





***Dedication***

***To***

*My dear parents: My wonderful mother Houria, and my supportive father,  
Ahcene whom I always wished to make proud.*

*My loving brothers: Sofiane, Samir, Yacine, and Ghiles that were always  
present by my side during these years of hard work.*

*Cylia.*

***To***

*My beloved parents: Arezki and Ndia*

*Who supported me all along my studies.*

*My brother and sisters Amar, Lynda, katia, farroudja, kenza.*

*Dahbia.*

## *Acknowledgements*

*We would like to sincerely thank our supervisor Ms. BADJA for her guidance, support, and encouragement as we completed our dissertation.*

*We would also like to kindly thank the members of the jury for having accepted to assess our work.*

*We also wish to thank our teachers for all of their help and efforts during the academic years.*

*Special thanks to Mr. LACEB and Mr. FERHI for their guidance.*

*We must be grateful for the moral support and inspiration provided by our parents and friends.*

## Abstract

*The present dissertation analyzes Betty Mahmoody's novel Not Without My Daughter (1987) from a new historicist view. The fundamental objective of this dissertation has been to show how Mahmoody represents Iranian society during Ayatollah Khomeini's regime using some significant and relevant notions of New Historicism. We have chosen Stephan Greenblatt's theory of New Historicism (1980-1990) for its significant ideas. We have also taken some concepts from Michel Foucault's Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison (1975) to achieve our goal. We have divided our work into two chapters. The first one has examined the historicity of the text and textuality of history and how they relate to Mahmoody's story. The second chapter has explored the idea of power and its various manifestations, including subversion and containment. Our study has revealed that Betty Mahmoody through her work reports real like events and makes from historical events a written text, by which we conclude that there is a relationship between the text and history. our study has also revealed that power is used by Khomeini to rule the Iranian people as well as by the male characters to dominate women. On the other side, we have focused on two concepts that are containment and subversion. The latter is depicted through various characters who violated the law while the former is shown in the Ayatollah government that attempted to control its people's actions.*

**Key Words:** Textuality, Historicity, Power, Physical, Psychological, Panoptican, Subversion, Containment.

## **Table of Contents**

<b>Dedication.....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Acknowledgements.....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Abstract.....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Contents.....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>I. Introduction.....</b>	<b>6</b>
a. Review of the Literature.....	7
a. Issue and Working Hypothesis.....	9
b. Methodological Outline.....	9
<b>Endnotes.....</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>II. Methods and Materials.....</b>	<b>11</b>
1. Methods.....	11
2. Materials.....	14
a. Biography of the Author.....	14
b. Synopsis of <i>Not Without My Daughter</i> .....	15
<b>Endnotes: .....</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>III. Results.....</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>IV. Discussion.....</b>	<b>19</b>
<b>Chapter One: Historicity of the text and Textuality of History.....</b>	<b>19</b>
1. Historicity of the text.....	19
2. Textuality of history.....	28
<b>Endnotes: .....</b>	<b>36</b>
<b>Chapter Two: Power, Subversion and Containment.....</b>	<b>41</b>
<b>1. Types of power in Betty Mahmoody's <i>Not Without My Daughter</i>...41</b>	
a. physical power.....	42
b. Psychological power.....	45

c. Panopticon power.....	45
<b>1. Subversion and containment.....</b>	<b>50</b>
a. Containment.....	52
b. subversion.....	58
<b>Endnotes : .....</b>	<b>61</b>
<b>V. Conclusion.....</b>	<b>66</b>
<b>VI. Bibliography.....</b>	<b>67</b>

## I. Introduction

The Iranian revolution in 1979, referred to as the Islamic revolution, was the most dramatic shift in the country's history. A series of events were organized by the leftist and Islamist organizations to overthrow the shah's White Revolution. The foundation of the Islamic Republic of Iran in 1979 proceeded with a radical change in the country. A pro-western, pro-American foreign policy was replaced by a more severe one that imposed the veil on women and showed its clear opposition to the United States and Israel<sup>1</sup>. Eventually, the Islamic revolutionaries' repudiation of non-Muslim tendencies abroad has led Iran to come across several conflicts with the occidental world and its neighbors.

Along with the political and economic changes, Iran's society and people were compelled to adhere to the strict Islamic precepts rejecting all manifestations of western influence. An extremely patriarchal society took place with the establishment of the new republic. Specific clothing for women is obligatory; as they suffered from domestic violence, under age marriages, and sexual abuse. This was portrayed in *Not Without My Daughter* published in (1987), the world-bestselling novel of the American writer Betty Mahmoudy,

*Not Without My Daughter (1987)* is an autobiographical work of literature that reports the author's own experience in Iran. The novel treats social, political, and feminist issues. Therefore, a New Historicist reading of *Not Without My Daughter (1987)* is an original theme that will provide a better interpretation and a deeper understanding of Mahmoudy's novel.

### **a- Review of the Literature:**

*Not Without My Daughter* is a novel by Betty Mahmoudy based on a true narrative of her journey through Khomeini's Iran. *Not Without My Daughter* was one of the author's most known works in the western world. After its 1989 release, the book received a quite big

success in the USA and gathered positive reviews in the European press, and also a widespread acclaim in the United States. Positive reviews of *Not Without My Daughter* in the European press highlight the mothers' fight for their children and their rights as western women.<sup>2</sup>

First, Mahmoody was described by the German magazine *Der Spiegel* as being “the pure west. She is brave, wise at the right time, crying at the humiliation and cold-blooded only when necessary. Her husband is the dark mystery, whose Change from American to Iranian resembles the change from Dr. Jekyll into Mr. Hyde”.<sup>3</sup>The European press has depicted her as a western mother fighting for her child and her rights. It also depicts the struggle of western women in cross-cultural marriages.

Besides, Betty De Hart in her book *Not Without My Daughter on Parental Abduction, Orientalism and Maternal Melodrama* (2001), emphasized the subject of a bad marriage and its detrimental impacts on children. She states that “Mahmoody and the other authors are unwise as they ‘dabbled’ in marriage with an oriental man, ... the punishment they receive is their struggle to keep their children.”<sup>4</sup> De Hart responds to the novel by maintaining a reductive view of Iran asserting that the two spheres of the world cannot mix since the novel proves this idea. The Mahmoody case illustrates the unfavorable perception of interracial marriage.

On the other side, the novel was criticized for its prejudices against Iranian culture. Many rejected the book for being pro-American and an anti-Islam propaganda. Numerous books and brochures by organizations of binational and Iranian intellectuals were published against the denigration of the masculine and Muslim category of Iran. Given the historical and political context of the novel's publication (the Gulf War, the hostage crisis, the Iraq & Iran

War, etc.), it was advantageous for the west to present the Islamic Republic of Iran as the devil.

For instance Hassan Bourara in his article “Not Without My Daughter: Reflections in Retrospect (1994)” discussed the 1991 film adaptation of Betty’s novel which was released four days after Bush’s deadline for Saddam Hussein to leave Kuwait. He claimed that this was just a means of fostering orientalist notions and stereotypes about Islam. Through his comment on the movie, he tends to explain that it is hard to ignore its ideology and its justification of the American legal system. He said:

Released on January 11, 1991, within four days of Bush’s deadline for Saddam Hussein to withdraw from Kuwait, this movie may be said to testify to the “durability and strength” of some of the cultural stereotypes associated with Islam, stereotypes that were heavily accentuated during the Gulf War.<sup>5</sup>

Maja Mugrele in “Orientalism in Not Without My Daughter (2013)” explained the Orientalizing of Iran and Islam identity illustrating the reductive view about Islam that was transmitted by the novel under the guise of realistic truth. He assumed that Mahmoody’s biographical novel is just another tool of the west that demonstrates his superiority over the Islamic and eastern culture. Therefore Mahmoody’s novel is subjective and orientalist view of Iran’s culture in the light of the conflict between the west and the east He cited:

The influence of not only the media but also the literary texts and films can be taken advantage of. Many mainstream texts and films – like for instance *Not Without My Daughter* – have helped shape the image of the ‘Muslims’, the ‘Arab’, their cultural and religious traditions, and their life in the USA. In the absence of other - direct or indirect – contact with a certain culture<sup>6</sup>

Added to, the journalist Helma Lutz rejects Mahmoody as a source of information regarding cultural differences across countries both east and west. She claims that the Mahmoody story’s appeal can be contributed to the long-standing hostility between Christianity and Islam.<sup>7</sup>Lutz criticizes the novel's characterization of Islam. She states that it is a reli-

gious war since the west is Christian and the east is Muslim. Distorting the image of Islam and the east is an excuse for Christianity to emerge as the model religion.

Concerns were raised about the text's nearly complete lack of scholarly criticisms. Sara Martin maintained that "*Not Without my Daughter* was disparaged by most critics worldwide. Artistically, they were regarded as bad drama. This judgment led to questioning the truthfulness and the right of the victimized eyewitness to offer their own personal point of view."<sup>8</sup> Although Betty's memoir was fairly popular and garnered a quite significant deal of criticism, it has not been given much weight in terms of literary expertise.

#### **b- Issue and Working Hypothesis:**

We can see from the above review of the literature that Betty Mahmoody's *Not Without my Daughter* has been a target for a wide range of critics. They have dealt with the novel from various perspectives. Most of them are limited to criticizing the work's value and impacts, whereas others focus on its style. To the greatest of our knowledge, no previous research has been done to study *Not Without my Daughter* from a New Historicist perspective.

Our concern through the present dissertation is to study Betty Mahmoody's *Not Without My Daughter* from a New Historicist perspective. In other words, we will discuss the novel in the light of some concepts of New Historicism such as textuality of history and historicity of text. We intend to depict the main events that happened in Iran between 1979 and 1989, and how the author used such events to create a written text. We will also analyze the concepts of power, subversion, and containment and relate them to the novel.

#### **c- Methodological Outline:**

In terms of methodology, we applied for the IMRAD method to realize this research. There are four sections in total. Our dissertation starts with the Introduction, which opens the

dissertation. A review of some of the literature on Betty Mahmoody's *Not Without My Daughter* is then provided. The part is followed by the method and materials section. In method, we have presented an overview of Stephen Greenblatt's theory, New Historicism (1980-1990), as well as some concepts taken from Michel Foucault's *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison* (1975). The Materials section is the part that contains the biography of Betty Mahmoody and a short synopsis of her novel *Not Without My Daughter* (1987). The findings of our research will be presented in the Result section. The discussion section will be divided into two chapters. The first chapter will discuss the Textuality of History and the historicity of the text. Then the theme of power, subversion and containment will be analyzed in the second Chapter. The work will end with a general conclusion in which we will sum our findings and suggest further studies as well.

## Endnotes

---

<sup>1</sup> SadjadPour, Karmin. 2019. *Reading Khomeini: The World View of Iran's Most Powerful Leader*. 14.

<sup>2</sup> Betty de Hart. 2001. *Not Without my Daughter on Parental Abduction, Orientalism and Maternal Melodrama*.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid. 52.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid .50, 51.

<sup>5</sup>Hassan Bourara. 1994.*Not Without My Daughter: Reflections in Retrospect*. 57, 58.

<sup>6</sup>Maja Mugrele. 2013. *Orientalism in Not Without My Daughter by Betty Mahmoody*. 40.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

---

<sup>8</sup> Sara Matin Alegre. 1998. *The Invisibility of Human Sufferings: The Adaptation of Novelized Biographical Material in Steven Spielberg's Schindler's List, Oliver Stone's Heaven and Earth and Brian Gilbert's Not Without my Daughter*. 72.

## II. Method and Materials

### 1. Method

This section of our work focuses on Stephen Greenblatt's theory of New Historicism (1980-1990), which is articulated in his essay *The Power of Forms and The Forms of Power in The Renaissance* (1982). We will attempt to apply this theory to Betty Mahmoody's *Not Without My Daughter* (1987) utilizing some chosen notions that are relevant to our study. We will also take a few essential theoretical conceptions from Michel Foucault's *Discipline and Punishment: The Birth of the Prison* (1975), which is regarded as a key work for new historicists.

Stephan Greenblatt is an American academic who is recognized for introducing New Historicism. He attended Yale University and graduated in 1969 with a doctorate degree. Greenblatt was influenced by Raymond William and attended Michel Foucault's lectures during his early years at Berkeley<sup>1</sup> where he contributed to the founding of a journal entitled *Representations* (1982) in which one of the most significant earlier New Historicist criticism appeared<sup>2</sup>.

As it happens, New Historicism emerged in the 1980's and gained significant traction in the 1990's and beyond with Greenblatt's introduction to *The Power of Forms in English Renaissance* (1982). New Historicism is a critical methodology influenced by the writings of Michel Foucault. It is a method of literary criticism and literary theory that is predicated on the idea that a literary work should be viewed as a result of the time, location, and historical circumstances in which it was written and the history of the author rather than a stand-alone piece of literature or art<sup>3</sup>.

In Greenblatt's work the very diverse approaches to literary history and social theory came together to create a close reading method attentive to the influence of social and

historical factors on text<sup>4</sup>. According to New Historicists, literary works are seen as ‘a vessel tossed in a social sea of competing interests, antagonistic values and contradictions’<sup>5</sup>. A literary work of literature cannot be an autonomous entity free of outside influence. A literary text is a product of different interacting socio-cultural, socio-historical values and political circumstances. The relation of New Historicism to literature is also the relationship between textuality and contextuality. Therefore, New Historicists tend to use significant concepts such as Textuality of History and Historicity of the text, Power, Containment and Subversion.

