can be seen as one of the themes that had not been seen in the two previous stages. In addition, because the novelist dared to treat this subject in this way it caused °Alī al-Dumaynī to declare that the novel is one of the local novels that gets closest to the nature of Saudi society; and furthermore it contributed to exposing Saudi's social problems, especially the ones affecting women. ⁽⁵⁵⁵⁾

The reader can also appreciate the artistic value of this novel and this highlights the development of Saudi women's writings in contrast with the previous stages. The techniques that the novelist employs, enhance the artistic value of this stage, as, for example, she structures her novel around two central narrators: the first one, Ṣabā, tells her story in the first

⁽⁵⁵³⁾ Al-Juhanī. p. 69.

⁽⁵⁵⁴⁾ Some critics value al-Juhanī's novel for its exposition of women's artistic awareness and consider this novel to be an important turning point in the development of the Saudi women's novel. See for example; al-Rifā'ī, p 49.

⁽⁵⁵⁵⁾ See: al-Dumaynī, °Alī, Laylā.. Wa al-Mawt, *al-Waṭan Newspaper*, October 1st, 2000. p 9.

four chapters. The second narrator, Khālida, describes her attitude to the problem after her friend's suicide.

As explained previously, the narrative time in the first four chapters is while Ṣabā is writing the letter to Khālida after her decision to kill herself. Therefore, she usually uses the present tense in her narrative. The narrator employs analepsis, where 'some of the events of the story are related at a point in the narrative after later story-events have already been accounted'.⁽⁵⁵⁶⁾ The first scene in the novel is from a past narrative time, when Ṣabā sees °Āmir putting the engagement ring on Khālida's finger. This scene evokes her memory of her relationship with °Āmir, so that she describes, artistically, an earlier event in her story after a later one. The artistic reason for using analepsis is its suitability for introducing the events of the novel according to the psychological situation of the narrator, and not the chronological order of the events.

However, °Izzat °Umar criticises the novel, arguing that the attendance of the first narrator, Ṣabā, and the second narrator, Khālida, remains the same in terms of language and thoughts. He believes that the stylistic aspects of the narrative do not change when the narrator changes, which is a clear artistic error in the narrative. He thinks that the aim of the second narrator is only to extend the event, so he does not see the point of creating a new narrator.⁽⁵⁵⁷⁾ Yet, the end of Ṣabā's life reveals a subtle detail that supports the novelist's call where it appears in Khālida's actions. Ṣabā's suicide causes her friend to experience a revelation and to speak up loudly for her rights and for the rights of other women. This subtle idea is conveyed through contrasting Khālida before her friend's death and after, which is clear in the two following points:

The first point; before Ṣabā's suicide, Khālida, is silent because she appears to be merely watching °Āmir doing what he wants to do.⁽⁵⁵⁸⁾ However, she raises her voice and shouts to °Āmir when she goes to his house and says, with the benefit of her revelation, "Ṣabā is dead!! I will never forgive you"; "I knew that there is something terrible deep inside you but I

⁽⁵⁵⁶⁾ Baldick. p.10.

⁽⁵⁵⁷⁾ See: Sulaymān. p.99.

⁽⁵⁵⁸⁾ See: al-Juhanī. p.69.

did not know that there is disease”; “it is not a disease ... it is an epidemic. Yes, it is an epidemic which killed Ṣabā”⁽⁵⁵⁹⁾

The second point; before Ṣabā’s suicide Khālida is passive; she knows that her fiancé is a womaniser and she also knows that he does not love her, but she agrees to marry him nonetheless.⁽⁵⁶⁰⁾ However, she changes after Ṣabā’s death and goes to his house to throw the engagement ring back in his face.⁽⁵⁶¹⁾ It is important to emphasise that the idea appeared in the previous theme which explains the creation of a new narrator and the change in the novelists’ attitudes to their society as they believe that they have to revolt if they are to get their rights. This idea appears in al-^Ulayiyān’s novel via the murder of the man who represents the patriarchal society, it also appears in al-Juhanī’s novel in the woman’s throwing the ring⁽⁵⁶²⁾ at the face of the man who represents all men in society. In Arabic culture the ring symbolises female passivity as shown in Khālida’s character before she knows about Ṣabā’s suicide. It is important to understand the culture of the writer in order to infer the novel’s symbolism and to reveal the meaning that a novelist wants to convey.⁽⁵⁶³⁾ Because she throws the ring, Khālida’s action can be seen to symbolise the change in women’s attitude to men.

It is worth noting that the narrator presents some past events using the present tense and allows the context to lead the reader to the right time. Critics emphasise that this is one of the features of ‘stream of consciousness’ novels, because the method shows that the narrator is living through these events at the moment of the narrative.⁽⁵⁶⁴⁾ This technique appears when Ṣabā narrates the details of her night of love with ^ĀAmir:

I pile the dress in front of me on the sand. Then I bring one of the candles closer to him to ignite the fire of love. The flame blinks suddenly and the smell of burning cloth mixes with the smell of the sea. The roses burn... the kisses and lies burn.⁽⁵⁶⁵⁾

⁽⁵⁵⁹⁾ See: *ibid.* p.72.

⁽⁵⁶⁰⁾ See: *ibid.* p.69.

⁽⁵⁶¹⁾ See: *ibid.* p.72.

⁽⁵⁶²⁾ There is a special meaning to the ring in Saudi culture which can be clarified through the Arabic byword; if people want to describe someone who obeys orders, they say: he is like a ring on his finger.

⁽⁵⁶³⁾ See: Hawthorn, p.123.

⁽⁵⁶⁴⁾ See: Mabruk, Murad, *Binā’ al-Zaman fī al-Riwāya al-Mu’āšira*, (Cairo: Al-Hay’a al-Miṣriyya li’l-Kitāb, 2006), P.29.

⁽⁵⁶⁵⁾ Al-Juhanī. p. 32.

In addressing the issue of betrayed women, al-Juhanī leans on the technique of narrator revelation, which is another feature of stream of consciousness technique novels, and bases *al-Firdaws al-Yabāb* on this technique. The stream of consciousness gives her a space in which to reveal the protagonist's suffering at the hands of her lover so that the painful experience guides her to judge the social system. It seems that through this technique, the novelist attempts to say to society that although its women are silent they have opinions; and given this situation, how are they going to gain their rights?

In addition, since consciousness indicates all the levels of the mind,⁽⁵⁶⁶⁾ the employment of this technique succeeds in revealing the psychological stages of the protagonist's regression in this novel, which takes five recognised stages:

- 1- The beginning of the story witnesses Ṣabā's complaints about °Āmir and her explanation of her situation to him, which suggests that she can merge with society and reveal her problems.
- 2- Then she regresses and keeps her thoughts to herself, so that she talks to herself when she sees °Āmir and Ṣabā getting engaged. The apparent aspect in this stage is that her analysis is logical.
- 3- After that, the protagonist regresses to a kind of hysteria, which results in a number of disorganised questions and images of unreal characters and dialogues.
- 4- The previous stage affects her mind so that she starts to think about suicide, giving reasons why it is the best decision.
- 5- The end of Ṣabā's life by suicide.

The novelist's employment of the stream of consciousness technique reveals a development in some of the Saudi women's novels we will discuss in terms of their ability to utilise new techniques. The use of this technique in this way appears at the beginning of this stage in the publication of *Wa Māt Khawfī* (1990) by Zāfira al-Maslūl. According to Humphrey, the stream of consciousness novels are the novels which 'have as their essential subject matter the consciousness of one or more characters; that is, the depicted consciousness serves as a screen on which the material in these novels is presented'.⁽⁵⁶⁷⁾ Al-Juhanī's novel is a presentation of

⁽⁵⁶⁶⁾ See: Humphrey, Robert. *Stream of consciousness in modern novel*, (California: University of California press, 1968), p.2.

⁽⁵⁶⁷⁾ Humphrey. p. 2.

the protagonist's feelings about her problems, for example, in the long conversation between Ṣabā and her child in her womb:

Leaving you is a crime, I know! But if you stay it is worse and nobody will forgive me, even you. Do you understand my child who I am not going to see? I wish to touch you. To enter my hand deeply and pass the chunk which its features have not completed yet... pull it a little... modify the placenta... then I kiss it before I hand it to death. I kiss the blood and the heart strongly and cry.⁽⁵⁶⁸⁾

To summarise, in the light of Elaine Showalter's theory, this section is devoted to an examination of the development of women's novel in terms of the second theme and Laylā al-Juhanī's treatment of the problem of relationships between the sexes. Showalter's theory asserts that the development of the women's novel can be examined through the observation of the themes played out in their writings. The reader can see through the analysis carried out here that the novel's theme has certain features that distinguished it from the previous stage. The most important aspect that has been discussed is that it supports the theme of al-ʿUlayyān's novel which calls for a reevaluation of the social system which persecutes women. The novel raises women's voices in refusing to be subjected to men. In addition, this novel outlines a very important step forward in terms of the use of artistic tools to clarify the problem, and it is considered by critics to be a very important turning point in the Saudi women's novel in terms of its technique, which has been discussed in the analysis.

3. Comparisons and Contrasts

This chapter has examined two of the most important themes tackled by Saudi female novelists in their novels, which are the two powers; the power of society and the power of men. It has been clarified, in this chapter, that two Saudi female novelists introduced a new method in their way of treating these themes. This method is represented through the violent discourse that appeared in the events of the two novels and their characters. This does not mean that the method that appeared in the novels in the previous stage had disappeared in this stage; rather, it is important to emphasise the new technique that appeared in this stage. Therefore, this section is devoted to examine the similarities and differences between the novels in this stage in terms of the treatment of these themes and to see the aspects of development that appeared in the Saudi women's novels in this stage.

⁽⁵⁶⁸⁾ See: al-Juhanī. p. 13.

Due to the increase in the publication of Saudi women's novels in this stage, it is impossible to present all the twenty-nine novels. Therefore, eight novels have been selected for analysis in this era; two of them are used in our model and six novels are presented here to adjust the main analysed models. Our remarks here as elsewhere in the thesis therefore pertain to the novels evaluated and may or may not tune with others which have not been surveyed.

Through an examination of the first theme, which is society's authority over women, it is noticed that some novels of this stage revolve around the idea of destroying the existing authoritative system and beginning a new era with more freedom. Qumasha al-^UUlayyān's novel *Bayt min Zujāj* (A house of Glass) (2000), is a clear example of the insistence of this idea. The novel revolves around a girl called Munā who has lost her mother and her youngest sister and she marries an old man because of her frivolous father. He gives her in marriage to an old man when she is a teenager in school and she is told about her marriage on the day before the wedding.⁽⁵⁶⁹⁾ The language in different parts of her novel refers to the word 'revelation'⁽⁵⁷⁰⁾ to show that this is the best way for freedom. For instance, when the protagonist, hears something inside a room in her house by accident, she attempts to find out what is going on. She somehow takes her husband's keys while he is sleeping and she goes to make a copy of the keys to resolve the mystery of this room. She finds a gentleman locked in this room because he has AIDS and his uncle, waiting for his death, has imprisoned him in fear of scandal.⁽⁵⁷¹⁾ In one of the conversations between them, she asks him:

- Why do not you revolt against your gaoler and get away from this captivity?
- We both live the same circumstances.. Why do you not also revolt against your gaoler and get away from this captivity?⁽⁵⁷²⁾

The novelist employs symbolism in this novel to highlight her meaning, which may be said to be the centre of this novel. The gentleman who is imprisoned is young, handsome and cultivated,⁽⁵⁷³⁾ and he is imprisoned because of traditions and customs. By interrogating the

⁽⁵⁶⁹⁾ See: al-^UUlayyān, Qumasha, *Bayt min Zujāj*, in Bukā^o Taḥt al-Maṭar, (al-Dammām: Dār al-Kifāh, 4th ed, 2004), p.94.

⁽⁵⁷⁰⁾ See: *ibid.* pp. 121, 124 and 125.

⁽⁵⁷¹⁾ See: *ibid.* pp. 110-113.

⁽⁵⁷²⁾ See: *ibid.* p. 121.

⁽⁵⁷³⁾ See: *ibid.* pp. 111-112.

symbol, the reader can see that the novelist wants to say that tradition is the reason behind the restrictions on young people whether they are women or men. At the end of the novel, the protagonist releases the gentleman and she also liberates herself from her husband and her father.⁽⁵⁷⁴⁾ Al-^Ulawayyān's reference to a rebellion in her language and the actions of the protagonist when she eventually behaves against the codes of her society whether in the desires of her father or her husband, is a clear indication of the discourse that the novel carries which is that women need to free themselves from the restrictions that society places on them.

In contrast, it is noticed that some Saudi women's novels in this stage use a different method in treating the problem of the power of society over women. This is apparent when Saudi female novelists in this stage use a method which has been used in previous stages to tackle this theme. After seeing one method of treating this theme in the first stage, we note that there is yet another method of treating the theme. The novel entitled *Imr'ah 'Alā Fawhat Burkān* (A woman at the mouth of volcano) (1996) by Bahiyya Bū Subayt represents the previous method which has appeared in the first stage. In comparison, both novels *Bayt min Zujāj* and *Imr'ah 'Alā Fawhat Burkān* treat the problem of society's power, for example; they both tackle the problem of giving young daughters in marriage to old men,⁽⁵⁷⁵⁾ they both emphasise that women have no right to choose their husband⁽⁵⁷⁶⁾ and they both refer to women's suffering through this kind of marriage.⁽⁵⁷⁷⁾ Furthermore, they both choose tragic portrayals to present the events of their novels when they address this problem, and the actual events are exaggerated. However, here, the method which is adapted to address this theme is different since the reader can see the references to the violent reactions by referring to the revolution in al-^Ulawayyān's novel. Whereas the picture of a compliant woman who adjusts to a painful reality is drawn in Bahiyya Būsabayt's novel and the protagonist's surrender appears in many scenes in the novel, such as her acceptance of the old man as a husband,⁽⁵⁷⁸⁾ and tolerating the husband's violence such as his beating and shouting⁽⁵⁷⁹⁾ and more importantly,

⁽⁵⁷⁴⁾ See: *ibid.* pp. 132, 141.

⁽⁵⁷⁵⁾ See: Bū Sbayt, Bahiyya, *Imr'a 'Alā Fawhat Burkān*, (Riyadh: Dār 'Ālam al-Kutub, 1996), p.13. and see also this idea in Al-^Ulawayyān, *Bayt min Zujāj*, p.94.

⁽⁵⁷⁶⁾ See: Bū Sbayt. p.7. and see al-^Ulawayyān. *Bayt min Zujāj*. p.93.

⁽⁵⁷⁷⁾ See for example: Bū Sbayt. p.57. and see for example al-^Ulawayyān. *Bayt min Zujāj*. p.97.

⁽⁵⁷⁸⁾ See: Bū Sbayt. p. 11.

⁽⁵⁷⁹⁾ See: Bū Sbayt. pp. 27, 28.

displaying this type of women to be the best examples of women as at the end of the novel.⁽⁵⁸⁰⁾ This means that surrender is the best way to overcome this problem. Her novel also refers to the ideal woman who is loyal to her husband even though life is painful because of the practices of her husband. Therefore, it is important to emphasise that Bū Subayt's method of treating this theme reminds the reader about the form that Saudi female novelist use in the first stage when they tackle it.

It is also noted that there is another way to treat the problem of society's authority over women as seen in Saudi women's novels at this stage. This way can be partially observed in Saudi women's novels in the previous stages but Zāfira al-Maslūl differs from them in the structure of her novel, *Wa Māt Khawfī* (And my Fear has died) (1990) which shows the effect of a father's authority on the formation of the child's personality. This novel is considered to be one of the stream of consciousness novels⁽⁵⁸¹⁾ in this stage as it attempts to highlight the character's emotions, as will be discussed. To highlight the theme that she wants to tackle, the novelist chooses a man as her protagonist because she wants to say that the power that men exert over women will affect all children whether they are male or female. Since the novel attempts to treat the problem of the father's power, it also refers to the role of this power in the forming of unstable personalities in Saudi society.

The novelist chooses the first person narrator as a way of telling the story, which is a most suitable way to treat this kind of narrative as it highlights the innermost feelings of the protagonist. Through this technique, the protagonist Sa'ad is introduced in different scenes when he appears to have an unconfident, disturbed and hesitant personality.⁽⁵⁸²⁾ Furthermore, the narrator admits, through the monologue, that he has these characteristics.⁽⁵⁸³⁾ The novelist wants to show the reasons for the existence of this type of personality and through flash back, the narrator shows his father's influence in shaping his son's personality. The father is shown to be a very angry person when the son refers to his behaviour with his mother: "She also feared my father... she hated him. He frightened her"⁽⁵⁸⁴⁾.

⁽⁵⁸⁰⁾See: *ibid*, pp, 97-100.

⁽⁵⁸¹⁾ See: Jarīdī, pp, 335-341.

⁽⁵⁸²⁾ See: al-Maslūl, Zāfira, *Wa Māt Khawfī*, (London: Dār Riyāya, 2nd Ed, n d), pp, 6-15

⁽⁵⁸³⁾See: *ibid*, 21.

⁽⁵⁸⁴⁾See: *ibid*, 23.

The novelist shows that the situation that the protagonist has seen between his parents has affected his personality when he says: “When my father came to take me I could not look at his face.. I was afraid of him, why? I do not know but I was so scared. I drank fear when I was child”.⁽⁵⁸⁵⁾

Through observing the novelist’s point of view about the issue of men’s power over their wives and children, we noted that al-Maslūl focuses on revealing the effects of this behaviour on the child’s feelings and the kind of personality this type of father created. In comparison to previous stages, we can see the treatment of this issue in Shaṭā and Khāshuqjī’s novels.⁽⁵⁸⁶⁾ However, the treatment of this theme in this stage concentrates on a very small idea which flows through memories and the feelings of the child and this is common in the stream of consciousness novels.⁽⁵⁸⁷⁾

The second theme tackled by Saudi female novelists in this stage is the relationship between men and women in Saudi society. The reader can observe this through an analysis of Laylā al-Juhanī’s novel *al-Firdaws al-Yabāb*. It seems that the novelists want to reject an absolute submission to the men in their society by means of another female narrator.⁽⁵⁸⁸⁾ By comparison, through the characterisation of her novel *Li’l-Qalb Wujūh Ukhrā*, Nidā³ (The Heart Has Different Faces) (1998), Abū ‘Alī defends the principles that Laylā al-Juhanī has defended in this stage. The character Dujā realises that she will be killed by ‘Ādil who represents the men who manipulate women’s emotions. To clarify the novelist’s idea, it is important to see how Abū ‘Alī portrays the character of ‘Ādil in this novel. The most important feature that the novelist shows in ‘Ādil is that he always looks as if he is greatly enamoured of a woman he has selected to meet his sexual needs, and once he is satisfied, he will look for another victim. This characteristic appears in different scenes in the novel, for example; it appears when he manipulates the emotion of his brother’s lover Sihām and they have sex after he knows that his brother is going to propose to her.⁽⁵⁸⁹⁾ Another example of this characteristic appears when a child of five years old comes to ‘Ādil’s brother with a letter signed by the child’s mother which says:

⁽⁵⁸⁵⁾ See: *ibid*, 23.

⁽⁵⁸⁶⁾ See: p 79 and p 115 in this thesis.

⁽⁵⁸⁷⁾ See: Humphrey, p, 7.

⁽⁵⁸⁸⁾ See pp 170-171 in this thesis.

⁽⁵⁸⁹⁾ See: Abu ‘Alī, Nidā³, *Li al-Qalb Wujūh Ukhrā*, (Jeddah: Dār Biḥār al-‘Arab, 1998), pp, 45-46.

To Mr Nāṣir, this child has just reached five years and he is your nephew. Yes, he is. °Ādil has deceived me then he left me with the problem. I left the family house to disguise my disgrace... His mother⁽⁵⁹⁰⁾

In addition, the novelist is keen to portray him as a man who has a great ability to reach women's hearts and to manipulate their emotions. This is shown in the female characters' stories, such as Sihām,⁽⁵⁹¹⁾ Maysūn⁽⁵⁹²⁾ and Dujā.⁽⁵⁹³⁾

After the elucidation of °Ādil's character in this novel, the novelist also shows the character of a strong woman who defends her principles in Dujā's story. In the last call between Dujā and °Ādil, she tells him that there is a letter for him in her flat and he can read it if anything happens to her.⁽⁵⁹⁴⁾ This means that this girl expects danger after a confrontation with °Ādil in order to remove this perverse man from society. The letter she wrote to °Ādil says that she has discovered his nature and she admits that she loved him:

I am not going to allow you to get into my house while I am alive, oh vicious man!.. I am wondering why you have this vicious heart?! I realised from the beginning that we do not suit one another ... Oh how much I love you, even your sins, and even though you are my killer.⁽⁵⁹⁵⁾

The end of the novel witnesses the scene when °Ādil is affected emotionally by this action and he decides to leave the country.⁽⁵⁹⁶⁾ This may symbolise that Dujā's sacrifice has succeeded in removing this kind of man and his effects from society. This way of treating the theme is similar to al-Juhānī's treatment since both writers describe violent and dramatic actions in order to change women's status quo in terms of their relationships with men, that is, the protagonist's suicide.

In contrast, the novel entitled *Iftaqadtuk Yawm Aḥbabtuk* (I Missed you When I Loved you) (1995) by Ṣafiyya °Anbar represents a different method of tackling the problem of women's relationships with men. This form is similar to the form adopted by novelists in the previous stage and which is discussed in the analysis of her novel °*Afwan Yā Adam* in Chapter

⁽⁵⁹⁰⁾ See: *ibid*, p 114.

⁽⁵⁹¹⁾ See: *ibid*, p 45.

⁽⁵⁹²⁾ See: *ibid*, p 190.

⁽⁵⁹³⁾ See: *ibid*, p 195.

⁽⁵⁹⁴⁾ See: *ibid*, p 181.

⁽⁵⁹⁵⁾ See: *ibid* p 195.

⁽⁵⁹⁶⁾ See: *ibid*, p 197.

Four.⁽⁵⁹⁷⁾ Her novel is based on narrative and dialogue in which the author uncovers the psychological features of a man's character and its effect on the formation of relationships with a woman in Saudi society. Through both narrative and dialogue, the novelist reveals her point of view about the way men picture women and what women need from men.

The importance of looking at this novel is that it is an example of how Saudi female novelists have diversified in finding ways of treating this theme. Also, it is important to prove that the method used in the previous stage in order to tackle this theme is still being used in this stage. This is because Laylā al-Juhanī and Nidā' Abū 'Alī's way of treatment does not dominate all the novels in this stage; rather, their way of tackling this theme is new. Their method also adds new meaning. Due to the large number of novels that flowered and were published in this stage, Saudi female novelists began to think of using different voices and thoughts to treat women's problems. The novel *Iftaqadtuk Yawm Aḥbabtuk* is a romantic story which revolves around a girl called 'Abīr who falls in love with Samī whose age is about 50 years and therefore much older than her.⁽⁵⁹⁸⁾ Through this discrepancy in their ages the novelists may want to suggest that the characteristics of Eastern men are much the same at any age. The novelist chooses the first person narrator to present the events of the novel and through this method of narrative, the novelist reveals the protagonist's feeling about her relationship with Sāmī.

As it is one of the most apparent characteristics of the second stage, the female voice that criticises Saudi men is clearly heard through the details of 'Anbar's novel. The events of the novel explore the relationship between Sāmī and 'Abīr which goes through many difficulties and all of these difficulties demonstrate that at the bottom of their problems is, the man. The novelist shows that the woman works hard to keep her relationship with the man and respect it. It seems that the novelist structures her plot on the fluctuating relationship between Sāmī and 'Abīr since the novelist's concentration is on the role of Sāmī who spoils their love every time and the novel, therefore, has a variety of complexities. This kind of structure allows the novelist to criticise men's nature since they do not respect their love for women. There are many examples of this concept in the novel and it is useful to describe some of them. One of

⁽⁵⁹⁷⁾ See p 123-124 in this thesis.

⁽⁵⁹⁸⁾ See: 'Anbar, Ṣafiyya, *Iftaqadtuk Yawm Aḥbabtuk*, (Cairo: Maṭābi' al-Ahrām, n d), p 7.

these examples is that the protagonist insists on the idea that men want women's bodies and not women themselves, and on the contrary, women do want men for themselves. This appears when Samī comes to kiss her and she refuses then she says:

I prevent you from kissing me because love has many meanings in people's mind. Love in my opinion is a spiritual relationship which remains forever and it is, in others' opinion, an emotional relationship because of desire and temporary need.. Then it will disappear with lull of the emotion. I am your wife and I do not accept myself as a tornado of transient desire.⁽⁵⁹⁹⁾

This passage shows that the novelist wants to criticise the men in her country and the idea dominates the novel through the narrative, the dialogue and the monologue.⁽⁶⁰⁰⁾

In comparison to °Anbar's novels, Zaynab Ḥafnī's first publication, *al-Raqṣ °Alā al-Dufūf* (Dancing on the tambours) (1998), treats the problem of relationships between the sexes in Eastern societies. Through the events of the novel, the novelist reveals her discourse about the failure of most romantic stories and their sad endings. The novelist does not hide her opinion, that Eastern men's selfishness is the root of the matter. This central idea can be seen by exploring three important points:

Firstly, the author attempts to show that the Eastern woman is concerned about the feelings of the man if she does not love him since she will reject the relationship if she is put in this situation and she will respect him by being honest with him. This is clear in the portrayal of the protagonist, °Abīr's first marriage, with Muḥammad when she marries him under her family's pressure. When she is sure that she does not love him, she respectfully asks him for a divorce and they quietly divorce.⁽⁶⁰¹⁾ The novelist attempts to make contrasts between her attitude to Muḥammad and her attitude to her second husband Majdī in terms of her love. Even though Majdī always expresses her love toward °Abīr, he chooses to marry her secretly in fear that his first wife and his children discover his marriage.⁽⁶⁰²⁾ In addition, when Majdī knows that his wife becomes pregnant, he becomes angry and asks her to abort or she will

⁽⁵⁹⁹⁾ See: *ibid*, p 98.

⁽⁶⁰⁰⁾ There are many examples in the novel emphasising her idea. For example, see: *ibid*, p 118, 142, 143 and 181.

⁽⁶⁰¹⁾ See: Ḥafnī, Zaynab, *al-Raqṣ °Alā al-Dufūf*, in Zaynab Ḥafnī, *al-A°māl al-Kāmila*, (Damascus: Dār Ṭlās, 2nd ed, 2003), pp 220-222.

