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A Comparative Study on the Decline of Values in F. Scott Fitzgerald's *This Side of Paradise* (1920) and Inaam Bioud's *Houaria* (2023)

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Dedication

We dedicate this thesis, above all, to our families, who have supported us from our earliest years—guiding us, motivating us, and reliably keeping us from stumbling along the way. In addition, we offer it to the handful of loyal friends with whom we shared these years far from home; they have grown into a second family, providing solid inspiration and strength throughout our academic journey.

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Abstract

F. Scott Fitzgerald's *This Side of Paradise* (1920) and Inaam Bayoud's *Houaria* (2023) provide profound insights into the societal transformations of post-war America and Algeria, capturing the erosion of traditional values amid modernization and post-traumatic recovery. Despite their distinct temporal and cultural contexts, the decline of values in these societies, particularly through the portrayal of women and the role of conservatism, remains underexplored in comparative literary studies. This study aims to compare how Fitzgerald and Bayoud depict this decline, focusing on gender roles and conservative ideologies as reflections of their eras' social and cultural moods. Employing Aram Veeser's New Historicism to contextualize the portrayal of women within historical and cultural dynamics, and Fundamentalism theory to analyze characters' adherence to traditional values, this dissertation is divided into two chapters. The first chapter examines the portrayal of women in both novels through a New Historicist lens, exploring how gender roles reflect post-war societal anxieties. The second chapter analyzes conservatism in *This Side of Paradise* and *Houaria*, using Fundamentalism theory to assess how characters resist moral and cultural decline. The analysis reveals that both authors portray women as symbols of societal change, navigating patriarchal constraints, while conservatism serves as a response to post-war upheaval, highlighting shared anxieties across different eras. Through their characters' journeys, Fitzgerald and Bayoud articulate the decline of values, underscoring the universal challenges of post-traumatic societies where tradition and modernity collide.

Keywords: Conservatism, Decline of Values, F. Scott Fitzgerald, Fundamentalism, Inaam Bayoud, New Historicism, Portrayal of Women, Post-War Societies.

Content

INTRODUCTION

صلاح أمرك للأخلاق مرجعه فقوم النفس بالأخلاق تستقم

إنما الأمم الأخلاق ما بقيت فإن هم ذهبت أخلاقهم ذهبوا

إذا أصيب القوم في أخلاقهم فأقم عليهم مأتما و عويلا

(Ahmad Shawqi)

Translation

The reform of your affairs lies in morals,

So refine your soul with virtues, and it will be upright.

Indeed, nations are their morals as long as they endure,

But if their morals fade, they too will perish.

If a people's morals are afflicted,

Then hold a mourning and raise a lament for them.

In those verses by Ahmad Shawqi (1868-1932) , an Arabic-language poet nicknamed "Prince of Poets", highlight the importance of values in building strong societies , and if they disappear everything becomes permissible. This timeless observation resonates with the themes of moral and social decay explored in F. Scott Fitzgerald's *This Side of Paradise* (1920) and Inaam Bayoud's *Houaria* (2023), two novels that explore the decline of values in specific historical contexts. In *This Side of Paradise*, Fitzgerald portrays the vanish of morals with the post-World War I American youth , as the protagonist Amory Blaine navigates a world of materialism and lost idealism, reflecting the Jazz Age's erosion of traditional morality. In contrast, *Houaria*, set in Oran during Algeria's Black Decade (1990-2000) , follows a female fortune-teller navigating a fractured society marked by violence and taboo, sparking controversy for its raw depiction of marginalized lives and perceived moral transgression.

This research paper explores the erosion of moral values in American and Algerian literature during transformative historical periods: the Jazz Age in the United States and the Black Decade in Algeria. Despite being separated by a century, as well as cultural and geographical differences, *This Side of Paradise* (Fitzgerald, 1920) and *Houaria* (Bayoud, 2023) depict the decline of moral values in their respective conservative societies. For your better knowledge, as *Houaria* is a recent work with no published translations in English or French, all quotations from this text used in this study are our own translations

In the 1900s, the cultural decline in the United States began to appear, influencing societal values in distinct ways. The aftermath of World War I and the Roaring Twenties brought changes in culture, economy, and politics. The progress noticed in all fields that facilitate life didn't make people take it positively in order to develop themselves mentally and improve their talents; rather they take it as a way the express their freedom and satisfy their desires by the culturaxplosion of the Jazz Age, with flappers and jazz music.

