

## Women's Participation in Politics as Represented in the Novel "In Praise of Hatred"

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### Abstract

In today's reality, there is a definite gap when it comes to men's and women's participation in politics. It can be seen that the society prefers men to lead them, make decisions and solve problems. The society assumes men to have better leadership qualities, but people tend to be sceptical when it comes to women. In Syria, men's responsibilities as leaders and the ones who make decisions are valued highly by the Syrian society. They believe that men's power and abilities to lead are more stable, prosperous and secure than women. Among the society, women are considered as subordinates and excluded from negotiations. This matter is highlighted in Syrian literature too, especially in novels and writings since masculinity, is practiced in Syrian society. This present study attempted to investigate the gender stereotypes on politics portrayed in the novel "In Praise of Hatred", by Khaled Khalifa. The present study employed a Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) approach to investigate the pragmatic representation of politics portrayed in the controversial Syrian novel. The findings focused on the representation of women in politics. To this end, Van Dijk's Social-political Discourse Analysis Approach was adopted to reveal the ideology behind the constructions. The issues of gender and politics were analysed based on the pragmatic representation in the novel. Adopting the Social-political Discourse Analysis approach under Sociocognitive Discourse Studies (SCDS), the criteria of social aspects (politics and gender) were being looked at thoroughly. Regarding subject positions, the data analysis showed that the portrayal of gender is always biased and women's participation in politics is not encouraged.

**Keywords:** Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), social-political discourse analysis approach, politics, gender

### 1. Introduction

The analysed discourse is a novel that delivers the messages of solidarity and will to fight for justice. It carries meaningful messages of feminism and women's rights and strengths to develop solidarity in fighting for women's freedom and rights since Syria is one of the countries in the Middle East which practices male dominant government. The author aims to change the society's mind and ideology since women are subordinates and need to be protected by men. It can be found that, feminism has challenged and confronted social injustices for a long time. It addresses the intersecting impacts of gender, race, class, politics, culture, nation, religion, sexual orientation and inequality and oppression. This can be seen in many novels, including the analysed novel.

The analysed novel portrays women's hardships for hundreds of years. Women have the most basic civil rights and chances- the right to vote, the right to own property, the right to work, chances to lead, chances to voice out opinions and also the chances to fight for justice and freedom. Because of the rights, women have been derided, assaulted, imprisoned, and even killed. It would seem that the society owes this novel a great debt. The works continue to change the society's mind and ideology about women and their participation in politics. Bey (1997) stated that women and girls in Syria face strict and discriminatory rules that have no basis in Syrian Law and Human Rights. The harsh rules violate women's and girls' human rights and limit their ability to carry out essential daily activities such as their opportunity to obtain education, provide for families, and even procure basic necessities crucial to survival since power and decision making are taken full responsibility by men.

The research aims to examine gender stereotypes in politics as portrayed in the novel. The research wants to prove women are needed in management and making decisions positions, as well as in politics. They need equal chances as men in voicing out their opinions and ideas. Women also need equal status as men, legally or socially.

The present research also proves the reality of the legislation and politics of women deny women's rights and helps to open the society's eyes and minds regarding gender stereotyping, especially about the participation of women in politics.

## 2. Literature Review

### 2.1 Recent Issues

From the issue in Syria, many Syrians fight to stop the dictatorship government. One of the solidarity actions showed by them is through writings and literature. Many authors in Syria, for examples, Nizar Qabbani, Samar Yazbek, Khaled Khalifa, Ulfat Idilbi and many others deliver the messages of solidarity and will to fight for justice in their works. There are also novels and works that carry the messages of feminism and women's rights as well as strengths to develop solidarity among women to fight for their freedom and rights. Some examples of the novels are Samada, by Fadi Azzam (2011), No Knives in The Kitchen, by Khaled Khalifa (2016) and In Praise of Hatred, Khaled Khalifa (2008). The authors seek to change the society's mind and ideology since women are subordinates and need to be protected by men. However, the rise of this genre of the novels and works has been prevented by the government (Anahit, 2016). Books were not allowed to be sold in the country.