⁽⁶⁰²⁾ See: *ibid*, p 243.

lose him. The protagonist makes a comment about this which reveals the novelist's confusion about Eastern men when she says:

She blames herself too much.. Why is the eastern man so selfish?? Why does the woman always pay the cost of sin?? Don't they both take pleasure in sex? Don't they both enjoy the orgasm??⁽⁶⁰³⁾

Secondly, after the protagonist's experiences with Majdī, she conveys her point of view about Eastern men to the readers. It reminds us of the most important characteristic that appeared in the second theme of the second stage⁽⁶⁰⁴⁾ where novelists show a direct criticism of the men in Eastern societies. The narrator's criticism comes after scenes of men's behaviour towards women and this is further shown as the protagonist continues her study and participates in different discussions about women's rights in Arab societies.⁽⁶⁰⁵⁾ The narrator offers this idea directly when she emphasises that the protagonist becomes more understanding about the nature of people.⁽⁶⁰⁶⁾ This experience and her study allows her to issue her judgement about Eastern men when the narrator tells us:

She realised that Eve, according to the eastern men in Arab societies, is still a delicious fruit. They do not mind picking them which makes women lose their trust of men.⁽⁶⁰⁷⁾

Thirdly, after the clarification of her picture of men in Arab society, the novelist addresses this issue by attempting to show that women should not depend on men in this kind of society. Because her future is uncertain if she marries an Eastern man the novelist attempts to show that there are many ways for women to prove themselves and to be successful. The protagonist does prove herself and is successful in this novel when she gets her PhD from Cairo University and tastes success.⁽⁶⁰⁸⁾

After referring to the similarities and differences between the novels of this stage in terms of treating the two themes, it is appropriate to compare and contrast the style that writers use to

⁽⁶⁰³⁾See: *ibid*, p 259.

⁽⁶⁰⁴⁾See p 124 in this thesis.

⁽⁶⁰⁵⁾See: Ḥafnī, *al-Raqṣ*, p 249.

⁽⁶⁰⁶⁾See: *ibid*, p 267.

⁽⁶⁰⁷⁾See: *ibid*, p 267.

⁽⁶⁰⁸⁾See: *ibid*, p 274.

tackle the themes. The analysis of the main two novels in this chapter shows that Saudi women's novels move forward in their choice of style. This invites some critics to stress the stylistic changes that appeared in this stage in Saudi women's novel such as Khālid al-Rifā'ī who calls the period of 1990-1999 as a 'flowering' stage.⁽⁶⁰⁹⁾ At the beginning of this stage, the Saudi novelist Zāfirā al-Maslūl shows a distinctive form of presenting the emotions and feelings of her protagonist. Since the plots of the stream of consciousness novels are 'concerned with psychic processes and not physical actions',⁽⁶¹⁰⁾ Al-Maslūl succeeds in highlighting the inner conflicts of the protagonist and introducing him as a hesitant and confused character in order to clarify her point of view. Therefore, the novelist depends on the stream of consciousness which allows the writer to highlight the protagonist's emotions and feelings, and through this technique, she can reveal the reasons for the formation of this kind of personality.

In this stage, Laylā al-Juhanī's novel *al-Firdaws al-Yabāb* represents the stream of consciousness novels and it has been seen that al-Juhanī employs the novel's place of setting in order to reveal the protagonist's suffering.⁽⁶¹¹⁾ In comparison, al-Maslūl also reveals her mastery when she employs the place of setting in her novel where it interacts with the protagonist's feelings. Jarīdī emphasises this idea when he states that through the inner monologue, the protagonist remembers the house of his childhood where this reveals his dispersion and his sharp feelings of fear, shyness and feeling of inferiority.⁽⁶¹²⁾ This is very clear when he goes to this house then says to himself:

I eventually reached a house... A small house which I knew eight years ago.. The eight years come back to me now. They come back like they happen at the moment. I knew this house since I was fourteen... I was sad, gloomy and scared.⁽⁶¹³⁾

Also the protagonist says in another part:

I went to the street.. My heavy steps lead me behind my thought and it revolves and revolves! And I revolve around it after I gave in to it. I found myself in front of my mother's house.. I knocked at the door.. My heart was pulsating

⁽⁶⁰⁹⁾See: al-Rifā'ī, p. 40.

⁽⁶¹⁰⁾ Humphrey, p 86.

⁽⁶¹¹⁾See p 164 in this thesis.

⁽⁶¹²⁾ See: Jarīdī, p 338.

⁽⁶¹³⁾See: al-Maslūl, p 22.

inside me.. I do not know why I knocked.. And then I cried, loudly, for the first time. I was screaming, calling her while hope lies when it says to me she is in the house but I knew she has gone, and I am not going to see her after this day.⁽⁶¹⁴⁾

These two passages are an example of the novelist's concern since she focuses on the protagonist's inner feelings and the role of the place of setting in showing these feelings. Also, the novelist employs flashback as one of the most important type of techniques, in the stream of consciousness novels.⁽⁶¹⁵⁾ Through using this technique the novelist attempts to show an important point, which is that the protagonist is psychologically unstable; and to reveal the reasons why this kind of personality is created.

Through observing the novels in this stage it is noticed that Qumāsha al-[°]Ulayān's novel *Unthā al-[°]Ankabūt* and Laylā al-Juhanī's novel *al-Firdaws al-Yabāb* witness a description of the sexual relationships between the sexes.⁽⁶¹⁶⁾ In comparison, Zaynab Ḥafnī in her novel *al-Raqṣ [°]Alā al-Dufūf* shows some bedroom sexual scenes. Showing details of what happens in the bedroom is a new feature that appeared in Saudi women's novel at this time; and this may refer to the idea that some Saudi female novelists began to renounce one of the features of conservative writing that is the cornerstone of conservative societies. For example, Ḥafnī describes the sexual relationship between Muḥammad and [°]Abīr on the first night after the wedding, from his carrying her and putting her in the bed, to his virility and her moaning.⁽⁶¹⁷⁾

In contrast, the majority of novels published in this stage do not take this direct approach; rather, they avoid these kinds of scenes. For example, Nidā[°] Abū [°]Alī in her novel *Li'l-Qalb Wujūh Ukhrā* refers to the sexual relationship between the characters but she does not describe the details. That is, when the scene concerns the sex act, the novelist alludes to it rather than making a direct statement. This happens many times in the novel and one example of this is when Sihām describes her relationship with [°]Ādil and when she reaches the sexual relationship she says: 'I gave him the best of what a girl owns'⁽⁶¹⁸⁾ which means her virginity, and also refers to her reputation.

⁽⁶¹⁴⁾ See: al-Maslūl, pp 24-25.

⁽⁶¹⁵⁾ See: Humphrey, p 86

⁽⁶¹⁶⁾ See p 146 and p 164 in this thesis.

⁽⁶¹⁷⁾ See: Ḥafnī, *al-Raqṣ*, p 219.

⁽⁶¹⁸⁾ See: Abū [°]Alī, p 45.

However, explicit description in the Saudi women's novels is apparent in this stage but only in a small number of cases; and when it does appear in a novel, it is not stressed. This means that the few novelists who approached this theme at this stage have prepared readers for this secret topic to be shown in more detail during the next stage.

It seems that Saudi female novelists, in the two previous stages, employed symbolism to express women's problems as is clear in Samīra Khāshuqjī's novel.⁽⁶¹⁹⁾ The employment of symbolism to express women's problems is more powerful in this stage because some novelists have developed their artistic techniques. In the previous section, analysis of Laylā al-Juhanī's novel and Qumāsha al-ʿUlayyān's novel discussed their tendency to adopt various tools to express their points of view. For example, al-Juhanī uses her technique to show that women are not going to obey men.⁽⁶²⁰⁾ The use of this technique, which expressively conveys women's concerns appears in different novels in this stage; for example, the novelist Qumāsha al-ʿUlayyān's employment of the character of a young and handsome man who is imprisoned because his disease refers to an unjust society and the weakness of its youth.⁽⁶²¹⁾ In addition, Nidāʾ Abū ʿAlī employs DuJā's suicide symbolically as it suggests that women have the courage to stand against men's injustice. However, some novels in this stage employ realism, which is clear in Bahiyya Bū Subayt's novel *Imraʾah ʿAlā Fawhat Burkān*. This novel is an example of the artistic weaknesses in some novels. There are critics who emphasise that the novel is full of artistic errors such as the author's intervention in the narrative to express her point of view.

4. Conclusion

In conclusion, it appears that the Saudi women's novel moves forward in terms of both theme and artistic value. Furthermore, since they have won both local and Arabic awards the novels may be regarded as evidence of such development. These awards include the following: al-ʿUlayyān won the Abhā award and al-Juhanī won the Shāriqah award. Therefore, this stage can be considered to be the dawn of a new era in which Saudi female novelists have become well-known in Arab countries before achieving international fame, which will be a very important stage indeed. At this stage, perhaps, novelists will start to interrogate more

⁽⁶¹⁹⁾ See p 79 in this thesis.

⁽⁶²⁰⁾ See p 156 in this thesis.

⁽⁶²¹⁾ See p 171 in this thesis.

complex issues in society that were not tackled in the previous stages since it would have been too inappropriate. In this stage, readers see controversial topics such as the nature of sexual relationships and the problem of abortion freely debated by daring Saudi female writers.

In the themes worked out in the novels of this stage, the reader can see changes in Saudi women's discourse whether directed at Saudi society or to the men in society. The novelists appear to have passed the stage of using careful language, which they use in the first stage; and they appear to have also passed the stage of discussing and directly stating their problems with society, which was seen in the second stage. The world of their novels shows that they have reached the stage of demanding a re-evaluation of their society, since their discourse rejects society's controls and women's absolute subjection to men.

Furthermore, this stage witnesses clear signs of development in its artistic value, since the novelists are influenced by the modern novel in Arab and international countries. The third stage introduces some novelists who employ the characteristics of the modern novel perfectly, as seen in al-Juhanī's novel. The most pertinent example of this is the use of the technique of stream of consciousness as an important method of describing women's suffering and feelings. Even though this aspect appears in the previous stages, the use of this technique in al-Juhanī's novel shows a clear development. In the light of these characteristics, it might be appropriate to say that the Saudi women's novel flowered during this stage in terms of the novelists' choice of themes and their style of treating them.

Chapter six: Popularisation of the Saudi Women's Novel (2002-2011)

1. Introduction

The final stage of the Saudi women's novel owes its forward movement to the international interests of countries where some of the novels have been translated into non-Arabic languages. The stage extends for a period of approximately ten years, from 2002 until the end of 2011; and the number of novels published is remarkable since Saudi women published more than a hundred novels during this time.⁽⁶²²⁾ Therefore, it is considered to be the most important stage of the Saudi women's novel. However, there are various factors that contribute to the importance of this stage that can be explored through the following points:

Firstly, the event of September 11th 2001 is one of the most important topics that we might examine in order to raise questions about many issues in Saudi Arabia such as religion, education, society and women. Women's problems are one of the most significant subjects discussed by Saudi intellectuals during this stage; and they attempted to analyse the matter or explain reasons for it. Al-Ghadhdhāmī is one of the well-known intellectuals who published a book entitled: *Thaqāfat al-Wahm: Muqārabāt Ḥawl al-Mar'ah wa'l-Jasad wa'l-Lughah* (A Culture of Illusion: Approaches About Woman, Body and Language)⁽⁶²³⁾ in 2006. Because the question of women is, in this stage, widely discussed at different levels, opportunities for women are expanded to present their problems. It is true to say that questions concerning women were presented before the events of September 11th 2001 but this stage is characterised by greater diversity and courage. In addition, the number of women who discuss their problems through the novel increases dramatically during this stage, which in itself represents a new Saudi literary phenomenon. Through observing the Saudi women's novel at this stage, we can see the effect of the events of September 11th on the content of the novels and their titles such as *al-Intihār al-Ma'jūr* (The Paid Suicide) (2004); *Ālā' al-Hudhlūl* and *Unthā Mufakhakha* (A Booby-trapped Female 2010), by Amīra al-Muḍḥī.

One of the results of the events of September 11th is that a discussion of women's rights has been implemented by all the cultural scholars with the support of government; the media also

⁽⁶²²⁾ See the table of Saudi women's novel in pp 190-192.

⁽⁶²³⁾ This book attempts to follow traditional stories and how they affect culture by rooting some perceptions in society's mind and then it examines how these perceptions transform into beliefs or stereotype.

plays an important role in marketing women's novels even though it comes, sometimes, at the expense of its artistic value. Al-Rifā'ī refers to *al-Qirān al-Muqaddas* by Ṭayf al-Ḥallāj and *al-Intihār al-Ma'jūr* by Ālā' al-Hudhlūl as an example of media interest in women's novels even though they do not fulfil the artistic conditions of the novel.⁽⁶²⁴⁾ As a logical result of the media's support of women's writing in this period, the readers of women's novels increased dramatically, especially in the case of Rajā' al-Ṣāni's novel *Banāt al-Riyāḍ* (The Girls of Riyadh) where the first edition was sold out in four months, unprecedented.⁽⁶²⁵⁾

The technological revolution plays an effective role in utilizing the Saudi women's novel as the best way of delivering women's messages to readers. The number of internet users reached a million at the end of 2001 and increased by 50% in 2002.⁽⁶²⁶⁾ The internet offers a way of publishing women's novels and in this way writers can gauge whether they are going to be successful or not. There are many Saudi novelists who have published their novels first on the internet, and then when they saw their work's popularity, published them as books.⁽⁶²⁷⁾ Due to the status of women in Saudi society, Saudi women, before the age of the internet, had difficulty in communicating with critics and intellectuals because women wish to protect their privacy in Saudi Arabia, but the internet has the effect of easing communication.

Another considerable factor contributing to the increase in the publication of Saudi female novels during this stage is the people's growing appetite for reading women's works.⁽⁶²⁸⁾ One result of the proliferation of women's novels during this stage was that people were beginning to hear what Saudi women had to say, and this might have been the result of media support or to a change in readers' thoughts and opinions. In addition, some of the top Saudi writers encouraged Saudi female novelists in different ways. For example, Ghazī al-Quṣaybī wrote an introduction to Rajā' al-Ṣāni's novel *Banāt al-Riyāḍ* focussing on the ways that

⁽⁶²⁴⁾ See: al-Rifā'ī. p.55.

⁽⁶²⁵⁾ See: *ibid.* p.55.

⁽⁶²⁶⁾ See: al-Hājirī, Iyās. *Tārīkh al-Internet fī al-Mamlaka al-ʿArabiya al-Suʿūdiyya.* (n p: n pub, 2004), p 62.

⁽⁶²⁷⁾ There are many examples which represent this idea such as al-ʿAūba by Warda abd al-Malik. See: al-Rifā'ī. p.52.

⁽⁶²⁸⁾ See: al-Rifā'ī. p.55.

she had mastered her writing tools and skills and the famous critic °Abd Allāh al-Ghadhdhāmī specified articles in the *al-Riyadh* newspaper about the novel.⁽⁶²⁹⁾

Since the remarkable number of Saudi women's novels published during this stage is a specific aspect of the awareness of Saudi female novelists, there are further more general aspects of the women's novel at this stage. The translation of some Saudi women's novels to other languages and international distribution may be considered to be one of the interesting characteristics of Saudi women's novels in this stage in terms of exposure to the rest of the world. For example, the novel *Banāt al-Riyadh* was translated into the English language under the title of *Girls of Riyadh* in 2007.⁽⁶³⁰⁾ Another example of the translation of Saudi female novelists works is *Nisā' al-Munkar* by Samar al-Muqrin which has been translated into Italian under the title of 'Le Donne Del Peccato'⁽⁶³¹⁾

Although some Saudi female novelists had won literary awards during the previous stage, female writers also proved their talent in this era by winning international prizes, which offers more evidence of the development in Saudi women's novels. In this stage, Rajā' °Ālim gained the International Prize for Arabic Fiction (Booker) for her novel *Ṭawq al-Ḥamām* (Collar of the pigeons) in 2010.⁽⁶³²⁾ In addition, Mahā Bā °Ishin won another international prize called The Arabic Human Award for her novel *Al-Ḥubb fawq Saṭḥ Marmarah* (Love Above the Surface of the Marmara) in 2011.⁽⁶³³⁾

In comparison to the previous stage, (as the table in the appendix shows p.254), the number of new Saudi women's novelists in the fourth stage was over seventy, whereas in the third stage, there were 11 fresh faces. This can be considered to be a very clear sign of the development of the Saudi women's novel in terms of quantity. From stage to stage, Saudi female novelists learn that the genre of the novel is a suitable for them to express their

⁽⁶²⁹⁾ See this article about this novel al-Ghadhdhāmī, °Abd Allāh, "Banāt al-Riyadh Banāt al-Nasaq" December 8, 2005, 13681, *Riyadh newspaper*, Accessed 04 June 2012:

<http://www.alriyadh.com/2005/12/08/article113797.html>

⁽⁶³⁰⁾ The copy translated to English language is issued in United State of America by The Penguin Press in 2007 and the translator is Marilyn Booth and Rajā' al-Šāni°.

⁽⁶³¹⁾ See "Riwāya Nisā' al-Munkar al-Akthar Jadalan fī al-Khalīj Taṣdur bi'l-Lugha al-Itāliyya", *Majallat Anhār al-Adabiyya*, Feb 27,2012 Accessed 12 August 2012 :

<http://www.anhaar.com/arabic/index.php/permalink/13664.html>

⁽⁶³²⁾ See: °Ālim, Rajā. *Ṭawq al-Ḥamām*, (al-Dār al-Bayḍā': al-Markaz al-Thaqāfī al-°Arabī, 2010), cover page.

⁽⁶³³⁾ See Takrīm al-Riwā'iyya al-Su'ūdiyya Ṣaḥibat Riwāya al-Ḥubb Fawq Saṭḥ marmara" *Uniem*, Accessed 13 Augus: http://www.uniem.org/index.php?action=show_page&ID=919&lang=ar

problems. Interestingly, the phenomenon of female pseudonym has returned as was the case with some of the new novelists such as al-Muhājira and Fiktūriya al-Ḥakīm. Perhaps ‘Diversity’ is the appropriate word to use to describe a stage that witnesses different tendencies, whether in the novels’ themes or techniques. It might be useful to start with a reference to the table of list of the novels published during this stage. It mentions the author and the date of publication. See appendix (p. 254)

2. The Most Prominent Women’s Issues in the Novels of Popularity and Extension

This part is devoted to the examination of the two themes examined previously in this thesis, which are the Saudi female novelists’ view of society’s power over women and how the writers see the relationships between the sexes. Two novels have been chosen to represent these themes. To represent the first theme, the novel is *Lam A‘ud Abkī* (I No Longer Cry) (2004) by Zaynab Ḥafnī and the novel chosen to represent the second theme is *Saqar* (Hell) (2008) by ‘Ā’isha al-Ḥashr.

2.1. Women’s Self-proving:

3.1.1. Introduction

In this section, the aim is to shed light on the way that Saudi female novelists have attempted to develop their treatment of the problem of society’s hold over women. Elaine Showalter has emphasised that one of the subjects that can be examined to see the development of women’s writings is ‘theme’. Through the exploration of how Saudi female novelists at this stage tackle the problem of the patriarchal system in Saudi society, the reader can see the issues that Saudi women’s novels raise as their writing develops.

The reason for selecting this novel to represent the women’s novel in this stage is that it introduces the new vision that Saudi novelists wish to convey concerning the problem of society’s power. Therefore, the novel deserves to be introduced as representative of the novels published in this stage. In addition, the novelist Zaynab Ḥafnī is considered to be one of the female activists who always calls for women’s rights, whether through her literary works or through her articles in newspapers.

The representative novel chosen to examine this theme is Zaynab Ḥafnī's novel, *Lam A'ud Abkī* 2004 (I No Longer Cry). Zaynab Ḥafnī was first known as a columnist in various Saudi and Arabic newspapers, and later in 1993 she published a book entitled *Risāla Ilā Rajul* 'A Message to a Man'. Between her three collections of short stories published in 1994, 1996 and 2000, she managed to publish her first novel, *al-Raqṣ 'Alā al-Dufūf* (1998). Following this, her collection of poems went to press in 2004. Most recently, Zaynab Ḥafnī has enriched her collection of writing with three novels: *Malāmiḥ* 'Features' (2006), *Sīqān Multawīya* 'Crooked legs' (2008), and *Wisāda liḥubbik* 'A Pillow for your Love' (2011).⁽⁶³⁴⁾

The novel 'I No Longer Cry' has been published in three editions (2004, 2007 and 2009). Zaynab Ḥafnī chooses the third person narrative technique, whereby she tells the story 'from a source external to the world of the novel by a narrator who is not one of the characters in the novel.'⁽⁶³⁵⁾ The novel revolves around the life of the protagonist, Ghāda, who distinguishes herself from other women by choosing not to use her beauty as the instrument of her success. Rather, to become a successful woman, she relies on hard work and her determination to succeed. The novel focuses on the issue of men's dominant role in Saudi society and the consequential subjugation of the other members of society to the patriarchal social power structure that is so apparent in the area of women's rights. Therefore, the protagonist seeks a place in which to find herself and to prove that women have the strength and the wisdom to succeed in the social sphere monopolised by men.

At the beginning of the novel, two different viewpoints of women's right to prosper in society are presented. This helps to further highlight the main issue of the novel. Nashwā, Ghāda's friend, laughs at Ghāda's decision to leave her job as a teacher for a job in journalism. Her doubts about Ghāda's chances are based on the way patriarchal society ties women by many social restrictions, and thus very often obstructs the fulfilment of their ambitions. Nashwā believes that women in such a society are not able to overcome these restrictions. Notwithstanding her friend's doubts, the protagonist claims that women should not give up fighting and never cease to attempt to overcome the obstacles put in place by society. She says:

⁽⁶³⁴⁾ See: Zaynab Ḥafnī's website at: <http://zhauthor.com/html/en-cv.htm>

⁽⁶³⁵⁾ Hawthorn, p 82.

Take this seriously and I will prove that you are wrong. I have the power to face the world to reach my dream. I will prove to you that woman is able to walk this bumpy path if she possesses will, intention and determination.⁽⁶³⁶⁾

This work represents a noticeable development in this particular theme of women's novels, and offers an alternative perspective to Ḥafnī, who treats the problem of male dominance and the struggle between the two sexes differently. The main contrast with previous topically similar novels lies in the new thematic aspect offered by Zaynab Ḥafnī. This new aspect is manifested by discussion about the demand for women's participation in the politics of the country e.g. through the appointment of a woman as editor-in-chief of the country's major newspaper. This idea has not been noted or discussed in the past, which seems to indicate that Saudi women's awareness of their rights has become highly developed during this period.

On the whole, the novel *I No Longer Cry* may be classified as a step forward in the issue of female criticism of male dominance in Saudi society. The novelist starts with a diagnosis of the issue by depicting some members of society who are stripping society's system. She refers to certain aspects of this through the example of Ghāda's father and her lover, who clearly behave according to the collective consciousness of society and who also disregard their own value system. The conflict between their personal convictions and the norms of society is demonstrated by the actions of Ghāda's lover Ṭalāl. He is an open-minded person, not least because he studied abroad. He also puts himself in the role of the defender of women's rights in Saudi Arabia. He was even imprisoned for his statements in the Saudi press. Notwithstanding his beliefs, he eventually yields to the pressure of the collective consciousness when he refuses to marry Ghāda because she is no longer a virgin, which is a severe handicap for a single woman in the eyes of Saudi society. The novelist emphasises that in the past, Ṭalāl had proposed marriage to his Spanish ex-girlfriend even though she had had many relationships before him.⁽⁶³⁷⁾ She refused his proposal. It is clear, therefore, that the novelist mentions this event to demonstrate how the social system and its norms control the men in her society, even though they do not follow the same norms when acting outside Saudi society's parameter. Also, she wants to point out the contradiction in the actions of a Saudi man who deals with the issue of women's morals according to the woman's nationality. The conversation between Ṭalāl and Ghāda reveals this contradictory approach,

⁽⁶³⁶⁾See: Ḥafnī, Zaynab. *Lam ʿAʿud ʿAbkī*. (Beirut: Dār al-Ssāqī, 3rd ed, 2009), p.45.

⁽⁶³⁷⁾See: *ibid.* 68.

when Ghāda asks Ṭalāl to marry, having just confessed to him about her previous sexual relationship with °Āmir. To this, Ṭalāl replies:

- I know that you ask for your rights but I need time to forget the past.
- Do you want to punish me for a past in which I do not have any sin?
- No, my love! I know that you were a victim but please help me to overcome this problem.
- Remember! One day you wanted to marry a woman who had many relationships and you wished her to accept this marriage... why do you wash away all of her mistakes and you do not forgive me for even one mistake?
- I do not know... Yes Ghāda! We are internally selfish and barbarous when it comes to our women because we consider them as a part our possessions.⁽⁶³⁸⁾

This dialogue reveals Ṭalāl's inner conflict and its various aspects which are caused by society's powerful influence.

Firstly, the novelist wants to underline society's dominance over men's minds, which is seen as the 'norm'; and how difficult it is for them to escape the pressure of society. Secondly, the author points out the issue of unequal criteria for society's judgment of people based on their nationality or gender, for example, a mistake made by a Saudi man (Ṭalāl) or a non Saudi woman (Isabella), mistakes that are tolerated, whilst it is strongly unforgiving of the same mistake made by a Saudi woman. Thirdly, what appears throughout this conversation is a clear ambivalence of Ṭalāl's inner convictions: on the one hand he goes with the flow of society yet on the other hand he notices the injustice stemming from main stream thinking; and he vocally criticises the men in his society, notwithstanding the fact that he himself is actually one of them.

The novelist supports her point of view about the dominance of men in society by referring to the perception of Saudi society shared by non-Saudis. She illustrates this through Ṭalāl's Spanish ex-girlfriend, Isabella's attitude, when he proposed marriage to her. She refused Ṭalāl because of the way she perceives the position of women in Saudi Arabian society. In Isabella's own words:

⁽⁶³⁸⁾ See: *ibid.*, p.97.

‘You know how much I love you and I believe that you do not have any doubt about this. But I cannot live in your country. A woman in your country has no dream. Her function as a woman, in this life, is having children and she wastes her time by following the fashion news. I cannot prove myself in your country. In only a few days I will be a lawyer and to marry you is to bury my dream.’⁽⁶³⁹⁾

The novelist also attempts to stress the idea of male dominance through one aspect of the country’s rule. This kind of concentrated criticism, which is directed at the country’s institutions, can be seen as a new feature appearing in the themes in Saudi women’s novels during this stage. The criticism of the governmental system in Saudi Women’s novels written in the previous stages is shown in glimpses whereas in this stage it is clear and can be seen throughout the whole novel. For example, Ghāda is not allowed to choose her job until she produces a letter of consent from her father. The protagonist discusses this rule with the boss of the women’s section in the newspaper: Is it necessary to bring a letter from my father? Do you not think that this decision is my own concern? Then the boss strictly replies: ‘Sister Ghāda! I would like to remind you that you live in a conservative society. I believe this is enough to answer your question.’⁽⁶⁴⁰⁾

The novelist manifests Ghāda’s struggle with her society first by showing her happiness upon receiving the letter from her father, followed by her indignation at the system supporting male dominance. The author emphasises this in Ghāda’s desire to have the right to determine matters relating to her personal life. By means of Ghāda’s inner monologue, the author is able to shift the focus from the problem of male dominance to the more general issues relating to women and their position in society. This shift is reflected in the following questions that Ghāda asks herself: ‘Why do a woman’s aspirations depend on a stroke of her father’s and husband’s pen? Does this represent social justice? Why does our society insist on appointing itself as the judge of our ambitions?’⁽⁶⁴¹⁾

Although the third person narrative technique used in this novel provides the novelist with an extra space in which to observe the characters and the events, it also weakens the plot of the novel, since the amount of often, irrelevant, narrations and descriptions is considerable. As a result, the use of this technique in this novel can easily distract a reader and weaken his or her

⁽⁶³⁹⁾See: *ibid.*p.68.