The traditional values of the past clashed with the emerging modernity leaving individuals struggling with the sense of disorientation and confusion. The war had not only destroyed the physical landscape but also disrupted the established moral and social order. The widespread adoption of new technologies and urbanization led to the rise of consumer culture, challenging the traditional agrarian lifestyle and its associated values .The rapid transformation left many Americans questioning their roles and identities in this evolved society. The erosion of val *This Side of Paradise* ues was more intensified by the economic flourish followed by the devastating crash of the 1929. Additionally, the Jazz Age characterized by excess and hedonism. Fitzgerald's (1920) is a prime example of a literary work that tackles the academic themes of identity crisis and the decline of values within its literary milieu. Fitzgerald portrays the decline of values of the "Lost Generation" in the aftermath of World War I.

In 1987, Algeria faced a profound decline of values , rooted in the aftermath of the Algerian War of Independence (1954_1962) . Despite achieving independence in 1962, the nation retrained the French colonial civil code , but the revolutionary ideals of freedom , equality, and justice eroded as corruption, authoritarianism, and social inequality deepened. Economic challenges, intensified by falling oil prices and mismanagement in the 1980s, exacerbated societal divisions. The 1984 adoption of the Family Code by a conservative assembly, heavily influenced by Islamic Law (Sharia), prioritized patriarchal norms and sidelined progressive voices, further undermining the pluralistic values envisioned at independence. The rise of fundamentalism from the late 1980s reinforced conservative ideologies, clashing with secular principles and suppressing social reform. Growing cynicism pervaded society as the moral and ethical foundations of the post-colonial state weakened , leaving Algerians to navigate a fractured social and political landscape, with tensions foreshadowing the unrest of the 1990s.

This decline of values is reflected in contemporary Algerian literature , notably in Inaam Bayoud's novel *Houaria* (2023). The novel, which won the prestigious Assia Djebar Grand Prize, sparked controversy for its use of colloquial language and themes deemed provocative by some critics. Through the story of a fortune-teller navigating a complex social landscape, *Houaria* explores the erosion of moral and cultural values in modern Algeria, highlighting ongoing societal tensions and the struggle to reconcile traditional and progressive ideals.

Moreover, notable American and Algerian authors have engaged with themes and topics related to the decline of values in their works, in particular F. Scott Fitzgerald in his novel *This Side of Paradise (*1920), Inaam Bayoud's *Houaria* (2023), who have contributed to the exploration of values and their vanish in both American and Islamic societies. The purpose of our Study is to compare the two novels belonging to different backgrounds in order to explore the issues of the decline of values and morals.

Review of Literature

F. Scott Fitzgerald's *This Side of Paradise* (1920) has drawn significant critical attention for its portrayal of American youth, its stylistic experimentation, and its role as a cultural artifact of the early 1920s. Critics have examined its thematic depth, innovative form, and engagement with social dynamics, offering varied perspectives on its strengths and shortcomings.

Thematically, the novel centers on Amory Blaine's quest for identity and selfhood. Embler (1945) argues it marks the start of Fitzgerald's career-long exploration of the "true inner self," with Amory's internal conflicts embodying self-division and destruction. Hart (1941-1983) traces Amory's journey from a privileged childhood through relationships with women—Isabelle, Rosalind, and Eleanor—to disillusioned adulthood, achieving self-knowledge by age 24. McGowan (2020) questions its classification as a traditional bildungsroman, noting Amory's role as both hero and self-destructive figure, marked by dissipation and disillusionment. Heiney (1958) suggests the novel aims to depict Amory's evolution from egotist to a "personage" of character but contends that Fitzgerald's own incomplete personal growth limits this transformation, leaving the narrative unresolved.

Stylistically, *This Side of Paradise* elicits diverse reactions. R.V.A.S. (1920) praises Fitzgerald's "felicity" and impressionistic style, likening it to James Joyce's A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man. McGowan (2020) highlights its experimental blend of prose, poetry, and drama, and its humor, particularly in depicting Amory's mother, Beatrice. Conversely, Broun (1920) criticizes its "callow" perspective and ornate style, describing it as "larded with fine writing." Wilson (1921/1961) calls it "highly imitative" of Compton Mackenzie's Sinister Street and "one of the most illiterate books of any merit," citing malapropisms and inaccurate literary references, yet acknowledges its vibrant "gaiety and color." McGowan (2020) defends Fitzgerald's use of extensive literary references, noting their "lightness of touch" in situating

the work within a literary tradition.