In fact, Stephen Greenblatt coined the concept “Poetics of Culture” in the beginning of his work to New Historicism aims to show how works are related to their socio historical contexts, in contrast to many previous interpretation techniques and schools that prefer to view historical and literary texts as autonomous entities<sup>6</sup>. For Greenblatt, a New Historicist work should consistently make reference to the historical and social circumstances from which it emerged regarding the classic literary studies that are commonly used to discuss the interaction between art and society. However, Cultural Poetics is based on the premise that texts not only depict the social forces that shape history and society but also the social processes that shape both personal identity and the socio historical context<sup>7</sup>. This indicates that New Historicism does not only analyze a literary work in relation to its socio historical setting but also studies the relation of the author or the biography to the text.

Additionally, Greenblatt emphasizes that a literary work's interpretation varies through time. A literary work typically is read in relation to both its historical background and the current context, which also means reading history using the present mind. For instance Louis Adrien Montrose, one of the most important New Historicists, claims that when we refer to a text's historicity, we are referring to its historical setting, and that a text's textuality is what transforms historical content into a work of art. This means that the historical meaning reported by literary works becomes subjective and unreliable.

Furthermore, New Historicism is a doctrine that asserts to speak for the oppressed and everything else that society ignores. Stephen Greenblatt developed the concept of power in New Historicism and linked to it two terms: Subversion and Containment in order to approach the hegemonic practices in society over the sub-cultures and the power of the dominator over the dominated. The binary opposition of these two key ideas in New Historicism has a broad meaning and touches on numerous topics as suggested in Greenblatt's *Invisible Bullets* (1981). According to Greenblatt, Containment refers to the mainstream ideology's ineluctable role as the other's guide. Subversion, on the other hand, refers to the other's conscious opposition to the mainstream culture and its ideology<sup>8</sup>. To be more explicit, power permits and uses subversive elements in order to more effectively stifle challenges to the established order and maintain the tenacity of its dominance. Subversion, to put it simply, is the rejection of social ideology and power that stand for the established order, whereas Containment refers to the management of the overtly subversive force within the confines of accepted wisdom or mainstream discourse to prevent it from having a significant impact.

Subversion as referred to by Louis Montrose, is the essential condition of power, which is the ability of the dominant order to create subversion and employ it for its own ends<sup>9</sup>. This means that the dominator frequently promotes subversion in order to control and take advantage of it. To prove that he is difficult to topple, he forces the downtrodden to break his rules and then punishes them. Overall, subversion should be used by the oppressor to grab power since it allows him to assert authority over the oppressed and impose his will on them.

The majority of New Historicism analysts concur that this ideology was highly influenced by the French philosopher Michel Foucault as he has influenced the concept of power in particular. According to Foucault, power is a human dynamic that shapes our interactions with others rather than just a physical force. Another definition of power is the methods by which a dominating group controls another<sup>10</sup>. This idea demonstrates Foucault's perception of

power the way he wants to presume that it is not always a physical force but instead may refer to a domination that is imposed on the oppressed. To clarify, power may be physical as it may be psychological and panopticon.

## **A. Materials**

### **1. Biography of Betty Mahmoody**

Betty Mahmoody was born on June 9<sup>th</sup>, 1945 in Alma, Michigan, USA. She is an American author best known for her book *Not Without My Daughter*(1987), and the president of the organization ‘One World for a Child’, which works to promote understanding between different cultures and ensure the safety of children from two-cultural marriages. Mahmoody married Sayyed Bozorg Mahmoody an Iranian physician practicing in the United States in 1977 with whom she had a daughter named Mahtob. In 1984 they went to Iran for a fifteen days trip, and that is when her suffering began. Her autobiographical book *Not Without My Daughter* (1987) describes the years of pain while she was held captive and hostage in Iran by her abusive husband from 1984 to 1986. Betty Mahmoody depicts her suffering to keep her daughter and portrays her escape from Iran to America through Turkey’s mountains.

Betty Mahmoody represented the United States at the Hague Conference on International Child Abductions in 1992. In 1990, Mahmoody was elected “Woman of the Year” and ‘Most Courageous Person of the Year’ in Germany. A Dutch newspaper called her ‘Mother of All Mothers’. In 1992, *Not Without my Daughter* (1987) won the Dutch readers’ prize for best book. Upon returning to America in 1986, Betty filed for divorce in the United States whereas, her husband had no voice since he was not present. The novel received a Pulitzer Prize nomination. Later, in 1991, it was made into a film of the same name.

## **C. Synopsis of *Not Without My Daughter* (1987)**

Mahmoody marries an Iranian physician named Sayyed Bozorg Mahmoody in 1977 after falling in love with him. She describes a blissful marriage during their time presence in America, where they had a beautiful daughter named Mahtob. She narrates how she goes to Iran with her husband and daughter, based on his promise that it would be a brief trip. In 1984, Betty departs Alpena, Michigan, to travel to Iran for a two-week vacation. However, things become complicated and the promise of a two-week visit turns out to be untrue as she and her daughter are subsequently imprisoned there against their will.

The events of the novel take place between 1984 and 1986 during Ayatollah Khomeini's regime. Betty describes how Americans are despised and considered as an enemy at that time. The book primarily focuses on the determination of a woman to overcome all obstacles for the benefit of her daughter. While reading the novel, we witness Betty's suffering as an American woman in a patriarchal society in the heart of the chronicle turmoil in Iran's politics and its foreign relations.

## Endnotes

---

<sup>1</sup>Eng Lit Mirror. (August 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2020). Stephen Greenblatt-20<sup>th</sup> Century Theorist/New Historicism UGC NTA NET JRF English Literature Theory. Available at: <https://youtu.be/3wYrs-eyN6Y> [Accessed September 30<sup>th</sup>, 2022].

<sup>2</sup> Mambrol. N, (November 16<sup>th</sup>,2017) Literary Theory and Criticism. Available at: <https://literariness.org/2017/11/16/stephen-greenblatt-and-new-historicism/>. [Accessed October 5<sup>th</sup>, 2022].

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

---

<sup>5</sup> E. Cain William Et all. 2001. Norton Anthology of Theory and Criticism. Stephan Greenblatt: Introduction to the Power of Forms. b-1943, University of Oklahoma, London. 2250.

<sup>6</sup> Veenstra. R. Jan, *The New Historicism of Stephen Greenblatt. On Poetics of Culture and the Interpretation of Shakespeare.* 174.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> Yang, H. 2021. *Subversion and Containment in Female Images: A Study of "The Dead" From the Perspective of New Historicism.* Department of Foreign Languages and Cultures, Sichuan University, Chengdu, Sichuan Province, China.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> Narinda Tiwary and N.D.R Chandra. *New Historicism and Arundhati Roy's Works.* 85.

### III. Results

By analyzing the novel, according to its historical era, we have intended to explore the influence of politics, society, and religion on the characters in Betty Mahmoody's *Not Without My Daughter*. That is, the political and cultural tension between two different spheres of the world is reported in the biographical work of Mahmoody. To make our vision a reality, we applied New Historicism that emphasizes the importance of the connection between literary works and their historical context.

Upon a close reading of the work, we determined that Betty Mahmoody's story has reflected a substantial number of historical events which have significant impacts on social ideology and the whole course of life in Iran. Betty historicized her plot and textualized historical events by linking the circumstances of her personal experience in Iran to several historical facts and realities. She has depicted what she judges as the oppressive social and political laws of Iran, people's lives, and especially women in the light of Khomeini's reign which chronicles the Gulf War and important political turmoil.

Betty Mahmoody has narrated her story as a captive in a country that imposes its ideals; known for its disrespect of human rights, more specifically, women's rights. Betty brought some personal stories of both feminine and masculine characters that were speaking out about the deteriorated lifestyle in Iran, her ordeal as a woman and as an American enemy in a fanatical land.

We have selected some theoretical concepts that may be applied in the context of *Not Without my Daughter*. Adding to the historicity of the novel and its textualization of history, we found that the novel has been charged with power relations, oppression, and oppressors. Power has been practiced on women as on the people of Tehran. A certain ideology and specific characteristics are imposed and should be applied and followed in the Islamic

societies. In fact, all the characters are under the control of the same ideology; no one has the freedom to change this fate.

Betty Mahmoody is the only character who is brave enough to change her fate. She does not accept the way of life in Iran and decides to flee with her young daughter Mahtob. In the end, she has succeeded in changing her destiny and that of Mahtob. Throughout *Not Without My Daughter*, we have noticed that Betty has depicted historical, political, social, and gender issues in Iran. Therefore, the ultimate concordant concepts of New Historicism selected for our research which are textuality of history and historicity of text, power, subversion, and containment have been relevant for this work as it allowed us to examine the different themes spotted in the novel.

## **IV. Discussion**

In this part of our work, we will use the fundamental elements of New Historicism to study Betty Mahmoody's work *Not without My Daughter* (1987). We are going to divide our dissertation into two chapters. The first chapter will discuss the concept of Textuality of History and Historicity of the Text.

The second chapter will discuss power and its forms, as well as two concepts related to power which are subversion and containment. We will try to link each idea and concept with the most significant events that occurred in Betty Mahmoody's novel.

### **Chapter One: Textuality of History and Historicity of the Text.**

According to Foucault, Textuality and history cannot be separated<sup>1</sup>. This interaction is what creates the connection between textuality and contextuality. The reading process of history through a character and that character's interpretation of historical events is referred to as the textuality of history<sup>2</sup>. *Not Without My Daughter* (1987) recounts the history of Iran and the main character's personal experience there. Mahmoody paints a dismal picture of life in the Islamic Republic of Iran during the rule of Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini. She depicts the lifestyle, the culture, and the harsh Islamic laws during a time of unrest and war.

#### **1. Historicity of the text**

*Not Without My Daughter* is the result of many events that occurred in Iran between (1979 to 1989). The story takes place in Iran, precisely in its capital Tehran which is under siege. Mahmoody describes it as a filthy, crowded city with dubious quality homes. That reflects its economic collapse caused by the post-revolution politics; the war with Iraq, the conflicts with America, and the Afghanistan war refugees.

*Not Without my Daughter* is a biographical, political, and historical novel in which Betty reports historical truth about the social and cultural norms of Iran. She is informative about the Iranian culture as she spots, for instance, inbreeding, a practice of most of the Islamic countries like Iran. According to her, cousin marriage was clear in Moody's family as most of their children seemed to have birth malformations. She says: "I noticed that some of the children suffered from birth defects or deformities of one kind or another....I wondered if I was seeing the consequence of inbreeding.... I knew that many of the couples in this room were cousins married to cousins."<sup>3</sup>

Betty Mahmoody reports social specificities of the eastern world. She highlights the extended families, something that is quite a particularity of eastern societies like Iran. For instance, her husband Moody has a significant number of relatives. She refers to the fact by saying that "More than one hundred of his relatives crowded around, screaming, crying, pumping his hand, embracing him and kissing him, kissing me, kissing Mahtob."<sup>4</sup> She comments that they all interfere in others' affaires and everyone has his word to say in everything.

Mahmoody has spotted other Iranian practices like the sacrifice of a sheep and walking across its blood to honor their first entering to the house, a practice that she considers as a "crazy tradition". She states that 'Mahtob shrieked. A pool of fresh, brilliant red blood lay between us and the street. Mahtob hid her face. Moody calmly explained that the family ...slaughtered it in our honour...so that we could have walked across the blood as we entered the house for the first time'.<sup>5</sup>

In Iran, a widow should wear only white clothes for the rest of her life. This is represented in Betty Mahmoody's novel through Moody's sister Ameh Bozorg. The latter is compelled to clad in white when she is informed that her husband was probably killed.

Mahmoody reports “Ameh Bozorg lost no time in assuming a mourning posture, wailing, pulling out her hair. She changed from the ornamental chador to a white chador and sat on the floor.”<sup>6</sup>

Besides, in *Not Without My Daughter* Iranian social norms are stereotyped. Mahmoody generalizes the Iranian’s celebration of birthdays only on Fridays. Friday is the day off work when family members can celebrate a birthday party together. Betty explains that “Moody grew agitated. He explained to me that a birthday party is a major social occasion in Iran, always held on Friday, when the guests are off work.”<sup>7</sup>

For New Historicists, a literary work is not self-sufficient but a product of not only the social structure but also the political events of the time in which it was written<sup>8</sup>. *Not Without my Daughter* paints the Iranian Islamic republic. Thus, Mahmoody includes details about the Islamic laws of Iran imposed shortly after the 1979 Islamic revolution. The article 638 of the fifth book of the Islamic Penal Code, chapter 18 under the name of Offenses against Public Moral, outlines sanctions and deterrent penalties on women who do not wear a hijab, including imprisonment from ten days to two months, and/or pay fines from RIs<sup>9</sup>. The article states:

Anyone who explicitly violates any religious taboo in public beside being punished for the act should also be imprisoned from ten days to two months, or should be flogged (74 lashes). Note- women who appear in public without a proper hijab should be imprisoned from ten days to two months or pay a fine of 50,000 to 500,000 Ryal.<sup>10</sup>

Betty Mahmoody has explains this while she says “One of the Pasdar’s assignments was to make sure women were properly dressed.”<sup>11</sup> She describes Iranian women:

They were thoroughly covered from head to toe, most of them wearing black *chadors* on top of coats and scarves like the *montoe* and *roosarie* I had just been given. All of the colours were drab. What are they going to do to me if I *don't* wear it? I wondered. Arrest me? I posed the question to Moody and he replied simply, 'Yes'<sup>12</sup>

Therefore, we can conclude that a hijab is an obligatory dress code for women in Iran. Any woman who refuses wearing it will be arrested.

