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Topic:

Orientalism and Feminism in Betty Mahmoody's *Not Without My Daughter* (1987) and Zana Muhsen's *Vendues* (1992)

Presented by:

Sabrina BATTOU

Djouher BELHITECHE

Supervised By:

Ms. Fariza BADJA

Board of examiners:

Chair : Ms. Katia MAHMOUDI

MAA, University of Mouloud MAMMERI (T.O)

Supervisor : Ms. Fariza BADJA

MAA, University of Mouloud MAMMERI (T.O)

Examiner : Ms. Fatiha BENSAFI

MAA, University of Mouloud MAMMERI (T.O)

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Dedications

A special feeling of gratitude goes to my loving parents who have been my source of inspiration and strength.

I also dedicate this work to my brothers, Redouane and Ahmed who helped me in all the things .

I am also pleased to dedicate the fruit of my effort to my beloved husband, Moumouh who has been a constant source of support during the accomplishment of this work.

I thank my grandmother Halima for nursing me with love and affection .

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DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to

My family and my friends.

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Abstract

This research paper examines the Orientalist representations in Betty Mahmoody's *Not Without My Daughter* (1987) and Zana Muhsen's *Vendues* (1992). It aims to provide how the East and Easterners are seen and portrayed in both works. It also aims to show the different forms of oppression that Eastern women encounter in both Iran and Yemen. To achieve our purpose, we have relied on Edward Said's well known work *Orientalism* (1978), and Chandra Talpade Mohanty's theory *Under Western Eyes : Femenist Scholarship and colonial discourses* (1984). In the first chapter of the dissertation, we have dealt with the representation of the West and Westerners 'the self' versus the East and Easterners 'the Other'. The second chapter has been devoted to the representation and double oppression of Oriental women. The latter analyzes how women suffer from male domination and religion rules. We have concluded that both Betty Mahmoody and Zana Muhsen tackle the same issue of the Orient. Both of them believe and accept on Western superiority. This research shows also that male's authority over females and religious laws dominate Eastern women's lives, denigrating them to a lower statut and subjecting them to physical and psychological abuse.

Key words: East, Easterners, Islam, Male domination, Oppression, Orientalism, Other, Physical and psychological abuse, Religion, Self, Superiority, West, Westerners.

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I. Introduction

During the 19th century, the West had conquered many Eastern countries. To legitimate its colonization, it misrepresented the East and its people as non-civilized, primitives and savages who were in need of civilization. Thus, Westerners had justified their invasion over the East by creating a binary opposition between the Occident/Orient.

Many literary works have employed Post Colonial and Orientalist Discourse to show the misrepresentation of the colonized nation. Among these works, we cite *Orientalism* (1978) by Edward Said in which he looks over the opposition between the East and West to react and answer back the racist stereotypes established by the Westerners. Through his theory, Said believes that Middle Eastern countries have been historically misrepresented by the West through a variety of stereotypes which have contributed to create a distorted view of that area. Said has demonstrated how the Occident perceives the Orient. He has explored the distorted representation and misleading judgments about the East. He has clearly showed the dichotomy of the East and the West and cited several examples of the cultural, social and political interaction between the two blocks.

Among the literary works which comply with our topic, we have selected the work of Betty Mahmoody's *Not Without My Daughter* (1987) and Zana Muhsen's *Vendues* (1992). Both novels are considered as two important literary works, in which Orientalism is mainly indicated in the portrayal of the settings as well as the representation of male and female characters. The two novels *Not Without My Daughter* (1987) and *Vendues* (1992) look into the way the American Betty Mahmoody and the British Zana Muhsen represent the Orient and its people with debased clichés and images to reveal their lack of social, cultural and religious values. In the two novels, the use of the colonial discourse serves as a strategy for Western protagonists to draw a dark depiction of the Orient. The latter is viewed as the

opposite of the Occident which is a superior nation contrary to the Orient which is perceived as different, inferior and barbaric.

The selection of *Not Without My Daughter* (1987) written by Betty Mahmoody and *Vendues* (1992) by Zana Muhsen is largely due to their similarities in the way they portray the Iranian and Yemeni countries and their inhabitants, especially women living under a tyrannical and oppressive rules of these areas. Indeed, the two works show the issues of women's condition in patriarchal societies governed by religious laws. Both writers struggle against abuse, injustice and inequality between sexes to gain their liberty.

This piece of research, therefore, holds the aim of studying Betty Mahmoody's *Not Without My Daughter* (1987) and Zana Muhsen's *Vendues* (1992) from an Orientalist perspective. It conveys the dichotomy that lies between the "Orient" and the "Occident." It also analyses how the protagonists employ the Orientalist discourse to draw a bad image of the Orient and how women suffer in Oriental societies.

a. Review of the Literature

Both Betty Mahmoudy's *Not Without My Daughter* (1987) and Zana Muhsen's *Vendues* (1992) demonstrate the struggles that women face in the Arab patriarchal society. Both works have largely been investigated and have received a lot of critical attention. To begin with, many critics have studied Betty Mahmoudy's novel *Not Without My Daughter* (1987) from different angles, and among them we cite Sam A. Stevens. The latter, in his article *Taking On a World of Words* published on December 23rd, 2019, argues that after reading *Not Without My Daughter*, he has contradictory feelings. From one angle, he feels awful for Betty because her husband, the man she trusts abducts her and holds her away from her family for more than a year. She is hurt physically and emotionally as she is deprived of her liberty and has no one to trust. From the other hand, he feels frustrated with the way she describes Islam and Moody's family. Most of the time, she speaks only of the horrible memories she had during her stay in Iran, which makes her book a 'horrible' work.

Sam A. Stevens says that he is not confident with the way Betty portrays Iranian people and he is not convinced that they are exactly as described. He explains that according to Betty, those who give support to her are the only good characters in the narrative, excluding her relatives even those who are understanding and helpful. He adds that there is not a character he likes and favours, because of Betty's negative portrayal of her in-laws whose image is distorted. Those who help her are vaguely described to protect their identities. So it is hard to connect with them. For him, the novel is compelling, but he does not find the writing very good. A lot of things seem to be retrospective rather than current which is frustrating. Sam A. Stevens admits that Betty's courage impressed him, and he also appreciates and respects men and women who support her during her journey stay.

Shaloo Walia is another critic who has examined Betty's novel. In her critic *Memoir of an American Held in Iran*, written in Jun 28,2022, she argues that the novel is a heartbreaking account of how horrible Iranian women's lives are. She also shows the pain a woman experiences after marrying outside of her race, religion and nationality for the sake of love. The writer is impressed by the way Betty overcomes all obstacles to protect her daughter. She says that it is incredible to see the lengths a mother will go for her daughter. She argues that the novel is a powerful and emotional depiction of a single woman's struggle in a strange country and she is in admiration of Betty's bravery and persistence. She admires that the novel is a remarkable tale of determination that is heart-wrenching as well as inspiring.

In the same way, Zana Muhsen's *Vendues (1992)* has been the subject of several studies. To start with, Amber Leigh Henderson in her book review entitled : *Sold by Zana Muhsen and Andrew Crofts* written in the 5th July, 2015 claims that Zana is determined to survive and is awkward. She never stops fighting, even if her family in laws breaks her spirit with endless work, beatings, abusive misconduct and the pain of giving birth on the ground. Amber affirms that she has learned a lot from Zana, since the latter is a strong woman who surpasses all the hardship. The writer confirms that despite all what Zana has undergone, no one is able to rob her of her integrity and since she has something worth fighting for, she fights for it and she does not let anyone break or strip her of her strength. She adds that, even if people and obstacles beat her down, she stands up with an even mightier strength than she had before and shows them that she is not weak. The critic also claims that one of the reasons Zana writes her novel is to expose the reality of slavery.³

Another critic who has analyzed the work of Zana Muhsen is Younus Fazal. In his *book review : Sold* published on October 3rd, 2021, he claims that it is necessary to read this

story because it enlightens readers about the captivity of the two young sisters, Zana and Nadia who are really pressured by their father. Younus Fazal argues that the book encourages us not to be judgmental towards women who have their own dreams and goals, contrary to Zana's father who sells his daughters in Yemen and runs behind money. The latter does not think about their lives or even the suffering they encounter there. The writer affirms that this powerful book clearly conveys the value of never giving up. He asserts that never giving up is the key to achieving anything big.

b. Issue and Working Hypotheses

From the above review of the literature, it is noticeable that considerable studies have been undertaken on both Betty Mahmoody's *Not Without My Daughter* (1987) and Zana Muhsen's *Vendues* (1992), however, in our opinion, no study has so far ventured to analyze and study the two novels together under an Orientalist and feminist perspective. Our purpose in this research paper aims to shed light on the theme of characters and setting to draw the image of the Orient under the Western eyes. Hence, the West maintains the career of misrepresenting the East in order to show the West as a superior power and promote the lack of civilization in the Eastern land and also to depict the inhabitants of that zone as savages, illiterates, primitives, and marginalised.

Besides, this study attempts to present the issue of women's lives under male dominance and religious laws. Both Betty Mahmoody and Zana Muhsen depict female characters who struggle to achieve their freedom in a patriarchal society and prove to be against the orientalist discourse who consider them as primitives and illeterate. They rebel against the established patriarchal rules. The two protagonists revolt against the oppression of the patriarchal power structures they experienced during their stay in Arab countries.

To examine the above issues, this study will rely on Edward Said's theory of Orientalism (1978), in which he depicts how Westerners view the Easterners and how their attitudes and misrepresentations produce an orientalist discourse on non westerners. This dissertation will also resort to Chandra Talpade Mohanty's *Under Western Eyes : Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourses* (1984) in which she affirms that Western feminists believe that all Eastern women belong to the same ideology, culture and have the same interests. Mohanty also claims that Western scholars hold prejudices that Eastern women's lives have been controlled and restricted by religion which is used as a pretext for their oppression.

c. Methodological Outline

At the methodological level, our research paper is undertaken following the IMRAD system. Our research is composed of an introduction in which we have stated our aim. Then, followed by the review of literature where we have reviewed some works published on Betty Mahmoody's *Not Without My Daughter* (1987) and Zana Muhsen's *Vendues* (1992). Then, we have established our issue and working hypothesis. In the Methods section, we have provided an overview of Edward Said's theory of Orientalism (1978), and Chandra Talpade Mohanty's *Under Western Eyes: Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourses* (1984). In the Materials section, we have provided the biographies of the writers as well as the summaries of the two selected works.

The discussion section will be divided into two chapters. The first one will deal with the representation of the Orient and orientals versus the Occident and occidentals basing our study on the stereotypical depictions constructed by Westerners over the Easterners. The second one will be devoted to the representation of Eastern women as victims of male domination and religious rules. Finally, our dissertation will end with a general conclusion. In this part, we will conclude our present study with a summary of the main ideas developed in the dissertation.

Endnotes

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II- Methods and Materials

1. Methods

In order to discuss the issue of Western superiority over the East and women's resistance under the patriarchal domination and religious rules in both Betty Mahmoody's *Not Without My Daughter* (1987) and Zana Muhsen's *Vendues* (1992), we will appeal to Edward Said's theory *Orientalism* (1978) and Chandra Talpade Mohanty's *Under Western Eyes : Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourses* (1984).

1.1 Edward Said's *Orientalism* (1978)

Partially our work relies on some theoretical concepts of Edward Said's *Orientalism* (1978) which is a literary theory that has acquired importance towards the end of the twentieth century. The term Orientalism is derived from Orient, which is a term used to describe the East, as opposed to the Occident which represents the West. The Occident was seen as the normal and center part of the world, while third world nations were thrown at the periphery.¹

Edward Said is a Palestinian literary and critical theorist of postcolonial literature. In his work *Orientalism*, he argues that Orientalism is an intellectual tradition that emphasizes the everlasting contrast between the East and the West. It defines and constructs the Orient and paves the way for hegemony over nation and civilization in the middle East and the other regions of Africa and Asia. In this way, Orientalism tends to rely on a binary opposition between the West and the East that is most of the time misleading and destructive.

In his book, Edward Said builds up his argument and analysis in three long chapters. The first part 'the scope of orientalism' covers all the dimensions of the subject, both in terms of historical experiences and time period. In the second part, 'Orientalist Structures and

Restructures', Said explains how philologically, historically and literarily, writers looked at the East in the nineteenth century. The third and last part 'Orientalism now' is about the contemporary American discourses on the Orient and the analysis of modern Orientalism.²

According to Edward Said, Orientalism is an academic discipline which examines Western representations of the Middle Eastern countries and its inhabitants. He focuses on how American, English and French scholars have approached the Arab land and Arabs living in the Middle East and North Africa. He describes how the image of the Orient is portrayed in literature and academic studies. For example, the Middle East is represented as being threatening, inferior, underdeveloped, and uncivilized. That is to say, the Western land sees itself superior to the Eastern one.³ Said's central concern in his book is to show that Western journalists, writers and scholars have helped to build up a prevalent and hostile image of the East and its population as inferior, stagnant, degenerate and far from being civilized.⁴ Secondly, according to Edward Said, Orientalism 'is a style of thought based upon an ontological and epistemological distinction made between the 'Orient' and the 'Occident' ⁵. Thirdly, Said defines Orientalism as a corporate institution for dealing with the Orient-dealing with it by making statement about it, teaching it, settling it and ruling over it, in short Orientalism is a Western strategy for dominating, restructuring, and having authority over the Orient.⁶

The author defines Orientalism as a way of seeing and thus defining middle Eastern and Asian cultures as inferior, backward, exotic and in need of rescue by the Western world. Said argues that Orientalism, as understood by Western scholarship on the Eastern world, is inseparable from the imperialist societies that produced it, making much Orientalist work inherently political and subject to power.⁷ In Edward Said's view it was Western scholars

who appropriate the interpretation and exploration of the Orient's history, its languages and culture for themselves. They write about the Orient's past and construct its modern identities from a perspective that took Europe as the norm, from which the 'exotic' and 'enigmatic' Orient deviated.⁸

In short, it is clear that the term 'Orientalism' refers to the dominance of the West over the Orient. According to Said, Westerners see themselves as superior, civilized and rational while viewing all Easterners as inferior, uncivilized and repressed. However, by assigning individuals a collective identity without getting to know them, the Occident classifies the Orient as being the same.