Culturally, the novel captures the post-World War I era. R.V.A.S. (1920) commends its "fundamentally honest" portrayal of undergraduate life, particularly its frank depiction of the "petting party" and rejection of clichéd college narratives. Kazin (1942) views it as a snapshot of a generation grappling with newfound freedom and uncertainty. Heiney (1958) emphasizes its role in defining the Jazz Age, noting its semi-autobiographical exploration of youth and ambition. McGowan (2020) underscores its historical importance, describing it as a work that "maps the joins as well as the fractures" of American society during a transitional moment marked by events like women's suffrage in 1920.

Modern analyses focus on gender dynamics and religious themes. McGowan (2020) highlights the strength of female characters—Beatrice, Isabelle, Clara, Rosalind, and Eleanor—who consistently outmatch Amory. Eleanor, in particular, emerges as a proto-feminist, challenging Catholic sexual hypocrisy and embodying forward-thinking modernity. The novel's engagement with Catholicism, through figures like Monsignor Darcy and Eleanor's atheism, underscores its iconoclastic streak, as Amory confronts a world where "all Gods [are] dead, all wars fought, all faiths in man shaken" (McGowan, 2020, p. 239).

Inaâm Bayoud's novel *Houaria*, winner of the 2024 Assia Djebar Grand Prize for Arabic-language novels, has sparked significant controversy in Algeria, reflecting deep societal tensions over artistic freedom, cultural norms, and gender dynamics. Set in Oran during the 1990s "Black Decade," *Houaria* employs colloquial Algerian Arabic (darja) and explicit language to portray the gritty realities of marginalized communities, particularly through the lens of a female fortune-teller navigating a turbulent socio-political landscape (Adnani, 2024; Moali, 2024). The novel's bold depiction of taboo topics—sex, poverty, and violence—has elicited polarized reactions, with critics accusing it of immorality and defenders praising its

literary courage. This review synthesizes the critical discourse from five sources, highlighting key arguments, quotes, and the broader cultural implications of the controversy, which culminated in the closure of MIM Éditions, the novel's publisher.

The primary criticism of *Houaria* centers on its use of explicit language and colloquial darja, which conservative and Islamist detractors argue violates Algeria's moral and religious values. According to Le Point (2024), the novel's "sexually explicit" dialogues provoked outrage, with critics labeling it "immoral" and disrespectful to Oran's cultural identity. Social media platforms, particularly X, amplified this backlash, with users demanding the novel's ban and the withdrawal of the Assia Djebar Prize (Le Monde, 2024). These reactions align with Adnani's (2024) argument that the controversy reflects a broader strengthening of Islamism in Algeria, where conservatives resist literature that challenges the idealized image of a morally pure society. The backlash escalated to political levels, with parliamentarians from Islamist and conservative parties like El Bina and FLN calling for government action against the novel (Le Point, 2024).

The intensity of the criticism led to severe consequences for MIM Éditions, which announced its closure on July 16, 2024, citing the "futility of fighting the absurd" (La Radio des Sans Voix, 2024; Le Monde, 2024). The publisher's statement underscored the overwhelming pressure from what La Radio des Sans Voix (2024) described as a "violent campaign" of insults and accusations, highlighting the chilling effect on literary freedom in Algeria.

Intellectuals, writers, and literary critics have defended *Houaria* as a bold and authentic work that reflects Algeria's complex social realities. Amina Belaala, a jury member for the Assia Djebar Prize, praised the novel's "narrative precision" and denied claims of immorality, arguing that it does not affront religion or ethics (Moali, 2024). Lazhari Labter, a prominent

writer, condemned detractors as “book burners” ignorant of Arabic literary traditions that embrace provocative themes, such as the works of Imrou’l Qays or Nizar Qabbani (La Radio des Sans Voix, 2024). Labter’s statement, “If MIM closes, it’s the victory of ugliness over beauty, of darkness over light” (as cited in La Radio des Sans Voix, 2024), encapsulates the defenders’ view that the novel’s suppression represents a broader attack on creative expression.

Supporters also emphasized the novel’s role in exposing societal flaws. Adnani (2024) argued that *Houaria* challenges the “idealized image of the Algerian Muslim” by depicting uncomfortable truths about poverty, violence, and marginalized lives, which conservatives seek to suppress. Similarly, historian Hosni Kitouni noted that the controversy has paradoxically increased the novel’s visibility, stating, “No ban can kill a book in the internet age; these censors are dangerous imbeciles” (as cited in Le Monde, 2024). On X, some users lauded the novel’s “high-quality style” and its authentic portrayal of Oran’s underbelly, arguing that its use of darja adds depth rather than vulgarity (Le Point, 2024).

