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**American Literature and the Representation of Feminism and
Women's Rights in Islam.
Case Study: Ayad Akhtar's Disgraced (2012)**

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for Master Degree in Civilization and Literature

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Dedications

This work is dedicated to my parents who have supported me with everything they could and believed in me; to my sisters who spared no effort encouraging me finish this work.

Saadia MEHIRI

It is a great pleasure for me to dedicate this humble work to my family, who has never left my side. No words could express my gratitude to you; all of you, Thank you.

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Abstract

Islam and Feminism views towards women's rights differ on several grounds. Consequently, this variance and compared to feminism, Islamic view towards women has been misrepresented as an inevitable consequence of a serious misunderstanding of the Islamic law in the first place. This study aimed to compare women's rights in both: Islam and feminism alike. This research, then, aimed to spotlight and analyzes the misrepresentations that may lead the misunderstanding of Muslim women's issues. To better achieve these aims, this study adopted a historical approach to display women's situation and rights in feminism, then in Islam. An analytical approach was also adopted to point out the controversial issues about the Islamic viewpoint to women highlighted in the American play of Ayad Akhtar's *Disgraced* (2012) and present its corrections in light of Quran and Sunnah in order to root out any ambiguity concerning women's matter. Therefore, this dissertation highlighted, on the one hand, that women enjoyed different rights in each of feminism and Islam. On the other hand, that misunderstanding the Islamic laws within their total context had led to their misrepresentation of Islam as a whole religion as it is the case in the American play *Disgraced*, which allows distorting women's real position within Islamic studies, with a high emphasis on the domestic violence issue.

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General Introduction

General Introduction

Women's issues have always been a topic of interest that they deal with a human being's fate. Human rights are, additionally, a necessity that should be granted for every individual. Putting these two sensitive concepts side by side will escalate the interest for the topic, for the fact that some women's position witnessed no stability; however, it sometimes rises to include equity, and falls other times to impose on women the worst actions of discrimination and oppression.

Throughout the course of history, many women were seen as inferior, second-class citizens those were created to serve men, and sometimes animals or had no souls. This dehumanization motivated Western women to revolt against all these segregations. As a result of this revolution, and by the nineteenth century, Feminism appeared as a social movement entrusted with fighting for women's rights. Feminism has developed from being an ideology which rejects women's oppression, to a social movement fighting for women's empowerment; however, it graded on from calling for only the right to vote in the European world, to reach total equality with men globally.

Women in front of these remarkable changes influenced by Feminism, found themselves adopting its ideologies as the only existing fighting front for them to get out of the oppression they are being subjected to by the patriarchal societies to more liberal ones. Thus, new practices, lifestyles, demands and needs started taking an important place within the Western world. The wide spread of the feminist ideas amongst the Western societies was echoed by Muslim women on different grounds to include social, political, and economic spheres. Accordingly, Muslim women started questioning their religious beliefs, comparing their situation with the Western women's ones.

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Nevertheless, this comparison is based on social principles established and strengthened by societies, which sometimes contradicts religion itself. Religion of Islam, as a matter of fact, is the divine laws set by Allah in the Quran, strengthened by His prophet in Sunnah. What Muslim women neglect about this comparison is that social practices and implements of religion are not the suitable criterion to be taken into account while comparing Feminism and Islam.

For the purpose of shedding light on how Feminism has convinced Muslim women that they should be sent free from religion, for it is restricting their freedom, reducing their productivity, and other claims, this study is devoted to investigate how both Feminism and Islam treat women and state their rights, in addition to analyzing Islam in isolation from the misinterpretations, misapplication, and misrepresentation, tackling only its ideology displayed in its legislative sources.

Women's rights in Islam were highly tackled from only a Western perspective, various misrepresentations about these rights raise to capture different communities' attention. *Disgraced* (2012) is a play written by the American playwright Ayad Akhtar, gathered the simplicity of style and the complexity of meanings and thoughts to highlight a group of controversial issues in the most thought-provocative way in order to head the audience to search for the answers those were not provided onstage in order to clarify women's position in both Feminism and Islam, and to investigate their situation, rights, and how they are being discriminated based on fallacious implementations of Islam. This research focuses on drawing a rational answer to the following main question: In light of feminism and Islam, to what extent does the American Literature succeed/fail to represent the misunderstandings of Islamic laws which are seen as the women discrimination's source?

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To answer this research question, other sub-questions are to be answered, which can be listed as follows:

- a- How are the different definitions of the concept of the Feminist problematic in addressing various visions of women's lives and rights?
- b- To what extent are the women's rights guaranteed in Islam?
- c- Based on Amir's attitude in Ayad Akhtar's *Disgraced*, how and why do the misunderstandings of the Islamic laws contribute in discriminating women?

Answering this set of questions requires setting up a number of sub-hypotheses preceded by the main hypothesis to be proved or refuted within the course of the study:

1-Islam is being exposed to several accusations for being a misogynist religion.

a- The significance of defining Feminism lies in the fact that it illustrates the debate over women's status in social, economic and political arenas and how understanding their rights leads to a resolution rather than a conflict.

b- Violating women in Muslim societies can be a result of the misrepresentations of Islamic laws.

c- Violating women in non-Muslim societies can be a criterion based on which one can state that Islam is not the reason for domestic violence. Investigating American literature can highlight the difference between the untold story of real Islam and what it has been introduced about it to the non-Muslim societies.

The Most Controversial Quranic Verse: Why 4:34 Does Not Promote Violence Against Women, is a book written by the North American John Andrew Morrow in 2020 to interpret the Quranic verse 4:34 in an exhaustive study where he interprets the

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verse in a methodological way. In four chapters Morrow interpreted the verse gradually, interprets the Verse related to other verses, related to the whole Quran, and related to the prophetic traditions.

Another work to be mentioned is the most known *The Second Sex* written by Simone de Beauvoir in 1949. The French feminist in this major work of feminist philosophy known as the feminism manifesto sets out the principles of feminism movement.

Many studies investigated Feminism in literary and non-literary works and Ayad Akhtar has chosen the genre of play, *Disgraced*, to tackle many themes and ideas through his characters; Akhtar also tackled women in Islam in one of his works which indicates that he is interested in feminism and the women's position in Islam and society; these are the main topic of this research. Different themes and subjects have been analyzed in *Disgraced* by researchers and through multiple interviews have been conducted with the author such as islamophobia, violence, 9/11 attacks, terrorism, ethnicity and racism, what motivated the researchers in this Master dissertation to tackle this play from a feminist perspective that analyzes domestic violence and highlights how Ayad Akhtar depicted woman, Islam, feminism and their representations all together in the Western literature and society.

The previous presented studies treat different subjects which were not presented gathered, as they are in this dissertation. Feminism, Islam, domestic violence, and their representation in the American Literature, are to be combined to display a new subject that analyzes domestic violence in *Disgraced*, the American Literature, from an Islamic perspective.

Moreover, this dissertation will adopt an analytical approach in order to analyze the misrepresentations of Islamic laws mentioned in the play *Disgraced*,

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investigate, and criticize them. Besides, a historical approach is employed, presenting the emergence and development of the Feminism movement and displaying women rights in both feminism and Islam.

Furthermore, this study is divided into three chapters, tackling three main ideas. The first chapter is devoted to discuss the historical background of Feminism as an ideology, philosophy, then a social movement fighting for women's rights. It deals also with displaying women's situation throughout history, regarding the views of philosophers, in different civilizations, and within religions. The second chapter is dedicated to highlight Muslim women's social, economic, and political rights in light of Quran and Sunnah. Further elements are included in this chapter to specify the Islamic frame of women's position within the Islamic sharia and Muslim societies, besides highlighting the differences between the divine laws and its human applications. Finally, the third chapter is allocated to analyze the American play *Disgraced* written by Ayad Akhtar to shed light on how a misinterpretation of a Quranic verse can contribute to representing Islam as a patriarchy religion that promotes violence against women.

Chapter one: Historical

Background of Feminism

Chapter one: Historical Background of Feminism

Introduction

Throughout the course of history, the world has witnessed different ideologies, beliefs, theories and principles that strengthen differences between people based on a set of criteria such as skin color, gender, social class, age and others. This distinction has motivated people to revolt against being inferiors, to fight for their rights, dignity and for a better life. Women, all along the eras of being inferiors, lived this segregation submissively until feminism came to light and highlighted this injustice towards women and struggled to impose gender equality.

I.1 Definition of Feminism

The term feminism is a flexible concept that can stand for different definitions. Feminism initially appeared as an ideology that supported gender equality and women's liberation. At its very beginnings, this belief aimed to spotlight the patriarchal injustice toward women, to enlighten them about their rights, and to pave the way for a revolution against the existing systems, traditions, principles, and even religions to reach gender equality and break the patriarchal restrictions. Mihai Androne, Lecturer, PhD, “Dunarea de Jos University of Galati Romania” in his article *A Terminological Analysis of Feminist Ideology* states:

Feminism is an entire philosophy aiming at actually changing the life of contemporary women, on the grounds that women and men have equal right in all the areas of social life. Equal rights first and foremost mean the opportunity to fill any position available to men, without any discrimination. That is why feminism is an ideology of “women’s liberation”, as women are profoundly discontent with their social status. (Androne 171)

In light of this statement, feminism is women's liberation philosophy which aims to improve women's situations at different levels.

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"Feminism is a movement to end sexism, sexist exploitation, and oppression" (Bell 8). Hooks in her book *Feminism is for everybody* emphasizes that sexism is the enemy not men themselves where she sets that women can be sexist, too. Feminism, from another angle, is the resisting movement to misogyny and the efforts made by whom rejected women's oppression to eradicate gender inequality. Its principle objective is to move on from the era of denying the fact that women and men are all equal, as human beings, sharing the same right in a better life, to more equitable societies in political, economic, and social spheres.

I.2 The Etymology of the Term Feminism

The origins of the term feminism are still uncertain; yet, it was first used by the French Feminist Hubertine Auclert(1848- 1914) in her writings in "La Citoyenne" magazine since 1882:

It only began to be used widely in France in the early 1890s and then principally as a synonym for women's emancipation. The first self-proclaimed "feminist" in France was the women's suffrage advocate Hubertine Auclert, who from at least 1882 on used the term in her periodical, *La Citoyenne*, to describe herself and her associates. (Karen 119)

Away from feminism the ideology, feminism the word has first been used only by the turn of the nineteenth century.

