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Introduction to Gender Studies

Textbook

**Edited by
Saida Hdi
Cherki Karkaba**

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This textbook is more than a pedagogical aid aiming to smoothly introduce the students to the complex field of Gender Studies, it is the testimony of a collective effort to create synergy in the department of English Studies at Beni Mellal faculty. The creation of synergies through the construction of a team for the sake of team spirit is what most European Commission projects (Erasmus +) aim to achieve by involving consortiums of partners from different countries with different traditions and various academic practices.

Thanks are to go first to Prof. Dr. Natalija Mazeikiene (Vytautas Magnus University, Lithuania), the coordinator of GeSt project ERASMUS+ Gender Studies Curriculum: A Step for Democracy and Peace in EU-neighbouring countries with different traditions (GeSt). It is within the framework of this project that a team of professors from the department of English Studies have joined their valuable efforts to represent the Sultan Moulay Slimane University as a partner from Morocco in this consortium which includes the pilot university from Lithuania as well as universities from Tunisia, Greece, Hungary and Ukraine. The major commitment of each partner in this project was to introduce new modules in already existing Master programs.

The Beni Mellal team deserves to be congratulated for going beyond introducing modules to raise awareness about gender issues in the academia. Indeed, special thanks are to go to each member of the Beni Mellal team for having contributed to the launch of a new Master program that was accredited by the Moroccan ministry of higher education in the beginning of the academic year 2017-2018. This textbook, which is one of the project's deliverable products, is the outcome of the teaching of a number of major modules in the newly accredited master in Gender Studies. The authors of the chapters integrated in this first volume are not the only collaborators to deserve being congratulated for their contribution; other members of the same team have to be thanked for their active cooperation, and particularly for

their commitment to participate in the writing and publication of, not only, the coming second volume of this textbook, but also in the publication of a new journal to be launched shortly.

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Cherki Karkaba

Preface

Sultan Moulay Slimane University has been a partner for three years in the Gest Project funded by Erasmus+ under the slogan: A step for Democracy and Peace in EU-neighbouring countries with different traditions. The consortium of the project consists of 10 higher institutions from Lithuania, Greece, Hungary, Morocco, Tunisia and Ukraine. The objective of the project is to enact positive changes and bring about new ways of thinking on gender equality in the world community with a focus on enhancing education on gender studies for students of Master Programs. This textbook has emanated as the outcome of this partnership in connection with our work on the Master Program in Gender Studies that saw the light in our faculty in 2017.

It is worth mentioning here that, besides this collaborative textbook, we, the project team members and other colleagues in the Master Program, have organized various events that have benefited our students and fostered awareness of gender issues in our faculty. These events include among others:

- The first International Conference on Gender Studies entitled “Gender, Identities and Education” (May, 2016)
- A Study Day entitled “Women and Politics” (May, 2017)
- A Study Day entitled “Insights into Bourdieu’s theory of gender”(December, 2018)
- A Study Day entitled “Gender in Anglo-American Women’s Literature:Issues and Perspectives” (April, 2019)

These academic events were organized in collaboration with INSAT association (a feminist association against gender violence defending women in precarious conditions), the department of sociology and the Interdisciplinary, Diversity and Development Research Laboratory (IDDRL) affiliated with the department of English studies in our institution. All these events, together with our MA program on Gender Studies, aim at producing specialists in

gender in a variety of fields in education, academic research and social work. For the sake of reaching these ends, our student researchers are expected to take part in social, cultural and economic change through activating both men and women's potential in different disciplines.

In the same vein, this textbook intends to introduce our Master students to different issues in gender studies for improving their awareness of gender equality. It, then, aims at familiarizing students with gender theories and with different disciplines in relation to gender namely literature, media, and communication. Likewise, it seeks to prepare students to become researchers geared with a wide range of methodological approaches to Gender Studies.

Noteworthy, the authors of this book are a group of devoted professors who are interested in gender studies both locally and globally; their main concern is to share knowledge with students and other colleagues. It would not have been easy without the commitment of these researchers and their perseverance to continue despite all the constraints.

Saida Hdi

Introduction

Gender studies: From academic beginnings to a Moroccan textbook

Why do girls have dolls and boys have cars for play? Why do women earn less than men? Why do they perform two-thirds of domestic work? Why is it so frowned upon for a man to be perceived as effeminate? Is power inherently masculine? How are the values privileging male dominance constructed? What are the implications of unequal gender power relationships?

These are just a few of the many questions addressed in gender studies, which have grown significantly in the last forty years in a large number of countries. To answer these questions, Gender studies adopts a specific interrogative approach intended to promote a systematic methodological debate on gender-related issues for the enhancing of gender equity in different spheres. However, for the sake of introducing this textbook, a few introductory notes will be made to define gender studies and explore its background and emergence as an academic field in university institutions, to conveniently elucidate the objectives and contents of the book's chapters.

What is gender studies?

Gender studies can be defined very broadly as all the research that focus on women and men, on the feminine and the masculine. But such a definition ignores the most heuristic contributions of the rich intellectual tradition that has developed since the 1970s in the wake of feminist movements, and which gave rise to what we now call gender studies. Based on this heritage, we propose to highlight four central analytical dimensions of the concept of gender: (1) gender is a social construct (2); gender is a relational process (3); gender constitutes a relation of power (4); gender is embedded in other power relations.

The first step in gender studies has been to deconstruct the essentialist gender visions which consist of attributing immutable characteristics to women and men, most often depending

on their biological characteristics. The second step of gender studies has consisted in advocating a relational approach to gender, because the characteristics associated with each sex are socially constructed within an oppositional relationship. Therefore, we cannot study women and women's issues in isolation from men and the masculine.

The third approach induced by the concept of gender is to perceive social relations between the sexes as power relationships. In this vein, gender studies not only claim that the two sexes are socially "different"; they also show that their relationship is hierarchical. This phenomenon is variously handled and qualified according to different research currents. The fourth idea underlying the approach of gender studies is to analyze gender within the "intersection" of other power relationships. As it is, the categories of sex are not homogeneous; they are crossed by multiple tensions and cleavages in connection with social class, sexuality, "race", age, etc. Being white or black, heterosexual or homosexual, worker or manager does not lead to the same experiences in gender relations. Accordingly, adopting a specific perspective for approaching gender must lead to systematic interrogations and rigorous investigation on the ways in which gender is intertwined with other power relations permeating the social order.

From these four analytical dimensions (social construction, relational approach, power relationship, intersectionality), gender can be defined as a system of binary hierarchical categorization between the sexes (men / women) and between the values and representations associated with them (masculine / feminine). This calls for an important terminological clarification: the term gender can be defined as a social relation and a social divisive marker. To qualify the positions one constitutes (to be a woman, to be a man), one will speak of "sexes", and not of "Genders". Hence, Gender refers to the system that produces a hierarchical binary role distribution between men and women; while the sexes refer to groups and categories produced by this system. This terminological clarification makes it possible to assert the social dimension of sex, breaking with the visions that oppose "gender" (which is a social variable) and "sex"

(which is a biological constant). In other words, gender as it is thought here must be distinguished from its grammatical meaning (which leads to talk about "genders" in plural: the feminine gender, the masculine gender)

Background and Emergence of Gender studies in Academic institutions

Gender studies are not only defined by a series of original analytical perspectives. They are also embodied in a set of canonical books, journals, textbooks, associations, curricula, institutions that have specialized around this theme since forty years in worldwide universities: in other words, they form a relatively autonomous academic field. Challenging biological determinism and analyzing the power relations between the sexes, gender studies has flourished as an extension of the so-called second wave feminist movements, which emerged from 1970s in most Western countries. After a "Militant" period, marked by their involvement in the agenda of feminist movements, these studies entered a phase of institutionalization (development of research and teaching within the university), in different national contexts. The process was more successful in the United States than in most European countries, especially in France.

These studies have incorporated various disciplines of human sciences and social studies: arts, literature, law, sociology, anthropology, history, philosophy, geography, political science, economics, psychology ... The institutionalization of these approaches has taken two distinct and complementary paths: on the one hand, they have experienced a boom within the various disciplines. In France, it is mainly through this interdisciplinary way that gender perspectives have spread, mainly inspired from sociology, anthropology and history. On the other hand, departments, research teams and specialized courses of study on gender issues emerged following an interdisciplinary investigation track: in Switzerland, for example, research units and diplomas in "gender studies" have developed in several universities since the second half of the 1990s. In Quebec, "feminist studies" were also constituted in the context of multidisciplinary centers, such as the Feminist Multidisciplinary Research Group (GREMF) created in 1983 at

Laval University, or the Institute for Research and Feminist Studies (IREF) created in 1990 at the University of Quebec at Montreal (UQAM).

However, in the Moroccan context, although gender studies has emerged since the 1990's at the university of Fez, very few universities (such as Sultan Moulay Ismail university of Meknes And Sultan Moulay Slimane university of Beni Mellal) subscribed in this academic project. Besides, the fragmentary scene between disciplines and the weak sense of interdisciplinarity in the different departments of the arts and humanities in Moroccan universities hinder the desirable scientific goals of the postgraduate units involved in gender studies. However, despite the restriction of this field to the postgraduate level, gender studies in Morocco starts in the last decade to influence the university life and attract a considerable number of student researchers.

Audience, objectives and contents of the textbook

The present collaborative textbook is authored by academics and professors from Sultan Moulay Slimane university in Beni Mellal, who teach and supervise students in the Master of Gender Studies, and engage in research on gender, besides their duties in the framework of the department of English studies. Addressing university students especially master student researchers in gender studies, this textbook aims to reach the following academic and pedagogical objectives:

- To initiate students in the field of gender studies.
- To expose them to gender issues and introduce major gender-related concepts and theories.
- To enable students to grasp and appreciate the complexity, interdisciplinarity and resourcefulness of this academic field.
- To make them aware of the different cultural, social, political, ethical and epistemological implications involved in gender construction and gender representation.

– To make them conscious of the social disparities triggered by gender representation, and initiate them for being researchers on ways of reforming the socio-economic, educational and cultural fields for enhancing gender equity

- To raise students awareness of gender in cultural representations, social stratification and power relationships.

-To enable students develop skills of deconstructing gender stereotypes and representations for knowing how discursive practices and socio-cultural normativity naturalize gender constructs and patriarchal worldview

-To introduce them as prospective researchers to the adequate methodological tools needed in conducting research on gender issues related to different cultural and socio-political areas within the private and public spheres.

Beyond any proclivity for excluding other areas such as gender and employability, business and political leadership, among others, the book is limited to five areas of research interest for the sake of convenience in order to make of it a concise introductory book. To implement the above mentioned objectives, the textbook chapters involve (1) Introduction to Gender theory (2) Gender and communication (3) Gender in media (4) Gender in Maghrebine Literature (5) Research Methodology in Gender studies.

The first chapter by Cherki Karkaba unfolds its argument by contextualizing gender studies within the theoretical framework of cultural studies where the concept of difference is central in both fields of research. Dealing with difference as a philosophical issue will pave the way for the notion of sexual difference which leads to the key distinction between sex and gender. The focus on this distinction is fundamental in the process of theorizing gender. The debate about sex, which is regarded as a biological embodiment and gender, viewed by theorists as a social and cultural construct, will open out the scope to deal with issues pertaining to the construction of masculinity and femininity in different cultures and societies. In a second section,

this chapter will demonstrate how feminist theory plays a vital role in the project of theorizing gender. Rather than pretending to provide the students with an exhaustive introduction to gender theories, this chapter has attempted to give an overall historically and theoretically contextualized account of the development of gender as a process of theorizing. This theorizing process is characterized by complexity and diversity. On the whole, the theorizing of gender has taken full advantage of its undeniable affinities with both feminism postmodernism and poststructuralism. Gender theorizing destabilizes the inherited structuralist binary approach to the issue of sexual difference, and by so doing, it opens the scope for a wide range of perspectives. There are other areas in which gender can be explored for example, postcolonial studies, particularly the intersectional feminist perspective.

The second chapter by Hayat Naciri explores gender differences in communication styles, considering language, the purpose of communication, the patterns of talk, and nonverbal communication. While it is impossible to come to a definitive conclusion, gender and communication studies generally promote the idea that differences in gender communication are socially learned and constructed.

In chapter three, Lalla Meriem Ouahidi and Hamid Masfour argue that the verbal and non-verbal communication in which people engage as interpersonal processes not only maintain values but also establish one's gender identity. In this regard, as a salient sphere of a multivalent, multilayered and multidirectional type of communication, media influences the construction of gender and gender roles more than any other channel of communication, since media are more efficient in eliciting performance of definite gender roles. In order to study media influence on gender representation, and proceeding both inductively and deductively, we suggest to interact with the following questions on the basis of different analytical tools and methods to enhance further detailed insights: (1) How are men and women represented in the media? (2) Which processes are undertaken to produce these gender-related representations? (3) Why are

patriarchal values adopted in the media? (4) How can the researcher demystify the cluster of gender stereotypes disseminated by Moroccan media? (5) Is it possible to deconstruct (a) how and (b) why Moroccan media discourse distributes unequal gender power positions? (6) Since the new social media allows for misrepresented gender groups to produce their own messages, can viable niches of resistance to mainstream media discourse develop to redress gender representations?

In chapter four by Farida Mokhtari, the main focus consists in addressing Maghrebine Women's Writing from a variety of time periods, backgrounds and genre as a means to discuss the difficulties of achieving a public voice. The students will be familiar with the representation of female experiences, and the effects of these voices and experiences for being silenced. They will explore the narrative methods women writers question and use to challenge, resist, and even subvert, and revise traditional gender roles and social expectations about female identity. By focusing on what kind of stories women choose to tell, and what themes they have chosen to deal with over time, students will be able to determine how gender can unify women in the Maghreb and provide them with a sense of power. To this end, students will be involved in examining the ongoing dialogue of women's experiences and women's socialization to such elements of difference as class, gender, and culture.

Finally, in chapter five Saida Hdi and Fagroud introduce students and prospective researchers to basic concepts of empirical research. Students will be able to conduct research in the different fields of gender studies. They will be able to identify different types of research and conduct scientific and methodological research on gender issues. They will be able to find researchable topics, write the review of the literature, formulate research questions and hypotheses, choose an appropriate methodology, analyze data and discuss the findings. Students will also be familiar with the instruments used in their research.

Hamid Masfour

Chapter 1: Introduction to gender theories

Cherki Karkaba

The starting point of any attempt at introducing gender theories is to contextualize gender studies in relation to cultural studies where difference stands out as a central key concept. The concern with the issue of difference is then the point of departure towards contextualizing gender studies within the theoretical framework involving cultural studies. Sexual difference is indeed of cardinal importance in theorizing gender as a process which revolves round the fundamental distinction between sex and gender. The debate about sex, which is conventionally regarded as a biological embodiment, and gender, usually approached as a social and cultural construct, opens out the scope to deal with issues pertaining to the construction of masculinity and femininity.

An overview of the different feminist waves highlights the crucial role played by feminist thought in the development of gender theories which hover round the terms sex, gender, masculinity and femininity. In spite of its diversity and multiplicity, feminism generally has undeniable affinities with postmodernism which, as a skeptical school of thought, offers its inquisitive critical tools to be ideally implemented in the process of theorizing gender. Postmodern feminist thought has actively contributed to the development of gender theories by raising relevant questions, warning against the limitations of structuralist binarism that nails gender-related concepts to reductive definitions. Postmodernism has pushed the theorizing of gender beyond the conventional boundaries between sex, gender, masculinity and femininity; it offers incommensurable possibilities of understanding, reflecting the complexity and diversity of gender theories.

1. Feminism, Gender and Cultural Studies

It is interesting to note from the beginning that gender studies, as an academic discipline, is categorized by Chris Beasley as an umbrella field made up of three subfields: sexuality studies, masculine studies and feminism (Beasley, 2005). The connection between these

disciplines is all the more interesting as feminism, through its different waves in history, has played an undeniable role in the process of theorizing gender. This irrefutable role is corroborated by critics such as Showalter (1990) and Storey (2015).

One of the most striking changes in the humanities in the 1980s has been the rise of gender as a category of analysis' (Showalter, 1990, p. 1). This is the opening sentence in Elaine Showalter's introduction to a book on gender and literary studies. There can be no doubt that without the emergence of feminism (the second wave) in the early 1970s this sentence could not have been written. (Storey, 2015, p. 140)

This chapter will demonstrate how early feminism, together with the twentieth century feminist waves, actively contributed to the construction of gender theories. But before reaching that point it is important to highlight the connection between Gender and Cultural Studies which, as an umbrella multidisciplinary field of academic research, also accommodates gender as one of the most important concerns in the humanities. Elaine Showalter would certainly endorse this affirmation as she is fully aware of the "striking" rise of « gender as a category of analysis » (Showalter, 1990, p. 1). What can be highlighted from the outset, however, is the proposal that feminism may be placed as a cardinal point of intersection between gender and cultural studies. Feminism fits in well in the matrix of cultural studies as a matter of fact, and this is testified by a considerable number of books offering introductions to this area of research. Most of these books devote at least one chapter to Feminism (or gender), which imposes itself as inevitable when embarking on the multidisciplinary field of cultural studies (Milner, 2005; Barker, 2004; During, 1994; During, 2005).

It is also important to highlight the common concern between gender and cultural studies; this concern lies in the concept of "difference" which is central in both fields. Being an essential issue in cultural theory, difference is the main concern for postmodern thinkers who share the common principle of valorizing rather than othering or rejecting any form of

difference, regardless of whether it is gender, ethnic or cultural. Those who undertake gender studies adopt the same principle, as difference “has become an indispensable conceptual category for contemporary gender theorists” (Cranny-Francis et al., 2003, p. 59). It is tempting to believe that understanding and dealing with cultural difference should first start with apprehending gender differences. Gender is all the more important in cultural theory as it is regarded by many scholars as a cultural construct. A great deal has been voiced about approaching gender as a cultural construct, but it is appropriate to have, first, an overview of gender as it has been theorized in the light of feminist thought and its development in history.

2. Feminist theories and the theorizing of gender

2.1. Gender in early and first wave feminisms

Having acknowledged the role played by feminism in theorizing gender, this section will consider the contribution of early and first wave feminism. There are so many types of feminisms as demonstrated in a variety of introductory books to feminist theories (Milner, 1995), but all these types have, as a starting common ground, the basic belief that women have been subordinated to men. The main objective to achieve for feminism is, therefore, equality between the two sexes. This was the aim to attain for early feminist theorists such as Mary Wollstonecraft who elaborated a social theory setting as ultimate objective the liberation of women from their subordination in society. With *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* published in 1792, Mary Wollstonecraft is regarded as one of the landmarks of what Chris Beasley calls « modernist emancipatory » or liberal feminism (Beasley, 2005, p.28).

Liberal feminism of the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, such as Mary Wollstonecraft (1759-97), argued for women to be included in this masculine project. Wollstonecraft’s aim was for women to be given access to education, to the Liberal model of knowledge and rationality and to enter public life ... She wanted women to attain what men of a similar class had in terms of opportunities and access to public activities (Beasley, 2005, p. 31).

Chris Beasley demonstrates that first-wave feminism was based on the critique of Liberalism which was dominant in mainstream Western thinking in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Emancipatory or liberationist feminism generally adopts Liberalism which entirely rests on the belief in the « freedom » of the individual. What is worth noting is that the use of the word « individual » in Liberalism is gender-neutral; an individual is, regardless of sex or gender, a human being, first. The humanity of individuals lies in their ability to reason, and therefore to be free to vote, to own property or to have control over their own bodies (to have children) (Beasley, 2005, p. 18). Early and first-wave feminism adopts, in sum, a humanist outlook by waging war against Western Humanism and Liberalism which paradoxically excluded women. Early and first-wave feminists embraced the gender-neutral idea of a « universal standard for social and political rights and selfhood », but they castigated the exclusion of women from this universalist and humanist project whose standard was rather male-centered as women were believed to be irrational and therefore incapable of reasoning. This was the belief that both justified women's subordination in society, and, at the same time, enhanced feminist activists to fight for women's inclusion in « the Liberal universal conception of the *Human*» (Beasley, 2005, p. 19).

Early and first-wave feminist activists set, as an ultimate objective, to liberate women from subordination and wage war against patriarchal ideology which constructs itself over gender-bias. Launched by Mary Wollstonecraft, this political activism, which has remained central in Western feminism, has engendered a « gender » theory that stems from the feminist concern with women's political and economic equality with men. Wollstonecraft's feminism was supported by John Stuart Mill and Harriet Taylor Mill who published in 1869 *The Subjection of Women*. This influential late nineteenth century book, which is remembered as a political denunciation of the injustice of gender inequality, was a source of inspiration in the early twentieth century for women suffrage groups such as Women's Social and Political Union

(WSPU, 1903). The campaign for economic and political equality reached its apex with twentieth century civil rights movements and became a prerequisite for women's emancipation. This emancipatory feminism surely positioned itself as central in the broader project of reaching full social equality; but it mainly laid the foundation for the construction of the overall edifice of feminist thought through the second and third waves.

2.2. Gender in the second and the third waves of feminism

The second-wave feminism, which flourished during the 1960s and 1970s also had an « emancipatory » orientation, but whereas the focus of the first wave was laid on the principle of political and economic equality between men and women, the second-wave feminists targeted a more sophisticated objective by aiming to investigate the cultural nature of power and oppression. This shift from the political and social to the cultural is of considerable importance in the history of theorizing gender as it marks a decisive move from the body to mind (to some extent), from the biological to the cultural, or else, from sex to gender.

What was at stake in the feminist thought during the 1960s and 1970s is the focus on the ways in which cultural manipulation can be used to endorse power and oppression. In this frame of mind, cultural institutions are perceived to be perpetuating women's subordination. Therefore, truth is to be discovered about power; its cultural mechanism is to be revealed in a way that oppression, repression and subordination may be eradicated.

This truth is about power and 'oppression'. In discovering the key mechanism/truth about power, the aim is to throw off macro (large-scale) structures of power that oppress women and other subordinated groups. (...) power in this model is understood in terms of suppression and dominance, as 'power over' rather than 'power to'. It acts downwards, in a negative fashion to constrict or restrict. Major analytical terms employed by second-wave feminism – like **patriarchy** (...) indicate the negative nature of power, its quality of repression. Second-wave feminism, from the 1960s and 1970s to today, offers a theory about the truth of power, in particular men's systemic power as a group over women as a group (even if individual men and

women might escape this social structuring). Power is owned by the dominant group, as an attribute or property. In short, men *have* power. (...) the aim of this theory is to overthrow power, to overthrow men's authority. (Beasley, 2005, p. 19)

The overthrowing of male domination has to start with the unveiling of truth about patriarchy as a cultural system whose mechanism works to celebrate the universality of male values at the expense of women in society. It is patriarchy as a social and cultural system of power that needs to be overthrown for second-wave feminists. Women have to liberate themselves from the oppressive power of patriarchy by rejecting the universalized values of male domination in favour of a valorization of women's values and identities.

This liberationist project of valorizing women's values and identities paved the way for third-wave feminism which developed between the 1970s and 1980s with a special focus on the positive acknowledgement of difference in general and gender difference in particular. Whereas second-wave feminism rejected women's subordination, and advocated an emancipationist universal humanism based on the gender-neutral principle of equality between men and women, third-wave feminism erected itself over the central idea of highlighting gender difference rather than attempting to assimilate women into equalitarian gender sameness (Beasley, 2005, p. 21). The theorizing of gender reached an advanced point of development during the late 1970s and 1980s, and the focus on gender became all the more important as it took a central position in feminist thought. In the late 1970s gender, began to be theorized, not anymore in modernist light, but it started to be approached through postmodern and poststructuralist insights. The idea of gender as a single collective category or identity began to be abandoned in favour of a poststructuralist vision in which individualities have to be revalued against all forms of hierarchical binarism (structuralism). Instead of considering women as a collective identity, each woman is perceived, through the lens of this new « gender difference » theory, as a unique individual with special concerns and interests. What should be remembered at this stage is that

third-wave feminists deem it important to reconsider female individualities and valorize the creative potentials in each woman. Women have long been subordinated economically, politically and also intellectually, and third-wave feminist thought raises the level of claims higher to require that women should contribute to the production of knowledge.

Activities (questions and elements of reply): What does this overview of feminist waves reveal?

- The claim of the early and first-wave feminisms is gender-neutral as it seeks to reach equality between men and women economically and politically following a humanist principle.
- Second-wave feminism steps away from the embodied claims of economic equality to mark a decisive shift from the political and social to the cultural.
- Third-wave feminism departs from the second-wave concern with the cultural and places 'gender difference' in the heart of feminist thought, with the aim to raise the claim higher and valorize female creative potentials.
- The old dialectics of body and mind is, to some extent, central in feminism which generally has two ultimate objectives to attain, regardless of space-time experience. The first objective is concrete as it aims at reaching political and social equality between men and women (body). The second objective is, somewhat, epistemological and it aims at reaching equity between male and female as producers of knowledge (mind). The first objective, which involves political action, is central for early and first wave feminism, whereas the second objective, which raises more complex interrogations, has become the core of feminist theories during the second and third waves. Since then, the concern with gender studies has been shifting away from the emphasis on power relations between women and men (Beasley, 2005, p. 12) in order to touch on a much broader panel of perspectives.

3. Sex and gender, masculinity and femininity

While perceived as permeating feminist debates throughout history, the dialectics of body and mind may also be viewed as governing the process of theorizing gender which hovers around the conceptual distinction between sex and gender. The theoretical debate revolving around sex and gender implicates the complex question of the relationship between what is biological and what is pertaining to social or cultural construction, or else, mental representation.

This central interrogation is what this section attempts to highlight.

The starting point for the discussion of gender as a cultural construct is the distinction between sex and gender which is essential according to critics. « The sex/gender distinction became one of the most fundamental assumptions in feminist gender theory from the 1970s on ». (Alsop et al., 2002, p. 26)

...one of the most central distinctions in feminist gender theory: namely that between sex and gender. Sex differences, the division into male and female bodies, were seen as biological differences, which it was the domain of biological sciences to investigate and define. Gender differences, however, behavioural and psychological traits associated with masculinity and femininity, were viewed as socially constructed. (Alsop et al., 2002, p. 26)

This distinction is the point of departure in one of the most complete books about gender theories: *Theorizing Gender* (Alsop et al., 2002). The book opens with the conventional differentiation between Sex as traditionally connected with biology (the body), and gender which is usually understood as social construction.

Conventionally sex has been seen as distinct from gender in that sex has been taken to relate to a biological division between men and women and gender to refer to the social constructions masculine and feminine. In other words, gender has been regarded as that which society makes out of biological sex difference. (Alsop et al., 2002, p. 4)

The distinction between sex and gender is also essential as a point of departure for social scientists as elaborated by Bruce Rigsby in his contribution to an introductory book to sociology *Society and Gender: An Introduction to Sociology* (Lupton et al., 1992).

... it has become commonplace for social scientists in their writing to draw a contrast or distinction between sex and gender, although they do not always do so consistently. Sex categories refer to features of human biology, to characteristics of our living, material bodies, while gender categories refer to matters of human culture and society. (Lupton et al., 1992, p. 26)

Robert Stoller, who is a psychologist, was one of the first to deal with the distinction between sex and gender. According to him, there are four concepts to consider when approaching gender: sex comes first and then follows gender, and then two other gender-related concepts, gender identity and gender role (Stoller, 1964, 1968).

In line with Robert Stoller, Ann Oakley clearly differentiates between sex and gender by claiming that gender is not the direct product of biological sex. In her *Sex, Gender and Society*, she defines sex as « the anatomical and physiological characteristics which signify maleness and femaleness and gender as socially constructed masculinity and femininity » (Oakley, 1972). In the light of this distinction, masculinity and femininity are to be looked at, not through biological lens, but rather as social, cultural and psychological constructions. Masculinity and femininity are acquired attributes in the course of the individual's development in a given social environment.

Sex is generally perceived as being naturally biological. Sex is nature, as expressed in *Gender Studies: Terms and Debates* (Cranny-Francis, et al., 2003, p. 4). Sex is associated with nature, biology and the body. The body is the battle field in the war between the sexes. The body has been used to justify the reductive division of sex into male and female. « We believe that proof of the existence of the two sexes is on the body, in the body; it *is* the body » (Cranny-Francis, et al., 2003, p. 5). The body has been, to some extent, chained to this male-female binary opposition. A binary opposition, « which makes this distinction and mutual exclusiveness between men and women appear natural » (Cranny-Francis, A. et al., 2003, p. 4). This distinction is so natural that administrative forms recognize only one choice among the two rubrics to be filled in: male or female. « ... our bodies are rigorously policed into two sexes – male or female » (Cranny-Francis, et al., 2003, p. 5).

Postmodern and feminist theorists share the belief that binarism, which had shaped western thought since the enlightenment, is inherently exclusive and hierarchical. Man-woman is

a polarity based on an exclusive distinction which is also construed as hierarchical. Man is superior to woman, quite in the same way as other oppositions such as White- Black, West-East. The first element is superior to the second in the binary opposition. While the first element is considered as the essential and, therefore, superior, the second element is relegated to the inferior, secondary position of the Other. Woman is the Other of Man as Black is the Other of White. This idea is central in one of the most telling titles of books written by theorists: Simone de Beauvoir's *The Second Sex*, a book published in 1949.

If sex is biologically embodied into male or female, gender, which became a major concern for theorists in 1970s, is described as a system dividing human beings into two categories, playing two distinct social roles: the roles of male and female. As a socially constructed system, gender does not escape binarism. « Every human body in modern societies is assigned a place in a binary structure of gender. » (Cranny-Francis, A. et al., 2003, p. 1). As a social system which « privileges the male over the female », gender « operates as a set of hierarchically arranged roles » culturally associated with positive and negative connotations. The binarism of these gendered connotations is traced as far back as the Greek philosopher Aristotle.

In his *Metaphysics* Aristotle ... sets one series of nouns against another, sorting them into opposites, where the obviously opposite pairs reinforce the oppositionality of the merely different pairs (male is to female as an oblong is opposite to a square?). Aristotle took his curious set of binary oppositions even further in his *Economics* where he states that men were stronger, women weaker; men courageous, women cautious; men the outdoors type, women domestic ... (Cranny-Francis, et al., 2003, p. 2).

Chris Beasley, who ranks feminism as a subfield in the umbrella discipline of Gender Studies, defines gender as a social process which consists in dividing up human beings into two sexed identities, male and female. This gendering process also divides up social practices into two hierarchical divisions wherein men are privileged, women devalued; men are associated with public life, women with domestic life.