1.2 Chandra Talpade Mohanty's *Under Western Eyes: Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourses* (1986)

Under Western Eyes : Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourses (1986) is an academic essay written by the Indian-American feminist researcher Chandra Talpade Mohanty, an Associate Professor of Women's studies at Hamilton college, New York. In the opening chapter of her book, Mohanty explains how some feminist scholars in the West have a propensity to lump together all women from the third world as being homogeneous and treat them as though they all share the same needs, irrespective of their geographical location, race, class, religion, or ethnicity.⁹

According to Mohanty, Western feminist scholarship's have grouped all third-world women together as a single and unified category. In *Under Western Eyes : Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourses* (1986), Mohanty explores Western feminist scholarship's deviation and separation of women from the globe into two dichotomy. The first category consists of Western women who are supremely emancipated, superior, intellectual,

and educated. The other group, identified as Third World Women who are victimized, sexually assaulted, illiterate and long for deliverance.¹⁰ By lumping everyone under one label, Mohanty writes: “This average third world woman leads an essentially truncated life based on her feminine gender (sexually constrained) and being ‘third world’ (ignorant, poor, uneducated, tradition-bound, domestic, family-oriented, victimized, etc)”¹¹

According to Mohanty, the uniform treatment of non-Western women in Western feminist discourse is equivalent to an act of colonialism. The latter, according to Mohanty, is “a relation of structural domination, and a suppression-often violent- of the heterogeneity of the subject(s) in question”¹². In this case, many Western feminist scholars homogenize the diverse heterogeneities of women in the developing world by reducing them into a single category that Western feminist scholars can use to colonize.

Mohanty analyzes ideas that portray Third World women as stereotypical victims. Approaching women as universal often ignores the historical or cultural context of women’s roles in a specific society. Mohanty specifies many ways women are seen as homogenous group. For instance, Hosken and Lindsay portray all African and Middle Eastern women as victims of male violence. According to Mohanty’s speech, this type of depiction keeps women in a fixed position and leaves them socio-politically powerless. Additionally, Mohanty writes that Western feminist scholars portray ‘Third World Women’ as oppressed, homogeneous and wholly under the control of religious traditions and ideologies. For instance, some western feminisits, depicts Islam as a defence for the Purdah (a social structure used in South Asia that separates Muslim and Hindu women at home and requires them to wear full body covering outside). Furthermore , it makes the case that the major justification for Purdah is the dominance of men and religion over women and the sense of security it gives to women.¹³

2. Materials

A. Biographies of Betty Mahmoody and Zana Muhsen

a. Biography of Betty Mahmoody

Betty Mahmoody is an American writer and public speaker, born and raised in Michigan in 1945. In 1977, she married Sayyed Mahmoody, an Iranian doctor practising in the United States. In 1987, she published her first novel *Not Without My Daughter Tome I* which relates her own story of the two years of suffering she spent in Iran and her escape later on with her daughter from her abusive husband. The novel was then transformed into a film of the same title. The work has the effect of a bomb and awakens consciences on a frequent problem. After her fight for freedom, she represented the United States at the Hague Conference on International Child Abductions in 1992.¹⁴

In the same year, she published her second book *For The Love Of a Child (1992)*, where she talks about adjusting to American culture, living in constant fear of her husband's revenge, and feeling frustrated with a judicial system that cannot provide her with security. In this book, Mahmoody recounts also her numerous interactions with women who had attempted to flee similar situations. Today, Betty Mahmoody is the President and co-founder of the organization called One World: For Children, an organization designed to promote understanding between cultures and offer security and protection to children of bi-cultural marriages. She was also chief instigator for legislation passed in Michigan relating to international kidnapping, and worked on a Federal Bill which was signed into law by President Clinton regarding the same issue.¹⁵

b. Biography of Zana Muhsen

Zana Muhsen was born in England in 1965. She is of a Yemeni origin, and was raised in Birmingham. She has attended the local Church of England School.¹⁶ She is a British author and biographer who has written about the experiences she and her sister Nadia had in Yemen. Zana Muhsen has a dual nationality being the child of Muthanna, a Yemeni immigrant father, and a British Pakistani mother Miriam Ali. She is known for her novel *Vendues (1992)* which tells the story of modern slavery. This book was written in 1992 and received immediate attention from all over the globe.¹⁷

After her return to England, Zana made a serious vow to her sister Nadia, that she would struggle to obtain her freedom as well. Thus, with the money earned from her best-selling novel, Zana decided to hire a security company named Corporate Training Unlimited, which is part of Global Security International based on Fayetteville North Carolina to help her save her sister Nadia. Unfortunately, the company betrayed Zana and failed to take Nadia to Birmingham. After so many attempts to save her, the Muhsen family agreed to send Nadia's brother, Mo, to get her out of Yemen. But, after he had spoken with her, he deduced that Nadia was influenced by her in-laws as she refused to return to England. After ten years, Zana publishes her second book entitled *A Promise to Nadia (2000)*.¹⁸

B.Synopses

a. Betty Mahmoody's *Not Without My Daughter (1987)*

The novel tells the story of Betty an American woman who is very attached to her family, her country and her way of life. She marries an Iranian living and working as a doctor in the United States. He starts a family with Betty with whom he had a daughter called Mahtob. They have been living happily, but unfortunately the political tensions between Iran

and the United States weaken their personal and professional situations. Because of the influence of friends, family and religious extremism, tensions become more and more frequent between Betty and her husband Moody.

Their life turns upside down and Betty is most often upset especially when Moody becomes too attached to other Iranians living in America. He starts to criticize the United States and even renounces to acquire the American nationality and decides to settle in Iran with his family and secretly organizes this departure. He makes Betty believe that they are going to Iran to spend only two weeks in his country while in fact he decides they would never return to America but rather live in Iran. At first, Betty hesitates but ends up accepting to accompany her husband and daughter to Iran.¹⁹

After two weeks spent in Iran, Betty realizes the truth. She is imprisoned in Moody's family home and he becomes violent, domineering, unpredictable and dangerous to his wife and daughter. He beats them when they do not obey his orders. During her captivity in Iran, Betty shows great courage and determination to flee Iran and return to USA. Moody frequently tells Betty that she is free to leave but not with her daughter, however she refuses to leave Iran without her young daughter and she does everything to protect her from her father's violence and from the Iranian patriarchal laws.

After several fights and difficult days, Betty and her Daughter Mahtob finally succeed to get out of Iran, and show a lot of courage especially during their escape through Turkey. They find the strength to travel hundreds of kilometers in snowy mountains. They endure fear, hunger and especially cold and exhaustion to regain freedom and reach their native country, the United States.²⁰

b. Zana Muhsen's *Vendues* (1992)

Zana Muhsen and her sister Nadia are two Birmingham girls who are sold by their father as child brides at an early age. The girls accept their father's offer of a holiday to Yemen to get in touch with their heritage and meet their paternal side of their family. Once there, the two girls discover they are tricked by their father who arranges their marriage secretly. They go through difficult experiences and face a hard life with their family in-law.²¹

On their arrival, Zana and Nadia discover that they are virtually prisoners. They had to adapt to a completely different way of life, with no running water, dung-plastered walls, frequent beatings, and the suffering of childbirth on bare floors with only old women in attendance. Thus, for eight years Zana and her sister have been forced to live in an isolated mountain village and suffer daily mistreatment. They endured hard work, and abuse. Later on, the media got involved and their mother intervenes to help them, However after eight years of misery and humiliation Zana succeeds to escape and return to England while Nadia stays because she has no courage to leave without her children.²²

When Zana first escapes from Yemen, her story spreads on front pages all over the world. The media start queuing up to buy her story, but she has not been ready to talk. She tells them she needs time to reflect and to put her ordeal into perspective. After a year, when the media's attention has calmed down, she decides that it is time to tell her story in a novel entitled *Vendues* (1992) to alleviate the painful nightmare, and produce a true picture of Zana's story and how difficult her life had been while being a slave in Yemen.²³

Endnotes

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²¹ Melanie, Finn, Nadia's choice, (1 Jan 2022) <https://mg.co.za/article/2022-01-01-nadias-choice/> Accessed on 13 March 2023.

²² Ibid.

²³ Ibid.

III- Results

Our dissertation has attempted to explore the Orientalist discourse in both Betty Mahmoody's *Not Without My Daughter* (1987) and Zana Muhsen's *Vendues* (1992). Our study has been based on the Western portrayal of the East and its population and how female characters suffered in that area. Hence, to achieve this research, we have relied on two theories, Edward Said's *Orientalism* (1978) which reflects the occident's view that the orient and its people are associated with multiple stereotypes. The theory also tends to show the relationship between the Self (occident) and the Other (Orient) which is based on power dialect and domination. As far as the second theory, we have relied on is Chandra Talpade Mohanty's *Under Western Eyes: Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourses* (1984) which aims at demonstrating how the patriarchal society and religious system elevate men and cause women's suffering and reduce them to lower positions.

Throughout our analysis of the two works, we have concluded that both Betty Mahmoody and Zana Muhsen share similarities in the representation of the characters and the setting, the dominant West, (self), against the inferior Orient, (the other). Moreover, both writers give negative descriptions of the Orient, its people and the land itself is associated with savagery, ignorance and backwardness. In addition, our analysis has shown that, according to the two novels, women in the Arab and Iranian societies are minimized and devalued by males' dominance and oppressed by Islamic rules. We have deduced that both Betty Mahmoody and Zana Muhsen have provided descriptions of the life of women living in Iran and Yemen under the violent, barbaric, tyrannical, and repressive Muslim beliefs. According to them, women in the Eastern land are double colonized; that is to say, women suffer at the hands of patriarchy and religion.

Throughout the study, we have noticed that, both writers are influenced by Orientalist ideas and that they advocate Western superiority over the East which is already described as being inferior, primitive and savage. They also share the view that the Occident is powerful and its people are privileged and thus, must always be superior. In fact, both writers are similar in the way they describe women's subjugation and oppression in a society which denies their status.

IV. Discussion

In this stage of our research, we will study Orientalism in terms of Characters and Setting in Betty Mahmoody's novel *Not Without My Daughter* (1987), and Zana Muhsen's *Vendues* (1992). We shall rely on Edward Said's theory of Orientalism in order to show the misrepresentation of the Orient and the Eastern people.

Chapter One: Orientalism at the Level of Characters and Setting in Betty Mahmoody's *Not Without My Daughter* (1987) and in Zana Muhsen's *Vendues* (1992)

a- The representation of characters in Betty Mahmoody's *Not Without My Daughter* (1987) and Zana Muhsen's *Vendues* (1992)

In this section, we will examine Betty Mahmoody's *Not Without My Daughter* (1987) and Zana Muhsen's *Vendues* (1992) to analyze the notion of Western superiority over the Orient. The main aspects of this concept are those of the portrayal of the Self, or Occident, versus the Other, or Orient. Indeed, Betty Mahmoody and Zana Muhsen in their writings demonstrate the Westerners' sense of superiority and dominance over the Orient. In regard to Edward Said's theory of Orientalism, it is crucial to show the binary opposition between the Westerners and Easterners in both works.

In his book *Orientalism* (1978), Edward Said explains that there has been a great deal of debate on how the West portrays the East. Said draws attention to a tendency in Western discourse to characterize the Orient and its people as underdeveloped and inferior in comparison to the developed West. This has supported the continuation of Western domination. According to Said, it is believed that individuals in the West are educated, civilized and active whereas those of the East are uncultured and passive. The binary

opposition between 'other' and 'self' can be translated to the 'us' versus 'them', the 'West' versus the 'East', 'center' versus 'margin' and 'rational West' versus 'irrational East.'¹

The term "Orient" is used by Said to 'designate a system of representation structured by political forces that brought the Orient into Western learning, Western consciousness and later Western empire. It relates the inferior, the alien (Other) to the Orient (East).'² The Westerners establish such assumptions and beliefs to dominate and govern the Eastern and argue that they are in need of civilization and have to be represented. This is shown when Said opens his book with a quote by Karl Marx saying : 'they can not represent themselves, they must be represented. As a result, it is a western career to represent them.'³ The above quote explains that Easterners or the Orientals depend on the westerners as they are incapable of representing themselves and in need to be represented by the westerners since they lack civilization and knowledge. In other words, since the Easterners are believed to be far from being a developed community, Westerners consider it their duty to represent them.