Novels about war and justice often portray masculinity and the important responsibilities that men carry out in the society (Mohamed, 2011). Feminism has challenged and confronted social injustices for a long time. It addresses the intersecting impacts of gender, race, class, politics, culture, nation, religion, sexual orientation and inequality and oppression. This can be seen in the novels, such as "The Handmaid's Tale" by Margaret Atwood, "The round House" by Louise Erdrich, "Americanah" by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, "Speak" by Laurie Halse Anderson, and also the novel that will be used in this research, "In Praise of Hatred" by Khaled Khalifa. The novels invoke attention to crucial feminist concerns- marriage equality, political equality, rights, sexual assault and many other issues.

The novels portray women's hardships for hundreds of years. Women have the most basic civil rights- the right to vote, the right to own property, the right to work and also the right to fight for justice and freedom. It would seem that the society owes these novels and writings a great debt. The works continue to change the society's mind and ideology about women and their participation in politics. "In Praise of Hatred" is a famous novel which criticizes the dictatorship government of Syria and it carries meaningful feminism messages. It is unfortunate that this novel is banned in Syria. That is why it is chosen as the best discourse to be analysed in order to examine the women's participation in politics, as the matter is a core theme of it.

### 2.2 Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA)

Widdowson (2007) defined CDA as an approach that concerns with the use (and abuse) of language for the exercise of socio political power, ideology and social belief. According to Forough and Mohammad (2011), quoted from Fairclough (1995), CDA can be defined as fundamentally concerned with analysing opaque as well as transparent structural relationships of dominance, discrimination, power and control as manifested in language. CDA aims to systematically explore often opaque relationships of causality and determination between discursive practices, events and texts, wider social and cultural structures, relations and processes. The function of CDA is to uncover the relationship between language, society, power, ideology, values and opinions (Van Dijk, 2008).

Amerian and Esmaili (2014) define CDA as a discipline that uncovers both the hidden and transparent social as well as political norms and values. CDA explores social and political context in order to liberate ideologies, hegemony, dominance and social powers. Whereas Ali (2012), defines CDA quoted from Fairclough (1995) as an interdisciplinary form of analysis that deals with the investigation of dialectical relations between discourse and other objects, elements or moments as well as the analysis of the internal relations of discourse.

From the definitions given, CDA is a contemporary approach to the study of language and discourses in social institutions. CDA focuses on how social relations, identity, knowledge and power are constructed through written and spoken texts in communities, education, or politics environments. Here, the researcher will focus on communities and political environment in a written text and use a critical theory of language which sees the use of language as a form of social practice.

One of the CDA's analytic lenses is gender. CDA which is involved in gender analysis is called Feminist CDA (Jones, 2012). The aim of feminist CDA is to analyse the complex working of power and ideology in discourse to sustain hierarchically gendered social orders. According to Duke (1993), this approach is pertinent in present time, in order to recognise the operations of gender ideology and institutionalised power asymmetries between or among groups of women and men that are complexly intertwined with other social identities.

Gender as a social category intersects with other categories of social identity, including sexuality, ethnicity, age, social class and position and geographical location (Duke, 1993). It is to show up the complex, subtle, and sometimes not so subtle, ways in which gendered assumptions and hegemonic power relations are discursively produced, sustained, negotiated, and challenged in different context and communities (Mat Nayan, 2017). This approach is not solely focused on text and talk only, but it comes from an acknowledgement that the issues dealt with the material and phenomenological consequences for groups of women and men in specific communities. To conclude, feminist CDA suggests the usefulness of language and discourse studies for the investigation of feminist issues in studies about genders.

The other analytic lens of CDA is politics. The CDA focuses on analysis of politics in discourses, usually called as critical-political discourse analysis, which was introduced by Van Dijk (2008). It is the most common interpretation is that critical-political discourse analysis focuses on the studies of the political discourses. It deals with the reproduction of political power, power abuse or domination through political discourse, including the various forms of resistance or counter-power against such forms of discursive dominance.