⁽⁶⁴⁰⁾See: *ibid.*p.49.

⁽⁶⁴¹⁾See: *ibid.*p.50.

concentration. Since it is emphasised that the novel, artistically, is not meant to answer the question ‘what happens next?’ its events should be tied to the causality.⁽⁶⁴²⁾ For example, the novelist goes back to the history of Talāl and the history of Nashwā without any discernible artistic reason, or value except to extend the events of the novel.⁽⁶⁴³⁾

3.1.2. The obstacles to a woman’s ambitions

The issue of male dominance in society is intertwined with the difficulties that women face when trying to prove themselves in their society, i.e. to fulfil their ambitions in a restrictive and limiting kind of social system. The novelist stresses the fact that women are capable of facing such challenging conditions. Through her experience as a working woman, the protagonist attempts to answer a fundamental question that any woman wanting to prove herself and fulfil her ambitions has to ask: ‘Why do women not succeed in a patriarchal society?’ Having done it before, the novelist illustrates again how the patriarchal society plays an effective role in undermining women’s efforts to realise their ambitions. The novelist tries to tackle this issue from different angles by mentioning various obstacles that prevent women from succeeding. Whilst criticising society as it is, the author objectively points out the fact that women themselves often play an important role in the continuation of women’s problems in their society. This is due to several factors.

Firstly, the novelist refers to the common element of Saudi society: a distrust in women’s capabilities. This is demonstrated by the futile effort of the boss of the women’s department Fawziya, to obtain the full authority to function properly as a ‘real’ editor-in-chief. Fawziya demands the authority to appoint qualified journalists and to fire anyone who is less, or not even, qualified. She also asks for the right to issue a complete authorisation before any reports or columns are published. Yet, the editor-in-chief refuses her demands. She considers this to be clear evidence of the distrust women often have to face in the workplace, and of the department’s insistence on rendering women dependent on men. Consequently, Fawziya quits her job.⁽⁶⁴⁴⁾

⁽⁶⁴²⁾See: Forster. p. 93.

⁽⁶⁴³⁾See for example the history of Nashwā in the novel pp. 30-40.

⁽⁶⁴⁴⁾See: Ḥafnī. p.98.

Apparently, the fact that Fawziya had the courage to demand her rights is a sign of advancement in women's awareness of their position in society. The novelist diagnoses the problem clearly and shows that men in Saudi society can acquire high positions in their jobs, yet they prevent women from having the same aspirations. In other words, men do not give women any, or very little, opportunity to prove themselves or to fulfil their ambitions. Through Fawziya's actions, the reader notices a shift in the lens through which the writer sees this issue from a mere disagreement between the editor-in-chief and the boss of the women's department to a more general and all-encompassing 'battle' between the two sexes in society. In this regard, the novelist tells us:

She considered his attitude as clear evidence of a distrust in a woman's capabilities, which is reflected in man's insistence on maintaining her dependency on him.⁽⁶⁴⁵⁾

Secondly, the novelist emphasises a dysfunction within women's communities; and the consequence of their lack of co-operation with one another is that they fail to achieve their rights. The author points out these aspects of Saudi society in different places in the novel. At the beginning, she refers to the problem of jealousy between women. This jealousy is based primarily on their appearance. This is obvious from the author's description of the protagonist's beauty: She used to receive looks of admiration from men and envy and jealousy from women.⁽⁶⁴⁶⁾ This sentence appears on the first page of the novel, which underlines the importance of this issue for the author. Thus, a reader is able to notice that the novelist attempts to classify the jealousy of women as one of the most important reasons for Saudi women's failure in their society. When Ghāda submits her first report in the journal, which took a month to complete, Fawziya asks her in a reluctant way about the reason for ignoring the viewpoint of the female scholar in this report. Ghāda answers: 'They refused to cooperate with me'.⁽⁶⁴⁷⁾

This example reveals another issue, that is, the lack of cooperation between women in Saudi society. The highly educated woman, who should be aware of other women's needs, does not encourage another talented woman to prove herself in her area of the job. The novelist

⁽⁶⁴⁵⁾ See: *ibid.*p.98.

⁽⁶⁴⁶⁾ See: *ibid.*p. 9.

⁽⁶⁴⁷⁾ See: *ibid.* p.51.

employs a specific dialogue to highlight this problem and to analyse the reasons behind the disunity of women in society.

One of Ghāda's colleagues admits that women always criticise the way men treat them, but when they have the choice of whether to deal with a man or a woman, they immediately choose the former.⁽⁶⁴⁸⁾ This is a direct critique of the way women, by not supporting other women's rights when an opportunity arises, contribute to the weakening of the role of women in society in general. A reader can see between the lines a message holding women's disagreements responsible for their current status in society. In addition, this message stresses an important point: an idea requires hard work and a certain amount of effort in order that it can be transformed into something real.

The novelist emphasises the problem of disunity between women whilst referring to jealousy as being the main element of this disunity. Yet, this jealousy stems not only from another woman's appearance but also from her apparent success. When Ghāda asks her colleagues about the reasons for women's reluctance to support other women, Munā replies:

I have a convenient interpretation! It relates to the problem of jealousy in women, one of our characteristics. We burn with jealousy when one of us excels at any field or achieves a high position, so we set up a trial for her, show her errors to public gaze and expose her secrets.⁽⁶⁴⁹⁾

The following situation can serve as an illustration of Munā's thoughts: After Ghāda succeeds in her first report and the deputy editor-in-chief shows his satisfaction with her work, Fawziya spreads rumours about Ghāda's relationship with Ṭalāl. Following this, Ghāda's colleagues begin to gossip about her. Eventually, she meets Fawziya, who tells Ghāda openly: It seems that there is someone supporting you in this newspaper for private reasons.⁽⁶⁵⁰⁾ This scene reveals that the protagonist faces fierce personal enmity from her female colleagues, who should, on the contrary be rather happy about her success. The author reminds the reader that women not only abstain from congratulating another woman on her success, they also attempt to spoil her success by making up false accusations about her and the way she reaches her success. Through this dialogue and events, the novelist wants to

⁽⁶⁴⁸⁾ See: *ibid.*p.52.

⁽⁶⁴⁹⁾ See: *ibid.*p.52.

⁽⁶⁵⁰⁾ See: *ibid.*p.79.

deliver a message about this kind of practice and the consequences that weaken women's defence of their position in society.

It is clear that what the writer wants to convey is that the most important obstacle to any woman being able to prove herself in society is the rivalry and jealousy felt and shared across Womanhood. The author also draws attention to the issue of men abusing this perceived weakness in women in order to prevent them from raising their demands. In other words, the novelist attempts to present the idea that it is women themselves that are the main reasons behind the weakness of their position in society and that this is the reason why men's status seems unchallenged. This idea can be compared with Elaine Showalter's theory that women can be 'indoctrinated into being very deeply identified indeed with male culture'.⁽⁶⁵¹⁾ According to Showalter's argument, this can have a negative impact on women's ability to work together to achieve their rights. It is not, of course, suggested that Zaynab Ḥafnī has based her treatment, in this novel, of the problem of women's disunity on Showalter's theory, but the reader can easily recognise a similarity in the issues raised. One of the examples of the writer's criticism of the impact of male culture on women is the attitude and behaviour of the female manager of the newspaper's women's department to Ghāda's objection to the idea of forcing a woman to produce a letter of consent from her father, which we have already discussed. Instead of working with Ghāda to change the situation, the female manager colludes with the status quo by reminding her that she lives in a conservative society.

In addition, men are well aware of this and they try to use it to their own benefit. Ṭalāl's comments about Ghāda's situation shows that he is aware of women's handicaps. This is apparent from his reaction when he hears what kind of treatment Ghāda receives from her boss: What a women's world! This is Woman. Whenever she educates, the jealousy remains in her mind.⁽⁶⁵²⁾

Related to the problem of women's disunity is the account given by the novelist about Talāl's imprisonment. He landed in gaol because he demanded, in public, that the government uphold women's rights. Through a political statement, she wants to emphasise that the best defenders of women's rights should be women themselves since they know about their

⁽⁶⁵¹⁾ Showalter, Elaine, *Toward a feminist poetics*, p.189.

⁽⁶⁵²⁾ See: Ḥafnī. p.79.

struggles best. At the same time, when men stand up for women's rights, society sees it as a call for sexual liberalisation or for women's unveiling. This was also the substance of Talāl's case against him.⁽⁶⁵³⁾ The novelist underlines the fact that men will give up as soon as they face the first obstacle, since they are not fighting for their own cause. This can be understood from Talāl's remark after leaving prison: I was wrong when I interfered! I have to leave this duty to you and to women like you, who have decided to be on the line of fighting.⁽⁶⁵⁴⁾

Talāl leaves the country and breaks up with Ghāda because of this problem. The issue is so simple in its logic: Men are not going to fight for women's rights, so women must do so. Yet, this requires unity amongst women. As the author pointed out several times, the lack of unity is just another obstacle in the way of achieving women's rights. In this scene, the novelist enters the political arena; she wants to criticise the government directly since it does not appear to allow people to discuss the problem of women's rights. As mentioned previously, this kind of direct criticism may be considered to be one of the characteristics of the Saudi women's novels at this stage.

Thirdly, through the novelist's treatment of the obstacles that prevent women from proving themselves in society, she refers to the prevailing idea, that is, that women reach their success not through their qualifications but through their beauty. Even though the protagonist is described as a beautiful woman, the events of the novel show that she achieves her various successes through her performance. When the reader examines the plot of the novel, it seems that the novelist wants to disconnect between two important lines she uses to reach her goal in the novel; the first line is to stress the idea that women have the ability to succeed through their own qualifications, thus the novel's argument is that the protagonist's sex is not the reason for her failure. The second line is to refer to the problem in society where a woman's beauty is used as one of her qualifications in her working life and this is one of the obstacles that prevents women from proving themselves in this kind of society.

The events of the novel lead the reader to imagine that members of society evaluate women according to how beautiful they are, or not, rather than whether they are qualified or not. Ghāda's appointment as a journalist shows that the way she was employed did not examine

⁽⁶⁵³⁾See: *ibid.*p.142.

⁽⁶⁵⁴⁾See: *ibid.*p.142.

whether she is qualified for this kind of job; she is appointed because of a special relationship with her friend Nashwā. Her friend is a beautiful woman who knows a rich and high class man who always does what she wants; and he called the editor-in-chief to appoint her in the newspaper.⁽⁶⁵⁵⁾ Here the novelist wants to deliver an important message which is that even though women are well qualified like the protagonist in this novel, they cannot reach their goals without the help of a beautiful woman. This idea is strongly stressed when the novelist creates a partial event carrying a message that concerns the new journalist appointed in the newspaper. The writer describes Dalāl's sensuality to show the reason behind the appointment:

She is luscious. Gathered between nomadic beauty and the Damascene sensation. Her body is feminine. Her skin is coloured white tinged with pink. She has wide, blue, eyes. Her hair is smooth and gold and flows down her back.⁽⁶⁵⁶⁾

The novelist continues to emphasise what she looks like and describes the staff's reaction when they see her for the first time: they gape at her beauty. Then she refers to her qualifications and the fact that she is not cultivated. Furthermore, she has no knowledge of the nature of journalism and she has, nevertheless, come to the newspaper with the appointment letter from the editor-in-chief.⁽⁶⁵⁷⁾ When Dalāl is appointed, Ghāda was the boss of the women's department and the editor-in-chief did not ask for an opinion about appointing her. In addition, Ghāda was surprised when she saw a column by Dalāl which had been given to her without Ghāda's permission.⁽⁶⁵⁸⁾ By describing this event the novelist wants to focus on the idea that this kind of practice leads women to lose their value in society. An unqualified woman represents women in journalism in that Dalāl is appointed because of her relationship with the editor-in-chief. She considers this to be one of the obstacles that prevent women from proving themselves. However, the protagonist does not let this difficulty stop her as Fawziya did but she continues to try to prove herself.

Fourthly, lack of support from men is one of the problems that women face in Saudi society if they want to prove themselves. The novelist attempts to highlight this problem through the

⁽⁶⁵⁵⁾ See: *ibid.*p.46.

⁽⁶⁵⁶⁾ See: *ibid.*p.106.

⁽⁶⁵⁷⁾ See: *ibid.*p.106.

⁽⁶⁵⁸⁾ See: *ibid.*p.108.

dialogue between the protagonist and Talāl. Comparison between the creative women in western countries and Arab countries is the instrument used to deliver this message to the reader. This is shown when Talāl asks Ghāda about the book that she is reading, and she tells him that she is reading *Three Guineas*, a novel by Virginia Woolf, and comments:

What draws my attention when I read her biography is the letter that she wrote to her husband thanking him for standing beside her when she was sick. How much do we miss this kind of supreme relationship between man and woman in Arab societies!⁽⁶⁵⁹⁾

It seems that the novelist shows this obstacle directly by allowing the protagonist to vent her feelings about the problem of lack of support between men and women in society. It is clear that the protagonist misses this support from the people around her, which suggests that women need the support of special relatives such as husband, father and brother, etc. On the other hand, this problem is highlighted through the events of the novel where it is depicted as a social matter. As previously mentioned, Fawziya demands to have the right to lead the journal, but she is not supported by the men in the department which has a bad effect on her work and forces her to make the decision to quit. When Ghāda becomes the leader, she suffers from the same kind of problem when the men's department does not support her in her quest to prove herself in her job.

Characterisation is used as one of the novelist's techniques to deliver her message and she utilises two methods to introduce the protagonist of the novel. The first is the direct method.⁽⁶⁶⁰⁾ It appears when she describes Ghāda's attributes in a way that presents her as an example of a militant woman who fights to prove herself despite the difficulties. The protagonist is presented in various aspects such as: her physical characteristics, her feelings and her intelligence. She directly shows how Ghāda is beautiful by describing the details of her body such as her legs, buttocks, hair, eyebrows, skin and bosom. Her beauty, as we have seen, is implied here to examine the traditional idea that a woman's beauty is used to prove herself and to reach success. She wants to say that women can use their beauty for different goals as is well known in Saudi society, but, there is also a matter of other attributes, their wisdom, mind and hard-work that can lead them to success. The protagonist is also directly described in the presentation of her hobbies when the novelist tells us:

⁽⁶⁵⁹⁾See: *ibid.*p.59.

⁽⁶⁶⁰⁾See: Baldick. p. 37.

Ghāda has different hobbies: Woodcarving to make different frames from Islamic Decoration, Flower arranging and her mania for reading and when she became a teenager, she spent most of her time on reading international literature such as Chekhov and Virginia Woolf.⁽⁶⁶¹⁾

From this full description of the protagonist's hobbies, the reader can read Ghāda's character; she could be thought of as the carrier of the novelist's message; woodcarving and flower arranging suggests that the protagonist was an aesthete and an artist who had understood the value of the aesthetic ever since childhood. That she reads international writers suggests that Ghāda is knowledgeable and it is clear, too, that she started to build her knowledge when she was a teenager. The presentation of the message carrier (Ghāda) in such a positive way is one of the instruments that novelists employ to clarify problems and by using this technique she pictures the protagonist in a way that attracts the receiver's sympathy. However, it is also noticeable that the novelist exaggerates her attributes by having Ghāda use sophisticated language. It is unlikely that a secondary school child uses very complicated language and has mature ideas. For example, the novelist goes back to the protagonist's childhood to show her criticism of the Arabic poet Jubrān Khalīl Jubrān⁽⁶⁶²⁾ (1883-1931) when she said to her teacher:

Why does Jubrān always sing about his homeland?! And if the homeland is the safe refuge for a person, why did he leave it behind preferring to live in a very far away land until his expatriation devoured him; after which he died alone and his body was covered by foreign sand.⁽⁶⁶³⁾

It is obvious that this cannot be the language of a secondary school child since it carries a strong idea, poetic words and metaphoric language. Logic is very important when the novelist describes the characters, especially if she tackles social issues that should be gleaned from the society in question; and the writer's exaggeration in the characterisation of her protagonist's language is hardly convincing.

The novel starts with a stress on the idea that the protagonist has a point to make and a message that needs to be delivered to the women in her society and these appear via different attitudes played out in the novel. At the same time Ghāda is challenged by her friends and

⁽⁶⁶¹⁾See: Ḥafnī. p.13.

⁽⁶⁶²⁾Jubrān Khalīl Jubrān was a famous Lebanese-American artist, poet, and writer and he is considered to be one of the most important writers in the Mahjar literature.

⁽⁶⁶³⁾See: *ibid.*p.13.

journalist colleagues in a world led by the patriarchal system, and in which she cannot succeed. This is demonstrated through the conversation between Ghāda and Nashwā when Ghāda express her wishes to be a famous journalist, and her friend replies:

Excuse me! I have never heard of a Saudi female who shot to fame as a journalist. You, my darling, live in a country handcuffed by many social restrictions that will obstruct your ambitions. Do not forget that we live in a patriarchal society.⁽⁶⁶⁴⁾

The protagonist ponders this and she replies:

I will prove to you that a woman is able to go on this bumpy path if she possesses will, intention and determination.⁽⁶⁶⁵⁾

In spite of these challenges, she does not hesitate, and she works harder to prove to society that women are able to enter the world of the Press and succeed, despite the difficulties. To achieve this goal, the novelist shows women's success in proving themselves in this society through different ways:

Firstly, the protagonist proves herself in her work from the first task she takes on when her first report is published although it is a lengthy one. The editor-in-chief allows the report (which is about the importance of a direct arrangement between universities and the labour market), to be published in two parts, because of its value.⁽⁶⁶⁶⁾ In addition, because of Ghāda's success in her job as a result of her efforts in preparing reports, the editorial board chooses her to be the youngest department president compared with the presidents of departments in other local newspapers in the country.⁽⁶⁶⁷⁾ She continues to succeed and becomes the president of the women's department where she tackles different social issues and also submits a distinguished report that updates the department.⁽⁶⁶⁸⁾ The protagonist shows her staying power when she faces difficulties in proving that women can overcome obstacles that impede their progress.⁽⁶⁶⁹⁾

Another aspect of the novelist's point that women can succeed in the world of the Press is that the reader is shown that, in the beginning, Ghāda's father was not happy for her to quit

⁽⁶⁶⁴⁾See: *ibid.*p.13.

⁽⁶⁶⁵⁾See: *ibid.* P.45.

⁽⁶⁶⁶⁾See: *ibid.* p.52.

⁽⁶⁶⁷⁾See: *ibid.* p.98.

⁽⁶⁶⁸⁾See: *ibid.* p.127.

⁽⁶⁶⁹⁾See: *ibid.* p.108.

her job as a teacher in order to work in the media. When she told him of her plan, he shouted at her and warned her that she would lose much if she left the job in government. He swears that he is not going to help her if she chooses this job.⁽⁶⁷⁰⁾ Through this event, the novelist attempts to show her father's initial attitude towards her dream and his prejudice against her ambitions. He is supposed to support her in her attempt to fulfil her ambitions but he leaves her to manage on her own. Through this, the writer also wants to show the prevailing idea in Saudi society that women are not able to succeed in the Press. However, after Ghāda becomes a journalist, her relationship with her father changed; he always asks about her recent reports and he discusses the substance of the subjects that she presents with her and encourages her to choose the issues which concern their society.⁽⁶⁷¹⁾ The change in the presentation of the father's way of dealing with his daughter is considered to be an implicit recognition of what Ghāda has achieved in the Press, since it also conveys the idea that women can possibly change the dominant man's thoughts about her, whenever they are given an opportunity to prove themselves. The novelist stresses the possibility of changing the father's mind about her job and therefore, an aspect of the patriarchal system, when he says on his deathbed:

I stood against your ambitions in the past but I admit today that I was wrong. I wish to live longer just to see your successes but it seems that destiny will not reprieve me to see this day.⁽⁶⁷²⁾

3.1.3. The end of the novel

The novelist chooses the title "I No Longer Cry" and connects it to the end of the novel in support of her point of view that is, that women should be encouraged to prove themselves in their society. It has been emphasised that the title is a clear reference to a new era for women represented by Ghāda and that it is possible that this era could be formed without tears and with no room for surrender or defeatism.⁽⁶⁷³⁾ The end of the novel is clearly linked with the title when the protagonist is shown in a contemplative mood thinking about her story and considering her problems and her achievements. The light is shed when she remembers her problem with her first love, Zayd, who left her after his sexual desires had been fulfilled. She

⁽⁶⁷⁰⁾See: *ibid.* p.43.

⁽⁶⁷¹⁾See: *ibid.* pp.80-81.

⁽⁶⁷²⁾See: *ibid.* p.156.

⁽⁶⁷³⁾See: *al-Rifā'ī.* p.238.

also remembers how her lover Talāl left her, his country and his principles about women's rights when he faces the first difficulty. She also remembers how she lost her parents and her best friend Nashwā who dies after suffering from leukaemia.⁽⁶⁷⁴⁾ These memories and their detrimental effects on the protagonist are portrayed in such a way that the reader might be led to think that she will stop fighting to prove herself in her society because she is frustrated and her morale, low. However, she recovers herself and starts to talk to herself:

Time has not passed yet. I am not going to throw myself in the water as it is said in the Chinese proverbs. I must live with the hope of tomorrow and cling to my dream for the future. I am not going to let my life be like a feather thrown by the wind of memories. I have to ride the horse of my will to go forward to the gardens of the future with an optimistic spirit. There are many things I need to fight for. I have many big issues that need a desperate defence.⁽⁶⁷⁵⁾

The novelist chooses an open ending as a symbol of the idea that the issue itself is left to women in Saudi society to deliver the message that society is not going to allow women's status to change. For this reason, women must work in a united way to achieve their rights and prove themselves so that they can contribute effectively to their society. The last sentence in the novel is uttered when the protagonist stands up in front of a mirror and wipes her tears repeating: "No tears after today".⁽⁶⁷⁶⁾ The novelist suggests that the solution to the problem of male dominance as discussed in the above analysis is that if they want to introduce themselves to society, it is up to women themselves.

To summarise, Elaine Showalter's theory is based on the reconsideration of women's literature, historically, in order to recognise the phases that their writing has passed through and to establish the characteristics of women's writings from stage to stage. Through an analysis of Zaynab Ḥafnī's novel it appears that in tackling society's power over women, writers employed a new tactic when they started to look deeply into the country's institutions and to criticise them; which in turn, heralded a new stage, based on the idea of reformation. The novel clearly shows that the governmental system contributes to the prevention of women from proving themselves since, for example, it is illegal for women to choose her career or type of work, if her father does not want it. Also, the Press, which is supervised by

⁽⁶⁷⁴⁾ See: Ḥafnī. p.156.

⁽⁶⁷⁵⁾ See: *ibid.* p.157.

⁽⁶⁷⁶⁾ See: *ibid.* p.157.

the government in Saudi Arabia, does not trust a woman even though highly qualified, to be a leader. As a result, Saudi female novelists' political vision appears to become wider during this stage. Since they tackle society's power over women through a focus on public authority, they expand their view concerning the power exerted over women to include governmental power as one of the important reasons for the low status of women in Saudi society.

2.2. The Effects of the Tribal System on the Formation of the Relationships between the Two Sexes

In the previous section the first theme tackled in Saudi women's novels in the fourth stage, namely, society's authority over women was examined. This section is devoted to an exploration of the second theme, which treats the relationships between men and women in Saudi society. Through this, the reader can recognise the changes that appeared in the themes of the novels at this stage. This change is the focus of Elaine Showalter's theory when she suggests that researchers study women's literature through women's history and by finding out the most important changes that appeared in their writings. She emphasises that the themes found in women's writings are one of the most important subjects that should be tackled when studying women's novels. Therefore, this section will shed light on the second theme through an analysis of ʿĀʾisha al-Ḥaṣhr's novel, *Saqar* (Hell).

The reason why this novel has been chosen to represent the novels published during this stage that tackle the second theme under discussion is its clear vision in describing the problems played out in the novel. In this section the viewpoints of female novelists of this period in general, and which can be found in this novel, are widely discussed; for example, the issue of a change of ideas about men in Saudi society. In addition, the novelist, as mentioned below, is considered to be one of the foremost Saudi activists concerned with women's rights.

ʿĀʾisha al-Ḥaṣhr is a Saudi Arabian writer who was born in a region in southern Saudi Arabia called ʿAsīr. The novelist published two novels preceded by a book entitled: *Khalf Aswār al-Haramlik* which is about the rights of women. The novelist is classified as an activist Saudi

Arabian woman who defends women's rights and calls for the resistance of certain systems in society. She published another novel entitled *Tashazzī* in 2011.⁽⁶⁷⁷⁾

3.2.1. Characterisation

The novel revolves around the experiences of the two main characters representing the new generation who carry their own ideas about how to form relationships between men and women. The novelist's criticism of the traditional way of finding partners appears through the two main characters' struggles with their society regarding its principles. It is important to present the main problem that the novelist attempts to tackle by displaying the main characters' backgrounds in order to show that even though they grow up in the same society, their thoughts are formed differently.

The first character and the protagonist, Mahā is represented in this novel as a girl from a well-known tribe in the area. The novelist does not describe the characters directly; rather, the reader can see their characteristics through the events of the novel. In addition, she employs the events of the novel to show certain aspects of the antagonist in order to criticise traditional characters. For example, through the events of the novel, the observer can see that Mahā has a rich understanding of a variety of areas, such as literary criticism, music and painting and by delivering this idea, the writer highlights her father's ignorance, which represents traditional society. This is apparent when she explains how she found the books that she is reading when her father bought them merely to decorate a part of his house. Then °Abd Allāh asks her:

- So your father loves reading.
- No.. my father did not even open one of these books, and until now, he does not know what those books contain but when someone from the city wanted to get rid of his library, my father thought that this library fits with a part of our house because the shelves are good and the books were well organised... So we got a library but no one reads the books except me.⁽⁶⁷⁸⁾

⁽⁶⁷⁷⁾ See: Dārat al-Malik °Abd al-°Azīz, *Qāmūs al-Adab wa al-Udabā' fi al-Mamlaka al-°Arabiyya al-Su°ūdiyya*, unpublished dictionary.

⁽⁶⁷⁸⁾ See: al-Ḥashr, °Āisha, *Saqar*, (Beirut: Arab Scientific Publishers, 2008), p.45.