Likewise, Mahmoody refuses to conform to ‘the alien laws’ of the Islamic Republic, which she accuses of being corrupted, hypocrite, and oppressive especially for women. For instance, Iran has enacted laws that prohibit use of contraception.<sup>13</sup> In her novel, Mahmoody speaks about birth control which is punished by the penal code of the country. She declares:

The constitution strove to dictate all of the critical details of an individual's life, even the most private concerns of womanhood. For example, it was a crime for a woman to do anything to prevent conception against her husband's wishes. I knew this already. In fact, Moody had told me it was a capital offense. Reading about it here brought a wave of apprehension. I knew that by now I had probably broken many Iranian laws and would surely continue to do so. But it was disconcerting to know that I carried within my body, unbeknownst to Moody, an IUD that could jeopardize my life. Would they really execute a woman for practicing birth control? I knew the answer to that. In this country men could and would do anything to women.<sup>14</sup>

Betty is well aware of the punishment awaiting her in case anyone knows about her IUD saying “What if Moody beat me so badly that I required treatment and some Iranian doctor found out? If Moody did not kill me, then the government might.”<sup>15</sup> However, she knows that getting pregnant would prevent her attempts to escape forever. While desperately searching contraceptive pills in Moody’s store of medicines she avows that she “never understood how Moody managed to get oral contraceptives through customs into an Islamic republic where birth control was unlawful.”<sup>16</sup>

Further, In *Not Without my Daughter*, Mahmoody reports several events from history. She puts forward the events before leaving America for Iran during a period when the Islamic revolution was at its peak in Iran because of the historical transition from the Pahlavi dynasty to Iran's Islamic Republic. In fact, a series of events supported by leftist and Islamic organizations were observed to overthrow the white revolution of Shah whose reforms resulted in aggressive modernization in Iran launched on January 26<sup>th</sup>, 1963. Pahlavi Shah had

aligned with the US and the Western bloc to rule firmly as an absolute monarch following the 1953 Iranian coup d'état.<sup>17</sup>

Betty Mahmoody claims that even before coming back to Iran, Moody becomes involved in everything happening in his country. He was against the Shah's government and was joyous when the Shah was dethroned, and Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini came back from his exile and took the rule. That is among the persistent causes why Moody wants to return to Iran. The hostage crisis is also another cause behind his wish to come back after this incident, the Iranian's presence in the United States was unwelcome. She asserts

When the shah left Iran and the following day the Ayatollah Khomeini stage triumphant return. Moody found cause for celebration. He brought dozens of Iranian students home with him for a party, giving me absolutely no warning. They stayed up late into the night, filling my American home with excited, animated conversation in Farsi.<sup>18</sup>

In the novel, Moody and other Iranians suffer from racism and violence. Betty reports that "An Iranian student at Texas AI was beaten by two unknown assailants, and Moody worried that he might suffer the same fate. He also worried about the possibility of arrest or deportation"<sup>19</sup>. This portrays the deteriorated situation of Iranian people in America after November 4<sup>th</sup>, 1979. Thus, when everyone at the hospital where Moody works discover his sympathy and support for Iran, they mock at him, calling him Dr. Khomeini. He even receives anonymous threatening calls at home. Moody's life has become difficult especially as he lost his job.

In fact, all Iranian people did not want any relation with America. The Shah has long been criticized for his associations with the west, particularly with Britain and the United States. He was as well criticized for the suppression of opposition voices by domestic forces. As a consequence, they began to protest against him until it turned into a revolution and on January 16<sup>th</sup>, 1979, the Shah fled the country. On February 1<sup>st</sup>, Khomeini returned to Iran, greeted by crowds of supporters, and was appointed interim Prime Minister soon after.<sup>20</sup>

Mahmoody links the events and brings out the historical most dramatic act in the relations between Iran and the U.S. which is ‘The hostage crisis.’ She states that: “Most of the students were celebrating Eid Corban, the feast of sacrifice. It was November 4<sup>th</sup>, 1979.”<sup>21</sup> She highlights the way Moody was relieved after hearing about the takeover of the American Embassy in Tehran by a group of students of Tehran University that same day. She states that “ In private he showed elation over the maddening events of the hostage crisis, clearly gleeful that America was emasculated before the world.”<sup>22</sup>

In another way, Betty underlines the fact that it was ‘an act of war against the United States that changed the course of history. It had profound ramifications on domestic politics in the U.S. and poisoned U.S-Iranian international affairs for decades. Iran’s hostage crisis is an international crisis in which militants in Iran held 52 American nationals’ captives at the U.S. embassy in Tehran for more than a year.<sup>23</sup> That was a demonstration from the Iranians who opposed the American presence in the country and demanded that the Shah returns to pay for what he caused for Iran after he went to the U.S. for medical treatment.

The Islamic revolutionaries aimed to reject western influence on the country with the overthrow of the Shah’s rule. Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, the post-revolutionary Shia cleric, denounced the Shah as the one leading to the demise of the Islamic religion in Iran. Betty cites that during the Shah’s order, Islamic names were not accepted in the country: “The family surname was originally Hakim, but Moody was born about the time the Shah issued an edict forbidding Islamic names such as this, so Moody’s father changed the family name to Mahmoody, which is more Persian than Islamic.”<sup>24</sup>

New Historicism has its distinctive elements in terms of how it interprets ‘the historicity of books and the textuality of histories’. It accentuates how a text interacts with elements like political power and cultural constructions. It seeks to comprehend the text in the light of its historical setting and to comprehend cultural history through literary works. The historicity

of texts, in the words of Louis Adrian Montrose, “suggests the cultural specificity, the social embodiment, of all modes of writing not only the texts that critics study but also the texts that study them.”<sup>25</sup> The idea of New Historicism promotes the strong connection between a book and its society, particularly its historical setting.<sup>26</sup> This implies that a literary work is always informative about the society and the time in which it is plotted.

Precisely, *Not Without my Daughter* serves as a reflectional portrait of Muslims and Americans and the experience of cultural adaptation within a different society. The narrative exposes the influence of religion and politics in a period marked by numerous historical changes. Betty Mahmoody stands on several episodes of the Iranian historical, political, social, and cultural background. Another historical climax that affected Betty in Iran was the Iraq and Iran war (1980-1988). Her time of presence in the Islamic Republic was tormented by numerous incidents related to it.

Mahmoody has spoken about the relationship between the Iraq war and America. Moody’s rage against America is also due to its support for Iraq. He claims that if Iraq was not backed by the U.S.A, they could not be capable of confronting Iran. One night, Betty is scared when an Iraqi wave of bombers passed over, but her husband harshly tells her “I did not do this to you. Your country is doing this to my people. Your own country is going to kill you.”<sup>27</sup> She depicts how America and its president Ronald Reagan are blamed for anything happening in Iran saying:

By morning the city was abuzz, licking its wounds, crying for revenge. Obviously, the raids were the work of the Iraqi Air Force, but the radio spouted predictable rhetoric. The Iraqis were supplied by the Americans. Their pilots were trained by America. The raid was planned and supervised by American advisers. For all the average Iranian knew, President Reagan himself had flown the lead plane. It was not a good day to be an American in Iran.<sup>28</sup>

The quotation above proves the new historicism notes that intend to imply that literature is both socially productive and socially generated.<sup>29</sup> That is, literature not only influences society, but society also influences literature. The quotation above shows how the Iranian prop-

aganda against the American president Reagan feeds the Iranian's rage against the Americans. Moreover, these events influence Mahmoody's novel as an American woman.

Soon after the revolution's triumph its leader, Ruhollah Khomeini, began urging Islamic revolutions throughout the Muslim world especially in Iraq; Iran's Arab neighbor and the only other major Gulf nation with a predominantly Shia Muslim population. Saddam Hussein tried to exploit what he saw as the post-revolutionary turmoil, military brittleness as well as the Revolution's unpopularity with Western nations by invading Iran to start the war. Although Saddam Hussein's forces achieved some early gains, Iranian forces were able to drive the Iraqi army back into Iraq by the middle of 1982. Iran invaded Iraq in July 1982 and launched numerous offensives to seize territory and take over towns like Basra. As Iraq was on the defensive, the war lasted until 1988.<sup>30</sup>

Despite this sobering truth, the Western world paid little attention to the war in the public eye. That is not to argue that foreign and Western influences did not have a role in the fight. Yet, the U.S. eventually developed a clear preference for Iraq. The United States sought a solution where Iran's Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini and his religious zeal would not prevail in the Middle East by offering military assistance and intelligence data to Saddam Hussein and his troops. At the same time, the Reagan administration continued to arm and deal with the Islamic Republic of Iran, as scandalously revealed in the 1985 Iran-Contra crisis.<sup>31</sup>

The contradiction in the behavior of the United States cannot be easily explained. The superpower was a crucial but conflicting player during the Iran-Iraq War. Even when unapproved, as in the Contra instance, its operations served the U.S.A. and its material interests in the Middle East more than Iran or Iraq in the long run. In the end, American intervention made the already brutal Iran-Iraq War worse and increased the long-lasting political unrest.<sup>32</sup>

In *Not Without my Daughter*, Betty spotted a detail about the news report about sophisticated air-to-air new missiles. One reporter said that the people would be surprised to learn where the new missiles originated. She cites:

America? Russia? France? Israel? Everyone speculated, but Moody was certain that the new weapons originated in the United States. Because of the arms embargo, he said, they were probably channeled through a third country making Iran pay a higher price. Moody was convinced that money-hungry American arms merchants could not ignore a customer with such an insatiable appetite.<sup>33</sup>

This quotation can relate to the above paragraphs. America was probably playing on two sides for its only benefits.

Also, Betty Mahmoody also made a brief reference to the Afghanistan war. The 10-years Soviet occupation shortly after 1979 caused the single largest refugee crisis in the world. By the end of 1979, 400.000 Afghans had fled to Pakistan and another 200.000 to Iran. The number kept rising from 1985 to 1990.<sup>34</sup> The Afghan refugees who covered the city of Tehran is another historical detail of that period in *Not Without My Daughter*. The author asserts that “There were many Afghani men in baggy, wrinkled pants, gathered at the waist, carrying incredibly heavy loads in their backpacks.”<sup>35</sup> She also reveals that “The dangers of life in an impoverished city overcrowded with refugees were emphasized.”<sup>36</sup> She is told by her American friend Ellen that those refugees represent a danger in the city. Ellen tells her that “It’s Afghans who are doing it... There are so many Afghans in Iran and they don’t have any women of their own, so they rape whomever they can get.”<sup>37</sup>

Betty Mahmoody refers to another reality of the Iranian history: The Kurdish revolution for self-rule in Iran. On August 12<sup>th</sup>, 1979, only months after the Islamic Republic of Iran was established, Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini warned a group of Muslim professors about a common enemy. By common enemy, Ayatollah meant the Kurdish minority. The Kurds have backed the revolution and desired some sort of autonomy in post-revolution Iran. Khomeini saw any kind of self-rule a threat to the Islamic republic, therefore, it is unacceptable. Days

after his speech, Khomeini issued a fatwa, or religious decree, directing the armed forces to exterminate the Kurds and seize control of the Kurdish district in Northwestern Iran.<sup>38</sup>

Briefly, Mahmoody makes a brief reference to the Kurds in her novel. She says that “We have recently heard of the Kurdish rebellions in Iran. If the Kurds were fighting for self-rule, what were Israel, Russian, and Iraqi soldiers engaged in the fighting for?”<sup>39</sup> Amahel tells her that “the Kurds had been hostile to the Shah’s government and were equally hostile to the Ayatollah.”<sup>40</sup> The Kurds are an ethnic minority of Sunnite Muslims known for their fight for self-rule in both Iran and Iraq; as the two countries continue to fight them back and exterminate them through the years.

## **2. Textuality of History**

Greenblatt rejects the universality of history through literature. He asserts that “New Historicism, as I understand it, does not posit historical processes as unalterable and inexorable, but it does tend to discover limits or constraint upon individual intervention.”<sup>41</sup> The creation of a textual representation results from its negotiation with history and cultural interaction. This makes it an interesting location for New Historicists. Understanding literature requires familiarity with its historical milieu. The ‘textuality of history’ with the ‘historicity of text’ as defined by Louis Montrose:

Have no access to a full and authentic past, a lived material existence, unmediated by the surviving textual traces of the society in question—traces whose survival we cannot assume to be merely contingent but must rather presume to be at least partially consequent upon complex and subtle social process of preservation and effacement.<sup>42</sup>

The quotation above means that, although historians could access history through literature, as narration was the primary method by which it was recorded, its objectivity cannot be guaranteed because the author does not only reproduce events from history but also has the authority to comment on them in a work of art. Thus, shifting in time, the unreliability of memories and the author’s stand to truth cannot be authentic and reliable. The textuality of

history is the author's manipulation of reality that can be fantasticated and dramatized. When a person recalls past events, he uses his memories which may include some of his imagination.

The autobiography narrative must have a historical context, and the reconstruction of the autobiographical subject must comprehend the relationship between historical truth-telling and fiction. Any reading of an autobiography must take into account historical past. In other words, the autobiographical realm is a place where the spectacular, and fantasy clash with the real. Determining how the autobiographical subject pursues the risky goal of striking a balance between narrativity and history is also crucial at this point.<sup>43</sup> The requirement is to comprehend the historicity of texts and the textuality of history. The former means, indeed, the fictionalization of history. When reading an autobiographical novel, truth becomes subjective. Autobiography becomes related to the historical experience of the author.

Betty Mahmoody, in *Not Without my Daughter*, reports her souvenirs from what she has endured in Khomeini's Iran. The story begins when she takes the plane with her husband and daughter to Iran, describing the details of her detention in the Islamic republic in a linear way, and then she shifts in time back to them in Michigan. At first, Betty Mahmoody describes a happy marriage while in the United States. She reports: "My days were filled with the happy chores of billing patients and keeping the account book for Moody's practice, coupled with joys of caring for my home and family."<sup>44</sup> Suddenly, she takes a shift and goes into a flashback to when they were in Michigan.