Gender in the modern West usually refers to two distinct and separate categories of human beings (the division into men and women) as well as to the division of social practices into two fields. The gendering of social practices may be found, for example in contemporary Western societies, in a strong association between men and public life and between women and domestic life, even though men and women occupy both spaces. (Beasley, 2005, p. 11)

Space is thus gendered in the West into a division of two distinct and oppositional associations: one male, positive and superior and the other one is female, negative and inferior.

Gender in Western society refers to a binary division (into two categories) of human beings and social practices to the point of this division even being construed as oppositional. We see this at work in the phrase ‘the opposite sex’. The two categories are not merely regarded as distinct and opposed, they are also put into a hierarchy in which one is typically cast as positive and the other negative. (Beasley, 2005, p. 11)

The construction of the « positive-male » as superior and the « negative-female » as inferior is grounded in culture or social behaviour. Gender, which is considered as « the cultural or social construction of sex » is also perceived as a « set of meanings that sexes assume in particular societies » (Cranny-Francis et al., p. 3). These meanings are taken to be organized as « masculinity or femininity ». Lined up with male or female bodies, these meanings are incorporated, to use Bourdieu’s term, into social behaviour. Pierre Bourdieu, the French sociologist and cultural theorist, uses the concept of « Habitus » which can be defined as the interiorisation and incorporation of mental representations into the unconscious which, in turn, influences external social behaviour. Similar views are held by the authors of *Theorizing Gender* who claim that human beings are initiated into « patterns of conceptualization, ways of seeing and understanding » (Alsop et al., 2002, p. 35). This initiation is a process that becomes completely « habitual », constituting a « framework of interpretation » incorporated in the unconscious. Such internalized conceptual framework determines external social behaviour.

People's response to sex and gender is therefore determined by their inner framework of interpretation (Bourdieu's habitus).

In this way masculinity and femininity are deemed as cultural constructs. This idea was adopted by Ann Oakley who argued that sex was related to anatomical biology with its distinction between male and female, whereas gender is defined as socially constructed femininity and masculinity (Oakley, 1972). Evoking the research by the anthropologist Margaret Mead (1949), the writers of *Gender Studies: Terms and Debates*, like Oakley before,¹ state that « a particular behaviour which is coded as masculine in one society may be coded feminine in another ». This example illustrates that gender is a social and cultural construct, an ongoing process of interpretation as Anne Fausto-Sterling also suggests in her more recent book *Sex/Gender Biology in a Social World*.

An individual, therefore, has a sex (male, female, not designated, other); but they engage with the world via a variety of social, gender conventions. Each individual, thus, manufactures a gender presentation that can feed back on the individual's sex, and is interpreted by others using the specific gender frameworks of an individual's culture. Gender, then, is definitely in the eye of the beholder. Sex and gender presentation are in the body and mind of the presenter. (Fausto-Sterling, 2012, p. 7)

There is no surprise to view gender as a question of interpretation if it is admitted that gender is a cultural construct. Here, what is usually debated in cultural studies can be called for help, namely the approach of representation as somewhat a form of interpretation. If we admit with Fausto-Sterling that sex and gender are « in the body and mind », it becomes tempting to associate « sex » with the body and « gender » with the mind. Consequently, masculinity and femininity are then to be viewed as related to the mind, not the body, as they are just

¹ « Some years ago, Margaret Mead set out specifically to study the variation in masculine and feminine personality types in different cultures. She has been accused by some of finding precisely what she set out to look for; on the other hand, the findings of other anthropologists have for a long time supported her conclusion that different societies define masculinity and femininity differently, emphasising different qualities, interests and occupations as 'male' and 'female'. » (Oakley, 1972, p. 54)

interpretations or mental representations incorporated by culture and society. As cultural interpretation, masculinity and femininity « transcend » biology as they go beyond bodily considerations.

... the corporeal theatrics of a world where at least two genders correspond to but one sex, where the boundaries between male and female are of degree and not of kind, and where the reproductive organs are but one sign among many of the body's place in a cosmic and cultural order that transcends biology. (Laqueur, 1990, p. 25)

Identical opinions about sex, gender, femininity and masculinity are voiced by a variety of critics such as Stevi Jackson & Jackie Jones. While asserting the central position occupied by gender in feminist theories, especially since the early 1970s, the writers of *Contemporary Feminist Theories* devote a chapter to the theorizing of gender and sexuality in which gender is defined as denoting femininity and masculinity in opposition to the embodiment of sex as biology. « The term gender has been used since the early 1970s to denote culturally constructed femininity and masculinity as opposed to biological sex differences. » (Jackson, 1998, p. 131)

Activities

There are two questions to be raised at this stage:

- a- What are the biological, social and cultural implications in the relationship involving sex, gender, masculinity and femininity?
- b- Is the fundamental distinction between sex and gender unquestionable?
- This section has highlighted the paramount importance of the distinction between sex and gender, a fundamental distinction which serves as a platform for the debates contributing to the construction of feminist and gender theories.
- Sex has traditionally been associated with nature and biology; it has conventionally been connected to the body.
- Gender, on the other hand, has been fully recognized as social and cultural construction.

- Femininity and masculinity belong to the realm of gender which, as a cultural construct, transcends the body, biology and nature.
- As a reaction to the second question, one can recall Stevie Jackson's words by asserting that in the theorizing of gender there is « no consensus » regarding the adoption of one definition at the expense of the other, given the wide range of existing theories. « Gender and sexuality are among feminism's most central concepts, yet there is no consensus on how to define them or how to theorize their interrelationship. » (Jackson 1998, p. 131) This statement underpins the fact that the enterprise of theorizing gender and feminism remains an open construction site. The theorizing of gender is a process under construction as betrayed by the difficulties and the instability of the related concepts.

4. The complexity of theorizing gender

4.1. Defining slippery concepts:

The attempt to provide elements of reply to the second question calls for a demonstration of the fact that gender is a very complex issue that implicates challenging concepts which keep slipping away from fixed definitions. The fundamental distinction between sex as biology and gender as cultural construction has been destabilized by a number of critics and theorists. Anne Fausto-Sterling questions the concept of sex by claiming that there are more than the two traditionally recognized sexes. She published an article strikingly entitled « The Five Sexes » (Fausto-Sterling, 1993). Christine Delphy calls for a thorough questioning of the link between sex and gender and sexuality. « Delphy argues, however, that the link between sex and gender, and sex, sexuality, and procreation, should be questioned by feminists » (Delphy, 1993). Christine Delphy denounces the bias and lack of objectivity at the background of the distinction between sex and gender.

Until now, most work on gender, including most feminist work on gender, has been based on an unexamined presupposition: that sex precedes gender. However, although this presupposition is historically explicable, it is theoretically unjustifiable, and its continued existence is holding back our thinking on gender. It is preventing us from rethinking gender in an open and unbiased way. (Delphy, 1993)

Delphy's words illustrate the considerable doubt that has been cast, over the past decades, on sex as being exclusively related to the body, biology or nature. Moreover, sex itself has been approached as a cultural construct. The boundaries have been effaced between the biological and the cultural, opening the scope for ambivalence and ambiguity. The influence of the postmodern thought is undeniable in theorizing gender, and critics like Elizabeth Grosz acknowledge this influence by recognizing the « slippery and ambiguous » characteristic of the terms usually debated in connection with gender (Grosz 1994). Sex, gender and sexuality have revealed themselves to be difficult to distinguish, differentiate or disentangle. For Stevie Jackson, the term 'sexuality' is sometimes implemented in a way that it might mean gender (Jackson, 1998).

(...) these working definitions are not always easy to sustain and not all feminists would endorse them. For example, psychoanalytic theorists have long disliked the sex-gender distinction, seeing sex, gender and sexuality as too closely bound together to be easily disentangled, and they frequently use the term 'sexuality' to encompass what other feminists would call gender (see Mitchell 1982). (Jackson, 1998: 132)

Elizabeth Grosz warns against the difficulties in approaching slippery concepts such as sexuality. « As a concept, sexuality is incapable of ready containment: it refuses to stay within its pre-designated regions, for it seeps across boundaries into areas that are apparently not its own. » (Grosz (1994). Introduction and Acknowledgement). In *Volatile Bodies*, Elizabeth Grosz recognizes the ambiguity of the term sexuality which is the central concern of her book.

It is a book “on” sexuality, with all the rich resonances of this slippery and ambiguous term. There are at least four different senses of this term which may be relevant to help specify the

concerns dealt with in what follows. First, sexuality can be understood as a drive, an impulse or form of propulsion, directing a subject toward an object. Psychoanalysis is uncontestedly the great science of sexuality as drive. Second, sexuality can also be understood in terms of an act, a series of practices and behaviors involving bodies, organs, and pleasures, usually but not always involving orgasm. Third, sexuality can also be understood in terms of an identity. The sex of bodies, now commonly described by the term gender, designates at least two different forms, usually understood by means of the binary opposition of male and female. And fourth, sexuality commonly refers to a set of orientations, positions, and desires, which implies that there are particular ways in which the desires, differences, and bodies of subjects can seek their pleasure. » (Grosz, 1994, p. Ixii)

The conceptual ambivalence may also derive from the initial ambiguity of the term « sex » which serves as a point of reference for both gender and sexuality. Sex, which denotes the bodily difference between the two sexes (female and male), slips away towards sexuality when it signifies an erotic activity based on body contact. The word sexual is sometimes used ambiguously by feminists when there is, for example, talk about the « sexual division of labour. »

Sexuality erotic identities, desires and practices is usually conceptualized as distinct from, but related to, gender. The concepts of gender and sexuality both take 'sex', a highly ambiguous term, as a point of reference. In the English language the word 'sex' can denote either the distinction between male and female (as 'two sexes') or sex as an erotic activity (to 'have sex'). Similarly, 'sexual' can refer to the different activities or attributes of men and women, as in such phrases as 'the sexual division of labour', or it can refer to the erotic sphere of life, for example, to 'sexual fantasies'. Moreover, the term 'sex' can be used more commonly in French, but sometimes in English to name sexual organs which are simultaneously erogenous zones and the body parts which distinguish male from female ». (Jackson, 1998, p. 131)

As the last lines of this quotation mention, the word sex is used in French to signify the

sexual organ which distinguishes male from female. The use of this word can also suggest that sex, as a mark of being male or female, is a question of interpretation when hidden under clothes; a person dressed in women's clothes in theatre, for example, may be a man in disguise. Another instance, not all people wearing a skirt are women; the skirt is culturally adopted as a man's national garment in Scotland. This may lead to the conclusion that sex is a matter of interpretation as much as being a physiological anatomy. A person's sex can be constructed as masculine or feminine depending on the social and cultural norms incorporated by the perceiver. Sex can be seen as a social and cultural construct as much as gender. This can be underpinned by Simone de Beauvoir's affirmation that « one is not born, but rather becomes, a woman » (de Beauvoir, 1949). In her *Sexual Textual Politics* Toril Moi also states that « a woman defines herself through the way she lives her embodied situation in the world, or in other words, through the way in which she makes something of what the world makes of her » (Moi, 1985, 2002). In the last two quotes, the word « woman » is interchangeable with the word « man », suggesting that society and culture define what sex and gender roles should be adopted and performed by individuals.

The idea of sex being, as much as gender, a social and cultural construct is reflected in the shifting borders between the two terms in the language of critics and theorists as illustrated by Stevie Jackson in the following quotation.

The term 'gender' itself has an Anglo-American heritage and is more often used by English speakers; in France, for example, the word sex is still preferred, or sometimes social sex' (see Mathieu 1995). Some dislike the term 'gender' because it leaves the concept of 'sex' untheorised (Wittig 1992), while others make use of the concept of gender while also calling 'sex' into question (Delphy (1984, 1993); Butler (1990, 1993)). There are also those who resist the imposition of the term gender in the name of 'sexual difference', which they see as irreducible to either biological sex or sociocultural gender (Braidotti, 1994). » (Jackson, 1998, p. 132)

4.2. Postmodernism and the theorizing of gender:

The ongoing debate about sex and gender reflects the complexity and diversity of gender theories. These theories have made the concepts of sex and gender even more complex with the influence of postmodernism and post-structuralism, which reserve a special place for discourse and language. Michel Foucault defines discourse as anything liable to carry meaning, whether verbal (spoken or written words), or non-verbal behaviour like ceremonial rituals for instance. As a postmodern thinker, Foucault liberates the concept of discourse from the conventional departure from a fixed point of reference existing prior to the act of enunciation. The focus is rather laid on the effects of the communication processes which become a necessary medium for the production of meaning. These discursive processes don't refer to an already existing order of reality; they are rather the means by which reality can be shaped according to the understanding of the subject (or perceiver). Discourse does not reflect a given difference between things, it is the producer of differences between things, people and cultures.

The first thing to note in this formulation is that it reverses the conventional order of things: instead of looking for a meaning or point of reference that exists prior to the enunciative act (or what Foucault calls a "statement") and which is then given expression in that act, the focus is on meaning or reference as an effect of communication processes (Hartley, 2016, p. 52).

For Foucault, discourse is closely connected to power, and as such, it is the bearer of imperatives and normative rules.

... discourse as an object of analysis starts to include far more than simply the words spoken or written, let alone merely their signified contents, and extends to include an entire enunciative field, consisting of such "facts of discourse" as "principles of classification, normative rules, institutionalized types" and more (Foucault (1972, p. 22); Hartley (2016, p. 53).

Michel Foucault has influenced many feminist critics who have implemented his views about discourse. They have adopted Foucault's idea that the perceived things of this world are filtered and mediated by discourse. Foucault's theory assumes that there is no fixed essence of

perceived things, everything is constructed through language and discourse.

In the opening sections of this chapter the importance given to individual differences in postmodern thought was highlighted; now light should also be shed on how language shapes the individual's sense of self due to its productive potentials. This shift of focus from the individual to language and its productive power is important in the development of postmodern thought which has played a vital role in the theorizing of gender. Such postmodern views on discourse and language have led to the assumption that sex and gender differences are discursive constructs engendered through the productive power of language.

Jacques Lacan also has influenced feminist thinkers such as Luce Irigaray who is one of those who have actively contributed to the theorizing of gender by approaching the concept of the body in its relation to the issue of difference and gendered subjectivity. The « sexual difference approach » has been endorsed by Luce Irigaray who represents the rise against the trend of feminist thought resting entirely on the principle of equality between women and men in all aspects and respects. Women's individual differences from men, as well as from other women, should be acknowledged through the development of a language of their own, a language that seeks to express better their self-referential subjects and identities. (Irigaray, 1985, 1977). This postmodern way of thinking discards the view of the self as a coherent unified whole; rather, it tends to define the self as being fragmented, a fragmented self which is in a constant process of formation, a self that constructs itself through language and discourse. Discourse calls upon the self to play a crucial role in the process of constructing one's own subjectivity through the understanding of the meaning made available to the individual in question. The theorizing of gender has benefitted from these postmodern insights which led to the consideration of gender subjectivities as cultural, linguistic and discursive constructions. Such postmodern influences resulted in the conceptualization of sex and gender in relation to the notion of subjectivity as embodied performance.

4.3. The performative theory of gender: Gender as embodied performance

As a cultural thinker, Judith Butler is generally cited as the theorist of gender performativity. Butler, who adheres to the post-modern approach to « men » and « women » as discursively constructed categories, defines sex (body) as being a discursive formation or a product of discursive practices. Butler departs from the basic distinction between sex and gender by raising the question: « Is sex to gender as feminine is to masculine? » (Butler, 1993, p.XIV). Her point of departure is a disruption of the belief in sex as being a static and passive material body. She erects her disruptive argument on a sexual metaphor, enacting the dichotomy of active-passive. In such a metaphor, sex is the feminine that is believed to remain static, awaiting the active intervention of gender as a fertilizing masculine power. While acknowledging the cultural productive power that decides for the sex to be assumed by the body, Butler moves on to question the materiality of sex by suggesting that sex is an idea in the sense of a cultural construct that materializes through a performative discursive process of reiteration.

“sex” is an ideal construct which is forcibly materialized through time. It is not a simple fact or static condition of a body, but a process whereby regulatory norms materialize “sex” and achieve this materialization through a forcible reiteration of those norms. (Butler 1993, p. XIV)

It is the reiteration of gender regulatory norms (the normative imperative to be adopted) that enables « sex » to materialize through a performative discursive process. Performativity is defined as being « the reiterative and citational practice by which discourse produces the effects that it names. » Gender performativity is the productive power of a process involving discursive practices that are reiterated to form and mark material sex differences. Gender performativity, which is linguistic and citational in nature, works by making pronouncements (e.g. « it’s a boy /girl! »); these performative pronouncements are part of a normative discourse, imposing on the body the imperative of behaving as masculine or feminine.

But how, then, does the notion of gender performativity relate to this conception of materialization? In the first instance, performativity must be understood not as a singular or deliberate “act,” but, rather, as the reiterative and citational practice by which discourse produces the effects that it names. What will, I hope, become clear in what follows is that the regulatory norms of “sex” work in a performative fashion to constitute the materiality of bodies and, more specifically, to materialize the body’s sex, to materialize sexual difference in the service of the consolidation of the heterosexual imperative. (Butler, 1993, p. XII)

Subjects are like actors on stage; their subjectivities undergo a process of formation through the gender roles they have to perform in accordance with the imperatives dictated by normative social practices. The actor on the stage of gender performance has to parody femininity or masculinity in response to social imperatives. Butler denies the existence of a pre-given essential sex and goes on to claim that the body goes through a process of continuous gender performance.

Butler is known for her use of the concept of « drag », which is an imitation or « parody » of a real woman. Drag is a theatrical construct that becomes the symbol of mimickery as an inherent structural feature of gender.

... all gender is a form of parody, but that some gender performances are more parodic than others. Indeed, by highlighting the disjunction between the body of the performer and the gender that is being performed, parodic performances such as drag effectively reveal the imitative nature of all gender identities. ‘In imitating gender, drag implicitly reveals the imitative structure of gender itself – as well as its contingency’, Butler claims; ‘part of the pleasure, the giddiness of the performance is in the recognition of a radical contingency in the relation between sex and gender’ (GT: 137–8; her emphasis). (Salih, 2002, p. 65).

Is drag the imitation of gender, or does it dramatize the signifying gestures through which gender itself is established? Does being female constitute a “natural fact” or a cultural performance, or is “naturalness” constituted through discursively

constrained performative acts that produce the body through and within the categories of sex? (Butler 1990, 1999, p. XXVIII)

The questions raised by Judith Butler in this quotation should be read as statements or concluding assumptions about her performative theory of gender. Drag, which is the emblem of her theory of performativity, is a « cultural performance », a dramatization of the discursive practices by means of which gender identities are constructed.

Activities

- a- What makes the theorizing of gender a difficult and complex process?
 - b- In what way has postmodernist thought influenced the theorizing of gender?
 - c- To what extent does the theory of gender performativity illustrate the complexity of theorizing gender?
- This section has demonstrated that the diversity of gender theories stems from the difficulties of theorizing gender due to the ambivalence and ambiguity of the implicated concepts. These gender-related concepts are slippery and prove to be difficult to define as they keep slipping away from theoretical definition.
 - The influence of postmodernism and post-structuralism has certainly contributed to the development of gender theories through the rejection of all forms of binary thinking. Post-modernism (or post-structuralism) implements a skeptical and inquisitive critical tool based on constant interrogation of concepts, which plays a decisive role in making the enterprise of theorizing gender an open construction site.
 - The gender theory of performativity illustrates the complexity of theorizing gender. It corroborates the postmodern blurring of boundaries between the concepts related to gender. It demonstrates that gender is to be taken more seriously as a challenging concern in cultural theory.

Rather than pretending to provide the students with an exhaustive introduction to gender theories, this chapter has attempted to give an overall historically and theoretically contextualized account of the development of gender as a process of theorizing. This theorizing process is characterized by complexity and diversity. On the whole, the theorizing of gender has taken full advantage of its undeniable affinities with both feminism postmodernism and post-structuralism. Gender theorizing destabilizes the inherited structuralist binary approach to the issue of sexual difference, and by so doing, it opens the scope for a wide range of perspectives. There are other areas in which gender can be explored; for example, postcolonial studies. Furthermore, while remaining an open construction site, gender stands as a challenging concern in cultural theory.

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Chapter 2: Gender, Culture and Communication

Hayat Naciri

Women and men are different not only in terms of their physical attributes but also in their communication. They have different conversational styles and different interpretation of utterances. The causes of these differential patterns related to gender in communication have long been investigated. Some researchers have accounted for these differences through biological theories conceiving them as innate; some have resorted to psychological theories, believing the differences stem from cognitive stages of development or reinforcement procedures; some have advocated social role theory, proposing that we learn to act and talk in ways adjusted to what is expected as masculine and feminine behavior; and some have proposed theories of societal development, hypothesizing that male dominance emanates from the social structures, and that these structures determine communication patterns.

Gender

Oakley (1972) was one of the first social scientists to have distinguished the concept of gender from the concept of sex. According to Oakley, gender is a concept that humans bring into being in the social sphere through their interpersonal and socio-cultural interactions; yet it relies excessively upon biological differences between males and females. Because humans create the concept of gender on a social level, gender is referred to as a social construction. The social construction of gender is displayed by the fact that individuals, groups, and societies attribute particular characteristics, statuses, or values to individuals merely because of their sex; yet these attributions differ across societies and cultures, and over time within the same society (Oakley, 1972).

Gender is a symbolic social construct that differs across cultures, and shifts over time within a given culture, OR over the course of individuals' life spans, and in relation to the other gender. What gender means and how we perform it depend on a society's values, beliefs, and

preferred ways of organizing collective life. For instance, in America to be masculine is to be strong, ambitious, successful, rational, and emotionally controlled. Although these requirements are perhaps less rigorous than they were earlier, they remain predominantly determinant of American masculine imaginary. Those we regard as “real men” do not cry in public, and have success and power in their professional and public lives (Kimmel, 2000a, 2000b, 2005). To be feminine, on the other hand, is to be physically attractive, deferential, emotionally expressive, nurturing, and concerned with people and relationships (Spence & Buckner, 2000).

Gender is something individuals learn and embody; it is not particularly a personal and individual quality; rather it is constructed by cultures that stipulate the social meaning and expectation of each sex in a given society at a particular time. In other words, it determines what is expected, allowed and valued in a woman or a man in a given context. This means that gender varies over time and across cultures. Therefore, gender is not something we are born with, and not something we have, but something we do (West & Zimmerman, 1987) – something we perform (Butler, 1990). Indeed, gender has come to be used as a verb (to be gendered, or to gender something or someone). Femininity and masculinity gain much of their meaning from the fact that society juxtaposes them. That is, when society constantly represents women and men in particular binary ways, it is difficult to imagine that masculinity and femininity could be defined differently.

Cameron points out that for the objectives of linguistic and sociolinguistic studies, gender has often been defined not as biological maleness or femaleness, but rather as social distinction of men and women in specific communities. Thus, gender-linked patterns of language use stem not only from men and women being naturally different, but from the way that difference is made significant in the organization of social life and social relations (Cameron, 2010). Gender refers to the social attributes and opportunities related to being male and female, the culturally coded relationships between women and men and girls and boys, and the relations between

women and between men. These attributes, opportunities and relationships are socially constructed and learned through the socialization processes. They are context-/time-specific and variable. In most societies there are differences and inequalities between women and men in decision making opportunities, responsibilities ascribed, activities undertaken, and access to and control over resources.

Coates further elucidates that currently gender is rather seen as something we ‘do’, instead of seen as a natural given (Coates, 2004). According to Cameron (2010), therefore, in sociolinguistic studies on gender, language can be seen as one resource with which social actors build various types of masculinities and femininities, positioning themselves in a particular gender and marking themselves from the other gender. Coates (2004) also points out that most societies function on the basis of two genders, masculine and feminine and, therefore, it would be tempting to treat gender simply as a binary opposition, which, until fair recently, has often been the case in the field of gender and language.

Culture

The culture of any society consists of the sum total of ideas, conditioned emotional responses, and patterns of habitual behavior which the members of that society have acquired through instruction or imitation and which they share to a greater or less degree (Linton). According to Peoples and Bailey, culture is the socially transmitted knowledge and behavior shared by some group of people (Peoples and Bailey). In the same vein, in Harris definition, a culture is the total socially acquired life-way or life-style of a group of people. It consists of the patterned, repetitive ways of thinking, feeling, and acting that are characteristic of the members of a particular society or segment of a society (Harris). Similarly to Axelrod, we see the content of the culture as a set of traits, which can refer to behavior, knowledge facts, ideas, beliefs, norms, etc.

A culture is made up of structures, primarily institutions, and practices, particularly

communicative ones, that reflect and uphold a particular social order; and through which a society announces and sustains its values. They do this by defining certain social groups, values, expectations, meanings, and patterns of behavior within given social groups as natural and good and others as unnatural, and bad, or wrong. According to Spencer 'Culture is a fuzzy set of basic assumptions and values, orientations to life, beliefs, policies, procedures and behavioural conventions that are shared by a group of people, and that influence (but do not determine) each member's behaviour and his/her interpretations of the 'meaning' of other people's behaviour.' (Spencer-Oatey, 2008)

Communication

The origin of the word "communication" is "communicate" or "communis" which means "to impart", "to participate", "to share" or "to make common." The sense of sharing is inherent in the very origin and meaning of "communication."

Communication is defined as a dynamic, systemic process in which meanings are created and reflected in human interaction with symbols. In other words, communication is a symbolic activity which implies that it requires reflection, and meanings are variable and constructed rather than inherent in symbols themselves. It can be understood only within its contexts, including the especially important system of culture. Similarly, according to Lumsden communication may be defined as "the process of using verbal and nonverbal cues to negotiate a mutually acceptable meaning between two or more people within a particular context and environment" (Lumsden & Lumsden, 2000)

1. The Social Construction of Gender

A culture is made up of belief systems, values, and behaviors that foster a particular ideology or social system. How we communicate our gender is influenced by the values and beliefs of our particular culture. What is considered appropriate gender behavior in one culture may be looked down upon in another. In America women often wear shorts and tank tops to

keep cool in the summer. Think back to summer vacations to popular American tourist destinations where casual dress is the norm. If you were to travel to Rome, Italy to visit the Vatican, this style of dress is not allowed. There, women are expected to dress in more formal attire, to reveal less skin, and to cover their hair as a display of respect. Not only does culture influence how we communicate gender identities, it also influences the interpretation, understanding, or judgment of the gender displays of others (Kyrtzis & Guo, 2001; Ramsey, 2004).

The socialization process plays a fundamental role in social construction, given that, through various socializing institutions (e.g., family, school, environment, state, workplace), members of society transmit and consolidate different cultural forms of behavior. This is materialized as something that is learned, reinforced, and endorsed in patriarchal society, thus informing what is obligatory, permitted, and prohibited. Different mechanisms of socialization reinforce stereotypes as to who is a man or woman in the patriarchal gender system. These mechanisms guarantee that the order is preserved and reproduced through the internalizing of values as "natural" and "appropriate" for a woman or a man.

1. 1. Gender Stereotypes

Women and men begin to act the stereotypical female and male role as a child and continue along this same path as an adult. In his work, Schneider (2005) outlines the common stereotypes of women and men based on psychological research. Some common female stereotype traits are affectionate, emotional, friendly, sympathetic, and sentimental; stereotypic males' traits include dominant, forceful, aggressive, self-confident, rational, and unemotional (Schneider, 2005). These gender stereotypes have ascribed attitudes such as sensitivity and being emotional to women, assigning them to "take care" behaviors, while portraying men as aggressive and rational, prescribing them to more of a "take charge" style (Welbourne, 2005). Men are generally thought to be agentic—that is, competent, assertive, independent, masterful,

and achievement oriented, while women are perceived as inferior to men in agentic qualities. Conversely, women are generally thought to be communal-that is, friendly, warm, unselfish, sociable, interdependent, emotionally expressive and relationship oriented-while men are perceived as inferior in communal qualities (Eagly & Mladinic, 1989).

According to the sex role theory, being a man or a woman means enacting a general role as a function of one's sex. But this theory also uses the words masculine and feminine, asserting that the feminine character in particular is produced by socialization onto the female role. According to this approach, women acquire a great deal of sex role learning early in their lives, and this can lead to an attitude of mind that creates difficulties later, during their working lives. It's a form of "culture trap" (Claes, 1999). However, gender stereotypes tend to include exaggerated or erroneous assertions about the nature of males and females. For example, a common gender stereotype about males is that they are not emotional. Females, on the other hand, are commonly stereotyped as being irrational or overly emotional. Therefore, stereotypes about gender can cause unequal and unfair treatment because of a person's gender. This is called sexism.

Gender roles are descriptive and prescriptive (Eagly, 2009). The descriptive aspect, or stereotype, tells men and women what is typical for their sex in particular contexts and situations. The prescriptive aspect tells them what is expected or desirable (Rudman & Glick, 2001). Prentice and Carranza (2002) illustrate this claim:

The stereotypic belief that women are warm and caring is matched by a societal prescription that they should be warm and caring. Similarly, the stereotypic belief that men are strong and agentic is matched by a societal prescription that they should be strong and agentic. (p. 269)

Societies use symbolic means to segregate the sexes conceptually as well as physically. Social rules designate some forms of verbal and non-verbal communication according to sex, to maintain distinction. Masculine and feminine stereotypes can be seen as complementary in the

sense that each gender is seen as possessing a set of strengths that balances out its own weaknesses and supplements the assumed strengths of the other group (Cameron, 2003; Jost & Kay, 2005). The alleged complementarity of attributes serves to reinforce male superiority and female subordination as it naturalizes these beliefs, thus making them acceptable to men and women (Jost & Kay, 2005; Rudman & Glick, 2001). W. Wood & Eagly (2010) further suggest that these distinctions appear to be pan cultural, a strong claim that requires empirical investigation.

1. 2. Gender Role

The term gender role was first coined by John Money in 1955, during the course of his study of intersex individuals, to describe the manners in which these individuals expressed their status as a male or female in a situation where no clear biological assignment existed. The concept of gender role, then, refers to the activities ascribed to women and men on the basis of their perceived differences.

A gender role is a set of societal norms dictating the types of behaviors which are generally considered acceptable, appropriate, or desirable for people based on their actual or perceived sex or sexuality. In other words, gender roles are based on the different expectations that individuals, groups, and societies have of individuals based on their sex and based on each society's values and beliefs about gender. Gender roles are usually centered on conceptions of femininity and masculinity, although there are exceptions and variations. The specifics regarding these gendered expectations may vary substantially among cultures, while other characteristics may be common throughout a range of cultures. There is ongoing debate as to what extent gender roles and their variations are biologically determined, and to what extent they are socially constructed.