I.3 Types of Feminism:

By the turn of the nineteenth century, feminism managed to be the center of attention of people with different ideologies. This led to the emergence of different kinds; each calls for specific principles and objectives, sharing the same focus and struggling for women's rights.

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I.3.1 Liberal Feminism:

Liberal feminism is "certainly the moderate or mainstream face of feminism"(Chris 51). Liberal feminists believe that men and women should share the same opportunities in public life, with an emphasis on rights that women did not possess earlier. This approach works on ensuring women's access to political arena with no restrictions, as well as, guarantees their rights, starting from determining their right to hold positions that were kept for men, to demonstrating their rights in working without being exposed to harassment.

"Liberal feminism also focuses on how private life impedes or enhances public equality."(www.thoughtco.com) the supporters of this type assume that individuals have the ability to ameliorate or deteriorate their own lives. In addition, the main emphasis of this type is gender equality in public spheres.

I.3.2 Radical Feminism:

By the 1960s, and due to the American leader T. Grace Atkinson (1938), feminism took a new turn, after the emergence of a new philosophy which believes that women oppression is a certain result of the dominance of patriarchy, gender inequality, and women's subordination to men. This philosophy strove to reject patriarchy and to limit the chances given to men based only on gender.

In a time where women were treated as inferiors on the physical and psychological grounds, radical feminists raised the challenge to achieve absolute gender equality to help women hold higher positions in different domains.

Radical feminism aims fundamentally to eradicate patriarchy in addition to end men's superiority by rooting the principle of gender equality, by establishing more

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equitable societies, where both men and women should share the same rights, assume same responsibilities, and share equal access to public life.

I.3.3 Marxist Feminism:

With the passage of time and the widespread of Capitalism¹, society was divided into two different classes, the bourgeoisie and the proletariat, which triggered struggles between these classes in different fields. As this system spread, the fact that it depends on private ownership captured the feminists' attention to state that gender inequality is one of the reasons for women's oppression besides social classes' imbalance. Marxist feminists strain to spotlight how Capitalism exploits women by imposing lower wages, more working hours and other unfair work conditions. Marxist feminism also believes that women are being double oppressed; on the one hand because they are women on the other hand due to their poverty. These conditions led them to fight hard in order to attain economic equality, gender equality and better working conditions, taking into account Black women, Third-World women and every single woman.

I.4 Women Through History:

All along history, women in different societies have been treated differently based on each community' mores. Women in different civilizations, religions and in the eyes of different philosophers have possessed various positions and have been treated in different ways. Women through the course of history have not enjoyed a stable and equitable situation, yet changeable conditions.

¹ An economic, political, and social system in which property, business, and industry are privately owned, directed towards making the greatest possible profits for successful organizations and people. (Cambridge Dictionary)

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I.4.1 The Position of Women among Philosophers:

While men were living their superiority, imposing their dominance over everything in light of the prevalence of the patriarchy system, women were barely seen as second-class citizens. It was widely spread that women can only be classified as inferiors, servants, tools to give birth to other males and as men's properties. These beliefs rooted to the philosophers opinions about women, when we can clearly see how Aristotle undervalued women in his "politics" stating that: "[T]he relation of male to female is by nature a relation of superior to inferior and ruler to ruled"(www.thoughtco.com). In other cases, they did not consider her even a human, and sometimes they said that she was an incomplete man. Plato, for instance, believed that women were like slaves, children and frivolous creatures, he used to feel sorry for being a women's son.

I.4.2 Women in Different Civilizations:

Woman has been always affected by different civilizations, she did not enjoy living in better situations; she is still voiceless, dependent, and living in restricted societies with hard conditions. In the Roman civilization, women used to be treated as a men's private property that he can abuse, punish in the worst ways, sell or even kill. Roman society depended highly on men's authority.

Greeks, by their turn, divided women into classes, those for entertainment, others for taking care of their bodies, and wives for legal children, as Demosthenes(384 BCE-322 BCE) the Greek orator expresses his mind about women. For Chinese it was totally agreed for a men to kill his wife, for them, women should be subordinate to three men her whole life her father, husband and son.

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I.4.3 Women in Religions:

Most people believe that religions are meant to improve their lives, to preserve their rights, and to impose justice. Women's position in different religions differs from one to another based on their scriptures.

I.4.3.1 Women in Judaism:

Jews during their prayers praise God for not creating them woman; due to their belief that she is an evil, she is the origin of sin, and she is the one who tempted Adam to Lord's disobedience, as it was highly represented in the Holy Book as follows: “The woman you put here with me — she gave me some fruit from the tree, and I ate it” (Genesis 3:12); this, in their belief, is the reason why women are still being punished by childbirth pain, their desire to their husbands, and men's ruling over them, “I will make your pains in childbearing very severe; with painful labor you will give birth to children. Your desire will be for your husband, and he will rule over you.”(Genesis 3:16).

The woman in the Jewish belief is owned by her father who sells her to her husband. The husband, by his turn, will be her master and absolute controller later on. After her husband's death woman is inherited as a part of his heritage. Moreover, if a man dies and he does not have a male kid, his wife will be forced to marry his brother, that is to say that she has no authority over her own life. Furthermore, the woman in her menstrual period, in the Holy Book, is considered impure, she should not touch anything in order to not unclean it; she is not allowed to eat with her husband, to share the same bed and even the same place.

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Evidently, Judaism proponents propagated that woman was created from Adam as a sign of her inferiority; for Adam, to be his assistant not his partner, and other beliefs that stand for dehumanizing women.

I.4.3.2 Women in Christianity:

The story of Eve's temptation to Adam had a great impact on the Christians as well; so they also feminized the first sin, which was the reason for women's subordination for long centuries amongst the Christian societies.

Christians impose women to adopt a specific attitude in the Church based on what is stated in The New Testament such as remaining silent "Women are to be silent in the churches. They are not permitted to speak, but must be in submission, as the law says."(1 Corinthians 14:34), and asking her husband at home "If they wish to inquire about something, they are to ask their own husbands at home." (1 Corinthians 14:35).

Digging deeper into the Christian societies may lead to notice the wide spread of celibacy among them which is a reflection of their deep belief that marriage is an impurity; this belief resulted in monastic prevalence; yet, when a man chooses to marry, divorce will be prohibited for him within the Christian belief.

Woman's situation was similar in both Judaism and Christianity, no great changes managed to take place under these religions dominance.

I.4.3.3 Women in Islam:

Prior to Islam, women continued to be marginalized, subordinate to men, and inferior to them; during this period; they had no privileges since their infancy, where people were highly dominated by the idea that women are a threat to family honor, accordingly, they prefer to bury them alive. When it comes to marriage, no special privileges has been offered to women; while different types of marriage prevailed in

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Jahiliyah period² that was characterized by degrading and humiliating women, so men were able to exchange their relatives (*Zawaj al-shighar*), paying no attention to their self-determination as an independent entity and with no dower (*mahr*) and proposing and accepting (*ijab wa qubul*). Furthermore, men could also swap their wives without even divorcing them (*Zawaj al badal*). Another type of Jahiliyah marriages is *Nikah Al Mokhadana* which is the situation where women were forced to live a marital life with men without any contract that legalize this relation, preserve their dignity, rights, or even their humanity.

Consequently, divorce has no limits also; Jahili man has the absolute control over his wives that set the stage for him to subjugate them. They have been inherited as men's possession, have no financial rights, no social involvement, no education; women used to be a mere voiceless subaltern.

Islam grants women's rights sometimes by equality and others by justice, for it is inequitable to share the same rights while sharing different characteristics. Stating that men and women are different does not mean that one is inferior to other; however, it is the most appropriate way to achieve a certain level of integration that could grant more equitable chances for both genders. By the rise of Islam, women's situation has witnessed a great change by opposing and eradicating all misogyny practices; hence, it first negates that Eve is the origin of sin; yet, it emphasizes that both Adam and Eve disobeyed God. The Sacred Quran mentions no differences between men and women in creation "people, be mindful of your lord, who created you from a single soul, and from it created its mate, and from the pair of them spread countless men and women far and wide" (Qur'an 4:1), in punishment, and reward "Their Lord has answered them: 'I will not allow the deeds of any of you to be lost,

² The ages before Islam (Almaany dictionary).

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whether you are male or female, each is like the other'" (Qur'an 3:195). Furthermore, initially; Islam has prohibited female infanticide which grants women right to live. After preserving their life, it manages to impose women's social involvement through different activities those were inaccessible for them before its emergence. Related to this fact, Islam has also ensured their right to education, holding different positions when possible, respecting a set of conditions that are existing to serve their safety, which contributes in offering them the right to gain their own possesses which means that they can be considered financially independent and a man cannot control their possesses unless they allow him to do.

During the post Islamic era, the woman was neither controlled by man nor considered as his own property, the fact that resulted in ending woman's inheritance as a private possession, yet focusing on her right to have share in inheritance. From a social perspective, Islam pays a considerable attention to the marriage institution for its importance, and strengthens it by set of conditions those aim to preserve both genders' rights; thus, it focuses on, first, the woman's acceptance after man's proposition, representing a high consideration to the woman's opinion that she has not enjoyed before, then offering her the dower (*mahr*) as a personal possess. Another condition for marriage is the witness that this marriage has been really done, to guarantee civil and social rights of both parents and children. Islam sets up that marital relationship is a partnership that is labeled by respect and blessing, *mawada* and *rahma*; no one is supreme, yet each is in charge of different responsibilities based on each physical, psychological and physiological abilities. While marriage is an institution that requires conditions to be built up, divorce, as the deconstruction of this institution, is also limited by conditions. Unlike other religions and civilizations, divorce in Islam did not undervalue women and organize the known chaotic practices

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of it, for the first time women have the opportunity to end this relationship if it is impossible to carry on it for reasonable causes. On the political ground, Islamic law enables women to take a part in politics (shifaa as a minister), women practice in *al baia* as a representation to their practice in elections, their participation in ghazawat and other political events (Mahmood Ahmad 14).