From this dialogue, the reader can see how the protagonist gained her knowledge and she is shown through her different conversations to be highly cultivated. This is one of the aspects of the cultivated characters in Saudi novel where reading various books contributes to forming their thoughts.⁽⁶⁷⁹⁾ By emphasising this idea, the novelist also wants to deliver a clear message, that the educational system in Saudi Arabia does not prepare women to be cultivated. This message is strongly stressed in the passage where the novelist creates a partial event to show how the educational system forms girls in Saudi Arabia. This idea is demonstrated when she uses the flashback technique, returning to Asmā^c's earlier years in primary school where the teacher has a bad affect on her feelings and her life. Asmā^c believes that the teacher is always right and that she is going to guide her in the right way. The teacher tells her about the torment of guilt that she will suffer in her grave and in hell on Doomsday if she does not become a good Muslim. The child heard a lot about the levels of torment in the grave such as the existence of a very big snake called al-Shujā^c al-Aqra^c.⁽⁶⁸⁰⁾ The information dominates the child's life where she saw the torment of the grave in her dreams, and her fear of snakes caused her to wet the bed every night.⁽⁶⁸¹⁾ The novelist digresses here to show how the educational system destroys Saudi girls and undermines their confidence and she concludes with the story of Asmā^o who according to her diagnosis suffers from paranoid schizophrenia.⁽⁶⁸²⁾

This event naturally leads the reader to make comparisons between Asmā^o and Mahā in terms of their personality and their knowledge since the effects of the educational system on them both is examined. However, the novelist wants to suggest the idea that reading books plays an important role in protecting Mahā from these negative effects. Through her own efforts ever since she was a teenager, the protagonist fortified herself from the consequences of the bad effects of educational practices in Saudi Arabia.

The idea of criticising a governmental ministry, which, in this novel, is the Ministry of Education, is one of the innovations that appeared in the theme of women's novel in this

⁽⁶⁷⁹⁾See: al-Shāy^c, Mahā, *Shakhṣiyya al-Muthaqaf fī al-Riwāya al-Su'ūdiyya*, (Riyadh: Dār al-Mufradāt Li'l-Nashr wa'l-Tawzī^c, 2009), p 361.

⁽⁶⁸⁰⁾ This idea came from the Islamic religion and is emphasised by many Islamic intellectuals. For example, Ibn Taymiyya refers to the torment in the grave. See: Ibn Taymiyya, Aḥmad. *Majmū^c Fatāwā Shaykh al-Islam Aḥmad Ibn Taymiyya*. (Cairo: Dār al-Wafā^o, 3rd ed, 2005, Part 4), p.248.

⁽⁶⁸¹⁾See: al-Ḥashr. *Saqar*. p.25.

⁽⁶⁸²⁾See: *ibid*. p.63.

stage. This kind of criticism is based on the idea of reformation after the revelations concerning society that appear in the world of Saudi women's novels in the previous stage. The appearance of any criticism of the government was absent in the previous stages, however, in this stage it becomes a phenomenon which can be considered to be one of its characteristics. In the first section of this chapter it was noted that Zaynab Ḥafnī directed a sharp criticism of a Press that does not consider women when it appoints an editor-in-chief; and here °Ā'isha al-Ḥashr directs her criticism at the Ministry of Education in a society which prepares women to be subservient and silent. Since these practices oppress women, al-Ḥashr wants to pay attention to a change in the characterisation of the new generation of young men; and this could be seen as a change in female novelists' view of men in Saudi society.

The second main character represents a new generation of young men °Abd Allāh , who, to some extent, is portrayed differently than the negative picture of male figures in the previous stages. It is obvious, in the first stage, that Aḥmad, (who represents men in al-Rashīd's novel), returned to his family and let his lover down which suggests that men in conventional society support the traditional system.⁽⁶⁸³⁾ The result of the device of returning Aḥmad to his family and ignoring his lover Nawāl is that she rejects him and does not accept his apology, which suggests that women do not yet trust men. It is also seen in the third stage that the man, °Āmir, has been portrayed as a traitor who just uses love to fulfil his sexual enjoyment. As we noticed previously °Āmir did not believe that Nawāl loved him and trust him and he thought that she has had many sexual relationships. However, the character °Abd Allāh , in al-Ḥashr's novel thinks differently about marriage which suggests a central change in the Saudi female novelist's ideas about men. The writer attempts to show the former idea about men in some characters of the novel since they advise Mahā to distrust °Abd Allāh because men, in this kind of society, do not deserve women's trust. This is demonstrated when her colleague Fawziyya says:

Men are men whether they are old or young... they are all one type. Their concern is to entrap their prey.. Play with a girl's heart.. Reach her by titillating her feelings.⁽⁶⁸⁴⁾

⁽⁶⁸³⁾See: p 96 in this thesis.

⁽⁶⁸⁴⁾See: al-Ḥashr. *Saqar*. p.19.

The same attitude is shown when the novelist refers to Fawziya's story before she married in the traditional way. The idea that men cannot marry women if they have had a relationship with them is strongly emphasised by Fawziya's character.⁽⁶⁸⁵⁾ The purpose of illustrating this idea is to refute the dominant problem in women's minds about men in Saudi society and to show an apparent change in men's ideas about women. This is clear in Mahā's case when she did not believe Fawziya's idea about her lover and she is shown to be completely confident about him. It also appears when °Abd Allāh comes to Mahā's father and asks for her hand in marriage which is a clear reference to his absolute trust in Mahā even though she went out with him.⁽⁶⁸⁶⁾ The novelist is keen to describe the change in men's minds demonstrated when Mahā told °Abd Allāh about a case that happened in her place of work at school. This was about one of the students who collapses from time to time due to epileptic fits and the occasion when one of her friends went to call her parents to come and take her home. Then her brother came and took her, but the case had been unveiled and the school has discovered that with the plan was that her friend call her lover not her parents. The school found this out from her friend who tells another friend about the secret, after which it passed between the students and on to the head teacher. The importance of this particular action stems from °Abd Allāh's comment about this case when he says:

Her plan was excellent. The problem is her trust in someone who does not deserve this trust. If her friend had not betrayed her, she would have continued to meet her lover without problems.⁽⁶⁸⁷⁾

This comment switches from the idea that a man's view of relationships between the two sexes before marriage is that it is a casual affair that results in distrust, to the view that the relationship is now more serious for men, and that it ends in marriage. Another issue dealt with in this comment is that of the ever present problem of distrust, when men play the role of lover; and here the novelist tries to show a change in the idea.

According to the change made by Saudi women novelists about men at this stage, al-Ḥaṣhr describes °Abd Allāh positively, especially regarding his point of view about marriage before he gets to know Mahā. Therefore, she introduces °Abd Allāh in the first chapter of the novel by portraying the scene in which °Abd Allāh lays on the beach thinking about his trip to

⁽⁶⁸⁵⁾ See: *ibid.* p.79.

⁽⁶⁸⁶⁾ See: *ibid.* p. 92.

⁽⁶⁸⁷⁾ See: *ibid.* p. 65.

Saudi Arabia. The second main character in this novel is shown to be a well-educated man who has extensive knowledge from his reading and foreign travel. This knowledge has an affect on his life when he starts to see the relationship between the sexes differently. In this chapter, the novelist shows the conflicts between him and his traditional family in terms of marriage where it is shown that he is strictly against the traditional way. The writer employs comedy to criticise the traditional way of marriage and to show the change in the ways in which men choose their future wives. For example, ‘Abd Allāh’s mother keeps asking him about his marriage, trying to persuade him to allow her to look for his future wife. He, however, attempts to convince his mother that he wants to love his wife before the engagement and a woman’s looks are not enough to guarantee a happy life. Then his mother asks him:

- Son! You are not going to get engaged to a girl who is just beautiful, but I will make sure that she is well educated... just tell me what you want her to look like and I will look for a girl who suits you.
- I want her to be white with four wheels, two doors and sunroof. He said sarcastically... then he said, ‘I am a human being and I want a human being not a car with specifications’.
- Your brother and your three sisters got married... you were the only one who did not tell me about the girl that suited you and trust me to find her for you!!
- What about the girl’s dreams? Mother! What about her personality?! What about her thought? I have to make sure of these things, from my feelings about her, mother!⁽⁶⁸⁸⁾

This conversation shows the novelist’s change in ideas about men’s motives because here, men want to know their future wives before marriage and not because they are thinking of their sexual enjoyment as in previous stages; and the reason for this change is to build the idea of starting a family on the right basis. Through the means of comedy, the novelist conveys the change in men in the new generation when ‘Abd Allāh shows that women, from his society’s perspective, are only commodities with their own specifications, for sale. The criticism of the traditional way of marriage in society appears also in the characterization of Mahā since she refuses anyone who wants to marry her if she doesn’t know him because she thinks that marriage in Saudi society is contrary. This is because traditionally the marriage comes first and only then the woman starts to know the man who has become her husband.

⁽⁶⁸⁸⁾ See: *ibid.* p. 11.

Marriage made in this way, transfers her into an odalisque or slave because someone pays an amount of money, called *mahr*, (dowry) but it is, in Mahā's opinion, money used to buy her and take her into his house and under his authority.⁽⁶⁸⁹⁾

So it seems that the novelist presents the representatives of both sexes and their ambitions about their future partner as those of a new generation. The two characters meet each other in a bookstore when Mahā looks for a new collection of poems. When the attendant tells her that the collection is no longer available she groans. When the protagonist returns to the shelves to have another look at the books, someone has been there and left a piece of paper with a message inside:

Hello! I have the collection... I will bring it tomorrow at the same time and I will leave it outside, at the bookstore door and you can take it whenever you want. °Abd Allāh.⁽⁶⁹⁰⁾

The protagonist gets the collection as °Abd Allāh has suggested in the note and she goes through the collection until she reaches a poem entitled 'telegrams of love to an absent female' where he has underlined five lines in the poem:

I come to you.
While I shine the day.
I ask the seaports, the seas about you
I search in oysters about you
I come to you.⁽⁶⁹¹⁾

°Abd Allāh has written his telephone number after this poem, which means that he wants to contact her. Through this event, the reader realises that the novelist suggests that the meeting place itself symbolises the difference between the generations. That is, the bookstore is a symbol of the knowledge and awareness of the youth in Saudi Arabia because both characters are keen to learn from the best resources of knowledge, from books, rather than through the instructions of conventional society. Then the novelist attempts to show the traditional society's attitude through the natural relationship by emphasising that the tribal system plays an effective role in the formation of a relationship between the sexes. Through the novel's

⁽⁶⁸⁹⁾See: *ibid.* p. 16.

⁽⁶⁹⁰⁾See: *ibid.* p. 17.

⁽⁶⁹¹⁾See: *ibid.* p. 22.

scenes the novelist attempts to say that a tribal system does not allow women to know their future husbands before marriage although it is one of their most basic rights.

It is important to notice here that the novelist demonstrates a clear change in women's views on the problem of tribal systems. In this stage, the novelist shows the negative effect that the nature of social composition based in tribal racism and discrimination, underlined by the giving of daughters in marriage, has on Saudi women. The treatment of this problem had not been attempted in Saudi women's novels before, which may mean that the novelists of this stage were beginning to delve much more deeply into social issues in order to analyse women's problems.

3.2.2 The Generation's difficulties in society

The novelist highlights the difficulties that face both men and women in a tribal society that prevent them from formulating their relationships through choosing their own partner. It is worth noting here that in order to stress this idea the novelist always represents these difficulties as problems threatening both sexes especially when she attempts to tackle the issue of men's power. Therefore, she employs the actions and the conversations of the novel effectively to show how youth suffers from the traditional system, and these techniques can be divided into two sections:

Firstly, the novelist refers to the problem of tribal intolerance as one of the most apparent difficulties facing the new generation as it appears in the novel. This problem is highlighted and criticised by the novelist through the actions and the conversations in the novel. When °Abd Allāh agrees with Mahā that the end of their love story should be marriage, °Abd Allāh approaches her father asking for Mahā's hand in marriage. Later, however, her father refuses him and the reason for this rejection is revealed in the conversation between her father and her mother, which she hears when she is listening on the stairs. The father discovers that °Abd Allāh does not belong to any known tribe when he says to the mother:

- He is not suitable. This man is well-educated and has a great job and everyone knows him, commends him. I swear I work hard to find someone who knows his roots in order to accept him as a husband to my daughter but when I could not find the tribe he belongs to, I am not going to expose myself among my tribe.

- Of course! We are not going to accept him for our daughter as long as he is not a match to us.⁽⁶⁹²⁾

The act of refusing °Abd Allāh, and the dialogue which shows the reason for the refusal, reveal the central idea that the novelist wants to emphasise which is that the traditional system represented by the father and the mother forces the new generation to behave according to its instructions. Even though her parents' acceptance of her future husband and the right to determine her own future is a girl's basic right the novelist shows how much the tribal system controls girls in order to prevent them from enjoying their rights. This is demonstrated when Mahā comes to her father and says:

- Dad I. I agree to marry °Abd Allāh.
- What? Repeat what you said.
- I want to marry °Abd Allāh.
- Who asks for your opinion...?
- Islam gives me the right of rejection or agreement and I am not going to marry anyone except °Abd Allāh even if you kill me.

Then her father lunged at her and gave her a powerful slap, repeating:

- So you know him, whore! What did you say?! Islam?! You know Islam now...?!⁽⁶⁹³⁾

In this conversation the novelist shows that the tribal system works contrary to Islam since it is against the patriotic pride found in each tribe and the effects of the rivalry this causes between them. This problem also has different effects on society; for example, the problem of violence against daughters that many events in the novel describe. In addition, the problem of tribal intolerance is strongly attacked by Mahā through the conversation between her and °Abd Allāh after they know the father's attitude. This is shown when °Abd Allāh asks Mahā:

- Why does your father take pride in his tribe? Who is your grandfather? For what has he become known? What is his history?
- He has nothing else to be proud of. People are proud of their tribes and hang on to the traditions of the tribe because that is the only thing they have. Their grandfathers were very simple and what they achieve in their life is related to their ability to survive... I

⁽⁶⁹²⁾ See: *ibid.* p. 99.

⁽⁶⁹³⁾ See: *ibid.* p. 101.

hope you do not think that one of our grandfathers invented something or resisted for freedom. Edison is not my grandfather and nor is Che Guevara.⁽⁶⁹⁴⁾

She continues:

- Also, Nelson Mandela is not from our tribe, of course. Imagine, my father thinks that he is better than Mandela because Mandela is black...

Through this dialogue, the novelist shows other disadvantages of tribal intolerance because it is against nationalism and the religion of Islam, which is demonstrated when °Abd Allāh criticises the father's refusal to have him as his son-in-law. He looks at this from the father's point of view; he did not consider whether he is a Muslim or he is a Saudi Arabian man, when he did not accept him, but rather, he wanted something else, which turned out to be, a tribe.⁽⁶⁹⁵⁾ The novelist goes further in criticising the Ḥanbalī law school when she describes the judge's attitude as a consequence of Saudi culture. This is apparent when °Abd Allāh asks Mahā to go to the judge and ask him to conduct the marriage and Mahā told him that he is going to refuse because there can be no marriage without the family's consent.⁽⁶⁹⁶⁾

The reader can detect some artistic errors in the treatment of this issue because the main characters are obviously unaware of the nature of the tribal system in Saudi Arabia. This is shown in Mahā's and °Abd Allāh's decision to marry when they know nothing about the tribes in Saudi Arabia since tribes do not give their daughters in marriage if the man does not belong to a known tribe. The whole dialogue between Mahā and °Abd Allāh before he proposes marriage to Mahā was about how they might build their future and no one thinks that the marriage can be refused because of the tribal system. It is obvious that the novelist wants to demonstrate how the tribal system destroys their dreams especially when the scene is portrayed at the time when they are shocked by the father's reaction. However, this does not convince the reader who understands the nature of Saudi Arabian society.

Another artistic error, which can be related to the previous one, is that the novelist shows °Abd Allāh to be a person who does not understand the Ḥanbalī Madhhab of his country. This is obvious, when he asks Mahā to go to the judge, which is against the Madhhab which requires the attendance of a custodian. These errors contradict the picture outlined previously

⁽⁶⁹⁴⁾See: *ibid.* p. 103.

⁽⁶⁹⁵⁾See: *ibid.* p. 104.

⁽⁶⁹⁶⁾See: *ibid.* p. 105.

when the writer describes the main characters of the novel to be cultivated and to have a developed knowledge of different civilisations; so it is *a fortiori* to know the basics of marriage in their society.

Generally, it is important to highlight the structure of the tribal system in Saudi Arabia since in many parts of the novel the novelist is keen to illustrate it. This tribal system hinges on the idea of fear of scandal and the spreading of rumours which is strongly emphasised in the novel. Many of the motives behind the traditional family's way of dealing with Saudi Arabian lifestyle stem from reading the reaction of others in the society, and not from the interests of the family. There are different central events which refer to this panic such as the father's refusal of °Abd Allāh as Mahā's husband, because he thinks about the scandal should his tribe get to know that he gave his daughter in marriage to someone who did not belong to a known tribe.⁽⁶⁹⁷⁾ It is also apparent when Mahā's father decided to allow his daughter to go back to work and the reason for this is the fear of scandal. Again, this is clearly shown when Mahā's mother tells the father that many of Mahā's friends have telephoned to ask about her and some of them want to come and visit her and she says:

- What should I say to those people? There is no doubt that they have started to talk about her and our reputation.
- Listen.. I will let her go to school but I am going to drive her and pick her up. And she can meet the relatives when they visit us and apart from this she will stay in her room. She is not allowed to sit or eat with us.⁽⁶⁹⁸⁾

Another aspect of the tribal system illustrated in the novel is that this kind of system shows its commitment to the doctrine of Islam but in practice, it does not apply Islam if it contradicts the system of the tribe. One of the examples of this problem is related to the giving of daughters in marriage which happens in Mahā's story where she explains to her father that in the opinion of Islam in this situation, Islam gives her the right to accept or reject the man. However, because Islam's opinion does not fit in with the tribal system, the father controls Mahā's wishes and rejects the man that she wanted, and he then, chooses her future husband.

⁽⁶⁹⁷⁾See: *ibid.* p. 99.

⁽⁶⁹⁸⁾See: *ibid.* p. 122.

This system, with its particular contradictions, reflects an impossible situation that women have to endure, and which is described in the interpretation of the title of the novel (*Saqar*), that is, 'hell'. The protagonist explains the title in one of her conversations with °Abd Allāh which appears in Mahā's comment about the student who pretends epilepsy when she suggests that her future is over after her family finds out what happened. When °Abd Allāh says "Poor girl, I sympathise with her", Mahā replies:

- Are not we all pitied?! Are not we all like to be in hell?
- Why all of this pessimism? My love!
- Because this is the reality. Do not people in hell eat, drink, talk but they are tortured. And this is our situation as women! We eat, drink, talk and we are also tortured. In short, we are not happy at all.⁽⁶⁹⁹⁾

Secondly, the novelist refers to the *inequality between men and women* in society's practices that have been widely tackled in the previous stages. This difficulty is clarified through two important techniques; the first is by showing the problem directly through dialogue, for example, when °Abd Allāh and Mahā talk about different subjects before they meet each other. They find much common ground between them through these conversations and at the same time °Abd Allāh is trying to convince her to meet him so that they can see more of each other. However, Mahā is scared, even of their conversations on the phone, because of her fear of the power of an unjust social system which Mahā clearly criticises when she says:

Assume that our families know about our love story and our nightly conversations! What will happen? Is your father going to kill you? He is not going even to admonish you because you are a man! But me! The situation is different. It is not because I commit a sin, which differs from the one you commit... You and I do the same action, which is, talking together on the phone and society will see me as guilty and our guilt never becomes equal and our punishment is not going to be the same! Why? Because I am a woman!⁽⁷⁰⁰⁾

It is clear to the reader that the lover's attitude has changed from the negative position in the previous stages and as discussed in previous chapters. The novelist attempts to keep the reader aware by stressing through each event, the idea that the new generation takes a different position to the last generation since it supports women and trusts them. Through the

⁽⁶⁹⁹⁾See: *ibid*, p 65.

⁽⁷⁰⁰⁾See: *ibid*, p 66.

dialogue relating to this particular problem, the reader can see °Abd Allāh's positivity which is apparent in his language; for example, "Yes I know this about our society and I know more" "My love, calm down... This status can be changed with your patience and awareness and other women's" "You can write to the newspapers about this matter".⁽⁷⁰¹⁾

The second technique is through showing the way Mahā is punished, after her father finds out about her relationship with °Abd Allāh. When they break the traditional system and commit a mistake (from the point of view of the tribal system), the victim in this matter is Mahā and she, therefore, is punished by her father with different types of punishment. For example, she is imprisoned in her room, she is deprived of going to school to work and her father beats her. However, °Abd Allāh is not punished by his society even though he does the same thing as Mahā but because the novelist insists on the idea of a change in men of the new generation, she shows °Abd Allāh to be yet another victim of unjust practices. He suffers when he hears that Mahā marries another man and because of his stress, he drives his car up the hill after drinking alcohol, and, hugging Mahā's photo he allows the car to career down the hill. Unable to move because most of his bones are broken °Abd Allāh is taken to hospital and admitted to the intensive care unit.⁽⁷⁰²⁾

The end of the struggle between the tribal system and the new generation is a tragic one since the protagonist's heart is broken when she is forced to marry someone she does not want and does not choose. The end also witnesses the breaking of °Abd Allāh's body after the tribal system destroys his dreams and separates him from his lover. However, this end raises many questions of the system that are aligned with the objective of the novel. These questions are raised after Mahā hears of °Abd Allāh's condition when his niece telephones just as her father enters into the room. She attacks him, beating his chest and screaming: "You are the reason! I am not going to forgive you. Allāh is not going to forgive you... I hate you I hate you".⁽⁷⁰³⁾ Then he slaps her but he does not have her locked up; then he retires to his room, puts his head in his hands and cries. He wishes, from the bottom of his heart, that he was able to give his daughter to the one she loves and chooses to marry but he cannot do that because of the tribal system. The novelist shows that he realises that he is weak even though he is physically

⁽⁷⁰¹⁾See: *ibid*, p 67.

⁽⁷⁰²⁾See: *ibid*. p. 157.

⁽⁷⁰³⁾See: *ibid*. p. 158.

stronger than his daughter but he is weak because he stands against the weakest. He thinks that if he is strong, then he must support his daughter and resist these traditions and customs and if he is not a weak man, he must fight for his daughter's happiness.⁽⁷⁰⁴⁾ So this tragic end sheds light on the problem and makes the author's criticism more effective because the reader can see that the tribal system has detrimental effects on both the victim and the offender.

To summarise, this section focuses on an examination of the second theme that Saudi female novelists attempt to tackle in their novels. Elaine Showalter's theory emphasises the idea of the history of women's literature in order to see the development of women's writings. According to her theory, research into the theme of their writing is essential in order to observe the development of women's thoughts. Therefore, in the light of her theory, the analysis of al-Ḥashr's novel shows that Saudi women's novels witness a change in their ideas about men where they think that their views on women has changed. This is to insist on the idea that the generation, whether members are men or women, should cooperate in an attempt to reject traditional ideas about women. Since she criticises Saudi society, al-Ḥashr has the courage to question the Saudi educational system which somehow contributes to perpetuating women's unequal status in society.

3. Comparisons and contrasts

It is apparent, through the analysis of the two novels, *I No Longer Cry* by Zaynab Ḥafnī and *Hell* by ʿĀ'isha al-Ḥashr that a new method of treating our two themes was adopted by novelists. Their courage is obvious when they criticise governmental systems, which they view to be one of the reasons for the low status of women in their society. Since some of the Saudi female novelists of the previous stages directed their discourse at society in order to diagnose, criticise and revolt, their discourse is directed at the government in an attempt to reform. Both novels analysed in this chapter reveal this tendency since al-Ḥashr criticises the ministry of education and Ḥafnī criticises the Press organisations. Therefore, this section is devoted to proving that this characteristic exists in some others novels of this stage. Constraints of size and space prevent the analysis and evaluation of all the 119 novels published in this period. Eight novels have been chosen, therefore, from this period, and the two novels of our model for a discussion and comparison of themes. Our remarks here as

⁽⁷⁰⁴⁾See: *ibid.* p. 158.

elsewhere in the thesis therefore pertain to the novels evaluated and may or may not tune with others that have not been surveyed.

The first theme examined is the power of society over women which has been tackled by Samar al-Mugrin in her novel *Nisā' al-Munkar* (the Women of Vice) (2008). This novel directs sharp criticism of the three powers; the legislative, executive, and judicial. The novelist chooses the first person narrator to convey her point of view through Sāra who is the protagonist of her novel. The novel revolves around a girl who suffers from society's rules, as they do not allow rights for women. Her conflicts with her society lead her to be imprisoned and in the prison, she listens to the imprisoned women where the most apparent reason for their problems is society's injustice and the loss of women's rights. Therefore, through a careful reading of the novel, the reader can find the key sentence of the issue that the novelist attempts to tackle when the narrator says:

Because I am a Saudi woman who must suffer from inferiority since she did not get any of her rights.⁽⁷⁰⁵⁾

This sentence is the starting point that the novelist uses to tackle the problem of society's power over women. The word "Saudi woman" suggests that the problem belongs to women who live in Saudi Arabia. The word "inferiority" indicates the psychological status of women in Saudi Arabia from the novelist's point of view. The word "any of her rights" suggests society's practice with women, as it is the only reason for their low status. This careful diagnosis shows that the novelist has gone far in treating women's problems in the novel, because it reveals a development in the female writer's method in tackling this theme at this stage.

Through her novel, the writer accuses the government of preventing women from gaining their rights; and this is apparent through her criticism of the three powers. Her criticism of the legislative power appears sometimes through her criticism of the regime and sometimes through examples of the way legislation is carried out. The novelist criticises the regime through the narrator's direct criticism of Wahhabism, which is at the foreground of the Saudi Arabian regime in her viewpoint. In one of her comments on the status of women in society

⁽⁷⁰⁵⁾See: al-Muqrin, Samar, *Nisā' al-Munkar*, (Beirut: Dār al-Sāqī, 2nd Ed, 2008), p. 27.

the narrator emphasises that the extremism of Wahhabism has stolen many things from women's lives.⁽⁷⁰⁶⁾ In addition, the narrator shows that Saudi legislation neglects to legislate in terms of what is important to women, which is illustrated when the narrator says: We, as Saudi women, still timidly or sometimes fearfully call for women's right to drive a car.⁽⁷⁰⁷⁾

Since the novelist criticises the legislative power through her criticism of the regime and the way it rules the country, she also directs sharp criticism at one example of executive power when it uses the system against women's rights and freedoms. This example appears when the narrator criticises al-Hayah, which is one of the executive organisations, in their way of dealing with women. For example, the novelist shows through the narrative, the lack of women's freedom in shop centres when she portrays how the members of al-Hayah hound women, asking them to cover themselves.⁽⁷⁰⁸⁾ The writer shows that they employ the waiters in restaurants to spy on the customers if they suspect any forbidden relationship.⁽⁷⁰⁹⁾ Therefore, when she has dinner with her lover Ra'if, the members of al-Hayah attack them and take them to al-Hayah's centre where she is cursed, beaten and kicked.⁽⁷¹⁰⁾ The novelist compares London with al-Riyadh to show how different it is for lovers when the protagonist meets Ra'if and they express their love freely by describing a poetic moment in Hyde park.⁽⁷¹¹⁾

The novelist also criticises the judicial system in the country when it denies women their rights. This is shown when the protagonist speaks of her suffering in the court after she has spent six years waiting for divorce papers. Her description of the scene in the court building has an artistic purpose⁽⁷¹²⁾ because it shows that her attendance there has no effect. In addition, the novelist shows contradictions in judicial power because women are judged in a way that infringes Islamic law. For example, this is shown when the narrator is in prison and talks to women who have been imprisoned for love and one of them has been given four years and seven hundred lashes. Commenting on this judgement, the narrator says:

⁽⁷⁰⁶⁾See: *ibid*, p 11.