“Gender roles” have been described as society’s shared beliefs that apply to individuals on the basis of their socially identified sex (Eagly, 2009) and are thus closely related to gender

stereotypes. Stereotypes can be conceptualized as the descriptive aspects of gender roles, as they depict the attributes that an individual ascribes to a group of people (Eagly & Mladinic, 1989). A sociological perspective toward gender roles suggests that masculine and feminine roles are learned and that masculine and feminine gender roles are not necessarily connected to males' and females' biological traits. In the same vein, various groups, most notably the feminist movement, have led efforts to change aspects of prevailing gender roles that they believe are oppressive or inaccurate.

The socialization process starts in the early childhood. Girls are taught to play with dolls, the learn to prepare food and clothes and everything that is associated with “women’s duties” and boys are taught to play with small cars, weapons. Thus, boys learn at an early age that their interests are opposed to those of girls.

1. 3. Parental Influences

In a society full of gender stereotypes, children frequently learn to adopt gender roles which are not always unbiased to both sexes. As they are moving through childhood and into adolescence, they are susceptible to many factors that influence their attitudes and behaviors concerning gender roles. Yet, the powerful influence on gender role development occurs within the family setting, with parents passing on their own presumptions about gender. This is confirmed by Witt as he stated that the primary socialization of a child is determined by the parents, they serve as the child's earliest exposure to how constructions of male and female traditionally act and behave (Witt, 1997). Therefore, the profound impact of parental expectations of gender roles can especially be seen in the role children play in household duties. Girls generally do more housework than boys and the type of housework assigned to children largely depends on gender. Thus, household dynamics further advance gender role expectations on children. In this vein, Maltz and Broker's research suggested that the games children play may contribute to socializing children into masculine and feminine gender roles. For example, girls

are encouraged to play "house" with baby dolls to prepare them for parenting, and fashion dolls to prepare them for dressing pretty as grown-ups, which promotes stereotypically feminine traits, and may promote interpersonal relationships as playing house does not necessarily have fixed rules or objectives; boys, on the other side, are encouraged to play more competitive and adversarial team sports with structured, predetermined goals and a range of confined strategies. (Maltz and Broker)

Thus, as a result of socialization, the boy and the girl will promptly be identified with one of the two existing predefined categories. The attributes of the category will affect their perception of self, their conceptualization of their "proper" role in society, and presumably their view of others. Given that the categories are the prevailing social norms, and are maintained through societal beliefs, it is logical that the child will tend to demonstrate behaviors that comply with sex-role expectations and avoid exhibiting the behaviors that are ascribed to the "opposite" sex of their own (Moreno, Kramer, Scheidegger, & Weitzman, 2005). Therefore, gender roles intend to set boundaries between what is perceived as congruent for women and for men in the society with regard both to the public and private spheres. Such roles are accepted as 'natural' and internalized by girls and boys from a very early age.

As a result, these hints give them significant knowledge on what are required gender roles and on the other hand set alignment features for framing their own gender identity. Although the differences between the sexes in this age group are not as demonstrated, many already have internalized gender-typical behavioral characteristics, hierarchical boundaries and interests.

1. 4. School

It was argued that kindergarten is the first institutional arena that routinely practices the hegemonic definitions of masculinity and femininity that also involve the incorporation of various agents (Chen & Rao, 2011). Kindergarten teachers consistently reinforce the gendered stereotypes through a process of gendered segregation on a daily basis (ibid). Such stereotypes as

the importance of beauty and grace in girls and aggressiveness in boys is communicated to the children repeatedly (ibid). To better explain the effect the kindergarten experience has on children, a study of four Chinese kindergarten classes was carried out in Hong Kong, the children were observed for a total of one hundred and five visits of three hour intervals over the span of twelve months (ibid). A total of two hundred and six gendered anecdotes were recorded, and the findings depicted the various ways in which gender is socially constructed in the kindergarten classroom. Among these, gendered labels were used, gender segregation was demonstrated, and overall teachers interactions with boys were more frequent and positive. These findings clearly depict the main reason for the salience of gender due to the agents that practice it. The teachers did not once acknowledge how they produced a gendered environment and therefore were unaware of their significant contribution to the construction of gender to their students.

Moreover, the images that small children receive from the textbooks are women carrying babies, or women in the kitchen preparing food, or women working in the field, or, at the high end women nurses, women teachers. While men are usually doctors, engineers, soldiers, performing some heavy, intellectual job. This leads to further divisions, stereotyping and to the perception that women's role is always indoor taking care of family (or others) and that of men is outdoors.

1. 5. Media

The feminine persona is created by multiple institutions in society. Media in particular contributes negative conceptions of what it means to be a girl and latently indicates the subordination of women.

Mass media have the power to confirm both stereotypes and non-traditional gendered behavior. A study conducted by Powel and Abel analyzed how sex-role stereotypes in television programs such as Teletubbies and Barney are aimed at the preschool audience. In their analysis,

Powel and Abel found that gendered messages and behavior is present in preschool television programming and this was found through eight different themes and out of the eight themes five of them, leadership, appearance, gendered roles, occupations, and play roles, were significantly gendered (Powell; Abel, 2002) In both Barney and Teletubbies, males served as the leaders and the director of action. The three youngest Teletubbies robotically followed around the oldest who happens to be male like. The pattern being set is that males lead and females follow. On the other hand, Barney is also the male leader but he leads the children as a caring, social values, "feminized" male teacher. The reconfiguring of leadership as social and friendly leadership can be seen an alteration of a typical male teacher but the sex-stereotype of male being leaders is reinforced for the preschool aged children. Reconfiguring of the male characters was also prevalent for the four remaining themes that were gendered. The males in these shows were taller in stature, wore darker colored clothing but sometimes wore shorts and skirts. As for gendered roles, the males were generally more active while the females were more social and passive. Neither program showed men and women in non-stereotypical occupational roles, indicating that at an early age, children are exposed to gender -specific occupational expectations. In play roles when it was either time for story time or play time the females played the more passive roles such as setting up a picnic, while the males played the more active roles such as fox chasing.

Gender roles are socially determined. The way society is taught to be socialized is striking and goes unrecognized. With guidance from institutions and arenas such as school, family, surrounding and the mass media gender seems to be coerced, as it comes with a scripted set of behaviors and attitudes.

2. Psychological Differences across gender

It is claimed that the wide difference between men and women and their style of communication stems from the fact that they perceive the goal of conversations differently. In this sense, academic research on psychological gender differences has shown that men and

women differ in their communication characteristics and traits. In general, women are more social-emotional in their interactions with others, whereas men are more independent and unemotional in conversations (Chodorow, 1978; Eagly, 1987; Miller, 1976).

Men and women also differ in their relations towards others in society: while women strive to be more social in their interactions with others and use communication as a tool to enhance social connections and create relationships, men value their independence and use language to exert social dominance and achieve tangible outcomes (Chodorow, 1978; Eagly, 1987; Miller, 1976).

The main differences Gray (1992) identifies between communication styles of men and women are as follows: Women are relationship-women at the basic level, “For most women, the language of conversation is primarily a language of rapport: a way of establishing and negotiating relationship. They tend to be more expressive, tentative, polite, and social. Men, on the other hand, are goal-oriented; they define their sense of self through their ability to achieve results (Gray, 1992). For most men, talk is primarily a means to preserve independence and negotiate and maintain status in a hierarchical social order” (Tannen, 1990). Men approach conversations with the goal of transmitting information and offering advice, where women aim to maintain interaction and seek control and understanding (Tannen, 1990).

Theorists have suggested that these gender discrepancies in communication styles put women at a disadvantage when interacting with others because they speak more tentatively than men, who are known to speak more assertively, thus leaving the impression that men are more confident and capable (Lakoff, 1975). Many of these gender differences in communication styles outlined make women appear subordinate to men, suggesting they should be viewed as second-class to men. In his book *Men are from Mars, Women are from Venus*, John Gray suggests that men and women are so different in their approaches to communicating that they are from different planets: they have different needs, goals, and values in the way they communicate

(Gray, 1992). Understanding these differences is key to creating and maintaining successful relationships by being aware of how other genders communicate and thus adapting one's style accordingly. Therefore, researchers have hypothesized that this is possibly because of their perceived lower status to men (Thorne & Henley, 1975). This could be due to societal norms that enforce this gender status hierarchy. Pearson (1985) also found that women often weaken their statements. And one explanation of this could be due to their lower self-confidence in what they are saying and their fear of being wrong, which can be contributed to their perceived inferior status.

3. Gender Differences in Communication Styles

3. 1. Non-verbal Communication

In his observational study on nonverbal gender differences, Hall (1984) reported that women smile and laugh more and have a better understanding of nonverbal cues. She believed women were encouraged to be more emotionally expressive in their language, causing them to be more developed in nonverbal communication. Men, on the other hand, were taught to be less expressive, to suppress their emotions, and to be less nonverbally active in communication and more sporadic in their use of nonverbal cues.

Smiling

Research has revealed that, under a wide variety of social circumstances, females are more likely than males to smile. Over 70 studies have investigated sex difference in smiling under various social conditions, such as when people engage in face-to-face interactions or walk past one another on the street or in hallways (e.g. Van Vianen & van Schie, 1995; Chapell, 1997). Another social condition involves people being photographed for the purpose of later sharing the pictures with friends and relatives (e.g. Reis et al., 1990; Otta et al., 1994; Hall et al., 2002). In most surveys, females have been found to smile more than males (La France et al.,

2003; Ellis et al., 2008, p. 670). Analyzing why females smile more than males lead to emphasize cultural learning factors. For example, Dodd et al. (1999) asserted that because they are socialized to be friendlier and more emotionally expressive than males, females tend to smile more.

The social context in which smiling occurs has also been found to substantially affect the size of the sex difference (LaFrance et al., 2003). Women smile more than men when the situation involves social engagement, and this is particularly evident when the context is marked by social tension. Accordingly, women's tendency to smile more than men is higher when they are being observed by others, when they are instructed to get acquainted, when they engage in self-disclosure, and when they experience embarrassment (M. LaFrance et al., 2003). These situations make communality more salient, which heightens the expectation for more feminine behavior. It is stated that the size of the difference is smaller or absent in situations where males and females are engaged in the same task or occupy the same social role.

Further analysis revealed that women's greater smiling reflects their low power relative to men (Henley, 1977). Henley (1973) and Deutsch (1990) maintained that smiling is recognized in most, if not all, cultures as a submissive gesture, and suggested that females are taught from childhood onward to behave in more submissive ways than males. Smiling, according to Henley and Deutsch, is one manifestation of submissiveness. In the same vein, James and Drakish (1993) observed that women are expected to gain greater ground than men to serve the function of establishing and maintaining personal relationship whereby they are to keep the interaction following smoothly and to show goodwill toward others. This weaker gender is further expected to share personal feelings and other socio-emotional matters relevant to interpersonal relationship more than men.

Gazing and Eye Contact

It was found that adult women gaze at their interaction partners more than men do. It is

worth noting that these patterns are most pronounced when the measure of gazing involves duration rather than the number of individual looks at another person (Hall, 1984). In fact, some investigators have reported the opposite effect when the measure involves frequency of glances. In short, men's gaze patterns are such that they look more frequently but for brief durations at their interaction partners than women do.

Gender differences in gazing are also sensitive to sex composition of the interacting pair, such that the largest sex difference in gazing favoring females is observed when the comparison entails contrasting female–female with male–male dyads (Hall, 1984). Hall and Gunnery (2013) have suggested that this is due to the contribution of both interactants. In addition to women gazing at their dyadic partners more than men, research shows that women are gazed at by others more than men are. Thus, because women tend to gaze more, and because individuals tend to gaze at women more, female–female dyads exhibit more eye gazing behavior than cross-sex or male–male dyads.

Although Hall and Gunnery (2013) have suggested that men are somewhat uncomfortable with eye-to-eye contact, they sometimes appear very comfortable staring down others when they are talking but look at others little when they are listening. Dovidio, Ellyson, Keating, Heltman, and Brown (1988) have indicated, for example, that men exhibit a pattern called high-visual dominance: They gaze more at their interaction partners while speaking than while listening. This is especially true of men in high-power positions. Women, in contrast, tend to do the opposite: They gaze at their partners more while they are listening than when they are speaking. Again, we see the effect of context. Both sexes sometimes show visual dominance when they are in high-power roles (Ellyson, Dovidio, & Brown, 1992).

Touching

Touching is a nearly universal nonverbal aspect of social exchange between people. Almost everyone touches others when communicating face to face, though the type and meaning

of touching interpersonal relations is highly variable. The touching that occurs as part of a greeting between two people, for example, will differ in type and meaning from the touching that occurs alongside prolonged interaction. Additionally, touching in social situations can take on many forms, for instance it can be short like an arm tap (a quick touch and release) or be a touch and hold, such as hand holding or an arm-around type touch.

The study of sex differences in social touching behavior was brought to light by Henley (1973) who found that in public places, men initiated touch with women more than women initiated it with men, and attributed public touching largely to a need to display control and dominance. This research has been criticized by those testing the dominance theory in cross-cultural research.

In her most influential interpretation, Henley (1977) suggested that high-status people have greater license to touch a low-status person than the reverse. She reported that men touch women more than women initiate touch with men and saw this asymmetry as reflecting status differences. Such asymmetry is due to a status difference between men and women. This status difference, maintained Henley, gives men a touching privilege that, in turn, contributes to their domination of women. Men, by virtue of their status in society, are freer than women to touch others and therefore do so. Henley (1977) suggested that women are touched more than men, implying that women are more approachable and more vulnerable to personal violation by virtue of their lower status. J. A. Hall's analyses have led her to conclude, however, that the reverse pattern is more reliable. Compared to men, Hall (1984, 2011) has reported that women generally touch others more than men do. The nature of the relationship also counts. Males appear to initiate touch more than females when the relationship is a non intimate one and the setting is public. Among married couples in contrast, wives touch husbands more than the other way around (Smith, Vogel, Madon, & Edwards, 2011).

Research has also identified differences in the accuracy or effectiveness with which men

and women use touch to communicate with others. Among unacquainted participants, regardless of the gender of their interaction partner, women are more likely than men to successfully communicate sympathy using touch, whereas men are more likely than women to successfully use touch to communicate anger (Hertenstein & Keltner, 2011). This research also found that happiness tended to be successfully conveyed by touch in female–female dyads only (Hertenstein & Keltner, 2011).

3.2. Man and Woman Communication Styles

Language is one area where gender roles and expectations can be constructed and reproduced. The notions that through language women exhibit same-sex solidarity and “support” whereas men harass and “control” (Fishman, 1978) or that women talk to foment or enhance relationships, while men talk to solve problems, are among the most entrenched generalizations found in popular culture and are widely exploited by the advertising industry, among other media (Talbot, 2000). These views, however, have been challenged in recent language and gender literature.

The characteristics of male and female use of language has been researched from a different perspective that the two genders operate like two cultures that are made easily visible through two different conversational styles (Tannen, 1985). This differs from previous studies by incorporating the gender’s different use of language. Since the 1980s, linguistic features that were labeled “female” slowly became understood as powerless linguistic style, leaving linguistic “male” features to be understood as a powerful linguistic style. Powerless language includes elements such as but not limited to: tag questions, intensifiers, hedges, hesitation forms, gesture forms, questioning intonation and questioning statements, while powerful language lacks these elements (Morgan, 2008).

3.3. Conceptualizing Verbal Communication

Linguistic Politeness

It is argued that when communicating verbally, women more often than men tend to use speech style that gives the impression of politeness. Holmes (1995), Coates and Cameron (1988, p.123) refer to women as more polite than men when all the necessary reservations and qualifications have been taken into account. Politeness is therefore defined as “behaviour which actively expresses positive concern for others, as well as non-imposing distancing behaviour” (Holmes, 1995, p.5). Coates referred to Politeness as ‘women styles’ (1986, p. 102).

On average, women use more expressive, tentative, and polite language than men do, especially in situations of conflict (Baslow & Rubenfield, 2003). They try to create an environment with closeness and consensus. Men, on the other hand, are viewed as more likely than women to offer solutions to problems in order to avoid further seemingly unnecessary discussions of interpersonal problems (Baslow & Rubenfield, 2003). They often use explicit and aggressive commands and directives to get the upper hand in conversation to protect themselves psychologically from being pushed around (Tannen, 1992; Coates, 2004). This phenomenon is described vividly by Deborah Tannen,

Men view the world in a hierarchical way. They hold the idea that there must be one person in a superior position and another in an inferior position during a conversation. They are more independent and attach more importance to power, and hence they talk more, swear more and use aggravated directives to get power in the conversation. They try their best to achieve and maintain the upper hand and prevent others from psychologically putting them down or pushing them around. Women, by contrast, tend to think of the world in a non-hierarchical way. They pursue intimacy in life and pay more attention to friendship. They will feel close and comfortable through getting and giving empathy and support (Tannen, 1992).

Nevertheless, a study of politeness in language use conducted by Brouwer (1982) showed no difference in politeness by women and men observed buying tickets at an Amsterdam railway station. The researchers hypothesized that women would be more insecure, more hesitant and more polite when buying tickets than men. It was found, however, that men and women did not

differ when the ticket seller was a man; both men and women were more polite to him than when the ticket seller was a woman. Studies about forms of address (Erwin-Tripp, 1971) have shown that forms implying respect are directed more often to men than to women. In studies of sex differences in speech, as in studies of sex differences in other spheres, findings are often generalized far beyond the population studied. Thus, slight differences in speech have led some to assume that women have their own language. This focus on gender may, as critics observe, de-emphasize the effect on language of other factors such as social setting, social class, geographical locale, age, race and ethnicity.

Tag Questions

Tag questions are brief, rhetorical questions placed at the end of declarative sentences. They can be used to communicate slight uncertainty or to soften the severity of a request. There are four kinds of tags: epistemic modal tags which express the speaker's uncertainty; challenging tags which are confrontational as they pressure a reluctant addressee to reply or aggressively boost the force of a negative speech act; facilitative tags which invite the addressee to contribute to the discourse; and softening tags which alternate the force of negatively affective utterances such as directives (Coates, 1986, p.104; Holmes, 1995, pp. 80-82). Yule defines the term tag questions and makes a comparatively determined claim:

They are used more often by women when expressing opinions. These features of women's speech all seem to be ways of inviting agreement with an idea rather than asserting it. Men tend to use more assertive forms and 'strong' language [...] (Yule, 2006, p. 224).

This attitude is based on the conclusions presented by Lakoff and that propounded the idea that speakers using tag questions in speech leave the impression of not being completely sure of themselves, of looking for confirmation from the collocutor, even of having no views of their own. Some studies confirmed that women use two to three times more tags in task-oriented exchanges (Fishman, 1980), while others discovered this to be relevant for men's verbal

production (Lapadat & Seesahai, 1977). The ongoing debate resulted in two different, even conflicting, approaches to this problem, the difference and the dominance approaches, based on whether the advocates were more in favour of the stance that women and men spoke differently due to their relation to language, or that the men's dominance in society was only mirrored in language.

In this respect, Hellinger & Busmann (2002, pp. 17-18), referring to Holmes (1995) state that the occurrence of tag-questions may have various communicative functions in actual discourse, wherefrom the explanation of their purpose in terms of uncertainty or tentativeness is only one among a number of possibilities. Thus, as it has been established:

A tag, for example, can both indicate a willingness to entertain alternative positions beyond that which the main clause conveys (thus, the absence of unshakeable conviction) and also serve to connect the speaker more firmly to others. Establishing such connections may ultimately strengthen a speaker's position by enlisting social support for the speaker and their ideas and projects. (Eckert/McConnell-Ginet, 2003, p. 160)

Certain sociological studies, based on all gender couples, however, have shown that irrespective of gender, lower rate of tag-questions would be a sign of a dominant speaker (Kollock, Blumstein, Schwartz, 1985). Part of the social position of subordination is achieved through expressing conventional politeness, especially forms that mark respect for the addressee and increased use of tag questions in their speech. Coates (1987, p.105) points out that 59 percent of tags used by women are facilitative while 61 percent of tags used by men are modal (compared to 35 percent for women). To confirm this, Holmes (1995, p. 85), in her study of the use of tags in New Zealand, found that "women generally use ... tag questions more often than men in facilitative positive politeness function". Lakoff (1973, p. 54) however, points out that there are situations or instances in which tags are the only legitimate sentence form. Interestingly, as shown by Cameron et al (in Coates & Cameron 1998, p.75), Holmes challenges

Lakoff's view, which sees women's language as associated with weaknesses or subordination. Holmes (1995) tries to modify Lakoff's view by indicating that men use tags as well, the difference only comes when women use more facilitative tags with affective meaning.

Questions

Several researches claim that women have a tendency to convert statements into questions when communicating (Coates, 1987, p.106; Coates, 1996, p.266; Mills, 1995, p.22). Questions are very important as they give the speaker opportunity to evoke response. Instead of using questions only to get information, when one speaker can take a role for an expert, women use them for other reasons as well. They use questions to construct and sustain friendship: to draw speakers into conversation and to sustain the conversation to check if what is said is still acceptable to everyone present (Coates, 1996, p.265; Mills, 1995, p.22). It would therefore be correct to say that women use questions more at interactional level than at informational level, because they are facilitators. Consequently, they use questions, as questions are much less threatening than making an assertion.

Maltz & Borker (1982) states that women and men observe different rules in conversing. Men view "questions" as request for information while women view questions as a part of conversational maintenance. Furthermore, women view a kind of aggressive linguistic behaviour as personally directed, negative and disruptive while men consider such behaviour as a way of organizing a conversation. For any problem-sharing and advice-giving, women tend to discuss, share and seek reassurance while men tend to look for solution, give advice and even lecture to their audiences. All these characteristics in men and women's speech may have in one way or another affect their politeness to a certain extent in their conversation.

Apologies

Analyzing gender differences in the use of the apology forms during telephone

interviews, Mattson Bean and Johnstone's (1994) reported that men apologized more than women during telephone interviews. Whereas no significant gender differences were confirmed by other empirical studies in the use of this speech act in different languages, and thus it seems that as Schumann (2011, p. 2) puts it, "despite widespread acceptance of the stereotype that women apologize more than men do, there is little compelling evidence of a gender difference in apology behavior."

Holmes (1989), for instance, reported that women apologized most to hearers of equal power while men apologized to women regardless of status, and women apologized most to female friends whereas men apologized most to female strangers. Yet, other research on the use of apologies yielded different results. A study conducted by Mills in 1995 in New Zealand with regards to how often, and how differently women and men apologize did not indicate significant discrepancies in the distribution of apologies used by women and men. This led Mills to explore other social features of apology behaviour between women and men. Looking at apology strategies, which are explicit exclusion of apology; explanation or account; and acknowledgement or responsibility; she found that women used strategies of expressing lack of negative intent and recognizing the others' right to an apology. On the other hand, men tend to use strategies, which focus on the relative status with the other, blaming and expressing self-deficiency.

Further, women and men were found to differ in the kinds of differences for which the apologies are meant. Women particularly apologize for intrusions relating to a person's personal space and infringements of the talking rights of others. Men were more concerned about the inconveniences, which cost another person time or money, and faults that cause damage to another's possessions. The study (Mills, 1995) goes on to reveal that women may interpret situations differently from men; the 'same' behaviour may evoke an apology from a woman but not from a man. Thus, men often apologize for heavily weighted offences, while women tend to

apologize for less serious faults. Mills (1995) suggests this may be why women apologize more frequently than men. However, despite widespread acceptance of the stereotype that women apologize more than men do, there is little compelling evidence of a gender difference in apology behaviour.

However, other researchers (e.g., Cameron, 1995, 1996) have questioned the assertions about gender differences in apologies, arguing that viewing men and women in a dichotomized way not only ignores the diversity of speech within groups of women and groups of men but also ignores cultural differences and those that may result from other social variables such as class, age, and ethnicity and thus, as Freed (1995, p. 55) declares, it serves to perpetuate stereotypes about male and female discourse. Also, it has been argued that variation in the realization patterns of apologies might be subject to the effect of a variety of social factors, among which power and social distance, as well as their subsets like age and gender have been argued to be the most important ones (Blum-Kulka, House, & Kasper, 1989).

Interruptions

According to Zimmerman and West (1975), interruptions are violations of the turn-taking rules of conversation where interrupters prevent the speaker from completing his or her turn, at the same time gaining a turn for themselves. Many linguists, such as Coates (1989) explain that some people may use many simultaneous speech or interruption frequently to show their interest, enthusiasm, and high-involvement and to show that they are active listeners, enjoying a topic or trying to seek a joint solution to a problem. These interruptions are cooperative, supportive rather than disruptive and competitive (James & Clarke, 1993).

It was argued that disparities exist in the turn-taking behavior between male and female speakers. Female speakers, especially in all female conversations, often break the rule of one person at a time. Many of them speak at the same time. Coates (2004, p. 131) explains that this collaborative mode of organizing talk is first identified as collaborative floor and called as

conversational jam session. In this mode, all participants take the conversational floor simultaneously, but the different voices work with each other, not against each other, to construct meaning. Although this way of talking is available to all speakers, Edelsky finds that women are more inclined to use it than men in mixed-sex conversations (Coates, 2004, p.131).

Coates (2004, p. 136) claims that women often adopt the jam session model while men prefer a one-at-a time model of turn-taking, so overlapping talking is rare in all-male talk. Even if men are in a more gladiatorial style of talk, they will also pursue a well-timed exchange of speaker turns. Coates (2004, p. 137) indicates that men do not like others to join in when they have not finished their speaking. They will think of others' words as intruding on their right on a solo floor even if the others' words are collaborative comments and support for their speeches. With the variation of situation and topic, some things will be changed. Women may obey the rule of one-at-a-time model when they have high social status and are in a very formal conversation. Men may enjoy overlapping each other when they are jointly discussing a topic and become noticeably excited. Thus, differences in turn-taking between males and females do exist.

Research shows that men tend to interrupt more than women (Coates, 1987). Furthermore, men tend to interrupt even where a woman has a high status (Holmes, 1995, p.52). It has also been argued by some scholars that uninterrupted conversations signify liking, affiliation and sensitivity to the interactive needs of others. In this context, James & Clerke (1993) declared that

Any interruption made by women were to seek cooperation and for rapport-building. They also observed that women asked more questions than men, encourage others to speak, using fillers (mhmm) indicating that they are listening and they do not protest as much as men whenever being interrupted. On the other hand, men often interrupt, challenge, dispute and ignore more, dominate the conversation, may use fillers (mhmm) to indicate 'agreeing', decide the topic and are inclined to make categorical statement.

Sex differences in language also may be explained by the relationship between the speakers and their power positions. For example, a cluster of findings about who interrupts whom in conversations suggests that differences of power and status are more salient than those of gender alone. The person with the least power in the relationship worked harder at keeping the conversation going, and this was not always the woman.

Zimmerman & West's research (1975) indicated that there are definite and patterned ways in which the power and dominance held by men in other contexts are exercised in their conversational interaction with women. They analyzed turn taking and silences in mixed-sex conversations and concluded that men are more likely to interrupt women than vice-versa. This pattern between males and females is seen as similar to that of adult-child interactions where the child has restricted rights to speak and to be listened to. Thus they conclude:

. . .at least in our transcripts, men deny equal status to women as conversational partners with respect to rights to the full utilization of their turns and support of the development of topics. Thus, we speculate that just as male dominance is exhibited through male control of macro-institutions in society, it is also exhibited through control of at least a part of one micro-institution. (Zimmerman & West, 1975, p. 125)

Feedback in Conversation

Feedbacks are produced when the current listeners give simultaneous expressions during the current speakers' utterance to demonstrate their activeness and attentiveness to the current speakers. There are verbal and non-verbal feedbacks, such as head-nod, smile, eye-glance and laugh. Orestrom (1983) argues that feedbacks have a positive effect and show support to the current speaker to achieve consensus between the conversational participants. Pilkington (1998) has concluded that women are inclined to give more positive feedback while men provide fewer verbal feedback (Coates, 2004, p. 138). Both minimal responses and back-channels belong to feedback. Some linguists, including Coates, regard them as the same thing, while others, such as

Orestrom (1983), minimal response seems to be just a part of backchannels.

Minimal responses are defined as forms such as mhm, yeah, right, which are scattered through the current speaker's ongoing utterance. The conversational partner can interpose such comments between breaths-rarely overlap the current speaker's utterance. Even if any short pause is caused, the current speaker can continue his or her turn after enclosure of yeah or um. According to Zimmerman & West (1975, p. 108), Fishman (1973) believes that such items may not interrupt the current speaker, instead they regard these minimal responses as a kind of positive reinforcement and support for continuing talk and hold the idea that the provider of such response must do an active work and he or she can display continuing interest and coparticipation in topic development. However, there is an exception, which Zimmerman and West (1975, p. 124) highlight when stating that sometimes the retarded minimal responses are undeniably signals of non-support to the continued development of a topic by one speaker over a series of turns, and they will serve, at a minimum, to bring the topic to a close.

Coates argues that the research on the use of minimal responses shows unanimously that women use them more than men and mentions that Holmes (1995) even wonders if minimal responses are "a female specialty" (Coates, 2004, p. 87). In one of her studies, she finds that women are skillful and sensitive in using the minimal response – they neither overlap nor interrupt the current speaker's utterance, which is agreed by Fishman (1980b). According to Coates (2004, p. 87), men also use delayed minimal responses which are regarded as a tactic to undermine the current speaker and reinforce male dominance.

According to Orestrom (1983), backchannels are emitted by the listener as feedback signals. They vary considerably in length, from short vocalizations like mm, yeah (which are also called minimal responses) to very long expressions, such as I think you are right. Backchannels, as a signal of feedback, are preferred by women, but some types of backchannels, such as mhm and yeah, are used by men much more than women. People give backchannels with

three tones-falling tone, level tone and rising tone. The finding in Stenstrom's (1994) study is that the falling tone is the most common one, followed by the level tone. She also finds that men use level tone three times more than women. Stenstrom (1994, p. 81) argues that backchannels can reflect empathy, enthusiasm and indignation. Moreover, she makes a further argument that they can also reflect a lack of interest, indifference and impatience sometimes.

When men and women listen, they use different behaviors and may listen for different things. Men tend to listen for the bottom line, for some action to be taken or decision to be made; women tend to listen for details to fill in the full picture. Men use less eye contact and head nods; women ask more questions and tend to work at maintaining the conversation Stenstrom (1994).

Conversational Work

It is claimed that women tend to do a greater amount of "conversational work" than men. They nurture conversation to keep it going by responding according to the rules of polite interaction, whereas men dominate the conversation and violate the rules of turn-taking (Fishman 1978; Watts 1992). According to Smith-Lovin and Robinson (1992), women encourage communication and disclosure and thus use talk to form and enhance relationships to a greater degree than men. Among married couples, women take responsibility for maintaining intimate relationships; they do the emotion work in an attempt to change their partners' emotional behavior when the latter fail to express their intimate feelings (Cancian & Gordon 1988; Duncombe & Marsden 1994).

