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**The Ambivalent Vision Towards Women Liberation in
Assia Djébar's *A Sister to Scheherazade* (1987) and
Jamaica Kincaid's *Lucy* (1990)**

Presented by: karima Dahmani

Siham Bachir

Supervised by: Dr. Gada Nadia

Board of Examiners:

Supervisor: Dr. Nadia Gada

Chair: Dr. Rafik Laced

Examiner: Dr. Rabea Aziz

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The Master domiciliation laboratory:

Dedications:

To my dear parents

my husband

Rabah and Ryma

To all my family

To my dear parents

To my beloved sister Ines

To all my family

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Abstract

Patriarchy and women oppression have always been an obstacle to women's progress. Many studies were undertaken by feminist scholars on these issues. The present dissertation carries on the research on this topic which continues to be experienced by women.

By reliance on Assia Djebar and Jamaica Kincaid's novels **A Sister to Scheherazade (1987)** and **Lucy (1990)** we depicted the status of women who lived in a male-dominated society. The aim is to vehicle the idea that women are subordinated and oppressed by men, as they undergo oppressive social and cultural norms. Otherwise, women are not oppressed just by men but also by women especially traditional mothers who stick to the old social norms. As a result, this perpetuation of male subordination leads to the reinforcement of the patriarchal regime. However, throughout these two selected novels Assia Djebar and Jamaica Kincaid show that women are able to rebel against the patriarchal norms and challenge men's control and power, therefore, sisterhood and solidarity are the force that might enable women to speak up their rights and break the restrictions imposed by the patriarchal codes.

To sum up, through the novels we reflect the ambivalent status of women in oppressing each other and its effects on reinforcing patriarchy and women's subversion, as a first vision. Then, we turn the scales to how women help each other through making a sort of sisterhood and solidarity between them and its consequences on women evolution and liberation as a second vision

Key words: Patriarchy, Ambivalence, Women Oppression, Perpetuation of Patriarchy, Sisterhood and Solidarity.

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1- Introduction

It is a common belief that woman is a weak human, who should live under the protection and domination of man. Therefore, such a mindset reduced the power of women and limited her place within the societies; they are supposed to occupy one space, that of the home. These inherited stereotypes undermined women's role and limited it to domestic spheres. As a result, women are taught that only man can play a great social role in society.

Many feminist works tackle the problem of woman's subordination. Among them, Assia Djébar's **A Sister to Scheherazade (1987)** and Jamaica Kincaid's **Lucy (1990)**. Although these two authors are from two different countries, they can be compared in the way they reflect on the issue of women suffering within patriarchal societies, which made woman worthless and powerless.

It might be useful to start by explaining what patriarchy is. The British sociologist Sylvia Walby defines patriarchy as "a system of social structures and practices in which men dominate, oppress and exploit women." (Walby, 1990: 20) Consequently, oppression finds its way through the patriarchal regimes, which established male's subordination. Otherwise, women are discriminated because of their gender. In other words, the biological differences between the two sexes contribute to the persecution of women both in domestic and public spheres.

Women are doubly oppressed in the third-world countries, where traditions and religion combine to let women live under man's domination. In these societies, women are doubly marginalized, especially women of color and women living in extreme poverty. As well as, religious beliefs strongly reinforce and privilege man's status and limit woman's role and ignore her real value and contribution in social life.

As a result, feminism appeared, through its many waves, to react against oppression and marginalization and fight for women's rights and freedom. More specifically, radical feminism, which seeks to get rid of patriarchy entirely so that to make an end for women's suffering by making hand in hand, Therefore, Multicultural Feminism came as a response to face women's subordination. Jonna Lian Pearson, in her article entitled "*Multicultural Feminism and Sisterhood among Women of Color in Social Change Dialogue*" (2007) shows that the proverb says: "two are better than one because together they can work more effectively. If the one falls down, the other can lift her up." Therefore, Multicultural feminism calls for women's unity of all cultures to speak up their rights.

Moreover, the French feminist Simone De Beauvoir argues that man is the only human who has the freedom to choose whatever he wants and he considers himself as the center of the world. In contrast, woman is always the follower of man. So, in her book **The Second Sex** (1949), she appeals every family to consist of a balanced couple.

To end, Assia Djebar's **A Sister to Scheherazade** and Jamaica Kincaid's **Lucy** typically portray the suffering of women within the patriarchal societies and how they are facing male's domination. In the other hand, these novels depict the way old generation of women contribute in sustaining men's control and power. However, an emerging category of women create a sort of solidarity between women to speak up their rights and break the restrained patriarchal codes. Therefore, they challenge gender subordination in order to gain their liberation.

a- Review of literature

Assia Djebar and Jamaica Kincaid are novelists who have received attention in the field of criticism. In their works, they focus on community and family issues. Therefore, they have been criticized from different angles and perspectives.

Starting from Djebbar's **A Sister to Scheherazade**, a book that has received much criticism. Yomi Olusegun-Joseph in "*Differing from her sister's voice: Reconfiguring womanhood in Assia Djebbar, A Sister to Scheherazade (2017)*". Yomi Olusegun argues that the novel is a perfect image that portrays the Arab-Islamic sisterhood precisely in the Algerian society, which arose according to him from the factor of patriarchy and polygamy that has devalued women. He adds that Djebbar used the Scheherazade trope to assert that women do not depend on the mercy of a man in order to obtain her deliverance. So, it is a means of indicating the intellectual power of women and their ability to get rid of patriarchy and male domineering power (Olusegun, 2017: 3). However, women still face obstacles that determine the extent of their authority which means that cultural, traditions and religious beliefs contribute greatly to the consolidation of patriarchy.

Another review comes from Nancy Arenberg's "*Mobile Bodies and Kindred Sisters in Djebbar's Ombre Sultan (2008)*". Her criticism focuses on Hajila's mobile body that defies the traditional passivity assigned to Muslim women by engaging in exploring the "forbidden spaces" without her veil which is considered as a protective measure from the male gaze" (Arenberg, 2008: 357). She also asserts that **A Sister to Scheherazade** is a fascinating novel that mirrors its feminist message in an original way by interpolating the story of Scheherazade. Similar to Dinazarde, Isma succeeded in awakening her co-wife to fully understand her oppressed state.

Moreover, according to Arenberg, Djebbar suggests that solidarity between women may point them toward the road to freedom. Feminine bonding may also provide hope for breaking down spatial barriers impeding women from moving out into more public roles". (Arenberg, 2008: 364)

In another critical work by Dr. Saima Manzoor, "*Crossing the Threshold: a Critical Analysis of Women's Subversion and Solidarity (2017)*", the critic argues that Djebbar's use of

threshold in the novel is figurative. It is a term that carries various dimensions in its essence, through which she targeted feminist issues. In addition, it is described as a borderline between the imprisonment and freedom for women. The same critic contends that the threshold is a clear evidence for the inequality between sexes (Manzoor, 2017: 32). Besides, she thinks that crossing the threshold is the best means that leads toward self-discovery and self-evolution as argued here: “they valiantly cross the threshold of male-controlled domain and challenge the patriarchal notion of female ownership” (Manzoor, 2017: 34). As Hajila’s brave act of crossing the threshold of her apartment in aids of her co-wife.

Similar to Djebbar, Jamaica Kincaid’s **Lucy** has received much critical attention. In an essay written by Majda R. Atieh, named *Betraying Wordsworth: The strategies of migratory translation in the travel narrative of Lucy by Jamaica Kincaid (2017)*. The reviewer stated that Lucy is viewed as a narrative of betrayal that informs about migratory identity on western discourses to curb western modifications on the writings that produced in their countries by the foreigners. She states: “Lucy’s interrogation of the privileged space transacted by the western sign becomes an act of betrayal that involves withdrawing the imperial power of scrutinizing the colonized and commodified image” (Atieh, 2017)

Lucy is considered as a counter discourse that defies the global set forth ethics. Thus, Lucy’s cultural translation classified as a liberator betrayal that rejects her social status as “transient other”.

Last but not least, Sayed Mohammed Youcef in his article “*Rite of passage in diaspora: Jamaica Kincaid’s Lucy as a postcolonial kunstlerroman*” (2015), classifies the novel as an autobiographical kunstlerroman which is a subgenre of bildungsroman that focuses on growth and formation of the protagonist (Sayed Mohammed: 198). Therefore, Lucy starts from shifting away from forces such as colonial and patriarchal norms, which ultimately contributes to the

building of her hybrid identity and opens up her maturity (Ibid: 196). Moreover he gave glimpse to the chapter's titles starting from "poor visitor" ending up with "Lucy" That proves the protagonist's self-formation and development. "towards the end of the novel the protagonist is no longer known as the "poor visitor" rather, she is now the chastened and independent "Lucy" the very subtitled of the last part change from "Poor visitor" to "Lucy" does suggest the protagonist's growth (Ibid: 208).

To sum up, the critical reception of the two novels, one might deduce that Assia Djebar is known for her feminist inclination in her writings. Therefore, we can see clearly that her critics also focus and share the issue of feminism mainly relating to religion, since Assia Djebar is an Algerian and Muslim writer. The solidarity and sisterhood of the female characters of the novel concern Yomi Olusegun-Joseph. Whereas, Nancy Arenberg focuses on the unfairness of obliging young girls to wear the veil in such societies. Saima Manzoor is another one who concentrates on the home as the only frequent space of women but they get freedom only by crossing it, all this happens under the pretext of religion. On the other hand Jamaica Kincaid's critics remain far from the issue of feminism but rather focusing on the other social issues. Therefore, our interest to study the two novels may contribute to the existing knowledge. Its research contribution is based on the study of two novelists reflect on the issue of feminism in terms of the conflict between liberated women and mothers in their own harm by sticking on the old norms of patriarchy, believing that it is their right social structure of living. Consequently, keep themselves under the yoke of male domination, until the emerging of conscious women who rejects their existing norms by making hand in hand and seek for liberation.

b- Issue and Working Hypotheses

In reviewing some literary works and analyses that have studied the two novels of the writers; Assia Djebar's **A Sister to Scheherazade** and Jamaica Kincaid's **Lucy**, we have

noticed that most of the previous researches had basically focused on the same issues, patriarchy and gender resistance in Djébar's **A Sister to Scheherazade**. Colonialism, mother daughter relationship within the patriarchal societies and the quest for identity in Jamaica Kincaid's **Lucy**. Therefore, no research has compared these two works on the perspective of women's reinforcing the patriarchal regimes that makes women more oppressed.