⁽⁷⁰⁷⁾ See: *ibid*, p 22.

⁽⁷⁰⁸⁾ See: *ibid*, p 12.

⁽⁷⁰⁹⁾ See: *ibid*, p 39.

⁽⁷¹⁰⁾See: *ibid*, pp 41-45.

⁽⁷¹¹⁾See: *ibid*, pp 20-21.

⁽⁷¹²⁾See: *ibid*, p 8.

Even Allāh , in *Sūrat al-Nūr*,⁽⁷¹³⁾ punishes the adulterer, male or female, by a hundred lashes. I do not know how this number has doubled and from which law this number comes!!⁽⁷¹⁴⁾

In comparison, in her novel *Sīqān Multawiya* (Crooked Legs) 2008 Zaynab Ḥafnī treats this theme partly in the way the writers used in the previous stage and partly in new ways. The protagonist of her novel Sāra is born and grows up in London where she gets to know a different culture that insists on freedom for any woman who reaches 18 years of age. However, because she lives with an eastern family, her father does not approve of her insistence on freedom and he uses violence to deal with the situation. In general, the novel revolves around the daughter's attitude and the family status, and the way decisions are made on the matter. It is clear that the novelist wants to tackle the problem of society's power over women and therefore, for the purposes of this thesis, it is important to see how the novelist tackles this problem.

An analysis of the novels shows that in the previous stage, a new method appeared in women's treatment of society's power; and the world of some novels witnesses a women's revolution either through violence or through the picture of the female protagonist leaving her unfair society.⁽⁷¹⁵⁾ Ḥafnī's novel discusses this matter through concentrating on two important paths. The first path, which is also seen in the previous stage, appears in Sāra's revolution against the society's traditions, and in her bid to choose her own life, which is based on the freedom of women. The conversation between Sāra and her father demonstrates the conflict between the two ideas; the traditional idea and the modernist one which appears when the father asks:

- Where were you? Oh daughter of the dog!
- I am not underage to report my daily movements. Yesterday was my twenty third birthday! It means I am an adult.⁽⁷¹⁶⁾

⁽⁷¹³⁾ Al-Nūr chapter in Qur'ān.

⁽⁷¹⁴⁾ See: *ibid*, p 57.

⁽⁷¹⁵⁾ See: p 156 and p 171 in this thesis.

⁽⁷¹⁶⁾ See: Ḥafnī, Zaynab, *Sīqān Multawiya*, (Beirut: al-Mu'assasa al-^cArabiyya li al-Dirasāt wa al-Nashr, 2008), p 16.

The father beats her violently and because of his attitude, she decides to leave home. Before she leaves, she writes a note, which says: “do not look for me”. Here, the novelist wants to emphasise that women will turn to revolution as a result of violence against them. She also hints that the rules in Saudi Arabia do not fulfil women’s rights and freedoms because they allow the family and men to practice their authority over women. This meaning is demonstrated when Sāra chooses to be free and renounce the repression of the family when she has the backing of the law. The second path is a new characteristic that appeared at this stage; that is that the novelist criticises the Saudi government as being the most important reason for women’s low status in society. For example, in comparison with Samar al-Muqrin’s novel, Zaynab Ḥafnī makes direct criticism of the justice system in the country. The novelist employs the flashback technique to show that the system judges according to a person’s sex; and this supports sexism and inequality between men and women. It appears in the scene when Sāra remembers her trip with her family to Saudi Arabia and the conversation when Sāra asks her cousin about the reason for her divorce and she replies:

- In our country there are not convincing justifications for divorce. It is enough for the man to say that he does not want his wife any more; then the judge will immediately approve his request.
- What if a woman wants to divorce?
- Then she must justify her request...⁽⁷¹⁷⁾

In addition, the novelist shows the power of al-Hay⁹ah over women and its effect which restricts women’s freedom and appears in many parts of the novel.⁽⁷¹⁸⁾ The novelist’s point is made at the end of the novel when Sāra insists on her right to choose her husband Ziyād outside her country.⁽⁷¹⁹⁾ The reader will compare this scene with the one where the judge separates two married lovers because of the difference in their lineage.⁽⁷²⁰⁾ Also, the writer’s intention is shown through the monologue when Sāra thinks about her country and her father, saying:

I hate the ingratitude and I do not hate my country, but I refuse to live in a land that seizes my freedom because of traditions and customs.⁽⁷²¹⁾

⁽⁷¹⁷⁾ See: *ibid*, p 102.

⁽⁷¹⁸⁾ See for example: *ibid*, p 101,103.

⁽⁷¹⁹⁾ See: *ibid*, p 124.

⁽⁷²⁰⁾ See: *ibid*, p 108.

⁽⁷²¹⁾ See: *ibid*, p 127.

In the context of the whole novel, this sentence suggests that the Saudi women's novel in this stage uses a new method of tackling the theme of society's powers over women and their desire for reformation of the country's rules in order to fulfil women's rights. It also reveals a development in the way that Saudi female novelists in this stage treat this important issue; and it also shows a newly acquired courage in addressing such political topics.

In contrast with these two novels, Laylā al-Juhanī's novel *Jāhiliyya* (Times of Ignorance) (2007) does not criticise governmental systems in Saudi Arabia even though it tackles the problem of discrimination. As in the previous stages, the novel's focus is on the effect of tribal discrimination on women when they fall in love with men who are unsuitable because they do not stem from the same roots as their own family. It is possible to say that this novel falls within the second theme as it treats the relationship between the two sexes, but the novelist's focus also invites us to classify it with the first theme because she concentrates on society in general as will be seen later. The novel does, at the same time, treat another social issue, which is the problem of society's discrimination against blacks.⁽⁷²²⁾

The novel revolves around the story of Līn who falls in love with a black man; and the novel shows the couple's conflicts with their society's traditions. As has already been noted, tackling the problem of tribal society's concerns about the importance of the tribal roots of a person who proposes marriage, is one of the new themes that appear in this stage.⁽⁷²³⁾ The author's way of addressing this problem, is by portraying the tribal system through two means; the first appears through the monologue technique since the father is shown as sympathetic with his daughter's need to marry the one she loves but he is also shown as being scared about her dark future when he remembers what happened in a similar case. For example, after Mālik comes to her father to ask his daughter's hand in marriage, the novelist describes the father's anxiety showing that he had not slept for two nights thinking about what would happen to his daughter if he said, Yes:

She will be happy for a short time but she will suffer for a long time. He believes that people will not let her alone; they will talk about her and

⁽⁷²²⁾ See: Alhasoun, p 277.

⁽⁷²³⁾ See pp 116-121 in this thesis.

despise her. He believes that they will not settle for discussion but they will attempt to change what they do not want.⁽⁷²⁴⁾

The father remembers many stories relating to this problem such as the two youths who kidnap their cousin and her husband ordering the husband to divorce his wife and when he refuses, killed him.⁽⁷²⁵⁾ It is unusual in Saudi women's novels to find the picture of the father who symbolises the patriarchal system in this way. However, picturing the father as such is an intelligent technique, in that it conveys the idea that the system controls the members of society, even if they do not accept its traditions; and this suggests both the difficulty of changing the system and also provides clear evidence of women's suffering under such regimes.

The second method is achieved by showing what the supporters of the tribal system do to root the traditional practices in their society. This is described through the character of Līn's brother Hāshim who is considered to be a product of society's culture. Although the world of some of the fourth stage's novels which are mentioned in this thesis shows the change in the new generation of men since they trust women, this novel shows Hāshim differently. Alhasoun refers to this when he states that Hāshim 'is young and one expects him to be free of much that hampers the older generations but, on the contrary, the novel reveals him as more shackled by the outmoded codes than his own father'.⁽⁷²⁶⁾ An example of this appears in the scene when he comes to his sister's room and looks everywhere to find evidence to show to his father which justifies his revolution against his sister.⁽⁷²⁷⁾ Hāshim's character reveals that the tribal system does not set justice rather it enables men to use its rules for fulfilling their desires and putting pressure on women. Since Hāshim's character is full of contradictions, it is used as one of the novelist's methods to convey her points of view. The novelist uses the flashback technique to show how Hāshim deals with Saḥar in order to reveal one of his contradictions. It appears when the narrative flows concerning Saḥar:

She did what she did by her choice. He did not force her to do anything and he did not promise her anything. He thought that he loved her but after the

⁽⁷²⁴⁾See: al-Juhanī, Laylā, *Jāhiliyya*, (Beirut: Dār al-Ādāb, 2nd Ed, 2008), 125.

⁽⁷²⁵⁾See: *ibid*, 125.

⁽⁷²⁶⁾ Alhasoun, p 280.

⁽⁷²⁷⁾ See: al-Juhanī, *Jāhiliyya*, p 18.

blood dropped between her thighs, everything is over; the happiness of knowing her is over, the longing to touch her is over...⁽⁷²⁸⁾

The novelist shows the pain that his ignorance causes Saḥar and through Saḥar's reaction to it when she insists on meeting him to discuss something important. When she meets him, she speaks one sentence, "Life is credit oh Hāshim! You have a sister and tomorrow you will regret"⁽⁷²⁹⁾ and turns away from his car. After hearing this Hāshim doubts and distrusts his sister and all his behaviour after that is unacceptable to her. In other words, Hashim can have relationships with girls but his sister is certainly not allowed the same freedom.

The second theme tackled by Saudi female novelists in this stage is how they see the issue of women's relationships with men. This is demonstrated in an analysis of al-Ḥashr's novel where it seems that there are some changes made in the novelist's method of treating the theme. This change is shown through the change in women's ideas about men who fall in love with women before marriage.⁽⁷³⁰⁾ In addition, the novel shows a sharp criticism of the government which does not give women a right to get to know her future husband before marriage. In comparison, Badriyya al-Bishr's novel *al-Urjūḥa* (the Swing) (2010) represents a new aspect that appeared in women's writers' novels in this stage. The novel revolves around Maryam and two of her female friends; and the novelist utilises the flashback technique to describe the background of those characters. To examine the novelist's ideas the focus will be put on the character of Maryam and her relationship with Mushārī, which can be seen through two points:

Firstly, although the idea of exploitative man is a dominant idea in the women's novels in the previous stages,⁽⁷³¹⁾ the picture of man changes during this final stage since the events of this novel reveal an important innovation. The novel chosen to represent the second theme in this chapter shows the change which appears in the relationship between ʿAbd Allāh and Mahā.⁽⁷³²⁾ In comparison, Badriyya al-Bishr's novel shows the new idea in the scene when Maryam falls in love with Mushārī, and the novelist's point of view is revealed through the narrative when she says:

⁽⁷²⁸⁾ See: *ibid*, 24.

⁽⁷²⁹⁾ See: *ibid*, 25.

⁽⁷³⁰⁾ See pp 212-213 in this thesis.

⁽⁷³¹⁾ See p 122 and 160 in this thesis.

⁽⁷³²⁾ See pp 212-213 in this thesis.

She was a prisoner of the old stories which say that when the young man reaches his goal from a woman, he will leave her and look for another girl ... He was amorous and wanted to enjoy his love so his religious and social conscience did not ruin his love.⁽⁷³³⁾

In addition, the novelist shows the change in men's ideas about women in this case through the action of Mushārī who proposes to Maryam. Their love story ends in marriage, which suggests that the novelist attempts to show a different motive for the formation of the relationship between two sexes. In other words, the world of women's novels in this stage witnesses the idea that men of the new generation have changed, in particular in their opinion about love before marriage.

Secondly, one of the most apparent aspects of the treatment of this theme that appears in this novel is the idea of the effect of the governmental system on the relationship between the sexes even when they are married. This effect appears through the novelist's insistence on the freedom that has been emphasised in many parts of the novel. In order to express the importance of freedom, the novelist uses different methods such as making a comparison between the freedom in the western world and Saudi Arabia. She also emphasises the lack of freedom in Saudi Arabia in the scene when the protagonist's husband invites his friend and his wife for dinner in a restaurant. When the two families start to eat, members of al-Hay'ah group attack them and spoil the evening. The novelist does not refer to individual names, rather, she refers to each member of al-Hay'ah as, "One with a surly face"⁽⁷³⁴⁾ to symbolise his extremism.

Since the novelist criticises a governmental organisation, namely "al-Hay'ah", which she sees as having a bad affect on members of society and their freedom, she clarifies Mushārī's opinion about the previous scene. Mushārī's character in the novel describes a cultivated man who is knowledgeable and an excellent poet. Introducing Mushārī as this specific character may have the effect of preparing the reader to receive his discourse whether through dialogue or through his actions. Therefore, his comment about the scene is important in order to establish the novelist's opinion about al-Hay'ah practises and he summarises his criticism of

⁽⁷³³⁾See: al-Bishr, Badriyya. *Al-'Urjūḥah*. (Beirut: Dar al-Sāqī, 2010), p.17.

⁽⁷³⁴⁾See, for example, *ibid*, p 21, 22 and 24.

the whole political system when he says: Islam lost its moderation when the political power agreed with religion.⁽⁷³⁵⁾

In contrast, the novelist Rajā' al-Şāni^c through her novel *Banāt al-Riyād* (The Girls of Riyadh) 2005 does not criticise governmental systems in the way that the other novels tend to do. The focus of her criticism is on traditional society and the Saudi Arabian men who follow its traditions. In addition, the novelist draws a clear picture of ideal society for Saudi women according to her viewpoint, which shall be discussed. The novel revolves around the love stories of four girls from the capital city of Saudi Arabia, Riyadh, and through their stories, she reveals the picture of Saudi men as she understands them.

Through her treatment of the problem of relationships between the sexes, the novelist attempts to portray different types of Saudi men in order to emphasise women's difficulty in dealing with them since men appear to be full of contradictions. However, It is noted that the novelist refers usually to "Najdī" men⁽⁷³⁶⁾ and their extremism, which suggests sharp criticism of the men from this area. This method starts with the second stage when Şafiyya^c Anbar criticises Eastern men⁽⁷³⁷⁾ but al-Şāni^c makes this more specific when she specifies men from the region of Najd. The events of the novel show that Lamīs's experience is the only successful love affair among the girls' characters in this novel because she and her lover are from al-Ĥijāz region which suggests that men from Najd are extremist. It is worth referring here to Alhasoun's statement about the difference between people who live in the two Saudi regions when he states: "Even though she lives in Riyadh, Lamīs comes from Ĥijāzī roots and her young husband is Ĥijāzī; al-Ĥijāz is considered, by all standards, a region much more open than Najd or any other region in Saudi Arabia".⁽⁷³⁸⁾

Therefore, the most apparent focus of al-Şāni^c's novel is the picture of the men from Najd who are seen as having a weak personality which prevents them from fulfilling their love affairs and marrying the girls that they love. This is because they have to obey the orders of traditional families even though obedience comes at the expense of their happiness and their lovers'. This picture reveals men as weak in facing up to their families and strong in facing

⁽⁷³⁵⁾ See: *ibid*, p 23.

⁽⁷³⁶⁾ It is stressed in many parts of the novel that Najdī men are from the centre of Saudi Arabia (Najd).

⁽⁷³⁷⁾ See p 123 in this thesis.

⁽⁷³⁸⁾ Alhasoun, p 268.

up to their love and lovers. For example, after a very passionate love affair between Mashāʿil and Fayṣal, he eventually comes to her and explains that his mother does not agree that he marries her. He points out that she can imagine the results of challenging his family and that no power can stop their anger if he insists on his attitude about marrying her.⁽⁷³⁹⁾ The same scene appears via Firās who falls in love with Sadīm and he breaks this romantic relationship because his relatives and friends advise him to use his mind not his emotions, and he follows their advice.⁽⁷⁴⁰⁾ Through referring to these two men's cases the novelist wants to show the ways that the families use to control men; the first one, when she shows the direct confrontation which appears in Fayṣal's case. The second one is the family's ability to change their son's mind through convincing him that they are right, which appears in Firās's case.

Another picture of men drawn in *Banāt al-Riyād* is the image of an undecided man who makes a fateful decision based on his doubts. Sadīm's first relationship is with Walīd and the picture of his character appears after he asks for her hand in marriage; and they conduct the marriage contract before the wedding night. This contract allows him to visit her only in her family's house or to meet in public places such as restaurants. When Walīd wants the wedding to be earlier than the summer holiday, Sadīm refuses because she wants to focus on her study and wishes the wedding to be arranged for a time after she has completed her exams.⁽⁷⁴¹⁾ Sadīm feels that Walīd is not satisfied with her decision but although she is disappointed, she decides to make him happy and invites him to the family's house. She wears black diaphanous lingerie because she is now his legal wife. After having a beautiful night, he sends her a divorce letter because he thinks that she is too bold which means that he thinks she had relationships before him.⁽⁷⁴²⁾ The novelist uses the monologue of the character to convey her message which reveals the complicated psychology of Najd's youth as young men insist on having sex before the wedding but if they get what they want, they tend to think that the women are experienced.⁽⁷⁴³⁾

⁽⁷³⁹⁾ See: al-Sāni^c, Rajā³, *Banāt al-Riyād*, (Beirut: Dār al-Sāqī, 2005), p 129.

⁽⁷⁴⁰⁾ See: *ibid*, p 283.

⁽⁷⁴¹⁾ See: *ibid*, p 40.

⁽⁷⁴²⁾ See: *ibid*, pp 41-43.

⁽⁷⁴³⁾ See: *ibid*, pp 42.

The events drawn in the novel suggest that the author is keen to visualise an ideal society for Saudi girls represented in the picture of the house of the Kuwaiti lady Umm Nuwayyir. It is important to see the message in the choice of a Kuwaiti lady, which may be that to suggest the existence of such a strong character in Saudi society is fraught with difficulties. In Umm Nuwayyir's house, the girls gather with their lovers in order to understand one another and to express their feelings. However, the novelist is keen to show that it is impossible for them to be involved in forbidden relationships since Umm Nuwayyir takes on the role of control. When Umm Nuwayyir allows Mashā'il and Fayṣal to come to her house to protect their love, the narrator shows that from time to time she comes into the room to see if everything is going well. The narrator's comment on this scene is:

How nice is Umm Nuwayyir! In spite of her liberation, she cares about the four girls as much as her daughters. She obviously observes them in a nice way.⁽⁷⁴⁴⁾

In addition, Umm Nuwayyir plays the role of advisor when she often shares her experiences with them, in different scenes in the novel. Her house is employed to symbolise an excellent environment for the girls and it also symbolises the new generation of Saudi Arabian daughters.

In contrast, in her novel *Dhākira Bilā Wishāḥ* (A Memory with no Scarf) (2005), Ḥasna al-Qarnī shows a woman who wants to rebel against men in her society. This kind of treatment of this theme appears first in the third stage as we have seen in the analysis of Laylā al-Juhanī's novel.⁽⁷⁴⁵⁾ At the beginning of al-Qarnī's novel, the reader can notice the author's attempts to convey the message that the pressure of husbands over their wives in this society is inspired by their families. The ideas of machismo and masculinity are given more focus in many parts of the novel; for example in the scenes where the writer stresses the family's indulgence towards her brother Ebrāhīm, just because he is a male.⁽⁷⁴⁶⁾ Also, the novelist is keen to show that the girls in the family take these principles and adopt them with their husbands, which appears in the character of the narrator's sister Munīra since she is steeped in these bad traditions.⁽⁷⁴⁷⁾

⁽⁷⁴⁴⁾See: *ibid*, pp 106.

⁽⁷⁴⁵⁾See p 171 in this thesis.

⁽⁷⁴⁶⁾See: al-Qarnī, Ḥasna, *Dhākira Bilā Wishāḥ*, (Riyadh: Dār al-Mufradāt, 2005), p 19.

⁽⁷⁴⁷⁾See: *ibid*, p 75.

In comparison, Rajā³ al-Ṣāni⁶'s novel *Banāt al-Riyāḍ* shows that men think that women threaten their power if they are self dependent.⁽⁷⁴⁸⁾ In spite of this, the female characters in the world of her novel do not protest against men and, three of them have sad endings. However, the world of al-Qarnī's novel shows that the novelist wants to stress the idea of rebellion when the protagonist deals with her husband differently. The novel revolves around a well-educated girl growing up in a traditional family, and she marries twice, unsuccessfully. The author reveals that women in Saudi society are taught that they have no rights when they marry. To emphasise this idea, the novelist paints many scenes, and in one of these the first husband comes to see the protagonist Fiḍḍa in her father's house before the marriage contract. The narrator tells us that her stepmother advises her: 'Fiḍḍa, when you get in, say hello and put your head down'; then she starts to talk and talk about what I should do and what I should not. I thought, how am I going to know what he looks like if I'm not allowed to look at him. Why should he see me if I can't see him?!'⁽⁷⁴⁹⁾

In addition, the novelist shows that her second husband despises her because she has been divorced and another man has enjoyed her body. She asks herself what she should do? Does she have to bury herself after the failure of her first marriage? The protagonist portrays the husband's carelessness and ignorance which invites the novelist to repeat the word "تمرد" "to rebel" many times.⁽⁷⁵⁰⁾ One of her ways of rebelling is to tell her husband, Nāṣir that she wants to become a radio announcer which is not allowed in Saudi society; and after she becomes a successful woman, her husband does not change, rather he throws her out of the house. Her comment about that is 'this is because I am a woman who rebelled and succeeded'.⁽⁷⁵¹⁾ At the end of the novel the protagonist commits suicide because society rejected her when she rebelled against it.

An analysis of some of Saudi women's novels in the third stage shows that the writers' style has flowered, which can be seen through their diversity and their capacity to treat themes aesthetically. As has been argued previously, Laylā al-Juhani's novel *al-Firdaws al-Yabāb* was considered to be one of the most important novels in the previous stage, especially in

⁽⁷⁴⁸⁾See: *Banāt al-Riyāḍ*, p 92.

⁽⁷⁴⁹⁾See: al-Qarnī, Ḥasna, p 72.

⁽⁷⁵⁰⁾See: *ibid*, pp 64, 73, 133 and 90.

⁽⁷⁵¹⁾See: *ibid*, p 138.

style. The novelists, in the fourth stage, do not show a considerable change in their style, is considered to be a feature of the style of this stage. What is important to emphasise is that they expand in using the characteristics of the style that appeared in the previous stage. Some of the novelists, in fact, show their mastery in employing the aspects of the novel where their ideas, feelings and points of views are shown. Therefore, it is important here to refer to some examples which help readers see how the novelists use their techniques to convey their messages and to clarify the two examined themes.

Firstly, it appears that some Saudi female novelists use the place of setting to show their feelings, which has the effect of expressing the ideas that they want to emphasise. This idea has appeared in Laylā al-Juhanī's novel in the previous stage where she shows Jeddah as a human being that can feel.⁽⁷⁵²⁾ It also appears in this stage in many novels such as Badriyya al-Bishr's novel *al-Urjūha* and this appearance reveals the novelist's problem with her society. She employs the place of setting artistically in order to reveal its feelings and hence uncover the nature of her society, which does not respect women's rights. After the protagonist suffers from her experiences with the al-Hay'ah, the reader can see the novelist's message between the lines of her description of her city Riyadh. She narrates:

Maryam left Riyadh as it is, in the summer, pale and congested like a pregnant woman but with dust. Dust covers everything...⁽⁷⁵³⁾

This type of description shows the novelist's feelings about the city of Riyadh as it is a mirror image of the novelist's idea about women's rights in this city. To make this idea clear, the reader can see the novelist's description of the city of Geneva after the plane landed, when she says:

When the plane landed, there was a new morning lighting the sky in its pure face like a mirror... the green of the trees appeared celebrating the sunshine after a light shower which cleaned the asphalt of the airport. When the captain announced that the temperature is 16, everybody laughed and one of them said: "Wow! We were in hell. Did we reach heaven?"⁽⁷⁵⁴⁾

By contrasting the portrayal of the two places, the reader notices that throughout the course of the whole novel, the writer does not mean the place itself, rather she suggests that the

⁽⁷⁵²⁾ See p 163 in this thesis.

⁽⁷⁵³⁾ See: al-Bishr, p 7.

⁽⁷⁵⁴⁾ See: *ibid*, p 27.

freedom offered to women in Geneva is not provided in Riyadh since the protagonist's happiness is mirrored in her vision of the place of setting. Therefore, the reader notices references which highlight her meaning, for example, her suffering at the hands of al-Hay^oah.

What is relevant here is the employment of 'time' in women's novels in this stage used to serve the novelist's ideas and to clarify their feelings or points of view. In her novel *Jāhiliyya*, Laylā al-Juhanī attempts to make a comparison between the tribal system in the era before Islam and the current tribal system in terms of people's inequality. This reveals the novelist's understanding of the past as it becomes, in the historical consciousness, an instrument to understand the present.⁽⁷⁵⁵⁾ The novelist shows that the dominant idea about blacks has been destroyed after Islam but people have revived it recently. The novelist uses an intelligent idea to convey this message to the reader, which clearly appeared through the titles of the novel's chapters. She does not use the name of the days and months used after Islam; rather she uses the name of days and months used at the time prior Islam as titles of the novel's chapters. For example; the title of the first chapter is:

Jubār al-Thālith °Ashar min Wa°il: min al-°Ām al-Thānī °Ashar Ba°d
°Āṣifat al-Ṣaḥrā°.
Jubār the 13th of Wa°il: Twelve Years After the Desert Storm.⁽⁷⁵⁶⁾

The novelist dedicates the last chapter to explaining the meaning of these names and the reader sees their meaning as the following

- Jubār means al-Thulāthā° = Tuesday
- Wa°il means Shawwāl = October⁽⁷⁵⁷⁾

By using Jāhilī time, she suggests that because of their practices people are like the people who lived before Islam, a time which is called the "time of ignorance". This indicates that the novelist does not use time only to show the period of the novel but also as an artistic device to support her idea about discrimination.