James & Drakish (1993) approve that men speak more than women in conversation involving both sexes, and when men talk to men they mostly focused on competitive matters and teasing, sports, aggression and doing things. Women, on the other hand, when talking to the same sex, the contents of discussion encompass the self, feelings, affiliation with others, home and family. Peculiarly when the two sexes interact, men tend to take the initiative in conversation but there seem to be the inclination to attain some kind of cooperation on the part of men to

adapt to the topics discussed. In this case, men speak less aggressively and competitively and women reduce their amount of talk about home and family.

Among other researchers, Janet Holmes believes that most women like to talk more and they regard talking as an important means of keeping in touch, particularly with their friends. The purposes of language to them are to establish, nurture personal relationship. Men, however, incline to see language more as a means for obtaining and conveying information. Holmes further suggests that women are more likely to use positive politeness than men as she asserts that “women’s utterances show evidence of concern for feelings of the people they are talking to more often and more explicitly than men’s do...” (Holmes, 1995)

Talkativeness as a trait is conventionally conceived more feminine than masculine (Crawford, 1995; Helgeson, 2015). There is some evidence women are more verbally aggressive than men, particularly in their use of indirect aggression via tactics such as gossip (Hess & Hagen, 2006; McAndrew et al., 2007). For instance, women spend more time gossiping than men and are much more likely than men to gossip about close friends and family members (Levin & Arluke, 1985). Among friends, women tend to gossip more about physical appearance, whereas men gossip more about achievement (Watson, 2012). However, Tannen (1990) claimed that who talks more, women or men, depends on whether one examines talking in private or public. Opposite to the prejudice that women talk more than men, empirical studies of a number of social situations such as committee meetings and internet discussion groups have shown the opposite to be true. Women may talk more in private and informal occasions than men, but they surely play the second role in the public and formal occasions and tend to speak less than men.

Topics of Talk

Topics of talk is another area in which gender differences in language has been found. In 1922, Moore reported that women generally spoke with women about men, clothes, buildings, and interior decoration, whereas men generally talked with men about money, business, and

leisure time activity. Later, Bischooping (1993), came to strikingly the same findings, although with less discernable discrepancies. Thus, the findings are relatively coherent regarding conversational topics but not about whether men and women use language differently.

John Gray (1992) in his book 'men are from Mars, women are from Venus', he referred to the difficulties males and females often experience in communicating with each other.

Among these differences he identifies the following:

- Men prefer to brood and stew over problems and daily experiences in private ('retreating to their caves'), whereas women like to talk about them.
- Women like to talk about problems, often in detail, because they seek empathy and because it helps to talk them through, whereas men may simply try to offer solutions (the 'Mr. Fix-It' syndrome).
- Women offer advice and constructive criticism ('The Office Improvement Committee') as an act of love, whereas men may feel that women are trying to change them.
- Women approach problems in an involved, intuitive fashion, whereas men tend to be more detached and less intuitive.

These differences, he suggests, often cause communication breakdown, leading to conflict and misunderstanding:

- When women talk about their problems, men lose points by interrupting and giving instant solutions. Women perceive this as a message that her male colleague does not care. The Office Improvement Committee refers to women's tendencies to improve things, look around and make suggestions. This eagerness to please often turns men off. For example, if a woman says 'you should clean up this office,' her intention may be to help, but what the man hears is criticism . . .
- Women value caring, cooperation, collaboration, consensus, consideration and communication. Men value the bottom line, efficiency, effectiveness, accomplishment, achievement, independence and autonomy . . .

In social interaction, men and women have different interests in choosing their topics. When men are talking, they are more likely to choose the topics of politics, economy, stocks, sports, current news. While women have more interest in talking family affairs, such as the education of children, clothes, cooking, fashion, etc. Therefore, women's talk is associated with the home and domestic activities, while men's is associated with the outside world and economic

activities.

In the field of language and communication as in other disciplines, critics indicate that there has been an inclination to highlight findings of difference between the sexes more than findings of no difference. A number of researchers who have hypothesized differences have not found them (Kramer, 1974; Hirschman, 1974), and Kramer et al. (1978) claim that such research is less often reported and circulated than the studies which identify differences. This may happen because researchers tend "to presume and over-report differences rather than similarities between the sexes because our culture is infused with stereotypes which polarize females and males." As a matter of fact, it has been suggested that many stereotypes about personality traits and behavioral characteristics of men and of women may be related to beliefs that the sexes speak in different ways; these beliefs also tend to be reinforced by the popular media (Kramer et al., 1978). Empirical studies of actual speech have found relatively few expected sex differences, but in some instances findings have indicated a reverse of the stereotype.

Sex differences in language also may be explained by the relationship between the speakers and their power positions. For example, a cluster of findings about who interrupts whom in conversations suggests that differences of power and status are more salient than those of gender alone. Using Fishman's study (1982) of male/female couples' communication patterns in ongoing conversation as a model, Kollock, Blumstein, and Schwartz (1985) found that differences such as women's use of tag questions and males' interruption patterns did not hold for couples when traditional power relations were reversed. The person with the least power in the relationship worked harder at keeping the conversation going, and this was not always the woman.

Academic research and popular literature in gender differences across communication styles has come to the conclusion that while women are communal and relationship-oriented in their communication style they tend to have more expressive, tentative, cooperative, and polite

communication characteristics, men are more goal and task-oriented and they use more aggressive, assertive, direct, and powerful communication traits as a means towards tangible outcomes, such as obtaining power or dominance (Basow & Rubenfield, 2003; Maltz & Borker, 1982; Wood, 1996; Mason, 1994; Gray, 1992).

Nevertheless, the research findings do not indicate a consistent pattern in the effects of gender on spoken language. For instance, regarding gender differences in the amount of talk, James and Drakich's (1993) critical review concluded that whereas some studies found that in some circumstances women talk more than men, other studies revealed no gender differences. In the case of interrupting conversations, James and Clarke (1993) deduced that the majority of the research found no significant gender differences. A review by Aries (1996) refutes the claim that women use more tag questions and qualifiers than men, and Clark (1997) did not find considerable gender differences in the expression of feelings. Accordingly, research accentuated that description for gender differences in language and specially the relationship between speech partners should be assessed within the context of the conversation and the failure to do so may explain inconsistent findings.

Activities

- a- What is gender? Can it be altered or changed? How?
- b- Discuss the idea that gender is something you do rather than something you have.
- c- What are the sources of our ideas about what it means to be male and female, masculine and feminine?
- d- How do personality, gender, & culture impact the self-concept?
- e- To what extent your speech style reflects what is typical for your gender?
- f- Do the primary games you played in your childhood match those suggested by the authors for persons of your sex?
- g- To what extent do your childhood socialization experiences explain your current speech style?

- h- Feminine speech patterns, such as tag questions and back channeling, may be more useful than brief and direct masculine speech for people in positions of authority.
 - i- List a few of the subtle ways teachers reinforce binaries and unequal differences.
 - j- What do we now know about gendered gaps in education?
 - k- Explain how gender-role stereotypes are affected by age and ethnic group. Identify specific gender-role attributes that seem to be affected by these variables.
 - l- Both men and women hold gender-role stereotypes for both genders not just the opposite gender. Are the stereotypes you hold for your gender more or less dangerous than the ones you may hold for the other sex. Explain and justify your stance.
 - m- Some researchers have suggested a psychological model of sex differences that attempts to reconcile biological perspectives with more social-psychological approaches to the explanation of sex differences. Explain the psycho-biosocial model. Reflect on how different influences are interrelated.
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- a- Men talk more than women.
 - b- Men are more likely to interrupt women than to interrupt other men.
 - c- During conversations, women spend more time looking at their partner than men do.
 - d- Nonverbal messages carry more weight than verbal messages.
 - e- Female managers communicate with more emotional openness and drama than male managers.
 - f- Men not only control the content of conversations, they also work harder in keeping conversations going.
 - g- When people hear generic words, such as "mankind" and "he," they respond inclusively, indicating that the terms apply to both sexes.
 - h- In classroom communications, male students receive more reprimands and criticism.
 - i- Women are more likely than men to disclose information about intimate personal concerns. 10.
Female speakers are more animated in their style than are males.
 - j- Women use less personal space than men.

k- When a male speaks, he is listened to more carefully than a female speaker, even when she makes the identical presentation.

l- In general, women speak in a more tentative style than do men.

m- Women are more likely to answer questions that are not addressed to them.

n- There is widespread gender segregation in schools, and it hinders effective classroom communication.

o- Female managers are seen by both male and female subordinates as better communicators than male managers.

p- In classroom communications, teachers are more likely to give verbal praise to female than to male students.

q- In general, men smile more often than women.

(From Myra Sadker and Joyce Kaser, The Communications Gender Gap, Mid-Atlantic Center for Sex Equity, 5010 Wisconsin Avenue, N.W., Suite 308, Washington, D.C. 20016, 1984.)

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Chapter 3: Gender in the media

Lalla Meriem Ouahidi & Hamid Masfour

“Manufacturing consent” to dominant ideologies and manipulating public opinion for maintaining the interests of the power elite have been perhaps the main aims of media as mass communication (Herman & Chomsky, 1988). Reinforcing this end through an intricate process of orienting perceptions towards different issues (politics, economy, sports, fashion women and men’s relationships), media invents people’s worldviews and takes part in the shaping of their behaviour of which gender and gender roles constitute a salient part within specific culture-bound expectations on how women and men should behave. In this regard, the verbal and non-verbal communication in which people engage as interpersonal processes, not only maintain values, but also establish one’s gender identity. As a salient sphere of a multivalent, multilayered and multidirectional type of communication, media influences the construction of gender and gender roles more than any other channel of communication, since media are more efficient in eliciting performance of definite gender roles.

Likewise, on a worldwide level, gender roles are represented in favour of highlighting man as the norm and woman as a performative subordinate involved in performing the script of values offered by a patriarchal paradigm wherein man is held superior, and, therefore, the predicate of any social enterprise, while women dwell as a functional means towards patriarchal goals (Carter & Steiner, 2004). This is to convey that these media representations have political implications since they bear power-related statements, either reinforcing the gender relations status quo as it is lived in real society, or by legitimating new forms of gender hierarchy (Ryan & Kellner, 1990)

Objectives

Claiming no exhaustiveness, the objectives of this chapter are only tentative in view of the space given and the complexity of gender in the media. Among other things that may be

targeted in an ulterior investigation, this study aims:

- (1) To enable students develop informed awareness about how media takes part in constructing patterns of gender and gender stereotypes in different societies.
- (2) To enable students grasp (a) how and (b) why media produce patriarchal-oriented values and impose them as dominant (natural) meanings.
- (3) To track and deconstruct the cluster of gender representations and stereotypes disseminated by Moroccan media.
- (4) To demystify (a) how and (b) why Moroccan media gender discourse distributes unequal power positions.
- (5) To develop students' critical awareness for identifying different discursive strategies premising the gender discourse of media such as:
 - naturalization of media producers' meaning
 - Strategies of selection (exclusion and inclusion, backgrounding and foregrounding/Mediation, etc.)
 - Persuasive strategies operating through concealing implied ideological messages through a manifest discourse
 - Reinvention and perpetuation of patriarchal gender discourse
 - Construction of discursive coherence and concealing contradictions
- (6) To enhance students to deal with research in the field of gender representation in the media

Interrogative scope

With globalization, international broadcasting and worldwide web connection, media texts are getting more and more multidirectional and invasive, bringing foreign gender values and naturalizing them beyond the boundaries of the media text and the audiences' home culture. However, for the sake of convenience, most of this chapter will explore the issues of gender in media within Moroccan context, believing that gender representations still have specific inflections in the media depending on the culture of both media text producers and the target audiences. For this purpose, and regarding the space allowed for this chapter, we suggest to

interact with the following questions which in no way constitute an exhaustive interrogative repertory: What is the difference between sex and gender? What is representation and gender representation? How are gender representations enacted in the media? How are men and women represented in Moroccan media in the private and public spheres of the family and society? How are masculinity and femininity represented? What script of representations is encoded by Moroccan Media to construct, circulate and impose stereotyped “ideal” images of woman and man? What are the reforms and media policies taken to remedy these dysfunctional gender representations? What are the media-related levels to be addressed for gender-promoting recommendations?

Method

Noteworthy, methodologically speaking, as we conceive of gender representations to be mere constructs emanating from unnatural gender norms, this chapter is deeply informed by a constructionist approach. In a few notes, constructivism stands on the perception of the world, the self and the other as being socially and culturally constructed. According to Stuart Hall with “the conceptual systems of their culture and the linguistic and other representational systems to construct meaning”, the social subjects create and prescribe the range of meanings to back up a culture-related understanding of the world (Hall 1997, p. 25). In this sense, the way human experience is signified is not based on natural meaning and final truths, but rather on constructed values liable to change in shifting contexts (Bryman, 2008, pp. 19-20). By extrapolation, men and women are informed by socio-cultural constructs rather than by immutable truths concerning their hierarchical relationships and gender roles. In this way, the construction of gender involves a relative cultural representation more than an irreversible absolute certainty about the binary perception of gender, mainly operating through language which is “‘the shared cultural –space’ in which the production of meaning through language - that is, representation – takes place” (Hall 1997, p. 10). However, why should we adhere to the

constructivist approach? Mainly because media does not disseminate truth messages but rather representations, constructs, gender imaginaries and myths (Baudrillard, 1983; Anderson, 1983; Barthes, 1972; Wolf, 2002).

1. Sex, Gender and Representation

Nowadays people are overwhelmed by media messages about gender, propagating stereotypes and normative values about men and women. Before embarking on investigating media gender representation, it would be convenient to explore the differences between sex and gender, on the one hand; and to shed light on the concept of representation. This section provides a simplified investigation of the general trends in the representation of men and women, focusing on different Moroccan media texts.

1.1. Difference between gender and sex

Famously stated the French Feminist Simone de Beauvoir in *The Second Sex*, “One is not born a woman, one becomes one,” (Beauvoir, 2009, p.22). Meaning, while sex is natural, gender is a social construct. That is, a person is born female, which is biological; but learns how to behave as a woman by living within a particular society, which refers to gender as emanating from culture. At the heart of interest in the concept of gender are the unequal power relationships privileging men over women in patriarchal societies, or rather in almost all human societies. In this regard, Simone De Beauvoire argues that women’s social subordination and their pale presence stem from the patriarchal dominant norms excluding minorities. This patriarchal privileging of men’s domination is predicated on a dichotomy which assigns men positive qualities and women negative ones. Patriarchy naturalizes these characteristics to make them perceived as being innate natural features of women.

Hence, criticizing the naturalization of gender, feminists aim to dismantle it and show how it is produced. They argue that gender is constructed through several channels, such as society, politics, family, language and media. Given the ubiquity of media, and the big role it

plays in forming opinions and identities, researchers have studied and analyzed all types of media products to find out how they represent, misrepresent and shape our views of gender.

2. Representation

Representation in media refers to how media texts portray and depict ideas, issues, events, groups, individuals, etc. to an audience. In other words, representations refer to words, expressions, images, sounds, stories, sequences etc. that stand for ideas, emotions, values, etc. They make use of culturally existing signs to convey meaning (s), based on the reciprocal relationship between the different signifying systems. Media texts do not present the world as it is; they only represent it. Worthy to mention, representations are mediated since they undergo a process of selection (certain signs are given prominence and other are ignored/ marginalized) and organization. No matter how realistic they seem, media texts are just representations of reality. Therefore, the audience should not view media representations as a reflection of reality; they are, in fact, created to be read as a new reality that serves the aims of the media makers. In other words, media texts are manipulated (mediated) to shape the audience opinion about certain issues, values and ideas.

No doubt, media influences how we view the world around us, including our identities as males or females. (Gauntlett, 2008, pp. 1-3) There are different male and female role models offered to us on a daily basis. These role models may seem distinct and varied; however, there is a limited range of roles reinforced by stereotypes repeated again and again. Does this mean that media manipulate few role models that are likely to impede individual growth? Numerous studies have investigated how media represent gender and found out that The portrayal of men and women in media reflect an asymmetrical relationship where women are often portrayed in negative/ demeaning ways whereas man are depicted in more assertive roles.

Since culture and representation are two sides of the same coin, people may have different views about what is 'positive' and 'negative'. In fact, people have different readings of

cultural representations; therefore, what is negative for one may be acceptable for another. That is why any analysis should be cautious to avoid value judgments that speak on behalf of a specific group or ideology.

For operational purposes, it would be useful to survey a number of concepts to which representation is tightly related:

- Representations are associated to ideologies. They portray the world from an ideological perspective. Thus, all media representations have ideologies behind them.
- Stereotypes as ready forms of representation which enable the audience to decode the media message. They are used repeatedly to naturalize the messages meanings.
- Media texts are constructed to appeal a specific target audience. The codes (the selection of the appropriate elements from symbolic, technical and linguistic codes) are manipulated by the media makers to construct meaningful representations. These constructed texts may be linguistic and / or audio-visual. For example, in a magazine, this includes the layout of the page, among other elements.

How do representations work?

Representations operate in the following ways:

- 1- Same representations are repeated again and again in different media texts till they become the norm that people are expected to follow/ abide by.
- 2- Media representations create different categories of people, ideas and or events. They make generalizations about these categories till they become part and parcel of our thinking processes.
- 3- All media representations are constructed around a specific point of view that reflects the ideology behind them.
- 4- Representations have modes of address that brings out some hidden assumptions about who we are and how we should be.

Who? What? Why? Where?

To address the issue of media representations, the following questions should be tackled thoroughly: What is represented? And why? What information or message the media makers intend to convey; how (i.e. the protagonists, the setting, the colors, the language, the music, etc.) and why (for what purpose). Who is the target audience? What is the purpose behind this representation? Who is responsible for the representation? The reader should take into consideration the media makers and the institutions responsible for producing the media text. S/he should determine the agenda of the media makers, the target audience, the genre of the text, the commercial aspect and artistic devices. Likewise, the media receiver should be aware of the codes used, the preferred reading sought, the setting and the protagonists.

3. Misrepresentation of gender in the familial sphere

The aim of this section is to demonstrate how Moroccan media represents parents' roles in the family. Investigating this issue, we focus on: (1) how the mother and the father's roles are unequally assessed in different media texts through space division inside and outside the household (2) how media minimizes women's role in sustaining the household's economic needs (3) and how women are viewed regarding their role in the process of culture circulation.

3.1. Wives and Mothers Associated with Domestic space:

Impeding the achievement of gender equality is the fact that women disproportionately bear the burden of maintaining and nurturing the marital relationship (Coltrane, 1996). Strikingly, in the Moroccan context, a man's success or failure is seen to be utterly related to the wife, as it is the case in such a Moroccan proverb "A husband succeeds thanks to his wife, and fails due to his wife". This shows how a Moroccan woman in the media is more obliged and blameworthy than man concerning the fulfillment of the family prosperity. Due to this social gender perception, women are culturally coded in media representation to meet the expectations of the audience as a family caretaker who vicariously gives up herself and her personal

achievement and aspirations to the wellbeing of her children and the success of her husband.

Likewise, the domestic sphere is portrayed in Moroccan media as the optimal space for women. Although they may be seen holding jobs and positions outside their homes, they are represented to devote considerable time, psychological and physical efforts for ensuring a balanced domestic familial atmosphere. In this regard, the advertising discourse insists on reducing the place of woman to two dominant roles: the housewife and the mother.

As a housewife, through commercial broadcasts, especially, those produced by Moroccan Ads producers for Moroccan audience, housekeeping and housework seem to be the preserve of women. The image of woman is intimately related to the brand of certain products, foods or condiments: Magdor (butter), Tide, OMO, Ariel (washing powders), Aicha, (Jam) knorr (condiment). In this role, women are generally portrayed as being naive, ignorant, incapable to detect the product or unable to remove the stains. The man (the husband, the father, the son the brother, the neighbor, the parent ...) comes to her rescue as it is the case with *Messieur propre*. He always has the miracle solution, proposes or imposes his knowledge. Acting as a saviour, this wise man is intelligent, counselor, donor of lessons and infallible fountain of reason.

Likewise, the spots that make the role of women predominate as mothers are often confined to the linear relation "mother-baby": Johnson shampoo, Bebe Cadum ...). This mother is young, beautiful and modern. Man is generally excluded from the process of raising children. In addition, the woman-object is portrayed to strive for realizing herself depending on satisfying the perception of man, especially in advertisement spots related to beauty products such as beauty creams, deodorant, etc. The result of her efforts is often measured by the yardstick of man's admiring and languishing gaze.² Moreover, it is the woman who seduces the man and seeks his gaze to last further.

In private domestic spaces (house, kitchen) women's traditional dress is predominant to

² According to film theorist Laura Mulvey, the male gaze consists of the male perspective representing women as passive sexual objects (Sassatelli, 2011).

connote the harem atmosphere, and to depict them as taking care of the hygiene of the house, rubbing, polishing, receiving the guests, eating, talking, going about supervision of school homework, talkative on the terraces. Outside her home, she indulges in the frenzy of shopping, she walks, or walks the children. Similarly, urban women are more visible than rural women, which reinforces the intra-gender elitism of the media at the expense of villagers, and the lack of respect for the principle of diversity and pluralism reflected by the exclusionary choice of spaces and protagonists.

In short, in different genres³ media draws for man and woman two distinct worlds: he is the boss, the businessman, the doctor, the farmer. She is the housewife, the secretary, the hostess. Her role is to serve man first. To construct and circulate this gender representation, media adopts stereotyping through space division which is a process operating through binary role reduction, generalization and hierarchization.

3.2.Economic Contribution to the Household

Considering the space associations of gender in media, it appears that women are more presented in a domestic space (house, living room, cooking, market ...) than in professional places (office, dental office, construction site...). Conveying home as the ideal and perfect situation for women and society, media attempts to address the audience to persuade them of role division, associating economy and outside work with men and disregarding possible leisure and professional places for women.

Why do advertisers hesitate to represent women in professional spaces, despite their omnipresence and integration of more spheres that were hermetic and hostile to them? Moreover, physically or by his voiceover, man is omnipresent in the commercials of which woman is the subject or the main actress. In an overwhelming majority, he is the holder of solutions, he has the

³ Genre involves the categorization of media texts on the basis of their common characteristics. It also refers to a set of rules embedded in the media text to orient the audiences decoding, since genres demarcate appropriate thought, feeling and behaviour and provide frames, codes and signs for constructing a shared social reality' (Ryan & Kellner,1988, P.77)

advantage of knowledge and expertise that are portrayed in ads to be lacking in women. He is the savior of the inextricable situations which a woman is facing. Contrastively, when the voiceover is feminine, it symbolizes seduction and sensuality. The man plays a central role in the commercial: while he acts as the savior, the woman occupies a marginal and secondary role of the assisted subject. These unequal power relations between man and woman are surprisingly supported by advertisement creative people who are reluctant to recognize the new roles of women in society, or pretend to ignore them. In terms of media strategies, these unequal representations are, supported by a process of selection based itself on foregrounding and backgrounding. While foregrounding is a discursive strategy that brings into prominence messages privileging men, backgrounding is a selective discursive tactic that eclipses the strengths of women and the weaknesses of men to construct an underprivileged image of women.

Telecom operators stand out in these encoding strategies through billboards showing respect and consideration to women as enterprising leaders, which is not relevant to the company's real gender strategy. In TV spots, Telecom keep the woman in the status of a woman-object, foregrounding her as a woman-auxiliary of man. This poses the question of the Moroccans' relation to the advertised images in terms of interpreting media messages related to gender equality. However, in Maroc Télécom's offer, "Business Class Package", the ad features a woman with sober clothes, her hair strictly tucked towards the back, she is comfortable and smiling in view of the effort and the excessively heavy weight of the laptop that she embraces with ease. The body of the woman apparently shows in a posture backgrounding the traditional sex symbolism; she is unusually foregrounded as being active, laborious and in her element, contrary to the regularly advertised woman as being a sex object. In technical media criticism, the message in this ad is encoded through an "oppositional code" since it diverges from the usual stereotypical sex-object representation of women dominant in the discourse of advertisement. This is meant only as a persuasive technique pretending to offer the audience a countercultural

and anti-establishment representation to conceal the real gender representations adopted by the mainstream marketers.⁴ However, women are excluded in various professions, for some billboards either efface them or background them in favour of men. In some cases, for the same product, ads are produced showing women in one version as sex symbols, and displaying males as discerning serene men.

The image of women in Moroccan advertisement can be identified to embody a set of recognizable characteristics excluding them from the role of professional competence and economic contribution to the family. In biased media portrayal, the woman's body fuses into the commodity in such a way that both overlap in the perception of the audience so that the feminine body becomes interchangeable with the commodity advertised. Also, women are depicted as narcissistic and obsessed about their beauty which results in demeaning stereotyping representations of women as psychologically imbalanced objects of pleasure incapable of shouldering family responsibility. Similarly, advertisement excludes many professional female profiles, like female architects, female lawyers, female doctors etc... Importantly, woman's self-esteem is shown in ads to be realized only through her achievements in cooking, housekeeping and beauty following the one-way model of physiological beauty, and viewing knowledge, creativity as null and void values! Adding to that, ads support a stereotyped male / female opposition wherein the wise and expert man, holds knowledge through the voiceover. This is intended to obey the dominant code for constructing masculinist representations favouring man as the source of the family providence.

3.3. Women's role in the production and circulation of culture

Although women take part in producing and circulating culture, media texts silence their agency and their potential for creating cohesive social values. This is again another level on which media constructs a hierarchy privileging men to induce the representation that the familial

⁴ This media technique is also called "reverse Jamming" (Lievrouw ,2011)

sphere's moral and cultural bonds are the father's prerogative. What is more, women are represented in media to spread negative cultural effects from her family to the social surrounding.

The stereotyped image of women is at the heart of a dysfunctional media representation utilized for creating fiction and entertainment programs at the expense of Moroccan women's real role within her culture and society. As a case in point the sitcom "Moul taxi" (taximan) illustrates the mediocrity of most of Ramadan drama, some of which are strongly prejudiced to the representation of women's cultural role, among other things. In the third episode, the main message conveyed is that, educated or illiterate, Moroccan women are equal as far as superstition is concerned. This episode brings two women to the scene, the mother and her daughter. The mother takes her daughter to the "fqih"(charlatant) to chase the evil spirits opposing her access to employment. In their journey they accompany the taxi man who cannot help mocking the two women for their ignorance and superstition .At the end of the journey, the daughter's diploma and the taxi property documents inadvertently catch fire during the " fqih"'s ritual. The subtext meaning put across and constructed by the end of the episode is that all women are equal in holding superstitious beliefs. Although the owner of the taxi is materialistic, stingy, shrewd, grumpy and indulgent, the mother and her unemployed disturbed daughter are held in a more degrading portrait depicting them as ignorant witchcraft believers.

However, in some Moroccan media texts, it cannot be denied that women are sometimes conferred a positive role in the making of their culture, which makes their representation ambivalent. To illustrate, in the telefilm Aicha Douiba directed by the female director Fatéma Boubakdi, women are positively represented as intelligent and active in the shaping of culture. In this film, an old man reunites his three daughters, saddened as he was going to announce that it was their last meeting; he declares to have been appointed by the villagers for a mission for which he should be absent for a few days. The film is full of adventures, where the intelligence

and cunning of Sanaa Akroud, starring as Aicha Douiba, is highlighted.

Likewise in the series *Romana Ou Bartal* directed by the same female director in 2007, a positive representation of women is disseminated on the strong Moroccan feminine personality. Through the actress Sanaa Akroud, starring as the heroine and orphan Romana, the plot of different episodes are woven around her character capable of finding intelligent solutions to continuous obstacles encountering her. Not only does she sort out her troubles through her wit, but also through her learned quality of mind, her capacity to tell structured, suspense-filled and allegorical wise stories. As such, through Aicha Douiba, the Moroccan woman is also represented as an active agent in strengthening culture and up keeping the circulation of time-honored moral values through maintaining the tradition of orality illustrated in Aicha's art of folktale story telling.

Morocco is a country in transition, where a whole society seeks its marks between a rich and strong tradition, often operating as a heavy obstacle, and a desired modernity, often lived but hardly accepted in terms of gender equity. For this reason, media, and advertising in particular, must symbolize this new modern identity in a balanced way avoiding biased gender representations. The sexist distribution of social roles, which is largely consecrated by the effect of redundancy, is unique to advertising and heavily invested for in the media. One of the consequences associated to this representation is indisputably the trivialization of woman and the impregnation of the subconscious audience that reproduce biased gender models in the collective imaginary. This prescribes a uniform passive position for women to privilege man's place in the economic self-sufficiency of the household, and to construct the representation that the family as a social unit depends on man. In the long run, this disables the current societal dynamic of gender equity and frustrates it.

4. Media stereotypes of masculinity and femininity

In this second section, we explore the cultural constructs and stereotypes constructed or reinforced by Moroccan media for defining masculinity and femininity. This issue is investigated on two axes: (1) Analysis of the media representations adopting patriarchal values privileging men and representing women as being incapable of leadership in politics and business (2) Analysis of how media discourse invents, reinforces and imposes values to manipulate males and females' perception of femininity and masculinity as fixed, absolute universal representations .

4.1. Stereotypical representations of femininity

As most societies in both developed and developing countries have witnessed phenomenal changes in relation to women's roles, women, nowadays, are active members in society, holding influential positions. However, media representation of women still remains constant and uniform .Does this mean that societies are still male-dominated or that the status of women is secondary? In this regard, Helen Cixous (1975) poses a question: "Where is she?" which involves a list of binary oppositions: "activity/passivity, sun/moon, culture/nature, day/night, father/mother, head/heart, intelligible/palpable, logos/pathos" (Cixous, 1975, p. 578). These binary oppositions are connected to one another, so female, other, passivity, nature, heart, and pathos become connected and in opposition with male, self, activity, culture, head, logos. Moreover, the value of the right side of the binary relating to the male is assumed positive as compared to the female which is in the position of the subaltern.

In fact, Different research on the portrayal of gender in media put forward the view that there are significant differences between the representation of men and women. Women are usually depicted as housewives mainly concerned with cleaning, cooking and washing. Their basic concern is to take care of the husband and the children. These studies have found that women are misrepresented, and subject to unrealistic depictions which confirm their traditional,

obsolete social roles. They are often presented as the underprivileged side of the male-female dichotomy, whereby men and women are assigned positive and negative attributes, respectively.