In addition to this, women in religious societies are doubly oppressed not only because of the patriarchal regimes but also of the religious beliefs. Furthermore, emigrant women and women of color in particular are experiencing more marginalization and alienation because of their black skin and strange countries, especially in the Third World. Then, we shall try to analyze the extent to which the two authors Assia Djébar and Jamaica Kincaid are convergent as well as divergent in their works **A Sister to Scheherazade** and **Lucy** even though they address one major issue, which is challenging patriarchy.

Meanwhile, we consolidate our arguments throughout our comparison by appropriating some ideas and insights from Bell Hooks' **Feminist Theory: From Margin to Center** (1984). And then, we also use another article taken from another theory of Bell Hooks **The Will to Change** (2004), entitled "*Understanding Patriarchy*". Hence, it will be clearer that all women in the world are oppressed, marginalized and alienated regardless of their race or social class. But, we shall limit our analysis to see the extent to which women in the two selected texts are more exposed to sexist oppression; they are under the obligation to resist to male's body. It is important to point out that through Assia Djébar's **A Sister to Scheherazade** and Jamaica Kincaid's **Lucy**, we shall try to demonstrate that solidarity and sisterhood between women in fighting against male subordination is possible. Meanwhile, we shall examine that even women reinforce patriarchy and create such atmosphere of hatred and enmity between them.

Hence, the purpose of this research paper is to show that despite the cultural ethnic differences between the two authors, we may combine their societal status; they shared issues and then reach a same objective, which is their ways of facing patriarchy, their depictions of the various restrictions and kinds of imprisonment of women. So, the premise and the main focus in our dissertation is focus on how the absence of women solidarity and disunity between women can prevent or be an obstacle with impacts dangerously on their emancipation and contribute indirectly to the perpetuation of patriarchy.

In the course of reading the two novels, we intend to provide questions that worth answers for better understand and build the structure of our dissertation, and to make our path clear in the analysis of each novel. So, we extract events that show women perpetuate patriarchy in the two novels, and how does each other describe it. Next, we go straight if women are capable to liberate themselves from male's subordination, break the restrictions of the patriarchal societies and achieve their goal of taking their freedom, and how does it appear in the two narratives. Then, how women help each other and cooperate to transcend all the boundaries of patriarchal societies.

c- Methodological Outline

As mentioned earlier, our modest piece of research aims to analyze the oppression of women who live within the patriarchal societies through two literary texts. Meanwhile, there are women who contribute to this oppression, specifically old traditional mothers who believe in male's power and right to dominate and control women. Therefore, this old belief plays a role in sustaining the patriarchal norms that women suffer from. Such subordination creates a generation conflict with other women, especially daughters and young women who do not accept this persecution and see it as an obstacle to their freedom of life. So, they fight in many ways to save themselves from the difficulties they face within the patriarchal environment

where they live and also to break the restrictions of the family codes, which hinder their importance in the societies where they grow up.

This conflict appears clearly throughout Assia Djébar's **A Sister to Scheherazade** and Jamaica Kincaid's **Lucy**. Therefore, we will discover the ways traditional mothers help to sustain these patriarchal beliefs and attempt to take their daughters on the same path that they walk on. We will also analyze how the female characters react against these beliefs and oppressive norms in their challenge of gender subordination and their quest to take their liberation.

Furthermore, this research paper follows the IMRAD format. It is shaped mainly into four main parts. First of all, we started with an introduction in which we provided a brief overview and presentation about the entire work and the issues that will be developed in the discussion section, as well as the presentation of the two novels Assia Djébar's **A Sister to Scheherazade** and Jamaica Kincaid's **Lucy**. Our analysis will be interpreted under the study of women's oppression and women's liberation. Then, we have methods and materials, which is another section where we borrow Bell Hooks' feminist ideas and concepts which are developed in her works entitled, **Feminist Theory: From Margin to Center (1984)** "*Understanding Patriarchy*" (2004). Our main purpose is to explain and interpret the issues tackled in the two novels from a feminist perspective. In addition, there is a section, which involves the autobiographical sketch of the two authors Assia Djébar and Jamaica Kincaid as well as the summaries of both novels **A Sister to Scheherazade (1987)** and **Lucy (1990)**. The third section is devoted to the Results where we mention our findings that we have been discussed in the Discussion section. This discussion section is divided into two chapters, in the first chapter we have the mechanisms used by women to face oppression. In the second one, we have dealt with the tools used by women to get their liberation that female characters use in the

two novels. Finally, we close our study of the two novels with a conclusion that recapitulates all what have been examined in the discussion section.

2. Methods and Materials

A. Methods

1. Bell Hooks' Feminist theory: From Margin to Center (1984)

To analyze Jamaica Kincaid's **Lucy** and Assia Djebar's **A Sister to Scheherazade** from the perspective we have chosen, our theoretical basis rests on several works of Bell Hooks such as **Feminist Theory: From Margin to Center** (1984), and mainly an article entitled "*Understanding Patriarchy*" taken from another theory **The Will to Change** (2004). It is then useful before trying to apply it on the two texts to suggest a brief summary by focusing on what might be relevant to our comparative study.

Feminist Theory: From Margin to Center is an essay written by the American author Gloria Jean Watkins, who is known as Bell Hooks in 1984. It is divided into twelve chapters. The two concepts "Margin" and "Center" caught our attention with their meaning and their relevance to our study of the two novels. They allowed us to recognize that there are free people who live in the "center" and people who live in the "margin" who are periphery marginalized, especially women who are taught to be powerless. Additionally, the expression "from margin to center" shows us that women can go ahead from oppression to liberation. In this essay, Hooks shows that nonwhite women and poor white women are more marginalized, which means that their existence is just on the fringe of the American society, and their lives are not taken into consideration. Therefore, they are not part of Feminist Theory. For her, feminist theory is featured by white women who live in the center, so it cannot include the experiences and the suffering of Black Women who live in the margin. In fact, she states that the only thing that pushed her to write her book is the absence of feminist theory which addresses margin and

center oppositions all the same. Therefore, only those who live within both margin and center can deal with the feminist theory.

In the first chapter entitled **Black Women: Shaping Feminist Theory**, Hooks shows that weak women “silent majority” who are really victims of sexist oppression and daily mental and physical violence never made Feminism in the United States. The chapter contains a criticism of Betty Friedan’s **The Feminine Mystique**, in which Hooks states that even this theory is useful, it neglects the depiction of a group of women who are non-white women and poor white women. In other words, she refers just to educated-college middle upper class and married white women as victims to stay at home. Therefore, she ignores the pain of the masses of American women as a whole. Also, she did not tackle the problems of women without husbands, without children and without houses.

Another chapter which is important and can contribute to a more understanding of Djebbar’s and Kincaid’s texts is entitled **Feminism: A Movement to End Sexist Oppression**, in which Hooks argues that there is not a common clear definition of Feminism. Thus, in the United States, people believe that feminism is the aim of making women the social equals of men, but Hooks does not agree since not even men are equal. She asks: [] “...what men do women want to be equal to?”(Hooks, 1984: 18). In fact, she argues that white women of upper class are not equal to those of lower class, especially black women who realize that even men in their social group have neither status nor power within the society. That is to say, they are oppressed, dominated and exploited in the same way (Ibid.).

Besides, she addresses liberal feminism where she states that radical reforms have a positive impact on women, but without asking for omitting the system of domination. The liberal feminists believe that women can be equal to men of their social class only if they do not challenge to get rid of oppression (Hooks 1984: 20). In addition, Hooks shows that so many

women reject to advocate Feminism because of different reasons; American and African-American women found themselves alienated, others doubt the true meaning of the term and some women because they are oppressed and exploited, especially women of color.

As a result, women consider Feminism as a movement, which fights only for white rich women's rights (Hooks, 1984: 22, 23). Furthermore, Hooks claims that Feminism is a struggle to end sexism without taking into consideration a specific group, a social class or even the race women belong to. It does not seek to value women more than men; in other words, it aims to change society and make it better, because feminism is not a lifestyle (Ibid: 26).

Another insight, which can be applied to the study of the two novels in the third chapter, **The Significance of Feminist Movement**, Hooks highlights that sexist discrimination and oppression is the main factor that creates certain clashes and conflicts between men and women. Consequently, all sorts of oppression begin at home, therefore, the feminist movement appeals to end the war between the sexes and create such atmosphere of privacy and intimacy between them, which is the good impact that liberal feminism ignores (Hooks, 1984: 34). Moreover, all types of oppression in the United States are the basis of the traditional western thought; the power is always for the superior and the inferior must be controlled (Ibid: 35). She further claims that sexist oppression has a great importance, because it is an experience that all people without exception can go through. So, fighting against it is a great challenge that may lead to the elimination of the other types of oppression (Ibid.).

Sisterhood: Political Solidarity between Women is another chapter in which Hooks argues that women experience most the sexist oppression. Therefore, there is a group of people of the power social structure perpetuates sexism. She adds that Male Supremacist Ideology convinced women that their value relates to men. Besides, they are taught that women's solidarity and bounding never existed; they are enemies. As a result, Hooks invites women to

create a feminist movement and build a life based on solidarity and sisterhood (Hooks, 1984: 43). She declares that there is no feminist movement without Sisterhood, without solidarity, the feminist movement cannot make an end to the sexist oppression (Ibid: 44). Bell Hooks points that racism constitutes an obstacle to women emancipation; that means, black women see that white women are the supremacist group who dominate and exercise power on them (Ibid: 49). Finally, she says that the differences do not prevent women from standing together; they just need to be sisters, to be united and feel each other to end sexist oppression.

Men: Comrades in Struggle, liberal feminists define men as “the misogynists” and the oppressors, women are the oppressed. (Hooks, 1984: 67). However, Hooks mentions that black women contribute to the struggle against racism and they have shared political solidarity and resistance which make them dismiss the anti-male stance. (Ibid: 69). In this chapter, Hooks points out that men are not all and always the enemies of women. She writes: Men who actively struggle against sexism have a place in feminist movement. They are our comrades. (Ibid: 90).

Feminist Movement to End Violence is another chapter in which Bell Hooks agrees that violence against women is a way to strengthen male subordination. She asserts that in the pre-capitalist world men have the absolute right to rule women’s lives within their family. Unlike; the capitalist society prevented them from doing so (Hooks, 1987: 120). Therefore, home is the best place where men restore their domination. She further mentions that television convinced women that male violence over them is a proof of love; thus, it is hard to end patriarchy. (Ibid: 122, 123). So, Hooks asserts that women are strongly convinced that male violence and subordination is a significance of their importance.