Secondly, the analysis of the previous stage shows that the novelists began to describe bedroom scenes, which readers had not seen before. This method continues in this stage and

⁽⁷⁵⁵⁾See: Darrāj, Fayṣal, al-Riwāya wa Ta°wīl al-Tārīkh: Naẓariyya al-Riwāya wa al-Riyāya al-°Arabiyya, (Casablanca: al-Markaz al-Thaqāfi al-°Arabī, 2004), p 81.

⁽⁷⁵⁶⁾ Al-Juhanī, *Jāhiliyya*, p 11.

⁽⁷⁵⁷⁾ See: *ibid*, pp 176-177.

indeed, writers expand on the technique. The ease of access to the internet and to books written by international writers may contribute to the use of this style since it is considered to be a sin in a conservative society. For example, Zaynab Ḥafnī in her novel *Sīqān Multawīya* shows this kind of description when Ziyād explains the first time he has sex when he says:

... That day she wore a skirt which almost covered her briefs and a shirt with a bra that revealed the beauty of her prominent breast. There was a crafty smile on her face when she saw me shaking and saw the sweat on my brow...⁽⁷⁵⁸⁾

It is also worth mentioning that the number of novelists that use this method has increased in this stage and some novelists describe the details of homosexual relationships such as Ṣabā al-Ḥarz.⁽⁷⁵⁹⁾ Therefore, the novelists hide their names and use a pseudonym because this theme is not allowed in Saudi society and they fear the reaction of their families.⁽⁷⁶⁰⁾

Thirdly, due to the effects of the internet on Saudi society, some Saudi female novelists employ technology in their novels and they use it to push forward their points of view. In her novel *Banāt al-Riyād*, al-Ṣānī^c employs the device of the internet, (that is email), to convey her ideas. This appears through her use of narrative, since it reveals her capacity to adapt it to serve the issue she wants to address. The author chooses the third-person narrative as her way of telling the story and the characters in her novels are referred as 'he' and 'she'.⁽⁷⁶¹⁾ In this way, the narrator appears to know everything about the characters and the events of the story.⁽⁷⁶²⁾ The narrator in *Banāt al-Riyād*, goes further as she also appears to know the reactions of society about the events of the novel. Al-Ṣānī^c structures her novel in fifty chapters and each chapter begins in the form of email, such as the first chapter which starts:

To: seerehwenfadha7et@yahoo.com

From: "seerehwenfadha7et"

Date: 13/2/2004

Subject: ساكتب عن صديقاتي⁽⁷⁶³⁾

⁽⁷⁵⁸⁾See: Ḥafnī, *Sīqān*, p 62.

⁽⁷⁵⁹⁾See: al-Ḥarz, Ṣabā, *al-Ākharūn*, (Beirut: Dār al-Sāqī, 2006).

⁽⁷⁶⁰⁾See: Ḥafnī, Zaynab, *al-Thawūra fī al-Adab al-Nisā'i al-Ḥadīth*, (Cairo: an unpublished paper presented in the American University in Cairo, May 31, 2010), p 3. Accessed: 24 Sep 2011

<http://www.zhauthor.com/html/ar-cv.htm>.

⁽⁷⁶¹⁾See: Baldick, p 259.

⁽⁷⁶²⁾See: *ibid*, p 259.

⁽⁷⁶³⁾See: al-Ṣānī^c, p 9.

The narrator emails a chapter to the group every Friday starting from 13/2/2004; chapter fifty was emailed on 11/2/2005. In the week following each email the novelist imagines the receivers' reaction and responds in the first part of the chapter, and then she continues telling the events of the novel. In addition, this section allows the novelist to present her point of view about society's reactions, presented in the emails that she receives. For example, in Chapter Five the novelist starts the chapter by discussing the emails that she has received: Some wrote saying: I am not authorised to talk on behalf of girls of Najd. You are only being spiteful, trying to vilify women in Saudi society.⁽⁷⁶⁴⁾ This reaction is what the novelist expected from Saudi society before publishing this novel. So structuring the work in this way allows her to defend herself when she answers the accusation at the beginning of Chapter Nine saying:

I always work on reforming my mistakes and I insist on developing them. However, I do not see people around me doing this. I hope people who criticise me evaluate themselves instead of evaluating me. Hopefully, we repent from our sins after we read them on the internet pages. So we can discover our hidden cancers then we can treat them. But I do not see anything here that people could learn from.⁽⁷⁶⁵⁾

It seems that the novelist anticipated her society's reactions to the content of her novel and she, therefore, prepared her answers in advance. Her expectation was true since her novel faced very strong opposition, which prevented it from being sold in Saudi Arabia. This technique also allowed her to directly convey her messages to Saudi society when she gave her critique of the status of divorced women and society's attitude to her.⁽⁷⁶⁶⁾

At the beginning of this chapter it was noted that there were many novels published in this stage in comparison with the previous stages. Al-Rifā'ī emphasises that some novels may be characterised artistically as weak novels at this point.⁽⁷⁶⁷⁾ It seems that the reason behind the appearance of weak novels is that some novelists enter this field without knowledge or talent which is a result of the technological revolution and the success of some novelists. This affects Saudi women's novels as they witness one of the characteristics appeared at the first

⁽⁷⁶⁴⁾ See: al-Ṣāni', p 36.

⁽⁷⁶⁵⁾ See: *ibid*, p 68.

⁽⁷⁶⁶⁾ See: *ibid*, p 195.

⁽⁷⁶⁷⁾ See: al-Rifā'ī. p 56.

stage, which is the problem of superficial errors. It would be useful, here to examine some of these weaknesses in *Dhākira Bilā Wishāh*.

The novelist chooses the first-person narrative as her way of telling the story which has the effect that the narrator is the most important character of the novel.⁽⁷⁶⁸⁾ The thematic purpose of choosing this device is to describe the protagonist's feelings about the experiences she had with her two husbands. Therefore, this novel may be considered as a stream of consciousness novel because it depends on the protagonist's inner feelings. However, the author makes superficial errors when the narrative does not fit with the narrative. The reason for this may be her desire to use everything she can to prove her society's underdevelopment because it insists on holding on to its traditions. An example of the superficial artistic errors in this novel appears when the novelist describes the status of the narrator's father when he goes to find shaykh Abū Mannā^c to treat the protagonist. She says:

My father went to shaykh Abū Mannā^c. He was afraid of being seen by anybody because treating by herbs prevented the daughter's marriage. He sat beside a tree and waited until dark came and after the roads were clear, he went to his house and asked him to come.⁽⁷⁶⁹⁾

It appears that this scene springs from the protagonist's knowledge, although the narrator is not part of this scene, and throughout the context of the novel, the reader cannot see any indication that led to the narrator's knowing about this event. Providing such a detail in the novel in this way raises an important question in the readers' mind, which is, how does the narrator know about how her father went to shaykh Abū Mannā^c? A similar problem also appears at the end of the novel where two characters continue the dialogue in the story after the protagonist's suicide.⁽⁷⁷⁰⁾ It is useful here to see the difference between al-Qarnī and al-Juhanī's way of dealing with this kind of narrative. Al-Juhanī creates a new narrator to continue the protagonist's narrative when she posts her story to Khalida in two chapters.⁽⁷⁷¹⁾

Furthermore, the novel is full of language errors where the novelist chooses to use the Classical Arabic language to be the language of the narrative and the dialogue. However, the

⁽⁷⁶⁸⁾See: Baldick, p 98.

⁽⁷⁶⁹⁾See: al-Qarnī, Ḥasna, p 23.

⁽⁷⁷⁰⁾See: ibid, p 154.

⁽⁷⁷¹⁾See p 171 in this thesis.

novelist makes some mistakes, whether they appear in the grammar or in the structure, which negatively affect the meaning. For example, the narrative presents two sentences:

"حقاً إنها اسم"⁽⁷⁷²⁾، "ما رأيتُه في عينيها غضب وكرهية"⁽⁷⁷³⁾

The underlined nouns are given wrong forms where they should be grammatically "اسم" and "غضباً" because the position of the first noun is Marfū^c which takes the Ḍamma form "ُ" and the position of the second noun is Manṣūb which takes the Faṭḥa form "َ". In addition, the novel has some complicated sentences, which confuse the meaning because of the novel's prosaic writing style. For example:

I wish to penetrate his head to reach his heart so he penetrates my mind.⁽⁷⁷⁴⁾

4. Conclusion

This stage in the Saudi woman's novel reveals a noticeable development in terms of its themes and its artistic value. Before observing the development of the novels during this stage, it is important to overview the movement of the publication of women's novels in this era because that will give us a clear sign of its progress. As it has been noted, the number of women's novels is remarkable in this stage due to different factors; and this increased number enabled more women to reach their readers. The remarkable number also creates more diversity whether on the artistic level or on the thematic level. At the same time, the number of novels published by Saudi women contributes to the expansion of a cluster of artistic weaknesses in the novel because there are some writers who manage to enter the literary field when they are not artistically qualified.

Saudi women's novels have developed clearly in terms of the novelists' awareness of their specific problems, and these can be seen in the issues that they attempt to tackle. Through their criticism of the patriarchal system, Saudi female novelists' demands becomes greater than their demands in the previous stages because they start to criticise a system which prevents them from taking up highly paid, and responsible jobs, for example, as an editor-in-chief in the newspapers. The novels represented in this stage show strong criticism of the

⁽⁷⁷²⁾ See: al-Qarnī, Ḥasna, p 13.

⁽⁷⁷³⁾ See: ibid, p 16.

⁽⁷⁷⁴⁾ See: ibid, p 70.

issue of making women dependent on men in their work, which can be classified as a kind of political criticism because it is directed at the government. The observer can see an increase in Saudi women writers' confidence in describing women as holding higher political positions, a situation that had not been treated in the previous stages. It is worth mentioning that Saudi women's novels do not go deeply into the problem of Saudi women's reluctance to occupy higher positions in Saudi politics but it is important to consider this stage as a forward step in this matter.

In addition, it is clearly apparent that the picture of men during this stage has changed in Saudi women's novels to the extent that it might be considered to be a phenomenon because the number of the novels dealing with this change deserves our consideration. As has been discussed in the previous stages men, whether they are well-educated or not, are the reason for women's difficulties in Saudi society; and during this stage of the novel the new generation of men become supporters of women attempting to gain their rights. According to this new idea about men, the reasons for women's problems are seen as the traditional society as well as the governmental systems.

As far as the novels' techniques are concerned, the observer can see that Saudi women's appetite for writing novels sometimes negatively affects the artistic value of their works. This is because there are many writers who enter this field without professional artistic tools and with a lack of innate talent. However, it is noted that some of the novels written in this stage have been developed artistically in terms of employing certain aspects of the novels such as the construct of characterisation and the use of language. In addition, the novelists in this stage dare to discuss subjects previously understood to be taboo, as is noted in Ḥafnī's novel where she describes the details of sexual intercourse and it is also apparent in Ṣabā al-Kharz's novel *al-Ākharūn* where sex has been clearly described, a phenomenon which is unmatched in the previous stages. Because of this, the Ministry of Culture and Information has prevented these kinds of novels from being sold in the country.

Chapter Seven: Conclusion

This thesis examined two important themes, which were tackled in Saudi women's novels from 1958-2011. While exploring these themes, Elaine Showalter's theory concerning the study of women's literary history was borne in mind. As outlined early in the thesis, Showalter suggests that the study of themes in women's writing is essential in an examination of the development of women's thoughts and writing style. Through a general overview of the Saudi women's novel, it is true to say that the most important themes that novelists address in these novels revolve around tackling the problem of two authorities; society's power and men's control. Therefore, this thesis argues that the development of Saudi female novelists' awareness of the effects of these two social powers is divided into four noticeable stages. The thesis argues that the political, the cultural and the social movements in Saudi Arabia have played an important role in the formulation of the novelists' thoughts and awareness.

Through tracing the development of the awareness of Saudi female novelists, the reader can see that it mirrors the development of society itself. This notion appears in the novels discussed at each stage; and the influence of foreign societies is clearly apparent in the novels of the first stage since they employ other Arabic dialects in the novels' dialogue or the events of the novels take place in another country. The reader can see that the change appears in the form and the theme of Saudi women's novels, which are concurrent with the changes that appear in society in the second stage, which witnessed the results of women's education in Saudi Arabia. The second Gulf War also witnessed a change that appeared in society, which affected the women's novels in the third stage since they show a noticeable development in terms of both technique and themes. The changes that appeared in the fourth stage are the consequences of the changes that appeared in society after the events of September 11th 2001 as has been discussed in this thesis.

The most important findings of this thesis can be divided into two parts; the first is related to numerical phenomena seen in the literary world which affected the texts (novels). The second part relates to the development of women's awareness seen through the analysis of the novels written by Saudi female novelists. Together, these parts demonstrate the development of Saudi female novelists whether in the development of their artistic consciousness shown in the use of

literary tools or in an improvement in terms of the ways that they treat the problems that women face in the society.

The first part can be seen as a kind of reference to the development of Saudi female novelists' awareness, as has been outlined in the thesis. This study has proved that the number of Saudi women novelists and novels has increased from stage to stage. The second stage witnessed nine novels which is close to the number of the first phase but the difference between them is the length of the stages; that is, ten years in the second stage whereas, 21 years in the first. The number of novels published in the third stage more than doubled those of the second stage in a period of twelve years. In the fourth stage, the number of novels increases dramatically, since more than a hundred novels were published during this era. This rising number shows an increase in the popularity of Saudi women's writers since the emergence of women's novels in Saudi Arabia.

Furthermore, each stage of the Saudi women's novel witnesses the appearance of new female faces on the literary scene, which indicates the importance of this genre for Saudi women novelists since they seem to have found it a very effective method of conveying their messages. Five new female writers appeared on the literary scene during the second stage whereas there were eleven new novelists in the third stage. There has been a dramatic increase, to more than fifty, of new female novelists in the fourth stage.

In addition, the number of awards that Saudi female novelists gained for their novels has increased, which is another sign of the development of the Saudi women's novel. Although Saudi female novelists did not achieve any awards in the first stage, the second stage witnessed the achievement of Rajā' Ālim which was the first award gained by a Saudi woman for her novel, and was the only award gained at this stage. The number of awards for Saudi female novelists increased in the third stage since three prizes were awarded to two Saudi female novelists, Qumāsha al-Ulayyān and Laylā al-Juhanī. Saudi female novelists' literary skills reached a peak when Rajā' Ālim achieved the International Prize for Arabic Fiction (Booker) and there are other novelists who gained various prizes for their novel.

In short, the examination of various novels carried out in this research demonstrated ways in which Saudi women novelists changed techniques in the treatment of their themes, from one stage to the next.

This does not mean that the changes are shown in all the novels of a stage rather, the appearance of a change in some novels at any one stage indicates a change in women's thoughts and in the method employed to tackle their problems through the genre of the novel. To prove this, the thesis shows that some Saudi women's novels do not show a specific change whether in the theme or in the style which appears in the sections devoted to comparing and contrasting the case study novels with some of the novels in the same stage. As a result, the analysis of the representative novels shows that the awareness of Saudi female novelists has developed whether in the actual theme or in the artistic tools that the novelists used in order to explore it.

Through analysing the theme of the novels, the thesis highlights the characteristics of the two themes examined in this thesis. It is noticeable that in the first stage Saudi female novels were concerned with the diagnosis of women's difficulties since they focused on women's problems in order to highlight them. Saudi female novelists' criticism of both their society and the men in their society in the first stage is played out through the events of their novels; and their criticism is meant to be interpreted by their readers. In their treatment, the novelists have not shown their characters to be in a position to make accusations against the society or against men; rather their novels, in this stage, attempt to highlight intrinsic problems. The reason for this is that the novelists want to awaken their society to the core of their issues rather than to create an enemy of society. Hudā al-Rashīd's novel is a clear example of this tendency as she conveys her point of view through a calm discourse which appears in the novel's cautious dialogue and in her concern for portraying an ideal picture of her protagonist's character.

The second stage witnessed a new kind of treatment since the novel started to tackle current problems that appeared in Saudi society during that time; and, they also criticised men directly. Amal Shṭā dared to treat the problem that appeared in Saudi society, that is, the effects of Saudi men's behaviour when they travel abroad for business and Ṣafiya °Anbar directs criticism at men when she discussed them as the sex responsible for the failure of relationships between

men and women in society. Furthermore, she also criticises eastern men, directly. As a result of the examination of women's themes, it seems that in the first stage, women novelists criticised both men and society through highlighting women's status, but in the second stage, novelists criticised men in a more direct way.

In the third stage, the world of Saudi women's novels examined in this thesis undergoes a rebellion, since women novelists' discourse is clearly directed at society and men. While the novels of the second stage criticise men and Saudi society through the words spoken by their women characters, the third stage shows women's rebellion and strong protest against both men and society, through their actions. Both representative novels demonstrate this kind of rebellion whether shown through the murder of a man to symbolise the destruction of the patriarchal system, or the throwing of the ring in a man's face to suggest the end of women's submission to men. In addition, as the thesis suggests, some novels in this stage reflect the dominant characteristics of the two themes that appeared in the previous stages.

In the fourth stage, some Saudi female novelists' discourse made progress since they began to participate in the reformation of the system. This is clearly apparent in the way that women's issues were tackled since novels began to criticise the governmental system that allows inequality between men and women. Some Saudi female novelists in this stage tackled the problems through criticising many governmental organisations which prevented women from gaining their rights and the thesis shows examples of this criticism. For example, Saudi female novelists criticise important governmental organisations such as al-Hay'a as the system uses the power of government to prevent women from gaining their rights, the ministry of education as it is designed to teach girls how to be silent and the novel also tackles the problem of the prevention of women from being leaders in the Press. The thesis refers to the change in women's relationships with men when the novelists portray them as romantic and open minded which has not been clearly defined in the previous stages. It can be said that this picture of men is dominant in most of the women's novels in this stage as has been indicated in the case study novels. This can be seen as a kind of development in Saudi novelists' awareness as they experiment with the idea that the women and men of their generation can gain their rights if they cooperate against an unfair system.

The changes that appeared in Saudi women's novels can also be said to have broken a sexual taboo. Women's novels in the first and second stage do not show the intimate relationships between the two sexes even though some of their main events are couched in romantic stories; rather, they attempt to avoid describing the details. However, this tendency changed in the third stage since some Saudi female novelists were daring enough to describe these kinds of sexual scenarios. The novels in the fourth stage show great courage in this area and they, therefore, faced a fierce attack from Saudi society. Hence, the sale, inside the country of some of the novels, in this stage, have been banned, such as Rajā' al-Şāni's novel *Banāt al-Riyāḍ*.

Since Saudi women's novels demonstrate a noticeable progress in the novelists' awareness of women's problems shown in the two themes that the thesis has examined, they also show a noticeable development in the style which the novelists utilise to highlight women's issues. This development is clearly shown in the novels selected in the case study of Saudi women's novels. There are some characteristics that distinguish the style of women's novels in each stage, which convey the development of the novelists' awareness in terms of the way they master their writings and the techniques they use.

The first stage, which is called the 'early beginnings' of the Saudi women's novel has some stylistic features which refer to the nature of beginnings. This stage witnessed some superficial errors in the novels' techniques; the details of these flaws have been clarified in Khāshugjī's novels. In addition, in most of the women's novels in this stage, the employment of the novel's technique is simple and the conflicts between the events are clearly recognised. The didactic form has predominated in most of the novels where the novelists insist on their points of view, sometimes at the expense of the artistic value as has been noted in this thesis. However, the thesis agrees with some of the critics' views when they argue that Hudā al-Rashīd's novel is considered to be a shifting point as it prepares women's novel to move forward to the next stage.

In the second stage, Saudi women's novels show an improvement in style which can be seen in their use of a variation in narrative, such as in Amal Shaṭā's novel. The employment of a psychological analysis to understand the nature of Saudi men is a new style used in the Saudi women's novel, which has not been recognised in the first stage. For example, in her novel,

Şafiya ʿAnbar attempts to interpret her male character psychologically in order to criticise western men's behaviour. The use of artistic techniques is shown to be more mature such as employing the flash back in Shaṭā's novel.

In the third stage, a noticeable change in the style of Saudi women's novels demonstrates a considerable development in the novelists' awareness of the genre of the novel. At this stage, Saudi female novelists seem to become aware of the benefits of using modern techniques and employing them to highlight women's problems. Laylā al-Juhanī's novel *al-Firdaws al-Yabāb* is the best example of this development since she shows great skill in employing the stream of consciousness technique as well as symbolism in her writing.

In the fourth stage, the reader cannot recognise a huge change in the style of the novels written by Saudi female novelists. However, as the thesis has clarified, the stage of the establishment of Saudi women's novel contributes to the continuation of women's capacity to improve their writings in the fourth stage. That is to say, due to the large number of Saudi women's novels published in this stage, the stylistic tendencies have varied, which proves that Saudi female novelists are capable, artistically, of expressing women's problems in their society. The fourth stage can be considered to be a stage of dissemination, since women's novels become known internationally as a result of a wide employment of modern techniques.

Through an historical observation of women's novels, the thesis reveals numerous issues relating to women's literature, which offers scope for further studies; and it might be useful to explore such issues and to make them the focus of future research.

It has been noted that in the early stages, the efforts of the researchers whose interest is in Saudi literature were focused on Saudi male literature and they did not return to Saudi women's literature until after the events of September 11th 2001. Therefore, one of the most important subjects in this field is the return to the beginnings of women's novel to see their contribution to the emergence of the Saudi literary novel in an impartial way, as women represent an essential element of literature in the country. Therefore, it is important to reconsider the issue of the beginning of the Saudi novel through careful analysis of the novels published by Saudi

women at the end of 1950s and the beginning of 1960s and to compare them with the novels published by men during that period.

Because of the limited number of critical studies of Saudi women's novels, the aesthetics of the Saudi women's novel need more in depth analysis to reveal their distinguishing features. That is to say, this kind of research can lead to specific features that distinguish Saudi women's writings from those of Saudi men's writings. For example, studying women's language in their novels and analysing their discourse can add a new contribution to the Saudi literary field. Because a large number of Saudi female novelists are young, these kinds of studies may improve their writings.

This thesis shows that the increase in the publication of Saudi women's novels and novelists in the fourth stage is remarkable and it is important therefore to devote studies to exploring the reasons behind this dramatic increase. These studies can also examine the artistic tendencies of Saudi female novelists in this stage. In addition, because this stage is the appropriate stage for women in their bid to reform the governmental system as it has been shown in this thesis, it is useful to devote studies to the examination of women's points of view about reform played out through the events and themes of their novels.

The phenomenon of employing symbolism in the Saudi women's novel to reveal their points of view about women's problems also needs to be studied deeply. This phenomenon appears, as the thesis shows, in the Saudi women's novel in all the stages. Therefore, as this topic is one of the most important characteristics of the Saudi women's novel, it will be useful to devote some further research to exploring why this concerns Saudi female novelists, in order to clarify its features, the stages of its development and the differences between the novelists in using this technique.

As the thesis shows, the fourth stage witnessed Saudi novelists referring to themselves via pseudonym. This issue first appears at the beginning of Saudi women's novel and it is recommended to investigate this idea to see the reasons for returning to pseudonym in women's novels in the fourth stage.

This thesis shows that the Saudi women's novel gives the two themes examined in this study its attention and this shows the contribution of Saudi female novelists in treating these problems. In addition, this study shows the participation of Saudi female novelists in Arabic literature since 1958. Importantly, Saudi female novelists show through their novels a noticeable development whether it appears through their awareness about women's problems or through their improvement of the style that they use to show their problems through the genre of the novel.

It is clear that the awareness of Saudi female novelists has increased in-between different stages of their novels' development, reflecting to a large extent to the development of Saudi society in general. This development indicates a positive outlook for the future of women's novel in Saudi Arabia, whether in terms of the ways female novelists tackle their problems or the artistic value of their literary works. However, it is not possible to predict whether Saudi women gain their rights and have their demands fulfilled by the society, yet it might be assumed that the awareness of Saudi women of their rights has developed substantially and represents a right way for channelling their aspirations regarding their position in Saudi society.

Bibliography

1. Primary Sources:

- Abu °Alī, Nidā°, *Li°l-Qalb Wujūh Ukhrā*, (Jeddah: Dār Biḥār al-°Arab, 1998).
- Aḥmad, °Ā°isha, *Basma min Buḥayrāt al-Dumū°*, (Jeddah: al-Nādī al-Adabī, n d).
- Al-Bishr, Badriyya, *Al-Urjūḥa*, (Beirut: Dar al-Sāqī, 2010).
- °Ālim, Rajā°, *Arba°a Šifr*, (Jeddah: al-Nadī al-Adabī al-Thaqāfi, 1987).
- °Anbar, Šaffiyya. *°Afwan yā °Ādam*. (Eygpt: Dār Mišr Li°l-Ṭibā°a, 1986).
- °Anbar, Šaffiyya, *Wahaj min Bayn Ramād al-Sinīn*, (Beirut: al-Dār al-°Arabiyya li al-Mawsū°āt, 1988).
- °Anbar, Šaffiyya, *Iftaqadtuk Yawm Aḥbabtuk*, (Cairo: Maṭābi° al-Ahrām, n d).
- Al-Ḥashr, °Āisha, *Saqar*, (Beirut: Arab Scientific Publishers, 2008).
- Al-Juhanī, Laylā. *Al-Firdaws al-Yabāb*. (Cologne: Al-Jamal Press, 1999).
- Al-Juhanī, Laylā, *Jāhiliyya*, (Beirut: Dār al-°Ādāb, 2nd Ed, 2008).
- Al-Muqrin, Samar, *Nisā° al-Munkar*, (Beirut: Dār al-Sāqī, 2nd Ed, 2008).
- Al-Qarnī, Ḥasna, *Dhākira Bilā Wishāh*, (Riyadh: Dār al-Mufradāt, 2005).
- Al-Rashīd, Hudā, *°Abath*, (Cairo: Maṭābi° Rūz al-Yūsuf, 1980).
- Al-Rashīd, Hudā, *Ghadan Sayakūn al-Khamīs*, (Cairo: Rūz al-Yūsuf, n d).
- Al-Šāni°, Rajā°, *Banāt al-Riyādh*, (Beirut: Dār al-Sāqī, 2005).
- Al-°Ulayyān, Qumāsha, *Unthā al-°Ankabūt*, (Al-Dammām: Dār al-Kifāḥ, 7th Ed, 2010).
- Al-°Ulayyān, Qumasha, *Bayt min Zujāj*, in Bukā° Taḥt al-Maṭar, (al-Dammām: Dār al-Kifāḥ, 4th Ed, 2004).
- Al-Maslūl, Zāfira, *Wa Māt Khawfī*, (London: Dār Riyāya, 2nd Ed, n d).
- Bū Subayt, Bahiyya, *Durra min al-Aḥsā°*, (Riyadh: Mu°assasat al-Jazīra, 1988).
- Bū Sbayt, Bahiyya, *Imr°a °Alā Fawhat Burkān*, (Riyadh: Dār °Ālam al-Kutub, 1996).
- Ḥafnī, Zaynab, *al-Raqš °Alā al-Dufūf*, in Zaynab Ḥafnī, al-A°māl al-Kāmila, (Damascus: Dār Ṭlās, 2nd Ed, 2003).
- Ḥafnī, Zaynab, *Šiqān Multawiya*, (Beirut: al-Mu°assasa al-°Arabiyya li al-Dirasāt wa al-Nashr, 2008).
- Ḥafnī, Zaynab. *Lam A°ud °Abkī*. (Beirut: Dār al-Ssāqī, 3rd ed, 2009).
- Khāshuqji, Samīra, *Qaṭarāt min al-Dumū°*, (Beirut: Zuhayr Ba°labakkī, 2nd ed, 1979).
- Khāshuqji, Samīra, *Wadda°t Amālī*. (Beirut: Manshūrāt Zuhayr Ba°labakkī, n d).