By the same, Mahmoody talks about Moody's affection and involvement in his country's politics. He believes that the U.S.A. caused them to go into several fights over the U.S-Iran problem. She also shows how each one of them is defending his country saying "This was too much for me to bear. I rose to the defense of my country while casting

aspersions on Moody's. Our conversation degenerated into bitter arguments, uncharacteristic of our normal non-confrontational lives." <sup>45</sup>The arguments between them go so far to the extent of considering divorce as a solution. She reveals that "At times the word divorce hovered close to the surface of my consciousness."<sup>46</sup>

According to Frederic Jameson (1993), suppressed feelings and ideas, as well as the distance from the past and the effort to reconcile it, generate recollections that idealize the past and hence conjure up a separate history as something desirable to the present.<sup>47</sup> Betty frequently refers to her marriage in America as a happy one and Moody as "a loving husband and father" neglecting the bad side. This is due to time that works as a filter of the bad memories and keeps only the good ones comparing to the present struggles. There is an alteration in the remembrance of the same events. The memories are reshaped consciously or unconsciously. New historicism claims that the past is interpreted with the present mind of the protagonist therefore history becomes subjective.<sup>48</sup>

Notably, Mahmoody has reported the past according to her subjective view of reality in the present. She mixed historical facts with her sentiments about the current time. She deals with history as a personal matter according to her bad experience with the country and its laws. On the other side, she keeps defending her country and denigrating Iran in every manner using historical facts. The American identity of Betty Mahmoody that comes to the surface when she speaks about Iran makes it impossible for her to be objective during her narration, given the two countries' deteriorating relations at the time.

Greenblatt allege, in his work *Invisible Bullets*, that historical evidence is unreliable. Even in the absence of substantial social pressure, men lie quite readily about their most intimate beliefs.<sup>49</sup> Betty uses her daughter Mahtob to show the degree of violence in Iran. She keeps saying that her daughter asks her to take her to America because Mahtob hates her

father, as she put it, “She screamed in surprise and fright, struggling his grip, but he held firm as he followed the rest of the family to the rooftop.”<sup>50</sup> She also describes the scene when Moody wants to take Mahtob by force to an Anti-American demonstration of war. Betty depicts her daughter confirming that “She was not a dutiful Iranian child: she was my resolute American daughter.”<sup>51</sup> She also says that her way of reasoning amazed her in a manner that insinuates that being in America is more reasonable than choosing to stay in Iran, which means that America is a good place whereas Iran is the bad one.

First, Betty Mahmoody uses anti-American religiosity in Iran to elevate her country and culture. To her, the Iranian revolution makes no sense stating “How I loathed war! It made no sense. I did not understand a country full of people so eager to kill so ready to die.”<sup>52</sup> The Iranians’ hatred towards the American government and its foreign politics, and the stereotyping of its culture and people is apparent throughout the novel.

While reporting the news that is presented on the Iranian TV, Betty states that “Three-minute wrap-up of world news, which means some negative report about America. Americans were dropping like flies from AIDS. The American divorce rate was staggering. If the Iraqi Air Force bombed a tanker in the Persian Gulf, it was because America told them to do it.”<sup>53</sup> The Iranians view American culture as self-destructive, their women as unrespectable, a country with the highest divorce rate, sexually contagious diseases like AIDS, and a lifestyle leading to inevitable hell. Betty does not like the fact that America is portrayed in such negative image when she forgets that she is doing the same with Iran. Therefore, we conclude that reality is interpreted according to a person’s point of view; reality is subjective; it changes from one narrator or one representation to another; thus it is unreliable.

Second, Mahmoody highlights the fact that American women married to Iranians are kept in Iran against their will. They are sexually assaulted in Iran, as they are victims of domestic violence like the rest of the Iranian women. She speaks about the Taxi driver who

was brushing her leg with his hands in an inappropriate manner. Her American friend Ellen tells her that the same thing happened to her. However, Essay, one of Moody's relatives informs her: "I have heard about this, ... It has never happened to me. I think they do that to foreign women."<sup>54</sup> Here, Betty aims to redirect her racist view on Iran to the Iranians, demonstrating through these examples that Iranians are racist towards Americans and that they mistreat American women.

On the other side, Iranian propaganda informs the Iranians that Iraq is simply a puppet, armed and controlled by the United States. Mahmoody explains the anti-American demonstrations through her book, where everybody is shouting, "Maag barg America," a Persian slogan that means "Death to America," repeated by all the Iranians and even taught to children at school. Moody belittles Betty's parents for being Americans and tells her that they do not matter because they are Christians. Betty represents Iranians as "oblivious to squalor, contemptuous of western customs and ideals, and clinging to their own zealous brand of the Ayatollah Khomeini's fanatical Shiite sect of Islam."<sup>55</sup> She reports as well that the Iranians choose to eat on the floor, refusing the use of modern material as a way of rejecting the westerners' practices and being faithful to Islam and Khomeini's principles.

Furthermore, Betty Mahmoody reports multiple scenes in a way to amplify the degree of deterioration of social life in Iran. She often speaks about religion and describes the contradictions between Iranians' beliefs and their acts. According to Mahmoody, religion is used by men only to practice oppression on women and as a means of manipulation. For example, in the Islamic laws, men are not allowed to touch women unless they marry them but Mahmoody shows in her novel that Iranian men do not even respect these laws. She states "The driver reached the front of the bus and held out his hand. When I thrust the tickets at him, he grabbed my hand and held it firmly for an instant before he slid his own hand away slowly along with the tickets... "I thought Iranian men do not touch women like this"<sup>56</sup>

Additionally, Mahmoody presents a verse from the 'Koran' that says a man should not beat his wife unless it becomes the ever-last option. It clearly states "As for the women who show rebellion, you shall first enlighten them, then desert them in bed, and you may beat them as a last resort. Once they obey you, you have no excuse to transgress against them. God is high above you, and more powerful."<sup>57</sup> However, Iranian men constantly beat their wives and children as well without any obvious reasons and without even attempting to communicate with them. It is mainly the case for all the male characters in the novel including educated and illiterate ones.

She also reports Moody's swearing on the holy book that he is just taking her to Iran for a vacation, but he breaks his promise without caring about God's punishment. She recalls how Moody tells her 'I'd never do that to you. I love you. '...'Bring me the Koran.' I ... handed it to my husband. He placed his palm on the cover and declared: 'I swear to the Koran, I would never make you stay in Iran... that I would never make you live someplace against your will.'<sup>58</sup> Despite swearing, Moody detains her in Iran, the fact that shocked her knowing that this holy book is so sacred for Muslims.

By the same, Mahmoody highlights that Islam is a religion that respects other divinities. However, Iranian men do not care about the reality of these parts of Islam. The author of *Not Without my Daughter* is described as being subjective while commenting on Iran's politics, culture and social structure. According to a number of articles, her novel serves the American public opinion and the government's interests as it portrays the Islamic republic and the Islam religion as pure evil. It is released in the middle of the Iraq and Iran war and at the climax of the Iranian international conflicts with most of the worldwide state forces including America, Israel, and Russia. It is also the case of the novel's on-screen adaptation in 1991, which was the aftermath of the United States execution of Saddam Hussein.<sup>59</sup> This

novel undoubtedly has a political background as its release in such a sensitive period may be for political reasons.

Speaking on the unreliability of literary truth in new historicism, Betty has evoked the soldiering of young students by force to the Iraq war. She has reported:

Mrs. Azahr had a different reaction when I told her the story at school the next day. “When they see a group of boys, they pick them up and take them to the war,” she said sadly. “They do this at school too. Sometimes they take the trucks to a boy’s school and take away the boys to be soldiers. Their families never see them again.”<sup>60</sup>

No one knows the reality of why the police embark those boys. Everyone she asks provides a different answer. Reza tells her that they are probably arrested because of gathering without legal permission, while Moody simply says they have probably done something ‘wrong’. She says that “no one seemed to care anyway.” However, Betty chooses to keep the idea that they were kidnapping them to serve as soldiers in the war against Iraq.

In reality, during the eight-year conflict, many young boys wanted to help the war effort. They tampered with their birth certificates, sometimes with help from other people, or joined the Basij Resistance Force bases, which accepted volunteers under the age of eighteen. In those years, while the government of the Islamic Republic was massacring its opponents and members of the opposition in prison, many children were given arms and sent to the slaughter houses of the war for the “love of country” or “the love of martyrdom”.<sup>61</sup>

As it happens, the legal basis of conscription is the 1984 Military Service Act. Originally, according to article 2 of the act, nineteen was the age of conscription to military service. In the later phases of the Iran-Iraq war, the age for conscription was lowered to eighteen. Military service used to last 2 years during that time. The minimum age for voluntary recruitment appears to be 16 according to Iran’s initial report to the Committee on the Rights of Child.<sup>62</sup>

Another point that was discussed by Betty Mahmoody in *Not Without my Daughter* is the story about the young girls who, according to her, are kidnapped and raped by Iranian pasdars and also by Afghan refugees. They were raping girls before killing them. Betty was astonished that such practices happen in a Muslim country. It is quite impossible to know the credibility of this story. Betty affirms that “Whenever the pasdar arrested a woman who was to be executed, the men raped her first, because they had a saying: “A woman should never die a virgin.”<sup>63</sup>

Another dramatization of facts is when Mahmoody keeps calling her in laws smelly and confirms that Iranians shower once a year. However, she states later on that they cannot pray unless they shower after intercourse. She states that:

Moody rose early the next morning to shower, following the Islamic law of washing away the taint of sex prior to prayer. The noisy shower was a signal to Reza and Essay and to Mammal and Nesserine upstairs that Moody and I were getting along well.<sup>64</sup>

Given that Moody's family are quite religious and have children, it may be logical to assume that they are not having children from one shower and one intercourse per year. Her falseness in presenting the facts is obvious in her contradictory discourse above.

Again, Betty Mahmoody portrayed the Iranian men as aggressive, violent, and without mercy towards women. In other ways, she says that the majorities of Moody's relatives are educated and have high and respectable status in society. Thus, is it possible for a well-educated man committed to his religion to act in such disgrace and violence? That is another part of her story that is debatable and makes the reader question her faithfulness in reporting the truth.

Nevertheless Mahmoody's stereotype of Iranian men has been rejected not only by Iranians but also by American women married to Iranian men. It is cited by the German journalist Helma Lutz that when the book was first released, many American women married

to Iranian men counterclaimed her after the release of her book in America and denounced her portrayal of Iranian men in such a negative light.<sup>65</sup> A fact to which we can refer in *Not Without My Daughter* is the case of Alice the American lady married to an Iranian Ph.D. named Malek and this does not prevent them from being a happy couple residing in Iran. Betty states: “As I watched our guests that night, it occurred to me that of all the people I knew in Iran, Alice and Chamsey were the only ones who seemed happy.”<sup>66</sup>

The influence of the historical backdrop on *Not Without my Daughter* is traced in its context, from social norms change, political change, and its impact on economic development. As a result, viewing *Not Without my Daughter* through the lens of New Historicism would bring new perspectives on both text and history.

## Endnotes

---

<sup>1</sup> Hsiung Lai Chung. 2006. *Limits and Beyond: Greenblatt New Historicism and Feminist Genealogy*. 02.

<sup>2</sup> Keshav Raj Chalise. 2021. *Ranahar: Textuality of History, Culture and Politics*.

<sup>3</sup> Betty Mahmoody. 1987. *Not Without my Daughter*. 18.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.* 10.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.* 15.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.* 166.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.* 64.

<sup>8</sup> Serdaroglu, D. 2017. *A New Historicist Approach to Kazuo Ishiguro's When We Were Orphans*. Gaziantep University Journal of Social Sciences. 786.

<sup>9</sup> Islamic Penal Code of Iran. Chapter 18: Offences against Public Moral. 9.

[www.ghavanin.com/detail.asp?id=1232](http://www.ghavanin.com/detail.asp?id=1232) &

---

[http://www.unhcr.ch/cgi-bin/Texis/vtx/rsd/+qwwFqzvwn\\_x9Wx8DFqnlRTPdFqo2IyP0HEPpz\\_mwwwwwww3zmxwwwwww/rsddocview.html](http://www.unhcr.ch/cgi-bin/Texis/vtx/rsd/+qwwFqzvwn_x9Wx8DFqnlRTPdFqo2IyP0HEPpz_mwwwwwww3zmxwwwwww/rsddocview.html)

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> Betty Mahmoody. 1987. *Not Without my Daughter*. 32.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid. 13.

<sup>13</sup> Radio Free Europe/ Radio Liberty. December 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2021. *Iran Condom Ban Sparks Fears of Disease, Unwanted Pregnancies, and a Black Market*. Independent Media.

<https://www.radiofree.org/2021/12/22/iran-condom-ban-sparks-fears-of-disease-unwanted-pregnancies-and-a-black-market/>.

<sup>14</sup> Betty Mahmoody. 1987. *Not Without my Daughter*. 138.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid. 238.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid. 266.

<sup>17</sup> Ali Ansari. Kasra Arabi. February 11<sup>th</sup>, 2019. Ideology and Iran's Revolution: How 1979 Changed the World. Available at: <https://institute.global/policy/ideology-and-irans-revolution-how-1979-changed-world> [Accessed: September 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2022].

<sup>18</sup> Betty Mahmoody. 1987. *Not Without my Daughter*. 224.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid. 231.