The main aim of this approach is to operate the political discourse and how it can be studied critically. The analysis needs to contribute not only on discourse studies, but also to political science and social science. Critical-political discourse analysis should be able to answer genuine and relevant political questions and deal with issues which are discussed in political science.

Culture is also a lens in CDA. Cultural studies have been defined as an interdisciplinary endeavour that concerns with the analysis of cultural forms and activities in the context of the relations of power which condition their production, circulation deployment and affects (Fairclough, 2010). According to Jones (2012), culture studies in CDA analyse ideas that realities and subjectivities are constructed in and by language, and the power relations that are constructed through the culture of a society. The studies focus on ethnicity, tradition, way of life and politics that are driven under a group of society. The culture studies are limited in only one region since different regions practice different culture.

Media discourses can be any spoken, written or audio/visual material which is shared socially, also referred to as a discourse that can be used in communication or debate (Widdowson, 2007). The discourses of media include gender, politics, and also culture. The different is, discourses in media are spread around the society and the world, plus they convey specific messages to influence the society in believing an issue.

### *2.3 Sociocognitive Discourse Studies (SCDS)*

Sociocognitive Discourse Studies (SCDS) relate discourse structures to social structures via a complex sociocognitive interface (Van Dijk, 2008). SCDS critically describe the cognitive aspects of the use of some concepts or metaphors. Furthermore, it deals with social knowledge, attitudes and ideologies, social groups and communities.

As mentioned by Van Dijk (2008) in his book, SCDS do not only make explicit fundamental role of mental representations, but also show that many structures of discourse can be described in terms of various cognitive notions, especially those information, beliefs or knowledge of participants.

Van Dijk (2008) adds that SCDS also deal with mental representations that mediated with shared social cognition, societal structures, and actual text and talk. So, it can be seen that these studies critically describe and explain discourse and include a cognitive interface between discourse and society, and that social or political structures can only affect text and talk through the minds of language users. According to Treanor (2016), social members represent both social structures as well as discourse structures related with actual text and talk.

#### *2.3.1 Social-Political Discourse Analysis Approach*

This study to discourse is a particular application of a more specific approach, which is Social-political Discourse Analysis Approach that holds social and political reality. It is a specific type of socio-political analysis of discourse. The approach relates structure of discourse with structures of society, class, gender or ethnicity. Then, it is systematically associated with the structural units, levels, or strategies of talk and text embedded in their social political and cultural contexts. The approach is focusing on the relationships between social organizations, institutions, groups, roles, situations, power, or politics. Then, the findings need to be related with ideological analysis to examine what ideologies are typically associated with position. In relationships of dominance, such ideological discourse may sustain or challenge social positions (Mat Nayan, 2017). Social-political discourse analysis approach enables analysts to explain the relations between discourse and society that need to cross the well-known micro-macro and society-individual divide. The analysts can use this approach to relate the social and the discursive.

## 2.4 Politics and Gender

According to Magstadt (2013), politics are the authoritative allocation by the political system of values for society. It is the pattern or system of human interactions and relationships in any political society through which binding on all members of the society and is recognized as such by the great majority of the members. Politics are related with power which carries a great deal of the members. Politics are the process by which a community selects rulers and empowers them to make decisions, takes actions to attain common goals, and reconciles conflicts within the community (Di Bernardo, 2014).

Power is the capacity to influence or control the behaviour of persons and institutions, whether by persuasion or coercion (Magstadt, 2013). In other words, power is the ability to influence or to outright control the behaviour of people. Magstadt states that power can be seen as evil or unjust, however the exercise of power is accepted as academic to humans as social beings. Power plays an important role in politics, but political power cannot be equated with force (Magstadt, 2013). Power is wielded by people or groups by the acts of domination or coercion, seeing it as dispersed and pervasive (Smith & Litt, 2014).