Khāshuqji, Samīra, *Dhikrayāt Dāmi[°]a*, (Beirut: Zuhayr Ba[°]labakkī, n d).

Khāshuqji, Samīra, *Warā[°] al-Ḍabāb*, (Beirut: Manshūrāt Zuhayr Ba[°]labakkī, n d).

Shaṭā, Amal, *Ghadan .. Ansā*, (Jeddah: Tihāma, 1980).

2. Secondary Sources:

Abukhalil, Sa[°]ad. *The Battle for Saudi Arabia: Royalty, Fundamentalism, and Global Power*, (New York: Seven Stories Press, 2004).

Abū Niḍāl, Nazīh, *Tamarrud al-Unthā fi Riwāya al-Mar[°]ah al-[°]Arabiyya wa Bibluḡhrāfiyā al-Riwāya al-Niswiyya al-[°]Arabiyya*, (Beirut: al-Mu[°]assasa al-[°]Arabiyya li[°]l-Dirāsāt wa[°]l-Nashr, 2004).

Al-[°]Adwānī, Mu[°]jīb, *al-Kitāba wa al-Maḡw: al-Tanaṣiyya fi A[°]māl Rajā[°] [°]Ālim al-Riwāiya*, (Hā[°]il: al-Nādī al-Adabī, 2009).

Al-Afandī, Mā[°]sa, *al-Mu[°]thirāt al-Ijtimā[°]iyya wa al-Iqtiṣādiyya wa Ta[°]līm al-Mar[°]ah*, (Riyadh: Dār al-[°]Ulūm, 1983).

Al-Āghā, Farīda and al-Mānī[°], [°]Ā[°]isha, *Dirāsah Istiqṣā[°]iyya bi sha[°]n al-Buḡūth al-Mu[°]addah [°]an al-Mar[°]ah fi Manāẓamat al-Khalīj al-[°]Arabī*, (Beirut: Al-Mu[°]ssasa al-[°]Arabiyyah liddirāsāt wa al-Nashir, 1984).

Al-Ḍāmin, Samāhir, *Nisā[°] bilā[°] [°]Ummahāt: al-Dhawāt al-[°]Unthawiya fi al-Riwāyya al-Nisāiya al-Su[°]ūdiyya*, (Beirut: Al-[°]Intishār al-[°]Arabī institution, 2010).

Al-Dukhayyil, Wafīqa, *Amal al-Mar[°]ah al-Su[°]ūdiyyah*, (Riyadh : Maktabat al-Malik Abd al-[°]Azīz al-[°]Āmma, 2000).

Al-Faqīr, Sālim. *Al-Ru[°]iya wa al-Tashkīl fi A[°]māl Qumāsha al-[°]Ulayyān al-Riyā[°]iyya*, (Al-Dammām: Dār al-Kifāḡ, 2011).

Al-Ghadhdhāmi, [°]Abd Allāh, *Hikāyat al-Ḥadātha fi al-Mamlaka al-[°]Arabiyya al-Su[°]ūdiyya*, (Morocco: Al-Markaz al-Thaqāfi al-[°]Arabī, 2nd Ed, 2004).

Al-Hājirī, Iyās. *Tārīkh al-Internet fi al-Mamlaka al-[°]Arabiya al-Su[°]ūdiyya*.(n p: n pub, 2004).

Al-Ḥamdānī, Ḥamīd, *Binyat al-Naṣṣ al-Sardī*, (Beirut: Al-Markaz al-Thqāfi al-[°]Arabī, 2nd ed, 1993).

Al-Ḥarz, Ṣabā, *al-Ākharūn*, (Beirut: Dār al-Sāqī, 2006).

Al-Ḥashr, [°]Āisha, *Khalf[°] [°]Aswār al-Ḥaramlik*, (Beirut: al-Dār al-[°]Arabiyya Li[°]l-[°]Ulūm, 2007).

Al-Ḥāzimī, Maṣṣūr, *Fann al-Qiṣṣa fi al-Adab al-Su[°]ūdi al-Ḥadīth*, (Riyadh: Dār Ibn Sīnā, 3rd Ed, 2001).

Al-Ḥāzmī, Ḥasan, *al-Baṭal fi al-Riwāya al-Su[°]ūdiyya*, (Jāzān: Al-Nadī al-Adabī, 2000).

- Al-Ḥāzmī, Ḥasan, *al-Binā' al-Fannī fī al-Riyāya al-Su'ūdiyya: Dirāsa Naqdiyya Taṭbīqiyya*, (Riyadh: Maṭābi' al-Ḥumaydī, 2006).
- Al-Hazzaa, Abdulaziz, *Scenario Projections for Women in Saudi Arabia: the Changing Status , Educational and Employment Opportunities by the Year 2010*, (Minnesota: University of Minnesota, 1993).
- °Ālim, Rajā. *Tawq al-Ḥamām*, (al-Dār al-Baydā': al-Markaz al-Thaqāfī al-°Arabī, 2010).
- Al-Jibrīn, Abdulrahmān, *Risālat al-Islāh*, (Beirut: no Pub, 1992).
- Al-Juraysī, Hudā, Al-Mar'ah fī Sūq al-°Amal. In *Al-Mr'ah al-Su'ūdiyyah: Ru'ā' °Ālamiyya*.
- Al-Manāshira, Ḥusayn, *Dhākirat Riwāyat al-Tis'iniyyāt*, (Beirut: Dār al-Fārābi, 2008).
- Al-Manea, Azeezah, *Historical and contemporary policies of women's education in Saudi Arabia*, (Michigan: The university of Michigan, 1984).
- Al-Muhawwis, Maṣṣūr, *Ṣūrat al-Rajul fī al-Riwāyya al-Nisuyya al-Sa'ūdiyya: Ru'yah Thaqāfiyya Jamāliyy*, (Riyadh: Mu'asasat, Al-Yamama, 2008).
- Almunajjed, Mona, *Women in Saudi Arabia today*, (London: Macmillan Press Ltd, 1997).
- Al-Mūshī, Sālīma. *Al-Ḥarīm al-thaqāfī bayn al-Thābit wa al-Mūtaḥawil*, (Riyadh: Dār al-Mufradāt, 2004).
- Al-Nu'cī, Ḥasan, Al-Riwāya al-Nisā'iyya al-Su'ūdiyya Bayn °Iqdayn. In *al-Riwāya wa Taḥawwlāt al-Ḥayāt*, (Al-Bāḥa: al-Nādī al-Adabī, 2008).
- Al-Nu'cī, Ḥasan, *Khiṭāb al-Iqṣā' wa'l-Iḥlāl fī al-Riyāya al-Nisā'iyya al-Su'ūdiyya*, In al-Nu'cī, Ḥasan, *Khiṭāb al-Sard: al-Riwāyya al-Nisā'iyya al-Su'ūdiyya*, (Jeddah: al-Nādī al-Adabī, 2007).
- Al-Qaḥṭānī, Nūra, *al-Rajul fī al-Riwāya al-Nisā'iyya al-Su'ūdiyya: al-Ṣūra wa al-Dilālah*, (Damascus: Dār al-Qalam, 2009).
- Al-Qarnī, °Awaḍ, *al-Ḥadāthāt fī Mizān al-Islām*. (Cairo: Dār Hajr, 1988).
- Al-Quṣaybī, Ghāzī, *Ḥattā lā Takūn Fītnah*, (n p: Dar al-Nadwa, No d).
- Al-Rashīd, Hudā, *Wa min al-Ḥubb*, (Cairo: Dār Qibā' al-Ḥadītha, 2008).
- Al-Rifā'ī, Khālīd, Al-Riwāya al-Nisā'iyya al-Su'ūyya: Qirā'a fī al-Tārīkh wa al-Mawḍū' wa al-Qaḍiyya wa al-Fann, (Riyadh: al-Nādī al-Adabī, 2009).
- Al-Sharekh, Alanoud, *Angry Words Softly Spoken: A comparative Study of English and Arabic Women Writers*, (London: Saffron Books, 2006).
- Al-Shāyi', Mahā, *Shakhṣiyya al-Muthaqaf fī al-Riwāya al-Su'ūdiyya*, (Riyadh: Dār al-Mufradāt Li'l-Nashr wa'l-Tawzī', 2009).

- Al-Shidwī, °Alī, “Sirr al-Ghandarah: Qirā’a fī Riyāyat Masrā Yā Raqīb”, in al-Nu°mī, Ḥasan, *Khiṭāb al-Sard: al-Riwāya al-Nisā’iyya al-Su°ūdiyya*.
- Al-Shuraym, °Adnān, *al-Abb fī al-Riwāya al-°Arabiyya al-Mu°āšira*, (Irbid: °Ālam al-Kutub al-Ḥadīth, 2008).
- Al-Subayyil, °Abd al-°Azīz, Bid° al-Riwāya al-Su°ūdiyya, *Aḥwāl al-Ma°rifa* magazine, 31-12-2003.
- Al-Ṣubḥī, Imān, “al-Khiṭāb al-Idulogī: Tajsīd al-Ṭalāq Baṭalan”, in al-Nu°nī, Ḥasan, *Khiṭāb al-Sard: al-Riyāya al-Nisā’iyya al-Su°ūdiyya*.
- Al-Tall, Ghassān, *Al-Mujtama° al-°Ashā’irī*, (Amman: Dār al-Kindī, 1999).
- Al-°Uayn, Muḥammad, *Kitābāt Nisāiyya Mutamarrida : Ru°iya Tārīkhiyya wa Naqdiyya liKitābat al-Mar°a al-Su°ūdiyya*, (Riyadh : n Pub, 2009).
- Al-Washmī, Abdullah, *Fitnat al-qaūl bita°līm al-Banāt fī al-Mamlaka al-°Arabiyya al-Sa°ūdiyya: Muqāraba Dīniyya wa siyāsiyya wa Ijtīmā’iyya*, (Casablanca: al-Markaz al-Thaqāfī al-°Arabī, 2009).
- Al-Zahār, Najāḥ. *Ta°līm al-Mar°ah fī al-Mamlaka al-°Arabiyya al-Su°ūdiyya wa Izdihāruh fī °Ahd al-Malik Fahad*, (Jeddah: Dār al-Muhammadī, 2003).
- Bāghaffār, Hind, Ribāṭ al-Walāyā, (Jeddah: Dār al-Bilād, 1987).
- Baldick, C., *Concise Dictionary of Literary Terms*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 3rd ed, 2004).
- Bū Bshayt, Al-Jauharah, T°līm Al-Mr°ah Al-Su°ūdiyya : al-Tārīkh wa al-Wāqi° wa al-Taḥaddiyāt. In *al-Mr°ah fī al-Su°ūdiyya: Ru°ā °Ālamiyya*, (Riyadh: Dar Ghayna°, 2008).
- Cuddon, J.A, *Dictionary of literary terms and literary theory*, (London: Penguin Group, 5th Ed, 1999).
- Darrāj, Fayṣal, al-Riwāya wa Ta°wīl al-Tārīkh: Naẓariyya al-Riwāya wa al-Riyāya al-°Arabiyya, (Casablanca: al-Markaz al-Thaqāfī al-°Arabī, 2004).
- Dīb, al-Sayyid, *Fann al-Riyāya fī al-Mamlaka al-°Arabiyya al-Su°ūdiyya bayn al-Nash°at al-Taṭawur*, (Cairo: Al-maktaba al-Azhariyya li°al-Turāth, 2nd Ed, 1995).
- Dūdīn, Rifqa. *Khiṭāb al-Riwāya al-Niswiyya al-°Arabiyya al-Mu°āšira*. (Amman: Amānat °Ammān al-Kubrā, 2008).
- El-Nawawy, Mohammed and Iskandar, Adel, *Al-Jazeera: How the Free Arab News Network Scooped the World and Changed the Middle East*, (Cambridge: Westview Press books, 2002).

- Elsadda, Hoda, *Gender, Nation, and Arabic Novel: Egypt, 1892-2008*, (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press Ltd, 2012).
- Forster, E. M., *Aspects of the novel*, (Victoria: Penguin books Pty Ltd, 1963).
- Ḥabīb, °Azīz. Al-°Ālam al-°Arabi min *al-Muḥīt °ila al-Khalij: al-Mamlakah al-°Arabiyyah al-Su°ūdiyyah*, (Cairo: Maktabat al-Anglū al-Misriyya, 1975).
- Hawthorn, Jeremy, *Studying the Novel*, (London: Hodder Arnold, 5th ed, 2005).
- Humm, Maggie, *The dictionary of feminist theory*, (Wheatsheaf: Practice Hall/Harvester, 2nd ed, 1995).
- Humphrey, Robert. *Stream of consciousness in modern novel*, (California: University of California press, 1968).
- Ibn Taymiyya, Aḥmad. *Majmū° Fatāwā Shaykh al-Islam Aḥmad Ibn Taymiya*. (Cairo: Dār al-Wafā°, 3rd Ed, 2005, Part 4).
- Jarīdī, Sāmī, *Al-Riwāya al-Nisā°ya al-Su°ūdiyya: Khitāb al-Mar°ah wa Tashkīl al-Sard*, (Beirut: Mu°asasa Al-Intishār al-°Arabī, 2008).
- Jayyusi, Salama, “Modernist Arab Women Writers: A Historical Overview”. In *Gender, nation and community in Arab women’s novels*, Majaj, L, Sunderman, P and Saliba, T, (New York: Syracuse University press, 2002).
- Kashgharī, Amīra, *Qirā°ah fī Riwāya: Al-Firdāūs al-Yabāb*, in al-Nu°mi, Ḥasan, *Khitāb al-Sard fī al-Riwāya al-Nisā°iyya al-Su°ūdiyya*, (Jeddah: al-Nādī al-°Adabī al-Thaqāfi, 2006).
- Kāzim, Najm, *Mushkilat al-Ḥiwār fī al-Riwāya al-°Arabiya*, (Irbid: °Ālam al-Kutub al-Ḥadīth, 2007).
- Lacroix, Stephane, *Awaking Islam: The Political of Religious Dissent in Contemporary Saudi Arabia*. (Harvard: President and Fellows of Harvard College, 2011).
- Lodge, D., *The Art of Fiction*, (London: The Penguin Group, 1992).
- Long, David, *Culture and Customs of Saudi Arabia*, (Westport: Greenwood press, 2005).
- Long, David. *The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia*, (Florida: University Press of Florida, 1997).
- Lubbock, Percy, *Craft of Fiction*, (Milton Ketnes: Lightning Source UK Ltd, 2009).
- Mabrūk, Murād, *Binā° al-Zaman fī al-Riyāyya al-Mu°āšira*, (Cairo: Al-Hay°ah al-Mišriya li°l-Kitāb, 2006).
- Markaz al-Malik °Abd Allāh li°l-Ḥiwār al-Waṭanī min Wijhat Naẓar al-Mujtama°, (Riyadh: Markaz al-Malik °Abd Allāh li°l-Ḥiwār al-Waṭanī, 2007).

- Matshakayile. *F, The Flash-Back and the Flash-Forward Techniques in Ndebele Novels*, (Zimbabwe: University of Zimbabwe, 2001).
- Menoret, Pascal, *The Saudi Enigma*, (Beirut: World Books, 2005).
- Metz, Helen. *Saudi Arabia: A Country Study*, (Washington: Library of Congress, 5th Ed, 1993).
- Mitchell, G. Duncan, *A Dictionary of Sociology*. (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1968).
- Moi, Toril, “Sexual/Textual Politics: Feminism Literary Theory”. In Eagleton, Mary, *Feminism Literary Theory*, (Oxford: Basil Blackwell Ltd, 1986).
- Şaydāwī, Rafīf, *al-Riwāya Bayn al-Waqi‘ wa’l-Takhyīl*, (Beirut: Dār al-Fārābī, 2008).
- Selden, Raman, Widdowson, Peter and Brooker, Peter. *Reader’s guide to contemporary literary theory*. (London: Pearson Education Limited, 5th Ed, 2005).
- Sha‘bān, Buthayna, *100 ‘Ām min al-Riwāya al-Nisā’iyya al-‘Arabiyya*, (Beirut: Dār al-Ādāb, 1999).
- Showalter, Elaine, *A literature of their own: British Women Novelists From Bronte to Lessing*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1977).
- Showalter, Elaine, “Towards a Feminist poetics”, in Showalter, Elaine, *The New Feminist Criticism: Essays on Women, literature theory*, (New York: Pantheon books, 1985).
- Showalter, Elaine, “Women’s Time, Women’s Space Writing the History of Feminist Criticism”, in Benstock, Shari, *Feminist Issues in Literary Scholarship*, (Bloomington: Indiana University press, 1987).
- Sohrab, Muhammad, *State and Society in Saudi Arabia*, (New Delhi: Global Media Publications, 2008).
- Şubḥ, ‘Alī, “Ma‘ālim al-Adab al-Islāmī”, in Şubḥ, ‘Alī, Sharaf, Abd al-Azīz and Khafājī, ‘Abd al-Mun‘im, *al-Adab al-Islāmī: al-Mafhūm wa’l-Qaḍiyya*, (Beirut: Dār al-Jīl, 1988).
- Sulaymān, Nabīl, *Asrār al-Takhyīl al-Riyā‘ī*, (Damascus: Itihād al-Kuttāb al-‘Arab, 2005).
- Zakarya, Khidr. *‘An al-Waḍ‘ al-Ijtimā‘ī li’l-Mr’a al-‘Arabiyya*, (Damascus: Al-Ahālī, 1998).

3. Unpublished thesis:

- Al-Ḥassūn, Muḥammad, “Social Criticism in the Saudi Novel: 1990-present day”, University of Exeter, 2008.
- Al-Hefdhy, Yahya. “The Role of Ulama (Islamic scholars) in Establishing an Islamic Education System for women in Saudi Arabia”, Florida state university, 1994.

Al-Mouhanis, Zakiah, "Higher Education for Women in Saudi Arabia", University of San Francisco, 1986.

Al-Qaḥṭānī, Sulṭān, "The Novel in Saudi Arabia: Emergence and Development 1930-1989: A Historical and Critical Study", University of Glasgow, Department of Arabic, 1994.

Al-Wahhābī, Abd al-Raḥmān, "Women's Novel in Saudi Arabia: Its emergence and development in a changing culture", University of Manchester, 2005.

Dārat al-Malik °Abd al-°Azīz, "Qāmūs al-Adab wa al-Udabā° fi al-Mamlaka al-°Arabiyya al-Su°ūdiyya", Unpublished Dictionary.

Ḥafnī, Zaynab, "al-Thawūra fi al-Adab al-Nisā°ī al-Ḥadīth", (Cairo: an unpublished paper presented in the American University in Cairo, 31 May, 2010).

4. Electronic Sites:

Al-Balawī, °Abd al-Salam, "Fī Yaūm al-Waṭan.. al-Mar°at °Uḍw fi al-Showrā wa°l-Majālis al-Baladiyya" September 26, 2011, 15799, *al-Riyadh newspaper*, Accessed: 23 Nov 2011, <http://www.alriyadh.com/2011/09/26/article670109.html>

Al-Ghadhdhāmī, °Abd Allāh, "Banāt al-Riyaḍ Banāt al-Nasaq" December 8, 2005, 13681, *Riyadh newspaper*, Accessed 04 June 2012, <http://www.alriyadh.com/2005/12/08/article113797.html>

Al-Ghāmīdī, Asmahān, "al-Mamlakah Istathmarat al-°uqūl" September 22, 2012, 16161, *Al-Riyadh newspaper*, Accessed: 22 Sep 2012, <http://www.alriyadh.com/2012/09/22/article770177.html>

Al-Huwaider, Wajeha. "The Saudi woman who took to the driver's seat" *France24*, May 23, 2011. Accessed 12 Oct 2011, <http://observers.france24.com/content/20110523-saudi-woman-arrested-defying-driving-ban-manal-al-sharif-khobar>

"Al-Liqā° al-Waṭanī al-Awwal li°l-Ḥiwār al-Fikrī" June, 15-18, 2003, Accessed: 11 June 2010, http://www.kacnd.org/first_national_meeting.asp

"Al-Liqā° al-Waṭanī al-Thālith li°l-Ḥiwār al-Fikrī" Accessed: 19 June 2009, http://www.kacnd.org/third_national_meeting.asp

"Al-Mūsā: Barnāmaj Khādīm al-Ḥaramayn al-Sharīfayn Ḥaqaq Najāḥan Bāhīran" June, 22, 2009, *Albilad newspaper*, Accessed 23, June 2010. <http://www.albiladdaily.com/news.php?action=show&id=31047>

"Al-Malik °Abd Allāh Yujadid al-Dawla wa Ṭumūḥāt al-Mujtama°" *Al-Riyadh newspaper*. 14846, Feb 15, 2009. Accessed: 12 April 2010, <http://www.alriyadh.com/2009/02/15/article409691.html>

Al-Rifā°ī, Khālīd, "Thaman al-Shukiyāta: Bashā°ir BiMīlād Basha°ir "1", April 21, 2008, 244, *al-Majalla al-Thaqāfiyya*, Accessed 20 Jan 2010, <http://www.al-jazirah.com.sa/culture/2008/21042008/read47.htm>

Al-Shihri, Abdullah, "Manal al-Sherif, Saudi Woman, Detained For Defying Driving Ban", *huffpost world internet newspaper*, May 12, 2011. Accessed: 17 Dec 2011, http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2011/05/21/manal-al-sherif-saudi-arabia-driving-ban_n_865120.html

Al-Surayyi°, °Abd al-Raḥmān. "°Ishrīnī Qatal Shaqīqatayh" *al-jazirah newspaper* July 06, 2009, 13430, Accessed 3 June 2010, <http://www.al-jazirah.com/2009/20090706/lp9.htm>

Al-Zaydān, Khālīd, “Mawḍū‘ Qiyāda al-Mara’ah li’l-Sayyāra Yajib Allā Yakūn Qadiyya Bayn Fi’ah wa Ukhrā“, June, 13, 2005, *Riyadh newspaper*. Accessed 16 March 2010, <http://www.alriyadh.com/2005/06/13/article72002.html>

An interview with Ṣafīyya ‘Anbar, January 30 2006, *Al-Thawra Newspaper*, Accessed 17-2-2009. <http://thawra.alwehda.gov.sy/archive.asp?FileName=49899781720060129133040>

Badr, Quṣay, “an interview with Ṣafīyya ‘Anbar”, January 30 2006, *Al-Thawra Newspaper*, accessed 17-2-2009, <http://thawra.alwehda.gov.sy/archive.asp?FileName=49899781720060129133040>

Ḥafnī, Zaynab, *al-Thawūra fī al-Adab al-Nisā’i al-Ḥadīth*, (Cairo: an unpublished paper presented in the American University in Cairo, May 31, 2010), p 3. Accessed: 24 Sep 2011, <http://www.zhauthor.com/html/ar-cv.htm>.

Human Rights Commission website: <http://nshr.org.sa/tabid/146/Default.aspx>

Murphy, Kim, "Saudi Women Drivers Facing Islamic Wrath" September 12, 1990, *Los Angeles Times*: Accessed 5 July 2010, http://articles.latimes.com/1990-11-12/news/mn-3273_1_saudi-arabia

“Riwāya Nisā’ al-Munkar al-Akthar Jadalan fī al-Khalīj Taṣḍur bi’l-Lugha al-Itāliyya”, *Majallat Anhār al-Adabiyya*, Feb 27, 2012 Accessed 12 August 2012, <http://www.anhaar.com/arabic/index.php/permalink/13664.html>

Takrīm al-Riwā’iyya al-Su‘ūdiyya Ṣaḥībat Riwāya al-Ḥubb Fawq Ṣaḥḥ marmara” *Uniem*, Accessed 13 August 2012, http://www.uniem.org/index.php?action=show_page&ID=919&lang=ar

“Third National Meeting” Accessed: 19 June 2009, http://www.kacnd.org/eng/Third_meeting.asp

Zaynab Ḥafnī’s website at: <http://zhauthor.com/html/en-cv.htm>

Appendix

A. Diagrams

These diagrams refer to the main topic of the thesis, as they show the development of Saudi female novelists' awareness through highlighting the characteristics of the two themes studied in this thesis and the writers' styles. The first diagram indicates the features of the first theme by referring to the characteristics of this theme in the four stages. The second diagram shows the development of the second theme regarding the power of the society. The third diagram presents the development of Saudi female novelists' style.