<sup>20</sup> Al Jazeera English. February 4<sup>th</sup>, 2019. *Iran 1979. Anatomy of a Revolution L Featured Documentary*. Available at: <https://youtu.be/SJzuRf3Pyjk>. [Accessed: November 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2022].

<sup>21</sup> Betty Mahmoody. 1987. *Not Without my Daughter*. 229.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid. 232.

<sup>23</sup> Edit. October 28<sup>th</sup>, 2022. *Iran Hostage Crisis*. Available at:

<https://www.britannica.com/event/Iran-hostage-crisis>. [Accessed: November 7<sup>th</sup>, 2022].

<sup>24</sup> Betty Mahmoody. 1987. *Not Without my Daughter*. 04.

- 
- <sup>25</sup> H. Aram Veenser. 1989. *The New Historicism. Louis A. Montrose: Professing the Renaissance: The Politics and Politics of Culture*. 20.
- <sup>26</sup> Xiu LI Jie. 2014. *Historicity of Texts and Textuality of History-On the Virginian from The Perspective of New Historicism*.
- <sup>27</sup> Betty Mahmoody. 1987. *Not Without my Daughter*. 159, 160.
- <sup>28</sup> Ibid. 160.
- <sup>29</sup> XIU Li Jie. 2014. *Historicity of Text and Textuality of History-on The Virginian From The Perspective of New Historicism*.
- <sup>30</sup> History of Western Civilization II. The Iran Iraq War.  
<https://courses.lumenlearning.com/suny-hccc-worldhistory2/chapter/the-iran-iraq-war/>.
- <sup>31</sup> Admin. December, 2018. *U.S Involvement in the 1980s Iran-Iraq War: America's Haphazard and Tension of the Gulf Insecurity*. Available at:  
<http://yris.yira.org/comments/2729>
- <sup>32</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>33</sup> Betty Mahmoody. 1987. *Not Without my Daughter*. 275.
- <sup>34</sup> Rupert Colville. June 1<sup>st</sup>, 1997. *Refugees Magazine Issue 108 (Afghanistan: the unending crisis) – The biggest caseload in the world*. Available at:  
<https://www.unhcr.org/publications/refugeemag/3b680fbfc/refugees-magazine-issue-108-afghanistan-unending-crisis-biggest-caseload.html>. [Accessed: November 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2022]
- <sup>35</sup> Betty Mahmoody. 1987. *Not Without my Daughter*. 313.
- <sup>36</sup> Ibid. 288.
- <sup>37</sup> Ibid. 289.
- <sup>38</sup> Iran Human Rights Documentation Center. April 11<sup>th</sup>, 2012. *Haunted Memories: The Islamic Republic's Executions of Kurds in 1979*. Available at: [https://iranhrdc.org/haunted-memories-the-islamic-republics-executions-of-kurds-in-1979/#4\\_executions\\_and\\_battles\\_continue](https://iranhrdc.org/haunted-memories-the-islamic-republics-executions-of-kurds-in-1979/#4_executions_and_battles_continue). [Accessed: September 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2022.]

- 
- <sup>39</sup> Betty Mahmoody. 1987. *Not Without my Daughter*. 225.
- <sup>40</sup> Ibid. 385.
- <sup>41</sup> Stephen Greenblatt. 1990. *Learning to Curse: Essays in Early Modern Culture*. 221.
- <sup>42</sup> H. Aram Veenser. 1989. *The New Historicism. Louis A. Montrose: Professing the Renaissance: The Poetics and Politics of Culture*. 306.
- <sup>43</sup> Serdaroglu, D. 2017. A New Historicist Approach to Kazuo Ishiguro's When We Were Orphans. Gaziantep University Journal of Social Sciences.
- <sup>44</sup> Betty Mahmoody. 1987. *Not Without my Daughter*. 219.
- <sup>45</sup> Ibid. 225.
- <sup>46</sup> Ibid. 226.
- <sup>47</sup> Serdaroglu, D. 2017. A New Historicist Approach to Kazuo Ishiguro's When We Were Orphans. Gaziantep University Journal of Social Sciences. 789.
- <sup>48</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>49</sup> Stephen Greenblatt. 1988. *Invisible Bullets: Renaissance Authority and its Subversion*. 43.
- <sup>50</sup> Betty Mahmoody. 1987. *Not Without my Daughter*. 77.
- <sup>51</sup> Ibid. 376.
- <sup>52</sup> Ibid. 165.
- <sup>53</sup> Ibid. 27
- <sup>54</sup> Ibid. 277.
- <sup>55</sup> Ibid. 34.
- <sup>56</sup> Ibid. 287.
- <sup>57</sup> Ibid. 59.
- <sup>58</sup> Ibid. 368.
- <sup>59</sup> Hassan Bourara. 1994. *Not Without My Daughter: Reflections in Retrospect*. 57-58
- <sup>60</sup> Betty Mahmoody. 1987. *Not Without my Daughter*. 165.

---

<sup>61</sup> Aida Ghajar. 2017. *The Lost Youth of Iran's Child Soldiers*. Available at:

<https://iranwire.com/en/features/64724/>.

<sup>62</sup> Child Soldiers International (2001). *Child Soldiers Global Report 2001 Iran*. Available at:

<https://www.refworld.org/docid/498805f02d.html>.

<sup>63</sup> Betty Mahmoody. 1987. *Not Without my Daughter*. 305.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid. 88.

<sup>65</sup> Betty De Hart. 2001. *Not Without My Daughter on Parental Abduction, Orientalism and Maternal Melodrama*. 52.

<sup>66</sup> Betty Mahmoody. 1987. *Not Without my Daughter*. 302.

## **Chapter two: Power, Subversion and Containment in Betty Mahmoody's *Not Without My Daughter***

The notion of "Power" will be the main topic of this chapter. We will shed light on its many manifestations, including physical, psychological, and panopticon power. We will try to reveal how subversion is produced and how it is contained. By attempting to relate these concepts to events that occurred in *Not Without My Daughter*, we shall draw on Michael Foucault and some other new historicists to fulfill this realization.

### **1. Types of power in Betty Mahmoody's *Not Without My Daughter***

We cannot deny that power is everything in life without it, neither the oppressed nor the oppressor can survive and all people will be free and on equitable basis. But unfortunately, life has taken another path, in which humans come to life with a desire to own, reign and dominate. The French philosopher Michel Foucault influenced New Historicism, which frequently investigates the idea that power is the least common factor in all human professions. As a result, power serves as both a weapon of oppression and an object of yearning for the oppressed.<sup>1</sup> According to Foucault's thesis, the term "power" refers to the dominant and resistance connections that exist between people in a given society. He studies how society generates and distributes power. This concept seeks to explain why everyone, whether oppressed or alone, desires power.<sup>2</sup>

Greenblatt claims that "power is everywhere, not because it embraces everything, but because it comes from everywhere."<sup>3</sup> This quotation tends to indicate that power may take numerous forms and that it is always presents in life so that either you exercise it or it will be exercised or imposed on you in some way. *Not Without My Daughter* describes how power is exercised and how it is used by the oppressor to punish and torture the oppressed to install fear on him. We can distinguish three types of power in the novel which are Physical,

Psychological and Panopticon power. In this part of our work, we will relate each type to Betty Mahmoody's novel.

### **a. Physical Power**

This kind of power can be exercised when someone tries to physically hurt another if he does not accept or obey his orders. He does this by practicing violence. The latter is defined in the Oxford dictionary as “shoving, slapping, kicking and biting or even killing” in order to install fear. It is also used to prove the authority of the oppressor and make the subjugation of the oppressed easier.

New Historicism was greatly influenced by the French philosopher Michael Foucault, who maintains that “Power is exercised rather than possessed ... power is not repressive but productive.”<sup>4</sup> This passage from Foucault highlights the idea that power is exercised, which means that it only exists when it is used, like when the dominant impose it on the weak. In *Not Without my Daughter*, Betty portrays Iran as a country that is purely patriarchal where women are subjected to men. Gender is socially, culturally and religiously constructed.

The Islamic republic laws as represented in *Not Without my Daughter* are established in a way that serves men more than women. Iranian laws are severe on women as they are punished and tortured and even executed. Mahmoody says that “Whenever the Pasdar arrested a woman who was to be executed, the men raped her first, because they had a saying: “A woman should never die a virgin”.”<sup>5</sup> This saying proves the notion that the Iranian laws and religion authorize the ill-treatment and violation of women's rights. Religion is just a means of intimidation to keep the patriarchal force of men over females. In fact, humiliation and physical abuse make it impossible to women to think about rebellion. Therefore, they remain subjugated and powerless in the shadow of violence and fear.

Betty Mahmoody reports about Iranian husbands who abuse their women physically, which is seen as normal in society. Women accept the fact having no other choice since the laws of Khomeini serve the phenomenon. Nesserine explains to Betty after Moody beat her badly that “All men are like this ... Mammal does the same thing to me and Reza does the same thing to Essay.”<sup>6</sup> Abusing women physically is a means to control and subjugate them to the oppressive laws, women are also punished in case they do not respect the dress code imposed on them.

Actually, the incorporation of Sharia law into the constitution has reproduced and intensified male’s authoritarianism at the community and family levels. Soon after birth, a female body is subject to the hegemony of the father or other men acting as guardians. The husband takes possession of the female body after marriage. In this context, according to the law, male decisions can negate all societal rights of women. This includes the right to education, work, marriage, emergency and medical interventions, abortion divorce, custody of the children, and even the choice of dress and lifestyle and general freedom.<sup>7</sup>

Undeniably, the environment in Tehran is completely under the sway of religious pressure. Religion has taken over every area of life and has turned into a tool and justification for the exercise of authority. They take use of their shifted meaning of Koran verse to implement their supremacy over Women. For instance, in *Not Without My Daughter*; Mahmoody says:

In Sura (Chapter) 4, Verse34, ...: The men are placed in Charge of women, since God has endowed them with the necessary qualities, and made them the bread earners. Thus, the righteous women will accept this arrangement obediently, and will honor their husbands in their absence, in accordance with God’s commandments. As for the women who show rebellion, you shall first enlighten them, then desert them in bed and you may beat them as a last resort.<sup>8</sup>

Authority is only a subset of power relationships in which the use of power is limited through social endorsement or justification.<sup>9</sup>It is clear in this Sura that beating women is the last resort, but

men in Iran take the explanation that works better for their dominance. women should obey them otherwise; they have the right to hurt them physically on every fault they may commit because God has made them superior on women. This is the way violence against women is justified.

According to the French sociologist Pierre Bourdieu, power is formed culturally and symbolically and is perpetually legitimized through the interplay between agency and structure. This is mostly accomplished through what Bourdieu refers to as “habitus,” or socialized norms or tendencies that influence behavior and thought. “Habitus” is defined as “the way society is deposited in people in the form of permanent dispositions, or trained capacities and structured propensities to think, feel, and behave in determining ways that then govern them.”<sup>10</sup> In Iran violence against women is normalized so far that it has become a part of its social norms. When Moody was harming Betty in front of his family members, no one dares to intervene. For them, it was a husband-and-wife matter. It is obvious that in the Iranian society, men are the masters and women are the slaves. Mahmoody reports: “Iranian women were slaves to their husbands.”<sup>11</sup>

The Islamic Regime of Khomeini supports violence against women. A woman that does not respect the mandatory hijab puts makeup or nail polish in the street is arrested and punished and, in some cases, beaten by the Morality police.<sup>12</sup> This regime also supports domestic violence since it is not punished or considered a crime under Iranian law. As a matter of fact, criminal penalties for murder via domestic violence or “honor killings” are lighter than the penalties for other acts of murder. For example, men convicted of murdering their daughters are imprisoned for only three to 10 years, instead of receiving the standard sentence of capital punishment.<sup>13</sup> Betty is terrified because she knows that the laws of Iran would not protect her. She says “As long as I was in Iran Moody was my ruler.”<sup>14</sup> She adds “I was his chattel he could do with me anything he wants.”<sup>15</sup> She is subjugated to the fanatical

laws of the Iranian patriarchy as she has asserted. Betty mentioned that, she is married to a mad man and trapped in a country “where the laws decreed that he was my absolute master.”

Gender power is supported by religious power as an excuse for male domination during the Ayatollah Iran after 1979 till today. Still, women killed and severely punished in case of disobedience of the veiling law. On September 13<sup>th</sup>, 2022, the Morality Police arrested the 22-year-old Kurdish Iranian Mahsa Amini in the street in Tehran while visiting the city with her family. The Morality Police told Amini’s brother that they were detaining her for “improper” hijab and taking her to an “educational and orientation class.” They threw her into a van and, according to eyewitnesses, she was beaten in the vehicle on the way the police station. The Morality Police informed her brother two hours after her arrest that she had suffered a heart attack and brain seizure. He watched an ambulance taking her to the hospital. He brother stated that he “found her face swollen and her legs black and blue,” after visiting her. Amini died on September 16, 2022.<sup>16</sup>

Accordingly, it is to say that Iran’s social structure is rather a Gender power structure than a social class structure. Men are on the stage of the society while women are on the periphery. Even if they have the opportunity to be educated, a woman remains a man’s property. He guides her and knows better than her and she has to obey him. In order to realize this, violence is the tool to operate.

#### **b. Psychological power**

Psychological power can be defined as any intentional behavior that seriously undermines the psychological integrity of another person. Psychological power can take the form of oppression, defamation, verbal insult or harassment. New historicism welcomes Foucault's insistence that power operates through myriad channels, including not only direct subjugation and state action but, more importantly everyday life.<sup>17</sup> Foucault asserts that power

is not a direct and explicit action. It is rather more likely to occur beneath a number of unusual and cryptic methods and channels. It implies that there are more methods to wield power that are more oblique and unnoticed. To express this idea, we can refer to *Not Without My Daughter*.