Ending Female Sexual Oppression is another chapter in which Bell Hooks addresses the idea of Germaine Greer’s **The Female Eunuch**. She argues that for her and some feminist thinkers, freedom of sexuality is a way of women’s liberation. (Hooks, 1984: 147). Therefore,

they encourages women, especially teenagers, singles and students to sexual liberty. However, she asserts that in this way women are exposed to rape and pornography. (Ibid: 147). Some feminists rejected this idea because there is no real sexual freedom and her essay does not contain lots restrictions. (Ibid: 147, 147). Feminist activists think that this sexuality is more a reinforcement of male-domination rather than liberating women. (Ibid: 149).

In another chapter entitled **Feminist Revolution: Development through struggle**, Bell Hooks thinks that feminist revolution is not an easy task, but rather it needs more organizing and consciousness-raising (Hooks, 1984: 157). She adds that to build a solid feminist revolution, it is important to have a liberator ideology in order to get the real experiences from people who suffer from oppression, which means that they are important participants in the movement (Ibid: 161). Women should reorganize the movement without for getting the lower position of women in society in order to have the force to fight then break with the system, women focus must be on cultural change and erase systems of domination (Ibid: 163).

1. Bell Hooks' "*Understanding Patriarchy*" (2004)

"Understanding Patriarchy" is Bell Hooks' article taken from a theory entitled **The Will to Change** written in 2004. In this article, Hooks tackles a social political system; patriarchy and the way men and women reinforce it.

Hooks portrays patriarchy in her personal story she experienced within her family. In the opening paragraph, she depicts patriarchy as a social disease that destroys the human body. Women in particular, are the ones who feel this word most. Therefore, she states that men neither use the word nor know what it means. She says that patriarchy is a system which allows men to dominate weak persons, especially women. Thus, they have all the right to exercise and maintain that dominance as something natural.

She adds that her religious parents are taught to be patriarchal; this is the reason why she and her brother are differently treated. In other words, Hooks as a girl must be weak, caretaker, nonviolent and express her feelings. Whereas, her brother was taught to be strong, served and violent to protect his home and nation. Even if she is the strongest and the violent one, and her brother is so quiet and genteel, they must behave the way their parents want to; that is to say, to follow the patriarchal beliefs which determine the gender roles.

Additionally, Hooks states that in the patriarchal societies there are things that women are forbidden to do, the example of marbles; her favorite game which is considered as a boy's game. She tells that she was beaten and punished by her father just because she plays and wins the game and her brother loses and he does not care about. However, her mother tries to convince her that she must not do what she is forbidden to do. So, this is the reason which led her to challenge patriarchy and to prove that men suffer from as well. That means, both men and women perpetuate patriarchy though men are the winners of this system. Therefore, she asserts that men and women must work together to eradicate this phenomenon and change the patriarchal societies.

Finally, Hooks suggests that to eradicate a problem it must be identified first; which means, we have to realize that the issue is patriarchy and it is the pain of the society. So we have to put an end for it.

While handling these two Bell Hooks' theoretical works, we noticed that they are interesting to bring in our dissertation to well portray the suffering of women within the patriarchal societies, especially black women and those who grew up in a traditional environment based on religious beliefs. Additionally, Hooks stresses the importance of solidarity and sisterhood between women to overcome their suffering from persecution. Also,

Bell Hooks is among the radical feminists who encourage the rebuilding of societies and completely erase the word patriarchy.

B. Materials

1. Biographies

a. Biography of Assia Djébar

Assia Djébar is a prominent Algerian writer and novelist. She was born in 1936. Her literary output is based on women's struggle for liberation. They are widely recognized by literary critics for supporting women's issues. Because of her experience of subordination at early age, she consolidates her position and fights for women's rights. Much of her works vehemently expose the oppressive aspects of patriarchy and their negative outcomes on women. In 1957, she published her first novel under the title of **La Soif**, translated as the Mischief in English in which she describes two women's experiences. She denounces patriarchy through Nadia and Jedla, who fight to get rid of their husbands' oppression. Before reaching the age of twenty, Djébar denounces man's oppression of woman, and in the first novel published abroad by an Algerian woman. Moreover, she continued her artistic career by depicting women's other experiences of facing male domination by launching **Les Enfants de Nouveau Monde, Children of New World** where she portrays the role and contribution of women in the Algerian War of Independence. As a sequel to it, she also published **Les Alouettes naïves**, urging women to end their subordination and inciting for changes of Algerian women status. Until 1980, the iconic woman resume writing and produce a host of novels including **A Sister to Scheherazade** through which she highlights the patriarchal system in Algerian society. I typed storytelling and here is the file: <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Assia-Djebar>

In fact, Assia Djébar contributes to woman's liberation through writing novels, by her different seminars devoted to women's struggle by taking the Algerian context and reality as an example. Therefore, she was awarded the newscast international prize of literature in 1996,

as well as the peace prize of German book trade in 2000, on top of that in 2005 she was elected a member of the Académie Française specialized in the heritage of the French language to be the first figure to reach this well acclaimed position. Assia Djébar died in February 2015 but, her valuable position as a woman who succeeds not only to bypass the patriarchal norms, but also her struggle against such oppression which remains till now and survives in her writings.

b. Biography of Jamaica Kincaid

Jamaica Kincaid is the pen name of Elaine Potter Richardson from St John's The West Indies, a colonized Island by the British, born in 1949. Elaine grew up in a poor environment, she had a close relationship with her mother who has undertaken her studies under the British system. She was one of the brightest students in her class, but because of her family's hard financial situation she was removed to help carrying the burdens of the family. She was sent at the age of seventeen to New York in order to work as an au pair, but the unexpected happened as she severed contact with her family.

Jamaica Kincaid's writings centered on embodying family relationships mainly mother-daughter relations as it is reflected in her autobiographical memories in *Antigua*. She started her writing career with the publication of an article's writer for the New Yorker magazine. She became a staff writer in 1976. Later, she began her career and produced many works starting from 1983, the year she published her first book entitled **At the Bottom of the River**. **Lucy** came later, through which she portrayed her life. Moreover, **A Small Place** (1988), **The Autobiography of My Mother** (1996), **My Brother** (1997) and so many others. I typed storytelling and here is the file: <https://jwa.org/encyclopedia/article/kincaid-jamaica#:~:text=Jamaica%20Kincaid%20is%20a%20Jewish,she%20has%20resided%20ever%20since.>

Kincaid was a recipient of a number of prestigious prizes including the Morton Dauwen zabel award of the American academy of arts and letters for **At the Bottom of the River** 1948, Guggenheim award for fiction 1985 and Lann literary award for fiction in 1999.

Depending on the biographies, one may recognize many shared points about the two writers, we noticed both handle the social issues through which they give the real image from the living society by using realistic events and characters and mainly simple language in order to ease the transmission of their message. As persons, they share the same lifestyle. Both explored exile at an early age, as they experienced life far from their families, what obliged them to handle responsibility in order to build their professional careers by themselves. Both represent the strong and educated women who faced the social and traditional obstacles to reach their own desire.

2. Synopses

a. Synopsis of Jamaica Kincaid's Lucy

Lucy is a short novel written by the American-Antiguan Jamaica Kincaid in 1990. The novel tells the story of Lucy who is a teenager black girl of nineteen year old. She moves from the West Indies to the United States to be an au pair girl for a wealthy white family in New York. Lucy escapes her poor environment in order to find a new way of life away from the strictness of her family codes. She aims to leave and forget her painful past and her homeland where she felt oppressed. She does not feel nostalgia towards her childhood. When Lucy arrives to the United States, she realizes that there is a big difference between the place she left and the place where she is about to live. She feels that something is going wrong. Even though the sun is shining, the weather stills cold, the lights are everywhere but the image is unclear. She also remembers her beloved grandmother and her dishes that she used to cook for her, but now everything is over. In the beginning, she feels surprised about the outstanding life of the

American people, but she is disappointed at the same time since her expectation about the life in her daydreams does not correspond with reality. Despite all the disillusionments and the new things Lucy was experiencing, her homesickness as well, she dares to wipe out her disappointments and live with the rich couple, Mariah and Lewis by doing her daily duties as an au pair. Through time, Lucy realizes that Mariah is somewhat similar to her mother, because the two try to control her. In fact, her mother is the main cause that pushed her to run away and look for her own identity which will be totally the opposite of that of her mother. Therefore, Lucy expresses her anger against her mother through her sexual relations. In the United States, Lucy makes many relationships like her friendship with Peggy, the girl Mariah hates because of her bad behaviors. She also makes relations with men. When she receives the news of her father's death and her mother's poor financial condition, she sent her money with a letter cutting off all communication with her mother. Later, Lucy wanted to leave Mariah's family which disappointed her after Mariah decided to separate from her husband. Then, she left with her friend Peggy. Therefore, she got into a relationship with a man called Paul, but she has no affection for him even though he loves her. At the end of the story, Lucy and Mariah are friends again. Lucy succeeds to construct her life and her career as a photographer, and gets her own apartment. However, she does not fulfill the independence she has sought from her childhood. Therefore, Lucy finds herself getting detached from all relationships while she is trying to forget and escape from her painful past. Lucy concludes her story with a wish which is just to be able to love someone.

b. Synopsis of Assia Djébar's *A Sister to Scheherazade*

A Sister to Scheherazade is a novel written by the Algerian writer Assia Djébar in 1987, in which she tells a story of two women, Isma and Hajila who seem to be completely different. Despite their differences, they share one common goal which is emancipation. Isma and Hajila are both wives of the same man but they are not enemies. Isma is vibrant, passionate and emancipated while Hajila is traditional and cloistered. Isma is an intelligent, educated and modern woman, who aims to break the traditional constraints of the Algerian patriarchal society where she lives. She aspires to escape from her husband's dominance and leave the conjugal life. Isma married her husband with Hajila, a woman whose family forced her to be veiled, remain inside home and maintain her family as a good woman would do. So, Isma exposes Hajila to the pain she was suffering from. Now, Hajila finds herself in her husband's beautiful apartment where everything is comfortable. Despite the fact that she has no right to get out or even to look out the balcony, she wants to taste freedom and to experience the outside world. Therefore, she goes to the garden without putting her veil and let go off her hair when her husband and sons went out the home. Through time, Hajila's desire to explore the outside and to be autonomous became more yearning when she realized that outside and Harem are not the same. Therefore, she always escapes from the apartment and walks to the sea. In the second part of the novel, Assia Djébar includes an excerpt of the story of **A Thousand and One Nights** to show the solidarity between women as a whole, and between sisters in particular. This excerpt tells the story of two sisters, Scheherazade and Dinazarde who help each other. Scheherazade gets married with a king who had been betrayed by his wife. For this, he kills every woman he marries on the morning of his wedding night. Thanks to her intelligence and her sister's solidarity, she escapes death every night by telling her husband a story which she never finishes in order to arise his curiosity about the remaining part of the story the next night, and this, by dint of her sister Dinazarde when she agrees to come to the king's house and asks

her sister to tell them a story after her death. Thus, she told him a thousand stories that took a thousand nights and night through which she made the king love her, and regain his confidence on women. At the end of the novel, Isma made it clear that she is responsible for Hajila's awakening. Thus, Hadjila opens her eyes to see the existence of a hope for her liberty. So, Isma is the woman who offers Hajila the key to her own freedom.