According to Van Dijk (1995), politics and genders are the roles and relations of men and women, how genders are influencing the roles in society. For example, we can see that men dominate the political world; both in society and also families. Men are considered to be the breadwinners, leaders of the society and families; while women would be the nurturers of children, care givers, cooks, and cleaners. The gender politics of today allow for quite a bit more fluidity of gender roles (Carter, 1988), where there is a scheme to define the gender roles in the society.

Van Dijk (1995) claims that politics and genders form a gender gap, which is a disproportionate difference or disparity between both genders. The difference that exists between males and females in access to some social good or benefit based solely on their difference in gender, mostly dominated by the favour of men (Duke, 1993).

## 2.5 Previous Studies

The researches which are absolutely related to this study are very scarce. However, some researches were found which are related to critical discourse analysis of gender and politics. Moreover, some researches do not use novels as the researcher intends to do. Based on the previous studies found, it can be concluded that there are limited researches which were conducted to analyse politics and gender in novels. So, this research is very crucial to investigate today's literature especially in novel writings.

There are several researches found which use social-political discourse analysis approach in analysing discourses, just like the researcher did. The first one is entitled "‘Find Old Castles’ and ‘Pull-me-down’ Works: Architecture, Politics and Gender in the Gothic Novels of the 1790s". Smith and Litt (2014) have undergone the research to identify whether political and social improvement is linked by writers to the need to reform of sexual inequality in society. From the findings, it supports the researcher's research since the novels in the gothic era show that women play a minor interest in politics. Like this research which the researcher will conduct, the research also analyses novels but the usage of novels from 1790s are not very significant to be applied in today's era. This is why the researcher used a recent novel to be critically analysed in order to investigate the mind-set of the 21st century author towards women's participation in politics.

The second research which uses Van Dijk's Social-political Discourse Analysis Approach is entitled "An Analysis of the Representation of Female Members of the United Kingdom Parliament in the British Press". The research is undergone by Insenga (2014). The research is conducted to analyse the media discourse of the British Press on female politicians in the United Kingdom deconstructing the language used to depict them as political candidates, aiming at identifying recurrent patterns and stereotypical frameworks. It can clearly be seen that the research compares gender and politics. Furthermore, the researchers of the study use the text from an interview as their discourse. This is different with the intention of the researcher in which a novel was used as the discourse to be critically analysed.

Safa'a (2013) has undergone a research, which also uses the Social-political Discourse Analysis. The research is entitled "Between Empire and Diaspora: Identity Poetics in Contemporary Arab-American Women's Poetry". This research investigates and examines the racial politics which have impacted the community and how it relates to feminist discourses in the United States of America (USA); they have rarely addressed or investigated how the ramifications of these racialized politics and discourses are articulated in Arab-American women's poetry. In the poems that have been written by the Arab-American women, they discuss regarding their life there; on how the society perceives them differently as Muslims. The research focuses more on the society's thoughts about the existence of these Arab-American women in America. They do not have the power to voice out their

opinions at home and also in the society. At home, men are considered as head of the household and their thoughts are important in decisions making. Among the society, Muslim society is the minority in America and they have no power at all. From the results obtained, it could be seen that the research refutes the researcher's intention in conducting this research. It is because; the research focuses on how the American society perceives Arab-American women in America. However, this research which was undergone by the researcher analysed politics and gender as highlighted in a novel as the discourse of this research.

There is another research which has been conducted to investigate genders and politics by using Social-political Discourse Analysis Approach. The research is entitled "Men and Women as Represented in Medieval Literature and Society" by O'Pry-Reynolds (2013). The research analyses the representation of gender and power in the literature from medieval period. The finding of the research shows that male characters in the literature are portrayed as heroes; they are masculine, strong, and their role are as knights, who protect the king. The knights, meaning the male characters are respected in the society. This is different with the portrayal of the female characters. They are portrayed to be weak, and wait for knights to come and save them. Even though there are some characters of the female who are considered to be important in the society since they are princesses, however they are still weak because their characters are always in trouble, waiting for knights or charming princes to save them. They also often portrayed to fall in love with the male characters. It can be clearly seen that the results of the research supports this research that was conducted since it clearly stated the level of the power which each gender carries on their shoulders. However, the instruments used are different from the researcher's research since the researcher of the research focuses on the whole literature from the medieval society in general but this research focused on a discourse only, which is a novel from Syria.