Mainly after moody imprisons Betty in Tehran, he tries to make pressure on her mental health, manipulating, insulting and threatening her. Moody brought terror into the soul of Betty. He keeps threatening her with murder. She is his captive not only physically but also psychologically as he deprived her from speaking to her family in the U.S.A. He imprisons her as it is shown at the beginning of the novel warning her that “If you try to leave this house, I will kill you”.<sup>18</sup> Betty is lonely in a foreign land and gets depressed especially in Ameh’s house where every gesture of her is watched. Moody also warns her not to go outside. She states:

Back to the lonely bedroom, back to days of nothingness, back to nausea and vomiting, back to deep depression. Whenever I left my room, I was hounded at every step by Ameh Bozorg or one of her daughters. I felt my will weakening. Soon I realized, I would simply accept my plight and drift away from my family and my homeland forever.<sup>19</sup>

Moody goes further as he forbids the entire family to speak to her. Each time she enters a room, everybody turns their back to her or scowls at her. She Claims:

In that first week of imprisonment only Essay spoke kindly to me One day while she and Reza were visiting, Essay, managed to get me aside for a moment. “I am really sorry,” she said. “I like you, but they have told all of us to stay away from you. We are not allowed to sit with you or talk to you. I feel bad for what you are going through, but I cannot afford to get into trouble with the whole family.”<sup>20</sup>

As an American hostage in Iran, Betty is driven into depression. The whole family forces her to be in isolated and lonely. Such circumstances amplify her sorrow and drive her to anxiety. As shown in the above quotations, repression, isolation and manipulation have caused her

depression and therefore, the deterioration of her health. This made her consider surrendering to her miserable faith and accepting the reality of staying in Iran forever.

When they left Ameh Bozorg's house, Moody still imprisons her in Essay and Reza's apartment. He also takes her daughter Mahtob from her when he realizes that his own daughter runs away from him. He blames Betty for his daughter's behavior believing that she is more influenced by her American mother than by the Iranian culture. There is nothing worse for a mother than to be separated from her child. Separating Betty from her daughter Mahtob is a kind of psychological manipulation practiced by Moody. As he detects that physical violence does not seem to dishearten her, he resorts to another manner to dominate her so that she would understand that she has no other way to escape from that ordeal but obey and accept to succumb to the Iranian norms and life style.

Betty Mahmoody is living in constant fear. Her husband has installed that fear not only by using violence but also in a psychological way. He relentlessly keeps repeating to her his usual threats: "I will kill you." embedding the idea in her head. Moody terrorizes her in many different aspects. For instance, he threatens to take her to Khomeini and denounce her as being a C.I.A agent, letting her imagine the terrible punishment she may have. He keeps repeating to her "I'm going to take you to Khomeini and tell him that you do not like him, moody growled. I am going to take you to the government and tell them that you are C.I.A representative"<sup>21</sup> Betty is terrified as she says:

"In a rational moment I might have viewed these as idle threats. But I had heard stories of people who had been accused on the basis of little or no evidence and then imprisoned or executed without benefit of trial. I was at the mercy of both this insane man and his equally insane government. I knew that I remained alive only at the whim of Moody and his Ayatollah."<sup>22</sup>

Through this quotation it is obvious how much Moody's manipulation and threats has attained Betty's mental. Being afraid therefore makes her easy to handle as she would believe anything

he would say to her even if it is not real. She is obliged to do as told without even using violence as throwing an irrational threat at her is enough to make her scared. Moody's hate to his wife can be explained and related to his dark rage against America. He frequently tells her that her son from her first marriage is going to die in the Gulf war because America has to pay for what she has done to Iran and the Americans. Her son has to pay just for being an American.

In addition to the constant threats, Moody is trying to make Betty feel bad for herself. For instance, he judges her for being a bad mother as she made Mahtob so attached to her and that she can't be a normal child anymore. In another scene, Moody tells her that she is a bad wife because she is not giving him other children. Moody wants to make of Betty and Mahtob typical Iranians. Most of the time, he tells Betty that she is going to hell because she does not accept Islam as a religion. Moody centers much of his wrath upon the fact that she is not Muslim, he assures her "You will burn in the fires of hell," he screams at me. "And I am going to heaven. Why do you not wake up?"<sup>23</sup>

Women in Iran are contented with their deplorable situation and mostly do not even react or fight to get their rights. Greenblatt believes that no physical or military force is required to be deployed or utilized for power to work successfully in the interests of dominant ideological systems. When the self is constituted ideologically and linguistically, it reproduces hegemonic operation.<sup>24</sup> This implies that an intelligent individual who has a capacity to efficiently manipulate his linguistic tools is the powerful in his society, he has the power to influence and guide the others.

Ayatollah Khomeini uses the religious ideology to urge the Iranians to revolt against the shah so as to have power on his Islamic republic. He tries to draw on the ideal Islamic republic that preserves their dignity and leads to heaven. Hamid, an Iranian citizen tells Betty that "The people of Iran wanted revolution." He admitted to me quietly. "But this "he gestured to the

horde of unsmiling Iranians scurrying through the streets of the Ayatollah's Islamic Republic "is not what we wanted."<sup>25</sup> This saying explains how people are manipulated and made to believe that a revolution would make their life better. Everyone voted for an Islamic republic but at the end the results were not as promised and as imagined.

In another paradigm, men instrumentalize religion to justify their oppression. They also interpret Islam as they like to normalize the fact of beating women. Islam says a husband must be a woman's master whom she has to obey. They also use Islam to impose the dress code on women. Despite of all that, no woman dares to fight back her husband or complain. Mahmoody says:

Whenever I found something in the Koran that seemed to argue my case, that proclaimed the rights of women and children, I showed it to Moody and other members of the family...These were Shiite Moslems, still glorying in the success of the revolution, clad in the self-righteous robes of fanaticism. How could I - a Christian, an American, in the self-righteous robes of fanaticism. How could I - a Christian, an American, a woman - dare to offer my explanation of the Koran over the views of Imam Reza, the Ayatollah Khomeini, Baba Hajji, and, indeed, my own husband? As far as everyone was concerned, as Moody's wife I was his chattel. He could do with me as he wished. Islam says a husband must be a woman's master whom she has to obey. They also use Islam to impose the dress code because this religion says that a woman should be covered from head to toe. They have played women's minds till violence becomes an acceptable matter. No woman dares to fight back her husband or complain.<sup>26</sup>

Betty Mahmoody reports the time she goes to the embassy and begs Helen, the lady who works there to help her. She shows her the bruises in her body and those of her daughter. She even tells her that her husband is going to kill her if she goes back to him. Despite all that, the lady does not give any importance to those bruises as Iran's culture is a one where domestic violence is a banal matter. Helen simply mutters: "I don't know why American women do this."<sup>27</sup>

A smart educated person has the power to convince and manipulate using his linguistic tools even when he lies. We may project this idea on Moody who was lying to Betty to convince her to accompany him to Iran. He even swears on the Koran that he would never

keep her in Iran against her will so that she would trust him because she knows how faithful he is to his religion. Manipulation is achieved through lies using religion as a means to have control on women. Religion becomes a tool to hegemonic dominance over women.

### **c. Panopticon Power**

According to Michel Foucault the panopticon is more than just a well-built structure. It is a political construction that inspires to the creation of power relations and exercising them over the dominated. Its use must be solely for the purposes of power and politics. Foucault claims that “The Panopticon is a marvelous machine which, whatever use one may wish to put it to, produces homogeneous effects of power.”<sup>28</sup>

In *Not Without My Daughter*, we can say that Tehran is the panopticon prison. The Pasdars play the role of the watchtower and the Iranian people give the impression of being the prisoners. In every street corner, there is a truck full of Pasdars watching even the smallest actions of all the citizens. Women feel watched all the time and thus move cautiously fearing detention. This is also the case of anti-revolutionaries and the ones who possess anything that make reference to the American culture in the city of Tehran that is under siege.

Betty Mahmoody explains the situation saying that “it’s every activity scrutinized by heavily armed soldiers and scowling police. It was frightening to walk the streets in front of loaded rifles. Men in dark blue police uniforms were everywhere.”<sup>29</sup> Mahmoody also says:

Revolutionary soldiers dressed in camouflage fatigues were ever-present. They stopped cars indiscriminately, searching for anti-revolutionary contraband such as drugs, literature critical of Shiite Islam, or American-made cassette tapes. This latter offense could land you in prison for six months.<sup>30</sup>

From the quotation, we may say that the Iranian government of Ayatollah is a one that imposes its harsh politics and authority over its people especially in its capital Tehran. As

cited in the novel, it is the most crowded city in the country because of poverty in the villages that urge people to come to the capital, to seek a better life. Therefore, to have the control over the masses and to avoid any rebellion, the government established a surveillance with severe punishments for the ones who do not respect the laws. This is to prove that the only ruler in the country is the Islamic government.

According to the principles of the Shiite fanatical republic, women's dress code must be respected at the smallest detail no ankles showing, no hair which may outpace from the chador no makeup nor nail polish. Women cannot walk freely in the streets. They are exposed to being arrested at any moment in case for instance they forget a hair out or did not notice their socks were down or do anything that goes against the dress code imposed. As reported by Betty, one of the Pasdars' assignments is to make sure women are properly dressed. Betty Mahmoody reports the story of Hakim's niece who is stopped by lady Pasdars who took her into their care and used acetone to clean off her nail polish and lipstick. They scream at her and tell her they were going to take her to prison. They do not even care when she tells them she has left her two daughters at the apartment. Mahmoody also reports about the Pasdars by saying:

Then there were the ominous Pasdars, a special police force that prowled about in small white four-wheel trucks. Everyone seemed to have a horror story to tell about the Pasdars. They were the Ayatollah's answer to the Shah's Sevak, the secret police. Dark legends had grown quickly about the Pasdars, who were little more than street thugs suddenly bestowed with official power.<sup>31</sup>

In fact, At any moment, one can be arrested and sent to jail for the least of the reasons, and his family would never hear from him again. Betty explains that they would not even bother to investigate properly in the case and only care for punishment to extend their power so that no one would think of rebellion.

It is also the case of Fereshteh's husband who is arrested for plotting and thinking against the government. She tells her friend Betty that her husband had a master degree in economics from America and she recounts that the government is just afraid of this kind of citizens. Fereshteh says that one night the police just picked him from the street when he was at the gas station and they never heard about him. She says: "They just picked him up and put him in prison .... It has been more than a year now, and they have not even charged him with anything."<sup>32</sup>

The job of the secret police is to lookout for enemies of their republic or merely any defenseless person who they could intimidate. They are watching everything and ready to expose their power on any helpless individual. The laws of the Ayatollah and his agents in every corner of the city are the tool to thrust his power and make everybody under his mercy. The Pasdars have the freedom to do whatever necessary even if it is unethical or inhuman to get the orders executed. This proves Foucault's idea that power is predominant and omnipresent.<sup>33</sup>

In *Not Without my Daughter*, it is undeniable that all three kinds of exerting power including physical, psychological and panopticon power are in place. Iran, being an Islamic republic and Patriarchal society exerts physical and psychological power over women and authorizes the abuse of women's bodies as it is men's property. Concerning panopticon power, it is exerted by the government in order to have control over its citizens. *Not Without my Daughter* exposes the relations between the oppressed and the oppressor.

## **2. Containment and Subversion**

Life stands on power relations as there are rulers and those who are ruled. That is the reality of life in every domain and in every relationship between human beings. The distinction is between those who do not tolerate subjugation and those who do not indulge

opposition. The dominator uses every tool possible to sustain his current position. The subjugated are generally bound by social conventions and ethics. The oppressed in some cases fight against the dominator's laws and limitations. Alienated and oppressed people commonly violate the rules and reject all forms of servitude. From this comes subversion which can be defined as opposing power manifestations and oppressive laws of the ruler. Thus, subversion lies where power is performed.

Relying on Foucault's notions of power structures, Stephen Greenblatt, the leading exponent of the New Historicism literary theory, introduced the concept of subversion and containment. The act of trying to undermine or alter a political system is referred to as subversion, while the act of trying to stop the influence of a competing ideological power or political system from spreading is known as containment.<sup>34</sup>

#### **a. Containment**

According to Greenblatt's argument in his essay *Invisible Bullets*, power serves at the same time as both a producer and a container of subversion. As we have already seen, he asserted that "the apparent production of subversion is the very condition of power."<sup>35</sup> Power allows for the minimal coexistence of containment and subversion to the extent that neither the political or religious authority nor the relationship between the rulers and the ruled is threatened.<sup>36</sup> From this, we may deduce that power creates subversion, and subversion creates power because, as long as the oppressed subverts the oppressor, the latter contains him more harshly.

In *Not Without my Daughter*, the government of the Islamic republic contains the people of Tehran. To prevent subversive actions, Khomeini, surrounded Tehran and charged the Pasdars with monitoring the proper execution of his laws and punishing those who attempt to subvert them. The Pasdars play the role of terrorizing and intimidating people as Betty

asserts that “everyone has a horror story to tell about the Pasdars.”<sup>37</sup> Their job is to search for anti-revolutionaries, assure the right application of the dress code for women, and maintain the anti-American ideology. In order to achieve his objective of efficiently containing the Iranians, Khomeini hegemonically tries to drive his people ‘s rage and hatred towards the west and the United States as being their ultimate enemies and himself as their savior from the western ideological invasion.

Iran’s people overthrew the Shah’s rule in order to establish a pure Islamic republic based on Sharia law. Khomeini imposes Sharia as the utmost social and political code in Iran, disclosing the threat of Christianity and western influence and thus proving Iran’s power. No other religion could be professed in Iran, as Islam is imposed. People are contained by the legislative laws, as well as by the Islamic laws and the harsh punishment they may receive in case of rebellion. This indicates religious and political containment; Both are manifested through Betty Mahmoody’s novel.