Women's situation was not stable all along the history line, it varied between subjugation and dignifying, sometimes they were second class citizens and other times they were competitors to men, all these situations were influenced by the society's political, religious, social, or economic conditions.

I.5 Waves of Feminism

The previous presented facts about women subjugation, inferiority, dependence, and all other misogyny practices were the flame that sparked The Feminism Revolution, which went through several waves each calling for a set of demands that match the living conditions.

I.5.1 The First Wave: Suffrage

The first wave of feminism emerged in the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century in the Western world. It managed to be known in parallel with the abolitionist movement in the USA that represented its reformist nature. Feminism first wave initially started at the Seneca Falls Convention in 1848 calling for the genders equality which was drafted by Elizabeth Cady Stanton (1815-1902) in her "Declaration of Sentiments" after it was previously represented in Mary Wollstonecraft's "A Vindication of the Rights of Women" (1792), Stanton's draft outlined the ideology of the new movement and the political strategies those show how woman could be equal to man in different spheres. The first feminism wave main

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goal was to pave the way for women to struggle for their rights with a considerable focus on suffrage. Feminism activists during the first wave called also for woman's right to file to divorce, education, and the right to personal properties possession without men's control. These and other demands led to a great number of debates about vote and women's participation in politics. Some claimed that women were morally superior to men, and so their presence in the civic sphere would improve public behavior and the political process. (www.pacificu.edu). Thanks to this wave a number of black women known as "colored women" were given the chance to be known based on their writings such as Sojourner Truth (1797-1883) and Frances E. W. Harper (1825-1911). By the end of the nineteenth century, the claim had a great impact on the political field which resulted in the passage of the nineteenth amendment to the USA constitution in 1919 which guarantees women's right to vote. Amongst this wave's characteristics were that its advocates did not use the term Feminism for that it was not coined yet, however they supported the ideology of gender equality. Consequently, women, by the end of this wave, could achieve a noticeable success especially on the legal and political grounds.

I.5.2 The Second Wave: The Personal is Political

After the first wave, people's attention was highly concentrated on The First World War which led to an era of stability until the end of the Second World War where women were directed to a more specific positions; namely, nursing, working in the factories and holding men's positions while fighting. This stability was in feminists' favor where their return was stronger with stronger demands in the so called the Second Wave of Feminism.

The Second Wave of Feminism appeared in the Western world after the Second World War especially in the 1960s until the 1990s. This wave's proponents

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adopted a radical view where its supporters believed that Patriarchy is the reason for women's subjection that should be eradicated to allow women enjoy a less limited society where she can be more than an object. Unlike the first wave, the second was propelled by different races, colors and classes in an effort to eliminate all sexism³ practices among all the societies. Feminism activists during this period raised the challenge to pass the Equal Rights Amendment that guarantees social equality regardless of sex. They also fought for sexuality and reproductive rights, that is to say that the woman is not of interest only due to childbearing and housekeeping. They struggled to persuade woman that she should find her own identity far from her husband and children and that she can be of interest even though she has no husband and children for that she has her own identity, the women during this phase were unsatisfied of being mothers, wives and housekeepers due to their belief that these labels are the reason for their marginalization. All these facts were highly presented in Betty Friedan, one of the major figures of the second wave, "The Feminine Mystique" (1963). Second wavers also refused marriage, fought for legalizing abortion and the right to embrace sexual freedom.

I.5.3 The Third Wave:

Feminism at this point managed to spread the world, after gaining the right to vote, equal contracts, financial independence, political involvement, and after legalizing abortion and the right of birth control, feminists by the mid-1990s moved to a higher level in liberation that push them to struggle for a more liberal demands opposing victimizing women during the first two waves, emphasizing that no biological or psychological differences should be taken into consideration between men and women. Third wavers believed that women discrimination has not resulted

³ According to Merriam Webster, sexism is prejudice or discrimination based on sex especially discrimination against women.

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only in the spread of patriarchy; yet, women could be oppressed only for being colored or belonging to another race or class that can be highly exemplified by the superiority lived by white middle class women towards blacks, Asians, Third World women and others. They also denote that the issue of gender inequality is originated from cultural restrictions within societies which require radical changes of the cultural concepts. This wave's supporters strove to impose an absolute freedom for women, unlike the previous feminists, which adopted a reformist tendency that ensures liberating women and guarantees her rights by excluding the patriarchy's domination over her, which was seen as undervaluing women for third wavers who believe that the best way to empower women is to allow them live their own lives exactly the way men do, and to treat them as one creature sharing no differences. Naomi Wolf, one of the influential figures of this phase, on an interview on YouTube entitled *Naomi Wolf: Third Wave Feminism* says that “Third wavers tend to be more engaged with being willing to use power like media.” She, then, continues saying “third wave feminism tends to be much more pluralistic about sexuality and personal expression, and fashion choices, and much less dogmatic” where she emphasizes the major characteristic of this wave which is granting absolute freedom and highlighting the effect of technology on this phase. Accordingly, a great number of literary works have addressed this ideology, setting up its major basics and glorifying its objectives from which we can mention Rebecca Walker, the first to coin the term "third wave" in 1992, and her contributions in promoting the movement through her writings. Third wavers criticized the earlier feminist activists for struggling for only political and social women rights considering sex differences due to their belief that this difference is not important while both are able for what they are in charge of.

Chapter one: Historical Background of Feminism

Conclusion:

Feminism is a term used to refer to the genders' equality, no specific definition can stand for this concept's diversity and cover all its dimensions, while Feminism carries a philosophical, legal, theoretical, and a dogmatic dimension all stands for eliminating women's oppression and eradicating the patriarchy system, yet each within its sphere. Feminism is an ideology, a social movement and a philosophy that were raised up as a result of the subjection women witnessed since ancient times where they were treated as inferiors, men's possessions and servants. However, this movement's development did not appear at once but it was a continuous struggle that went through several phases known as waves, each characterized by different demands, beliefs and methods to reach their objectives.

Chapter Two: Islam and Women Rights

Chapter Two: Islam and Women Rights

Introduction:

By the arrival of Islam, the position of woman has been elevated, Islam has freed woman from being treated as a slave, has given her the right to live and to choose her husband, woman was also given the right of property in Islam as well as the right to inherit her father as man unlike the situation during the era of ignorance. Islam glorified the position of woman in society by giving her the free will to contribute and decide about different fields of life.

After the death of the prophet Mohamed (peace be upon him), people have been affected by traditions and other societies which resulted on the change in the norms of Islamic Arabic societies. Women started lose their rights and position in society by the maltreatment of men; the fact that women started lose rights resulted on the creation of the feminist movement.

Later on, in the late 19th century the feminist movement has been founded in the west to stand for the rights of women and elevate their position in society. Feminism at first called for right to vote and succeeded in doing so, later on they started to call for education and to stop discrimination all over societies.

However, the movement turned by the turn of the century and started to call for extra rights which made it lose its way towards achieving the basic goals for which it first came into existence for, such as free relationships and having the full right to do whatever woman wants with her body which is something against the morals and woman herself.

Feminism has failed in achieving its essential goals which are the rights of women because it becomes against the principles of humanity, unlike Islam which has

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given and protected women from being discriminated, humiliated and oppressed, that will be presented all along the coming chapter.

I.6 Muslim Women's Essential Reason "raison d'être": Servitude to Allah:

All along their lives, people with different conditions need laws to guide their lives, to structure their behaviors, and to help them differentiate good and evil; was it man-made or divine ones; i.e. the national identity necessitates being committed to a group of laws those are constituted by governments in order to maintain public safety and preserve the individuals' rights and duties, while the religious identity that stands for the loyalty to the divine teachings is to be committed to the canons represented in the holy scriptures. Muslims from different nationalities belong first to the Islamic identity where Quran and Sunnah are the major sources of Islam teachings. That is to say, Quran and Sunnah teachings take precedence over any other responsibilities Muslim person is committed to. According to this, Muslims are to be defined, first, as God's servants those were created to be His successors on earth "And [mention, O Muhammad], when your Lord said to the angels, "Indeed, I will make upon the earth a successive authority"" (Quran 2:30), besides worshipping Him "And I did not create Jinn and mankind except to worship Me" (Quran 51:56). These facts and the fact that Muslims believe that God is their creator, their keeper and their highest controller Who His orders ought to be their priority resulted on a full acceptance of His teachings and prioritizing them over other identities' responsibilities, that reflects on Muslims actions in which God obedience is their greatest goal. In this respect, and in light of the previous presented (Quran 51:56), women are of no exception, that sheds light on that their servitude to God is their greater purpose.

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I.7 Women Rights as a Part of a Higher Divine System:

Revelation in Islam addresses both men and women equally with some exceptions considering physical and psychological differences, about this, the German diplomat Murad Wilfried Hoffman (1931-2020) states in his *Diary of German Muslim*: "And so came the Islamic formula: equality in dignity with difference in burdens"(214), for that both are equal in the eyes of Islamic sharia in obligations, reward, and punishment, with a great emphasis on piety (taqwa) as the differentiation criterion within all humankind with its different races, colors and ages considering no other criterion, Prophet Muhammad peace be upon him in the Final Sermon (632 A.D) says:

All mankind is from Adam and Eve. An Arab has no superiority over a non-Arab, nor does a non-Arab has any superiority over an Arab; white has no superiority over black, nor does a black has any superiority over white; [none has superiority over another] except by piety and good action.

Thereupon, Islam considers no gender differences in its big issues, but it ensures achieving complementarity between men and women in different sub-issues; that is the first fact to represent Islam's acknowledgment that they are two separate entities those are, both, important for one stable community, yet each is responsible for the way he reflects God's obligations on his life.

Women are part of the Muslim community; exceptional legislations related to them are not to belittle them, but to show their exceptional role in achieving the right combination in a stable and organized society in which missions are given based on individuals' abilities and competencies. Moreover, women legislations are a part of a higher divine system that its laws are related to each other which confirms the meaning of servitude that is being committed to all its obligations.