### **3. Methodology**

The present research was a qualitative study which used CDA to analyse the mentioned discourse. The results obtained were based on Social-political Discourse Analysis Approach under SCDS.

#### *3.1 Material*

"In Praised of Hatred" was chosen to be analysed since it is a controversial novel that is banned in Syria. This novel was written by Khaled Khalifa in 2008 and translated in English by Leri Price in 2012. The setting of this novel is in 1980s Syria, when Hafez Al-Assad was the ruler of the country. The novel is about a young Muslim girl who lives a secluded life behind the veil in the vast and perfumed house of her grandparents. Her three aunts- the pious Maryam, the liberal Safaa, and the free-spirited Marwa raise her with the aid of their ever-devoted blind servant. Soon the high walls of the family home are no longer able to protect the girl from the social and political chaos outside. Witnessing the ruling dictatorship's bloody campaign against the Muslim Brotherhood, she is filled with hatred for the regime and becomes increasingly radical. In the footsteps of her beloved uncle, Bakr, she launches herself into a battle for her religion, country and her own future.

#### *3.2 Procedure*

There were several steps taken by the researchers in conducting this research. First, the researchers read the whole novel to know what the novel is all about. Second, the novel was reread, but this time, the researchers looked at each sentence to analyse it. Third, the initial findings from the sentences' analysis were grouped according to the Social-political Discourse Analysis approach. Forth, the findings were explained further in order to answer the research question. Fifth, the findings were compared and contrasted with the previous research.

The procedures taken made the researchers' analysis process easy and neat. The results were stated and discussed further to ensure the readers and future researchers can understand, satisfy and can use the information in their research.

### **4. Findings**

The findings indicated whether the analysis is answering the research question; how is women's participation in politics portrayed in the novel? The findings gave clear evidences toward the portrayal of politics and gender from the novel.

#### *4.1 Politics*

The politics elements in this novel are grouped into two categories; politics that represent males and politics that represent females.

##### *4.1.1 Politics for Males*

First of all, male characters in the novel have the superiority in the family. The decisions' making are in the hand or men in the family. For an example,

- *He decided, in a voice barely audible to my uncles and looking at Radwan, "This blind man has an equal share in all your wealth. If he comes to be in need one day, you will all be held responsible before God..." (p.11, ch.1)*

Superiority of men in the family is shown because men are the protector of the household, as can be seen in the following example,

- *...my grandfather exerted all his efforts to retain the ability to stand and walk like a military leader inspecting his troops. He wouldn't allow my grandmother to treat him like an old man, he used to say to Maryam, as he leaned on Radwan, "A man is the protector of a woman. She must not see how low her man sinks in old age, so she can remember him with love," (p.10, ch.1)*

Then, men are the breadwinner of the family. As an example,

- *...he bequeathed his wealth according to Islamic law and the house was to become the property of his daughters, who would retain the right to make use of it until the end of their lives. My grandfather laughed and leaned on his cane; he ordered my grandmother and Maryam to prepare the table in the dining room... (p.10, ch.1)*

Lastly, the superiority of men in the family is shown as sons are very important and hold responsibilities in the family. The evidence is,

- *My grandfather resigned from his three businesses and gathered my three uncles in the house's reception room. Maryam and my grandmother sat beside them as my grandfather briefly explained that he was no longer capable of overseeing his business affairs, and turned their management over to his sons. (p.10, ch.1)*

Second, they also have superiority in the society. Men are very important and powerful as they lead the nation. They, including strangers and guests are treated like a king. For the example,