While summarizing the two novels Assia Djebar's **A Sister to Scheherazade** and Jamaica Kincaid's **Lucy**, we noticed that even though the two authors are from different countries and different cultures, they tackle one single issue which is the oppression of women. The two female characters Hajila and Lucy suffer from the patriarchal family codes, not just under male domination but also from their traditional mothers who expect them to follow the way they shape. Meanwhile, both Jamaica Kincaid and Assia Djebar embodied the position of man as being the leader to whom women must devote themselves, though in the two texts men are physically absent. However, Hajila and Lucy in these two stories have a common goal which is liberating themselves from oppression and break the restrictions of the patriarchal society.

3. Results

From our own analysis and interpretation of Jamaica Kincaid's **Lucy** and Assia Djebar's **A Sister to Scheherazade**, we have perceived that even though the two authors come from different geographical areas and belong to different cultures, they addressed the same issues that women bear within the patriarchal societies. In addition, we have detected that the patriarchal norms taught women that they are powerless and worthless, and their existence is related to men. Therefore, these two novels present a portrayal of women's life; they reflect many deep images that we can extract from the real living societies, more precisely the traditional male'-dominated ones.

Moreover, through the female characters of **A Sister to Scheherazade** and **Lucy**, we noticed that women are differently oppressed. In other words, they are suffering from the marginalization and oppression because of their gender in different ways. As a case in point, Hajila and Isma in **A Sister to Scheherazade** and Lucy in **Lucy** are denied their right to freedom of life and doing what they wish because of the patriarchal beliefs. When related to Bell Hooks, she also mentions this deprivation of women who live in a patriarchal society in her article "*Understanding Patriarchy*", she stresses the idea of gender role and the way each one should behave and act so that to determine this gender role.

We took a notice of a very important type of oppression; even women contribute in the perpetuation of patriarchy. Therefore, they oppress their daughters and attempt to convince them to follow their path based on the patriarchal norms. They oblige them to act as they are taught to behave. In **A Sister to Scheherazade**, Hajila is obliged to be completely veiled, remain home and maintain her family as a good woman would be. Also, in **Lucy**, Lucy's controlling mother expects her to study nursing while Lucy wishes to become a photographer.

However, the female characters of the two novels do not accept this oppression and reject being under male domination and mothers' control as well. They rebelled against the patriarchal regimes and broke the codes of their families. Therefore, they challenge the system and violate the rules imposed on them to get their own independence. Besides, we saw in the novels that despite the oppression women suffer from, they create certain solidarity between them.

4. Discussion

Radical feminism is a type of feminism that aims in its essence to a radical change in women's life by rejecting patriarchal regime and all sorts of oppression and discrimination by man in all spheres. In our paper we relied on Assia Djébar's **A Sister to Scheherazade** and

Jamaica Kincaid's **Lucy**, through which we go from the time of omission where women themselves stick to patriarchy and perpetuate male domination. Then, how they suffer in such conditions. Therefore, radical feminists emerged, they were known by their raising consciousness. They challenged the existing social norms and urges women to help each other. Consequently, they revolt and liberate themselves.

1-Women Generation Conflict in the two Novels

Women as Guardians of Patriarchy

Patriarchy is a system that oppresses women and deprives them from their rights in society. Simultaneously, they are the main reason that consolidate the system. Since the old generations of women are raised on values based on male supremacy and the fact that man is the pillar of society, they impart the same social structure to their children since they are responsible for raising them. Therefore, the permanence of patriarchal system is due to women at the first place. Bell Hooks, in her **Feminist Theory: From Margin to Center** says that when we cease to focus on the simplistic stance "men are the enemy" we are compelled to examine systems of domination and our role in their maintenance and perpetuation (Hooks, 1984: 25). Therefore, women should not just blame men or consider them as enemies since women themselves have a role in consolidating men's domination and mainly consider them as essential beings in their lives.

A Sister to Scheherazade by Assia Djebar and **Lucy** by Jamaica Kincaid are, two novels that address the above-mentioned issue and give facts from the living reality of society about the centered role of women in general and mothers in particular in maintaining patriarchy.

a – Perpetuating Patriarchy in Assia Djebar's A Sister to Scheherazade

The persistence of the patriarchal system is linked to several factors that we extracted from the novel, like the forced marriage, the importance of marriage, childbearing and the difference between female and male children.

In the novel, Hajila is a young woman who has suffered from the unfairness of traditional and patriarchal thoughts in her society. She has no right to make any decision regarding her personal life. She was subjected to a forced marriage which is of great importance in her mother's old beliefs. For her mother Touma, by doing so the girl preserves her honor and that of her family, and protects their dignity as she will be in the custody of a man, without any regard for his moral qualities. In the light of this, Ukuthwala is a traditional custom practiced in South African communities, that clearly reflects the abuse practiced against women's personal desire in marriage. In **Is Ukuthwala another Form of Forced Marriage**, Koyana defined Ukuthwala as a culturally legitimate abduction of female or girl whereby, before a customary marriage a young man forcibly takes a girl to his home as his wife (Koyana, 1980: 12).

Hajila's mother gives an immense importance to marriage as she thinks that marriage the success of women, their highest ambition is to have children and home, and their only fight is to get and keep a husband. According to her, women themselves are weak and they get force only by linking to men. Bell Hooks asserts: "male supremacist ideology encourages women to believe we are valueless and obtain value only by relating to or bonding with men" (Hooks, 1984: 43). Therefore, Touma obliged her daughter to get married even if she will be a co-wife, just to get out of the predicament of celibacy.

Furthermore, the aspiration of a luxurious life seduces Hajila's impoverished family into marrying her to a divorcee with two children. She contends: "The whole family was excited at the forthcoming wedding arranged so hurriedly." (Djebar: 14). Hajila's mother lured by the hope of a better future for the entire family straightway accepts the marriage offer which is more like a business agreement in which the bride is nothing more than an exchanged object.

For Touma, the birth of a female child is viewed as a means to get a good bride price. In return, the man offers them a financial aid and promises to help them get a house of their own. Hajila says: “truly blessed be Hajila, my first born, so aptly named! When I expressed the wish on the day of her birth that she would find herself in Paradise one day, I could never have imagined such a home. Marble and glass!” She is astonished by the beauty of the house rather than giving importance to her daughter’s happiness and satisfaction.

In her book, Bell Hooks states: “Even in families where no male is present children may learn to value dominating authoritative rule via their relationship to mothers and other adults, as well as strict adherence to sexist defined role patterns.” (Hooks, 1984: 36). Touma is a mother who maintains the family law based on male domination which assigned for man the role of master. She tried to impart this thought to her daughter Hajila after her marriage, by urging her to obey her husband and treat him as being the basis of everything. As Isma told Hajila: your mother always refers to “your master”, “your lord”. (Djebar, 1987: 57). While accepting any kind of humiliation. Bell Hooks asserts: within the present family structure, individuals learn to accept sexist oppression as “natural” (Ibid: 38). As a result, we can notice that for Touma, the ideal woman is the one who obeys and respects her husband as being her boss.

One of the ideas prevalent in traditional societies, which reinforces greatly male’s domination and patriarchal system is that of preference of having male children. Women are socially and culturally looked down upon with contempt if they fail to give birth to a son. In the novel, reproduction and pregnancy are seen as an accomplice of patriarchy because of Touma’s bad experience with childbearing. Her first pregnancy which was Hajila was as a disappointment to her husband’s elderly parents, especially her mother in law “old peasant folk looked forward to the child’s birth, an heir for their heir” (Djebar: 59). Touma’s second procreation is considered also as a fail, because it was a second girl “Kenza”, especially when

she was born with poor health. At that time, Touma's mother-in law showed the hate she bore towards the girls (females), to the point that she wished her death with a cold heart. She states: Let the lord take her back! "...if it's written that her destiny is to be cut short!what do we want with yellow faced females!" (Djebar: 60). Touma's bad experience ends with her as a psychological complex and aversion toward girls. She says: "Oh Sidi Abdelkader el-Jilani! You have given me idiots for daughters! They've got no sense at all! Oh, my beloved! Wretched that I am!"(Djebar: 18). To conclude, the birth of a female child is less wanted and celebrated.

For Touma, childbearing is of a great importance. When her daughter gets married and comes into her matrimonial home, she becomes the focus of her mother's attention, as she anticipates her pregnancy. Touma's expectations increase. She says: "She was hoping for the announcement of a pregnancy which did not occur." (Djebar: 46). Barely six months of marriage Hajila became under an immense pressure to give birth to children. Touma requests: "Ask him to take you to see a doctor! Don't wait till it's too late." (Ibid: 17). For her, if the pregnancy did not occur, she will be divorced and lose everything, because she will be perceived by her husband as an obsolete means or rather useless. Therefore, she must ensure her place in that home only by having children. Djebar states: "What our old women are like! They don't consider that you're protected by a man, unless you're carrying his child!" (Ibid: 72).

b- Hajila's Suffering in Patriarchal Society

The patriarchal system has not only deprived women from their rights, but also has violated their entire being, as they were subjected to violence, rape as housewives.

In the novel, Hajila is a woman who suffers from this kind of woes. The opening pages center on the confining structure of the apartment where she spends her time as a housewife. After her husband and children have gone for a day, she settles into a daily routine centered on repetitive

chores like cooking, dusting, doing the laundry, ironing, washing and picking up after the children and many other tasks. As Isma says: “You put down the damp cloth, look at empty hands, the hands of a busy housewife”. (Djebar: 07). After that she is still at home as a prisoner, isolated, and bored waiting for a husband to meet his needs. She feels that she exists only for and through her husband and family.