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In brief, the first principle to be considered is that Muslims deeds are related to their greatest power, Allah, they are, all, equal on creation, reward, and punishment grounds. Women and men do not stand face to face to compete one another but to complete each other in light of the Islamic sharia that schedules their rights and duties in an organized plan to achieve stability, highlighting that being different does not reflect inferiority for both of them.

I.8 Women's Issue as Part of a Whole:

Muslims all over the world, belong to different governments and, consequently, to various laws, customs and traditions. This diversity resulted in numerous practices that contradict Islam. Group of women issues on different levels social, political, or economic, are being misunderstood to be Islamic, or misinterpreted by groups of people and practiced in a way that contradicts the original Islamic text that paved the way for the emergence of the big women issues within Muslim societies. Labeled as Islamic practices, deeds such as domestic violence and honor killings are being described as a part of the Muslim women sufferance, though both issues are universal and being discussed globally.

In most of the patriarchal societies, women are being described as inferiors because they believe that they are different, they could bring shame, they were created to serve men and so many other beliefs those contradict the real value of the Muslim women, that can be represented through the saying of Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) where he reported that women are twin halves of men (Sunan Abu Dawud). Accordingly, these misbeliefs, misinterpretations of the Islamic texts, and the ignorance of the Muslim women worth in Islam based on Quran and Sunnah strengthen gender discrimination which, by its turn, contribute in increasing women's

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problems, those can be solved as a result of solving the previous presented issues following an organized and systematic plan.

Muslim women problems are a part of a bigger dilemma. 1400 years after the emergence of Islam, and with regard to the great numbers embracing Islam every year, it is a great shame for a Muslim person not to be proud of his belonging, not to understand the essence of his mission and to allow other entities to affect his beliefs by falsifying or devaluing this essence. This issue, increasingly, captured women's interest with higher rates; all this was a straight result of various reasons such as, Media and the presented materials aimed to globalize Western norms and values against any other ones, the environment that Muslim women are surrounded by; in light of the Western dominance over social, political and economic sectors. Muslim women's issue, to an increasing extent, is raised to be a global conflict to prove what is already proven; women are, also, human beings, who shall enjoy rights similar to those men enjoyed before; yet, all these proved insufficient and only helped increasing gender conflict.

On another front, women rights are part of a greater system that is Islam, so while dealing with a part of their rights one should put these rights in their general context. For further explanation, to guarantee a better understanding of the Muslim wife rights, wife's duties and men role towards them should be, also, taken into account, in order not to fragmentize religion to serve personal or any organizations' interests, and to avoid any misuse of isolated parts.

Women, after all, are part of these societies, and an active existence needs to live as dignified as men. The question of women within Muslim societies needs to be taken into consideration as a part of Islam itself and working on eradicating the rooted problems those caused all these; from which we can highlight and emphasize on the

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misinterpretations of the original Islamic texts and their implementations within Muslim societies.

I.9 Women's Rights in Islam:

When the Islamic Sharia treated women as independent individuals for, almost, the first time and decided upon their rights and duties amongst the big picture of the Islamic legislation, it managed to structure an independent entity for them, for not being as like as men and to eradicate the effects of discrimination they witnessed earlier. This legislation managed to bring women out of the injustice, oppression, and the subalternity they endured before, to a fairer society or system that guaranteed them a set of rights and required them, in parallel, execute duties in order to reach a balanced system in various arenas such as social, political, economic and other natural rights. The following parts are to spotlight on some of these rights and present their significance.

I.9.1 Social Rights of Women in Islam:

Human rights are now dominated by Western standards, UN, UNESCO, UNICEF, HRW, and other organizations are means established by Western nations to shape a typical model for human rights based on their own beliefs and working on making them adequate with all societies. So, were these Western rights suitable for the Muslim societies? Or were there another model for these matters as more suitable alternative?

Human rights in Islam are generally derived from the two main legislation sources represented in Quran and Sunnah, besides their implementations in the prophetic society from the daily life of Prophet Muhammad and his companions, consequently, every single action took place in the Prophet's presence and faced no

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refusal from him or by Quran meant that this action is accepted within the Shariaa framework.

With this in mind, for a reason or another, and regardless the surrounding conditions, people, all along history, infanticide their girls sometimes by burying and others by burning them; with no need to mention other ways, depriving them one of the most essential rights those no authority has the right to take away from them.

In this regard, Quran reports "Whoever kills a soul unless for a soul or for corruption in the earth it is as if he slain mankind entirely" (17:33) the verse shows in high perfection how does Quran expresses the sanctity of the human soul in general, comparing killing one soul by killing everybody for that who is able to kill one person is able to do more since he is not able to distinct an innocent and guilty, besides, the verse forbids killing women in particular for what the case was before Islam "And when the girl who was buried alive is asked for what sin she was killed" (81: 8-9). These and other positions in Quran and Sunnah are straightforward acknowledgments of women right in life that is the principle issue amongst social rights.

Read! The first word revealed to Prophet Muhammad by Jibrīl⁴ was Read. Such a situation exceeded expressing mere reading to represent learning, understanding, contemplating, and reasoning which places a high emphasis on the value of education in this new religion. Although this verse addressed Prophet Muhammad at first; however, its significance, later, became one of the Islam's most important pillars because it was strengthened by another verse stresses the value of knowledge "Allah will raise those who have believed among you and those who were given knowledge, by degree" (Quran 58:11), Allah grants His excellences to two types

⁴According to Britannica, Jibrīl, in Islam is the archangel who acts as intermediary between God and humans and as bearer of revelation to the prophets, most notably to Muhammad

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of people, who believed in Him and those who have knowledge; women were of no exception according to this situation.

Since the 7th century, Islam has granted women the right to seek knowledge and the pursuit of education. This phenomenon was illustrated in more than one situation in the prophetic society. In different ways, Muslim women acquired knowledge that was forbidden for them before with total agree of the Quran and Sunnah. One of the most notable situations where women asked for knowledge was when a woman came to Prophet Muhammad and asked him to allocate a day to them in order to teach them from what Allah taught him and he did not blame her or criticized her desire, but responded to her request and came to her and other women to teach them⁵. These, Quranic verses, Sunnah teachings, and many other events took place in the Prophetic and the Caliphs' societies stand against any individual or group claims that Islam prohibited women from being educated, competing men, or even to be advisor to the Prophet himself, or to his companions, as it was the case for Aishah, after his death, when it is needed out of gender discrimination.

Stating that Islam grants women the right of education does not stand only for Islamic studies as it has been claimed by non-Muslims, but it includes also other fields like making speech, interpretation of dreams, medicine and surgery, poetry, without neglecting arts. (Ghadanfar 15)

On another front, marriage and divorce conditions became more organized due to the new system's (Islam) laws that imposed men and the patriarchy societies at that time to respect the will of women in marriage as in divorce. Dehumanizing women and degrading them were deeply eradicated by the ultimate sources of Islam, Quran and Sunnah on different levels, setting a great emphasis on the spiritual value of

⁵Sahih Al-Bukhari and Muslim

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marriage on both genders and especially women when Allah says in Quran "And of His signs that He created for you from yourselves mates that you may find tranquility in them; and He placed between your affection and mercy" (Quran 30:21).

I.9.2 Political Rights of Women in Islam:

Feminism came to be a global movement from merely the spark of fighting for women right to vote in the Western societies that placed a high value on this right. Muslim women at the first years of the emergence of Islam pledged their oath of allegiance (Bay'ah⁶) to Prophet Muhammad, considered as the political leader of Muslims, as a representation of their acceptance or rejection of the principle charter of Islam, that is the first proof from Sunnah on what is mentioned in Quran where Allah says "O Prophet, when the believing women come to you pledging you then accept their pledge" (60:12). In the famous Bay'at al Aqabah the Prophet pledged seventy-three persons including two women as a starting point for granting women right to participate in the political life. Neglecting the essence of the fact that women are now part of the political arena, islamophobic persons deliver misogynistic interpretations of the situation, that the Prophet did not shake women hands, which is a dogmatic issue needs further explanation. Furthermore, Yusuf al-Qaradawi (1926), the Egyptian Islamic scholar assumes, in this regard, that there is no clear Qur'anic text or a saying from Sunnah prohibits women's participation in the elections, for which there is no obstacle to deprive them sharing their political viewpoints.

Last but not least, political field was open for women during Prophet Muhammad's period in different situations, Scholars after 1400 years still writing about small, but momentous details the Prophet took care about concerning these

⁶The concept of bay'a in classical Islam refers to a reciprocal contract between the ruler and the ruled, with the latter giving his allegiance to the leader – usually the caliph – in exchange for protection and political and military leadership.

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incidents. One of the most renowned facts in this regard is Prophet and Caliph Omar Ibn Al-Khattab's consultation with Shifa bint Abdullah by dint of her political intelligence; she is often known for being as the first woman minister in Islam.

I.9.3 Economic Rights of Women in Islam:

Economically, women in Islam witnessed very different conditions on what was the case before. Women, as never before, could enjoy an economical independence, was it for what she owned by herself or what men are obliged to offer her; the dowry, inheritances, personal properties and other possessions.

At first, woman in Islam is not obliged to be responsible for her financial needs; however, it is the responsibility of her father before marriage which will be her husband's duty later on. woman all along her life, and even if she is a person of wealth, is not obliged to share her personal properties, to support financially any person, or even to spend on her children or herself, unless she is doing it willingly; because man is in charge of all these within Islamic Sharia framework.

In light of the last presented facts, and the fact that economic rights in Islam are given based on two different principles, in some cases based on equity and in others based on equality, a very controversial issue raises upon non-Muslims about Muslim female inheritance, they believe that females are being oppressed because they enjoy only the half portion of inheritance of males. This fallacy is being supported by a misinterpretation of a verse from Quran that is being treated separate from its general context (Quran 4:11), so they are neglecting the context of the verse and its background and all these previous presented conditions especially that men are responsible for all the financial responsibilities unlike women. Emphasizing the equity principle in such situation places a high value on the importance offered to both

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genders in Islamic laws. This, perfectly, illustrates how we could generate equality from equity taking into consideration all the surrounding conditions, responsibilities and needs of each individual within the Islamic sharia provisions out of gender discrimination.