Not Without My Daughter (1987) written by Betty Mahmoody is a sort of misrepresentation of the Oriental world. The novel is based on the true story of an American woman named Betty Mahmoody who is imprisoned by her husband in Iran. There, the protagonist encounters and lives with native people. Since their meeting, she has distorted the Orientals and associated them with a variety of stereotypes, notably barbarism, cruelty and inferiority.⁴ The novel also depicts the pain that women experience when they marry someone who is not of their religion or country. The novel demonstrates how religion transforms her husband from a loving partner to a violent person. In this regard, Betty criticizes the Iranians saying : 'Why I am wearing this stupid scarf ? I wondered. My hair was matted to my scalp. Perspiring profusely, I thought: I must smell like the rest of them by now.'⁵

From this quotation, we notice how Betty portrays the East or Eastern people as being undeveloped, primitive, smelly and dirty. She minimizes the Easterners and favors Westerners. That is to say, she creates a binary opposition and contradiction like "civilized/uncivilized," "Occident/Orient," and "self/Other." Her work stresses the contrast between the sophisticated Western people and the barbaric and primitive Iranians.

In addition, Edward Said explains that the Orient is viewed 'as irrational, deprived (fallen), childlike, different. While, the European is rational virtuous, nature, normal.'⁶ The quotation cited above demonstrates how the West portrays the East as being undeveloped, unsophisticated contrary to Westerners who are civilized and rational. Betty Mahmoody has written the story of her experience, and illustrated the dichotomy of the self versus the Other through the characters. For instance, Betty represents the self, while her Iranian husband Moody is represented as the other. Edward Said said : 'the Europeans divided the world into two parts, the East and the West or the Occident and the Orient or the civilized or the uncivilized, this was an artificial boundary and it was on the basis of the concept of them and us or theirs and ours.'⁷ That is to say, the Westerners portray themselves as being civilized and the Orient as being uncivilized and savages. He further states that by creating the Other and the Self, the Occident now has the power to define, describe, and depict the Orient as they like.

In her novel, Betty Mahmoody explores the Western's portrayal and perception of the East. She clearly demonstrates the division of the Easterners and Westerners and cites numerous examples of the cultural, social, and political differences between the two communities. She says:

Iranians proved to be stubborn about assimilating western culture. Even those who lived in America for decades often remained isolated, associating mainly with other expatriate Iranians. They retained their Islamic faith and their Persian customs. I once met an Iranian woman who had lived in America for twenty years and did not know what a dish-towel was.⁸

From this quote, we deduce that the writer describes the Iranian people as being far from civilization as they refuse to adapt to a more developed, refined and civilized way of life. Even after living for years in the United States, they prefer to isolate themselves from the refined American culture that has welcomed them. They are a community that is too attached to its native customs and traditions.

Throughout the narration, Betty portrays America as a sophisticated, civilized and a nation which is clean and well organized, contrary to the Easterners who are uncivilized, unhygienic, barbaric and primitive. It is intentionally remarkable that Betty continues to misrepresent Iranian people by describing them as animals. She says :

the Iranians attacked the meal like a herd of untamed animals desperate for food.[...]Within seconds there was food everywhere. It was shoveled indiscriminately into chattering mouths that spilled and dribbled bits and pieces [...]The unappetizing scene was accompanied by a cacophony of Farsi.⁹

From the above quotation, we see clearly that the Iranian people are portrayed with a variety of negative comments aiming at devalorizing them. The quotation supports the obvious assumption that Iranians are portrayed as animals and behave in a strange way. Iranians are considered as inferior and shameless people who lack good hygienic practices. To add to these negative comments, the most harassing one is the way Ameh Bozorg is represented. The protagonist describes her saying: 'Her nose was so huge I could not believe it was real. It loomed beneath greenish-brown eyes glazed with tears. Her mouth was filled with crooked, stained teeth.'¹⁰ This shows that Betty not only considers Iranians as inferior and uncivilized but also physically ugly and different.

Moreover, Betty establishes an ontological distinction between herself, as an American, and Moody's Iranian relatives. She only communicates with her parents and those who master English and sees Moody's enormous family as primitives compared to the family she belongs to. For Betty, only those who speak English or dress in a Western style can be considered clean and civilized, while those who are not capable of speaking English are uncultured and savages. For example, Betty portrays Zia Hakim, Moody's cousin as an educated person possessing Western values. She likes him since he wears a suit and speaks English. On the other side, she is apprehensive of those who speak Farsi, especially Ameh Bozorg. The dominant self versus Other is shown since Betty treats those who speak English as civilized and literate contrary to those who are uncivilized and barbaric. She says 'Zia's reddish-brown hair was styled fashionably. He wore a neat, tailored suit and a laundered shirt, open at the neck. Best of all, he was clean.'¹¹ In addition, Betty shows how she wanted to get rid of Reza (Moody's cousin) when he was in America. She says:

Although his presence there [in America] was a burden and I had finally and uncharacteristically delivered an ultimatum to Moody in order to get Reza out of the house ,at this place and time he was a friendly face ,and one of the few who spoke English to me ¹².

That is to say, Reza who had once lived in America, was not someone Betty particularly likes, but now in Iran, and being able to speak English, he becomes familiar. From this, we can understand that Betty values those who master English and consider them sophisticated and more civilized.

In Said's theory of Orientalism, Westerners maintain a dichotomy to identify themselves as specifically in opposition to Easterners. The binary opposition encourages the use of stereotypes and makes it easier to integrate contradictory beliefs that associate Eastern indigenous people with qualities different from those of Westerners. Said argues: 'What is

commonly circulated by it is not “truth” but representation.’¹³ This means, by giving Eastern people a collective image, the West was able to recognize stereotypical ideas about the East. In this regard, Betty writes: ‘His mind was a blend of brilliance and dark confusion. Culturally he was a mixture of East and West; even he did not know which was the dominant influence in his life.’¹⁴ For Betty, even if Moody is unaware of his achievements, but the reality is that the professional success of her educated husband and being a doctor is related to his Western identity, whereas, his dark confusion, appears to be indicated by his Eastern origins.

Moody has been a subject of critic. In the first lines of the story, Betty portrays him as a dedicated doctor, devoted parent and a real American family man. She writes ‘no one knew Moody’s paradoxical personality as well as I. Moody was a loving husband and father, yet given to callous disregard for the needs and desires of his own family.’¹⁵ She adds ‘I had married the American Moody and the Iranian moody was unwelcome stranger to me.’¹⁶ From Betty’s words, we understand how Moody, the careful father and loving husband at the beginning of the relationship, turns into a foreign person due to the influence of his Iranian origins.

Betty continues describing the member of her family in-law as ‘the scruffy Iranian’¹⁷, and tells about the incident when she invited some of her in-laws into her new home. She describes how the house was well and clean before they arrived, but suddenly becomes messy. She says:

Dinner was soon over, and as the guests retired to the living room, Moody muttered to me, ‘Look where Mahtob sat. There is no one grain of rice away from her plate or on the floor. And look where the adults sat.’ I did not want to look. I knew I would be up late that night cleaning grains of rice and other scraps of food off the walls and out of the carpet.¹⁸

From the preceeded quote, Betty explains how a clean house quickly becomes covered with food scarps. She makes a comparison between the place where her daughter Mahtob eats, which is spotless without droppings and that of her in-laws which is messy. She also degrades them while saying that she will have to clean the ‘walls’ and ‘carpets’ as if they are animals and savages.

Additionally, Betty shows her confusion towards Iranian culture. For instance, when she and her daughter arrived to Iran, her in-laws welcomed her with one of their traditions which is slaughtering a sheep to their honor. Instead of being thankful for the way they welcomed her, she deems this tradition as being barbaric, and criticizes it by saying:

Mahtob shrieked . A pool of freesh ,brilliant red blood lay between us and the street. Mahtob hide her face .Moody calmly explained that the family had purchased a sheep from a street vendor, who had slaughtered it in our honor. This should have been done before our arrival ,so that we could have walked across the blood as we entered the house for the first time. Now we must enter again he said ,across the blood . ‘oh come on , you do it , i said .i don’t want to do this stupid thing! Moody said quietly but firmly ,you must do it, you have to show respect, the meat will be given to poor people ! I thought it was a crazy tradition, but I did not want to offend anyone so I agreed reluctantly .¹⁹

The quotation cited above demonstrates the stereotypes about the Orient made by Westerners. It is clear from Betty's negative comments about Iranian customs and traditions that she considers them to be primitives and uncivilized.

Similarly, *Vendues* (1992) by Zana Muhsen explores the same topic which is highlighting the differences between the West and the East, just like Betty Mahmoody does in her novel *Not Without My Daughter* (1987). Zana Muhsen focuses on the life she experiences as an Occidental in Yemen and describes the challenges she has confronted there, as well as her struggle to adapt to an Eastern way of life.

Muhsen tells her own story and that of her sister Nadia. The two English girls were persuaded by their father to go for a holiday to Yemen, their country of origin, where they discover they had been sold and married against their will. They have suffered all kinds of violence from their family in law. They have tried for years to escape from Yemen to join their family and gain their freedom. In this analysis, we will show how the self and the other are represented in *Vendues (1992)* from an orientalist perspective in relation to Edward Said's theory. According to Said, the study of the East by Westerners serves as a means of control and dominance rather than an attempt to learn and know them. He also said that Western understanding of the Eastern world is linked to colonization. He expressed that in the definition he gives to Orientalism. He says :

Orientalism is a Western style for dominating, restructuring and having authority over the orient... It is a reflexion of the relationship of imperial and intellectual domination of a West which feels it is superior to an inferior East.²⁰

From this quote, Said demonstrates that because the West celebrates the idea that one is superior to others, the Westerner has a sarcastic perspective on other people and acquires prejudices about other nations. In other words, Westerners made stereotypes about the way of life of Easterners in order to minimize and devalue them.

From the beginning of the novel, Zana reveals her disappointment with her trip to Yemen just like Betty Mahmoody. She expresses her fear of travelling alone to an unfamiliar nation. She wonders why she did not remain in Birmingham with her mother and younger sister, as it is asserted in her book ; ‘ Qu'est-ce que je fais-moi Zana Muhsen, en Syrie ? Pourquoi suis-je pas restée à Sparkbrook avec maman et Nadia ? .’²¹ The quotation indicates that Zana expresses regret over taking initiative and agreeing to her father's suggestion to travel to her native country. She has always been reluctant to go abroad by herself, and she questions what her father has already told her about Yemen.

Zana has expressed her sense of superiority towards women of her in-laws and denigrates them. She feels freer and more dependent compared to them. In addition, she thinks and views her English language and lifestyle as being more sophisticated than Yemeni ones which are uncivilized and undeveloped. She says : ‘ Les femmes ne fument pas ici, mais Abdul Khada ne me considere pas comme elles, je suis anglaise, il me traite comme son égale.’²² From Zana’s words, we can feel her sense of superiority as she considers a Western woman equals Eastern man which is a way of degrading men. In her speech, she always insists on her preference for anything related to Birmingham and England. For instance, in her story, Zana prefers Mackie, her beloved English man and belittles her Arab husband Abdullah. We can notice that Zana shows the binary opposition between the self (Mackie) and the other, (her husband). Her representation reflects perfectly the association of the East with Otherness. She writes ; ‘J’aime Mackie. Meme si nous n’en sommes qu’au stade de flirt, je suis sûre de mes sentiments. J’aime un Anglais de mon age, on ne va pas me mettre de force dans le lit d’un Arabe de quatorze ans, dont j’ignorais l’existence jusqu’à cette nuit.’²³ This means that Mackie, even if still only a lover, is better than her husband.

Again, Zana expresses her hatred for her Arab husband, when her son is sick and doctors inform her that he needs the blood of one of his relatives. Zana shows her disapproval saying : ‘Je ne voulais pas que le père sache, et s’en mêle, je ne voulais pas qu’on lui prenne son sang. Je le voit malade, son sang, pourri, mauvais. C’est plus fort que moi, je n’aurais pas supporté qu’on lui en donne une seule goutte.’²⁴ Zana’s hatred for her husband and the Arabs in general leads her to refuse to let Abdullah, her child’s father save the life of their child. She does not want her son to have the blood of an Arab. From the two citations, we notice that the writer creates the binary opposition between her beloved boyfriend Mackie, the American and her Arab husband, Abdullah.

Zana Muhsen in her writing portrays the West as the opposite version of the East, and the Orient as being savages ‘ [...] je reste prisonnière à jamais de ces sauvages’²⁵ and in lack of dignity and principes ‘ces gens sont fous et ignobles.’²⁶ We can see that, stereotypes and clichés about the Oriental world and its people have been developed in the West, Europe is seen as being essentially rational developed, human, superior, virtuous and normal.