- *My grandfather had brought him back from Samarkand after one of his journeys there to look for Persian carpets, and my grandmother assigned him the best quarters during his six-month stay in their house. Every morning, he would wake up at five o'clock, perform the ritual ablutions with my grandfather, and then both of them would go to Aleppo's Umayyad Mosque, after eating the breakfast my grandmother had already prepared and laid out for them on the low table close to the large pool. (p.5, ch.1)*

After that, men with power are not forgotten wherever they go when they passed away. As the evidence shows,

- *He was expansive, beaming with joy at hearing news of his Samarkandi son, who still recalled him as the saviour who had lifted him from a corner of the ancient souk into the welcoming space of the world, and he repeated as much to his visitors, students and teachers of decorative art. (p.6, ch.1)*

Then, men are free to go anywhere they want without someone else's permission, as shown in the example below,

- *Omar came to our house soon after returning from his travels abroad. (p.72, ch.1)*

Furthermore, male slaves or servants are treated better in the society as they are still men. For example,

- *Blind Radwan lived happily like a servant with special privileges, entering into the fabric of the family to become one of its permanent features. Maryam never forgot his meal times, and he was never far away from her. (p.9, ch.1)*

The superiority of men are also shown as they symbolise strength and protect the society. The examples are,

- *...he was fulsome in his praise of Khalil's strength which had saved their lives... (p.41, ch.1)*
- *...but we believed that our young men would be plunged in it for years to come, and that few families would be able to escape the plains. (p.122, ch.1)*

The superiority of men in the society is clearly shown as they have wider networks, acquaintances and friends. For example,

- *He has boring conversations about politics and life with friends and colleagues, who boasted of being burned by the Iraqi sun... (p.51, ch.1)*

Finally, men are in charge for official negotiations. The following are the evidences upon this matter,

- *The politician soon became absorbed in Abdullah's dreams, dealing with delegates from Damascus,*

*Cairo and Moscow who brought alliances which didn't last long. (p.172, ch.2)*

- *...Bakr disagreed with them over fixing a date for a cease fire and returning to negotiations with Sheik Mahmoud Haritany...he was ultimately a puppet of the authorities who dispatched him to the meetings. (p.201, ch.2)*

Third, men are portrayed to be weak, but only with women's affection. Their strength and power lose to their lust. They cannot restrain themselves when a woman seduces them and influences their mind. The examples are included as follow,

- *I could only guess at the change in expression in men's faces when they came near us and were assailed by the scent of Safaa and Marwa's perfumed bodies. (p.37, ch.1)*

Fourth, last but not least, men with disabilities are subordinates. They are not important and abandoned by their own family since they are seemed to dishonour the family. In the society, they are also subordinates but their ranks are still higher than women. The examples are,

- *His family were offended by his blindness, so they ignored him and left him to wander as a vagrant in the streets of Ain Arab, a miserable child. (p.212, ch.2)*

#### 4.1.2 Politics for Females

The portrayal of women in politics in this novel is way too behind compared to men. They are considered to be subordinates and men are their superiors. First, women do not have power in the family. They are beloved and respected, but they have a lot of restraints that they need to obey because of their gender. For every decision and idea that they want to express, they need approval from men. As the evidence shows,

- *At that moment, I said to myself, "It is so difficult for a woman to reveal her secrets and thoughts." I envied my uncle, Omar for a moment, and then through off my suspicion and depression. (p.74, ch.1)*

Then, women need protection from men, as they are considered to be weak and cannot take care of themselves. The example is,

- *My small hand was weak in my father's palm which clutched mine in fear of losing me amongst the crowd on Telal Street. (p.4, ch.1)*

This matter is proven as women sacrifice their lives for their marriages. They devote everything for the husband and also the household. For example,

- *She had to chase Radwan away because she was afraid of her husband's anger; he had married her after her divorce from Radwan's father... (p.212, ch.2)*

Moreover, daughters are not as important and beloved as sons. The evident is,

- *She was devoted to her first-born son, and loved him to a degree approaching madness. She believed that he would pluck our family from out of its wretchedness and, like all mothers, she wanted him to be a doctor and a philosopher. I became like a younger sister or companion to her; after four years away from her I had grown distant. I was no longer a part of her daily vocabulary. She received my news with unconcern... (p.78, ch.1)*