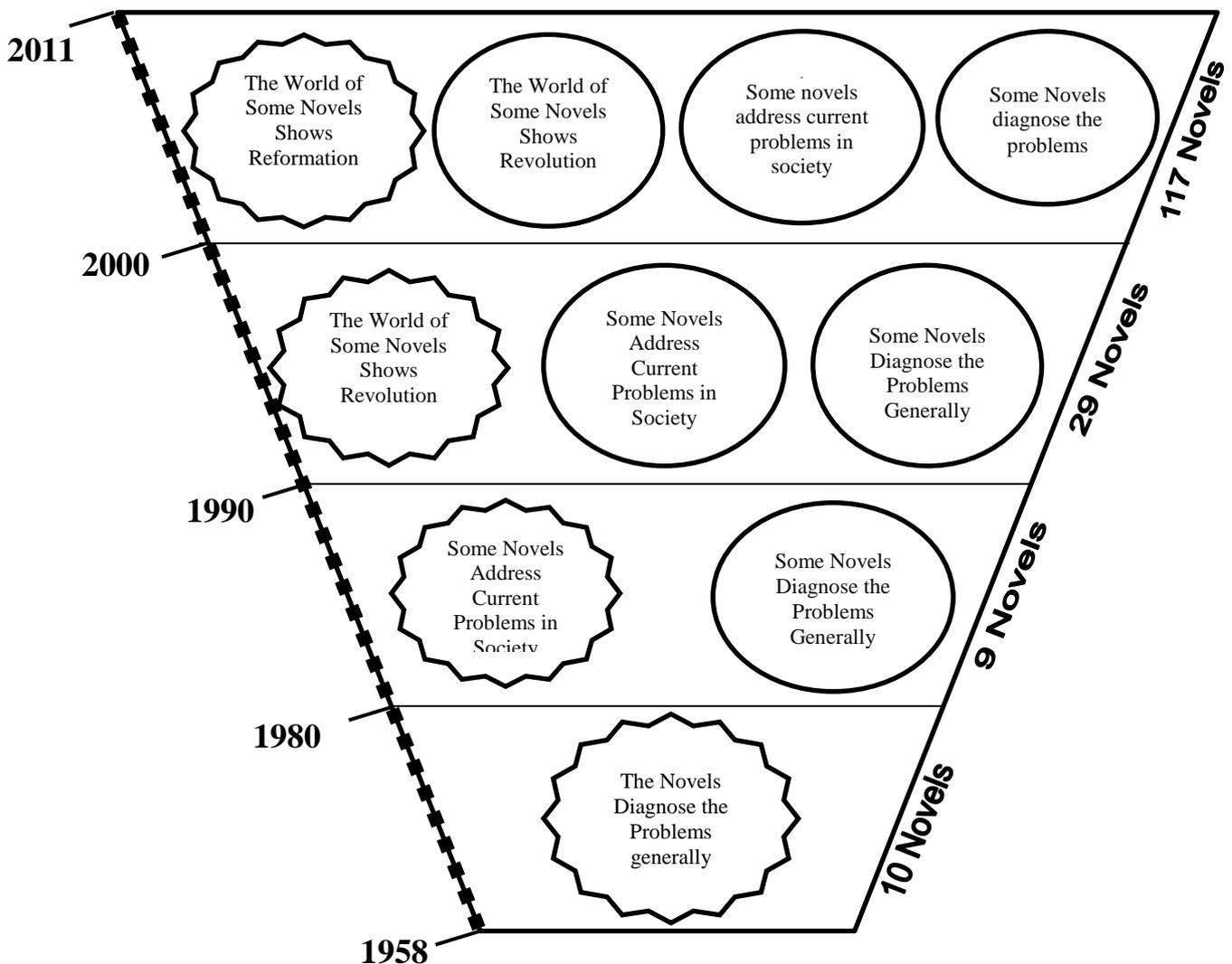


Diagram No.1: The Power of Society

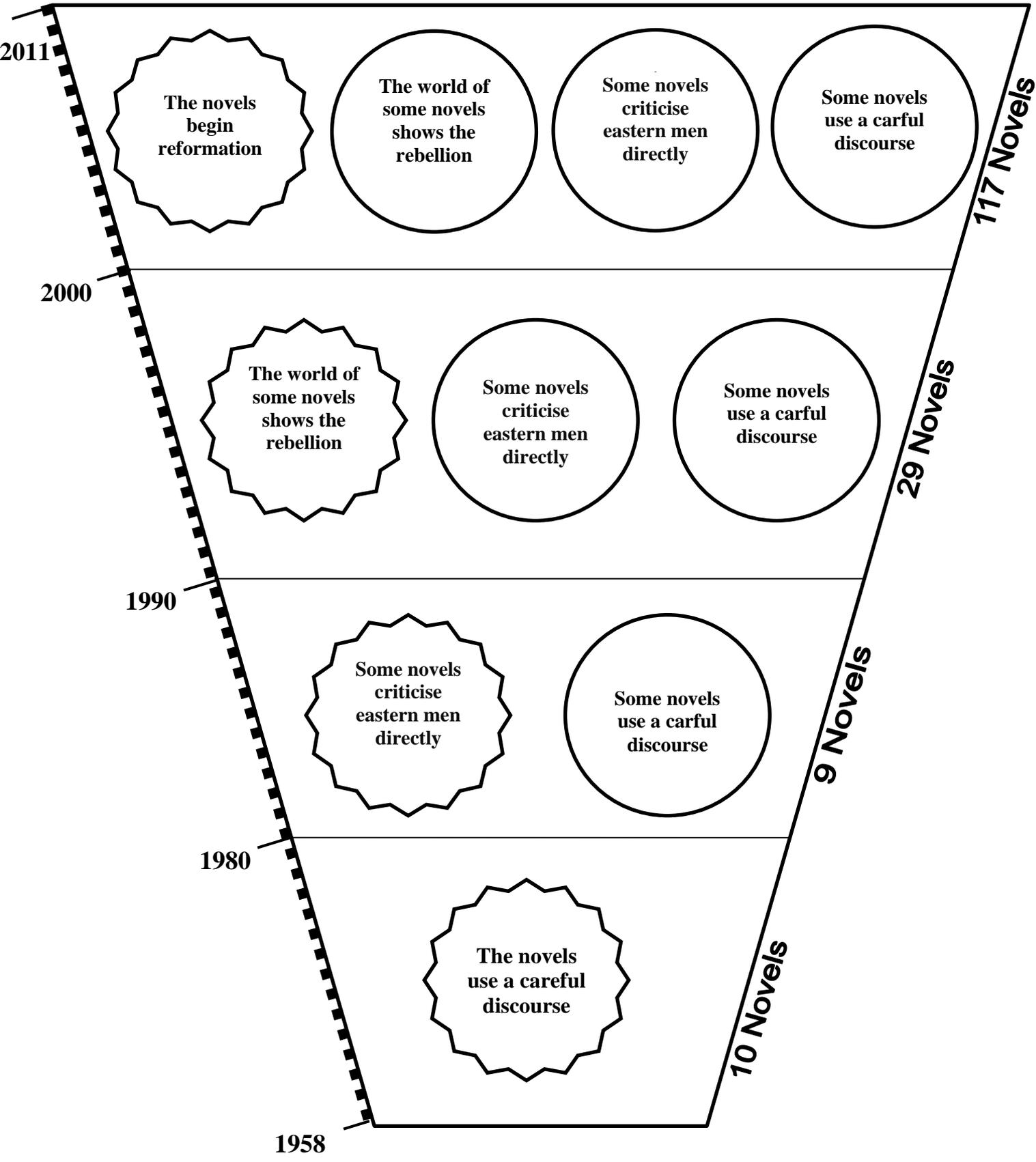


Diagram No.2: The Power of Men

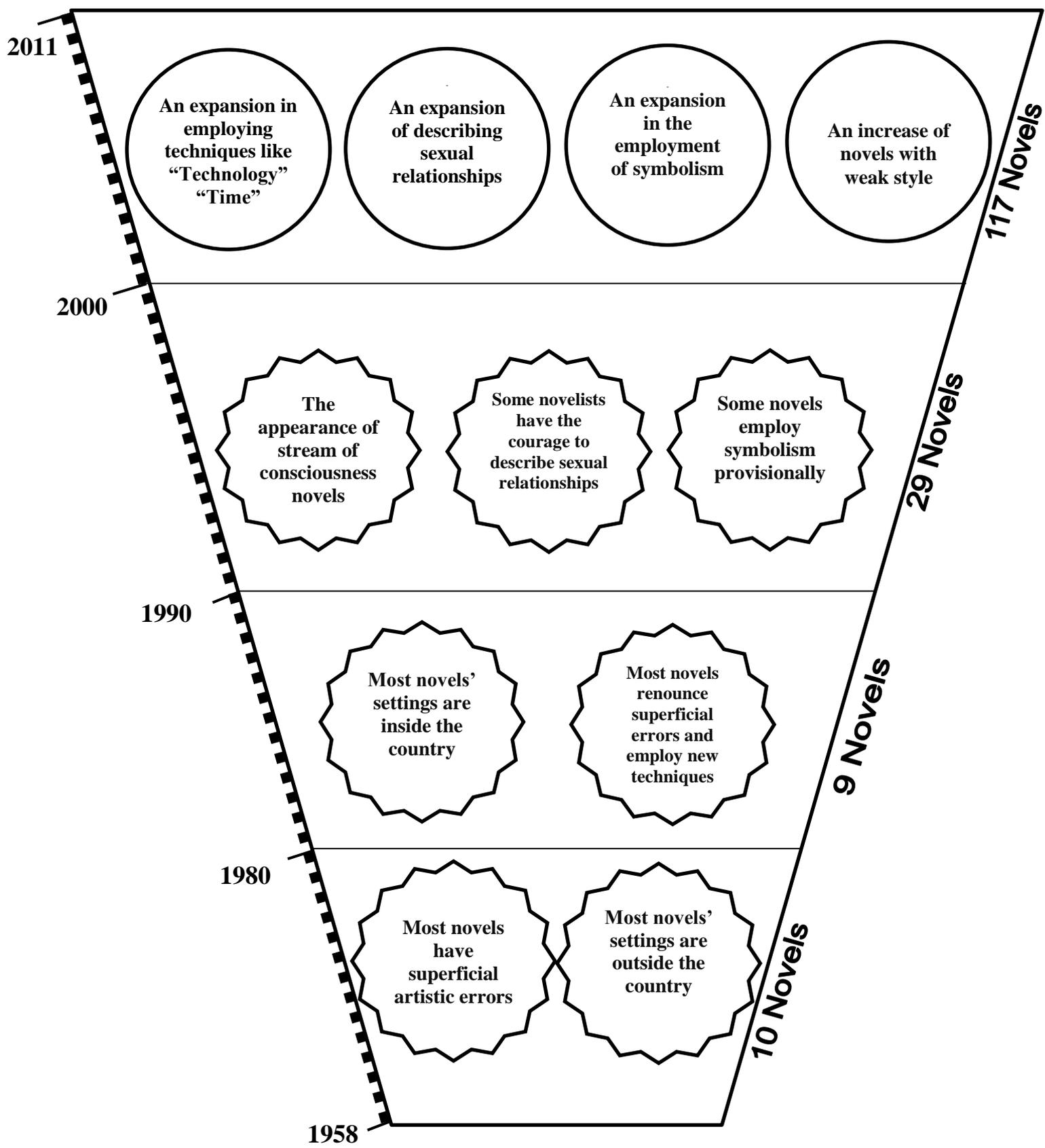


Diagram No.3: Style with Reference to the Power of Society and the Power of Men

B. Tables

1- The novels published at the First stage: the Early beginnings of Saudi women's novel

	Novel	date	Novelist
1.	<i>Wadda^c t^o Āmālī</i>	1958	Samīra Khāshuqjī
2.	<i>Dhikrayāt Dāmi^ca</i>	1961	Samīra Khāshuqjī
3.	<i>Barīq^c Aynayk</i>	1963	Samīra Khāshuqjī
4.	<i>Warā al-Dabāb</i>	1965	Samīra Khāshuqjī
5.	<i>Al-Barā^oa al-Mafqūda</i>	1972	Hind Bā Ghaffār
6.	<i>Ṣaḥwat al-^oĀlām</i>	1973	Nazīha Kutbī
7.	<i>Qaṭarāt Min al-dumū^c</i>	1973	Samīra Khāshuqjī
8.	<i>Ma^otam al-Ward</i>	1973	Samīra Khāshuqjī
9.	<i>Ghadan sayakūn al-Khamīs</i>	1976	Hudā al-Rashīd
10.	<i>Basmah min Buḥayrāt al-Dumū^c</i>	1979	^c Ā'isha Zāhir Aḥmad

2- The novels published at the Second stage: the Establishment of Saudi women's novel

1.	<i>^cAbath</i>	1980	Hudā al-Rashīd
2.	Ghadan Ansā	1980	Amal Shaṭā
3.	<i>Aḍayā^c wa al-Nnūr yubhir</i>	1986	Ṣafiyya Aḥmad Baghdādī ⁽⁷⁷⁵⁾
4.	<i>^cAfwan Yā^o Ādam</i>	1986	Ṣafiya ^c Anbar
5.	<i>Arba^ca Sifr</i>	1987	Rajā ^o ^c Ālim
6.	<i>Ribāṭ al-Walāyā</i>	1987	Hind Bāghaffār
7.	<i>Durra min al-Aḥsā^o</i>	1988	Bahiyya Būsubayt
8.	<i>Wahaj min Bayn Ramād al-Sinīn</i>	1988	Ṣafiya ^c Anbar
9.	<i>Lā^c Āsh Qalbī</i>	1989	Amal Shaṭā

⁽⁷⁷⁵⁾ This novel is mentioned by al-Rifā'ī, but I failed to find a copy. I contacted al-Rifā'ī to borrow his copy but he does not have one either.

3- The novels published at the third stage: the Coming of Age of Saudi Women's Novel

1.	<i>Ṣirā' °Aqlī wa °Aṭifatī</i>	1990	By Salwā Damanhūrī
2.	<i>Wa Māt Khawfī</i>	1990	By Zāfira al-Maslūl
3.	<i>Al-La'na</i>	1994	By Salwā Damanhūrī
4.	<i>Tariq al-Ḥarīr</i>	1995	By Rajā °Ālim
5.	<i>Iftaqadtuk Yawm Aḥbabtuk</i>	1995	By Ṣafiya °Anbar
6.	<i>Jama'atnā al-Ṣadāqa wa Faraqatnā al-Taḳālīd</i>	1995	By Ṣafiya °Anbar
7.	<i>Imra'a °Alā Fawhat Burkān</i>	1996	By Bahiyya Bū Subayt
8.	<i>Ādam Yā Sayidī</i>	1997	By Ṣafiya °Anbar
9.	<i>Masrā Yā Raqīb</i>	1997	By Rajā °Ālim
10.	<i>Unthā Fawq Ashri'at al-Ghurba</i>	1998	By Nūra al-Muḥaymīd
11.	<i>Al-Raqṣ °Alā al-Dufūf</i>	1998	By Zaynab Ḥafnī
12.	<i>Sidī Waḥdāna</i>	1998	By Rajā °Ālim
13.	<i>Al-Firdaws al-Yabāb</i>	1998	By Laylā al-Juhani(776)
14.	<i>Li'l-qalb Wujūh Ukhrā</i>	1998	By Nidā abū °Alī
15.	<i>Wamarrat al-Ayyām</i>	1998	By Nidā' abū °Alī
16.	<i>Ant Ḥabībī: Lan Naftariq Ma'an Ilā al-Abad</i>	1999	By Ṣafiya °Anbar
17.	<i>Ḥikāyat °Afāf wa al-Duktūr Ṣāliḥ</i>	1999	By Bahiya Bu Subayt
18.	<i>Al-Rajā' Iltizām al-Waqār</i>	1999	By Fāṭima Bint al-Surat
19.	<i>Sitat Aqdām Ṣaghīra</i>	1999	By Fāṭima Bint al-Surat
20.	<i>Ṣāliḥ al-Najdī wa Zahrā al-Janūbiyya</i>	1999	By Fāṭima Bint al-Surat
21.	<i>°Uyūn °Alā al-Samā'</i>	1999	By Qumāsha al-°Ulayyān
22.	<i>Unthā al-°Ankabūt</i>	2000	By Qumāsha al-°Ulayyān
23.	<i>Bukā' Taḥt al-Maṭar</i>	2000	By Qumāsha al-°Ulayyān
24.	<i>Bayt min Zujāj</i>	2000	By Qumāsha al-°Ulayyān
25.	<i>Ḥubbā</i>	2000	By Rajā °Ālim
26.	<i>Al-Shayātīn Taskun al-A'shāsh</i>	2000	By Muhra al-°Uṣaymī
27.	<i>Bāsīma bayn al-Dumū'</i>	2001	By Ṣafiya °Anbar
28.	<i>Khātām</i>	2001	By Rajā °Ālim
29.	<i>Al-Maṣīr</i>	2001	By Līndā al-Wābil

⁽⁷⁷⁶⁾ My copy, published in 1999 purports to be a first edition. However, the first edition of this novel was published in al-Shāriqa in 1998.

4- The novels published at the fourth stage: the Popluarisation of Saudi Women's Novel

1.	<i>Mawqīd al-Ṭayr</i>	2002	Rajā ʿAlīm
2.	<i>Wijhat al-Bawṣala</i>	2002	Nūra al-Ghāmīdī
3.	<i>Baʿd al-Maṭar Hunāk Dāʿīman Rāʿīha</i>	2003	Fāṭimah Bint al-Surāt
4.	<i>Tawba wa Sulayyā</i>	2003	Mahā al-Fayṣal
5.	<i>Safīna wa Amīrat al-Zilāl</i>	2003	Mahā al-Fayṣal
6.	<i>ʿIndamā Yanṭiq al-Ṣamt</i>	2003	Ḥanān Kattūʿah
7.	<i>Mazāmīr min Warāq</i>	2003	Nidāʿ Abu ʿAlī
8.	<i>Yafīrūn min Rufūf al-Maktaba</i>	2003	Suʿād Saʿīd
9.	<i>Ajīndat Mughtariba</i>	2004	Khulūd al-Siūtī
10.	<i>Rūḥuhā al-Mawshūmat Bih</i>	2004	ʿAmal Al-Farān
11.	<i>Ghayr wa Ghayr</i>	2004	Hājar Makkī
12.	<i>Al-ʿIntihār al-Maʿjūr</i>	2004	ʿĀlāʿ al-Huthlūl
13.	<i>Lam Aʿud Abkī</i>	2004	Zaynab Ḥafnī
14.	<i>Madāʿin al-Ramād</i>	2004	Badriyya ʿAbd al-Raḥmān
15.	<i>Banāt al-Riyād</i>	2005	Rajāʿ al-Ṣāniʿ
16.	<i>Al-Taḥaddiyāt</i>	2005	ʿĀliya al-Shāmān
17.	<i>Ḥubb fī Sijn al-Karāma</i>	2005	Al-Muhajira
18.	<i>Dhākira bilā Wishāḥ</i>	2005	Ḥasna al-Qarnī
19.	<i>Sitr</i>	2005	Rajā ʿAlīm
20.	<i>ʿUyūn Qadhira</i>	2005	Qumpsha al-ʿUlayān
21.	<i>Al-Qiran al-Muqaddas</i>	2005	Ṭayf al-Ḥallāj
22.	<i>Al-Nahr al-Thālith</i>	2005	Nisrīn Ghandūra
23.	<i>Wa Ghābat Shams al-Ḥubb</i>	2005	Amīra al-Mudḥī
24.	<i>Al-Ākharūn</i>	2006	Ṣabā al-Ḥarz
25.	<i>Al-Awba</i>	2006	Warda Abd al-Malik
26.	<i>Al-Baḥriyyāt</i>	2006	Umayma al-Khamīs
27.	<i>Baqāyā Imraʿa</i>	2006	Najāt al-Shaykh
28.	<i>Bukāʿ al-Rijāl</i>	2006	Laṭīfa al-Zuhayr
29.	<i>Banāt min al-Riyād</i>	2006	Fāʿīza ʿIbrāhīm
30.	<i>Hind waʿl-ʿAskar</i>	2006	Badriyya al-Bishr
31.	<i>Bayn Matārayn</i>	2006	Nabīla Maḥjūb
32.	<i>Rajul min al-Zaman al-Ākhar</i>	2006	ʿAmal Shaṭā
33.	<i>Suʿūdiyyāt</i>	2006	Sāra al-ʿUlaywī
34.	<i>Shams fī Hayātī</i>	2006	Lindā al-Wābil
35.	<i>Shihāb Mazzaq Ridāʿ al-Layl</i>	2006	Sanāʿ Saʿīd
36.	<i>Ṣamt Yaktubuh al-Ghiyāb</i>	2006	Suʿād Jābir
37.	<i>Al-dayāʿ</i>	2006	Maryam Ḥasan
38.	<i>Fi Ḥiddat al-Ashwāk</i>	2006	Wafāʿ al-ʿUmayr
39.	<i>Liʿl-Ḥuzn Baqiya wa Ashyāʿ Ukhrā</i>	2006	Muhra al-ʿUṣaymiī
40.	<i>Miḥuar al-Shar</i>	2006	Nabīla Maḥjūb
41.	<i>Al-Mirʿāt al-Munʿakisa</i>	2006	Sāra al-Zāmil
42.	<i>Malāmih</i>	2006	Zaynab Ḥafnī
43.	<i>Waddāʿ</i>	2006	Mahā Ba ʿIshin
44.	<i>Aḥbāt wa lam Ar Ḥabībī</i>	2007	Rīm Muḥammad
45.	<i>Biʿt al-Jasad</i>	2007	Fiktūriyā al-Ḥakīm

46.	<i>Bayt al-Tā'a</i>	2007	Munīra al-Subay'ī
47.	<i>Thaman al-Shikulāta</i>	2007	Bashā'r Muḥammad
48.	<i>Hatta lā Yadī' al-Hijāb</i>	2007	Al-Muhājira
49.	<i>Dimā' Mutanāthira</i>	2007	Butūl Muṣṭafā
50.	<i>Ant Lī</i>	2007	Muā al-Marshūd
51.	<i>Al-Raqṣ 'Alā al-Jirāh</i>	2007	Amal al-Muṭayr
52.	<i>Shar'uk Allāhumma lā I'tirād</i>	2007	Al-Muhājira
53.	<i>Fatāt al-Qarn</i>	2007	Hatūn Ba 'Azīm
54.	<i>Fitna</i>	2007	Amīra al-Qaḥṭānī
55.	<i>Kitāb al-Mut'abīn</i>	2007	May al-'Uṭaybī
56.	<i>Al-Mal'ūna</i>	2007	Amīra al-Muḍḥī
57.	<i>Hurūb al-Za'im</i>	2007	Nabīla Maḥjūb
58.	<i>Jahiliyya</i>	2007	Laylā al-Juhanī
59.	<i>Wa Ashraḡat al-Ayyām</i>	2007	Maryam al-Ḥasan
60.	<i>Ḥubb fī al-'Āsima</i>	2008	Wafā 'Abd al-Raḥmān
61.	<i>Sīqān Multawīya</i>	2008	Zaynab Ḥafnī
62.	<i>Al-'Abā'ah</i>	2008	Mahā al-Juhanī
63.	<i>Madīnat al-Sa'āda</i>	2008	Fāṭima Āl 'Amr
64.	<i>Ka'ināt min Tarab</i>	2008	'Amal Al-Farān
65.	<i>Lu'bat al-Mar'ah.. Rajul</i>	2008	Sāra al-'Ulaywī
66.	<i>Nisā' al-Munkar</i>	2008	Samar al-Muqrin
67.	<i>Al-Wārifa</i>	2008	'Umayma al-Khamīs
68.	<i>Saqar</i>	2008	'Āisha al-Ḥashr
69.	<i>Al-Hirmān al-Kabīr</i>	2008	Nūr Abd al-Majīd
70.	<i>Insiyya</i>	2008	Amānī al-Sulaymī
71.	<i>Al-'Atma</i>	2009	Salam 'Abdulazīz
72.	<i>'Uyūn al-Tha'ālib</i>	2009	Laylā al-Uḥaydīb
73.	<i>Aunthā al-Raghba</i>	2009	Badriyya al-Buṭayḥ
74.	<i>Khimāruk bi Ḥimārī</i>	2009	Khayriyya al-Sayf
75.	<i>Al-Dakhīla</i>	2009	Hanā' Aḥmad Yūsuf
76.	<i>Al-Tashazzī</i>	2009	'Ā'isha al-Ḥashr
77.	<i>Dhākirat Sarīr</i>	2009	Hadīl Muḥammad
78.	<i>Nuwāḥ al-Ṣamt</i>	2009	Ibtisām 'Urfī
79.	<i>Nisā' wa lākin</i>	2009	Nūr Abd al-Majīd
80.	<i>Ya'nī 'Ādī</i>	2009	Maysā' Bint Sa'd
81.	<i>Aḥbābtuk Akthar Mimmā Yanbaghī</i>	2009	Athīr al-Washmī
82.	<i>Muḡtaribāt al-Aflāj</i>	2010	Bashā'ir Muḥammad
83.	<i>Hams al-Majhūl</i>	2010	Nahla al-Thaqafī
84.	<i>Tawq al-Ḥamāma</i>	2010	Rajā' 'Ālim
85.	<i>Abnā' wa Dimā'</i>	2010	Lamyā' Ibn Su'ūd
86.	<i>Ragħm al-Firāq</i>	2010	Nūr Abd al-Majīd
87.	<i>Iunthā Mufakhkhakha</i>	2010	'Amīra al-Muḍḥī
88.	<i>Al-Urjūḥa</i>	2010	Badriyya al-Bishr
89.	<i>Rashḥ al-Ḥawāss</i>	2010	Nūra al-Muḥaymīd
90.	<i>Ma'a Sabq al-Iṣrār wa'l-Tarassud</i>	2010	Sihām Murḍī
91.	<i>Aqdām wa 'Aqabāt</i>	2010	Nūra al-Ghānim
92.	<i>Mutt Fīk</i>	2010	Hadīl Muḥammad

93.	<i>Al-Amākin fī ʿUyūn Jumāna</i>	2010	Nadā al-ʿArīfī
94.	<i>ʿAyn ʿAlā al-Mukhayyam</i>	2010	Rubā al-Quʿayd
95.	<i>Samāʾ Thāniya Talfuzunī</i>	2010	Iymān Hādī
96.	<i>Qalb al-Warda</i>	2010	Wafā al-ʿUmayr
97.	<i>Ashqar fī Kulliyat Banāt</i>	2010	Sanāʾ al-Qahtānī
98.	<i>Al-Ḥubb fī Muthakkira</i>	2010	Butūl Muṣṭafā
99.	<i>ʿIshrīnī wa Arbaʿīnak</i>	2010	Ḥanān al-Ruwaylī
100.	<i>Fī December Tantahī Kull al-Aḥlām</i>	2010	Athīr al-Washmī
101.	<i>Zilāl al-Waʿd</i>	2010	Munīra al-Subayʿī
102.	<i>Al-Raqṣ ʿAlā Asinnat al-Rimāh</i>	2010	Rihāb Abū Zayd
103.	<i>Al-Dināšūr al-Akhīr</i>	2010	Saḥar al-Sudayrī
104.	<i>Bashaʿ ʿAshwāʾī</i>	2010	Ḥasna al-Qarnī
105.	<i>Aurīd Rajulan</i>	2011	Nūr abd al-Majīd
106.	<i>Zāfirā</i>	2011	Ilhām al-Brāhīm
107.	<i>Al-Kābūs al-Muʿlim</i>	2011	Ḥanīn Nājī
108.	<i>Al-Ḥubb fawq Saḥ Marmara</i>	2011	Mahā Bāʿishn
109.	<i>Raghabāt shayṭāniyya</i>	2011	Wafā ʿAbd al-Raḥmān
110.	<i>Taraktuk LiʾAllāh</i>	2011	Shurūq al-Khālīd
111.	<i>Zill wa Mirʾāt</i>	2011	Nidāʾ Abū ʿAlī
112.	<i>Ḥarīq al-Mamālik al-Mushtahat</i>	2011	Balqīs al-Mulḥīm
113.	<i>Shaghaf Sharqī</i>	2011	Ghaṣbāʾ al-Ḥarbī
114.	<i>Muṭawwaʿa new look</i>	2011	Adwāʾ
115.	<i>Tawbat Ibn ʿIrs</i>	2011	Tahānī al-Ghāmidī
116.	<i>Anīn al-Thikrayāt</i>	2011	Ibtisām ʿUrfī
117.	<i>Album Bint Ghabiyya</i>	2011	Maysāʾ Saʿd