Furthermore, Westerners have a terrible, racial attitude and stereotypes towards Easterns. In this regard, Zana refers to them with negative insults ‘Salaud d’Arabe’²⁷, and she also degrades the oriental image and reputation, for instance, she devalues Iranian doctors and mistrust their skills. She asserts : ‘Lorsque je suis malade moi-même, je résiste seule le plus longtemps possible. Aucune confiance dans leurs médecins et médicaments, leurs décoctions bizarres. J’ai souffert de la malaria et m’en suis sortie quasiment seule.’²⁸ From this quote, we can say that Zana still maintains the idea that the Yemeni are a backward and uncultivated population. Even the doctors of this country are not spared of this criticism. Likewise, the protagonist of the novel, treats her in-laws as liars. She declares : ‘le mensonge n’est qu’un système permanent dans cette famille. Même s’ils volaient un mouton, et que ce mouton soit sur leurs dos, ils continueraient à mentir, et à prétendre que le mouton n’existe pas.’²⁹ The quotation below shows to what extent Zana considers her in laws unreliable. In describing them, Zana says :

ils parlaient tous arabe autour de moi, ils mangeaient avec leurs doigts des aliments inconnus ; j’ai cru reconnaître du poulet bouillit, des galettes de pains chaudes, des fruits ; ils buvaient je ne sais quoi de blanc, un genre de lait caillé. Je pensais vaguement à maman, à Nadia, à l’Angleterre, au restaurant où l’on devait servir des frites et le poisson, la bière dans les bocks, à la musique, à mes copains... tout cela m’apparaissait si lointain déjà, j’étais vraiment perdu, toute seule sur le toit du monde arabe.³⁰

Just like Betty Mahmoody, Zana criticizes her in-laws' manners of eating and contrasts them with the refined manners of English people. She is also disgusted by the use of hands by her in-laws while eating. That is to say, Zana creates a binary opposition between her family living in England and Abdullah's relatives.

In addition to all these negative critics, Zana in her portrayal of her mother in-law says : 'Au moindre pretexte, et même sans prétexte du tout, c'est la guerre entre cette femme et moi. Elle transpire, elle est grosse, laide, avec ses petits yeux méchants elle veut me dominer.'³¹ Throughout her writing, Zana depicts and comments about her mother in-law with negative remarks. She affirms that she does not like her and they do not get along well with each other. She also says : 'Cette femme est mauvaise, jalouse et méchante de nature...'³² These words demonstrate Zana's despise of her mother in-law.

Additionally, Zana criticizes and refuses to wear the traditional Yemenite dress and describes it as a slave outfit ' Pour elles il s'agit de coutumes, d'habitudes, d'éducation. Elles n'ont jamais rien connu d'autre. Pour moi c'est de l'esclavage. Je ne mettrai pas cette tenue d'esclave.'³³ For her, women who dress traditionally and follow the customs and traditions of their society are slaves and illeterate who just follow and adhere the laws of their culture, because of being powerless and unable to speak up for themselves.

In addition, Westerners categorize all Orientals as being bad, a description that leads to the discrimination of Orientals and considering them as inferior, and backward contrasting them to the advanced and civilized Occidents who are handsome and human. The knowledge that the West has about the Eastern world is not based on facts or reality, but rather on previous portrayals that have depicted all Eastern societies as being alike and different from

Western ones. Zana also contributes to shape this perception of Easterners or the Orient. She writes about her mother-in-law saying :

Ward, l'épouse de Abdul Khada, me conduit vers ma chambre. C'est une femme sans beauté, de même âge que son mari. Le teint olivâtre, les cheveux châtain, à la fois ridée et bouffée, elle observe les gens de ses petits yeux malins, agitant ses mains usées, ou tintent des bracelets d'or. La profusion de bijoux qu'elle étale elle ne fait qu'accentuer l'impression que cette femme est vieille avant l'âge. Les boucles d'oreilles, or sur peau flasque, les bagues, or sur doigt déformés, sont ici le symbole de la mère de famille, la reconnaissance de l'homme pour l'esclavage consenti au foyer.³⁴

According to Zana, Easterners are associated with particular types of physical appearance. For instance, Ward is cited as a victim of prejudice based on appearance. Even if she wears gold jewelry but according to Zana she is ugly and considers her a woman without beauty.

Throughout our analysis of the two books written by Betty Mahmoudy and Zana Muhsen, we have noticed that the two works share characteristics in their portrayal of the self, the dominant West and the Other, the inferior Orient. Thus, in order to establish a relationship of dominance and raise the Westerners over the orientals, the two writers attribute to the Easterners a set of stereotypes and characterise them as uncivilized, primitives and savages. Edward Said clarifies the idea that the Easterners are viewed as an undeveloped population and in need to be civilized. He argues : 'Orientals were rarely seen or looked at; they were seen through, analyzed not as citizens, or even people, but as problems to be solved or confined.'³⁵

b- Orientalism at the Level of the Setting in Betty Mahmoudy's *Not Without My Daughter* and Zana Muhsen's *Vendues*

Westerners have traditionally thought of the Arab world as being exotic and enigmatic. Additionally, they have provided reasons behind Western's domination of the Orient. They depict the East as a continent that lacks historical, social, and geographical

background. Therefore, Edward Said in his work *Orientalism* (1978) provides the differences between the West and the East saying that ‘Orientalism reinforced, and was reinforced by the certain knowledge that Europe or the West literary commanded the vastly greater part of the earth’s surface’³⁶ which means that, the Westernern zone is safe and secure, whereas the Orient is foreign, strange and insecure.

Said views the East and the West in two different directions, represented and defined differently, associating progress and light with the West, and confining the East to silence, subjection and clichés. Said in his theory argues that Orientalism makes it possible to look at other people in a completely inferior way, to bring the light of civilization to the "uncivilized" East. In this regard he claims:

Chateaubriand puts the whole idea in the romanticred emptive terms of a Christian mission to revive a dead world, to quicken its sense of its own potential, one which only a European can discern underneath a lifeless and degenerate surface.³⁷

Edward Said foregrounds the difference between the West and the East, describing the latter as primitive, uncivilized and contrasting it to the advanced and civilized West. In other words, Edward Said describes the East as being a dead zone and degraded region in need of the West to be civilized and revived.

According to Said, Westerners assumed that non-westerners are backward and in need of civilisation. The West is forging its own superiority in opposition to the Orient’s inferiority. In order to maintain their sense of superiority, they attribute the ‘Other’ with features that are inferior. The East, in terms of the differentiation, is the inferior region that needs to be conquered, while the West is only a mirror image of these contrasting features.³⁸

Throughout *Not Without My Daughter* (1987), Betty utilizes the sociopolitical ties between the two nations as well as the environment of Iran as a justification for her narrative and portrayal of Iran. From the first lines of her story, Betty has doubts and negative ideas about her travel to Iran due to the deteriorating diplomatic relationships between Iran and the United States of America. Iran is not exactly the ideal travel destination for her at the time. She explains: ‘what was an American woman doing flying into a country that had the most openly hostile attitude toward Americans of any nation in the world? why was I bringing my daughter to a land that was embroiled in a bitter war with Iraq?’³⁹ The above quotation highlights the tension between the West and the East, and Betty’s regret over traveling before even arriving to Iran. She also discloses her concern about traveling to Iran since she believes it to be unsafe for her daughter.

Iran is described as the ‘Other’, while USA is most of the time glorified. A closer reading of the story reveals a great deal of criticism of the Other (Iran) and compliments of the self (the USA). She says ‘He found a world far different from his childhood, one that offered affluence, culture and basic human dignity that surpassed anything available in Iranian society.’⁴⁰ From this description of her husband's new life in the USA , we can say that Betty is undoubtedly quite adept at contrasting the USA and Iran, and on several occasions, she glorifies the USA, its culture, and its people. She incites Iranians for cultural abandon and assimilation into the superior American way of life.

Due to the Orientals’s lifestyle and lack of civilization, Easterners are viewed by Westerners as barbarians. It is important to know that geography plays an important role in dividing the world. This division separates the world into two parts : the first is inhabited by Westerners and is considered to be the developed and civilized area, while the other part is considered to be backward and is inhabited by Orientals. In this regard, Betty asserts : ‘He

would realize that his professional future was in America not in a backward nation that had yet to learn the lessons of basic hygiene and social justice. He would change his mind.⁴¹ That is to say, Betty shows the difference between the two nations and expresses her preference to America over Iran. She minimizes the Eastern area by describing it as a backward land in lack of basic needs of life.

Additionally, Betty Mahmoody describes her husband Moody as a loving husband and attentive father in America. However, while in Iran, he proves to be the total opposite as he becomes cruel, violent and threatening. We may infer that environment impacts on a person's psychology and plays a major role in shaping his personality. Thus, while America has a positive impact on Moody, Iran on the other hand has a negative one on him.

Further, the subject of hygiene is common in the descriptions of Betty. She writes : 'Mahtob headed immediately for the bathroom, ready to wash Iran off her body forevermore.'⁴² From this quotation, one can say that in Betty's writing, filthiness is associated with Iran. She adds 'As we entered the airport terminal, stepping into a large reception room, we were struck quickly by another disagreeable sensation- the overpowering stench of body odor, exacerbated by the heat.'⁴³ This citation affirms that from the beginning, Betty claims that Tehran's air smells like sweat . In her description, Betty gives a bad image of Iran by describing this country as lacking hygiene and cleanliness as insects and rats are part of their daily life.

Betty commented as well on the kitchen of Ameh Bozorg, as being a dirty place and unfit to cook in. She has even seen bugs in the rice and notices unclean cooking methods. The protagonist claims 'Every time you go to the kitchen, somebody is eating over the stove and the food is dribbling back into the pot. They serve tea and they don't wash the cups and there are bugs in the food.'⁴⁴ From Betty's words, we can see her critic of practices of the Eastern land as being considerably distinct from those of her country. In other words , the writer of the story perceives Easterners as awful and horrible due to their way of life and

behaviour.

According to Betty, Iran is a ‘bizarre land’⁴⁵ in which she could expect almost anything to happen. In this regard, Betty adds ‘How could any American woman – or anyone – choose Iran over America? I wanted to shake Ellen by the shoulders and scream: Why?!’⁴⁶ In this discussion between Betty and Ellen; an American compatriot who is also retained by her Oriental husband but then decided to stay and live in Iran, Betty frenetically asks her why she made that decision and how it is possible that she chooses Iran over America.

In similar ways, Zana Muhsen has dealt with the same issues as Betty Mahmoody in depicting the oriental setting in relation to Edward Said’s theory. According to Said: ‘The Orient and Orientals are considered by Orientalism as an “object” of study, stamped with an otherness.’⁴⁷ According to many historians, the West views the East as an adversary attempting to separate it self from the barbarous other and establish its own noble status. Thus, the East is considered as a land of barbarism and savagery. The Oriental setting is used by the European writers to show the superiority of the West, by portraying it as a desolate and primitive environment.

Through this Western understanding of the Orient, Zana Muhsen exposes the reality of the primitive Oriental world by presenting the way of living and practices of those provincial regions. She writes :

Ward est autoritaire, haineuse, mais je dois bien reconnaître que comme toutes les femmes d’ici, elle est forte. Même vieille, les femmes continuent à travailler dans les champs, dans les maisons, comme des bêtes de somme. Ward voudrait me forcer à travailler autant qu’elle a travaillé et travaille encore.⁴⁸

Through the quote, Zana shows that to survive in Iran, women have to work hard inside as well as outside their homes to get food and their daily needs.

Zana devalues the East and portrays it as a barbarian and savage region. She shows this saying : ‘ Nous vivons à Hockail dans un état de sauvagerie moyenâgeuse et d’esclavage toute aussi moyenâgeux.’⁴⁹ In the same context, Zana states : ‘ Ce pays ne m’interesse pas, ce n’est qu’une prison et les prisons ont toutes la meme couleurs. Le temps n’existe plus.’⁵⁰ The above citations demonstrate the extent to which the East is regarded as backward. She compares life in Iran to the primitive one of the middle ages in which the notion of time did not exist. She adds ‘Ce pays est une prison a lui tout seul pour une étrangère.’⁵¹ The quotation explores the concept of western perspectives and ideas about the Orient, suggesting that the Orient is portrayed as a region of repression. Hence, Zana's description of Yemen combines the primitive representation of Yemen and the East in general. She assumes that there is no civilization in the region. She further adds :

Ce qui ce passait alors dans ma tete est difficile a préciser. Il me fallait vivre dans l’irréel, ce village accrochée a la montagne, cette maison accrochée au rocher, ce desert autour, ces gens, leurs actes, tous cela faisait partie d’un mauvais reve. Rien n’était vrai.⁵²

From this quote, Zana explains how difficult it is to adapt to the Eastern way of life. She claims that the East is a region that still practices traditional ways and that the customs and traditions differ from those she is accustomed to in Bermingham. This is shown when Zana was looking for blood for her son at the hospital but could not find. She says ‘ En Angleterre, dans les hopitaux, on trouve du sang sur place, mais au Yemen, il ya rien de tel. ’⁵³ That means she is unable to incorporate and integrate their culture and way of life since they are different from her home country.