A recurring theme across the sources is the gendered nature of the backlash, as *Houaria’s* female protagonist, author, and publisher (Assia Ali Moussa) intensified conservative ire. Moali (2024) highlighted this “misogynistic” dimension, noting that the targeting of women in literature reflects broader patriarchal resistance in Algerian society. Adnani (2024) echoed this, arguing that the controversy underscores “growing discrimination against women” in a radicalizing cultural landscape. On X, supporters remarked, “The outrage is less about the book and more about women daring to speak uncomfortable truths” (Le Point, 2024), reinforcing the view that the attacks are rooted in gendered power dynamics.

The controversy also reflects Algeria’s broader cultural war, as described by Le Monde (2024), where social media amplifies clashes between conservative forces and advocates of artistic freedom. Some X users suggested that literary jealousy from rival authors excluded from

the Assia Djebar Prize fueled the defamation campaign (La Radio des Sans Voix, 2024). Others pointed to political motivations, with Islamist parties like MSP calling for "firm measures" against "vulgar" works, aligning with conservative agendas to suppress dissenting voices (Moali, 2024).

The *Houaria* controversy highlights the tension between artistic expression and societal conservatism in Algeria, with significant implications for literary freedom. The closure of MIM Éditions, a publisher known for bold works like Abdelouahab Issawi's Booker Prize-winning novel, underscores the chilling effect of censorship (La Radio des Sans Voix, 2024). Comparisons to historical censorship cases, such as the 1994 attack on Naguib Mahfouz, circulated on X, framing the backlash as part of a recurring pattern of suppressing provocative literature (Le Point, 2024). However, the controversy has also sparked a broader debate about the role of literature in confronting societal taboos, with supporters arguing that *Houaria* holds "a mirror to the controversy also reflects.

Issue and Working Hypotheses

Extensive scholarly attention has been devoted to F. Scott Fitzgerald's *This Side of Paradise* (1920), which explores moral and social disillusionment in post-World War I American society (Bruccoli, 1991). Conversely, Inaam Bayoud's *Houaria* (2023), set during Algeria's Black Decade (1991–2002), has received limited critical analysis and is often criticized for its perceived challenge to Algerian identity and societal norms. To date, no comparative study has analyzed these novels through the lens of the decline of values, a universal theme addressed by both authors within their distinct socio-historical contexts. This study aims to examine how Fitzgerald and Bayoud employ narrative strategies—such as interior monologue, figurative language, and dialogue—to depict the erosion of moral and social values, reflecting the cultural and ideological tensions of the American Jazz Age and post-independence Algeria,

respectively. Specifically, this dissertation will explore how the theme of fundamentalism, as an expression of conservative ideologies, contributes to the decline of values in both novels, particularly through the rigidity of traditional beliefs in the face of societal transformation. Drawing on the New Historicism framework, as articulated in Veeser's (1994) *The New Historicism Reader*, this study will situate the novels within their socio-historical contexts, examining how historical forces shape their themes and character development. By comparing the authors' narrative approaches, this dissertation seeks to illuminate both the universal and context-specific dimensions of value decline, with a particular emphasis on the role of conservatism and fundamentalism in shaping the moral landscapes of modernist and contemporary literature.

Methodological Outline

This study will organize the dissertation into four sections following the IMRAD framework to investigate the decline of values in F. Scott Fitzgerald's This Side of Paradise (1920) and Inaam Bayoud's *Houaria* (2023). In the first section, the general introduction will present the central themes of the research, including the decline of moral and social values and the role of fundamentalism as an expression of conservative ideologies. This section will include a literature review synthesizing existing scholarship on both novels and an issue and working hypotheses statement identifying the research gap in comparative analyses of their portrayal of value decline. The second section, methods and materials, will outline the theoretical and analytical approach. In the methods subsection, this study will explain the application of New Historicism, as articulated in Veeser's (1994) The New Historicism Reader, to analyze the socio-historical contexts shaping the novels' themes and characters. In the materials subsection, this study will provide summaries of *This Side of Paradise* and *Houaria*, emphasizing their historical settings—the American Jazz Age and Algeria's Black Decade (1991–2002), respectively—and their use of narrative strategies, such as interior monologue,

figurative language, and dialogue. The third section, results and discussion, will comprise two chapters. The first chapter will analyze the portrayal of women in *This Side of Paradise* and *Houaria*, examining how gender roles reflect the erosion of values in their respective societies. The second chapter will explore the theme of conservatism, particularly the role of fundamentalism in reinforcing rigid traditional beliefs, and its contribution to moral and social decay during the Jazz Age and the Black Decade. The final section, the conclusion, will synthesize the key findings, highlighting the significance of the comparative analysis for understanding value decline in modernist and contemporary literature.