To illustrate from Moroccan Media, In Elfarouj movie, the female characters (the wife and the mother) take the role of the helper of the husband (hero) (using propp's terms). In a very comic way, their role is limited solely to taking care of the husband/son and making him at ease. In a similar vein, even though *Femmes du Maroc* magazine is believed to be westernized, the issues it addresses are close to traditional Moroccan aspects, fashion and lifestyle. For example, it includes sections, devoted to beauty, fashion, sexual health, marriage, domestic violence, cooking, rape, etc. The issues it tackles monthly are mainly traditional and, therefore, it promotes the asymmetrical relationship between males and females although it excludes from its readership the majority of illiterate audience and financially dependent women.

Stereotyping and misrepresentation of women in media have been one of the central concerns of social researchers. An examination of the literature reveals that researchers have focused on certain categories of the stereotyping of women, their age, occupation, body and their position at home and within the family (Shrikhande, p. 9). Put differently, in most media texts, the subordination of women can be highlighted in relation to four main attributes: role, posture, size, and age. In all the ads in which a male and a female are depicted together as a family, the female is shorter and younger than the male. The age and the size of the woman are clear indicators of her subordination and inferiority. It seems that females are more likely to be displayed as younger as and shorter than their male partners.

Media texts postulate that women should cook, clean and take care of the house while men are working and making money. Media has failed to depict the positive changes within society where it is socially acceptable for men to stay at home. One of the strongest criticisms of the way women are represented in media texts is that they are shown in an extremely narrow range of roles: in traditional occupations as wives, mothers or secretaries. "They are mainly

associated with low status jobs (secretaries, nurses, housewives, etc.) and they are rarely depicted as leaders. Many studies have provided ample evidence for this criticism” (Cited in Shrinkhande, p. 4; Ferrante, Haynes, & Kingsley, pp.231-237). In addition, Gallagher (2014) found that women were misrepresented in the media cross-culturally.

In this regard, “Hay Albahja” is a Moroccan sitcom in which this kind of stereotypes is embraced. Gender representations in this series protrude in several roles and interests of both men and women. Starting with women, it appears from the outset that women in the sitcom are represented as housewives, doing the household or acting as a maid (Fatna). Furthermore, there is an exaggeration in this regard, when one of the female characters (Chama) is portrayed as being over-obsessed with cleaning and tidying the house. As for the public interests -outside the house-, women’s desire to be educated is shown, but the purpose is not to have a career but rather to satisfy the future husband (example of Qamar). Other interests are ascribed to women such as the longing to get married, fashion and tailoring (Izza) and refusing the idea of old age (“don’t call me Khalti (meaning aunt),” Qamar Said).

The gender roles which are attributed to men are also stressed in this sitcom. Men are represented as the breadwinners (Kacem and Haddou) who care about their family members and try to create the normal atmosphere of the nuclear family. In most of the scenes, men are seen to be coming from outside, which means that their life is more concerned with the public sphere whereas the house is just for rest, food and sleeping. Moreover, men are portrayed as the ones who control and command. When it is the other way around, the husband is not considered as a man but rather a bucket, as Haddou, his father –in- law, called him once. That is to say when the role of the “hen-pecked” husband was played; the character was referred to as not a complete man (Jawhara’s husband).

Moreover, Courtney and Whipple analyzed the depiction of women in television commercials and found considerable differences between them and men. Females were under-

represented in advertisements for cars and related products, and over-represented in cosmetics food and home related products advertisements. The majority of advertisements used women to sell home products. (Cited in Shrikhande, pp. 10-11). This finding can be generalized to include other types of media texts. Also, they are defined in relational terms. They ought to be young and conventionally beautiful and marked by passivity, indecisiveness, submissiveness and dependence. Fejes summarizes the rare research on the representation of men in the media and states that their portrayal can be characterized as the opposite of the portrayals of women (Cited in van zoonen, pp. 319-320).

The stereotypical representation of women is the rule, according to Milburn, Carney and Ramirez. Females are underrepresented, and portrayed in drastically different ways than males. Women are more likely to be depicted as young than old, and they are stereotyped not only on television but in other communication media as well (Cited in Shrikhande, p. 9). The representation of women in media matches social expectations, and roles and characters that do not conform to the mould are likely to be considered deviant and become subject to criticism and scorn. These representations, in fact, naturalize assumptions about women and their roles in society as subservient; they become common sense (they result in a common sense consensus). Thus, media have naturalizing effects since they inculcate the perception of women's position as subordinate, submissive and dependent.

In the same context, in her influential book *The Feminine Mystique* (1963), Betty Friedan argued that the empowerment of women cannot be achieved in the presence of the feminine mystique, the prevailing constructed belief that women's place is located in the private sphere under the control of their men. Instead of deconstructing the feminine mystique, Moroccan media do not only construct it but also reproduce and reinforce it via its distorted mirroring of women's roles and strengthening the masculinity-femininity dichotomy. Such ideological shaping is easily attained if we bear in mind that media are extremely influential sources of

social behavior that acts as socializing agents that influence our attitudes, values, beliefs, and behaviors.

Media makers orient individuals to their preferred reading including the consumption of the previous mentioned male and female characteristics. In media, especially in movies, sitcoms, advertisements, females are depicted as good sisters, housewives, child-bearers and caregivers; yet, men are depicted as breadwinners, gatekeepers, decision makers although there is a prompt change in society as demonstrated in the following excerpt:

The housewife heroines[in media] are forever young, because their own image ends in childbirth[...] they must remain young, while their children grow up with the world. They must keep on having babies, because the feminine mystique says there is no other way for a woman to be a heroine.(Friedan,p.39)

How is a woman's life represented in Nido advert in Moroccan T.V channels? This question tests knowledge and understanding of how representations are constructed within media products, alongside the construction of femininity. A woman's life, accordingly, is represented as:

- Domestic/ obedient: home abiding
- Heterosexual: engaged in a romantic relation with man.
- Materialistic
- Reactionary
- conservative
- Monogamous /loyal
- Conforming to her social values
- Fulfilling socially and emotionally
- defined by key events: marriage/ children

Wherever possible, for the sake of further grasp on how gender representation operates in media texts, combinations should be made between different elements to analyze media language (i.e. moving image analysis: use of camera, lighting, color, editing, mise-en-scene)

However, there are media texts that break the stereotypes in order to subvert and challenge these highly valued constructions. A concrete example reversing gender roles and breaking away from the traditional prevailing division of gender roles is Mio, TV commercial, about dish washing liquid. This TV ad represents a number of men doing the household. It is true that the objective of this advertisement is to persuade customers to buy this product, but what is important for this analysis are the cultural dimensions that are implicitly used in the TV ad. TV commercials play with audiovisual techniques to emphasize masculinity-femininity dichotomy which address the social and cultural needs of viewers. Mio ad seems to revolt against the social expectations concerning gender roles, creating a new view of the world. Such new way of gender representation carries a new ideological agenda supporting feminist demands concerning gender equality. The caption of the commercial goes as follows:

net3awnu 3la \$qa

Collaborate to do the housework



In few media texts, women are portrayed as self-confident and career oriented. The provided statistics (in the literature) are very revealing, for, though the numbers are too small to extrapolate and generalize from, it is clear that women are more likely to be portrayed as subordinate to men. Gender bias can be detrimental to individuals, for it depicts an inaccurate image of the progressive leaps that have occurred within society with regards to men fulfilling some of the traditional roles reserved exclusively for women. While in reality women, nowadays, participate in several professional activities, advertisements portray a skewed,

unrealistic picture. Therefore, they do not provide role models to young girls. Rather, they inculcate these girls with outdated stereotypes of what is appropriate behavior for a woman.

Women's exclusion and segregation are the result of the artificial idea of womanhood engendered by society which sees women as secondary objects acquiring attention only in relation to men. To clarify, culture and society create the broadly shared definition of women since they are associated with the private sphere, and social inferiority is justified by the traditional essentialist claim that the meaning of a woman is inherent in her body. This means that men's superiority and domination does not necessarily mean that women are incapable of holding responsibilities because of their sex but rather it denotes the historical patriarchal intentions of underestimation and otherness of women. Such meaning attributed to women made them, because of socialization, perceives themselves as caregivers and domesticity stakeholders.

4.2.The Male gaze and Embodiment:

The gaze, the act of being looked at, is highly significant in terms of gender representations and the power relations in society. The gazers are mainly the active males and the gazed at the passive females; these gaze-related power relations, treating women as physical bodies, inform gender representation in media texts.

It is difficult to discuss the portrayal of males and females in media texts without resorting to theorist Laura Mulvey's approach to film studies via psychoanalytic and feminist film theory. Mulvey (1975) claims that the female in media texts is dealt with as bodies satisfying male expectations. This constructed image of woman follows the "male gaze. The examples she provided examples from Hollywood movies. The concept of the male gaze falls into two types: the voyeuristic and the fetishistic. In the voyeuristic male gaze, women are treated as sex objects while the fetishistic male gaze treats women as creatures to be worshipped.

The Male Gaze theory involves three perspectives: the producer, the audience, and the male characters in the film. First, Mulvey claims that since most movies are produced by men,

the camera adopts a masculine voyeuristic point. Thus, female subjects are looked at through shots and close-ups that would linger on parts of their bodies such as curves or tight clothes. Thus, this dominating camera lens reduces women to sex objects for heterosexual male audience. Second, for the sake of making profits, Hollywood movies use scopophilia, meaning sexual pleasure derived from through viewing, and exposing women for gratifying the the male viewer's pleasure. Finally, women are also subject to the gaze of the male characters, which endows the male with dominance over the media-portrayed passive female and, hence, reinforces patriarchy:

Women stand in patriarchal culture as signifier for the male other, bound by symbolic order in which man can live out his phantasies and obsessions through linguistic command by imposing them on the silent image of women still tied to her place as bearer of meaning, not maker of meaning. (Mulvey, p.586)

Therefore, the female being is mainly defined in relation to the male's preferred meaning of the category of woman. Likewise, in many social magazines, one can notice a gendered representation enacted by a male gaze putting into action process of hyper sexualization of women. Ex: "a bimbo named Elisa"; "The scandalously delicious and-all redone- Elisa arrives at Morocco... ". Moreover, Some newspapers do not hesitate to set the woman's body on the cover. However, it is common that Arabic-language newspapers are more censored for photo publication of naked women than the French press. For the censor finds that it is intolerable to reach a large audience and, thus, proceeds for banning issues in Arabic. Furthermore, in Moroccan print media, the topics most addressed related to women, figuring in order of frequency, are significantly revealing about the dominance of a reductionist male gaze: sex; prostitution; morality; the Moudawana (family code); crime; religion / the veil; begging; arts and culture; theater; AIDS; suicide; justice; politics; economy.

Frequently, the newspapers make women a driving force for their business strategy

through commoditizing them. The press has managed to break many taboos in relation to love and sexuality, which made strong sales in Morocco. In different Moroccan printed media, such as Al-Ahdath and Assabah, sex is represented to constitute the center of male / female relationships, in such a way that stereotypical sexed images of women are hypertrophied by drawings and cartoons.

In a similar vein, in advertisement, women are foregrounded as mere objects of pleasure. If we consider, as a case of illustration, an ad on Pepsi Cola, we notice that a young protagonist sings not only the pleasure of freshness, but also manipulates the consumers' perception through presenting a young "beautiful feminine" face appealing more for male desires than for the freshness of a soda drink. The woman, in such a case, diverts the viewers' attention who, instead of perceiving the message soliciting them, become prisoner of a parallel message which participates in the more or less negative representation of woman rendered within a stereotyped collective imaginary. This case of a male-gaze conditioned woman-object disseminates a uniform meaning of femininity based on the embodiment of woman- not only in spots related to beauty products and cosmetics, but also in other advertisements of a vast range of products and services.

Having seen how Mulvey's male gaze can be applied to identify the biased gender representation in media, it can be understood why her study is considered very influential in film theory and psychoanalysis. Yet it has been criticized for a number of reasons. In a sense it does not provide ample empirical evidence to support its arguments. Besides, it is not clear why Mulvey considered the viewer to be only a male, failing, thus, to examine the existence of female viewers. However, to fill in the gaps left in Mulvey, we can have resort to Naomi Wolf's *The Beauty Myth*(1990) to know about the profound effects women audience suffer due to their exposition to media-disseminated paradigms and "myths" of beauty and femininity:

[Because of] films and records combined, and thirty-three thousand American women told researchers that they would rather lose ten to fifteen pounds than achieve any other goal...More women have more money and power and scope and legal recognition than we have ever had before; but in terms of how we feel about ourselves physically, we may actually be worse off than our unliberated grandmother (Wolf, p.10)

According to the excerpt above, the female audience are harmed by false beauty myths hardly accessible by women, which not only reveals how the male-gaze informed broadcast female bodies create new beauty values, but also show how media can oppress women through standardizing femininity.

4.3.Representations of Masculinity

It is undeniable that media plays a significant role in shaping and reinforcing views about what a “real” man is. Usually, men are portrayed as strong, powerful, heroic, independent, intelligent, heterosexual, and sometimes aggressive and violent. This kind of masculine representation is usually associated, for instance, with action movies genre. Therefore, the main focus in media is still on the traditional norms of masculinity. In other words, the representation of masculinity in media opposes what is represented for depicting femininity; for “Media continue to present both women and men in stereotyped ways that limit our perceptions of human possibilities. Typically men are portrayed as active, adventurous, powerful, sexually aggressive and largely uninvolved in human relationships.”(Wood, 1994, p.54).

Besides, in media, men are contrastively represented to have a tendency for being independent not only in finance, but also in thought and action. They do not need to rely on others since they can restore the equilibrium which is part of the resolution of the narrative. Also, different stereotypes and ideologies inform the way men appear and control the social traits and roles they are associated with. At the macroscopic level, recent studies have shown that the stereotypical portrayals of men are often linked to aggressiveness, independency and

responsibility, unlike women (Wood, p. 32). This view is also present at the microscopic level as manifested in the following Moroccan ads.



In the first shot taken from a Dacia Car advertisement broadcast by a Moroccan public TV channel, the husband is portrayed as independent, powerful and confident as he drives the car, and his wife is reduced to taking care of their children as manifested in the advertisement; the wife is busy watching over their children while the husband is driving with pride and confidence. In addition, the man, the driver, is associated with leadership, confidence and seriousness as Wood argues in her *Gendered Media*, “Television programming for all ages disproportionately depicts men as serious, confident, competent, powerful and in high-status position” (Wood, p.32). Thus, men are deprived of all what women have like gentleness, softness and dependency and, instead, they show other traits like hardship, toughness and violence as stated by Wood, “Men are presented as hard, tough, independent, sexually aggressive, unafraid, violent, totally in control of all emotions and-above all-in no way feminine” (Ibid). In other words, men are drawn closer to situations more related to aggressiveness while women are more distanced from it and made a secondary entity whose job is never outside the house.

Another stereotypical image circulated by such advertisements is that men are not interested in what women do, like taking care of children and cooking, but they are more interested in work outside the house as breadwinners looking for sources of income. For instance in the second picture, the man is associated with a job which has to do with power and muscles.

He is distanced from femininity and housework, and thus a wall painter is a man not a woman. In other words, men, as represented in this advertisement by Colorado Paint, are much more connected to masculinity, and “they are typically represented as uninterested in and incompetent at homemaking, cooking, and child care” (Wood, p. 32), which are feminine traits.

Because media texts are likely to reach and influence directly or indirectly large audiences, they transmit dominant cultural and ideological representations of what is a man and what is a woman. This ability to make masculinity and femininity traits widespread reifies and promotes gender bias and male domination. In this regard, Almay et al. (1984) contend that gender representations in media become part of the collective social conscience and promote culturally dominant hegemonic ideas which highlight the view that men are controlling and women controlled. Put otherwise, media sustain gender bias since they tend to reproduce dominant values and norms about masculinity and femininity and at the same time marginalize alternative ideas/ possibilities.

5. Media expectations for and "ideal" man and woman

As for the third section, it is aimed to analyze the set of meanings and moral attributes that media produce to construct and disseminate a model of ethically imagined ideal Moroccan man and Moroccan woman. In this regard, these idealized media representations and expectations will be investigated within (1) the framework of men and women’s mutual relationships and (2) in terms of the manifest praise and the latent contempt underlying different texts in Moroccan Media

5.1. In terms of gender relations

Gender in Moroccan media, though with varying degrees, is explicitly binary in its representation. The preferred woman image disseminated to establish an imagined ideal is generally predicated on a cluster of attributes pregnant with the sense of her submissiveness to man. Perpetuating or constructing this gender paradigm supporting unequal power relationships,

Media privileges the representation of women as weak, emotional, compromising, sacrificing, blindly faithful, low spoken, obedient, forgiving man's marital mistakes, blameworthy in case of household failures, less oriented to pleasures, self-denying....

Sacrificing women are preferably represented as the backbone of the family in terms of keeping the marital bond viable. They are socially expected to be more inclined for negotiation with an assertive man in case of troubles and domestic feuds to ensure healthy children's upbringing. She is criticized in case she hustles her husband as detrimental to the father image represented as being necessary for producing strong personality in children's future. With an improvident man, she is to care more about children and shoulder the affective burden of the family. Even when the husband commits infidelity, she has to forbear and forgive for the sake of her children. Retaliation with asking divorce or with a counter extramarital act is more condemned than the husband's. Although anti-social behaving husbands are criticized for causing domestic violence affecting the children and the wife, they are represented in media as breadwinners, family men and decision makers who are given a margin for erring, for they are the family economic supporter and the infallible source of family guidance. In a word, Media defend unequal gender relations privileging the father position. Such expectations maybe either taking place in Moroccan society or/reinforced by media, or even media-constructed in some cases.

Mass media, especially television, are the means of communication and information playing a major role in education and public awareness of Moroccan population. In terms of gender, Moroccan media preferred power relationship is that of women's submissiveness and inferiority. To illustrate, in sitcoms, increasingly popular in Moroccan T.V channels, incitement to violence against women and their subordination are implicitly instilled since:

- At the time of humiliating utterances directed at women and violence-related dialogues, bursts of laughter accompany sitcoms and other series conveying a real invitation to gender

violence.

-The day after their appearance on the small screen, quotes and other axioms are taken up and crudely thrown at the figure of women on the street, public places, schools...

- Such drama productions generate and internalize in the collective memory all forms of material or symbolic violence against women.

To illustrate media-enhanced symbolic violence against women, the Sitcom: Khali Aamara (Uncle Amara), directed by Mohamed El Khiyari is a case of drama fraught with denigration of women. Mohammed El Khiyari in the role of Lamkhantar is the countryman who comes to town to live with his maternal uncle. He imposes himself in the life of the family and of the building to the point of becoming his neighbors' trustee. Various moments of people's lives in the building, such as traders and visitors, are introduced. Strikingly, a lot of funny scenes are based on woman as the object of Lamkhantar's humiliation. To begin with, Lamkhantar calls his uncle's wife "Umm Lghiss": (the mother of the mud) instead of her first name "Oum lghit" "the mother of the rain" connoting in Moroccan culture fertility and abundance. Thami Lkhayari does not fail in one of his episodes (broadcast on 2M on October 8, 2006) to treat the woman of all the names of birds. Consider this dialogue:

Oum lghit: "And my share of chicken? "

Lamkhantar, aka Thami Lkhayari: "The chicken is not good for women, it is only for men. For women it will be duck, turkey. You are even peacocks!"

The image of women in Khali Amara can be interpreted as such:

Oum Lghit: grumpy, miser, shrew, bad mother who missed the education of her children

Her daughter: a delayed corny whose only ambition is to marry, a tenant abandoned by her husband

Mi Lharnounia: an old and childlike woman

The maids: workable and need being beaten

Oum Lghit's mother-in-law: A stupid character ridiculed and humiliated.

By implication, on the gender ideological level of meaning, these women are represented as inadequate for running the familial affairs; therefore, their chaotic behaviour is to be controlled and directed by a masculine agent of equilibrium. This discourse representing man as a custodian of woman, and justifying for this reason symbolic and literal violence against women, privileges a stereotyped conception of the family as dependent on men's wisdom and women's acceptance of men's authority for the sake of a balanced domestic sphere. Only in such man-led family model, one is manipulated to think, can a fruitful male-female "ideal" relation rise, and the family as a space of socialization thrive.

5.2. Manifest idealization and latent contempt:

Drama and filmic gender representation discipline both men and women with a script of social expectations, using different discourse strategies to naturalize the constructed criteria for being an ideal man or an ideal woman. However, Although Moroccan cinema and T.V drama started to give voice to women through leading female character roles, like *Aicha Dwiba (2015)*, *Femmes et Femmes (1998)*, *Women's Wives (1999)*, *Amours voilés(2009)*, and *Much loved(2015)*, among others, women continue to be rendered through the prism of stereotypes and body-related perceptions in a more subtle way. This is to disseminate a false consciousness for women and to persuade them of performing a social gender script and fulfill social expectations on the basis of which they erroneously perceive themselves as being ideal females.⁵

To elaborate on the above, in the T.V film *Kid Ansa (Women's Wives)(1999)* by Farida Benlyazid, the events consist of a folktale told by a modern Moroccan mother to her daughter to teach her how to use cunning for the sake of avoiding men's bullying, keeping her self-esteem and controlling them. Likewise, in *Aicha Dwiba (Aicha the wolverine) (2015)*, a T. V romantic comedy directed by Fatima Ali Boubekdi, Lalla Aisha, daughter of a wealthy merchant, is

⁵ For Judith Butler (1990) gender emanates from performing a set of roles prescribed by the dominant norms and values.

cherished by her father. Being his only daughter, and having beauty and intelligence, Aïcha remarkably stands out of the women of her time. This 'rare pearl' is immediately noticed by his neighbor who turns to be the son of the Sultan. Despite his obsession with her, he adopts a mocking and ironic tone encountering her during their repeated dating. Strong-headed, Aïcha's self-confidence is not appreciated by the young prince especially when she begins a long arm-wrestling that will take a sad turn later. Although she loves him, the rebelling lalla Aïcha does not allow him to dominate her, and will, therefore, deploy many schemes to impose her convictions.

On the one hand, these films condemn the patriarchal view holding women as subordinates and shows possible female resistance against masculinist oppression. On the other hand, the films remain residual in terms of patriarchal stereotypes mainstreaming women in the undesirable image of a trickster.⁶ Praising cunning as the only way left for women to resist gender mistreatment, the film perpetuates man's imaginary about women as being weak, frail and incapable for open resistance. This desperate situation is in a way lived and experienced in Moroccan women's reality, which may be said to be implicitly perpetuated in the case of this film. Ironically, although the film is anchored in Moroccan folkloric story-telling based on Moroccan cultural values, the film ends up showing how women educate their daughter in a way that does not suit the requirements of the present modern context

Although women are expected to take part within the obligations of the system of values that hold society cohesive, they are rarely portrayed by media to take part in extra-gender social spheres. Their role in civil society groups, associations or parties to address environmental issues, social welfare, social class disparity, education gap, health care, war and international politics are seldom promoted or encouraged in the media. This is left for the male in media texts

⁶ In the "mainstreaming" of America: violence profile No. 11' in *Journal of Communication* (Summer, 1980), Gerbner, Larry Gross, Michael Morgan and Nancy Signorielli clarify mainstreaming, saying: 'In particular, heavy viewing may serve to cultivate beliefs of otherwise disparate and divergent groups towards a more homogeneous "mainstream" view.'

to be stereotypically represented in a way or other as peculiar masculine domains. With this exclusionary representation, media ignores the new roles and profiles of women to construct them within the standards laid down by patriarchal normativity for assuming limited socio-political roles within a media discourse that naturalizes the restriction of their role in the public sphere.

In this line of argument, on February 17, 2005, Rachid Niny's post titled: "The Man Who Lost the story of his life ", in a sharp and virulent tone against women, he condemns in particular those investing in the associative movement:

" Excessively excited for the feminine cause, tireless, the cigarette scarcely leaves her hand at the trembling portending an impending Alzheimer's disease. The one who thinks that she has lived all her life without needing a man. Personally, I do not see how one man would need another man! When feminist extremists speak, they are easily confused with men because their veins are too conspicuous on their foreheads ..."

Rachid Niny adds:

... an unfortunate coincidence made me sit at fifty-year old women's table ... one of them introduced me to her other friends who were venting their faces overloaded with makeup and laughing as if eternally frozen like a mask ...

Insulting, humiliating and denigrating women, the same journalist will reoffend them on other occasions. When asked why he scarcely invites female guests in his T.V program "Nostalgia", a program that looks back on the journey and path of Moroccan artists and writers ..., he explicitly retorts that in case he invites some female guests to his T.V program he cannot ask them some questions, especially when it comes to such things as age; for, according to him, "Women do not bear their old age!"

6. Reforming media institutions for reforming women's image

To promote women's image and to fight gender stereotyping in the media, various legal

and institutional measures have been taken on an international level. On October 5th, 1995, the European Council adopted a resolution on "The treatment of the image of women and the advertisement and the media "; and in November 16, 1997, the European Parliament issued a resolution on "The discrimination of women in advertisement ". Likewise, In February 1995, UNESCO organized a symposium in Toronto featuring "women and the media - access to expression and decision", following which women participants have developed a Platform for action. In a similar vein, the Beijing Conference and Platform for Action have been a tremendous incentive for several international governmental initiatives for enhancing equality between the sexes in the media. In Canada, the Beijing Conference was an inspiration for adoption in 1995 of the Federal Plan for Gender Equality (1995-2000) and the Program of Action for Gender Equality (2002-2005). These reforms, coupled with the efforts of the Canadian women's movement to improve the image of women in the media, increase their number in media companies and include their perspective in the treatment of information, gave rise to several gender-related regulations binding Canadian media institutions.

Similarly, in Morocco several full-fledged initiatives were taken to reform Moroccan media in terms of gender representation. Various modernization attempts have been undertaken to change profoundly the media institutions, which will not fail to reshape both the image and the positioning of Moroccan woman in this field. Among other things, some of the reforms implemented in Moroccan media are:

- The creation of the high authority of the audiovisual communication sector (HACA), under the Dahir of August 31, 2002, for putting an end to the monopoly of the state in the media sector in Morocco. This Dahir «specifies that only political parties, trade unions and associations with national vocation can seize it... the HACA has already been self-declared on cases that affect the normal citizens, because its role consists of the T.V viewer's protection" on different levels, with gender representations included.

-The Independent National Agency for the Deontology of the Press and the freedom of expression was established, stressing in “Article 14: Respect for woman” that

“ The journalist refrains from propagating any degrading image for the dignity of woman and avoids reporting on issues dealing with them as stereotyped objects of consumption that denigrating her rights. The journalist must also work towards highlighting the new roles undertaken by women as being an effective contribution to development.”

-Restructuration of the Ministry of Communication with a new organization charter including a gender service.

-The adoption of the national charter for the improvement of women’s image in the media (March 2005)

-The adoption of the Rabat Declaration on Gender Equality in journalism (August 2005).

-The establishment of the "gender council" within the National Union of Moroccan Press

-The adoption of the code of ethics of the National union of Moroccan Press (SNPM) especially “Article 14, Respect for women” mentioned above.

Taking into consideration the above mentioned legal and institutional reforms, Moroccan women's NGOs are aware that their relationship with the media and their mastery of this tool is a major asset in their action, besides being an essential tool for the visibility of a dynamic Moroccan civil society. This relationship of feminist NGO’s with the media apparatus involves two positive goals: Communicating the actions of women's NGOs to the masses and monitoring the outrages and transgressions staged against the status and image of Moroccan woman. However, Moroccan media institutions still keep women subordinated for many reasons:

-The achievements in Moroccan feminist association movement remains below the real expectations in comparison to an astonishingly dynamic associative fabric:

- Their Relations with regulators HACA (High Authority of the Audiovisual Communication) and INID (National Authority Independence and Deontology) are almost

missing.

- Women's associations do not influence the complaint system established by HACA to deal with media products detrimental to the image of women in Moroccan media (fiction, advertising ...)

Moreover, the presence of women in media institutions is still lagging behind men's majority. According to the Ministry of Communication (2004). The number of women professional journalists does not exceed 390, against 982 male journalists, and 63 trainee women against 116 men. 14 technicians against 65 technicians, 11 women photographers compared to 145 male photographers, or 468 women holding press cards against 1314 men.⁷ Furthermore, serious women's magazines are still suffering dire straits. As cases in point, March 8, a weekly Arabic tabloid magazine of l'Union de l'Action Feminine (UAF), published since the 80s, disappeared for many years for the lack in real investment in this female editorial structure, despite the support of an active female civil society, to resurface in 2005. This evokes the case of the feminist magazine Kalima founded by l' Union de l'Action Feminine in 1986: for its daring reports and investigations on such taboo issues as sex and Male prostitution in Agadir, the magazine was suspended several times which led to its bankruptcy and closure on April 25th, 1989.⁸

Even with the advent of these media reforms, it is still a long way to go to cleanse Moroccan media institution from a deep seated stereotyped agenda on women, for the transgression of Article 14 Respect for woman goes unnoticed by the monitoring agencies. To illustrate, until 2006, "The High Authority for Audiovisual Communication (HACA) reminds the SNRT (formerly RTM) and 2M. ... of ... discriminatory remarks – particularly addressed to

⁷ The press cards delivered in 2005:

1. Total : 2062
2. Hommes : 1572
3. Femmes : 490

young people and women - when they were implicitly racist. This was the case in an episode of the series "Labass, Oualou Bass", where a feminine character refuses her father's invitation to accompany her to Senegal. Her argument:

"Among Senegalese, I would be like a drop of milk ..." The use of terms and shocking expressions is also decried.

Stereotyping has even increased more and more in the last sitcoms produced for Ramadan entertainment programs. The actor Mohamed Khiary did not, in this connection, hesitate to describe his mother as "Hartouka" (shabby), words that contrast the educational vocation of a public channel. "At a peak-viewing time optimal for different advertisers to display ads for their products while all Moroccans, glued on the TV screen, are breaking their fasting, Ramadan sitcoms broadcast by 2M in 2017(Al Khawa (Brotherhood)) and 2018(Hay El Bahja (El Bahja Neighbourhood) persist, despite all reforms, in diminishing women and representing them in many episodes as being mere seekers for husbands to save them from spinsterhood.

7. Recommendations

Dealing with a bleak status quo concerning the disseminated media gender representations, we suggest a cluster of recommendations related to the most relevant axes which are deemed to be likely to improve the image of women; notably through taking and implementing Awareness-raising measures, encouraging gender promoting networking, providing trainings for promoting the image of women, setting up regulation and self-regulation strategies, and establishing strategic watch on media institutions.

7.1. Taking and implementing awareness-raising measures:

-Publicizing pioneering actions in the field of gender equality in journalism, e.g. the status of SNRT staff.

-Establishing forums for dialogue and reflection on the contents of media,

- Investing various means of communication to transmit the messages of women's

movement.