In addition, Zana believes that the Orient is associated with savagery, unsafety and harmful. As she claims in her book ‘La paix, mais ils sont tous armés de fusils, et ne cessent de tripoter la gâchette, comme s’ils etaient prêts a tirer. La plupart des hommes machonnent

du qat, la drogue locale. Yeux noirs, moustaches, fusils, ils sont tous sauf rassurant.’⁵⁴ A variety of negative traits determine Zana's perception of the East. Her work makes it clear that geography is important in defining oneself and creating an image through a number of qualities. She affirms that the West still believes in the superiority of their land over the East.

Said maintains that one of Orientalism's main aspects is ‘the absolute and systematic difference between the West, which is rational, developed, humane, superior, and the Orient, which is aberrant, underdeveloped, inferior.’⁵⁵ That means in contrast to the exotic Other, who is marked by its savagery and backwardness, the self on its side is presented as ordinary and sophisticated. Due to these stereotypes, the West declares its superiority over the weaker East and proclaims its dominance over it. The writer discusses the distinction of behaviour between Occident/Orient, the Self/the Other, Us/them, and Civilized/Uncivilized. Said explains that the difference is present in order for the West to establish its own sense of power over underdeveloped non-Westerner.

The West uses a dichotomy to define itself as opposed to the East, which serves to describe the Other as being inferior. Zana classifies the East as inferior in order to create an idealized version of the West as superior, and connect the East with barbarism and weakness that requires assistance. Zana writes ‘Ce desert, ces cabanes de terre, ces maison de pierres en ruines. Par moment, j’avais l’impression de passer derriere un bombardement. Un véritable cauchemar, cette region.’⁵⁶ Hence, the writer depicts the Orient as inferior and constructs a bad image about the region in which she lives. For her the later is similar to a nightmare with old houses, earth huts which represents to her a terrible place.

When describing Bermingham, Zana swings between calling it the wonderful city and her adoptive homeland ‘ville merveilleuse’⁵⁷ while denigrating Yemen by describing it as being dark, filthy, and black. That is to say, as an Occidental author, Zana denigrates the

image of the Orient in order to glorify the superiority of the West. Thus, Zana depicts the Oriental land as a dark place, a location that is unhygienic and lacking civilization and the capacity for a stable and comfortable living, 'Rien dans ma vie jusqu'à présent ne m'a préparée à vivre ca. Cette horreur dans ce pays effrayant.'⁵⁸ She struggles to survive there since she had grown accustomed to the comfortable life in England.

Another time, Yemen is criticised by Ahmed, Zana's older brother, who is abandoned by his father since he was a child. He wants to leave Yemen and move to Birmingham to live a stable and happy life. As it is mentioned in the story ' Demande à maman si elle peut m'aider à partir moi aussi. Je ne veux plus rester au Yémen. Si je pouvais vivre en Angleterre... et travailler là-bas ; je serai moins malheureux.'⁵⁹ One can say that, Ahmed sees England as a developed country with better life conditions and stability in comparison to Yemen.

Misrepresentations are used by Zana Muhsen in her writing to highlight the misery of her native country and justify its barbarious practices and primitive ways. Her novel embodies these preconceptions, which are still prevalent. Barbarism is the stereotype that frequently appears in Zana's writings. Discussing barbarism, or more specifically, savagery, Zana's texts recall to mind her portrayal of the East as being unconcerned with time. Zana writes ' je me demande si elle[Nadia] tient le coup. Je l'espère. Physiquement elle a besoin d'être soignée, elle ne le sera pas à Ashube, ni dans un autre village. Moralement, ils [Yemenits] ont dû l'abattre.'⁶⁰ From this citation, we can deduce that Zana still holds the idea that Yemen is a country far from civilization and lacks development, especially in the field of health. She further adds 'Qui va me couper le cordon ? J'accouche comme un animal ici, comme une vache qui mets bas dans l'étable. Mais les vaches savent se débrouilleseules. Moi je suis à la merci de cette mauvaise femme, et de sa lame rasoir.'⁶¹

The citation above demonstrates how Zana gives birth in a brutal manner. She also describes the method and inadequate tools employed in her surgery. Hence, she supports the notion that Yemen is far from civilization and lacks the lowest conditions of life. She describes the Arab world as a strange and enigmatic region. In other words, the Arab world is frequently portrayed as a land of oppression and cruelty. She says ‘ J’ignore encore sur quel sommet, à quelle attitude de cette planète se cache la vraie liberté des femmes. Pas sur les montagnes du Yémen en tous cas.’⁶² This quotation explores a notion of Western perspectives and ideas about the Orient, which implies that the Orient is portrayed as a region of repression.

To sum up this chapter, it is crucial to note that both writers Betty Mahmoudy and Zana Muhsen use characters and the Oriental setting to depict the binary opposition between the Self and the Other. Firstly, Betty paints a distorted and unfavorable picture of the Iranians and Iran. Her statements, way of thinking, and actions toward the native people of Iran all reflect this. Secondly, Zana Muhsen claims that Easterners and Yemen cannot accomplish development and are removed from modern society. As a result, both writers use the East and Easterners as a contrast to the West to minimize the Orient. According to Said ‘ Europeans depict Oriental cultures not as they are but as, for the benefit of the receiver, ought to be’⁶³. This indicates that all non-European cultures are described by Europeans in a way that serves their ideological goals. For Said, the European colonizers used to distort the colonized, his culture, and religion to support their imperialist ideologies. He also contends that the degradation of the colonized and his culture is a method of dominance and control. Edward Said adds :

the East is exoticised, mystified, and represented as a savage seductive, carrying all the dark traits of humanity, such as decadence, cruelty and sexual desire as opposed to the west being portrayed as civilized, rational, and reasonable .⁶⁴

This passage provides the binary oppositions that exists between the occidents (the self) seen as noble, civilized, educated people with rational thinking, and the Orientals portrayed as the "Other" and associated with savagery, backwardness, and irrational thoughts.

Endnotes

¹ Edward W Said, *Orientalism* (London: Penguin, 2003), 32.

² Said, *Orientalism*, 203.

³ Ibid, xi.

⁴ Maja, Mugerle, Orientalism in Not Without My Daughter by Betty Mahmoody, accessed on 06 January 2023. <https://www.researchgate.net/publication/276845956>

⁵ Betty Mahmoody, *Not Without My Daughter* (New York: St.Martin's Press, 1987), 10.

⁶ Said, *Orientalism*, 40.

⁷ Ibid, 41.

⁸ Mahmoody, *Not Without My Daughter*, 66.

⁹ Ibid, 17.

¹⁰ Ibid, 11.

¹¹ Ibid, 8.

¹² Ibid, 27.

¹³ Said, *Orientalism*, 36.

¹⁴ Mahmoody, *Not Without My Daughter*, 5.

¹⁵ Ibid, 5.

¹⁶ Ibid, 18.

¹⁷ Ibid, 42.

¹⁸ Ibid, 304.

¹⁹ Ibid, 15.

²⁰ Said, *Orientalism*, 3.

²¹ Zana Muhsen, *Vendues* (UK: Little Brown, 1992), 12.

²² Ibid, 36.

²³ Ibid, 45.

²⁴ Ibid, 276.

²⁵ Ibid, 52.

²⁶ Ibid, 89.

²⁷ Ibid, 86.

²⁸ Ibid, 277.

²⁹ Ibid, 176.

³⁰ Ibid, 20.

³¹ Ibid, 112.

³² Ibid, 65.

³³ Ibid, 30.

³⁴ Ibid, 46.

³⁵ Said, *Orientalism*, 78.

³⁶ Ibid, 41.

³⁷ Ibid, 43.

³⁸ Pennie Aurelia, Edward Said on Colonialism and ‘Othering’. Accessed on 23 January 2023.

<https://www.slideserve.com/pennie/edward-said-on-colonialism-and-othering>

³⁹ Mahmoody, *Not Without My Daughter*, 4.

⁴⁰ Ibid, 68.

⁴¹ Ibid, 57.

⁴² Ibid, 412.

⁴³ Ibid, 12.

⁴⁴ Ibid, 107.

⁴⁵ Ibid, 435.

⁴⁶ Ibid, 153.

⁴⁷ Said, *Orientalism*, 21.

⁴⁸ Muhsen, *Vendues*, 144.

⁴⁹ Ibid, 143.

⁵⁰ Ibid, 84

⁵¹ Ibid, 87.

⁵² Ibid, 51.

⁵³ 4Ibid, 275.

⁵⁴ Ibid, 23.

⁵⁵ Said, *Orientalism*, 5.

⁵⁶ Muhsen *Vendues*, 185.

⁵⁷ *Ibid*, 107.

⁵⁸ *Ibid*, 73.

⁵⁹ *Ibid*, 266.

⁶⁰ *Ibid*, 30.

⁶¹ *Ibid*, 196.

⁶² *Ibid*, 299.

⁶³ Said, *Orientalism*, 136.

⁶⁴ *Ibid*, 71.

Chapter Two: The portrayal of women in Betty Mahmoody's *Not Without My Daughter* (1987) and Zana Muhsen's *Vendues* (1992)

In this chapter, we will look at how male dominance over female characters and how women are considered inferior in both *Not Without My Daughter* written by Betty Mahmoody (1987) and *Vendues* (1992) by Zana Muhsen. Then, we will look at how religion is used by men to promote the idea that women are under men's command and control. Mohanty's theory *Under Western Eyes: Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourses* (1986) will be used to demonstrate how Arab women are treated as inferior to men and are under their authority.

a- Males' Domination and Females' Oppression in Betty Mahmoody's *Not Without My Daughter* (1987) and Zana Muhsen's *Vendues* (1992)

Feminism is a movement that started in the nineteenth century. It emerged as a response to gender discrimination occurring in patriarchal societies to fight against the tyranny of men. The Indian feminist author Chandra Talpad Mohanty is one of the most significant theorist in feminism. In her article *Under Western Eyes :Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourses* (1986), she argues:

This universality of gender oppression is problematic, based as it is on the assumption that the categories of race and class have to be invisible for gender to be visible. Claiming universality of gender oppression is not the same as arguing for the universal rights of women based on the particularities of our experiences.¹

From the above citation, one can say that most Western feminists ignore the various ways in which women identify themselves. They investigate gender inequality and women's issues from a global perspective while ignoring their culture, class, and ethnicity.

Inequality between the sexes has affected women for a long time. They are not independent and are kept in submissive roles either to their fathers or their husbands once married. Their primary duty was to raise their children at home and care for their husbands. For Western feminists, Eastern women's life is based on men; they become wives and mothers at an early age. They frequently live with family members and have to work and support themselves. Betty Mahmoody in her book *Not Without My Daughter* portrays Iran as a patriarchal society with oppressive laws that harm women. She says ' He (Moody) had seen for himself how Iranian women were slaves to their husbands, how the religion as well as their government coerced them at every turn, the practice exemplified by their haughty insistence upon an antiquated and even unhealthy dress code.'² That is to say, women are like slaves since they have to submit to patriarchal and religious laws. Betty shows how women are frequently repressed and hold under male authority by the use of power and intimidation.

Betty's novel *Not Without My Daughter (1987)* brings us to a setting where women are viewed as inferior to men and completely reliant on them. She encounters a reality in Iran where she depends only on her spouse. Patriarchy in the Iranian society affects the protagonist and other female characters as well. Ellen, an American who married an Iranian man is one example. Betty says that 'Ellen quit high school during her senior to marry Hormoz Rafeie, and by doing so, set up her life as a dependent spouse.'³ After getting married with an Iranian man, Ellen becomes submissive and obedient to the patriarchal orders of her husband. By doing so, she lost her independence.

The Iranian Constitution gives men an enormous amount of authority, which greatly reduces women's value. It is the man who is in charge of his family. Betty states 'And I tried to deal with the realization that I was married a madman and trapped in a country where the laws decreed that he was my absolute master.'⁴ That is to say, men have always oppressed

and marginalised women. In other words, women in Iran struggle to fulfil the expectations of both society and their spouses.

In addition, Iranian women are subjected to sexual harassment from foreign men. For example, Betty is victimized by a taxi driver who harasses her and touches her thighs when she is in his taxi back home. She claims :

After a morning of shopping, we hailed an orange taxi to take us home, and the four of us piled into the front seat. I was in the middle with Mahtob on my lap. The driver sped off, and when he maneuvered the floor shift, I felt his hand brush my leg. At first I thought it was an accident, but as we moved through traffic his hand slid higher, pressing against my thigh.⁵

From the above quote, we can say that the taxi driver disempowers Betty because of being foreign but also mainly of being a woman. Since Betty is a foreign woman in Iran, the taxi driver allows himself to take the slightest opportunity to sexually harass and touch her in the thighs. Harassing women and intimidating them is seen as usual, and foreign women encounter this in their daily life. In this regard, Betty adds:

- What is the matter ? Essey said. ‘‘ This is not where we are going.’’
- ‘‘ I know,’’ I said. My whole body trembled. I sent the girls over to look into a store window, then I told Essey what had occurred.’’
- ‘‘I have heard about that,’’ she said. ‘It has never happened to me. I think they do that to foreign women.’’⁶

After leaving the taxi driver’s car Betty is scared and recounts what happened to Essey. The latter takes this incident as something normal and she says that taxi drivers behave in this way because they know these women are foreigners.