The government operates Islam and anti-American dogmas as preliminary means for containment. Teaching anti-Americanism is to some extent preventing future generations from being influenced by the west which may lead to their rebellion against the oppressive laws of the Islamic republic. They wash the brains of the students to facilitate their subjugation and make them committed Iranians uninfluenced by the west. The enemy is America and therefore, they have to stand with their country, whatever the price to pay. Mahmoody explains that “The hallways thinned out as students found their classrooms for the day, and I soon became aware of the first morning exercise. “Maag Barg America!”<sup>38</sup> Betty is afraid that this would influence her daughter, but she can do nothing about it. Moody wants to make from her a dutiful Iranian daughter.

In *Not Without My Daughter*, religious, political and even gender containment are all related to Islam and Sharia. According to Greenblatt, religious authority is used as a powerful tool to keep citizens in line.<sup>39</sup> He asserts that “Physical compulsion is essential but never sufficient, the survival of the ruler depends upon a supplement of coercive belief.”<sup>40</sup> Greenblatt tends to explain that the oppressor frequently operates religion to appear divine in order to influence and control people. The latter would be easier to manipulate if they believe in a divine power that could judge them. That means religion becomes a justification for oppression.

As it is known, in Iran Sharia as the principle of the country’s rule, is exhibited in many aspects. In the novel, Betty Mahmmody provides a useful preliminary idea about containment when she says that if a woman dares to go out without being fully covered from head to toe, she would be arrested by the morality Pasdars, and in some cases, they are executed. In her memoir, Mahmoody has also spoken about martyrdom.

The Iranians are religiously contained and therefore accept dying for God’s sake in the Iran & Iraq war. They are religiously committed to the idea that death is not mystery for them. It even becomes a fantasy to die in the war so they can be resurrected in infinite heaven. Betty reports that one time, when Baba Hajji survived an Iraqi bombing on a Friday prayer, instead of being happy that he survived, he is upset because he lost the chance of dying as a martyr. Moody tells her that “He is upset that he was not killed. He wants to be a martyr like his brothers.”<sup>41</sup> She also states that:

To Mammal and Nesserine, life-including their own-was cheap. Death is a more common and therefore less mysterious phenomenon. What would Inc do but trust in Allah? And if the worst happened, was it not inevitable anyway? Their bravado in the face of the bombings was not a sham. Rather, it was a manifestation of the philosophy that taken to the extreme produces terrorist martyrs.<sup>42</sup>

Also, women accept their husbands' ill treatment because in Islam, a woman should obey her husband and be patient. They also tolerate the dress code since it is religiously imposed on them. They accept the law that prohibits birth control as it is religiously unethical; the mission of women on earth is reproduction. Betty wears the chador even though she was against it. She sees it as an ugly and unhealthy dress code that hides her beauty and makes her feel uncomfortable. However, she wears it because of being terrified of the idea of being arrested. Iranian women are welcoming these laws because they are issued from religion, and they have no other choice but obey aspiring for heaven and God's mercy.

In an essay entitled *"Invisible Bullets: Renaissance Authority and its Subversion"* Stephen Greenblatt introduced the not-quite-binary opposition of containment and subversion. He argued that the dominant culture of early modern England did not merely allow certain forms of unruliness or subversive thought to be manifested; rather, "subversive is the very product of that power and furthers its ends"<sup>43</sup> This means that the oppressor oppresses the subjugated, push them to subvert and then punishes them in order to prove that he is powerful and undefeatable. By doing so, eventually no one would dare to subvert his laws. Betty comments that: "I had heard stories of people who had been accused on the basis of little or no evidence and then imprisoned or executed without benefit of trial."<sup>44</sup> She outputs that the Iranian government punishes people even without clear evidence, and may go till execution of innocent people.

People would be afraid of committing any act that may be suspicious of betrayal when they hear about horrifying punishment. This is the case of Betty who is afraid when Moody threatens her that he would take her to the authorities and tell them she works with the C.I.A. The same case of Fereshteh who is afraid of talking about her husband's arrestment, fearing that she would get the same fate. People are afraid of the pasdars and are effectively contained that no rebellion is possible.

Accordingly, Iranian men have a significant influence over their women. Any act of rebellion from a female character is directly contained. Women have been discursively constructed and condemned as inferior yet threatening to man. Thus, they are in perpetual need of containment and control. They are subjected to particular disciplinary techniques. The body is an over-determined site of power for feminists as well as for Foucault; a surface inscribed with culturally and historically specific practices and subject to political and economic forces.<sup>45</sup> Significantly, this power relation between the two sexes is historically and culturally constructed. Through history, women have been considered inferior to men who are the virtue and women in nature are frivolous, irrational and in need of men's guidance.

Containment is possible when the man is financially and by virtue superior to a woman. In *Not Without my Daughter*, gender containment is found in Ellen's relation with Hormoz. Betty reports:

Once in Tehran, Ellen found herself hostage just as I was. Hormoz decreed that she was never going home. She was an Iranian citizen subject to the laws of the country, and to his will. He locked her up for a time and beat her.<sup>46</sup>

Ellen is afraid of leaving her husband because he has succeeded in making her lose her self-confidence and personality as a woman that can overcome the hard times in her life alone. She quit high school to marry Hormoz who enjoys both financial and social status. She chooses to return to her abusive husband though he gives her the freedom of fleeing Iran to America. She chooses to get back to him tolerating his humiliations and abusive treatment because of being incapable of living alone in the U.S. Ellen is subjugated to Hormoz.

Betty's rebellion is inadmissible to Moody Bozorg who wants to subjugate his wife and daughter to his Iranian patriarchal laws. He wants to make of them typical Iranian women. As long as Betty does not accept that oppression, he practices multiple ways of containment on

her; using violence, separating her from her daughter, and imprisoning her at home after confiscating her passport and checkbook. She reports:

I spent several hours in the bedroom with Mahtob, crying, fighting off nausea, wavering between anger and paralysis. Then Moody demanded my checkbook; I turned it over to him meekly. "Where are the others, he asked. "We have three accounts." I brought only one," I said. That explanation satisfied him, and he did not bother to search my purse.<sup>47</sup>

His aim is to make her reconsider her thoughts of fleeing Iran and just surrendering to the reality of him being the master and ruler. Moody is a typical Iranian man, even after spending twenty-five years in America. He tries to contain his wife so that she would accept his mastery on her as the rest of Iranian women do with their husbands in a misogynistic society like Iran.

#### **b. Subversion**

Wherever there is dominance, there is resistance, according to Foucault. Power is never absolute, uniform, or smooth but fluctuating and unstable; when power is being exercised on "micro levels" it is resisted on "micro levels".<sup>48</sup> which intends that power is the main condition to resistance. Power is manifested on different levels and is not static. Accordingly, resistance also becomes multiple as power is its engine.

In *Not Without my Daughter*, Betty's consciousness finds subversive elements everywhere. For example, she describes Iranians' faith as a mere hypocrisy. Betty sates that normally, in Islam, there is no difference between a Christian and Muslim as "we did worship the same God."<sup>49</sup> However, through the book, we find that hatred towards Christians is manifested especially from Moody. He ridicules Betty telling her sarcastically "is your father Muslim?" and when she says of course not he replies: "Then it does not matter"<sup>50</sup> which means that if someone is not a Muslim, he is considered an enemy and worthless.

Betty reports contradiction between a man's beliefs and his actions. She is a victim of sexual harassment by a taxi driver at several times. When she says "I thought Muslim men do not do this."<sup>51</sup> This religious hypocrisy makes her hate the Iranian government and its people. Such issues make her more dedicated to her Christianity and to the idea of leaving Iran whatever it takes her. Betty has in fact subverted in multiple ways. She hates being covered even though she does nothing against it as she alleges in her novel "why am I wearing this stupid scarf?"<sup>52</sup> to show to what extent she hates the chador. Since Moody announces to her that they are never getting back to America, all her thoughts were centered on one goal; "finding a way of getting out from Iran." Betty alleges: "To the police it was a routine event. To me it was a ghastly reminder of the perils of our lives in Tehran. We had to get out of this hell, and soon, before our world exploded around us."<sup>53</sup>

Mahmoody subverts to her husband's laws in several aspects. She refuses to stay a prisoner and decides to plan her escape to the United States. She manages to go to the Suisse embassy risking her husband's anger and the violence that may come with it. Every time Moody imposes on her to do something that she does not tolerate, she refuses in a way or another. For instance, she refuses the school where Moody wants Mahtob to get her education as she considers it inappropriate. Even though it is against the school's ethics to let a man in as it is a girls' school, she manages to convince the supervisor to let Moody visit it.

In other forms, Betty subverts to Iranian laws as she goes against the law that prohibits the use of birth control despite her husband's wish of having another child. She steals contraceptives and manages to prevent getting pregnant without being caught by her husband. When Moody tries to force Betty to go to America to see her father and sell all what they have and send him back the money to Iran, she gets suspicious as everybody tells her not to trust him because if she goes without her daughter, Moody would make sure that she would never see her again. She revolts against his orders and tries hard not to get on the plane to America

without Mahtob. She is even meeting Amahl secretly and they manage her escape illegally with her daughter before the day of her flight to America. After her escape, Betty says “how long would he wait before he realized I had tricked him?”<sup>54</sup> She manages to manipulate Moody so efficiently that he never found out what she had been planning.

Yet, in what concerns subversion, not only Betty has subverted in this novel but there are other characters as well. Betty subverts because she does not accept the Iranian laws and those of her husband. The other characters subvert in their own way because they are against the oppressive laws. For example, Hamid the ex-shah’s army officer who is helping Betty to make phone calls at his shop and is encouraging her to go against her husband, when he tells her “I could send somebody to take care of him.”<sup>55</sup> He means he can send someone to hurt him. He is also against the political system of Iran he says to Betty that “People wanted the revolution ... but this is not what we want.”<sup>56</sup> He is also trying to escape from that country to America with his family because he can no longer tolerate the degradation of Iranian’s life style. The Pasdars close his store because he is selling t-shirts with English slogans.

In another situation, we find the subversion of Amahl. Betty says that he has “his own reasons to help us”. He tries hard to help Betty escape in an illegal way from the Turkish mountains using his contacts and paying for all the procedures. Amahl knows that he may be executed for such infringement of law, but he does what he sees right against the Iranian laws and against Moody’s will and authority.

The very concept of subversion is unsatisfactory for describing resistance or revolution. Subversion is more likely to be the fantasy of someone inside a dominant subculture, whether he is eager to identify it and root it out, or to identify with it, the debate over subversion and containment is a non-debate, since "subversion" is already included in containment.<sup>57</sup> This means that subversion does not necessarily include acts of rebellion as it may be invisible.

Subversion refers for instance to someone who is against a certain order but does not dare to revolt against it. Therefore, the ruled can subvert directly and embody that power imposed on him in order to eliminate it, or in another way, he just identifies with it and avoids it. Subversion and containment are in fact interlinked. We find subversion in containment and containment in subversion. This implies that not only the oppressor contains the oppressed but the oppressed tries to manipulate the oppressor in order to get to his goal without directly subverting him.

In *Not Without my Daughter*, even though Betty is complotting against Moody for her escape plans, she tries to fool him and make him believe that she accepts the life in Iran instead of constantly fighting with him. She plays the loving wife that accepts that change in order to have a happy life with her daughter and husband and save her marriage. Nevertheless, it was just a tactic to divert his attention on what is on her mind so that he would trust her and give her some freedom to accomplish her plan. She endures things she does not want or accept. For example, celebrating the first day of Moharram and wearing the chador. She makes him believe that she has finally become the typical woman he wants to calm his anger and get what she wants from him.

Betty's combat was not an easy task. Her refusal of her current situation makes her subvert to every notion she does not accept. She risks the escape from the Turkish mountains longing for her freedom. She manages to find the courage in her daughter's eyes to restart a new life for both of them in the United States letting behind a life of humiliation and enslavement.

## **Endnotes:**

---

<sup>1</sup> Fatmeh Mojdegani. 2016. *New Historicist Reading of Arthur Miller's The Crucible*. 14.

- 
- <sup>2</sup> Djamila Bouaziz, Karima Raiah. 2016. *Captivity and Identity in Aphra Behn's Oroonoko or, The Royal Slave (1688) and Penelope Aubin's The Noble Slave (1722)*. 8
- <sup>3</sup> Stephen Greenblatt. 1982. *The Power of Forms in the English Renaissance*. 93.
- <sup>4</sup> E.Cain William, A.Finke Laurie, E.Johnson Barbara. 2001. *Northon Antology of Literary Theory and Criticism*. Michel Foucault. 1618.
- <sup>5</sup> Betty Mahmoody. 1987. *Not Without my Daughter*. 305.
- <sup>6</sup> Ibid. 106.
- <sup>7</sup> Editorial Board. September 27<sup>th</sup>, 2022. *Normalization of Violence Against Women in Iran*. Available at: <https://trafo.hypotheses.org/41104> [Accessed on: November 15<sup>th</sup>, 2022].
- <sup>8</sup> Betty Mahmoody. 1987. *Not Without my Daughter*. 59.
- <sup>9</sup> Victor Pitsoe, Moeketsi Letseka. 2013. *Foucault's Discourse and Power: Implications for Instructionist Classroom Management*. 26. Available at: [https://file.scirp.org/pdf/OJPP\\_2013020811451567.pdf](https://file.scirp.org/pdf/OJPP_2013020811451567.pdf). [Accessed on: November 13<sup>th</sup>, 2022]
- <sup>10</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>11</sup> Betty Mahmoody. 1987. *Not Without my Daughter*. 37.
- <sup>12</sup> *Iran's War Against Women*. United Against Nuclear Iran. Available at: [file:///C:/Users/amrane7/Downloads/Iran's%20War%20on%20Women2022-10-06\\_AG\\_JMB\\_CMJ\\_AG.pdf](file:///C:/Users/amrane7/Downloads/Iran's%20War%20on%20Women2022-10-06_AG_JMB_CMJ_AG.pdf). Accessed on: [November 13<sup>th</sup>, 2022]
- <sup>13</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>14</sup> Betty Mahmoody. 1987. *Not Without my Daughter*. 46.
- <sup>15</sup> Ibid. 60.
- <sup>16</sup> *Iran's War Against Women*. United Against Nuclear Iran. Available at: [file:///C:/Users/amrane7/Downloads/Iran's%20War%20on%20Women2022-10-06\\_AG\\_JMB\\_CMJ\\_AG.pdf](file:///C:/Users/amrane7/Downloads/Iran's%20War%20on%20Women2022-10-06_AG_JMB_CMJ_AG.pdf).
- <sup>17</sup> Stephen Greenblatt. 1982. *Introduction to the Power of Forms*. 2250.