- Involve women's organizations in raising public awareness of the fact that the right to communicate is one of the rights of citizenship.
- Raising awareness of the problem of violence against women applying the new communication technologies of broadcasting...
- Writing articles and making feminist radio broadcasts for mass media and the Internet (women experts, women's associations).

7.2. Encouraging networking on promoting the image of women in the media:

- Lobbying to allow access for more women in decision-making positions in the media, communication agencies.
- Investing in the reader's mail as a means of monitoring and pressure.
- promoting meetings between media professionals and female journalists to expose the problems encountered during their work, and to ensure that they are a source of information;
- Encouraging exchanges between Arab women journalists via the internet and strengthening alliances, and supporting and encouraging the creation of other regional alliances between women working in the media
- Creating a network of male and female journalists trained in gender and National Charter for Improving the Image of Women in the Media.
- Involving advertisers in thinking about the impact of stereotypes on their notoriety
- involving the Moroccan association of the social responsibility of the Entrepreneurs on thinking about the stereotypes detrimental to the image of the woman.
- Involving women sections of different political parties in the network "women and media"
- Establishing contacts with women image monitoring networks and associations,
- Creating a network of women's associations and gender advice

-Urging the Gender Council and its partners to invest in advocating specific legislation related to the image of women in the media.

-Initiating internet information Service for women including women's information, media and communication organizations

-Involving feminist publishing houses for publishing books on the subject "Women and the media" for the publication of thematic studies: image of woman in advertising, in the press, in the cinema ...

-Encouraging a movement to fight against negative images of women in the media.

-Developing an anti-sexist manifesto for advertising and fiction and have it signed and promulgated in different media forms.

7.3. Establishing media regulation measures:

- Setting up an apriori system of control for advertising spots, fictions

- Updating the codes of ethics and the ethical charters in order to include specific provisions to respect the image of women

-Having the press union adopt communication consultancy agencies and the Group of Advertisers of Morocco follow the rules of self-discipline and professionally enforce them.

-Establishing a national code of conduct for the benefit of female media professionals.

- Providing instruments that can enable viewers to express their reactions to attacks on the integrity of the image of women in the media.

- Setting up an advertising checking office to control the contents of advertisements.

-Conducting sociological studies and opinion polls on public media.

7.4. Creating measures of self-regulation:

-Encouraging media operators to self-discipline and provide minimum standards for non-discriminatory contents related to advertising and fiction. Encouraging sectors involved in self-discipline to provide minimum standards for non-discriminatory advertisement.

-Developing a self-regulation code for advertisement and Television advertising sector to combat all forms of stereotyped representations distorting the image of women.

-Setting up an alert system against female stereotypes in advertising and fiction content

7.5. Enacting media strategic watch:

-Ensuring the implementation of the Beijing Platform for Action regarding women and the media and stating the results on a yearly basis

- Monitoring television on a national level for the purpose of sensitizing the media and thereby empowering citizens by helping them to better understand gender issues in the media.

-Involving the national observatory of women in the strategic watch on the image of women in the media.

- Encouraging gender council, media public associations, women's associations ... to invest in gender egalitarian broadcasts and actions of the media.

- Granting a prize for rewarding the least sexist media. (As a relevant example, The Tahar Haddad prize, granted for a balanced image of women in the media, was already instituted by decree in May 1999, in response to a recommendation of the Commission on the Image of Women in media, originating from the National Council "Woman and the Family").

7.6. Trainings on gender-positive media:

-Integrating the gender issue into the curriculum of media training schools.

-Investing in media clubs from different academies to provide training on the theme "image of women in the media"

-Training future journalists on charters, codes of ethics, and authorities of media regulation related professional journalists.

-Integrating modules into the continuing education sessions of the elected representatives and especially parliamentary women.

-Training Women scenario writers on ethical code, texts and charters related to the image

of the woman in the media

- Strengthening women's leadership by promoting women's access to new information technologies to enable them to express and disseminate their point of view and make their potential known.

Undoubtedly, media influence the way we construct our identity along with the way we perceive the world, the self and the other. Regarding gender, media enacts a pattern of gender interactions marked by a socially approved gender paradigm through its own discourse representations that structure our social relationships and directs our attitudes for adopting permanent stereotypes. Though representations emanate from a system of socio-cultural values, media fossilize it as a system of truths. Accordingly, media gender discourse entails political repercussions rising from unequal status and uneven power relationships stated or implied within verbal and non verbal messages underlying different media texts. Likewise, the position of Moroccan media on women's issues is paradoxical. The representation they make of Moroccan women are dysfunctional as they backstage their present socio-economic roles and their multiple achievements in the promotion of women's rights and gender equality. Indeed, Moroccan media ignores the new roles of women and continue to reserve for them a reductionist treatment; for they are often represented in the roles of eternal victims, assisted or cloistered in traditional passive roles.

Ironically, even with the international and national media reforms mentioned above, and even if the most viewed Moroccan T.V channels 2M and TVM have reading and editing commissions to censor humiliating or sexist suggestions, there is a long way to go to reform gender representations in Media. However, monitoring media-disseminated gender contents is not a question of hindering the freedom of creation, but rather a question of preventing slippages with undermining sexist hints at the moral integrity of women.

Activities

- a- Can you think of a Moroccan media text that promotes gender equality?
- b- How do the different forms of media affect the way we see gender?
- c- What are some strategies for looking at and thinking about gender in media more critically?
- d- How can we work together to creatively counteract some of the rigid ideas about gender we get from media?
- e- What are the most common stereotypes used in Moroccan TV shows?
- f- Do you think the movies targeted for today's children are more or less gender stereotypic than the movies you watched as a child? Why or why not?
- g- What are some media techniques that naturalize gender stereotypes?
- h- How can media institutions be monitored to avoid the misrepresentation of women?
- i- Do media texts extend stereotypes practiced in reality? Or do they invent their own gender stereotypes? Justify your answer.
- j- In what way do movies promote patriarchal unequal gender relationships?
- k- How can media texts take part in patriarchal endorsing cultural politics?
- l- What is the benefit of demystifying the gender-related subtexts circulated by the media?

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Chapter 4: Arab Women's Writings

Farida Mokhtari

"Writing is one of the most ancient forms of prayer.

To write is to believe communication is possible

that other people are good, that you can awaken

their generosity and their desire to do better."

— *Fatima Mernissi*

Women's writing as a secluded area of literary studies is primarily founded on the notion that the involvement of women, historically, has been determined by their gender, and so women writers by definition are a well-meaning group of a separate study. It is not a question of the subject matter or political stance of a particular author, but of her gender: her position as a woman within the literary marketplace. Women's writing and its existence as a separate category of scholarly interest is relatively very recent. Currently, women's writing, though considered a discrete area of literary studies and practice, is recognized ardently by the numbers of devoted journals, organizations, awards, and conferences which focus primarily or exclusively on texts produced by women. Now, women's writing is commonly considered an area of specialization in its own right.

1. Women's writing a discursive space in world literature

Historically, the dominated role of male writers was generally evident in world literature across all eras, not only in the Arab world, but even in European countries and the United States of America. Until the late nineteenth century, this domination was highly masculine, clearly articulated within patriarchal, political discourses as a government trope to maintain a certain social order foregrounding tools and means of an appropriate moral code, religious paradigm and an agenda for sustaining political and intellectual hegemony. So far, the tradition of women

writings has been much ignored, due entirely to the inferior position women have held in male-dominated societies. Indeed, women writers were exposed to backlash and criticism from men writers, and have been subject to social cruel and degrading remarks, and cultural and political belittlement for centuries; to illustrate this, the male suggestion that women are more suitable holding a “needle” than a “pen”, or typical accusations well known to scholars of European women’s writing from earlier periods as they often dismissed women’s writing and qualify it as telling only ‘small stories’ or being too autobiographical.

Furthermore, women writers faced the challenge of being discursively unaccepted in the literary world, often having to prove the worthiness and importance of their works, and always forced to stand in the shadows of male writers, who confined them emphatically to the role of adoring mothers, caring wives, and domestic angels, and those who fell short of this ideal were to be despised and denigrated. In contrast, men occupied the public sphere and enjoyed both economic independence and commodified ownership of their wives. Paradoxically, despite the existence of an established and well-structured patriarchal system, the eighteenth and the nineteenth centuries witnessed a blooming of women’s writing in the west, with writers like Mary Wollstonecraft, Jane Austen, Dorothy Wordsworth, Harriet Ann Jacobs and many others who started writing and contributing to literature with creative and original masterpieces covering different genres of literature (poems, novels, short stories...) some of them were compelled to using pseudo-names sometimes under the social pressure to avoid rejection and censorship; a thing that did not prevent them from been exposed to hostile responses and criticism from men writers and the male-dominated society where they lived. However, women writers have started to gain more respect and acknowledgment since the nineteenth century particularly in western societies, while they were still silenced in the Arabo- Islamic countries until the twentieth century when Arab and Muslim women writers on their turn started manifesting themselves with pieces of literature.

In the Maghreb, a handful of women writers appeared in the spotlight in the 20th century before the Independence of Maghreb countries from French colonialism. In fact, the nineteenth and the twentieth centuries were marked by women all over the world who began to take larger roles in society and project their voices through their writings to distance themselves from the position of exclusion, silence, and oppression. In the same vein, the second wave of feminism in the twentieth century, precisely the '70s and '80s sparked a resurgence in forging a place for the works of women. Effectively, and sided by the feminist movement, the women authors denounce and epitomize the troubled self of a woman who has managed to overcome most of the obstacles, restraints and constraints by rebelling and rejecting the 'old-fashioned portrait' shaped and moulded for her as minor and marginalized gender being restricted by society. It was a way to subvert the subjection and the feminine identity imposed by patriarchy. Besides, the feminist discourse denounces the relationship of inequality and injustice that are depicted as inseparable in both colonialism and the concept of patriarchy.

Women's outcry was particularly through contesting hegemonic systems of thought in their writing. Indeed, women's oppression was deeply rooted in the structural codes of patriarchal societies where the female was subjected to the male subjugation and suppression. For, at the time, women's writing was often defined as writing by women, about women, and for women. This degrading state and insubstantial consideration of women to second-class citizens in the realm of literature is to confirm that women's experiences in life and position in the world are less important than that of men. To this end, feminism has come to identify and distinguish women's writing from men's writing without evaluating the one to be minor or major to the other.

2. Historical, social and cultural background of Arab women's literature

Oral literature and storytelling are one of the literary genres from which a genuine talent of writings emerged from the very early times up to the very moment; and women all over the

world are known to be the best storytellers of generations since ever. Dependably, and over the centuries to come, women of the Arab world have been writing masterpieces of literature, and continuing with successive generations of women whose stories, proverbs, songs, and legends form a rich oral heritage of literature. Notwithstanding, the most astonishing thing is that the first Arab novel was written by a woman and not a man; published in (1899) by the Lebanese Zynab Fawaz a pioneering poet, novelist and historian of famous women. The evolution of women's literature started then seriously from the 19th c. to modern writings.

Other talented Arab women writers emerged throughout the middle east notably Aicha Taymour, Warda Alyaziji, Malak Hifni Nasif, Alifa Rifaat, Daisy Al-Amir, and many others. Again, a big shift occurred in the 20th C. and accurately since the 1990s where Arab literature by Arab writers gained more importance all over the world. And before going through the history of Arab women's writing, we must revisit the literary history of men's writing in the Arab world, which preceded women's writing some fifty years ago with famous authors whose prominence is well established worldwide with their writings in Arabic as well as in other different foreign languages. Thus, great male figures of literature in the Arab world emerged like Naguib Mahfouz, Mahmoud Darwich, Nizar Qabani, Ilyas Khouri, to name only these from the Mashreq, and Tahar Ben Jaloun, Mohamed Choukri, Driss Chraibi and others from the Maghreb who have found their way to universality since then.

By the same token, a proliferation of literary productions by Arab women writers appeared in the Arab world, and a considerable number of these productions have been translated into the main foreign languages. Indeed, women's writings occupy an important place in the literary cannon now and it reflects a consciousness constructed by gender. Yet, one may wonder whether this literature by Arab women writers is a new trend of Arab literature, or has it a deep sound tradition in the Arab world? To answer this question, we must go back to history and investigate thoroughly over the matter. In fact, writings by Arab women or more precisely

“women’s writings” is as old as the literary experience itself. Indeed, women’s writings go back to the Pre-Islamic era and may be well before that. To illustrate this, a great number of women have distinguished themselves in Arabic literature since the early sixth century to the present day, and this despite the obstacles, difficult times and the hard conditions they have experienced, be they social, cultural or political. Starting with the first artistic form of literature, that is poetry, we have great names in ancient Arabic poetry namely, Alkhanssaa who was the most known poet of her time, or the sophist Rabia Aladawiya, those were mostly notorious among other great Arab women poets and writers. Other great names who represented Arab women intellectuals in the past are Zineb Nafzawiya and Fatima Alfihriya, to cite only these two. However, these names among others compared to male Arab writers/intellectuals were only isolated cases and timid voices . . . Nevertheless, through the years, the woman was overcome by her tragic situation trapped from custody and subjugation to servitude and marginalization. Inversely, and from the interwoven depiction of the social matrix of the Arab society, a new, confident and creative Arab woman emerged and broke all stereotypes of women's weakness or inferiority. With determination, she rose up and called for her awakening against the structured, patriarchal norms of society, and made of the pen her powerful tool and writing her force to break the silence and speak out to make her voice heard. Indeed, writing offered her opportunities to explore the injustice and the cruelty she endured in the past, but it was also a space to imagine a different kind of society in which women’s lives might be improved, and men’s dominant role(s) contested. To put it differently, women writers used different narrative methods to question and challenge, resist, and even subvert, and revise traditional gender roles and social expectations about female identity. As a matter of fact, women’s writing has questioned the existing ideologies which are essentially patriarchal, and has recorded the changes in challenged societies, eventually catalysing the dynamic response of this century. To this end, a new pattern of writings emerged; it is women's writings, and the first world women's conference held in Paris

in 1892 was a testimony of this effect.

Following this significant development in the women's trajectory, there was a wide debate about the identity of women's writing. This resulted in the emergence of conflicting currents, including women who were singled out by women and who refused to differentiate between gender-based writing, and a third part who tried to be between the conflicting trends. This debate was accompanied by many discussions about the terms “women and writing”, and since then there was a proliferation of terms such as women's writing, feminism or femininity. In all cases, women's writing, despite the diversity of the term, has become a necessary reality that imposed itself with forceful tenacity. Thus, the concept of feminine writing, “écriture féminine” defended in France by writers and psychoanalysts such as Hélène Cixous and Luce Irigaray was a parallel development, more intimately linked to the psychoanalytic ideas of femininity. Women's writing promoted writings marked by femininity, which generally meant female writing, although it was recognized that femininity was sometimes also found in male texts...; it is therefore not surprising that many women writers flourished during this period. For other women writers, however, it was always irritating to talk constantly about femininity and gender difference; as Nathalie Sarraute asserts in an interview in 1984:

"When I write, I am neither man nor woman, neither dog nor cat, I am no longer me, I do not I'm nothing, "There is no female writing, I have never seen," ... Literature is the archive of a culture, she claimed.

Activities:

- Situate Arab women's writing in Arab literary history.
- In your own words, briefly summarize the first historical part discussed in this chapter.
- Appreciate the meanings of some of these texts within their social, cultural and political contexts.

3. The evolution of Literature Female Figures from the Middle East and the Maghreb

Women's writings in North Africa and the Arab world go back to less than fifty years in the middle of the 20th c. and exactly after the Second World War, yet, despite the brief period of time, we perceive a remarkable progress and development in their fiction be it theme, form, or technique. Their first attempts were mainly a kind of preoccupation with cultural anxiety and more or less a loss of identity; then the progress was more oriented toward personal problems to be centered finally on the search of the self. Thus, the main concern of these writers was reflected on their female characters who struggle for self-recognition and personal identity. More interestingly their fiction took another aspect of evolution and turned to an order of rebellion against all forms of oppression and the whole structural paradigms of the society. Consequently, and gradually, women's aspiration goes from personal freedom to an exploration of the social milieu. As a result, their writings achieved a clear vision and a true maturity in dealing with the subject matter. They realized that the society must be the starting point of change, not only the individual; for, the freedom of the individual is closely related to the social setting. The current evolution in maturity and vision has of course important political and ideological implications.

In short, women in North Africa and the Arab World had to undergo a reorganized oppression that only rebellion can stand against. The revolution was then against cultural traditions and the legal status of women determined by "shari'a" (Islamic religious code) that defines the role of women to be subservient to successively their fathers, husbands, and sons and to commit themselves to the roles of daughters, wives, and mothers. Consequently, the revolt of women led to political awakening and political commitment; the engagement was often mixed with a sense of nationalism and national identity, because the countries from which those women write are either struggling for independence against foreign governance, or striving toward national identity and development. Those writers expressed women's problems and sufferings in

the context of Arab and North African societies and universalize the feminine cause.

Considering the above-mentioned stages, women's writings have achieved a large capacity of thematic and stylistic array, and reveal a multidimensional treatment of its subject matter. At first, an important growth in their production appeared; and the reason behind this rise is probably due to the postcolonial political stability and the newly independent states most Arab countries have achieved after World War II. Hereafter, the shaping of the national identity has directly led to the construction of modern secular societies, and to the gradual development of the social and educational conditions of Arab women. With the development of education, women have become aware of their individuality, thus, they have become conscious of their female identity which was in a way parallel to the wave of feminism that was expanding around the world. Since that time, Arab women writers have publicized a great quantity of literary creativity in different genres of writing, from prose to poetry to plays; they even proved the ability to deal with important political, social and cultural issues, and they showed how they can be intensely involved nationally despite the fact that they were deprived of their political rights as the right to vote, etc...

Reflecting over national, social and cultural issues has become a landmark and an original trait of Arab women writings. Thus, their contribution to the literary cannon with the proliferation of their works of fiction (novels, short stories, poems, etc...) have considerably proved their competence and allowed them the reputation of modern writers among their fellow men and whose works have been translated into the main foreign languages. This literary participation from their part is a step forward that has brought celebrity to many of them and even made them able to compete with male writers not only from the Arab world but even from the western world. Among these talented women we find: Ahdaf Soueif, Fadia Faqir, Assia Djebar, Fatima Mernissi, Laila Abouzaid, Leila Aboulela, Hanane Sheikh, Nawal Saadawi... The latter is the first Arab woman writer to be widely known in Europe and the most read of all

Arab novelists in the West. Apart from these, the above-mentioned Arab writers and many others are the true representatives of the Arab women writers who have given birth to a new kind of literary writings, writings that are a mixture of both kinds of literature; neither European nor Arabic literature; writings that are expressed through European languages but within an Arab cultural context. Some critics would call this type of literary writings “Hybrid writings” or simply, a Euro-Arab literature.

Activities:

- Read, understand and interpret key Arab literary texts of some of the cited authors and identify their characteristic & stylistic features as mentioned in the chapter.
- Explore some of the mentioned writer’s specificity and their literary creativeness.
- Appreciate the meanings of some of these texts within their social, cultural and political contexts

4. North African Narratives and Female voices

4.1. The case of Morocco

The last two decades of the twentieth century were the period in which the traditional exclusion of women in Morocco came to decline, mainly the deep-rooted denial of women’s participation women’s participation in the realm of the cultural landscape of world literature. Today, to speak of women’s writings in Morocco is to recognize new realities in the lives of Moroccan women achieved over the past couple of decades, these changes concern both public space and world knowledge. Hence, gradually more and more women began to challenge traditions through actively producing (publication), and in so doing, it became increasingly apparent that the old image of the silent, traditional woman was fading. In earlier times, the majority of women in Morocco lived only inside domestic spaces, behind walls, prevented from using the outside sphere except under the protection of the veil and generally escorted by a male

relative (mahram); nowadays, the boundaries are trespassed and more and more women have attained access to public spaces. Thus, this liberation is reflected in different ways, particularly in the cultural scene of the country that witnessed a substantial number of Moroccan women writers who began to publish different genres of literature: novels, short stories, memoirs, semi-autobiographical texts, essays and criticism, books on history and Moroccan society, and thousands of journal articles in scholarly publications as well as in the popular press. Indeed, such literary production is a significant proof that the image of the new Moroccan woman has considerably evolved. Truly, the Moroccan woman engaged herself in a process of self-affirmation and cultural liberation, a liberation that permitted her to challenge established social norms and demonstrate how the concept of decolonization can even be extended to the literary discursive practice of literature, which was once an exclusively male privilege. Writing in the Moroccan context, has therefore become rather an act of resistance for the Moroccan woman. In a word, women's writing is a subversive tool that questions taboos and male-constructed stereotypes. In fact, writing allows all women to challenge their social status and consider their female identity as an individual achievement and a self-realization that will help to create a new community spirit and an epochal mind-set.

As a matter of fact, to rewrite the feminine identity has been central to the writing of Moroccan women and corresponds precisely to their desire for social justice and democratic ideals. They are simply convinced that through writing they can initiate and bring reform. Indeed, many factors contributed to the formation of the feminine identity, and opened the door to women's writing. These factors are social, cultural and political, albeit the very limited chances of success of any writer, man or woman, in a developing country, constrained by limited resources. In this regard, if we consider the question of reading and readership in relation to key issues of language, literacy and lack of a strong reading culture both in the Moroccan educational system and in the culture in general, I would point out that it is difficult to conceive or

understand the conditions in which Moroccan women write, or the challenges they face, including the obstacles to publication. It is highly important to state the actual challenges that the writer faces in a developing society. By exploring these factors from the start, we will be free to explore in greater detail both the formal aesthetics and ethical preoccupations of women writers. Obviously, we are committed to a world of intercultural understanding and exchange of ideas, and this behooves us to become good listeners and readers of Arab women's writing. In addition, an acquaintance with Moroccan women's texts may help us evaluate more judiciously the quality of Moroccan feminism, which partakes of certain qualities of Western feminism without remaining in thrall to it. Perhaps we might even be brought to deeper reaction on the challenges of assuming universal values with regard to both feminism and democracy. Thus, in the troubling and provocative politics of the early twenty-first century, these are surely compelling reasons.

In light of the democratic transition in which Morocco has been involved since the mid-1990s, Moroccan women writers have rushed to enter the arena of creativity through its grand doors and form a formal framework that has engendered controversies even between these women themselves. Likewise, the number of women writers has increased to more than 100 and their representation in civil society associations and organizations has doubled while before their numbers have been counted on the fingers in the 1980s. Some see female writing as a repetition and imitation of male writing, while many voices recognize that feminist writing in Morocco has added much to what men have accumulated in literary writing, both in form and content. Their texts do not only expand and nuance our understanding about who they are and how they experience their culture, but will also challenge easy assumptions about Arab women's silence and passivity. To demonstrate more, women's writing additions are clearly embodied in the handling of some taboo social issues like the body revelation.

The mid-1980s formed the beginning of the open accumulation of diversity in the writing

experience of Moroccan women, an accumulation that has witnessed a significant evolution especially with the 1990s and is still undergoing steady transformation. While women spoke in the past about their bad conditions with their husband or sponsor, they were given the opportunity to write and express their problems, concerns, psychological suffering and desires, without anyone being able to prevent them. Women wrote about the nature of their body needs and its transformations according to its age and the constraints of society, and described the physical abuse they suffered from and inherent coercion that apprehended their desires and robbed their humanity. Many consider that most Moroccan writers exploited the audacity of disrobing the female body to take-over the spotlight and gain fame; the reality is but, a masculine vision that reflects how much the male mentality persists in a society that is ostensibly masked by modernity, and whose interior still drowns in and around the dark ages. There is no doubt that the literary works of Moroccan women have been supplemented by distinct additions reflected in the treatment of certain socially taboo issues, and in the ability to define a very different profound language. What is at stake is to challenge and judge these productions by women on the basis that writing is a human act of excellence, which must be practiced by men and women in the same aesthetic and artistic contexts, and that the achievements of women at the level of creative realization must be evaluated by the same criteria and critical tools with which we deal with in men's writing. In this regard, the need to claim their right to exist and to have a clear psychic space for themselves becomes an ultimate necessity. They can afford to be not only parodic but entertaining and highly sophisticated as well.

With the emergence of the new constitution - which insists on gender equality - Moroccan women writers are no longer convinced of the progress made in terms of freedom and the right to equality but are seeking to form an association that concretizes their rights, aspirations, defends their dignity and allows them to enjoy more freedoms. The existence of the Moroccan Writers Association as a cultural organization is betting on the adoption of women's positions and on the

defense and promotion of their achievements in the new constitution. The idea is "a great cultural project that has been brewing for a while and creative people in various fields of writing showed their readiness and their ability to engage in the project.

It is not an easy task within this short study to cover many of the mentioned authors and works; instead, this chapter will limit itself to discussing some of the works of the late Fatima Mernissi in the coming parts below.

4.2. Fatima Mernissi the woman writer

The late Fatima Mernissi is the woman who was described in the *New York Times* obituary as a founder of Islamic feminism. A Moroccan author, Fatima Mernissi, passed away on November 30th, 2015 at the age of 75. Widely known as a sociologist, she was acknowledged as the first Islamist feminist whose influence intellectually laid the ground for a foundational feminist debate in the Arabo-Islamic world. Mernissi was a woman of talent, inspiration and impact. Her books include "Beyond the Veil" and "Islam and Democracy". She grew up in Morocco in a harem, which she wrote about in her memoir "Dreams of Trespass". Her feminist epistemological work is an enterprise to be recognized as the first wave of feminism in Morocco if not in the Arab world. She was the Moroccan woman writer who challenged fundamentalism, injustice and gender inequality in the 1980s. Her legacy, as evidenced by her endeavors is already a convenient task to any reader to respect and celebrate her thoughts as profound for the global feminism movements. To this extent, she turned to Islamic texts to reconsider the whole heritage with elegance, audacity and courage. For a better understanding, she placed things in a socio-historical context, and then constructed her reinterpretation of polemical issues related to gender and put them in narrative volumes. It is indeed an audacious and risky business to be all in one, a woman, a writer and a feminist in a Muslim society into the bargain. It was a tiring commitment from her part that required lots of tactfulness, subtlety and alignment. In fact, Mernissi left a constructive and fundamental synthesis enterprise to her descendants, in which

she deconstructed the cognitive and social structure of the Arab-Muslim mind. In many ways, her attempts helped to demystify the exotic orient she disoriented, to marvel at a culture and a history she defaulted the frontiers and gendered border identities she dis/located.

A former university teacher, Mernissi taught different subjects such as methodology, family sociology and psycho-sociology at the faculty of Letters in Rabat between 1974 and 1981. She became known internationally mainly as an Islamic feminist. The bulk of her works were originally written a little more after Morocco gained independence. Most of them are critiques of the post-colonial state that simultaneously enacted conservative family legislation (the 1957 personal status code) while carrying out a modernization in order to argue that Islamic gender roles are clear obstacles to modernity. It is a historically rooted discourse on North African women in general and the Moroccan woman in particular that has often been placed at the center of the ideological conflict between the two poles, modernity, on the one hand, and Islamic tradition, on the other. This ideological divide that separates secular and Islamic feminisms played out in favor of patriarchy in society as the extremists firmly reject all feminisms whether Islamic or not Islamic. In the same vein, she tried to highlight the exclusion of women from the spheres of power that brought enormous prejudice to the Islamic religion, besides, the discourse of preserving the other sex by secluding it from the public space means simply empowering the male at the expense of the female. That is exactly the sort of work that liberal feminists like Fatima Mernissi were doing to denounce seclusion and advance social reform in Morocco. In this regard, Mernissi is the pioneering female figure in Morocco who disapproves the myth of the subordinate woman. Her work is particularly significant in conceptualizing parameters of feminist engagement with Islamic sources. Indeed, Mernissi's talent and impact inspired all good healthy minds and spirits, across gender race and creed.

4.3. Fatima Mernissi the reformist woman with commitment

In a multidisciplinary number of capacities, F. Mernissi trained, lectured, and advised all

future citizens and younger populations of the Arab/Muslim world to adhere to the values of social justice, gender equality, human dignity, honour and pride. Her compassion is articulated through her endless battles among subaltern women and dissident youth by urging governments to their insertion and empowerment and calling for a reconsideration of family codes and women's rights. She plainly pledges for an agenda for social and political reform, and eventually calls for a re-fabrication of a reorganized tradition that could meet the needs of an ever-empowered youth, strongly voiced women and other subversive minorities. Her ultimate preoccupation is to ease the modern aches of an effervescent society from an ever-ambivalent older generation of neo-colonialists and /or trans/nationalists. In a word, Mernissi's multiple attempts consist mainly of reforming and modernizing a set of traditions, cannons and policies to pave the ground for new advocates of Arab women's voices, and other marginal identities to hold on the torch and continue to cultivate the good seeds of a reformed society whose aspirations echoed a stance of democratic governance, aesthetic jouissance and political ascendance.

All the above-mentioned displacements couldn't be possible without first the greater access to women's education, which means automatically access to the outside spaces, which ultimately lead to their entry into the workforce; and this was one of Mernissi's primarily goals. For, it is strongly believed that the extension of education and greater integration of women into the world of work, make women's living spaces both expanded and transformed. Obviously, schools are places for increased awareness and broader influences, which can also lead to girls being more confident and empowered, and ultimately achieving greater political voice and social position. On the whole, education is an important springboard for not only the categorization of the public space and its diversity but also the personal investment and the possibility of building a future outside the socially attributed roles. Indeed, education enables women to meet the new challenges, and help them safeguard their rights and interests. In the same context, feminists and

women's organizations in Morocco, as in the rest of the world as a matter of fact, have early understood that their way out—for autonomy, economic independence and self-realization was education. As a case in point, schools in Morocco trained the first generations of girls, who had subsequently gained access to paid work, as well as public and political responsibilities. Now we have educated elite engaged and aware of the social and political role to play in society. As a matter of fact, the educated Arab women and women all over the world are now challenging the divided space where men used to manage politics and monopolize decision making, while women were confined to stay at home and content themselves with domestic duties. Effectively, the woman writer, Fatima Mernissi in occurrence, reflects the image of the society by exploring the intersections of the outside world with regard to her engagements. In this context, her dedication, social activism and anthropological research, her multifaceted political and empirical agendas have profoundly influenced and attracted women and men from all academic horizons, professional, artistic, educational and social backgrounds for crossing borders and helping default male elite patriarchy and empowerment, also to upgrade Arab women's status, rights and power in third world societies and culture.

Activities:

- Develop conceptual tools for understanding, researching and critically reflecting on Fatima Mernissi's texts
- Demonstrate how rewriting the feminine identity was central to the writing of Moroccan women and to their desire for social justice and ideals democratic to initiate and bring reform.