Second, women can have power and superiority but they are among themselves only. They have ranks among women based on their knowledge. It is shown as women gain respect based on their knowledge. As can be seen in the examples below,

- *I was very pleased with the regular visits to the Hammam every Thursday, and to Hajja Radia's house to listen to her tales and got amazed by her knowledge. (p.4, ch.1)*

Then, women can also be leaders and have power like men, but only to lead other women, not to lead the whole society. The evidence upon this matter is,

- *A girl I didn't know led me to the first meeting of Alya's group. The girls listen respectfully to Alya as she urged us to hate all the other Islamic sects and praise ours for being closest to the Prophet. (p.97, ch.1)*

Third, women are considered as subordinates in the society since they are restrained to do a lot of things. It is shown as women are treated based on her family background. She will be accepted by her in laws is she is from a good and well-known family, but if her family background is ruined, she cannot be accepted in the family even though she is kind and nice. The example is,

- *My grandmother was implacable in her hostility toward Wasal's daughter, Zahra, whom my uncle Bakr*

*had determined upon marrying...she would never allow her into the house, and that she would never see Bakr again as long as she lived. (p.49, ch.1)*

Besides, women are forbidden to go out except with men's company. Men are responsible to be women's protector, even though they are handicapped and disabled. It is compulsory for men to accompany women if they want to go out. The example is,

- *Blind Radwan accompanied us to the Hammam every Thursday carrying a large bag, waited for us by the door until we had finished, and accompanied us back to the same way, his crudely made cane never misleading him. He would walk in front of us, head raised, with stable and evenly spaced steps. (p.9, ch.1)*

Worse, women cannot have high education. They will be teased sarcastically if they want to gain knowledge.

- *Her eyes shone with pride at her 'little scholar', as she liked to call me, amidst Safaa's sarcasm and Marwa's rebukes- she reminds me constantly, "Woman are not entitled to be muftis". (p.57, ch.1)*

Then, if any divorce case occurs, women or the wives will be blamed for it. The example below is the evidence upon this matter,

- *Safaa sympathised with Omar and praised his divorce, cursing Rima's idiocy and criticising the smell of cheap talcum powder that came from her children. (p.73, ch.1)*

It shows how low women's level and status in the society as they cannot be included in any men's discussion. To illustrate,

- *Abdullah immediately took him away, and they left an irritated Safaa to her own devices for the afternoon. (p.106, ch.1)*

Fourth, it is shown that women are subordinates when they deliver disabled children. They will be blamed because they are considered to be unlucky to her household. As the result, they are divorced by their husbands. For example,

- *...after her divorce from Radwan's father, he had gone off to preach the Day of Resurrection in the villages and Bedouin camps, leaving her only some tattered rags, a mud hut and a decrepit donkey: a dowry for a woman doomed to be torn to pieces by men. They circled her house on cold nights and she didn't know how to protect herself from those who had designed on her and her blind child. (p.212, ch.2)*

It is clearly can be seen in the analysed novel that the superiority of men are way higher than women since they have the power to decide, solve and command anything they want. They are also being respected and remembered because of their positions in the society and what they have contributed. However, it does not matter how superior they are, their mind can be influenced by women since women have the ability to seduce, sway and influence them. As for women, they are being represented as subordinates and have lower status in the society. Even when they have the will to break the norms and stereotypes, the society will not support them because they are women. They cannot give out their opinions and ideas. They also cannot be included in any negotiation and discussion. Worse, daughters are not treated fairly too. Sons are way too precious and important, compared to daughters.