Moreover, Iranian women must obey their husbands, who treat them like slaves. The numerous acts of aggression and restrictions placed on women serve to show male dominance and the exploitation of weak women. It is the man who governs the woman even during his absence. Betty shows this when Mr Azhar (a principal of school where Mahtob studies) refuses to let her use the phone following Moody’s orders who prohibits and prevents them

from letting his wife use the phone or leave the school. He tells Betty ‘We promised your husband that we would never let you leave the building or use the phone.’⁷ That is to say, in Moody’s society, the man is the ruler and the one in charge who governs. Every one must obey his orders even in his absence. Again, when Moody is away, Reza, Moody's nephew, replaces his uncle and continues to watch and give commands to the entire family, being the master and the ruler. Betty says :

Whenever Moody was away from the house, Reza assumed the role of lord and master, attempting to dictate orders to me and to the children, demanding our unquestioning obedience as his rightful due. Shortly after his arrival I had some women friends over for tea. Reza sat silently in the room with us, obviously taking mental notes so that he could report to Moody if we said anything he found disrespectful. The moment my guests left, he ordered me to clean up the dishes.⁸

The above quotation reveals Reza’s control as he replaces Moody in his absence and takes the place of the ruler of the house. He keeps an eye on Betty and instructs her to wash the dishes as if it is her obligation as a woman. For Reza, women must be under the control of men. In other words, Betty must not remain unattended when her husband is absent.

From *Not Without My Daughter (1987)*, it is noticeable that Betty endures significant social struggles. She considers her husband as the major cause of her misery and pain. Even if Betty tries to free herself from patriarchal dominance, in reality she is still under the dominance of her husband and suffers just like other Iranian women. She wants to escape Iran and find the freedom that is unavailable in the Arab society.

Betty is exhausted from the aggressions she encounters repeatedly from her husband and the treatment she receives from her in-laws, who have isolated and shown her no consideration or respect the fact that makes her feel unwelcomed. In this sense, Betty argues :

In the first week of imprisonment only Essey spoke kindly to me. One day while she and Reza were visiting, Essey, managed to get me aside for a moment. " I'm really sorry", she said. " I like you, but they told us to stay away from you. We are not allowed to sit with you or talk to you. I feel bad for what you are going through, but I can not afford to get into trouble with the whole family."⁹

From the above quote, we can say that Betty is a victim, trapped by her husband in a strange family where her in-laws isolate her. Besides, she is treated badly by her sister-in-law who forbids the whole family from talking to her. Betty is treated as a stranger. Her sister in-law made her feel unwelcomed.

Throughout the narrative Betty reports how men hit women to make them obedient to demonstrate their dominance. Violence becomes a legal punishment for any mistake women commit. This is shown most often in the novel. In the above quote, Betty demonstrates how women in the Eastern countries are victims of physical violence :

He pushed my shoulders, slamming me into the bed. His screams took on a tone of insolence, almost laughter, as though he were the gloating victor in an extended, undeclared war. " You are here for the rest of your life. Do you understand ? You are not leaving Iran. You are here until you die."¹⁰

The above citation illustrates Moody's authority who imposes and forces his wife to accept his constraints. His supermacy limits Betty's freedom. For him, Betty should only accept this uncontested reality. As a result of gender inequality that positions a man at the highest level, Betty is compelled to accept and submit to Moody's violence and domination.

Furthermore, Moody's violence and punishment of Betty includes slaps, kicks, and other actions that may cause physical harm. In the novel, Betty often experiences physical violence by her husband. She asserts 'With Mahtob sobbing in the corner and me at his mercy, he became more methodical, punishing me in the arm, pulling at my hair, slapping me in the face, cursing all the time. Repeatedly, he screamed, I'm going to kill you ! I'm going to kill you !'¹¹

Moody's words present a terrible reality and point out the enormous brutality and savagery Betty undergoes under Moody's hands. He takes Betty's fragility and weakness to strengthen his authority in a society where the law gives him all the rights. Betty explains how Iranian women view men's violence against women while saying :

Nasserine [Moody's cousin] sat down on the bed and slipped her arm around my shoulders. "Do not worry about it", she said. "It is okay". "It's ok?" I said incredulously. "It's okay for him to hit me like this? And it's okay for him to say he is going to kill me?"

"He is not going to kill you, Nasserine said.

"He says he is. Why didn't you help me? Why didn't you do something?"

[...] "We cannot go against Daheejon," Nasserine repeated, "but it is okay. All men are like this."

"No," I replied sharply. "All men are not like this."

"Yes," she assured me solemnly. "Mammal does the same thing to me. Reza does the same thing to Essey. All men are like this."¹²

From the discussion above we deduce that in Iran, violence committed by men against women is seen as normal and becomes part of the daily life. Despite abusing Betty in front of all the members of the family, none of them intervenes as they think the husband has absolute power over his wife.

In Iran, Betty faces a new life she is not accustomed to in America. All over her life, she is secured and privileged by her country, where she is not subjected to male's restrictions. Nevertheless, now she finds herself obliged to do everything Moody orders her. She argues :

Moody considered my explanation for a moment, and then rejected it. He knew that I have a keen sense of direction. His eyes glaring with a righteous menace of a muslim man crossed by woman, he grapped me, one hand, digging into my arm, the other pulling at my hair. He drugged me in front of the family members who were lounging in the hole, about ten in all. "She is not allowed to leave this house!" he commanded. And to me he said, "if you try to leave this house again, I will kill you!"¹³

This incident portrays how Moody demonstrates his manhood and aggression and how he acts violently and severely in order to prove his masculinity and virility. He believes that his spouse must submit to his authority and that her place is only at home.

The devaluation of women is therefore a result of the patriarchal society that controls Iran. The Iranian culture views women as a property that is owned by their husbands. Betty says 'my own husband! As far as everyone was concerned, as Moody's wife I was his chattel. He could do with me as he wished.'¹⁴ In this environment where Betty lives, she is not only perceived as an inferior being but as an object, a bitter reality that she must accept.

In addition to physical violence, psychological violence is presented in the novel. Moody uses intimidation, threats, and isolates Betty from her friends and family as a means of punishing and torturing her psychologically. In her writings, Betty shows how Moody devalues, and threatens her. She illustrates how difficult it is for her to resist with Moody's harsh comments and treatment. He frequently expresses his frustration over Betty. His threats serve as a psychological abuse that makes Betty and her daughter fearful and anxious. She claims 'With Mahtob watching, unable to comprehend the meaning of this dark change in her father demeanor.'¹⁵ Betty is now anxious and afraid due to Moody's psychological abuse and his changeable attitude and emotions.

Betty is psychologically damaged because of her isolated lifestyle in the family and also because of being subject to Moody's restrictions, abuse, and threats. These constraints in fact force her to obey her husband's orders. She says 'I felt my will weakening. Soon, I realized, I would simply accept my plight and drift away from my family and my homeland forever.'¹⁶ From the preceding citation, we can understand that Betty is about to accept her fate and continue her life in Iran. She argues that Moody's laws have tortured and made her weak and she is ready to surrender to the laws of her husband. In this regard, the protagonist

says 'I realize now that these women are trapped as surely as I am. Subject to the rules of the world of men against their will, but obedient.'¹⁷

Like Betty, Zana Muhsen too, in her novel *Vendues* (1992) demonstrates how she and her sister suffer from being taken away from their family and society after being sold into marriage. Being a daughter in a patriarchal society is pretty difficult since fathers have unlimited control over their daughters. Girls are considered to be their fathers' property and are not allowed to defy their rules. From the beginning of the novel, Zana demonstrates her father's dominance over the household and how both she and her sister suffer from the governance of their father. She claims that her father constantly orders her ' Ne rentrez pas tard ! Faites attention aux garçons ! Ne parlez pas aux inconnus dans la rue! Il est toujours sévère et pointilleux sur l'éducation de ses filles.'¹⁸ She is supposed to blindly obey and submit to the authority of her father and put up with being governed since she is from a patriarchal society. She adds :

Alors que d'habitude, dès que je veux sortir pour aller retrouver mon amie Lynette par exemple, ou simplement m'évader de la maison, il suspecte toujours quelque chose d'anormal. J'ai donc pris le parti de me sauver sans rien dire la plupart du temps, en comptant sur maman pour la suite. S'il savait que je fume, s'il savait que j'ai un flirt... Quelle histoire ! je prendrais sûrement une claque, et une engueulade, à propos des mœurs dissolus de la jeunesse anglaise. Parfois je le déteste. J'ai 15 ans, j'en aurai 16 ans cet été, et j'aimerais un peu plus de liberté, Nadia aussi. Les filles de notre âge à Birmingham sont bien plus libres avec leurs parents.¹⁹

From this passage, one can understand that although Muthanna Muhsen has spent half of his life in England, he is still thinking that a woman should be under the authority of a man. For him, a woman must blindly obey the laws of her father and has no choice to do what she wants.

In her article *Under Western Eyes* (1986), Mohanty argues that feminists scholars like Hosken assert :

Physical violence against women (rape, sexual assault, excision, infibulation...) is thus carried out with an astonishing consensus among men in the world. Here, women are defined consistently as the victim of male control- the sexually oppressed. Although it is true that the potential of male violence against women circumscribes and elucidates their social position to a certain extent, defining women as archetypal victims freezes them into object who defend themselves.²⁰

That is to say, physical violence against women is practised by men all over the world. Women are consistently defined in this text as being under male control and sexually oppressed.

In her writing, Zana shows the oppression she faces during her stay in Yemen. According to her, in Yemen, women's freedom is never fully attainable. Females are still seen as inferior to men and they are still limited by many obstacles. Yemenit men continue to believe that a woman's place is at home, taking care of her children and family. In other words, they should always submit to the power of man who prevent them from being autonomous. This is shown in Zana's story :

Etre une femme, ici, c'est être condamnée à vie. Celles que nous croisons, voilée, charriant des seaux d'eau, inlassablement, ou leur fagot de bois sec inlassablement, détournant les yeux de l'homme qui passe... inlassablement... faisant des enfants... cette vie ne peut être pour moi. Jamais je ne leur servirai d'esclave.²¹

That means that women of the Yemenit society are victims who suffer from dominance just because of being a woman in a patriarchal society. Men believe that because women are viewed as less valuable, they are made to sacrifice and serve men. In other words, Zana in her novel shows the extent to which women are exploited in Yemen. She says :

Lorsqu'une fille se marie dans la société yéménite, on attend d'elle qu'elle partage les charges de travail avec les autres femmes de la famille. Une fille de mon âge est censée décharger les plus vieilles. Comme tous les chefs de famille, Abdul Khada et Gowad nous ont achetées pour cela aussi. Ils marient leurs fils à des filles physiquement résistantes et en bonne santé, souvent plus âgées, dans le même but. Je m'en suis rendu compte en regardant un peu autour de moi dans le village. Dès que les fillettes savent marcher, elles transportent de l'eau sur leur tête, aident à la cuisine, ramassent le bois et soignent les bêtes.²²

That means that the patriarchal system encourages men to rate themselves as the dominant group. From the preceded quote, we understand that women in Yemen are exploited from an early age. Women who can work hard and serve their husbands are categorized as good ones, which is the reason behind looking for healthy and strong girls to marry. This practice is part of the patriarchal system in which women are considered as subordinate and should obey the man who is super ordinate.

Likewise, Zana is a victim of a forced marriage as she is sold as a property with a good price by her father who is supposed to be their defender and protector. This is demonstrated in the discussion between Zana and her father in law:

- Il faut que tu t'habitues.

- Mais à quoi ? Je ne veux pas m'habituer. Qu'est-ce que mon père a fait ? Dis-le-moi, je t'en supplie.

- Ton père t'a mariée. J'ai payé pour cela

- "" Payé ? cette homme a payée ? Moi ? Vendue ? c'est impossible. On ne vend pas les gens comme des objets. Mon père n'a pas pu faire ça, c'est mon père, un père ne vend pas sa fille !""

- C'est pas vrai.

- J'ai payé, je t'ai dit. 100 000 riais.²³

The above cited passage deals with the fact that Zana's father in law (Abdul Khada) has total control over the life of Zana as he payed for her. Thus, she is not free to make a decision

about her life. Apparently, Zana's father is against the education given to women in England, and thus decides to bring his daughters to Yemen to be educated. Zana affirms :

Il m'a vendue, il nous a vendues toutes les deux, milles livres chacune. Est-ce pensable, ce genre de chose en 1980 ? un père qui vend ses filles comme du bétail ? c'était donc cela les menaces qu'ils proférait : " Je vais vous apprendre à vous conduire comme des jeunes filles Arab bien élevées." " Vous avez besoin d'autorité." " on ne montre pas ses jambes" " l'éducation en Angleterre est pourrie".²⁴

The discussion above shows that Muthanna has control and influence over his daughter's life. He oppresses and forbids them from behaving and living like English women on the pretext that life and education in England are dangerous and threaten the respect of Arab women.