5. The perspective of Gender in *Dreams of Trespass*

Given that Fatima Mernissi has made the Moroccan woman, a central figure in her writings, this part probes the parallel between the old generation of female characters and their counterparts, and locates the debate at the intersection of gender dynamics, in the reading of one

of her widely acclaimed books, *Dreams of Trespass: Tales of a Harem Girlhood* (1994). The text is a narrative that presents a nuanced image of women in Morocco and the extent to which they conform to tradition and the sociocultural boundaries of the harem. The book is actually a non-fiction as Mernissi herself stated, put in the form of account; in fact, the work is neither a memoir nor a novel, but rather a mosaic or montage that crosses borders, breaks rules, and not only narrates, but illustrates the sacred exegesis, secular profanities and power struggles as well as the true poetics of trespass. It is first of all, an account of the daily life of the first narrator who is no other but the young Fatima Mernissi. As early as that, the young Mernissi was already concerned with big issues by trying to make sense of the *hudud*, or the frontiers of the Arab Muslim patriarchy, and then to trespass them. The narrative unfolds around the life of a young girl growing up in a traditional Moroccan harem at once enchanting and denigrating. Mernissi's passage within the harem which represents the frontier that every woman must not go beyond is one of the entities that shaped her life and being; and the main subject that influenced both her writings and her vision as a feminist. *Dreams of Trespass* is in fact a combination of fairy tales and daily actualities, cries and joys, open moral lessons and promises that reveal Mernissi's continuous devotion to the feminist cause whose scholarly contributions and intimate testimonials highlighted the human, aesthetic, literary, spiritual and moral capacities of a woman writer, artist, social activist and human nature theorist.

5.1. Defining the Frontiers in *Dreams of Trespass*

Dreams of Trespass discusses particularly the frontiers for women, embodied by different female characters that provide a very distinct image of Moroccan women and how they decide whether or not to conform to customs and traditions. They completely understand the boundaries that are placed on them by the laws of the harem. As a child inside the harem, Mernissi used to listen to the views of her koranic school teacher, Lalla Tam; the latter believes in the *hudud*, or the belief that it is men's responsibility to take care of women and never allow them to cross any

forbidden frontiers. These frontiers were large in the aspect that women were not supposed to travel, but were also small in the fact that Mernissi was not allowed to leave the inner parlor of her house until her mother awoke because she could not defend herself. Mernissi's mother had not been raised in a harem in the city; she had been raised in the country and often lamented the restrictions placed on her. To give herself a sense of freedom, her mother would occupy herself with secret escapes to her rooftop to enjoy some time alone and with stolen snatches of radio broadcasts. In fact, what Mernissi does in the memoir is that she represents two categories of women with antagonistic perceptions of the harem to enforce the idea that not all women were submissive and docile to the patriarchal organization. Mernissi's mother is continually testing the boundary lines of the frontier presented to her. In this respect, the reader is definitely able to see how the older generation accepts the restrictions more willingly, and consents to the harem life and adhere to male's supervision of women, this category is termed the 'pro-harem' or 'traditional'(represented by Grand-mother Lalla Mani, and Chama's mother, Lalla Radia), whereas the young women prefer to challenge the restrictions and are termed 'anti-harem' or 'modern' stance (defended by the mother, the grandmother Yasmina, the adolescent Chama, and Tante Habiba).

The older generation seems to embrace the limitations in their life that are placed on them by the harem and Moroccan society in general. They understand that some of their liberties are hindered by the harem, but they also reap the benefits of that system. As a case in point, it provided a home for Mernissi's divorced aunts who would have been homeless had they not come into the harem. Mernissi also discusses how the harem is a safe place for women to come together in love and support of each other. In addition, Harem was a place where a man sheltered his family, his wife or wives, and children and relatives. It could be a house or a tent, and it referred both to the space and to the people who lived within it. In a subtle way, Memissi makes the harem look like a home more than anything else. She does this as she writes in the voice of a

child, a child who is normally protected by a so-called naivety, yet, delivers rather sharp critiques of the oppressive ways a harem controls the lives of the women inside it. On the other hand, even though living in the harem clearly depicts men and women's roles as not equal, many of the women prefer this traditional structure. This in turn leads the women to be very resistant to new ideas about feminism and the women's liberation movement in Morocco. The older women generally felt though the harem protects their cultural identity as Moroccan women, the liberation movement would have the potential to devastate that identity. However, the younger generation in the harem, are more prone to questioning these traditional customs, as obviously detected in yasmina's character that is much more open to learning about women's rights and shows her hunger to challenge the traditional gender roles in Morocco. The different viewpoints that Mernissi was exposed to, greatly shaped how she viewed feminism and her motivation to continually support the pushing of boundaries until women were given equal rights.

Mernissi herself does not fully realize the limitations put upon her until she notices how she and her cousin Samir were treated differently. They were both close in age but Samir was allowed more freedom because he was a boy and she, as a girl, needed to be protected. Her childhood experiences of harem life permitted her to depict the word harem as a sheltered and dull space that allows few freedoms. From within, young Fatima sends messages to inform the outside world about the lives of women inside the harem doors that she qualifies as a frustrating place. Indeed, it is through the children's voices in this memoir that she discovers and defines the word "harem". For Mernissi, the female voices of the book represent the paradigmatic figure of the trapped woman, who, by practicing powerful speech and questioning the limitations placed on her, saves her own life and changes the course of all women in her community/nation; thereby becoming a model for Arab women in the contemporary world. In the same vein, Mernissi consciously pursues a project of cultural decolonization by challenging old notions of sexuality and permanence across time and space, and offers a potentially transformative concept of

women's space in society. That's the reason why she admires the *femme fatale*, Tamou, who defies the borders established by men.

Mernissi explains that the strength of Arab women as understood by Arab men actually underscores their fears of women's power and thus creates a reason for them to justify and maintain harems. In this respect, she fervently defies patriarchy and reveals the perception Arab women have of themselves as superwomen capable of dealing with tragic situations when men are not around. She challenges established norms to measure the cultural attributes of Arab women and addresses their values with information and guidelines derived from within their culture. As a theoretician defining women's cultural spaces, she defies the boundaries created by man by leading her readers into the confusions created by Western errors of judgment.

Fatima Memissi's autobiographical *Dreams of Trespass*, presents the women in her family as exemplary symbols of Arab women's personal energy and effectiveness as agents of colonial-to-postcolonial cultural transformations. As agents of transition, their source of strength and power is certainly contested and questioned by men within new national laws. According to Mernissi, the past is full of stories told to her inside the harem, and it is on these stories that she has built her formal image of the woman she aspires to see in society, the reason for which she reviews the details and allows space on each character to give a clear image of the Moroccan woman whose aspirations and dreams were to unlock the doors and trespass on the borders of the harem. She goes on to believe that the tales' function as a source of solidarity and power within the rank of women, and it is through the ancestral oral heritage of women's tales that Arab women have learned and internalized this strength to reinforce their wisdom and resist the real presence of a male-dominated society.

5.2. The Religious Representation of Women in *Dreams of Trespass*

Through her rich and grand works, Fatima Memissi offers us, exemplary passages to illustrate her theoretical and sociological points of view. Faithful to the principles of Islam, she is

recognized in the Arab world for her insightful and fair review of women's rights and family rights, the overall is based on her endeavors in both research and interpretation of the Qur'an. Thus, in her scholarly research she treats the *Qur'an* as the holy book and the religious text as a political and cultural reference upon which she builds a theoretical premise. One of her most audacious efforts has been to challenge the orthodox interpretations of Islam. She attaches a great significance to religious beliefs, likewise, she strongly believes in equal rights for women, but her perception of "rights" does not emerge exclusively from European, liberal thought, but from an absolutely Islamic framework. In reinterpreting Islam, she begins by offering a very radical, and indeed, unconventional, view of Islam. Islam, she says, is "a set of psychological devices about self-empowerment and making oneself at home everywhere around the globe, in unfamiliar as well as familiar surroundings". (Fatima Mernissi, 1987)

Her works is primarily based on her representations of Moroccan women within an Islamic context that codifies women's positions not as the weak gender, but as pillars of societal strength, as known by Arab culture. However, the perception of the Arab woman as the other strong and fulfilling sex may pose a problem to the Western cliché that can circumvent the limits of Western sexism and racism. Mernissi's attempts for reinterpreting the religious texts demonstrate her Islamic cultural and political stance. In her works, she embarked upon a wide-ranging analysis of the canonical texts of Islam and Islamic history to question the paradigm for gender equality from within an Islamic background so as to reform the existing patriarchal system. She simply questioned Islam as a religion dominated by male elites particularly scholars and rulers, which pushed her to persistently seek to trespass those boundaries ascribed by Arab-Muslim patriarchal regimes. The reason why we see appealing terms as often ubiquitous in most of her works as (Harem, veil, Scheherazade, Hu dud, and Islam). Indeed, Mernissi's writings allocate fundamental questions related to the traditional masculinity of the male elite and its impact on gender equality in Morocco. What she demands is a solicitation to all stakeholders of a

re-reading of historical and traditional masculinity, which is as she asserts founded on traditional narratives, and to scrutinize ways and means to better comprehend the evolution of cultural praxis relating to the reformulation of societal/constitutional reform agendas and to measure its impact on gender inequality in post-colonial communities.

In a deep analysis, the majority of Mernissi's thoughts denounces the sexual roles ascribed to men/women and suggests elucidations to overhaul lesions that have damaged the very foundations of the social organization of Arab societies. To this effect, most of her works, questioned how, in highly codified cultures and societies, traditional masculinity engenders the heterosexual roles of family support attributed to men as diligent overseers, charged with social tasks and with moral responsibilities to support the needs of their nuclear and extended families. While satisfying such roles, they are thus expected to act as promoters of a widespread "cultural unconscious," generating normative social cast and promulgating model ethical and cultural norms. To this end, we perceive in Mernissi's work, her theoretical, political, social and empirical endeavours a cultured model of political governance with a clear social reform agenda, tools of a modernized democracy, all designed in a new technology of knowledge, implementing radical narratives of tempered masculinity, gender equality and social justice, all expertly phrased as "gendocracy", to borrow Najib Mokhtari's word.

Her best-seller, *Dream of the Trespass: Tales of a Harem Girlhood*, is clearly written with a "Western" audience in mind to give a sample representation of the Moroccan woman in particular, and to mainly dis-orient the orientalist views about women's inferiority in Islam and the nuanced meaning of the "harem" that is not like any other harem we read about in the *Arabian Nights* and other exotic texts in Egyptian and Turkish royal castles. Indeed, the orientalist discourse represents Muslims as promiscuous, and their women, victims of male oppression. The western colonizers took up the issue of women's dishonored condition in Arab societies as a rhetorical tool for legitimating their imperial domination. In doing so, they, not

only challenged the Arab culture, but also their faith, locating in Islam the reasons for the humiliating condition of women in the Islamic world. Mernissi obviously locates the prevalent stereotypical perceptions of Islam in orientalist writings, and seeks to deconstruct that discourse, to recover Islam within a profound, human context, sensitive to the concerns of women, and seeking to create a society based on gender equality. Hence, her authoritative works testify to the equality of women as it is stated in the Qur'an. In this regard, she asserts that Islam recognizes men and women as being potentially the same as far as rights are concerned. Like other Islamic feminists, she offers women-oriented gender-sensitive interpretations of Islam.

However, over the centuries, civilizations have fallen into erroneous interpretations in favor of patriarchal political systems. Arab women appear as a voice and a force to advance their positions in a postcolonial and global context. They recognize and seize cultural and political opportunities while remaining resolute and pursuing their freedom and rights in colonial-to-postcolonial transition.

Mernissi's main concern is to put on the fore the Moroccan women's dreams of national and personal independence outside the harem. Women inside the harem are not presented by Mernissi as victims of traditions and patriarchal rule in Western stereotypical perceptions, but agents of change during turbulent transitions in Moroccan history. To illustrate further, as a modern Scheherazade, Mernissi addresses Western audiences and begins by making a comparative assessment of women in the western and the Arab world, and comes to the conclusion that at both places, the position of women is clearly inferior and subordinate to men. Even in the Western world, a woman is perceived to be inferior to men, both physically and mentally. She goes on to explain that in the Islamic world, gender inequalities do not happen from a belief in their weakness, but, quite the contrary, in their power, and dangerous potential. With subtlety, she figures out Arab women's predicament under Islamic law, their abilities to enforce justice, and their capabilities of forward movement in a modern world. To understand the

concept of the harem between East and West, Mernissi represents an Eastern idea by giving her grandmother's impressions of harem life as a sheltered and dull space that allows few freedoms. Mernissi describes the frustration felt by her mother and other women with the restrictions of harem life and how they suffocate inside altogether. In a word, the harem is depicted as an authorized prison. "For my grandmother Yasmina, the harem was a cruel institution that sharply curtailed her rights" (Mernissi, 2001, p. 2).

Likewise, she portrays Moroccan women through her female characters as helpless creatures that are trapped within the shackles of male relatives as embodied in the harem caretaker, father, uncles, and mainly in the religion and the culture of which those males are the trusty lugs and protectors. In fact, *Dreams of Trespass* demonstrates how F. Mernissi's childhood was impacted by her mother and grandmother's livelihood inside the closed doors of the harem on the one hand, and how the city and country harems impacted her girlhood efforts to conduct a productive and promising career that her mother dreamed of but couldn't attain because it lay beyond the harem's guarded gate. Mernissi's place in the harem signifies her place in Moroccan history. Her success and her writing career claim an identity exemplifying her nations' development and cultural change. She effectively emerges from complex political and cultural transformations as a link in the chain of female narratives with the freedom to publish her writings and pursue a profession. To this end, she devoted her time and energy to stand as a pillar of internal change for the benefit of a whole community. Her writings address audiences of Arab males, Western feminists, and ethnocentric theorists to underscore narratives and critiques about Arab women's realities, from past to present.

F. Mernissi remains by far the most outspoken and highly respected voice of women writers and thinkers in Morocco and beyond. Her writings invoke an Islamic reference within a gradually emancipatory feminist discourse. She stands as a prominent arbitrator offering an opportunity for a real, potential synthesis of the dominant debates from both within and without.

Activities:

- Show how F. Mernissi gave voice to the Voiceless through her memoir “Dreams of Trespass” and how confident she was about Arab Muslim women’s case and their capacity to speak for themselves although they were/are the outcome of harem.
- Considered by many as the woman who has given confidence to the idea of an Islamic feminism and its struggles for human dignity, equality, and social justice, at a time when Western feminism remained Eurocentric anti-religious, and not Third Worldist enough. Explain.

Literature has always been a mirror of its society and its societal values. Therefore, the presence of women in the realm of literature, as well as the role they play within it, can only further enhance these values. Paradoxically, women are not considered literary characters or writers as Osterhaus (1987) summarizes that most well-known and well-respected writers throughout history have been men, resulting in, he continues “images of women in literature that are products of a creative process that has a limited perspective” (p.1). Likewise, women’s belittlement is observed not only in literature but in all other spheres of the social scales, be they cultural, social, religious, economic or political.

The election of Benazir Bhutto as a Prime Minister in Pakistan in 1988 irritated some Muslim conservative scholars and objected to the fact that a woman can lead a country. Mernissi wanted to make sure that this was a mere patriarchal stance and not an Islamic standpoint. She went into history to come out with a book entitled *The Forgotten Queens of Islam* (1993) to fund and support her argument of Muslim women past contribution and their incessant wholehearted involvement in socio-political and economic affairs of their societies.

Moreover, and despite the profound effect of the feminist movement since the 1970s on world culture, Arab societies are still primarily male-dominated, and men’s hegemony is still predominant. Women are constantly beheld hostile to achieving cultural equality. Nevertheless, this new generation of feminist/women writers has highlighted the strengths of women and

dispelled taboos deeply rooted in their weaknesses. Today, the new woman emerging in the new writings *defies* and dissociates herself totally from the traditional concepts of women such as the idea that women are weak and unable to maintain a family after the disappearance of her male supplier. Definitely, the 21st century Arab woman has overcome most of the obstacles, restraints, and constraints and has defeated most of the difficulties to modify the archaic portrait designed and moulded for her as being a minor and a marginalized gender. The current Arab woman has found for herself a place in her society and she is well welcomed worldwide thanks to her accomplishments, creativity, originality and the affirmed talent she naturally possesses.

Whether they write in English or in Arabic or in any other language, Arab women writers have recreated the feminine cause within the folds of their literature. Their creativity has proved a resounding success and has gained them international recognition and universal acclaim. The late feminist author Fatima Mernissi, for example, is now considered a pride for Moroccan/Arab women for the great challenge she has carried upon her pen and the empirical research she has undertaken to defend the true representation of Arab women.

Activities

- a- Situate Arab women's writing in Arab literary history.
- b- In your own words, briefly summarize the first historical parts discussed in this chapter.
- c- Appreciate the meanings of some of these texts within their social, cultural and political contexts
- d- Read, understand and interpret key Arab literary texts of some of the cited authors and identify their characteristic & stylistic features as mentioned in the chapter.
- e- Explore some of the mentioned writer's specificity and their literary creativeness, both of which express Arab women writers' complex identity.

- f- Develop conceptual tools for understanding, researching and critically reflecting on Fatima Mernissi's texts.
- g- Demonstrate how rewriting the feminine identity was central to the writing of Moroccan women and to their desire for social justice and democratic ideals to initiate and bring reform.
- h- Show how F. Mernissi gave voice to the Voiceless through her memoir "Dreams of Trespass" and how confident she was about Arab Muslim women's case and their capacity to speak for themselves although they were/are the outcome of harem.
- i- Considered by many as the woman who has given confidence to the idea of an Islamic feminism and its struggles for human dignity, equality, and social justice, at a time when Western feminism remained Eurocentric anti-religious, and not Third Worldist enough. Explain.
- j- Appreciate the meanings of some of these texts within their social, cultural and political contexts

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Chapter 5: Research methodology in Gender studies

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Researchers, particularly students in higher education, face difficulties in understanding research and applying the right tools. In fact, a good knowledge of research methodology is essential for undertaking a valid study. With more knowledge of research methods, students are likely to develop a conceptual framework and conduct research with confidence.

This chapter, then, aims at presenting basic concepts and terminologies in a simple and easy way to reduce students' anxiety about research. Moreover, it seeks to equip students with the necessary tools and instruments to conduct their research and provides students with the necessary training in gathering material, and participating in fieldwork.

The chapter starts with a background of different concepts in research, the types of research as well as the main steps in research methodology. Then, it introduces research methodology to students of gender studies in order to be familiar with research from a gender perspective and to be well equipped with the right tools to conduct research in their field. Finally, it familiarizes students with techniques for the collection of the data appropriate to particular problems.

1. An overview of Research Methodology

Doing research may be driven by different motives. People desire to investigate into a problem in order to find solutions, to get diplomas, to get intellectual joy or to get respectability (Kothari, 1990).

Singh (2006) categorizes research objectives into three Fundamental objectives:

- Theoretical objectives: the aim of the researchers is to formulate new theories, principles, or laws
- Factual Objectives: These researchers aim to find out new facts.
- Application objectives: Researchers having application objectives do not contribute a new

knowledge in the field of human knowledge but suggest new applications, improvement and modification.

Accordingly, the aim of research is to explore, describe, or diagnose a specific problem. To this end, research can be undertaken for the following reasons: (1) To gain familiarity with a phenomenon or to achieve new insights into it; (2) to portray accurately the characteristics of a particular individual, situation or a group; (3) to determine the frequency with which something occurs or with which it is associated with something else; (4) to test a hypothesis of a causal relationship between variables. (Kothari, 2004)

1. 1. Concepts and definitions

1.1.1. Research

Research is a systematic search for relevant information on a specific topic. It is a method of critical thinking. It is “a collaborative human activity in which social reality is studied objectively with the aim of gaining a valid understanding of it.” (Mouton & Marais, 1996) To this end, research is the pursuit of new knowledge through study, observations, comparison and experiment. It is a continuous quest for solutions to problems through planned and systematic data collection, analysis and interpretation (Kothari, 2004) in order to solve a problem, acquire intellectual knowledge, or face a challenge. A good research needs to be significant and contribute to knowledge. It should bring original information.

1.1.2. Research Methodology

To carry on research, the researcher needs to decide which theory or model is most appropriate to investigate a certain subject, which research hypotheses may be formulated on the basis of the selected theory or model, which measuring instruments and data-collection methods can be used, and how the collected data should be analyzed (Mouton & Marais, 1996).

Methodology, then, is a system of explicit rules and procedures adopted by researchers. It

is a systematic technique of how to conduct research and a scientific way of answering questions and testing hypotheses.

Research methodology provides the researcher with the opportunity to study and understand the subject deeply and think critically. It is the scientific analysis and study of research methods.

1.1.3. Research Methods

To undertake the research process, researchers use specific methods, techniques or procedures to gather information. Hence, the choice of effective and appropriate research methods can guarantee the collection of quality information. These methods can be qualitative, quantitative or both. While some methods are related to the collection of data, others pertain to the analysis of the data.

1.2. Types of Research

The purposes of research are different. Therefore, research types vary according to our purposes. Some types of research can be identified according to method such as **Primary Research** (questionnaires-observations-interviews) and **Secondary Research** (data already available-literature review). On the other hand, other types are classified in terms of application, objectives, and mode of inquiry.

1.2.1. Application

Applied Research or Action research aims at using existing knowledge for finding solutions for a specific question or a problem. The researcher is actually working with the topic/subjects while conducting the research. Generally, applied research focuses on "practical problems" in order to come up with solutions to better or improve an existing condition.

Basic Research or Fundamental research is concerned with discovering new knowledge or the formulation of a theory. It involves researching for the sake of increasing

knowledge as opposed to applied where the research truly is intended to solve a problem. Basic Research is often called "pure" research and is considered the foundation for applied research.

1.2.2. Objectives

Descriptive research is also called statistical research. The main goal of this type of research is to describe the data and characteristics about what is being studied. The idea behind this type of research is to study frequencies, averages, and other statistical calculations. Although this research is highly accurate, it does not gather the causes behind a situation.

Exploratory research: is a type of research conducted because a problem has not been clearly defined. Exploratory research helps determine the best research design, data collection methods, and selection of subjects. Given that it is fundamental in nature, exploratory research often concludes that a perceived problem does not actually exist.

Explanatory research: explores "why," and attempts to explain as the purposes of explanatory research. It builds on exploratory and descriptive research and further identifies the reasons for something that occurs. It looks for causes and reasons.

1.2.3. Inquiry mode

Qualitative Research, Quantitative Research and Mixed or Multiple methods.

Quantitative Research: known as structured research refers to numerical, measurable data. It is concerned with the measurement of attitudes, behaviors and perceptions. It is based on statistical analysis and large samples through the use of large-scale survey research. Accordingly, this approach uses methods such as online surveys, questionnaires or structured interviews to reach as many people as possible.

Quantitative research:

Means the data is collected and analyzed in terms of numbers.

Predicts and explains data in the form of statistical analysis.

Uses the numerical method to analysis and interpret the results.

Finds out the relationship among quantifiable variables and the results are inferred.

Qualitative Research known as unstructured research refers to non-numerical data, observations of a natural setting. According to this method, people are best observed in social and cultural contexts. It produces narrative descriptions of the phenomena under study. Hence, it is interpretive and descriptive as it attempts to get an in-depth opinion from participants; it aims at exploring their attitudes, beliefs, motivations, behaviours and experiences. It focuses on the complexity of meanings that participants bring to their experience of clinical practice rather than testing a hypothesis or leading to generalizations.

Qualitative research methods include focus groups, in-depth interviews, observation research, and case studies. **Qualitative research** can be used to study past events or current events. When used for past events, it is specifically called **historical research**. The main features of qualitative research are:

- It is conducted to have an insight and better understanding of not only the current situation but also why it is so.
- It is more open and responsive to the research participants.
- It uses a variety of methods and data collection strategies.
- It offers opportunities for descriptive and exploratory studies.

Qualitative research uses small sample and may not be representative of the general population. However, it may be transferable to similar context.

There is a lot of debate and discussion in social sciences methodology over qualitative versus quantitative inquiry and which one is better and more scientific (Dawson, 2009). The difference between the two approaches is not limited to how data are treated analytically. In fact, it all depends on the questions researchers define at the start and on the specific methodologies they choose to obtain the desired data. Indeed all methodologies have strengths and weaknesses

and the choice will depend on the research problem and objectives.

The mixed Approach

The Mixed approach refers to the combination of quantitative and qualitative research methods. For instance, a research team may use quantitative chart-based data reviews in collaboration with participant's interviews in order to get a more textured picture of reported participants outcomes and participants-reported outcomes. Through combining the methodologies, you can benefit from both the validity of quantitative analysis (answering the "what") as well as the depth of understanding of qualitative analysis (answering the "how" and "why"). Another term that is used here is triangulation which refers to combining qualitative and quantitative forms of inquiry. [SEP]

1.3. Research process

The aim of methodology is to help understand, in the broadest possible terms, not the products of scientific inquiry but the process itself. Indeed, the research process is a series of closely related stages or steps that are undertaken to carry out research. It involves asking the following questions (Dawson, 2009):

What is your research?

Why do you want to do research?

Who are your participants/respondents?

Where are you going to conduct your research?

When are your going to conduct your research?

How are your going to collect your data (Methodology)?

Based on the aforementioned questions, the main steps of research are as follows:

- (1) Stating the problem;
- (2) Reviewing the literature;
- (3) Determining the research design;

- (4) Collecting data;
- (5) Analyzing the data
- (6) Presenting the results.

Before embarking in research, a problem needs to be clearly recognized in order to define what information is further required not just what information already exists. Stating the problem is a crucial step in research.

1.3.1. Stating the problem

A research problem is “the issue that exists in the literature, theory, or practice that leads to a need for the study.” (Creswell, 1994, p. 50) In other words, a problem statement is a situation or an issue that needs a solution. It may be referred to as the gap of knowledge that needs to be filled. It is the central point of a research as it generates the research questions that the study aims to answer. It provides the foundation and the context for what follows. It focuses on some variables and not others.

Problem statements generally include three elements:

- The problem stated clearly with details of why it is important.
- The method of solving the problem (stated as a claim or thesis).
- The statement of objective and scope of the project.

The research problem might not be easy to establish. However, it provides a direction for the entire process. It goes through phases:

- selecting an area of interest and a research topic from personal experience, previous research, literature, or interest in a particular area, etc.

Researchers should find a topic that they are interested in and that they love because they could be working on it for years. The topic should be researchable, interesting and relevant. Actually, an essential step in the research process is to narrow a broad topic of interest into a specific research problem.

The stage of stating the problem is primordial for the subsequent steps; it will help determine the variables needed in the data collection and to define the methodology to be used.

- Choose a defined problem and ask more specific questions. Write the problem statement.
- Choose research design.

Criteria for selecting a good research problem:

- Research problems should be unique and provide innovative knowledge or fill a gap in the research literature.
- Data should be available
- The researcher should be interested in the problem: it is important to stay interested because research can be a long process.
- The problem needs to have theoretical and practical value.

Formulating research questions

The research question asks about a problem or issue that can be examined and analyzed to yield useful new information. It should provide answers that explain, describe, identify, substantiate, predict or qualify (Brink, 1994)

In order to focus your research question, you need to:

- Define your core concepts: remove ambiguity from your key concepts.
- What is the time frame?
- What is the geographical location?
- What aspect of the topic are you interested in?
- What is your unit of analysis?

Stating the hypothesis

A hypothesis is a statement about the predicted relationships among events or variables. In developing the hypothesis, you can be influenced by any of a number of sources, such as an

existing theory, related research, or even personal experience.

The formulation of a hypothesis provides a study with focus. It tells you what specific aspects of a research problem to investigate and what data to collect and what not to collect, thereby providing focus to the study.

1.3.2. Reviewing the literature (Review concepts and theories/Review previous studies and findings)

The review of literature is a fundamental part in the research process. It is the foundation for the new insight the researcher attempts to contribute. It provides a theoretical background for the research purpose and paves the way towards developing the methodology to be used. The review of the related literature helps fill in a theoretical or research gap in the discipline, clarify a conflict between theories, or explore an inconsistency in research findings.

A review of literature gives a theoretical rationale of the problem under study. It shows that the researcher is capable of conducting research and is familiar with the literature. Moreover, it indicates possible gaps that the present study might be needed to fill in the literature.

The literature review serves two purposes. First, it should convince the reader that the researcher is familiar with the literature and competent to conduct investigations. Second, it should convince the reader that the proposed study fits into the existing body of knowledge and explain how the proposed study is needed to fill a gap in the literature (Vanderstoep and Johnston, 2009).

It provides knowledge of experts in the field and permits the researcher to be acquainted with concepts and theories as well as previous empirical studies conducted in the same area of interest. A review of literature needs to be exhaustive in order to identify the gaps. One source might lead to another great source. It focuses on synthesizing and summarizing arguments advanced by other scholars in the field.

The review of literature consists of reading academic papers and articles. Hence, evaluating

information and ideas, and deciding what to accept and believe is highly recommended. A technique to evaluate information, decide on what to accept and believe, and handle complex opposing ideas is critical thinking. This involves asking questions about the relevance of sources to the area of research and the research problem, their credibility and authority as well as their recentness. In fact, we need to think critically to deeply understand and make sense of academic texts.

A literature review shows your readers that you have an in-depth grasp of your subject; and that you understand where your own research fits into and adds to an existing body of agreed knowledge.

A literature review has four main objectives:

- It surveys the literature in your chosen area of study
- It synthesizes the information in that literature into a summary
- It critically analyses the information gathered by identifying gaps in current knowledge; by showing limitations of theories and points of view; and by formulating areas for further research and reviewing areas of controversy
- It presents the literature in an organized way.

The four main objectives can be explained in a different way. A literature review:

- Demonstrates a familiarity with a body of knowledge and establishes the credibility of your work.
- Summarizes prior research and says how your project is linked to it.
- Integrates and summarizes what is known about a subject.
- Demonstrates that you have learnt from others and that your research is a starting point for new ideas.

1.3.3. Determining the research design

Research design is the conceptual structure within which research would be conducted. The function of research design is to provide for the collection of relevant information with minimal expenditure of effort, time and money.