Regardless of all the different opinions about women's work, women's work in Islam is permissible, so they can work which grants them personal gained amounts of money those cannot be controlled by any other authority than their own authority. Such situation can be proved by Prophet Muhammad's reaction towards his wife's, Khadija, businesses where he did not show any interference in her affairs those were one of the biggest businesses amongst the Quraish's⁷. This, on another hand, shows that women are allowed to establish their own affairs, they have the right to manage their own separate economical projects, their profits, and the way they will spend these incomes.

The dower in Islam is called *Mahr*, that is one of the economic rights granted for women by Islam, it is an amount of money was it cash, gold or any other equivalent conditioned by the wife herself or her *wali* (guardian), offered by man to the woman he chooses to be his wife, conditioned and spent by her.

These, and other financial, social, political and other rights are a part of what women strove to gain for a long time before Islam and within non-Muslim societies, while they are an inseparable part of the Islamic laws regardless of their implementations amidst Muslim societies, that differs from one society to another

⁷An Arab people of which Muhammad was a member and which from the 5th century was distinguished by a religious preeminence associated with its hereditary provision of the pre-Islamic custodians of the Kaaba at Mecca.(Merriam-webster)

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based on the spread traditions, fallacious beliefs, and the maltreatments of the Islamic texts.

I.10 Women's Rights between Divine Legislation and Human Application:

I.10.1 Religiously Forbidden and Culturally Forbidden:

People within society may fall in various mistakes and can be judged by their attitudes, people's actions are restricted by two different types of prohibitions, those enacted by Allah in His Holy Quran and Sharia known as *haram* (religiously forbidden) and others established by society named *Aib* (culturally forbidden).

Religiously forbidden actions are unaccepted actions by Islamic laws, Islam has made it clear for people what is right, accepted, permissible and what is wrong, unaccepted, or forbidden, Prophet Mohamed said "that which is lawful is clear and that which is unlawful is clear" (Hadith6, Bkhari and Muslim). Allah in His book the Quran mentions what is forbidden and how to deal or judge people who fall in such mistakes by a set of laws, adultery, for instance, is religiously forbidden.

Adultery is a sexual relationship between man and woman without a legal marriage which is considered as a shameful deed in Islam. Islam has selected the relationship between man and woman and established regulations and rules to prevent people from committing great sins and adultery. God has forbidden adultery in Quran and says "And come not near to unlawful sex. Verily, it is Fahishah (i.e., anything that transgresses its limits: great sin), and an evil way (that leads one to Hell unless Allah forgives him)". (v17:32)

Adultery is one of the greatest sins that Islam sets a specific penalty for it, provided that this penalty is carried out under conditions which are the person and his

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social status whether single, married or matron⁸ ; as for the single adulterer one hundred lash for both guy and girl which means one hundred lash for the guy and one hundred lash for the girl in addition to the exclusion from the country for one year without mercy, Allah says: "The unmarried woman or unmarried man found guilty of sexual intercourse lash each one of them with a hundred lashes, and do not be taken by pity for them in the religion of Allah" (Quran 24:2), this punishment is for unmarried persons guilty of adultery, but if married persons commit it (illegal sex), the punishment is to stone them to death, according to Allah's Law.

For married man and woman, the penalty is to be stoned to death for it is greater than if it is done by unmarried, while both are *fahishah*. The punishment will be applied by Imam only after the crime is proved by one of the three situations: when one of them admit that they commit the crime, when the woman is pregnant or when four, adult and sane, witness the crime.

Islam has provided man and woman with equality in penalties and prescribed punishments. There are several reasons why adultery must be prohibited in societies; on the one hand, prohibiting it is a criterion to measure Muslim absolute obedience to God applying servitude principle. On the other hand, adultery has many negative effects on the level of family and society, for example it causes lineages interminglement so we cannot differentiate one's sons, daughters and sisters. It is also one of the main problems caused by adultery divorce and family issues arising on the loyalty and trust issues those will be caused because of adultery. On the level of health, some diseases can be mentioned as a result of the spread of adultery in societies such as Gonorrhoea and AIDS. Moreover, Islam prohibited adultery to save woman's position in society so she will not be seen as object or a product that is sold

⁸Matron (n.) : ex-married woman

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and bought easily, but to be seen valuable and of a higher position. Adultery can be main cause of murders and crimes in societies, for example who knows that his wife, daughter, or sister is an adulterous will spare no effort to harm her and the one who committed adultery with her.

Culturally forbidden actions are socially, traditionally and culturally rejected actions, most of the time they are new actions or attitudes taken from foreign societies or civilizations, each society creates a group of laws or ideas that limit citizens' actions according to traditions. (Mdjed,14/04/2016). Nowadays, *Aib* in Muslim societies becomes an obstacle to young people and for some such as men a license to be used to justify their actions or crimes such as honor crimes towards women to control their lives, because for them committing *Aib* behavior is more shameful than *Haram*.

Honor killings are murders to be committed by man towards woman in the same family in the name of honor to preserve the reputation of the family. In fact they are crimes related to customs, traditions and committed due to the perpetrator's belief that the victim has brought dishonor or shame upon the family name, reputation or prestige. The name honor killings is derived from honor because they are crimes happened when man doubts in acts of his female relatives (wife, daughter, sister) and murders them to save his honor because he thinks that woman is source of shame and dishonor.

Woman has always suffered from traditions and patriarchy rather than Islam; traditions and society have always restricted woman's actions and attitudes in the name of honor which sometimes reach murders. Ahlam was one of the victims of honor killings who was murdered by her father in July 2020 in Jordan, a video of her posted on social media under the hashtag #Ahlam's-screams, neighbors said that he

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hit her head with a rock and set down near her dead body drinking tea in cold blood which is unaccepted and forbidden action in Islam Allah says “And do not kill anyone whose killing Allah has forbidden, except for a just cause” [v.17: 33].

According to “Solidarity is Global Institute” an association in Jordan nine family murders committed against woman in 2020 and twenty-one murders of the same kind in 2019 in Jordan only, sixty percent (60%) of these murders were committed against young women between ages of eighteen (18) and thirty-seven (37) years, in addition to two hundred (200) women who were murdered under the veil of honor in 2011 according to “Syrian Woman Observatory”. The worst thing about these murders is that they are committed as result of mistrust, rumors and without proof as indicated in 2015 by a study conducted in Egypt by the “National Center for Social and Criminal Research” seventy percent (70%) of honor killings were result of mistrust and rumors. (Nagham, BBC 8August 2020)

The fact that honor killings well spread in Arabic societies because of some reasons among which can mention is that people ignored Islam and its laws and considered it as an obstacle while it is the opposite, another fact that can be considered as reason is the foreign cultures affection on our societies, in addition to these reasons there is one more reason and main one which is the man-made legislations those could not achieve absolute stability amongst different societies.

Legislations of Muslim societies are derived from French legislations from the time of Napoleon such as Syrian and Jordanian legislations concerning woman, Napoleon considered woman as object and property of man which is not the case in Islam.(Basam,2017) For example in The Jordanian Penal Code the Article 98 states: “He who commits a crime in a fit of fury resulting from a wrongful and dangerous act on the part of the victim shall benefit from a reduced penalty”(KHUDEIR, 138)

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which means that the criminal will benefit from a reduced sentence if the criminal commits his crime in a state of extreme furious; however, in 2017 the article was amended to ban honor criminal from the benefit from a reduced sentence as stated in the article if the victim is woman according to the representative and human rights defender Wafaa Beni Mustapha to Aljazeera net. (Aljazeera, 21/07/2020)

Although the article 98 was amended but what about honor crimes those resulted on hundreds of female victims before 2017, this has one main interpretation that laws coined by a human being would never achieve equity and equality in all cases unlike Islam and its laws which lead us, always, to be fair enough in cases that civil legislations failed to achieve.

I.10.2 Islamic laws: Equity, Equality or both:

Islamic laws were delivered to Muslims through the Qur'an and then by the Sunnah, and they were subjected to two different principles in order to achieve equal opportunities for different segments of Islamic societies based on various conditions such as gender and age to ensure equality in obligations. Islamic laws were sometimes subordinated to the principle of equality, and other times to the principle of equity. enacting laws in light of one of the two previous mentioned principles do not promote any gender segregation; however, it is an identification of each one's mission on earth with an utmost confirmation on the fact that being different does not mean that one is inferior, but each is important in his appropriate course. Finally, the adoption of the equity and equality appropriately within the Islamic laws contributes elevating the situation of women from "we used to have no regard for women whatsoever. But when Islam came and Allah made mention of them, this caused us to realize that they have rights upon us" (Sahih al-Bukhari, Hadith 5505), to "Women are the twin halves of men".

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I.10.3 Criticism:

Human beings have suffered from different kinds of racism over time, white and black, poor and rich, man and woman. The latter has been brought to the light since the 19th century when feminist movement started to stand for the rights of women; however, back to the early past there was Islam which came to protect woman from discrimination and oppression caused by men and patriarchy societies.

On the one side, Islam all along the time gives woman a higher position comparing to her situation in the previous periods, preserves her rights and protects her from the time of the Prophet Mohamed (Pbuh) till nowadays; however, on the other side, feminism movement started from the civil rights and has changed its path reaching demands those contributes degrading woman to be a mere object and not an independent human being, but what happened is that Muslim woman ignored the Islamic laws which led her to be a fragile entity, affected by the Western culture calling for rights which do not fit her Islamic identity and the Sharia values, this in fact resulted on changing the views of Muslim woman towards Islam and changing her position within Muslim society from being dignified to be oppressed.

Conclusion

Despite all the rights given to woman by Islam which are mentioned above are just a try to give a clear idea about the position of woman in Islam; yet, the real value given by Islam to woman is that it saved her from being oppressed as she was before Islam and achieved equality between her and man in creation and reward with one and only difference which is piety, the idea that could not be well understood unless with a systematic reading and comprehension of Islam and Islamic laws in their whole

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context; the deep belief of the idea of the successor, and understanding that men and women are, both, important for a stable community, although they are different.