Abdul Khada is represented in the book as a harsh and violent man. In reality, he often tortures Zana. She claims ' Le défi ne sert à rien. La gifle m'atteint de plein fouet, violente sur la tempe, a m'en faire tombé.'²⁵ She endures torture, including beatings, rape, and abuse from Abdul Khada. Throughout the story, his [Abdul Khada] family does not appear to have any influence over his choices. He is the ruler, not only inside his family, but also in his entire village. This is frequently seen in the manner he gives commands which the entire family should obey. As Mohammed, the son of Abdul Khada, argues 'Je ne peux rien faire pour toi. Aucun homme ne peut désobeir son père.'²⁶ This suggests that Abdul Khada has complete control over them. Zana asserts:

Au mois d'Avril 1981, Abdul Khada prend soudain une décision et tout le monde obéit. Ils en a assez de Hays, il va partir travailler quelques temps à l'étranger. Il a vendu le restaurant et prévu notre retour à Hockail sans nous prévenir. Ward est heureuse, et moi aussi. Tout est si facile, lorsque l'homme décide. Il a voulu partir, et nous partons. Nous sommes ses objets.²⁷

From this quote, Zana reveals that Abdul Khada is a ruling man who oppresses his entire family and limits their desires in life. According to the Yemeni system, each family should have a head, and in Zana's family Abdul Khada is the leader who rules over them. In other

words, he is consistently depicted in the narrative as strong, powerful, and the only commander of his large family.

From the moment they set foot in Yemen, Zana and her sister are forced into slavery by their father-in-law in an illegal marriage. They have endured eight years of suffering, misery, misunderstanding, assault, humiliation, and constant offences. One of the terrible experiences Zana encounters is when Abdul Khada threatens to tie her to the bed if she refuses to surrender to his son and share a bed with him. Zana describes this incident in her conversation with Abdul Khada and Mohammed :

- Cette nuit tu dois dormir avec Abdullah.
 - Non, je ne le ferai pas.
 - Tu vas le faire, ou nous serons obligés de te forcer, on t'attachera sur le lit...
 - Je ne veux pas.
- C'est au tour de Mohammed de venir me faire la morale.
- Zana, tu dois coucher avec ton mari. Nous allons te forcer. Je regarde ces deux hommes forts, déterminés, dans l'encadrement de la porte. J'en ai aucune issue. Ils le feront, ils m'attacheront, comme ils le disent. Ils ne devaient pas s'attendre à une résistance de ce genre, chez une jeune fille. Ici les femmes obéissent aux hommes, et les hommes sont orgueilleux de leurs pouvoir. ²⁸

This citation demonstrates Abdul Khada's brutality. Every member of his family fears him since he is such a strong man. His influence and dominance are displayed over a powerless woman while forcing her to share a bed with his son.

In her daily life, Zana is still facing several types of violence by her father in law to oblige her submit to his orders. There are numerous ways of domestic violence used by Abdul Khada to dominate Zana such as beating, isolating, and belittling her. There are no specific laws to protect women in Yemen from violence, as Zana affirms when Abdul Khada forces her to carry water from the well located miles from their home. On her way, unfortunately,

Zana suddenly slips and the tank falls to the ground and she has to return around and fill the tank up again and Abdul Khada is frustrated by having to wait:

Furieux de mon silence, il s'empare brusquement de sa chaussure et me frappe en plein visage de toutes ses forces. La violence du coup me fait tomber en arrière, dégringoler des escaliers. Je suis à terre sans réaction et il est déjà penché sur moi, blanc de colère.²⁹

This indicates that Zana is suffering from the patriarchal system that forces her to carry out responsibilities she had not even learned about. In a society ruled by her father-in-law, she is viewed as inferior. In other words, we can say that Abdul Khada forces Zana to perform hard tasks and she becomes the victim of his physical violence.

In Yemen, Zana is also deprived of whatever privileges she would have in England and finds herself trapped in a world in which she has no control of her life. Zana must, therefore, be silent because in Yemen, a woman who does not conform to customs and traditions is beaten, as confirmed by Zana when she refuses to sleep with Abdullah, her husband :

Hier soir, je l'ai [Abdullah] repoussé violement. Un grand coup dans la poitrine l'a fait reculer comme le pantin maigre et faible qu'il est. Il est sorti pour se plaindre à son père, Abdul Khada a ouvert la porte, s'est dirigé vers moi et m'a giflé avec une telle violence que j'ai vu rouge. Tout était rouge dans ma tête. Le sang dans les yeux, le sang partout. J'aurais voulu le tuer.³⁰

From this citation, we can notice that, Abdul Khada is the one who holds the power. He maintains his position of dominance by engaging in actions that demonstrate his supremacy. He observes everything and imposes his rules on all family members, for instance, Zana, the wife of his son. He expects her to submit to him and thus frequently gives commands and considers her as an object.

Similarly to Betty Mahmoody, Zana Muhsen also endures psychological violence from her father-in-law who is really showing his power as the owner of Zana. As a first strategy to keep Zana and her sister Nadia in Yemen, and reassure their mother about her daughter's safety, he orders the two sisters to record a voice and lie about their condition in Yemen. In this regard, Zana writes :

- Il faut que tu donnes des nouvelles à ta mère... tu dois lui dire comment vous allez, toi et Nadia... Tu vas enregistrer une cassette.

- Une cassette ? ... D'accord. Je vais le faire ce soir dans ma chambre.

Nadia me regarde avec espoir.

- Non, ici, avec nous.

- [...]Tu dois dire que le Yemen est un pays magnifique. Que nous sommes en train de tuer le mouton pour une fête, tu dois dire que tu es heureuse. Nadia le dira aussi.

- J'en mourrais de rage et de frustration... maman va y croire. Va-t-elle deviner ? ... je ne peux pas m'empêcher de montrer mon désespoir. Ce que nous ressentons ne les intéresse pas.³¹

Because of that recording, Zana feels depressed as she is anxious that their mother will believe what they say and leave them in Yemen forever. This is a technique to affect their psychology and render them hopeless.

Abdul Khada considers Zana as a creature with no value that he can force to do what he wants. After forcing her to lie about her life's condition in Yemen, Abdul Khada again forces her to make confession recording that her father is a good man. Zana writes :

Il y'avait aussi la cassette qu'Abdul Khada m'avait forcé à enregistrer durant notre séjour là-bas. Il m'avait forcé à dire que papa était un homme bien et que nous étions beaucoup plus heureuses au Yemen qu'en Angleterre et à quel point c'était beau là-bas. Cela m'a presque brisé le cœur de faire la cassette, car je savais que cela pourrait mettre ma mère hors de la piste.³²

Again Abdul Khada's plan to convince Zana's mother about her children's conditions breaks Zana's and Nadia's hope to come back to England as they really hope their mother struggles to make them free from the terrible life in Yemen.

Again, Zana demonstrates that she is emotionally abused by her father in law when she writes about the incident where Abdul Khada takes the family photos she made in England and discards them. She says :

Un beau jour Abdul Khada arrive dans ma chambre et se met à fouiller mon sac.

- Qu'est-ce que tu fais ? qu'est-ce que tu cherches ?
- Ça
- Et il brandit les quelques photos de ma famille, de maman, de mes amies, que j'ai toujours avec moi. Le soir il m'arrive souvent de les regarder quand je suis seule. Je me précipite sur lui pour les lui arracher.
- Elles sont à moi, rends-les-moi !
- [...]Non ! C'est fini. Elles te rendent malheureuse. Tu ne dois avoir aucun souvenir de ton ancienne vie. Nous sommes ta famille maintenant !
- Je m'accroche à lui, pour attraper son bras et tenter de récupérer mon bien, mes précieux souvenir, mais il ne les lâche pas, au contraire, il les déchire, au-dessus de sa tête, rageusement, puis me rend les morceaux.
- Maintenant vasles jeter dans le feu.
- S'il te plait, non, ne m'oblige pas je t'en prie.
- Jette-les dans le feu !³³

Abdul Khada throws Zana's family photographs to make it difficult for her to remember her family in England. He knows well that the pictures remind Zana of her identity as a British and Abdul Khada does not want it. He forces Zana to accept her destiny to be Yemenite and her memory about her family in England should be forgotten. This indicates that what Abdul Khada has done is a kind of psychological violence which really breaks Zana's spirit and mental.

This part of our research has come to the conclusion that both *Not Without My Daughter* (1987) and *Vendues* (1992) are based on personal stories confirm how women suffer from the patriarchal system. Both writers Betty Mahmoody and Zana Muhsen give the true image of Arab women and how they are treated compared to men. For both writers, in an Arab society, men are viewed by law and tradition as superior to women. Every woman is expected to submit to the orders of a man whether he is a husband or a father who has the right to decide everything that concerns women's life.

B- Women as a Victim of Religion in *Not Without My Daughter* (1987) by Betty Mahmoody and Zana Muhsen's *Vendues* (1992).

This part of our work deals with the way the two novelists Betty Mahmoody and Zana Muhsen depict the extent to which religion has governed and limited the lives of Arab women and served as a justification for their imprisonment. It seeks to deal with Islam and how it is utilized and misrepresented in order to restrict women's lives, and how the protagonists in the two novels struggle against the Islamic oppression.

In the two novels, it is shown that Islam is represented as a non-Western religion. It is viewed as dangerous to women. The complex character of Islamic culture, which is viewed as oppressive by Westerners, is explained by Mohanty. She criticises Western's perceptions of the concept of veiling as being oppressive in all of these nations, including Iran, Egypt, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, and India. She believes that Europeans assume that any woman who covers herself is isolated from the world. In other words, Western feminists see the seclusion and veiling of non-Western women as an act of oppression and restriction. The latter is read and understood without taking into account the significance and meaning which varies depending on the period and location. In other words, according to Mohanty, Islam is regarded by many Western academics as being among the harmful forms of oppression that supports gender inequality.

Betty Mahmoody has relied on Western thoughts without taking into account local religious and cultural values in her rejection of the Islamic wear. She says :

In Iran you have to have this to go out on the street... ‘‘ When you go out on the street you will have to wear long sleeves and a scarf, and dark socks. ‘‘ but he had said nothing about a long, oppressive coat in the midst of hellish summer heat.³⁴

We understand from the quote that, Betty considers the islamic chador like an oppressive, harsh and cruel outfit. She adds that a woman cannot go out without wearing it and that she must cover herself completely. In fact, even in summer, in the heat of the day, women must wear this outfit which covers them from head to toe.

Betty believes that by wearing the chador, Arab women are oppressed. She claims that in the Muslim culture, men use violence against women to maintain religious rules. They feel that any offence against religion requires a violent response. She argues :

We had been Baba Hajji's house-guests for about five days, when Moody said to me, 'you have to start wearing chador in the house- or at least your roosrie'. ' No, I said. Both you and Mammal told me before I came that I wouldn't to remain covered indoors. They will understand, you said because I'm American.' Moody continued. 'Baba Hajji is very upset because yu are not covered. This is his house. 'Moody's tone was only partly apologetic. There was also an undercurrent of authority almost a threatening quality. I knew that facet of his personality well, and I had combatted it in the past.'³⁵

One can deduce that, in Iran, women have to cover themselves with a scarf even if they are at home in the presence of a strange male to avoid being exposed to him. A wife must cover her head to show her respect for her husband. From the preceeded citation, Moody wants to be authoritative. He wants to force his wife to put on the headscarf in order to show his authority over his wife to confirm his attachment to Islam. This shows how women are suffering from religious laws, and even religion justifies male violence on women.

Betty finds it disappointing that Islam gives more rights to men. She has shown that the man is more powerful and stronger compared to the woman. Betty writes :

In Sura (Chapter) 4, Verse 34, I found this distressing counsel from Mohammed :

The men are placed in charge of the women, since God endowed them with the necessary qualities, and made them the bread earners. Thus, the righteous women will accept this arrangement obediently, and will honor their husbands in their absence, in accordance with God's commandments. As for the women who show rebellion, you shall first enlighten them, then desert them in bed, and you may beat them as a last resort.³⁶

From the cited quote, we can notice that men are placed in a high level than women and they have the right to beat their wives if they do not obey their orders. In other words, according to Islam, God has given men physical qualities stronger than women. Men according to this religion are the bread earners, which makes them the protectors and the responsible ones.

Moreover, throughout all her narrative, Betty Mahmoody portrays all male Muslims and the Islamic Republic of Iran as being especially aggressive and harsh to women. She often compares Iranian women to submissive slaves. She claims that her husband's abuse of her and Iranian men's widespread disrespect for women are fundamentally supported by Islamic versions. She asserts :

I could not believe his words. He had seen for himself how Iranian women were slave to their husband, how their religion as well as their government coerced them at every turn, the practice exemplified by their haughty insistence upon an antiquated and even unhealthy dress code.³⁷

From the preceeded citation, we can say that Betty contends that religious laws and government oppresses Iranian women. She emphasises that one of the fundamental causes of their misery is a combination of religious laws and their islamic husbands.

In her narrative, Betty Mahmoody elaborates that men in the Islamic societies understand God's words in a way that serves their own needs, and they accept these interpretations as an essential reality. Betty claims :

Moody swore on the Koran that he would not attempt to keep me here against my will", I said, wondering how much Baba Hajji heard and understood. " You are a man of God. How can you allow him to do this to me after he promised to the Koran ?"