In her book **Feminine Mystique**, Betty Friedan discusses the American women’s greatest problem of housewifery from its beginning in the middle of the twentieth century when women started to sense a sort of dissatisfaction in their lives, it became as a collective psychological disease accompanied by unhappiness and isolation that every woman feels, Betty’s famous expression about it is “a problem that has no name”. As she follows closely the phenomenon, she gives the usual expressions that women could use when trying to describe the problem. She writes: “I feel empty somehow.....incomplete”. Or she would say: “I feel as if I don’t exist.” (Friedan: 16). In many cases women went to a doctor with inexplicable symptoms; they just say: ...“A tired feeling.....I get so angry with the children it scares me.....I feel like crying without any reason.” (Ibid: 16). Same to Hajila, she feels that she has no personality, she is no more than server of food. She takes care of others. On top of that, she had no right to explore the outdoors. She looks to the open space beyond the balcony to get rid of the distress inside her. She state: “kenza is living in poverty, while I’m becoming a doll kept in luxury” (Djebar: 57). She sees people rushing towards their work and goals, contrary to herself she never experienced life outside. She is a human being but with neither entity nor self-existence. Betty Friedan contends:

It is urgent to understand how the very condition of being a housewife can create a sense of emptiness, none-existence, nothingness, in women. There are aspects of the housewife role that make it almost impossible for a woman of adult intelligence to retain a sense of human identity, the firm core of self or “I” without which a human being, man or woman, is not truly alive. For women of ability, in America today, I am convinced there is something about the housewife state itself that is dangerous. (Frieden: 293).

In her nine chapter **Feminist Movement to End Violence**, Bell Hooks states: “Patriarchy allowed all men to completely rule women in their families, to decide their fate, to shape their destiny.” (Hooks, 1984: 120). Depending on that, Hajila senses her personality embattled as she comes home where the man drunkard and violent, treats her as a maid and subordinates her while he does not care about her; she feels absolutely no mutual bond of husband-wife relation. After months of loneliness and restraints, she decides to ease the constraints on herself and escape into town from the enclosures of her husband’s house whenever possible without his consent or even his knowledge, a habit which he eventually discovers. Consequently, she is subjected to physical violence, beatings and threats; her husband says: “I’ll break your legs and then you’ll never go out again, you’ll be nailed to a bed and...” (Djebar: 87). He continues: “I’ll put out your eyes and then you’ll never see again! And no one will ever see you either!” (Ibid).

Touma, in her turn, when she realizes Hajila’s strolls outdoors, she blames her severely by lamenting and shouting on her. She considers this act as a scandal and shame for all her family which urges her to hold her husband while resisting his domination and violence, she contends: “You will bring misfortune on us all! On all your lineage.” (Ibid: 45). As she prevents her to go out again. She says: “You bad girl! I’ll stay here and keep you shut up at home.” (Kincaid: 47). For Touma, her daughter does not stick to the origins she was raised on. The following comment by Bell Hooks gives more assertion. She writes:

Many of us who were raised in patriarchal homes where male parents maintained domination and control by abusing women and children know that the problem was often exacerbated by the fact that women also believed that a person in authority has the right to use force to maintain authority. (Hooks, 1984: 119).

Djebar refers to another sort of suffering in patriarchal society apparent in the novel. She represents woman in relation to her body which is perceived as an erotic signifier, which may cause sedition, perversion and bad morals, especially within the conservative societies.

Thus, it should be covered from male gaze once reaching the age of puberty to avoid acts like rape. Therefore, Hajila found herself under the obligation to hush up under the shadow of the veil. Isma says: “Your face completely hidden, leaving only one tiny gap exposed through which you peep to see where you are going.” (Djebar: 19). When Hajila tries to violate this norm and show up in public space without veil, she is subjected to hostile reactions.

On the other hand, Hajila’s act of love making with her husband is described as a rape. Djebar compares Hajila’s first sexual intercourse with her husband to “A battle fought out on a mattress in a tangle of crumpled sheets... (Djebar: 57). She uses words like “resistance” “surrender” “sword thrust” to describe the harshness of the act; he treats her as a sexual object, an object that he bought with his money. She contends: “He can see my legs! He can see my blood! He has paid for this right! ...” (Ibid: 58). He considers her as a mean to satisfy his sexual desire. Once his sexual instinct is extinguished, again he treats her as a subordinate. He says:” You’ve gone to lie down on the floor, on your usual mattress..., he lies on his high bed.” (Ibid).

c. Lucy’s suffering From Patriarchy

In her article entitled “Patriarchy and Women’s Subordination: A Theoretical Analysis”, Abeda Sultana asserts that patriarchy is the prime obstacle to women’s advancement and development. As it is shown in Jamaica Kincaid’s **Lucy**, Lucy suffers from the restrained family codes where she lives. She is not sent to a higher education as her two brothers are. Her mother expects her to study nursing while Lucy’s dream is to become a photographer. Therefore, Lucy feels oppressed even by her mother though she is a caring woman who loves her daughter. She thinks that her mother loves her just to make her as a copy of her. Lucy says: “I had come to feel that my mother’s love for me was designed solely to make me into an echo of her; and I didn’t know why, but I felt that I would rather be dead than become just an echo of someone.” (Kincaid, 1990: 36)

In her article entitled “*Understanding Patriarchy*”, Bell Hooks tells how the patriarchal norms are restored within the family, and how even parents and children are taught how each one takes their gendered place. She points out that in the patriarchal system, each one must fulfill their role. She says:

As their daughter I was taught that it was my role to serve, to be weak, to be free from the burden of thinking, to caretaker and nurture others. My brother is taught that it was his role to be served; to provide; to be strong; to think, strategize, and plan; to refuse to caretaker or nurture others. (Hooks: 2004)

In fact, this gender role is depicted in Jamaica Kincaid’s **Lucy**. Therefore, Lucy’s father who is physically absent in the novel, when Lucy tells her father’s story with his mother who abandoned him at the age of five and then his father who left him at seven years old. Therefore, he lived with his grandmother who used to love and serve him all the time, the way his wife used to do when he got married. Lucy says: “My father never saw his father again, either. He and his grandmother slept in the same bed. She used to get up a little before he did to prepare his breakfast, the same routine my mother used to follow and must have followed until he died.” (Kincaid: 125)

Bell Hooks, in her article “*Understanding Patriarchy*”, asserts that it is taught that man existed to be the powerful and the ruler. So, it is the role of woman to obey him. She declares: “At church they had learned that God created man to rule the world and everything in it and that it was the work of women to help men perform these tasks, to obey, and to always assume a subordinate role in relation to a powerful man” (Hooks, 2004)

Therefore, Lucy’s mother is also physically absent but always present in Lucy’s memories. She also used to serve her husband and follow the bases that determine how a good woman should be for being the ideal housewife. “Lucy declares: My mother was devoted to him. She was devoted to her duties: a clean house, delicious food for us, a clean yard, a small garden of herbs and vegetables, the washing and ironing of our clothes.” (Kincaid: 126)

Moreover, Bell Hooks writes that denial of self-determination is a kind of oppression. She writes: “Being oppressed means the absence of choices. It is the primary point of contact between the oppressed and the oppressor.” (Hooks, 1984: 5). Lucy considers her mother as the prime obstacle which deprived her from her dream as being a photographer and continuing her higher education. She and her husband always hoping for a good future which is full of success just for their three sons. Therefore, they are neglecting Lucy’s wishes and feelings even though she is the only girl. Lucy says:

I was the only child until I was nine years old, and then in the space of five years my mother had three male children; each time a new child was born, my mother and father announced to each other with great seriousness that the new child would go to university in England and study to become a doctor or lawyer or someone who would occupy an important and influential position in society. (Kincaid: 130)

Abeda Sultana, in her article “*Patriarchy and Women’s Subordination: A Theoretical Analysis*”, defines women’s subordination “as the inferior position of women, their lack of access to resources and decision making etc, and to the patriarchal domination that women are subjected to in most societies.” (Sultana, 2010). Lucy’s mother expects to send her to study nursery, to be an obedient girl who worships the family codes and follow the way she shaped based on gender role. Therefore, when Lucy behaves in the way that suited her mother, she takes care of her. If she did something wrong, she will punish her. Lucy says:

For my mother used to place me in her care from time to time, hoping, I suppose, that some of her good example would rub off on me. If I did anything she considered bad, she would threaten to give me senna tea, a purgative that caused bad stomach gripes; or she would threaten to put me in a barrel and shut the lid tight and forget about me. When I did things that pleased her, she would bath me and comb my hair and dress me up in her old cloths; and then she would insist that I go to sleep in a cloths basket lined with clean rags. I was much too big for the basket, but she would force me to lie in it all cramped up until she thought an appropriate time had passed. (Kincaid: 111)

However, Lucy’s brothers who are well treated by their parents show Lucy that her mother deprives her from her ambitions and neglects her because of her gender while she

focuses only on her three male children. Thus, Lucy realizes that she is discriminated by both her father and her mother, and her traditional mother believes that her pride will be in the success of her sons. Lucy says:

My father did not know me at all; I did not expect him to imagine a life for me filled with excitement and triumph. But my mother knew me well, as well as she knew herself: I, at the time, even though of us identical; I whenever I saw her eyes fill up with tears at the thought of how proud he would be at some deed her sons had accomplished, I felt a sword go through my heart, for there was no accompanying scenario in which she saw me, her only identical offspring, in a remotely similar situation. (Kincaid: 130)

As Bell Hooks mentions in her chapter **Sisterhood: Political Solidarity between Women**, “male supremacist ideology encourages women to believe we are valueless and obtain value only by relating to or bonding with men.”(Hooks, 1984: 43)

This ideology is also shown in Bell Hooks’ article “Understanding Patriarchy” when she embodies the patriarchal rules through her life experiment. She argues that women in the patriarchal society have to behave in a specific way as being soft and non-violent. This is depicted in Kincaid’s **Lucy** when Lucy meets Paul at the party and she says: I said, “How are you?” in a small, proper voice, the voice of the girl my mother had hoped I would be: clean, virginal, beyond reproach. (Kincaid, 1990: 97)

By the way, in Jamaica Kincaid’s **Lucy**, another type of oppression that women suffer from is women control women. In other words, traditional and religious women who believe in male’s power which creates hatred and betrayal between women.