---

<sup>18</sup> Betty Mahmoody. 1987. *Not Without my Daughter*. 75.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid. 61.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid. 239.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

<sup>24</sup> Brannigan John. 1998. *New Historicism and Cultural Materialism*. 07.

<sup>25</sup> Betty Mahmoody. 1987. *Not Without my Daughter*. 108.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid. 59.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid. 73.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid. 202.

<sup>29</sup> Betty Mahmoody. 1987. *Not Without my Daughter*. 32.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid. 308.

<sup>33</sup> Michel Foucault. 1975. *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*. 206.

<sup>34</sup> Ibrahim Al Shaaban. 2021. *Subversion and Containment Model in New Historicism*.

Available

at:

<https://www.grin.com/document/1192779#:~:text=The%20broad%20meaning%20of%20%27>

[Subversion,or%20political%20system%20from%20spreading](#). [Accessed: November 20th,

2022.]

<sup>35</sup> Steven Mullaney. 1990. *Discursive Forms, Cultural Practices: History and Anthropology in Literary Studies*. 08.

<sup>36</sup> Ibrahim Al Shaaban. 2021. *Subversion and Containment Model in New Historicism*.

Available

at:

---

<https://www.grin.com/document/1192779#:~:text=The%20broad%20meaning%20of%20%27Subversion,or%20political%20system%20from%20spreading.> [Accessed on: November 20th, 2022.]

<sup>37</sup> Betty Mahmoody. 1987. *Not Without my Daughter*. 32.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.* 117.

<sup>39</sup> Dr. Kristine Johanson. 2016. *Subversion, Unruly Masculinity and Patriarchy: An Analysis of Greenblatt's Subversion and Containment in Richard III and Henry IV*.

<sup>40</sup> Stephen Greenblatt. 1988. *Invisible Bullets: Renaissance Authority and its Subversion* .47.

<sup>41</sup> Betty Mahmoody. 1987. *Not Without my Daughter*. 167.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.* 165.

<sup>43</sup> Stephen Greenblatt. 1988. *Invisible Bullets: Renaissance Authority and its Subversion*. 48.

<sup>44</sup> Betty Mahmoody. 1987. *Not Without my Daughter*. 239.

<sup>45</sup> Angela King. 2004. *The Prisoner of Gender: Foucault and the Disciplining of the Female Body*. 30.

<sup>46</sup> Betty Mahmoody. 1987. *Not Without my Daughter*. 152.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.* 45.

<sup>48</sup> Angela King. 2004. *The Prisoner of Gender: Foucault and the Disciplining of the Female Body*. 37.

<sup>49</sup> Betty Mahmoody. 1987. *Not Without my Daughter*. 347.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.* 148.

<sup>51</sup> *Ibid.* 287.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.* 10.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.* 324.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.* 393.

<sup>55</sup> *Ibid.* 108.

---

<sup>56</sup> Ibid.

<sup>57</sup> Steven Mullaney. 1990. Discursive Forms, Cultural Practices: History and Anthropology in Literary Studies. 09

## V. Conclusion

Through this research paper, we have analyzed Betty Mahmoody's *Not Without my Daughter* (1987) and tried to apply the theory of New Historicism to it. To accomplish our work, we borrowed some concepts from the works of Stephen Greenblatt and the French philosopher Michael Foucault as from some other new historicists.

After reading the biographical novel of Mahmoody and considering Betty's efficiency in reporting the historical events of 20th century Iran, we deduce that the Ayatollah's Iran was charged with political conflicts and led to radical changes in the country and its foreign relations. Its laws have also represented a certain repression of its people.

The first chapter of our dissertation examines the ideas of "Textuality of History" and "Historicity of the Text." Applying them to the historical events that took place in Iran between 1979 and 1989 and how Betty highlights them in her literary work by linking them to her own experience. Through the second chapter, we tried to spot the different representations of power relations and their kinds through the novel and how Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini's government used it to exert pressure on Iranians. The second chapter's title, "Subversion and Containment," explains how and why some characters rebel against that imposed system, which tries to keep them in check and inflict oppressive rules on them.

We concluded from our examination of Betty Mahmoody's *Not Without My Daughter* (1987) from a New Historicist perspective. That New Historicism opens a new perspective and gives the reader the chance to broaden his historical knowledge in addition to understanding the verbal and written work. Finally, we propose that *Not Without My Daughter* (1987) by Betty Mahmoody should be examined from viewpoints other than historical ones. As an open source of information and knowledge, it can be examined from a psychological standpoint.

## Bibliography

### Primary sources

Betty Mahmoody. 1987. *Not Without my Daughter*. Great Britain by Bantam Press.

### Secondary sources

- Angela King. 2004. *The Prisoner of Gender: Foucault and the Disciplining of the Female Body*.
- Betty de Hart. 2001. *Not Without my Daughter on Parental Abduction, Orientalism and Maternal Melodrama*.
- Brannigan John. 1998. *New Historicism and Cultural Materialism*.
- Conor Sheridan. 2016. *Foucault, Power and the Modern Panopticon*.
- E. Cain William Et all. 2001. *Norton Anthology of Theory and Criticism*. University of Oklahoma, London.
- Fatmeh Mojdegani. 2016. *New Historicist Reading of Arthur Miller's The Crucible*.
- H. Aram Veaser. 1989. *The New Historicism*. Routledge. 23 West 35 Street New York, NY 10001.
- Hassan Bourara. 1994. *Not Without My Daughter: Reflections in Retrospect*. University Hassan II, Casablanca Ain-Chock, Morocco.

- Hsiung Lai Chung. 2006. *Limits and Beyond: Greenblatt New Historicism and Feminist Genealogy*.
- Ibrahim Al Shaaban. 2021. *Subversion and Containment Model in New Historicism*. Available at: <https://www.grin.com/document/1192779#:~:text=The%20broad%20meaning%20of%20%27Subversion,or%20political%20system%20from%20spreading>.  
[Accessed on: November 20th, 2022.].
- Keshav Raj Chalise. 2021. *Ranahar: Textuality of History, Culture and Politics*.
- Kristine Johanson. 2016. *Subversion, Unruly Masculinity and Patriarchy: An Analysis of Greenblatt's Subversion and Containment in Richard III and Henry IV*.
- Maja Mugrele. 2013. *Orientalism in Not Without My Daughter by Betty Mahmoody*.
- Michael Foucault. 1975. *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*. Second Vintage Books Edition, May 1995. Translation Copyright 1977 by Alan Sheridan.
- Narinda Tiwary and N.D.R Chandra. 2009. *New Historicism and Arundhati Roy's Works*. Journal of Literature, Culture and Media Studies.
- SadjadPour, Karmin. 2019. *Reading Khomeini: The World View of Iran's Most Powerful Leader*.
- Sara Matin Alegre. 1998. *The Invisibility of Human Sufferings: The Adaptation of Novelized Biographical Material in Steven Spielberg's Schindler's List, Oliver Stone's Heaven and Earth and Brian Gilbert's Not Without my Daughter*. Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona.

- Serdaroğlu, D. 2017. *A New Historicist Approach to Kazuo Ishiguro's When We Were Orphans*. Gaziantep University Journal of Social Sciences.
- Stephen Greenblatt. 1982. *Introduction to the Power of Forms*.
- Stephen Greenblatt. 1988. *Invisible Bullets: Renaissance Authority and its Subversion*.
- Stephan Greenblatt. 1982. *The power of forms in the English Renaissance*
- Stephen Greenblatt. 1990. *Learning to Curse: Essays in Early Modern Culture*.
- Steven Mullaney. 1990. *Discursive Forms, Cultural Practices: History and Anthropology in Literary Studies*.
- Veenstra. R. Jan. 1989. *The New Historicism of Stephen Greenblatt. On Poetics of Culture and the Interpretation of Shakespeare*.
- Victor Pitsoe, Moeketsi Letseka. 2013. *Foucault's Discourse and Power: Implications for Instructionist Classroom Management*. Available at: [https://file.scirp.org/pdf/OJPP\\_2013020811451567.pdf](https://file.scirp.org/pdf/OJPP_2013020811451567.pdf). [Accessed on: November 13th, 2022]
- Xiu LI Jie. 2014. *Historicity of Texts and Textuality of History-On the Virginian from The Perspective of New Historicism*. Northeast Petroleum University, Daqing, China.
- Yang, H. 2021. *Subversion and Containment in Female Images: A Study of "The Dead" From the Perspective of New Historicism*. Department of Foreign Languages and Cultures, Sichuan University, Chengdu, Sichuan Province, China.

## Internet Websites

- Admin. December, 2018. U.S. Involvement in the 1980s Iran-Iraq War: America's Haphazard and Tension of the Gulf Insecurity. Available at: <http://yris.yira.org/comments/2729>. [Accessed: October 24<sup>th</sup>, 2022].
- Aida Ghajar. 2017. *The Lost Youth of Iran's Child Soldiers*. Available at: <https://iranwire.com/en/features/64724/>. [Accessed: September 02<sup>nd</sup>, 2022.]
- Al Jazeera English. February 4th, 2019. Iran 1979. *Anatomy of a Revolution L Featured Documentary*.  
Available at: <https://youtu.be/SJzuRf3Pyjk>. [Accessed: November 3rd, 2022].
- Ali Ansari. Kasra Arabi. February 11th, 2019. Ideology and Iran's Revolution: How 1979 Changed the World. Available at: <https://institute.global/policy/ideology-and-irans-revolution-how-1979-changed-world> [Accessed: September 3rd, 2022]
- Child Soldiers International 2001. *Child Soldiers Global Report 2001 Iran*. Available at: <https://www.refworld.org/docid/498805f02d.html>. [Accessed: November 3rd, 2022.]
- Edit. October 28th, 2022. *Iran Hostage Crisis*. Available at: <https://www.britannica.com/event/Iran-hostage-crisis>. [Accessed: November 7th, 2022].

- Editorial Board. September 27th, 2022. *Normalization of Violence Against Women in Iran*. Available at: <https://trafo.hypotheses.org/41104>. [Accessed: November 15th, 2022].
- Eng. Lit Mirror. August 3rd, 2020. *Stephen Greenblatt-20th Century Theorist/New Historicism UGC NTA NET JRF English Literature Theory*. Available at: <https://youtu.be/3wYrs-eyN6Y>. [Accessed: September 30th, 2022].
- United Against Nuclear Iran. *Iran's War Against Women*. Available at: [file:///C:/Users/amrane7/Downloads/Iran's%20War%20on%20Women2022-10-06\\_AG\\_JMB\\_CMJ\\_AG.pdf](file:///C:/Users/amrane7/Downloads/Iran's%20War%20on%20Women2022-10-06_AG_JMB_CMJ_AG.pdf). Accessed: [November 13th, 2022].
- Islamic Penal Code of Iran. Chapter 18: Offences against Public Moral. 9. Available at: [www.ghavanin.com/detail.asp?id=1232](http://www.ghavanin.com/detail.asp?id=1232) & [http://www.unhcr.ch/cgi-bin/Texis/vtx/rsd/+qwwFqzvwn\\_x9Wx8DFqnlRTPdFqo2IyPOHEPpzmwwwwwww3zmxwwwwwww/rsddocview.html](http://www.unhcr.ch/cgi-bin/Texis/vtx/rsd/+qwwFqzvwn_x9Wx8DFqnlRTPdFqo2IyPOHEPpzmwwwwwww3zmxwwwwwww/rsddocview.html).
- Mambrol. N. (November 16th, 2017) *Literary Theory and Criticism*. Available at: <https://literariness.org/2017/11/16/stephen-greenblatt-and-new-historicism/>. [Accessed: October 5th, 2022].
- Radio Free Europe/ Radio Liberty. December 22nd, 2021. *Iran Condom Ban Sparks Fears of Disease, Unwanted Pregnancies, and a Black Market*. Independent Media. <https://www.radiofree.org/2021/12/22/iran-condom-ban-sparks-fears-of-disease-unwanted-pregnancies-and-a-black-market/> [Accessed: September 31<sup>st</sup>, 2022].
- Rupert Colville. June 1st, 1997. *Refugees Magazine Issue 108 (Afghanistan: the unending crisis) – The biggest caseload in the world*. Available at: <https://www.unhcr.org/publications/refugeemag/3b680fbfc/refugees-magazine->

[issue-108-afghanistan-unending-crisis-biggest-caseload.html](#).

[Accessed:

November 2nd, 2022].