Chapter Three: An Analytical

Reading of Women's Rights in

American Literature: Case Study:

***Disgraced* by Ayad Akhtar**

Chapter Three: An Analytical Reading of Women Rights in American Literature: Case Study: *Disgraced* by Ayad Akhtar

Introduction

Was it just a play? Was it just a dinner? Was Ayad Akhtar paving the way for the audience to draw the final results by themselves? Ayad Akhtar, in his play *Disgraced* (2012), with neutrality, manages to spotlight on different controversial Islamic issues; starting from spousal support, women issues (domestic violence, Hijab), and reaching the way a Muslim should adopt while living within the American society, whether assimilation or acculturation. Akhtar in each case presents two opposite opinions in a thought-provoking way, so the audience could develop their own opinions based on their own convictions, psychologies and researches. *Disgraced* also treats a number of subjects from which we can mention Islamophobia, post-9/11 America, AlQaeda⁹, Identity, and prejudice.

I.11 The Play as a Literary Genre and its Importance:

The word "Play" is derived from the Greek word "paizo" which means "to act" or "to perform"; from this perspective we can define play as a literary work. Plays are written to be performed in theatre, on stage, and in front of audience, it narrates a story with elements of conflicts, tensions, and actions through dialogues of characters for dramatic significance. Dialogues used in plays must be convincing and interesting. Plays are divided into acts and scenes; they are powerful way of storytelling that requires the audience to react to the plot, setting, characters, conflict and resolution immediately. Plays, always, play a major role transmitting global messages.

⁹Al-Qaeda, Arabic al-Qā'idah ("the Base"), broad-based militant Islamist organization founded by Osama bin Laden in the late 1980s. (britannica.com)

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A number of elements should be included in a work to be classified as a play, these elements are, first, the plot of the story which shows how events are ordered, second element is setting, which means where and when the story takes place, next is characters or, actors who perform the story on stage, the dialogue, which is the spoken words the characters contact though all along the play, conflict that is the problem to be solved through the play, and finally the resolution which stands for the end of the play. Great meanings could be presented through these elements to serve specific aims.

Plays as they share elements, they also diverse to include different kinds or types, five main types of plays can be mentioned, comedy which is a type that includes comic passages those make audience laugh usually with happy endings. In opposition to it, other plays are to be classified as Tragedy, which includes sadness, death, darkness with tragic and dramatic endings; for example, "*Romeo and Juliet*". Another type called tragicomedy contains elements of both comedies and tragedies. Historical type can include both elements of tragedies and comedies with focus on actual historical events, and the last type is melodrama which focuses more on emotions rather than details. (Emma, 2020)

I.12 Ayad Akhtar as an Author:

Ayad Akhtar is an American playwright, actor, novelist, and a screenwriter of a Muslim Pakistani heritage. He was born in October 28, 1970 in Staten Island in New York City, raised in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, and graduated from Brown University.

Akhtar, directs his works to include different controversial taboos to break societies' fear to face them and obliges people to face the elephant in the room, so he writes about islamofacism, identity crises and contradictions, American Muslims, Muslims in post-9/11 America and others, which grants him a great success that was

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reflected in publishing his first work *The American Dervish* (2012) in over 20 languages. His works includes plays, novels, besides acting.

Ayad Akhtar's works were nominated for a great number of prizes among which he won the Pulitzer Prize for Drama (2013) and Obie Award for Playwriting(2013) for his play *Disgraced*, an Award in Literature from the American Academy of Arts and Letters (2017), Edward M. Kennedy Prize for Drama (2018) for *Junk*, and many others.

I.13 “Disgraced” as a Play and its Significance:

Disgraced is a play written by the playwright Ayad Akhtar in 2012, it was first premiered Monday night at the American Theater Company in Chicago before went on stage of Lincoln Center Theater in New York (Chris, 2012). It went on to win “The Obie Award” and the Pulitzer Prize for best drama in 2013, later on to be nominated for “Tony Awards” in 2015. Akhtar in his *Disgraced* highlights and discusses topics of identity, religion, politics and economic ideas through his protagonist character who is an American lawyer of Pakistani heritage called “Amir”.

Akhtar in his play *Disgraced* tries to deliver messages about many issues, but mainly focuses on how ethnic minorities suffer in American society especially Muslims after 9/11 attacks through his well selected characters who are selected to represent ethnic minorities with usage of simple modern English. As for style, Akhtar uses a simple and direct style when presenting thoughts and ideas; however, it was complex and confusing when it comes to results and beliefs. This contributes elevating the literary value of this play for it make it possible for the audience to be involved by their ideologies, beliefs, psychologies, and personalities in the play.

Disgraced has come to discuss what people do not ever really dare to discuss in public in the American society to not be labeled as a terrorist, inferior or other

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labels. *Disgraced* is a play of five main characters with different views and beliefs that represent the contradictions concerning identity, faith, religion and woman's crisis in society. The main character of the play is "Amir" a successful American attorney of Pakistani heritage who spares no effort to hide his name and identity from his Jewish partners and changes his name to "Kapoor" to show that he is Hindu. Akhtar through his protagonist wants to present the fact how Muslims in post-9/11 America are socially obligated to amalgamate in the American society, hide their real identities, and live with certain principles those are imposed upon them in order to have equal opportunities as Americans. "Emily" is Amir's wife, who is a beautiful white artist strongly interested in Islamic culture, she thinks that Amir's view and understanding of Islam is wrong. There is, also, Abe, who is the nephew of Amir who changed his name from Hussein to Abe to avoid racism and discrimination in society. Isaac is Emily's co-worker who represents the Jewish minority. Isaac's wife "Jory" is an attorney at the same firm with Amir and an African American who supports Amir's ideas about Islam.

I.14 The General View of Woman within the Play “Disgraced”:

Women are always a topic of interest, tackling women issues within a literary work will, certainly, give it a new angle to be seen and analyzed from. Akhtar in his *Disgraced* sheds light partly on women in different societies, with varied beliefs.

The writer starts describing Amir's mother as tough and fanatic mother, who has a great role in transmitting her personal thoughts to her child, spitting in his face, threatening him to break his bones, and emphasizing her situation telling him that she spat in his face so he will never forget that he should always hate Jews. He, then, presents Emily, the white, successful, gentle, American artist, interested in Islamic Arts and consequently, Islamic religion, Emily, on another hand, is Amir's wife. Jory

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is another female appears in the course of the play, although she has no idea about Islam" I don't remember that being in the Koran"; yet, she is judging its laws as a specialized scholar "I don't blame the French for their problem with Islam"(59) and, "The veil is evil" (60).

Disgraced tackles different types of women and how do they deal with religions, misconceptions, misinterpretations of religious canons and how could these different types of women influence their children's and husbands' personalities and the way they implement religious laws based on their own experiences and false interpretations, neglecting the real essence of a religion.

I.15 Non-Muslims views towards Muslim Women's Rights:

The play *Disgraced* aims at depicting how ethnicities can coexist with each other in times of identity crisis with little focus on the protagonist Amir who grew up in a Muslim family, many non-Muslims nowadays think negatively about Muslim people and Islam due to a number of reasons such as Media, false interpretations of Islamic laws and Quran and representatives' religious weaknesses as a result of the pressure of foreign culture that is imposed on them and their amalgamation with its standards such as Amir in *Disgraced*, who was motivated by his anger to beat his wife as a result of the cruel circumstances he witnessed "in order to convey the discharge of a lifetime of discreetly building resentment"(75).

Amir's violent attitude contributes reflecting a negative belief that Islam promotes domestic violence whenever man is having a bad temper, though he states clearly that he is no more Muslim; yet, his Muslim Pakistani heritage mean, always, that his negative attitudes are of an Islamic tendency. Media, from another perspective, plays a major role in stressing such misconceptions about Islam and Muslim women rights in the Western societies; especially in the post-9/11 period.

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On a higher level, the wide spread misinterpretations of Islamic laws led to misunderstandings and wrong applications of a number of Islam's obligations and prohibitions by both Monotheists and others. The way Amir interprets the verse 4:34 expresses his slight understanding about Islam and women's rights in the Quran and Sunnah "So let's talk about something that is in the text. Wife beating", (57) "I'm paraphrasing", (58) and emphasizing the isolated words "beat them"(58). Such interpretations of that verse could highlight that Islam oppresses woman and treats her as an inferior that is dealing with only parts of the whole religion, it is judging a whole organized system depending on a fragmented part. Analyzing women's rights in Islam in isolation from its big picture is one of the most reasons that Islam is being labeled as misogynistic, terrorists' religion, violent and others. To achieve a full understanding of a law in the Islamic Sharia, one needs to ensure that he is referring to a specialized scholar, who by his turn, should emphasize giving the verse's exegesis respecting all Tafsir's¹⁰ conditions.

Amir, again, while talking to Emily about his sister mentions "never make her a citizen", (20) and "marry her off in Pakistan"(20). The first mentioned statement is highly refused by Islam, because it guarantees females' citizenships since their births to be equal with these of males, have the right of life, the right in education, in political sphere and grants her all the rights to be a full Muslim citizen. Furthermore, legal marriage in Islam is based mainly on four conditions; offer and acceptance (*Ijab and qabul*), dower (*Mahr*), the presence of witnesses and the guardian (*al-wali*), which determines that no authority has the right to force woman to marry if marriage is contradicting her free will. Muslims' wrong implementations of these laws should not lead us to accuse Islam of gender discrimination.

¹⁰ grammatical, historical, allegorical or traditional interpretations of the Qur'an(definitions.net)

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I.16 Amir's Behavior Towards his Wife and Domestic Violence: "Beat Them":

One of the most debatable issues about the Islamic laws and one of those issues' feminist activists adopt as an argument to prove that Islam is a sexism religion, is the domestic violence debate. This matter has been tackled in a fallacious way, it was, first, misinterpreted, then, misapplied by Muslims and non-Muslims alike, which resulted on presenting distorted ideas about women's position in Islam, men's attitude towards them, and that domestic violence is deeply rooted in Islamic sharia.

"From a health perspective, domestic violence can be better understood as a chronic syndrome characterized not only by episodes of physical violence but also by the emotional and psychological abuse that perpetrators use to maintain control over their partners" (Hegarty, Kelsey, et al). Domestic violence or, intimate partner violence (IPV) is a social phenomenon where one partner (women in most of the times) is being physically or psychologically assaulted by the other, which cause a serious risks on the individual, familial and even societal levels, such as depression, low self-esteem, death and gender discrimination.