In her article, Hooks highlights an important type of oppression, which is the oppression of women by women. She portrays oppression using her own life experience. Therefore, she states that her traditional religious parents who believe in gender roles had well restored the patriarchal norms by teaching them to their children; sons and daughters. As she

confirms that both men and women support the patriarchal attitudes. She says: “Women can be as wedded to patriarchal thinking and action.” (Hooks, 2004)

As it is shown in Jamaica Kincaid’s **Lucy**, Lucy remembers her relationship with her mother when she saw Mariah wants her and her children to admire the house she grew in and to see things like she did when she was a child. Lucy says: “Mariah wanted all of us, the children and me, to see things the way she did. She wanted us to enjoy the house, all its nooks and crannies, all its sweet smells, all its charms, just the way he had done as a child.”(Kincaid: 35, 36)

Lucy states that like her controlling mother, Mariah used to do so. Therefore, she realizes that even if Mariah is a woman who belongs to a privileged white family, she suffers from oppression and inspired the patriarchal family codes, which means, she has the same attitudes as her mother. Lucy says: “The times I loved Mariah it was because she reminded of my mother. The times that I did not Mariah because she reminded me of my mother” (Kincaid: 5). As it is shown in Bell Hooks’ article, the patriarchal norms are taught from childhood. She asserts: “Embracing patriarchal thinking, like everyone else around them, they taught it to their children because it seemed it like a “natural” way to organize life.” (Hooks, 2004)

Furthermore, Lucy says that Mariah hates her new friend Peggy because she sees her as a slut girl with a bad behavior and bad influence. Lucy declares: “She did not like Peggy. Peggy smokes cigarettes, used slang, wore very tight jeans, did not comb her hair properly or often, wore shiny fake- snakeskin boots, and generally had such an air of mystery that it made people who did not know her well nervous.” (Kincaid: 60). So, Mariah is angry because she is not able to order Lucy to stop this relation. Lucy says: “This new friendship of mine drove Mariah crazy. She couldn’t tell me what to do, exactly, because she wasn’t my parent, but she gave me lectures about what a bad influence a person like Peggy”. (Ibid: 63)

Besides, like Lucy's traditional mother who wants to keep her daughter virginal, clean and far away sexual relations, Mariah also attempts to prevent Lucy from falling into promiscuity. Lucy says:

I was feeling that I was made up only of good things when suddenly I remembered that I had forgotten to protect myself, something Mariah had told me over and over that I must remember to do. She had taken me to her own doctor; and every time I left the house on an outing with Piggy, Mariah would remind me to make sure I used the things he had given me. (Kincaid: 67)

Bell Hooks, in her **Feminist Theory: From Margin to Center** points out that male supremacist ideology taught women that they could never be sisters, side to side. She asserts: "We are taught that our relationships with one another diminish rather than enrich our experience. We are taught that women are "natural enemies", that solidarity will never exist between us because we cannot, should not, and do not bond with one another." (Hooks, 1984: 43). Lucy tells that when she was in her homeland Antigua, her mother experienced a betrayal from another woman who had loved her husband and tried to kill her. She says: "It was from her own experience that she spoke- the experience of having woman who had loved my father, whose love he had not returned, try to kill her, while they left my father without so much as a singed hair on his head". (Kincaid, 1990: 49)

In addition, her father had cheated on her mother. He had children with another woman who tried also to kill Lucy and her mother. Lucy declares:

My father had perhaps thirty children; he did not know for sure. He would try to make a count but then he would give up after a while. One woman he had children with tried to kill me when I was in my mother's stomach. My father had lived with another woman for years and was the father of her three children; she tried to kill my mother and me many times. (Kincaid: 90)

Therefore, Lucy came to a conclusion that also in the modern world women are oppressed even white women who descend from rich families. On this platform, Hooks clarifies that "all women are oppressed". She writes:

A central tenet of modern feminist thought has been the assertion that “all women are oppressed”. This assertion implies that women share a common lot, that factors like class, religion, sexual preference, etc. do not create diversity of experience that determines the extent to which sexism will be an oppressive force in the lives of individual women. (Hooks, 1984: 5)

When Lucy lives with Mariah and her husband Lewis, it seems that they form a perfect couple who love each other. After that, Lucy recognizes that Lewis is no longer in love with Mariah when he creates problems to make her believe that she is the responsible for their separation. And then she realized that he is betraying her with her best friend Dinah, whom she never loved. Lucy says: “A woman like Dinah was not unfamiliar to me, nor was a man like Lewis. Where I came from, it was well known that some women and all men in general could not be trusted in certain areas.” (Kincaid: 90)

Lucy begins to recognize that there is something in common between Lewis and Dinah when Mariah and Lewis were at odds, but when Dinah arrived, he became good. Lucy declares:

As soon as Dinah came, Lewis’s mood changed. He was no longer in the same room with Mariah; he was in the same room with Dinah. Lewis and Dinah started to laugh at the same things, and their peals of laughter would fly up into the air wrapped around each other like a toffee twist. (Kincaid: 79)

The things that made Lucy astonished about the betrayal of Dinah is that she has everything Mariah has. She says: “She had her own husband, she had her own children (two boys, two girls), she had her own house in the city and one on the lack-she had the same things Mariah had, and still she liked Mariah’s things better. How to account for that.” (Kincaid: 59)

Upon her arrival in the United States, Lucy hopes for the best, yet she experiences disillusionment; she feels marginalized. In the first part of the book, Kincaid depicts Lucy as a poor visitor; she is not just a stranger but also a woman of color. In the first day Lucy feels surprised and disappointed all the same; what she expected to be in her daydreams is not the same of what she found in reality. She says: “Now that saw these places, they looked ordinary,

dirty, worn down by so many people entering and leaving them in real life, and it occurred to me that I could not be the only person in the world for whom they were a fixture of fantasy.” (Kincaid: 4). Besides, Lucy experiences new things that she had never done before like ringing in the elevator, being in an apartment, and seating at a table and eating food that has been restored in a refrigerator. Thus, Lucy sleeps deeply not because she is happy but because she misses home. She says: “I slept soundly that night, but it wasn’t because I was happy I comfortable quite the opposite; it was because I didn’t want to take in anything else. (Ibid)

Because of all the disappointments Lucy faces, she suffers from homesickness; she longs for everything she left behind. So Lucy was confused whether she really wants to go back her homeland despite the harshness of life there. She declares: “But now I, too, felt I wanted to be back where I came from.”(Kincaid: 6). As a result, Lucy cannot get rid of her memories and she does not imagine that the bad situation she lives in the new place was one day a dream she wanted to realize. Therefore, she longs for every detail she left in Antigua. She declares:

In the past, the thought of being in my present situation had been a comfort, but now I did not even have this to look forward to, and so I lay down on my bed and dreamt I was eating a bowl of pink mullet and green figs cooked in coconut milk, and it had been cooked by my grandmother, which was why the taste of it pleased me so, for she was the person I liked best in all the world and those were the things I like best to eat also. (Kincaid: 7)

Another problem Lucy faces is being marginalized; she is an emigrant and woman of color all the same. Bell Hooks, in her chapter **Feminism: A Movement to End Sexist Oppression** states that “women in lower class and poor groups, particularly those who are non-white, would have defined women’s liberation as women gaining social equality with men since they are continually reminded in their everyday lives that all women do not share a common social status” (Hooks, 1984: 19)

When Lucy arrived to the United States she felt alienated, everything is different from the Island she left. The family Lucy lives with calls her poor visitor because she seems to be

surprised each time she is looking at them eating dinner and the way they eat or behave with each other. Therefore, she felt sad and unhappy. She says: “I was only an unhappy young woman living in a maid’s room, I was not even the maid. I was the young girl who watches over the children and goes to school at night.” (Kincaid: 07). Furthermore, even the maid hates her. Lucy declares:

One day the maid who said she did not like me because of the way I talked told me that she was sure that I could not dance. She said that I spoke like a nun, I walked like one also, and that everything about me was so pious it made her feel at once sick to her stomach and sick with pity just to look at me. (Kincaid: 11)

To sum up, **A Sister to Scheherazade** and **Lucy** are two novels that share the same matter, even if their writers are from different continents and different cultures; we notice that women all over the world share the same unjust system of life. Both the female characters, Hajila and Lucy suffer from the same woes of the patriarchal society, they are subjected to underrate and oppression by their mothers. From our reading, we come to the conclusion that patriarchy is a system that has always put women in the lower status in society. It existed since years and still exists, due to women and mothers who are transmitting its rules and norms to their children over generations by considering male as superior to female child when raising them. This kind of treatment gives to males a sense of superiority over women and raise men’s status. Thereby, mothers can be considered as the central success of patriarchy. So, they help in their own persecution by themselves. Moreover, women who are perceived as violating patriarchal norms are met with severe reactions. This hostility keeps women in their subordinate position.

Chapter Two: Feminine Rebellious in Assia Djébar's *A Sister to Scheherazade* and Jamaica Kincaid's *Lucy*

a. Code Breaking in Assia Djébar's *A Sister to Scheherazade*

After a period of time, women were marginalized and dominated in patriarchal societies, they get enough from discrimination which led them to bond and get rid of the norms of their living society. Therefore, radical feminism emerged as a revolutionary act against the unjust restraints imposed on women.

Feminist Revolution: Development through Struggle, is a Bell Hook's chapter **Feminist Theory: From Margin to Center** in which she emphasizes women's fight for liberty.

She states:

To build a mass-based feminist movement, we need to have a liberator ideology that can be shared with everyone. That revolutionary ideology can be created only if the experiences of people on the margin who suffer sexist oppression and other forms of group oppression are understood, addressed and incorporated. They must participate in feminist movement as makers of theory and as leaders of action. (Hooks, 1984: 161).

In her novel, Assia Djébar represents two different types of female characters and focused on showing the difference between them: the traditional Hajila and the developed Isma. A plot through which she gave a clear image about women's bonding, sisterhood and consciousness-raising. Thus, Djébar shows how Isma helps Hajila to make a road towards liberation and freedom.

In her chapter entitled **Sisterhood: Political Solidarity Between Women**, Bell Hooks states:

Before we can resist male domination we must break our attachment to sexism; we must work to transform female consciousness. Working together to expose, examine, and eliminate sexist socialization with ourselves, women would strengthen and affirm one another and build a solid foundation for developing political solidarity (Hooks, 1984: 47).

Hence, Isma in the novel incarnates the independent modern woman contrary to Hajila who is abused by everyone. Isma is like Hajila's overseer; she urges her to challenge the male's

subordinate and obstacles of exploring life and the outside world. She tries to free her and open her eyes to the world.

From the beginning of the novel, Isma seems to be as a vibrant and emancipated woman. She recounts her memories from adolescence and speaks about her experiences outdoors as a free and independent woman (Djebar: 12). She tries to give a sort of comparison between her life and the one of Hajila, trying to make her aware that there is a better living beyond what she lives. Further, she plays a role of the narrator since she narrates excerpts from the life of Hajila and addresses to her by using the second person "you" as if she blames her or wants to make her mindful about her miserable life. She says: "You are still in the grip of the same inexplicable grief" (Djebar: 07). She wants to tell her that you can change this situation. She gives her tips and constructions to rise up. Isma says:

Oh, to be able to leave the house! Once you have put on your suits, knotted your ties, you can cross the threshold. The street awaits you... you can present yourself to the world, you fortunate males! Every morning of every day, you can convey your bodies into dazzling light every day that Allah creates! ... (Djebar: 09).

She continues: "How do you learn to rid yourself of suffering with every breath you exhale" (Djebar: 09). Therefore, Hajila starts her revolt by crossing the threshold and discovers liberty by venturing out on the streets secretly.