The preparation of research design, appropriate for a particular research problem, involves the consideration of the following:

- Objectives of the research study
- Method of Data Collection to be adopted^[1]
- Source of information—Sample Design^[2]
- Tool for Data collection^[3]
- Data Analysis-- qualitative and quantitative

1.3.4. Collecting the Data

Having formulated the research problem, developed a study design, constructed a research instrument and selected a sample, the data from which inferences and conclusions will be drawn for the study is collected. There are two types of data. Primary Data are collected for the first time. Secondary Data have already been collected and analyzed by someone else. Interviews, questionnaires, experiments and/or observations might be used. ^[4]

Collecting data through any of the methods may involve some ethical issues in relation to the participants and the researcher. Those from whom information is collected or those who are studied by a researcher become *participants* of the study. ^[5] Anyone, who collects information for a specific purpose adhering to the accepted code of conduct, is a *researcher*. The data collection stage of research involves making a choice about the population of elements that will be the target of the study.

1.3.5. Analyzing the data

Analyzing data will depend on whether the researcher has chosen to conduct qualitative or quantitative research. For quantitative data analysis, issues of validity and reliability are important. On the other hand, Qualitative data analysis is a very personal process. Qualitative researchers might acknowledge that participants are influenced by taking part in the research process. Similarly, they might admit that researchers bring their own preferences and experience to the project

Analyzing data involves a number of closely related operations which are performed with the purpose of summarizing the collected data and organizing these in a manner that they answer the research questions and objectives.

1.3.6. Presenting the results.

This stage involves informing the world about the results and conclusions drawn regarding the tenability of the hypotheses. In this stage, the answer to the research question should be clear. The information learned in the current study might then stimulate new questions or new hypotheses for subsequent studies. The questions that should be asked here are:

- Did the researcher achieve his/her research objectives?
- What are the strengths and weaknesses of the research?

To sum, this section dealt with the concept of research, different types of research and the process of research in social studies in general. The following section will focus on research in relation with gender studies.

2. Gender and Research

This chapter is a guide to help young researchers beginning a career in gender studies to embark in gender research. Research methodology in gender studies considers gender as a crucial and significant variable. It focuses on the experiences of men and women and the similarities and differences between them. The goal of research in gender is to give value to both sexes and fight against gender inequalities.

2.1. Gender

The concept of gender involves sexual differentiation and the reproduction of inequalities between men and women in various fields. This has led to the emergence of different theories and methods. The choice of a method or another becomes an issue in itself when the phenomenon is subject to a gender analysis.

Feminist research makes the differences and dominations between males and females the center of research questions and analysis for the aim of “developing theories that advance practices of gender justice” (Somekh and Lewin, 2005, p. 66). The so-called “scientific” method was unquestioned because

- It allows for the objective collection of facts by a value-neutral researcher
- Reality is out there and the researcher can discover the truth independent of observer effects. However, this has been challenged by the feminist critique.

According to Somekh and Lewin (2005), Feminist research has been at the forefront of challenging the silencing of women’s voices in society and research and in challenging a narrow, gendered kind of science, which cast women in passive and subordinate roles and excluded them from scientific practices by virtue of them being ‘emotional’ and hence incapable of ‘reason’. Crucially, feminist research aspires to be for women as much as it is about women. (p. 66)

In fact, since feminist research aims to create social change, it involves an ongoing criticism of non-feminist scholarship and is guided by feminist theory. Weiner (1994) offers three principles as a guide: feminist research involves a critique of unexamined assumptions about women and dominant forms of knowing and doing; it involves a commitment to improve life chances for girls and women; and it is concerned with developing equitable professional and personal practices. It is thus critical, political and praxis-oriented. (p. 66)

2.2. Feminist Critique

Some writers such as Hammersley (1992) have challenged the foundations of the feminist

methodology and criticized the basic components on which feminists laid their foundations concluding that the arguments in support of a feminist methodology do not establish it as a coherent and cogent alternative to non-feminist research. However, it is widely recognized now that the feminist approach has brought substantial gains to the development of social research through the positive and creative production of knowledge and should not be undermined (Ramazanoglu, 1992).

All research involves some element of the researcher's personhood in terms of values, opinions, interests, approaches, etc. Since biased research includes the use of male-only respondents. Feminist research suggests that research:

- should focus on the need for research to mean something, to lead to change in women's lives.
- is not research about women but research for women to be used in transforming their society.
- should give continuous and reflexive attention to the significance of gender as an aspect of all social life and within research.
- should value the personal and the private as worthy of study.
- should focus on both women's and men's experience

The "scientific" approach is also criticized because of the focus on theory testing. Instead, research should be **ethnographic** and describe "life as it is" from which theories should be developed. The "Grounded Theory" developed from data and aims to be faithful to the reality of situations. The researcher does not develop a theory then proves it, but allows the relevant theory to emerge.

Feminist researchers challenge the way methods are used rather than the methods themselves. Feminist researchers use not only the face-to-face interview but other qualitative & quantitative methods as well.

According to Margrit Eichler (1988), sound research related to gender is threatened by five dangers:

- a- **Androcentricity**: refers to approaching an issue from a male perspective # gynocentricity: seeing the world from a female perspective.
- b- **Overgeneralizing**: occurs when research that focuses on members of one sex is used to support conclusions about both sexes.
- c- **Gender Insensitivity**: refers to the failure of researchers to consider the variable of gender at all. As is evident throughout many writings, social forces often affect men and women quite differently.
- d- **Double Standards**: researchers must be careful not to distort what they study by evaluating women and men using different standards.
- e- **Interference**: Beyond affecting researchers, gender often shapes the attitudes of subjects, which can also distort a study. *Interference*" occurs if a subject reacts to the sex of the researcher rather than to the research itself.

3. Methods of Data Collection: Data collection instruments

Methods involve that range of approaches used in scientific research to gather data which are to be used as a basis for inference and interpretation, for explanation and prediction. The word refers to those techniques for eliciting responses to predetermined questions, recording measurements, describing phenomena and performing experiments. It could be extended to include participant observation, roleplaying and non-directive interviewing. This section covers the main instruments used in research, particularly the most popular ones used in gender studies.

3.1. Questionnaires

A questionnaire is a basic method to collect data. Questionnaires are a form of quantitative research and have been widely discussed in research methodology. Davies and Mosdell (2006) state, "A questionnaire is one of the simplest and quickest ways of getting

information from large numbers of people and, with modern versions of statistical software, it can be a very easy instrument both to design and [analyse]” (p. 78). A questionnaire is a way to know what people think, do and know and to discover their attitudes, beliefs and tastes. It should be based on the hypotheses and the research questions, and the construction of the questions asked must relate to the aims of the overall study.

Constructing questions

Writing questions is an essential task in designing a questionnaire. The literature about questionnaires and how to design questions shows a general agreement about the characteristics of questions. In fact, some scholars in research methodology such as Wimmer and Dominick (1997), Berger (2000), Neuman (2004), and Davies and Mosdell (2006), to name but a few, widely agree that good questions are clear, succinct, simple and unambiguous so that respondents understand them. In addition to keeping the questions short and to the point, there are a number of problems that should be avoided.

Questions to avoid

Respondents need to answer questions without being embarrassed or confused in order to maximize the accuracy of answers. To achieve this goal, some mistakes have to be avoided while writing the questions.

Although the task is not as simple as it appears, it is highly recommended to avoid biased questions which reveal the beliefs and opinions of the researcher and impose them in a way or another on respondents. A similar kind to biased questions is leading questions, in which respondents are led to choose the answer that the researcher wants.

Another kind of questions to keep away from is the double-barreled questions; these ask two or more questions at the same time such as the question: Do you think billboards are attractive and informative? This question should be separated into two parts, and only one piece of information should be included in a question.

In addition to the above problems, researchers should make sure their respondents do not feel threatened or embarrassed by sensitive questions for which they might find no answer. Another matter to keep in mind is trying to avoid Jargon and technical terms which are beyond respondents' capabilities and only a few respondents might know. One more factor that can make respondents feel at ease with the questionnaire is the clarity and simplicity of instructions. In fact, the researcher should provide clear instructions for completing the questionnaire by indicating to respondent whether they should circle, tick, or cross the answer and by giving an example when necessary.

Although constructing questions is not an easy task, efforts should be made so that the questionnaire looks easy and attractive. A critical step that contributes to that is deciding on the types of questions to be asked. These types include, among others:

- **Open-ended questions**
- **Close-ended questions**
- **Choice questions**
- **Likert scale**
- **Checklists**

Advantages and disadvantages of questionnaires

The advantages of questionnaires explain why they are widely used. In fact, questionnaires are designed to quickly and easily obtain information from people in a non-threatening way. They can be inexpensive and easy to analyze. They are also familiar to most people and less intrusive than telephone or face-to-face surveys. Likewise, they can be administered to large groups of respondents at the same time and can be sent to a wide geographical area, which helps to save time, energy, and money (Munn & Drever, 1990). Moreover, respondent can complete the questionnaire when it is convenient and can take their time to consider questions without feelings of threat or embarrassment.

In spite of all these advantages, some problems might be encountered. For example, the conditions under which the questionnaire is completed cannot be controlled and it is not possible to observe the respondent's reaction to the question or offer help when needed. Therefore, the researcher might end up with incomplete or superficial information. Another problem is that questionnaires are not suited for the illiterate (Seliger and Shohamy, 1989).

Overall, like any other data collection technique, questionnaires can have advantages and limitations. Nevertheless, they are a popular means of collecting data in different types of research. To see if this research instrument is well designed and to avoid serious problems as for the design and comprehension of the questionnaire, a vital stage to go through before starting data collection is piloting or pre-testing. Piloting consists of testing the questionnaire on some people in an attempt to refine the questions before deciding on a final version.

3. 2. Interviews

This second method of data collection is the interview which can be done face to face as is normally done or it can be a phone interview or even online. It is probably the most widely used method employed in qualitative research, a central resource for social science.

The interview is a more flexible form than the questionnaire and, if intelligently used, can generally be used to gather information of greater depth and can be more sensitive to contextual variations in meaning.

Interviews provide a qualitative method of gathering evidence, data or information. Responses are not usually expressed in numerical terms, as might be the case with questionnaires. The questions though should be focused, clear and they should encourage open-ended responses. The latter mean that the researcher doesn't restrict the interviewees to some responses by giving them options and letting them give any variety of answers. It is mainly qualitative in nature.

If you are planning to carry out interviews as part of a research project, the first things to

consider are whom you will interview, what kind of information you want to obtain, and the type of interview that will help you to do that. The following section discusses the types of interviews.

Types of Interviews

Unstructured interview. It contains many open-ended questions, which are not asked in a structured, precise manner. Different evaluators interpret questions and often offer different explanations when respondents ask for clarification.

- Semi-structured interview. The interviewer has a list of questions or key points to be covered and works through them in a methodical manner. Similar questions are asked of each interviewee, although supplementary questions can be asked as appropriate. The interviewee can respond how they like and does not have to 'tick a box' with their answer.
- Structured interview. The interviewer asks the interviewee a series of specific questions, to which a fixed range of answers are possible ('ticking a box'). This is the typical form of interview used in social survey research, and can provide quantitative data, as in a questionnaire.

The structured interview is at the quantitative end of the scale, and more used in survey approaches. The rest of the scale, semi-structured and unstructured, is the area occupied by qualitative researchers, with the interviews characterized by increasing levels of flexibility and lack of structure.

Feminist research has often been characterized as *qualitative* research *by* women *on* women and *for* women, but feminists also conduct quantitative research and research on men, and men can conduct research adopting feminist perspectives. Nonetheless, many feminist researchers are concerned with giving voice to women's own accounts of their understandings, experiences and interests, which gives them a strong link to the phenomenological approaches discussed above.

In this respect there are arguments not only that a feminist approach has a special affinity with qualitative interviews, but also that feminism has made major contributions to reshaping how qualitative interviewing is understood more broadly.

3. 3. Focus groups

What is a focus group discussion?

Focus groups are a form of group interviewing, but it is important to distinguish between the two. Group interviewing involves interviewing a number of people at the same time, the emphasis being on questions and responses between the researcher and participants. Focus groups however rely on interaction within the group based on topics that are supplied by the researcher. Hence the key characteristic, which distinguishes focus groups, is the insight and data produced by the interaction between participants.

Focus group is a technique of data collection based on recruiting a group of 6 to 12 respondents having some characteristics in common. The goal is to stimulate a discussion and an interaction between the group's members. Focus group research involves organized discussion with a selected group of individuals to gain information about their views and experiences of a topic.

Focus groups are useful for a number of topics with gender issues

- a- Characterizing social and cultural norms
- b- Sharing and comparing (each member of the group is sharing her/his experience and during the discussion they are comparing their experience with others. This can generate insights that wouldn't be possible in a one to one exchange)
- c- Revealing how people talk about an issue (people are sitting around a table and exchanging among them selves and the researcher can listen and learn the kind of language people use, their intonation, their views about a given issue)

- d- Exploring potentially sensitive topics
- e- Explore a range of needs, thoughts and feelings that people have on a specific topic
- f- The purpose is to uncover factors that influence decisions, opinions, behavior or motivation;
- g- Explore the language people use to talk about an issue;
- h- Understand differences in perspectives between groups or categories of people (men and women, urban vs. rural citizens, etc.);
- i- Shed light on survey data already collected.

The role of moderator or group facilitator becomes critical, especially in terms of providing clear explanations of the purpose of the group, helping people feel at ease, and facilitating interaction between group members.

3.4. Observation

‘Seeing comes before words... and establishes our place in the surrounding world.’
(Berger (1972, p. 7)

Observation is a method by which researchers systematically observe people while joining in their routine activities or in their natural setting. Observation research is descriptive and often exploratory. It is normally qualitative research, inquiry based on subjective impressions. It is particularly prevalent in the social sciences and in marketing and involves directly observing behaviour (primary data) with the aim of describing it and having a deep understanding of it.

To observe means to examine an object, or an individual, or group of people, or an event with all of the senses. Recording of observations may take many forms, from simple and casual to exact and sophisticated. For example, an observer may observe an event and then complete a checklist on whether or not key behaviours occurred. Or the observer may write notes on everything that happens in his or her presence. More sophisticated recording may involve audio-

visual devices.

This kind of research usually involves the researcher "getting to know" the people they're studying by entering their world and participating in that world. It offers the opportunity to gain a deeper understanding of the group being observed. This means the researcher puts her/his-self "in the shoes" of the people under the study in an attempt to experience events in the way they experience them. It may be covert (secret: people under study don't know the observer is doing a particular study) or overt (open: people are aware they are being observed)

Observation is typically divided into naturalistic (or "nonparticipant") observation, and participant observation or structured and unstructured observation. A combination of the two criteria might be used and the researcher could choose a participant structured or participant unstructured observation as a tool to achieve his/her research.

The researcher's role may vary when adopting observation as a method of collecting data:

Participant as observer: would participate fully with the group under study, but would make it clear that he is also undertaking research.

Researcher reveals his identity of researcher and research purpose to the group. Researcher participates in the activities that the group does in daily basis.

Observer as participant: is one who identifies herself as a researcher and interacts with the participants in the social process but makes no pretense of actually being a participant.

Complete participant: may either be a genuine participant in what she is studying or pretend to be a genuine participant. People will see her only as a participant, not as a researcher.

Complete observer: observes a social process without becoming a part of it in any way. The participants in a study might not realize they are being studied because of the researcher's unobtrusiveness.

3.5. Case Study

A case doesn't have to mean just one single person but is a social unit with deviant

behavior and may be an event, problem, solution, process, activity or program of a social unit. The unit may be a person, a family, an institution, a cultural group, a community or even an entire society (Kothari, 2014).

Case study method is expressed in various sources with different terms such as casework, case-method, plan game, simulation game and decision game. It is mostly applied in business circles, social work areas, medical sciences and education.

Case studies are only one of many ways of doing social science research, with experimentation, observation, surveys and archival information each suited to a certain type of research problem, degree of experimenter control over events and historical/contemporary perspective and focus. It aims to obtain a complete and a detail account of a social phenomenon or a social event of a social unit.

Table: types of cases in a case study

Person	The study of one single individual, generally using several different research methods.
Group	The study of a single distinctive set of people, such as a family or small group of friends.
Location	The study of a particular place, and the way that it is used or regarded by people.
Organization	The study of a single organization or company, and the way that people act within it.
Event	The study of a particular social or cultural event, and the interpretations of that event by those participating in it.

In a case study, data can be collected from multiple sources by using any qualitative method of data collection (interviews, observations, documents, artifacts, etc.). Case study as a research strategy often emerges as an obvious option for new researchers. The case study researches are becoming increasingly valuable because they have had great impact on the social

sciences and there has been a growing interest in qualitative methods.

Case studies as a research method have been viewed as lacking rigour and objectivity when compared with other social research methods. On the other hand, despite this skepticism about case studies, they are widely used because they may offer insights that might not be achieved with other approaches.

Case studies have often been viewed as a useful tool for the preliminary, exploratory stage of a research project, as a basis for the development of the 'more structured' tools that are necessary in surveys and experiments.

Case studies help you to understand why people do certain things, what motivates them, how they explain what they are doing, what kind of preceding activities lead them to do certain kinds of things and in that sense, therefore, you are explaining what is going on.

3.5. Sampling

When you start a research, you should have defined your target population. All what a researcher does during the study should be limited to the population's individual/units and all the results are convenient only for the population under study and could not be adopted for any other population.

The term *population* does not necessarily refer to all the people in the town, county or state. Rather, it refers to the group or units of interest (married couples, livestock owners, students, participants in an extension program, or recipients of a newsletter series) who are found in the geographic area of interest (town, university, county, region) during the time of interest (since 2000, during 2015-2018, and so on).

In many researches, the population is too big that it becomes difficult to observe each individual/unit of the population. In such cases, we need to extract a part from the population to be subject of observations and study. This part that is really observed is called "Sample" and the procedure that helps a researcher to do so is sampling method, sampling strategy or sampling

procedure.

Sampling is the procedure that should be followed in order to produce a sample to observe from a population.

Not every sample is valid. Indeed, a sample should be representative for the population in order to be able to draw conclusion for the population from the observation of the sample only. Two aspects are to be taken into consideration when talking about sampling representativity. The first one is quantitative and concerns the sample size and the other one is related to the composition of the sample, namely the individual/units to include in the sample.

Types of sampling

There are two different ways to sample: random sampling and non-random sampling. They are also called Probabilistic sampling and non-probabilistic sampling since the first ones are based on probability to draw samples whereas the latest don't. The most important between the random and non-random sampling is the so-called "Sampling frame" that designate the list of all individual/units belonging to the population under study. If a researcher seeks to use one of the random sampling procedures, she/he should obtain a population list. In absence of this list a random sampling could no be realized.

To introduce sampling, we are going to consider an example of research conducted to investigate the attitude towards any issue related to gender (let's say violence against women) among students at a specific university. The individual/unit in this study might be "a student". The target population might be the university. What is meant by university here is "all the students of the university under study".

In this example, the list of all individual/units involved is easy to find. When this list is in the researcher possession, then the random sampling procedure could be applicable. Different procedures are to use, taking into consideration the composition of the population. The most important and the most used procedures are given and briefly described here:

- Simple random sampling
- Stratified random sampling
- Systematic random sampling
- Two level random sampling

Simple Random Sampling

A sampling is called random when all individuals/units of the population have the same chance or probability to be part of the sample so that it is possible to confidently make estimates about the total population based on the sample results. Random sampling increases the likelihood that the information collected is representative of the entire group.

It should be noted here that the information gained from a sample could be generalized only to the larger population from which the sample is taken. Conclusions drawn from a representative sample of undergraduate students from a particular university may be generalized to all undergraduate students of the same university. They should not be generalized neither to graduate students of the same university nor undergraduate students of another university or country.

A sample is simple when the selection of one individual/unit does not affect the selection of any other individual/unit of the same population. The individual/unit's selection is done in an independent way for each other.

When the population is small, numbers or names can simply be drawn from a hat. Record the number or name that is drawn. Put the slip back into the container and continue drawing until the required sample size is obtained. If the same number is drawn again, disregard it, put it back in the container and continue. For larger populations and to ensure equal selection opportunities, a random number table may be used such as those found in most statistics textbooks.

Stratified sampling

In stratified sampling, the total population is divided into separate groups (strata), which

differ along selected characteristics such as gender, age, level of studies, or geographical location. A random sample is drawn from each subgroup or stratum.

This method is especially appropriate when particular subgroups are known to vary or when some characteristic, such as gender, is known to be related to the outcome of interest. For example, we might want to draw a sample from each age grouping in the program to ensure that each is fully represented. To do so, determine what percentage each age group makes up of the total number of participants. Use this percentage to determine the proportion of the sample that must come from each age group. Then, randomly select an equal number of participants from those enrolled in the corresponding age group. The example that follows shows the sample size for each **filière** stratum in an educational program where the total number of participants is 2500 and the desired sample size is 300.

Filière	English	French	Sociology	Geography	Total
Number enrolled	500	1120	680	200	2500
% of total group	20%	45%	27%	8%	100%
Sample Size	60	134	82	24	300

Systematic sampling

In stratified sampling, the total population is divided into separate groups (strata), which differ along selected characteristics such as gender, age, level of studies, or geographical location. A random sample is drawn from each subgroup or stratum.

Non-random sampling

All random sampling procedures assume the availability of the sampling frame. However, most of the time, this list is not easy to provide. Just as there are several types of

probability sample, so there are several types of non-probability sample: convenience sampling, quota sampling, dimensional sampling, purposive sampling and snowball sampling. Each type of sample seeks only to represent itself or instances of itself in a similar population, rather than attempting to represent the whole, undifferentiated population.

Convenient sampling

Basic to all empirical sampling, is the importance of selecting “information-rich” cases from which you can learn much about issues that are important to the study. Focus on the specific rather than the general; for example, if an evaluation’s purpose is to increase a program’s effectiveness in reaching low-income families, you may learn more by conducting an in-depth query of the few poor families in the program than by gathering standardized information from a random sample of all participants.

Snowball sampling

A process in which contact is made with participants appropriate for your research through whatever access route you can find, and These people are then used as informants to identify, or put the researchers in touch with, others who qualify for inclusion (similar/ relevant characteristics for your research) and these, in turn, identify yet others—hence the term snowball sampling. This can often be an integral part of ethnography, which involves spending time in the field with the group under study, but is also useful in contacting hard to reach groups and individuals, and perhaps people engaging in criminal or otherwise non-normative or deviant behavior. The task for the researcher is to establish who are the critical or key informants with whom initial contact must be made

Quota sampling

A quota sample divides the population being studied into subgroups such as male and female, younger and older.

The quota sampling is the closer empirical one to random sampling. It corresponds to random stratified sampling.

You estimate the proportion of people in each group based on what you know about the population in general. For example, you decide to conduct a quota sampling on a population based on the level of undergraduate studies (First year, Second Year, Third Year) and gender (male, female). The administration informs you that the number of each group is as presented in the table below:

	S1	S3	S5	Total
M	1280	960	160	2400
F	1920	1440	240	3600
Total	3200	2400	400	6000

The corresponding percentages are

	S1	S3	S5	Total
M	21	16	3	40
F	32	24	4	60
Total	53	40	7	100

For this example, search for respondents until 21% of your sample is composed by males of level1. This is not the same as the stratified random sample because not every single student of a specific level and a particular gender is identified and has an equal opportunity of being included.

Sample size

When your purpose is to generalize or show representativeness, the size of the sample becomes an issue. How many individuals or units should you include so that the sample provides

a fair representation? Often, a proportion of the population is used to determine the sample size. For example, you might sample 10% of all producers in the county, or 20% of all program participants. Whether you use proportions depends on the size of the total population. In a program with 200 participants, a 20% sample would produce a sample of 40 people—underrepresenting the population since there is a large chance for respondent variability. On the other hand, a 20% sample of 50,000 county inhabitants produces a sample of 10,000—an unnecessary oversampling. You do not gain much more precision than you would using a sample of 400. Notice that the smaller the population, the larger the sample size. This is because smaller populations exhibit greater variability.

Variability, known as sampling error, exists within any sample. The larger the sample, the smaller is the sampling error. But no sample will yield exactly the same information as if all people in the population had been included. Information collected from a sample is used to make estimates about the population. The intent is to produce as close an approximation of the population as possible within the constraints of time and money.

To estimate how closely the sample approximates the population, two parameters are set—the margin of error and the confidence level. The margin of error indicates the range of values that can result when you use a sample to estimate the population. For example, a 5% margin of error means that if 50% of the sample adopted a recommendation, you can be fairly certain that 47.5% to 52.5% of the whole population adopted it. If results show that 95% of the sample improved in parenting skills, you can feel comfortable saying that 93.5% to 97.5% of all participants improved in those skills.

The risk of being wrong within the margin of error is known as the confidence level. That is, a 95% confidence level ($C = .95$) means that there is a 5% chance that the results will not fall within the specified margin of error. Using the previous example, there is a 5% chance that this interpretation is not correct—that 93.5% to 97.5% of all participants did not improve their skills.

We can say that we are “95% sure” that our conclusions accurately reflect the total population.

Sample size (Qualitative research)

Sampling in qualitative research has suffered a similar problem to quantitative research in general with the representative random probability samples of quantitative research regarded as the norm to which it should be compared and so found wanting.

At the risk of repetition, it is odd to talk of a sample or sampling in qualitative social research without a context since whom you research and interview is totally dependent on the nature and design of your study. Some would argue that even the term sample is inappropriate, given that the focus of data generation in qualitative research is on the process rather than an end point of numbers. When your purpose is to examine selected cases in greater depth, the previous recommendations for sample size do not apply.

A major characteristic of qualitative research then is that it is theoretically driven, and this also applies to the construction and selection of the sample in a qualitative interview study.

Often, in purposeful sampling the sample size is very small—possibly even just one case study ($n=1$). For example, you may wish to conduct a single case study of a low-income participant and the difference a program made in his or her life. Or, your purpose may require an in-depth analysis of successful community collaborations, highlighting the factors affecting success. Another option is to ask knowledgeable people to identify such collaborations and then select a certain number to include in your sample. If the purpose of the evaluation is to document diversity or variation, a larger number of cases may be necessary to capture the variety. What is the recommended sample size? There are no rules. It depends upon what you want to know, what will be useful, what will be credible, and what can be accomplished within the time and resources you have available.

A more general way of thinking about theoretical sampling in qualitative research is that selection is made on the basis of relevance for your theory, in order to produce a sample that will

enable you to develop the theoretical ideas that will be emerging in an iterative process between your theory and your data, and to enable you to test these emerging ideas. This suggests that you will not necessarily start with your sample set in stone, but will modify it and seek further cases in the light of your ongoing analysis of data and the theoretical development emerging from your study. This emerging sample will be both theoretical and purposive, selecting particular exemplary cases for the needs of your study.

Researchers can be preoccupied with the question of how many interviews they should do when they are conducting a piece of qualitative empirical work.

When sampling for the purpose of generalizability, the sample size is set in advance. With purposeful sampling, on the other hand, the sample size may change as the study progresses. For instance, based on early investigations, you may identify other “information- rich” cases to include. Or, you may terminate data collection when no new information is forthcoming from the new sampled units.

More than likely, the factors determining sample size will be time and resources. Select the individual cases carefully to choose those that are most likely to provide the information you are seeking. Finally, explain and justify your sampling procedures and decisions so that information users and decision makers understand your logic. As a professional, you are obliged to describe the strengths and weaknesses of the sampling procedures that are relevant for understanding the findings. Be careful not to generalize but to focus on the intention and strengths of a purposeful sample.

The concept of saturation is often mooted as the ideal guide for the number of interviews to be conducted, especially where researchers are taking an interpretive, grounded approach. That is, qualitative interviewers should continue sampling and identifying cases until their interviewees are not telling them anything that they have not heard before. Thus rather than the number in a sample being representative of types of people as in quantitative research, in

qualitative research it is the range of meanings that should determine numbers of interviewees in a study.

Using data saturation is challenging for many qualitative interviewers, however, because sampling, data collection and data analysis have to be combined, and it is not possible to specify how many interviews are necessary in advance.

Research methodology in gender studies is a guide to help students and young researchers beginning a career in gender. To this end, this chapter aimed at involving students in research in the field of gender studies by explaining the basic concepts and terminologies of empirical research and familiarizing them with the right instruments and research methods.

Students in gender studies need to be equipped with the right tools that would help them understand not just the products of scientific research but the process itself. As knowledgeable researchers, they will be able to address inequalities based on gender and conduct research that ensures equality between men and women and gives equal value to each one of them.

Activities

- a- What is research?
- b- Distinguish between research methods and research Methodology?
- c- What are the different types of research?
- d- How do you define a research problem?
- e- What is a research design?
- f- What is the difference between the quantitative and the qualitative method?
- g- What are the main points that gender research focuses on?
- h- What methods does gender research mostly focus on? Provide some examples.

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Conclusion

Through this textbook, the authors have attempted to introduce gender studies as an interdisciplinary academic field adopting a specific interrogative approach. Dealing with gender as a social construct, a relational process and a locus of power and power relationships, the textbook initiates the students into one of the most challenging research areas. It enhances them to encounter gender issues in different discursive practices as being a complex phenomenon underlying different facets. Likewise, reiterated implicitly or explicitly across the chapters, the investigation in the field of gender studies is not only intended to uphold an academic systematic methodological debate, but also to bring about change in male-female relationships in different spheres.

However, it is important to note that this textbook intentionally leaves some areas of gender studies unexplored. Having dealt with gender theories, gender in culture and communication, in media, and in Maghrebine literature, besides methodology of research on gender, it should be acknowledged that the book's chapters in no way exhaust all the details involved in each chapter's issue. To clarify, chapter one, offering an introduction to the theories of gender, does not cover some aspects such as intersectionality. Chapter two on gender, culture and communication does not explore the impact of professional, academic, and economic positions on communication besides the factor of gender. Chapter three, restricted to gender in printed media, TV. Drama and the movies, does not introduce gender issues such as the new media (the Internet, cyberspace and digital world). Likewise, chapter four does not survey gender in men's Maghrebine literature, despite their relevance and significance to the socio-cultural and aesthetic implications related to the impact of gender in the shaping of the Maghreb society. Chapter five on research methodology and gender offers general guidance; however it does not introduce specific methodologies on investigating gender in literature, in cinema, in education, in public relations etc.

In a similar vein, the four domains addressed in this textbook are not the only ones constituting the fields of research in gender studies. Other spheres involving gender such as employment, leadership, business world, visual arts, education, among others, represent vital spaces for gender research. They allow for further exploration of the potential role of gender and gender representation in structuring societies, on the one hand. On the other, they allow for critical insights to redress gender inequities through the questioning of biological determinism and the demystification of the power relations constructed between the sexes.

Notwithstanding, the missing aspects discussed above are not left by the authors out of uninformed selection or pedagogical inadequacy. Rather, the unexplored areas are only strategically postponed to administer two pedagogical aims:

- To smoothly introduce gender studies and avoid the overwhelming of students.
- To gradually introduce other relevant areas and aspects in an ulterior second volume in a textbook format, a gender studies companion, or otherwise.

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