Though the inferiority complex Amir suffers from through the course of the play; yet, Akhtar does not pass hints of unstable relationship between him and Emily (his wife). Moreover, they still share a great love despite their different religious points of view. "I'm not Muslim. I'm an *apostate*. Which means I've renounced my faith"(57), Amir the protagonist of *Disgraced* utters in a defensive way as if he is denying a great guilt. As the talking goes on, Amir emphasizes his Muslim Pakistani roots and that this needs a hard work to root it out, he also emphasizes, on the other hand, that he is continuously melting in the American "We" denying his original identity. These factors lead the audience straightforward to an absolute truth, that

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Amir is sparing no effort to adopt the American identity, lifestyle and standards. He was imposed to racist pressures from the American society for his Muslim Pakistani roots though he was working really hard on cutting off all his relations with his previous identity, so he first changed his name, his social security number; yet, still facing "he has it in for me"(36) situations, from his boss "your birth name is not Kapoor, it's Abdullah, why did you change it"(36), the *Times* newspaper "The paper mentioned the firm and they mentioned Amir and it looked like he was representing a man who was raising money for terrorists"(69), and Isaac "I wouldn't have even known you were a Muslim if it wasn't for the article in the *Times*." In parallel with this, Amir's exclusion from the promotion affair and choosing Jory for the promotion over him although his notable efforts, followed by the scene of his wife Emily cheating on him contributes flaming his rage causing a bloody violence scene.

All at once, Amir hits Emily in the face. A vicious blow. The first blow unleashes a torrent of rage, overtaking him. He hits her twice more. Maybe a third, in rapid succession. Uncontrolled violence as brutal as it needs to be in order to convey the discharge of a lifetime of discreetly building resentment. (Akhtar 75)

The quoted statement illustrates Amir's violence perpetration over his wife, where he, unconditionally, discharged his anger of the racist pressures he faced until that turning point in which Akhtar tries hard to represent as a very aggressive moment. Beating his wife cruelly, suddenly, and continuously contradicts with women's rights in Islam; yet, this fact was always a matter of debate.

Quran the first source of laws in Islam in Surat Al-Nisa'a (women chapter), and in most parts of it discusses women's rights and duties. One of the most controversial verses appears within this chapter tackles wife beating issue. About this, Quran states:

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Men are in charge of women by right of what Allah has given one over the other and what they spend for maintenance from their wealth. So righteous women are devoutly obedient, guarding in the husband's absence what Allah would have them guard. But those wives from whom you fear arrogance first advise them; then if they persist, forsake them in bed; and finally, strike them. But if they obey you once more, seek no means against them. Indeed, Allah is ever Exalted and Grand (4:34).

This verse raises a group of serious questions about Islam and domestic violence, because it was interpreted in totally wrong ways those guarantee men a carte blanche beating women, which is the essential misconception lead to labeling Islam as a misogynistic religion; yet, all these misinterpretations go against Islam principles about the spousal relationship that should be established based on love and mercy.

In the first place, this verse is not directed to all couples; however, it displays a guide to men on how to deal with a social problem that they may face with their wives. When man is in front of a situation of arrogance, and in order to protect the family institution, Quran sets him a group of steps to face it positively. Initially, he is ordered to admonish woman in a way that guarantees that she is, now, aware of her fault; then, if the first stage was of an insufficient effect, ignoring her in bed. However, this step should not be practiced neither in front of children, nor strangers to not deepen humiliation between man and woman that might hardened her rebellion. If these two stages proved to be insufficient, then beating her. Beating wife in Islam is being restricted by several conditions. First of all, it will never take place unless man has already tried admonishment and banishment in bed. Second condition for it is that it should be in order to educate not to humiliate, consequently it should be non-violent and gentle, Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) ordered man to not beat woman violently and to not beat her on her face and that is only if beating is a must. Finally, striking them is not always the right act to be carried out, so man cannot adopt it, taking into consideration all its restrictions, unless he is convinced of its effectiveness. The essential facts those

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should be highlighted in this context are that all these measures are to be adopted if and only if the wife is behaving in a rebellious way that can destroy that marriage institution and that whenever this institution is saved; man is obligated to stop referring to these disciplinary punishments. (Qutb,114-116). Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) states about this "Those who strike their wives are not the best among you" that stands for the fact that beating wife, conditionally, is not preferred or prioritized.

In light of this, Amir's behavior towards Emily is completely rejected by Islam for several reasons from which we can mention that his action was sudden "All at once"(75), violent "uncontrolled violence as brutal as it needs to be"(75), "her face bloodied"(76), based, merely, on his psychological complexities not on her misbehaviors "in order to convey the discharge of a lifetime of discreetly building resentment", besides being not even conscious "Amir suddenly comes to his sense" while one of the most important instructions in Islam is that man should take such a decision guardedly to not be unjust. Moreover, his prejudgment about the verse "that is in the text"(57) and his interpretation of the same verse in isolation from its whole context, not taking into account how it is related to other verses, its historical context, and how Prophet Muhammad (pbuh) implemented it all along his life "The Prophet never beat any of his wives or servants; in fact, he did not strike anything with his hand except in the cause of God or when the prohibitions of God were violated, and he retaliated on behalf of Allah" (Sahih Muslim) is such a reflection of his slight knowledge about Islam and that he is not even qualified to talk about the verse that is in the text.

Conclusion

Plays, as a literary genre, played a great role conveying different types of messages, reflecting the real life on the stage is a motivated action for people to

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rethink their reality, their issues, their existence, and their beliefs. *Disgraced* is the masterpiece written by the American playwright Ayad Akhtaris, one of the most notable plays to discuss serious taboos in the American society. However, Akhtar did not provide any final judgments about these taboos; yet, he made every effort to point the essence of each problem that ensures the audience will question the issue and then stand face to face with it to finally reach a satisfactory result about it.

Women issue in Islam in *Disgraced* was discussed during a dinner party, by a Westernized apostate, a Jewish who did not even read the Quran, an African American could not remember the verse being in the Koran or not, and a White American interested in Islamic Arts. tackling Muslim women's rights issue amongst several issues those were raised during that dinner by non-specialized, not even familiar with the issue, neglecting all its religious, historical, and dogmatic angles is a straightforward way to a complete misunderstanding of the verse and a misrepresentation of the whole religion.

Islam does not promote domestic violence; Islam emphasizes the importance of applying the penalties when family's or society's stability is threatened by either men or women. 4:34 is the divine law to deal with women misbehaviors that is restricted by severe conditions.

The widespread of domestic violence in Muslim societies and the belief that Islam encourages domestic violence in non-Muslim societies are the result of a misunderstanding of the verse and its implementation, not an injustice to women.

General Conclusion

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Through Feminism and Islamic points of view, women's issue has been treated through different ideologies, beliefs and laws. Women enjoyed a set of laws in order to organize their lives. However, dominance and power criteria require falsifying the ultimate goals of these laws to serve the interests of the strongest. Women's rights, then, are subjugated not only to the ideologies they are related to, but also to misrepresentations which have the ability to distort the authentic objective of a law. Feminism, by its turn, starting as a philosophy, sparks the sense of women's political freedom, to reach calling for total equality, when Islam is a religion which since its first appearance called for Women justness; sometimes by equality and others by equity.

The patriarchy societies contributed to a great extent flaming the spark of feminism, that is for the gender discrimination, women went through centuries before feminism developed from a mere ideology which celebrates women's liberation, to a social movement that aims to empower women and achieve gender equality. Subsequently, diverse branches of feminism with various demands and ideologies have taken place all along the history timeline to eradicate gender discrimination, Liberal Feminism, Radical Feminism and Marxist Feminism. Displaying women's position throughout history, in the eyes of philosophers, and within religions; Christianity, Judaism, and Islam, leads to highlight the necessity of the existence of a front that should fight for women for the low conditions they are witnessing. This front was feminism waves which have appeared during the nineteenth century. Starting by the first wave which strove for the right to vote; moving out to the second wave when higher demands were raised as a result of women engagement in the Second World War. So, women called for gender equality and equal access to public life. The third wave, unlike the previous waves, was not of a reformist tendency; yet,

General Conclusion

it fought for more liberal demands to include all women in order to eradicate gender inequality represented in the patriarchy system, and working on opposing the idea that physical and psychological differences could grant people different positions.

On the other hand, Islam proves that being different does not reflect inferiority, in that men and women are equal in the eyes of Allah. Yet, each should shoulder their responsibilities to fulfill the mission they are created for. Consequently, and compared to Feminism, Muslim women issue has been highly affected by Media and westernization; modern Muslim women have preferred feminist ideas over Islam due to the fact that Islam has been affected by various misrepresentations and misinterpretations that present it as a misogynistic and sexist religion. Although all the accusations Islam faces, however, women are greatly dignified within its laws represented in its legislative resources: Quran and Sunnah, which grants them social, political and economic rights that stand for granting them an equitable life. These rights have been also misapplied by Muslims and misunderstood by non-Muslims to be deviated from its essence. In this regard, cultural practices have sometimes taken precedence over religious laws to generate unbalanced understanding of these religious acts which have resulted in misrepresentation of Islam as if it is the source of these practices.

The American literature is of a great influence over the world ideologies, different literary genres serve different purposes. Plays, for instance, stimulate audience to satisfy their curiosity about its themes. *Disgraced* displays diverse controversial topics including women issues such as domestic violence, veil, under-age marriages. Domestic violence is not stimulated by Islamic motives as it is presented in the play, however, Islam has severely restricted these punitive punishments and limited its implementations to serve only the family' interest. Yet,

General Conclusion

the misunderstanding of Amir of the verse led to a distorted presentation of it to be understood as if Quran is promoting violence against women. Though the restricted conditions men should be subjected to towards his wife's misbehaviors; yet, Prophet Muhammad of Islam clearly states that those who strike their wives are not the best among the Muslims directing them to avoid it even as a punishment limited with severe conditions in addition to highlighting that Islam imposed penalties against males and females alike if they threatened family' or society' stability is a requisite. For further understanding, other studies may be conducted to investigate how Feminism holds a great part in exposing women to violence with higher rates compared to the essential ideology of Islam away from its practices. Compared to this, diverse studies could be conducted to discuss other issues related to Muslim women misrepresented issues such as the global debate raised about Hijab.