Later on, Hajila became an autonomous woman, who leaves the house alone and freely without feeling shame or being veiled, more specifically without the guidance nor the control of man, until it became her daily habit. Exploring the outdoors is an act that contributes also in evolving Hajila's thought. Isma says: [] "...as if intimations of morality which had previously lain coiled up inside you were beginning to ooze away." (Djebar: 43).

One of the most famous slogans of the radical feminists is "my body belongs to me", which means that women should have the right to be free towards their own bodies, contrary to the old norms which say that woman's body should be covered.

The veil is an icon of a traditional society which embodies the women's identity and dignity. Isma and Hajila who consider the veil not just a piece of cloth that covers the head, but rather veils women's freedom and evolution, it makes women as unknown and hidden objects. Therefore, Hajila shows her revolt against it by expressing her desire to throw the veil under the support of Isma. She says: "there, you make your sudden decision to take off the veil! As if you wished to disappear ...or explode!" for Isma, Hajila does a great path by throwing the veil. She expresses: "you were walking in the shade, now you are in the sun". (Djebar: 30).

Moreover, Hajila is astonished by a woman that she sees in public a garden during her strolls outdoors. She is enjoying and playing with her baby freely and without a veil. Hajila asserts: "Henna-ed hair...Not a French woman.' And you muse, 'without a veil, out of doors, playing lovingly with her child!' you repeat, out of doors, without a veil, loving..." (Ibid: 27). Hajila is inspired by the view. For her, this woman is a typical example which represents freedom and liberty and that she should follow, it encourages her to cross the threshold another time without her veil. She says: "Tomorrow, I shall do it again!" (Ibid: 28). As a result, she regains the ownership of her body

Isma speaks about Hajila's journey of evolution proudly. She describes her paths as of a great achievement as it is her own success. She addresses to Hajila: "... you the new woman, you who have just been transformed into another woman." (Kincaid: 31)

When it comes to sex and reproduction, radical feminists requests for a greater freedom. They demand reproductive freedom accompanied by free access to abortion. For them, it is necessary to have a say concerning their desire to get a pregnancy or not, contrary to the old standards that say women is a reproductive mean that should bear children just after the marriage. Merely months after starting to confront the outside world and begin to hit the goal of getting liberty, Hajila realizes that she is pregnant, after days of supposing that it is just a sickness.

Isma rejects the idea of Hajila's pregnancy. She considers it as a threat that may obstruct her journey towards her personal freedom. She tries to convince her that it is wrong to get a child from a drunkard man with whom she will make an eternal accord. She assures her that it will be her main obstacle in front of her advancement. Isma says: "...how will you possibly be able to move around out of doors without being seen? How can you escape notice with this swollen belly? Will this protuberance take on your identity, fend the air for you to pass, prevent your being an observer whose appetite is never satisfied?" (Djebar: 73).

Hajila realized that getting rid of her pregnancy is her ultimate attempt to free herself from the bondage of patriarchal norms. She whispers to Kenza: "Do you suppose I could get rid of it." (Ibid). She goes out aborts her fetus by throwing herself under a car. She survives the accident but loses her baby, who is depicted as a symbol of prison. Hence, he obliges her to domestic obligations and marital responsibilities.

A sister to Scheherazade is a book title that was inspired by the story of **One thousand And One Night**, which recounts a story of a king who had been betrayed by his wife, thus he became a great hater of women. So, he kills every woman he marries. All women were afraid to marry him except Scheherazade the daughter of the vizier, she is intelligent so that she escapes death every morning by telling him a story to which she never puts an end in order to create suspense and curiosity in him and gain another day until she made the king love her and all this was realized by the aid of Scheherazade's sister Dinarzad. Scheherazade said: "my dear sister, I need your help in a matter of great importance.....as soon as I am in the sultan's presence, I shall beseech him to let you sleep in the bridal chamber...if I obtain this favor, as I hope to do, remember to wake me tomorrow morning, one hour before daybreak!" (Djebar: 91)

Assia Djebar makes an intelligent link between the story and her novel where she focuses on sisterhood and solidarity between female characters. Assia Djebar likens Isma to

Dinarzad, seeing that she helps her sister to avoid death and keep her alive. Similar to Isma, who helped her co-wife to build her self-awareness, self-confidence and support her to reject any patriarchal restriction, Dinarzad saved her sister.

Radical feminism sees women as a cooperative bond. Similarly, Hajila and Isma are supposed to be enemies since they are co-wives as it is usually seen in traditional societies, but rather they are sisters who make hand in hand and help each other. Isma tells: “Hajila the stranger, whom others imagine to be my rival, but who is my intimate” (Djebar: 80). Moreover, when Isma gives to Hajila in the Turkish bath the duplicate key of the apartment when her mother prevents her to get out again is symbolic in its essence, because she rather offers her the key of her freedom. Isma tells: “Here am I speaking to you again, Hajila. As if, in truth, I were causing you to exist.” (Ibid: 82)

a. Patriarchy Defiance in Jamaica Kincaid’

As it is discussed in the first chapter, women in general suffer from the patriarchal norms, especially women of color and those who grow up in traditional societies. Therefore, Women also play a role in sustaining these patriarchal codes. So, they oppress other women like their daughters.

Bell Hooks, in her article “*Understanding Patriarchy*” shows her rage over the society where she lives, she asserts that she has a desire to challenge patriarchy because it was an obstacle which prevented her from things she wanted to do. (Hooks, 2004)

In Jamaica Kincaid’s **Lucy**, Lucy decides to run away from the family codes where she lives. She left the West Indies to look for her liberation in the United States. As it is mentioned in the first chapter, despite all the disillusionments Lucy faced in the new world, she remained steadfast and kept her way working as an au pair girl to a bourgeois white family in New York in order to reach the dreams she could not achieve in her native land.

Lucy took the first step to leave Antigua. Now, she is in the United States, in the places that she sees in her daydreams. She says:

In a daydream I used to have, all these places were points of happiness to me; all these places were lifeboats to my small drawing soul, for I would imagine myself entering and leaving them, and just that-entering and leaving over and over again-would see me through a bad feeling I did not have a name for. (Kincaid, 1990: 03)

Lucy tells that the Bible that her cousin offered her reminds her about her childhood when her cousin's parents obliged her to become a Seventh-Day Adventist. Therefore, Lucy feels the urge to leave everything behind without exception even her own family. She notes: "... I wonder even in my whole life a day would go by when these people I had left behind, my own family, would not appear before me in one way or another." (Kincaid: 08) Therefore, Lucy always tries to overcome her feelings and homesickness by performing her duties and taking care of her employer's four daughters. She declares:

My waking hours soon took on a routine. I walked four small girls to their school, and when they returned at midday I gave them a lunch of soup from a tin, and sandwiches. In the afternoon, I read to them and played with them. When they were away, I studied my books, and at night I went to school. (Kincaid: 09)

Bell Hooks, in her **Feminist Theory: From Margin To center**, indicates that in her book, **The Female Eunuch** Germaine Greer and some other feminist thinkers see that liberty to have sex is a way of getting rid of women's oppression, Hooks asserts that "Feminist thinkers, like Greer, believed that the assertion of the primacy of sexuality would be a liberatory gesture". (Hooks, 1984: 147)

As we have mentioned in the first chapter, Lucy's mother is the primary reason that pushed Lucy to escape and look for a new way of life. She always warns her about illegal sexual relationships that are forbidden within the religious norms and the patriarchal system as well. Therefore, the freedom of having sex is shown in **Lucy**. Lucy forms so many sexual relations during her living in America, and this is an expression of her anger at her mother, and also is a

way of violating the patriarchal rules. Therefore, she rebels against her mother by being a slut. Lucy says: "I said, "How are you?" in a small, proper voice, the voice of the girl my mother had hoped I would be: clean, virginal, beyond reproach. But I felt the opposite of that..." (Kincaid: 97).

Even though Lucy experiences so many sexual relations and goes from one man to another, she cannot be in love with any one as she sees that to love or to get attached to someone is a way that will take her back to the bonds of her painful past. Lucy declares: "I could tell that being in love would complicate my life just now. I was only half a year free from the unbreakable bonds, and it was not in my heart to make new ones." (Kincaid: 71).

Moreover, the relationship between Lucy and her mother is ambivalent. As we have seen in the story, sometimes Lucy loves her mother and sometimes hates her. Hence, through the story, Lucy expresses how angry she is at her mother, as she used to receive letters from her mother; she overcame herself and kept distance between her and her homeland and her mother. She writes:

[]... I received a letter from my mother bringing me up to date on things she thought I would have missed since I left my home and would certainly like to know about. "It still has not rained since you left," she wrote. "How fascinating," I said to myself with bitterness. It had not rained once for over a year before I left. I did not care that any longer. The object of my life now was to put as much distance between myself and the events mentioned in her letter as I could manage. (Kincaid: 31).

Besides, Lucy decides to detach herself from her mother by neither opening nor answering her letters. She says: "I had, at that moment, a collection of letters from her in my room, nineteen in all, one for every year of my life, unopened. I thought of opening the letters, not to read them but to burn them at the four corners and send them back to her unread." (Kincaid: 91).