One of the past research which supports the findings is "‘Find Old Castles’ and ‘Pull-me-down’ Works: Architecture, Politics and Gender in the Gothic Novels of the 1790s" by Smith and Litt (2014). The findings of the research show that women represented in gothic era novels play a minor interest in politics. Safa'a (2013) has undergone a research entitled "Between Empire and Diaspora: Identity Poetics in Contemporary Arab-American Women's Poetry". The findings of the research are supporting these findings. Women do not have power to voice out their opinions at home and also in the society. At home, men are considered as head of the household and their thoughts are important in decisions making. Among the society, Muslim society is the minority in America and they have no power at all. There is another research which supports the findings. The research is entitled "Men and Women as Represented in Medieval Literature and Society" by O'Pry-Reynolds (2013). The findings of the research show that male characters are respected in the society.

## 5. Discussion

It is discussed that the portrayal of female characters are subordinates and less powerful than the male characters. It is because, it is not women's responsibilities to decide things and solve problems, and it is men's. Women are stick to their wifely duties and devoted themselves for the family. In the analysed novel, men give orders and women need to follow them. This proves men are more powerful. The male characters are heads and leaders in



the households and also in the society. Whereas the female characters are just their subordinates as they decide everything for them. The male characters are given prominence because of their power and superiority. So, they have more power to exert their will over others. It is always men who set plans in a family and also in running the society. Women only have supporting roles who assist men and support them in every decision they have made.

The portrayal of the nameless main character as a woman who wants to fight for freedom and justice gives impact to the female readers. She is a symbol of a rebellious woman who disobeys the female roles, norms and stereotypes in her society. Even that, she is still behind men in terms of power and politics. She is a leader to her group of fighters, but only to lead other women. She still has to follow orders from men; Bakr and Abdullah, on when to attack, what to do and what is next. She experiences dilemma as she wants to have power. She needs to reassure people that she can take charge, but people around her do not support her at all because she is a woman. She also has to act tough, but the nameless main character becomes egoistic and arrogant, as she sees herself better than other women. This matter is being highlighted by the author of the novel to prove women are not destined to be leaders because they act based on emotions and attitudes, which influence their decisions making and problems solving.

The portrayal of the subordination of women who have less power in the society is common. The author stressed this matter in the novel because he wants to criticize the Middle East culture, especially in Syria, which plays an important role in the subordination of women, which leads to form patriarchy among genders. Syrian culture and social practices form a social system in which men contribute to all social roles and keep women as subordinates. Women in Syria depend on men, as they need to accept decisions made by them. They need to please men always as men are the breadwinner of the family. It proves that women are dominated by men in the society.

## 6. Conclusion

In conclusion, men are represented positively as they belong in the public sphere while women are portrayed negatively since they have lower status and less important roles in the society. Men are important in the society because their ideas are being heard and they are responsible in making decisions and solving problems, whereas women are excluded from negotiations and their voices are inaudible. Moreover, men have a lot of privileges and rights, but women's rights are limited and restricted. It is men's nature to lead and beside men, there are women who support them. While it is true, women need to be given chances to stand out and voice out their opinions and ideas. The stereotyped of women's participation in politics give implications to the society and women themselves. First, it gives impact to the social system in the society to have patriarchy. Patriarchy here is the roles of men as superiors and leaders. Second, for politics and leaderships, the participation of women is much lower than men because the society does not have confidence and trust enough to let women lead. Third, women are facing this hard truths mainly because the fact that most people think that women are underrepresented. It causes women to have a challenging time getting the same advantages, rights and freedoms as men. This can lead to internal conflicts and unhappiness because they need to live as how the society told them to do. Women should have freedoms and rights to live free from violence, slavery and discriminations. Women especially in Syria need to be given opportunities to be highly educated, own property, vote and earn a fair and equal wage. Hopefully in the future, there are more research on CDA that relate to the importance of gender equality, women's status and the participation of women in politics and leaderships. By conducting more research on these matters, it can educate gender awareness and equality to the society in order to undo the deep socialisation and belief in the traditional values of women. It is because, they are being practised and believed by the society since a long time ago. Winning rights for women, especially for women and girls is about more than giving opportunities and also about changing how countries and communities work. This novel calls for new efforts to strengthen women's movements to improve themselves. Women need to be confident to emphasise their leadership, action and voice.

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