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Glossary

Term	Definition
Gender discrimination	A situation in which someone is treated less well because of their sex, usually when a woman is treated less well than a man. (Cambridge Dictionary)
Islamophobia	Irrational fear of, aversion to, or discrimination against Islam or people who practice Islam. (Merriam-Webster.com)
Misogyny	Hatred of, aversion to, or prejudice against women. Misogyny may be distinguished from the closely related word sexism, which signifies discrimination based on sex (although it most frequently refers to discrimination against women) and also carries the meaning “behavior, conditions, or attitudes that foster stereotypes of social roles based on sex.” (Merriam-Webster)
Patriarchy	Hypothetical social system in which the father or a male elder has absolute authority over the family group, building on the theories of biological evolution developed by Charles Darwin.(Britannica.com)
Sexism	Prejudice or discrimination based on sex or gender, especially against women and girls. Although its origin is unclear, the term sexism emerged from the “second-wave” feminism of the 1960s.Sexism can be a belief that one sex is superior to or more valuable than another sex, the concept of sexism was originally formulated to raise consciousness about the oppression of girls and women.(Britannica.com)

Appendices

Appendix One: Ayad Akhtar's Biography

Ayad Akhtar is an American playwright, actor, novelist, and a screenwriter of a Muslim Pakistani heritage. He was born in October 28, 1970 in Staten Island in New York City, raised in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, and graduated from Brown University.



Akhtar's parents came to the United States from Pakistan in the late 1960s; both were doctors and both hoped he would be a doctor, too. He had a literature teacher who inspired him to become a writer. He spent his junior and senior years under her tutelage "reading everything under the sun," including "a lot of very obscure modernist writers." He left his hometown of Milwaukee, Wisconsin for Brown University in 1988 with the goal of becoming a writer. There, he was drawn into the theatre scene after a friend cast him in a student production of David Mamet's *Sexual Perversity in Chicago*. He loved it. After graduation, he left for Italy to work with renowned theatre director and theorist Jerzy Grotowski, eventually becoming his assistant. After returning to the US, he taught acting with avant-garde director Andre Gregory, and by 2002 had earned a MFA in film directing at Columbia University. Striking an ironic note about his long apprenticeship, Akhtar once remarked, "I had this weird, avant-garde training that was all about process. And now I write these overtly audience oriented, well-made, traditional plays. It's really weird how life is." (www.huntingtontheatre.org)

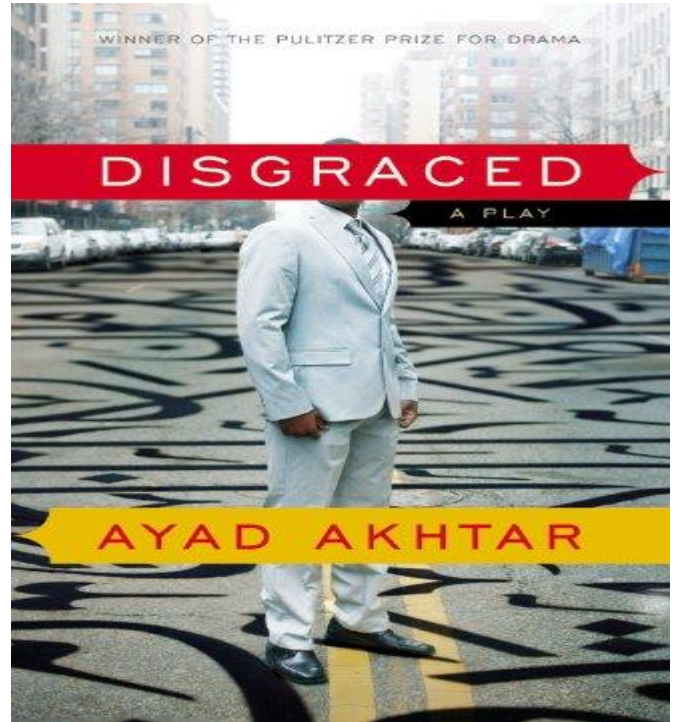
Akhtar the playwright is a man of meditative calm, soft-spoken and genial; he roams easily across a vast intellectual expanse, gliding from a discussion of statecraft in Shakespeare to the mysteries of the prophet to plots and subplots in “Seinfeld.” But what most absorbs him is the question of Muslim identity in the turbulent post-9/11 world. It’s the subject that informs all of his work. Akhtar himself has struggled to come to terms with his heritage, and his deeply personal exploration into his faith and culture have led him to an artistic awakening. (www.washingtonpost.com)

Ayad is the author of *Homeland Elegies* (Little, Brown & Co.), which *The Washington Post* called “a tour de force” and *The New York Times* called “a beautiful novel...that had echoes of *The Great Gatsby* and that circles, with pointed intellect, the possibilities and limitations of American life.” His first novel, *American Dervish* (Little, Brown & Co.), was published in over 20 languages. As a playwright, he has written *Junk* (Lincoln Center, Broadway; Kennedy Prize for American Drama, Tony nomination); *Disgraced* (Lincoln Center, Broadway; Pulitzer Prize for Drama, Tony nomination); *The Who & The What* (Lincoln Center); and *The Invisible Hand* (NYTW; Obie Award, Outer Critics Circle John Gassner Award, Olivier, and Evening Standard nominations).

(<https://ayadakhtar.com>)

Appendix Two: Synopsis of *Disgraced*

Disgraced is a one-act play written by the American Ayad Akhtar. It was first premiered in the American Theater Company in Chicago, then on stage of Lincoln Center Theater in New York in four scenes in 2012. *Disgraced* is a Pulitzer Prize winner for best drama in 2013, Obie Award, and nominated for Tony Awards in 2015. The play displays how could a simple dinner party sparkle a controversial debate



about number of socio political themes, Islamophobia, racism, hybridity, anti-Semitism, violence, and others. Five characters take place within the play to represent different points of view, ideologies, and different angles treating one subject, Amir, his cousin Abe, his wife Emily, her colleague Isaac, and Isaac's wife Jory. The story's events escalate when Amir, the American lawyer with Pakistani Muslim heritage, and his wife Emily invite Isaac and Jory over for dinner where several issues will be discussed by the characters around the dinner table to reach that point when Amir beats his wife at the same night; to end up with a tragedy. This scene plays an important role in involving the audience judging Amir's behavior each according to his own ideologies, if not motivating them looking for the real reason for it; whether it is due to his Muslim heritage or for other reasons. Although its simple language, *Disgraced* events and ideas are of a high rate of complexity.

Résumé

Les points de vue de l'Islam et du féminisme concernant la position et les droits des femmes diffèrent sur plusieurs points. Par conséquent, cette variance, et par rapport au féminisme, le point de vue islamique envers les femmes a été déformé comme une conséquence inévitable d'une grave incompréhension du droit en premier lieu. Cette étude, vise à comparer les droits des femmes dans les deux idéologies : l'Islam et le féminisme. Cette étude ensuite à mettre en lumière, à analyser et à corriger les représentations erronées qui peuvent conduire à une mauvaise compréhension des questions relatives aux femmes musulmanes. Pour mieux atteindre ces objectifs, cette étude a adopté une approche historique pour présenter la situation et les droits des femmes dans le féminisme, puis dans l'Islam. Une approche analytique a également été adoptée pour mettre en évidence les questions controversées concernant le point de vue islamique sur les femmes dans la pièce américaine *Disgraced* (2012) d'Ayad Akhtar, et présenter ses corrections à la lumière du Coran et de la Sunna afin d'éliminer toute ambiguïté concernant la question des femmes. Ainsi, cette étude a mis en évidence, d'une part, que les femmes jouissent de droits différents dans le féminisme et l'Islam et, d'autre part, que la mauvaise compréhension des lois islamiques dans leur contexte global a conduit à une représentation erronée de l'Islam en tant que religion globale, comme c'est le cas dans la pièce américaine *Disgraced*, qui permet de déformer la position réelle des femmes dans les études islamiques, en mettant l'accent sur la question de la violence conjugale. En comparaison, diverses études pourraient être menées pour discuter d'autres questions liées à la déformation de l'image des femmes musulmanes, comme le débat mondial sur le hijab.

ملخص

تختلف وجهات نظر التيار النسوي و الإسلام إلى وضع المرأة و حقوقها على مختلف المستويات. لذلك فقد تعرضت نظرة الإسلام للمرأة للتحريف كنتيجة حتمية لعدم فهم هذا الأخير و تشريعاته فهما سليما. تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى مقارنة حقوق المرأة في ضوء كل من: الإسلام و النسوية على حد سواء، ثم تحديد، تحليل، و تصحيح المفاهيم و الممارسات المحرفة التي تؤدي بدورها إلى سوء فهم قضايا المرأة المسلمة. ولتحقيق هذه الأهداف بشكل أفضل، تبنت هذه الدراسة نهجا تاريخيا لإظهار وضع المرأة و حقوقها في الحركة النسوية، ثم في الإسلام. كما تم اعتماد مقاربة تحليلية لتوضيح القضايا الخلافية حول وجهة النظر الإسلامية تجاه المرأة و التي تم تسليط الضوء عليها في مسرحية *Disgraced* للكاتب الأمريكي أيدأ أختر الصادرة سنة 2012 و عرض تصحيحاتها في ضوء القرآن و السنة من أجل اجتناب أي التباس يتعلق بشؤون المرأة. توضح هذه الدراسة، من جهة، أن المرأة كانت تتمتع بحقوق مختلفة في كل من النسوية و الإسلام، و من جهة أخرى، أن سوء الفهم للقوانين الإسلامية داخل سياقها العام قد أدى إلى تشويه صورة الدين الإسلامي ككل كما هو الحال في المسرحية الأمريكية، و التي تؤدي بدورها إلى تشويه مكانة المرأة الحقيقية داخل مجال الدراسات الإسلامية؛ مع التأكيد الشديد على قضية العنف المنزلي.