In an important chapter by Bell Hooks entitled **Sisterhood: Political Solidarity Between Women**, Hooks addresses a very important idea that may make an end to women's oppression which is solidarity and sorority between women. She asserts that as women "We are taught that women are "natural" enemies, that solidarity will never exist between us because we cannot, we should not, and do not bond with one another. We have learned these lessons well. (Hooks, 1984 : 43). But, Hooks rejected this idea and calls for women's solidarity. She says: "We must learn to live and work in solidarity. We must learn the true meaning and value of sisterhood." (Ibid)

We can see that the meaning of sisterhood and solidarity is embodied in Jamaica Kincaid's **Lucy**. This is portrayed in the hidden love of Lucy towards her mother, even though Lucy shows her hatred for her mother throughout the story, she cannot deny the feelings of love she feels for her mother. When Lucy receives her mother's letters, she confesses that although she wants to burn them and send them back unread, she will miss her if she reads them. She declares: "It was an act, I had read somewhere, of one lover rejecting another, but I could not trust myself to go too near them. I knew that if I read only one, I would die from longing for her." (Kincaid: 91)

As well, this solidarity appeared also when Lucy felt pity for her mother when she received the news of the death of her father, who left her mother poor. Therefore, Lucy could not leave her mother in that miserable situation. So, she sent her all the money she saved and a letter where she showed her regret for her mother. By the way, Mariah also contributed in helping Lucy's mother with her money. Lucy writes:

I had been putting away some money for the apartment Peggy and I were planning to share; I took it all and sent it to my mother. Mariah, on hearing this, gave me double what I already had sent, and I sent this along, too. I wrote my mother a letter; it was a cold letter. It matched my heart. It amazed even me, but I sent it all the same. In the letter I asked my mother how she could have married a man who would die and leave her in debt even for her own burial. (Kincaid: 127)

Throughout the story, in a way or another Lucy always confesses her love for her mother and her mother's love for her, which means that whatever the circumstances the patriarchal beliefs imposed on them, they cannot deny their feelings of love for each other. Lucy declares:

I had not been opening the letters my mother had been sending to me for months. In them she tried to give me a blow-by-blow description of how quickly the quality of her life had deteriorated since I had left her, but I only knew this afterward-after I had learned of my father's death, written to her and sent her money, and then opened the letter she sent in reply. For if I had seen those letters sooner, one way or another I would have die. I would have died if I did nothing; I would have died if I did something. (Kincaid: 139)

Lucy also adds that her mother was always trying to protect her. She says: "My mother used to bath me in water in which the leaves and flowers of these plants had been boiled; this bath was to protect me from evil spirits sent to me by some of the women who had loved my father and women who had not loved in return." (Kincaid: 124)

Additionally, Hooks in her chapter **Sisterhood: Political Solidarity Between Women**, highlights that women's divisions is an obstacle to building sisterhood between them. So, in order to strengthen relations between women, these divisions must be erased. She asserts: "Women are divided by sexist attitudes, racism, class privilege, and a host of other prejudices. Sustained women bonding can occur only when these divisions are confronted and the necessary steps are taken to eliminate them." (Hooks, 1984: 44)

This belief is portrayed in **Lucy**; Lucy tells about her good relationship with Mariah. She says that she loves her. Lucy writes: "Mariah said to me, "I love you." And again she said it clearly and sincerely, without confidence or doubt. I believed her, for if anyone could love a young woman who had come from halfway around the world to help her take care of her children, it was Mariah." (Kincaid: 26, 27)

Moreover, Mariah considers Lucy as one of her daughters. She thinks of her by doing things that make her happy. Lucy says:

Mariah was like a mother to me, a good mother. If she went to a store to buy herself new things, she thought of me and would bring me something also. Sometimes she paid me more money than it had been agreed I would earn. When I told her how much I enjoyed going to the museum, she gave me my own card of membership. Always she expressed concern for my well-being. I realized again how lucky I was to have met her and to work for her and not, for instance, some of her friends. (Kincaid: 110)

Unlike Lucy's mother who rejected her wish of being a photographer, Mariah encourages her by offering her a book of photographs and pictures. Lucy tells: "Mariah had given me a book of photographs, because in the museum were some photographs I particularly liked." (Ibid: 115). She also adds: "When I told her how much it pleased me to go and look at these pictures, she went out and bought me a book of them." (Ibid)

Therefore, Lucy loves Mariah too. She really felt sorry for Mariah when she was betrayed by her husband Lewis. Lucy takes a position against him although he is kind to her and treats her like his daughter. So, she shows her sympathies with Mariah. She writes: "And then I wondered when had I come to think of Lewis as a swine: I had always liked him; he had been always kind to me. And then I knew: he made Mariah cry, and I had taken her side; that was something I would always do." (Kincaid: 119)

Bell Hooks says in her chapter **Re-Thinking The Nature Of Work** that feminist activists see work as the arm which motivates women to advance towards their liberation and confront oppression. She asserts: "Work outside the home, feminist activists declared, was the key to liberation. Work, they argued, would allow women to break the bonds of economic dependency on men, which would in turn enable them to resist sexist domination." (Hooks, 1984: 95)

This concept appeared in Lucy, when she decided to leave Lewis and Mariah's apartment after their separation and work outside. Therefore, she got a job and she succeeded to achieve her goal to live the life she always dreams and become an autonomous woman. She writes:

I got to my job, I said good morning to everyone, I sat at my desk. I was now living a life I had always wanted to live. I was living apart from my family in a place where no one knew much about me; almost no one knew even my name, and I was free more or less to come and go as pleased me. (Kincaid: 158)

Throughout the novel, Lucy goes through difficult steps while living in America, but she did not stop in the pursuit of her liberation. She made a decision of not attending school anymore and rejecting to become the nurse that her mother expected her to be, because she always wanted to be strong and authoritative. She declares: "Right after we had returned from the summer at the lack, I decided I would not attend school at night anymore or study to become a nurse." (Kincaid: 92). She also says:

I was not good at taking orders from anyone, not good at waiting on other people. Why did someone not think that I would make a good doctor or a good magistrate or a good someone who runs things? As a child I had always been told what a good mind I had, and thought I never believed it myself, it allowed me to cut quit a figure of authority among my peers. (Kincaid: 92)

It has been a year since Lucy left the West Indies. She built of herself a strong girl; the free young woman who does not look like her traditional patriarchal mother. She says:

I had been a girl of whom certain things were expected, none of them too bad: a career as a nurse, for example; a sense of duty to my parents; obedience to the law and worship convention. But in one year of being away from home, that girl had gone out of existence. (Ibid: 133)

When the New Year came, Lucy constructed the dream she walks behind and the words her mother often repeats to her. Lucy writes: "Still, it made me remember what my mother had said to me many times: for my whole life I should make sure the roof over my head was my own; such a thing was important, especially if you were a woman." (Kincaid: 144) Therefore, the day Lucy left Mariah's apartment has arrived. She moved to her own one. She says: "The next day

I woke up in a new bed, and it was my own. I had bought it with my money. The roof over my head was my own-that is, as long as I could afford to pay the rent for it.” (Ibid: 144)

Now, she is the new Lucy, she succeeded to get rid and break all the restriction of the patriarchal society where she lived. Hence, she created another personality of herself which is totally different from the one her mother expected to be. Lucy writes:

Mariah had given me a small desk with many drawers. I had placed it near my bed, with a lamp on it. I reached into the top drawer and retrieved a small stack of official documents: my passport, my emigration card, my permission-to-work card, my birth certificate, and a copy of the lease to the apartment. These documents showed everything about me, and yet they show nothing about me. (Kincaid: 148)

In the end, although Lucy reached her liberation and became independent, she recognized that there is something missed in her life which is the feeling of happiness and love. She tells: “The feeling of bliss, the feeling of happiness, the feeling of longing fulfilled that I had thought would come with this situation was nowhere to be found inside me.” (Kincaid: 158)

Finally, Lucy ends her story with sadness and heartbreak, and a wish she really wants to happen in her life. She says:

Then I saw the book Mariah had given me. It was on the night table next to my bed. Beside it lay my fountain pen full of beautiful blue ink. I picked up both, and I opened the book. At the top of the page I wrote my full name: Lucy Josephine Potter. At the sight of it, many thoughts rushed through me, but I could write only this: “I wish I could love someone so much I would die from it.” And then as I looked at this sentence a great wave of shame came over me and I wept and wept so much that the tears fell on the page and caused all the words to become one great big blur. (Kincaid: 164)

Jamaica Kincaid, throughout her novel **Lucy**, transmits an important message in order to make people aware of how women live in all around the world, especially those who live within the traditional patriarchal societies. Therefore, she shows that despite the oppression and the subordination that women suffer from especially because there are women, old and traditional mothers in particular, who sustain the patriarchal norms. Other women reject to live

under the patriarchal family codes. Thus, these women face and rebel against the patriarchal system so that to take their liberation. Furthermore, Jamaica Kincaid shows that women are not always enemies; they can be sisters and create such solidarity to break the restrictions imposed by the patriarchy.

Conclusion

To Conclude, **A sister to Scheherazade** and **Lucy** are two fascinating novels that show the journey of women within the patriarchal societies. Both of them have portrayed the cruelty, the discrimination, the injustice and the oppressive constraints under which women live.

In our study of the novels, we dealt with the issues mentioned before, an analysis that has allowed us to identify the common points between the two novels. We have selected novels from different cultures and even environments to show that women are living in the same woes all around the world. Furthermore, throughout our reading of the novels, we may notice that Assia Djébar and Jamaica Kincaid are radical feminists and novelists in their stance since they tend to deal and transmit an understanding for the roots of patriarchal oppression.

Our dissertation has required us to start from a clear and detailed definition of patriarchy which is the main source of women's suffering and self-degradation. Straightforwardly, our study is a sort of ambivalence between women's disunity and its results versus women's bonding and its consequences.

In the first chapter, we have focused on the mothers who maintain the patriarchal norms by forcing their daughters to follow its restraints, believing that it is the right system on which life is based. Due to the lack of awareness which overwhelm their thinking, mothers transmit the same values to their children. Both **A sister to Scheherazade** and **Lucy** share the same aspects. Hajila's mother urges her daughter to sanctify her husband, she prevents her to confront the outside world which is for her reserved only for men, as well as she push her to get a pregnancy in order to become a full women. On the other hand, Lucy's mother shows clearly her preference of her male child and gives Lucy less importance and less value just

because she is a female. Consequently, such behavior shows women dispersion and disunity. Therefore, it gives men more hegemonic sense over women.

In the second chapter, we have turned the balance from women who see patriarchy and men's control as natural to rebellious women who reject all the patriarchal norms.

Through the female characters of Hajila and Isma in Assia Djebar's novel and through Lucy and Mariah in Jamaica Kincaid's novel, we have extracted an image about women's sisterhood and solidarity within the patriarchal society since they helped each other to overcome and challenge all their obstacles. Isma in **A Sister to Scheherazade** helps her co-wife Hajila to build her self-awareness, self-consciousness and self-confidence, what helped to form a rebellious woman who refuses everything that curbs her advancement as she explored the outside world, she regains control over her own body by removing her veil and aborts of her unwanted baby.

Lucy, in the other hand, left her island searching for her freedom to realize her professional wishes. Naturally, she builds her career as she wants, she finds support from Mariah with whom she has a good relationship despite their different cultures, and even if Lucy is a black woman, she got a nice treatment from her.

Throughout our dissertation, we came to a conclusion that women disunity helps consolidating patriarchy. Therefore, it contributes to women suffering and distress. Whereas, women's unity helps them to fight against their exploitation and discrimination. Then, they gain their liberation and freedom. Finally, we can say that Assia Djebar and Jamaica Kincaid share the same purpose throughout their novels which aim to the sensitization of women to face the patriarchal system. So that, they depict the real image in which the traditional women live.

We wish we have succeeded in exploring and transmitting the issues of the two novels studied from our angle. Rather, our research does not cover all the issues that can be tackled in

both **A Sister to Scheherazade** and **Lucy**. Furthermore, we believe that the works are still rich to be analyzed from different perspectives, as it is an interesting subject that needs further investigation.

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