Moody took the floor only briefly. He admitted to the truth of my story that he had taken an oath on the Koran. " But I am excused," he said. "God will excuse me, because If I did not do it, she will not have come here."³⁸

The discussion between Betty and Baba Hajji proves how Moody betrays his promise when he swears he would not keep Betty in Iran against her will. That means that Moody and Baba Hajji use the Koran to fit their needs. In the passage below, Betty tells the reader when she left to pick up her daughter from school. The teacher of this school refuses that Betty takes Mahtob on the pretext that the girl belongs to her father. She states :

Khanum Shaheen said, ‘ We cannot give her to you. This is Islamic law. This is an Islamic school and we have to abide by the law, and the law is that the child belongs to the father. In this situation there is no way we would give the child to you.’³⁹

In the above quotation, we can notice how Betty shows that Iranian men use and interpret Islam in a way that satisfies their needs. They apply it only in situations that suit and serve them well. She realizes that Islam is a religion that deprives women from their own children. Again, we can see how Islam supports and sides with men against women.

For western feminists, the veil and the islamic dress are viewed as a means of controlling women. In other words, in the western view, veiled and covered women are portrayed as victims of oppression. However, Mohanty argues that there are several reasons to wear the scarf and that a woman who wears it does not necessarily mean that she is oppressed, but it may be due to religious, geographical or even political reasons. Many Muslims hold to the prevalent notion that the veil symbolizes honor and identity. If a woman does not wear the veil, she becomes a victim of harassment and the entire community risks losing its foundation and identity.

Betty Mahmoody represents Islam as a repressive religion. She confirms this by sharing her experience with the IUD. She claims that Islam and Iranian society are against conception. In her narrative, she says that a woman who places the IUD can risk being killed by her husband. She asserts :

It was a crime for women to do anything to prevent conception against her husband wishes. I knew this already. In fact, Moody had told me it was a capital offense. Reading about it here brought a wave of apprehension. I knew that by now I had probably broken many Iranian laws and would surely continue to do so. But it was disconcerting to know that I carried within my body, unbeknownst to Moody's, an I.U.D. that could jeopardize my life. Would they really execute woman for practicing birth control ? I knew the answer to that. In this country men could and would do anything to women.⁴⁰

That means that Betty Mahmoody's belief in Iran's backwardness and barbarism is shown by the fact of the use of birth control (I.U.D) endangers women's life. She argues that in the name of Islam, Iranian men can do anything for women who do not obey and respect their religious laws. Thus, she feels herself a powerless and voiceless woman.

Similarly to Betty Mahmoody, Zana Muhsen demonstrates how she has resisted religious laws in order to liberate herself and her sister Nadia from the imprisonment she experiences in a Muslim society. By narrating her story, Zana evokes the issues of the Muslim community where unfortunately most of the Islamic laws are not respected or applied by men, to begin with, Zana's father is a Muslim but his behaviour demonstrates the total opposite of what Islamic rules state. He makes an illegal marriage with Miriam Ali and has children with her without being married, which is against Islamic laws. Zana states 'En revanche, il avait un point de vue légale sur l'affaire : maman et notre père ne s'étant jamais mariés légalement, maman était considérée en principe comme notre seule tuteur légale.'⁴¹ She adds that, he holds racist views about black people, disliked them, and has always treated them poorly because he just sees them as slaves and nothing more. He even forbids Zana from speaking to them. She says :

D'après lui, nous étions en danger morale. Interdiction de porter des mini jupes, interdiction de fréquenter les noirs et d'écouter de la musique de « nègre » ! J'y songe, ce vendeur était peut être raciste, comme papa... Souvent je demande à maman, Mais qu'est ce qu'il a contre les noirs, papa ? Je ne sais pas, demande-le-lui... Je n'ai jamais osé lui poser la question. Simplement j'ai cru comprendre qu'au Yemen les noirs n'étaient des esclaves, et qu'il les considéreraient toujours comme tels, inférieurs.⁴²

From the citation, we can notice that Muthana's (Zana's father) racism directly goes against Muslim principles and laws which state that all people are created equal and that skin color should never be used to differentiate individuals and consider them less important.

Another example where it is shown that Muthanna applies Islam in a way that serves his needs, is when he sells his daughters and keeps the money. Zana writes 'Ainsi c'est la vérité, on m'a vendue comme on vend un âne ou un chameau. Mon prix est de 100 000 riais...je suis une esclave, une fille vendue par son père.'⁴³ That means that Muthanna violates the Islamic law as well. He also disregards Zana's insistence to be divorced. These are examples of men who claim to be Muslims but only practise what benefits them personally while ignoring the rest. Instead of teaching his daughters the value of Islam, he thinks that by selling them to a Yemeni family, they would become true Muslims.

In Yemen, Muslim women must carefully cover themselves in public and adhere to strict norms about appearance and behaviour as is the case in many Muslim nations. As Zana claims: 'Dès les premiers jours, Nadia m'a dit que son beau-père Gowad voulait qu'elle s'habille "convenablement". Elle porte désormais un foulard sur la tête, et une longue robe bariolée, sur des pontalons qu'il lui arrivent aux chevilles'⁴⁴. That is to say, women should cover themselves completely in order not to attract men's attention to them. Zana adds ' Il a engagé deux hommes pour ce travail. Et la présence d'étrangers à la famille implique que nous, les femmes, devons porter le voile en permanence.'⁴⁵ Just like Betty Mahmoody is obliged to wear the chador at home in the presence of strangers, Zana, too, is forced to wear the traditional Muslim scarf out of fear of Abdul Khada's condemnation.

In the eyes of the West, the veil serves as the dividing line between women who are civilized and those who are not. For them, Muslim women must give up their veils and

traditions in order to be seen as civilized. By the end of Zana's story, the author tells how she gets rid of her Yemeni outfit and takes off her scarf to show the travellers at the airport that she is not Arab or Muslim but rather an English free woman. The protagonist writes :

Il ne faut pas qu'on me prenne pour une femme Arabe seule, je dégage mon imperméable, croise les jambes, secoue mes cheveux... Je suis une touriste Anglaise qui rentre chez elle. [...] Mon pontalon de mauvais coton, cet imperméable trop long, ce foulard que j'ai fait glisser de mes cheveux ne suffisent pas.⁴⁶

From this passage we can notice that like other westerners, Zana Muhsen as an Occident woman views the veil a symbol of women's backwardness, submission, and oppression. She thinks that getting rid of her scarf frees her from belonging to the Arab world. She adds :

Vous désirez quelques choses ? je n'ai pas faim, je n'ai pas soif, j'ai surtout besoin de respirer. Nous sommes en période de ramadhan, et seules les étrangères demandent un plateau. Je veux bien, oui, merci. Pour leur faire comprendre qui je suis. Je ne jeûne pas, je n'ai jamais suivi leurs règles de ramadan, je n'ai jamais fait leurs prière. Je suis anglaise. Meme si j'ai la peau brulée par leur soleil.⁴⁷

The preceded conversation between Zana and the flight attendant while returning to Birmingham demonstrates how she feels freer and more liberated from the eight years of suffering. By asking the flight attendant to bring her food despite being in Ramadan, Zana violates islamic laws which she has never respected even during her stay in Yemen.

Moreover, in Western feminist ideology, Muslim women have become a collective group with shared ideologies and behavioural patterns. According to feminists writers, Muslim women are of the same category and share the same qualities. In fact, the majority of non-Muslims believe that religion is one of the key factors that promote patriarchal views. Yemeni men justify their behaviour by establishing connection between their acts and Islamic laws in order to avoid seeming harsh and cruel. Even if Islam is in fact a religion that emphasises respect for both genders, equality, kindness, and defends women's rights by

honouring their desire to do what they want rather than what is imposed on them, men in Yemen, use it as it suits them. Zana maintains :

Il ya une chose dont je suis sûre : à part Nadia et moi, aucune des filles du village n'a été forcé au mariage. Si une fille ne veut pas d'un garçon, elle a le droit de refusé, et d'en choisir un autre. C'est dans leurs lois, dans Coran. « Alors pourquoi nous ? » « Pourquoi nous avoir enlevées et forcées ? » ... Comme la majorité des femmes, elle s'est contentée d'accepter le choix de sa famille. Mais elle pourrait divorcer... « Pourquoi pas nous ? »⁴⁸

From what is said before, one can say that Yemen is a Muslim patriarchal nation because Yemeni men continue to believe that women's place in society comes after them and that they do not have the same status and rights as them. We can also say that even if Zana is not a Muslim, she wants to learn Coran, and she discovers that in Islam, a woman cannot be forced into marriage. Therefore, her father goes against laws when he marries her against her will. It is thus an illegitimate marriage according to what is stated in coran.

To end with, both Betty Mahmoody and Zana Muhsen illustrate the challenges that women encounter daily while living in Arab countries and present a realistic picture of how women suffer because of religion and the way it is interpreted. The two writer confirm that in addition to the oppression of their husbands, women in Iran and Yemen have also endured violence because religion has repressed them. The two authors have reached the conclusion that society and religious laws are the reasons behind women's misery, turture and sad destiny.

Endnotes

¹ Chandra T. Mohanty, *Under Western Eyes: Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourses*, On Humanism and the University I: The Discourse of Humanism 12, no. 3, 19.

<http://links.jstor.org/sici?sici=0190-3659%28198421%2F23%2912%3A3%3C333%3AUWEFSA%3E2.0.CO%3B2-Y> Accessed on 02 February 2023

² Betty Mahmoody, *Not Without My Daughter* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1987), 37.

³ Ibid, 151.

⁴ Ibid, 71.

⁵ Ibid, 276.

⁶ Ibid, 277.

⁷ Ibid, 121.

⁸ Ibid, 222.

⁹ Ibid, 61.

¹⁰ Ibid, 44

¹¹ Ibid, 105.

¹² Ibid, 106.

¹³ Ibid, 75.

¹⁴ Ibid, 60.

¹⁵ Ibid, 44.

¹⁶ Ibid, 75.

¹⁷ Ibid, 82.

¹⁸ Zana Muhsen, *Vendues* (UK: Little Brown, 1992), 8.

¹⁹ Ibid, 8.

²⁰ Mohanty, *Under Western Eyes :Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourses*, 14.

²¹ Muhsen, *Vendues*, 58-59.

²² Ibid, 100.

²³ Ibid, 46-47.

²⁴ Ibid, 56.

²⁵ Ibid, 59.

²⁶ Ibid, 48.

²⁷ Ibid, 130.

²⁸ Ibid, 49.

²⁹ Ibid, 152.

- ³⁰ Ibid, 53.
- ³¹ Ibid, 97-98.
- ³² Ibid, 138.
- ³³ Ibid, 115-116.
- ³⁴ Mahmoody, *Not Without My Daughter*, 12.
- ³⁵ Ibid, 28.
- ³⁶ Ibid, 59.
- ³⁷ Ibid, 37.
- ³⁸ Ibid, 46.
- ³⁹ Ibid, 199.
- ⁴⁰ Ibid, 138.
- ⁴¹ Muhsen, *Vendues*, 174.
- ⁴² Ibid, 10.
- ⁴³ Ibid, 49.
- ⁴⁴ Ibid, 105.
- ⁴⁵ Ibid, 141
- ⁴⁶ Ibid, 287-288.
- ⁴⁷ Ibid, 290.
- ⁴⁸ Ibid, 108.

V. Conclusion

Through this research paper, we have attempted to examine the Orientalist presentations of both Betty Mahmoody and Zana Muhsen throughout their novels respectively *Not Without My Daughter* (1987) and *Vendues* (1992) relying on the work of Edward Said's *Orientalism* (1978) and Chandra Talpade Mohanty's *Under Western Eyes: Feminist Scholarship and Colonial Discourses* (1984). Our analysis is centered on the different stereotypical representations of both writers about the Eastern land as well as its people who are portrayed as primitives, irrational and uncivilized. In addition, we have tackled the theme of third world women's oppression and discrimination under the patriarchal system and Islamic laws.

The result that has been reached in our work is that Betty Mahmoody and Zana Muhsen have shed light on the stereotypes about the Occident as being superior, civilized and developed in contrast to the Orient that is regarded and portrayed as inferior, primitive and barbaric. In other words, both authors have misrepresented Iran and Yemen and associated the two countries with a set of stereotypes and prejudices, in order to degrade and belittle them to promote Europe's superiority. In this sense, the Easterners are viewed as morally, physically, and socially primitive and inferior creatures. Both novels have tackled the same issue of the representation of the oriental characters and attributing them to the status of primitiveness and backwardness, and also the portrayal of the Eastern area as being savage, dark, and exotic.

The patriarchal system has strongly influenced most women to be submissive, two of whom are Betty Mahmoody and Zana Muhsen, who are victims of male domination and religious rules. They have endured a nightmare while living in Arab Muslim countries. The heroines of the novels have bravely struggled against discrimination and oppression to dismantle the belief that women should endure sufferings. Betty Mahmoody and Zana

Muhsen had to battle social and gender inequalities in order to win their freedom and liberty. They rejected the role attributed to women in the patriarchal society to gain their freedom and return to their home countries.

In this dissertation, we have tried to study some points that have not been covered in previous works. Thus, we think that the aforementioned works contain interesting and workable themes that can be studied and explored by other students. Therefore, we are encouraging researchers to conduct additional research about multiple themes that are common between the two novels like the types of violence and trauma endured by women and their struggle to gain freedom.

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