II-Methods and Materials

For our dissertation study, we have utilized two key frameworks to analyze the theme of declining values in F. Scott Fitzgerald's *This Side of Paradise* and Inaam Bayoud's *Houaria*. New Historicism, as articulated by H. Aram Veeser in his introduction to *The New Historicism Reader* (1994), serves as our primary theoretical framework, providing a robust lens to explore the historical and cultural contexts of the texts. Additionally, we examine Fundamentalism as a significant theme and religious movement, which enriches our analysis of the moral and societal shifts depicted in the novels. These frameworks were selected for their comprehensive concepts, enabling a thorough exploration of our topic.

1-Summary of the Introduction to *The New Historicism Reader*(1994) edited by H. Aram Veeser

H. Aram Veeser's introduction to The New Historicism Reader seeks to define and defend New Historicism (NH), a literary and cultural theory that emerged in the late 1970s and 1980s, primarily through the work of scholars like Stephen Greenblatt at the University of California, Berkeley. Despite NH practitioners' initial denials of forming a unified movement—citing its "indeterminacy," heterogeneity, and lack of a formal doctrine—Veeser identifies five core assumptions that bind NH works together, drawn from close readings of key texts. These assumptions, which have held up well since Veeser's 1989 formulation, emphasize the historical embeddedness of all cultural expressions while acknowledging NH's own participation in the systems it analyzes. The introduction addresses NH's critics, traces its origins in Renaissance studies, illustrates its methods through examples from the anthology's essays, and explores its evolution into studies of capitalism and modernity. It concludes by examining "fractures" where non-NH scholars adapt NH techniques selectively.

At the heart of NH are its five fundamental assumptions, which counter traditional literary criticism's focus on timeless aesthetics or isolated texts: (1) every expressive act, from literature to everyday rituals, is embedded in a network of material practices, such as economic or social conditions; (2) any act of critique or opposition inevitably uses the tools it condemns, risking entrapment in the very systems it exposes (e.g., subversive art may reinforce power structures); (3) literary texts (like novels) and non-literary texts (like legal documents or travel logs) circulate inseparably, influencing each other without clear hierarchies; (4) no discourse provides access to unchanging truths or fixed human nature, as all are shaped by historical contexts; and (5) critical methods describing culture under capitalism themselves participate in that economy, mirroring market dynamics like exchange and circulation. These tenets, Veeser argues, allow NH to reconnect personal lives with broader societal shifts, appealing to poststructuralists and Marxists disillusioned with deconstruction's abstraction or Marxism's neglect of individual experience. However, the fifth assumption—emphasizing capitalism's role—raises questions about NH's politics: is it progressive or conservative, subversive or stabilizing?

Critics have accused NH of conservatism, as captured in M.H. Abrams's 1992 Glossary of Literary Terms, which reduces NH to four traits that seem to neutralize radical change: (1) subject positioning, where individuals are fixed by social identities (e.g., class, race, gender), limiting universal appeals; (2) Power/Knowledge (from Foucault), portraying power as inescapable and intellectuals as complicit in oppressive institutions; (3) internal dialogism (from Bakhtin), showing how conflicts within texts or society are contained by unifying structures; and (4) thick description (from Geertz), favoring detailed cultural analysis over broad discussions of class struggle or economic change. These elements, critics like David Simpson argue, promote a "strong containment thesis," where subversion is always absorbed by dominant systems, discouraging solidarity or disruption. Yet Veeser counters that NH

disrupts "business as usual" in literary studies by rejecting the liberal consensus that great art must oppose society, instead examining how capitalism metabolizes art and life, producing effects like anorexia (fear of consumption) or homophobia (fear of fluid identities).

NH's writing style embodies this tension through "arbitrary and conditional contingency"—provisional interpretations that link chance details to larger explanations, often prioritizing local knowledge over grand narratives. Critics charge this leads to "arbitrary connectedness," where anecdotes gain undue significance, but Veeser illustrates NH's method via Greenblatt's essay "Marlowe and the Will to Absolute Play" (from Renaissance Self-Fashioning, 1980), which unfolds in five operations: (1) an anecdote (a historical merchant's log describing admiration for an African town followed by its destruction); (2) outrage at the moral vacancy revealed; (3) resistance (Marlowe's rebellion against norms); (4) containment (how rebellion reinforces society); and (5) the critic's autobiography (Greenblatt's reflection on his own complicity). This structure highlights NH's volatility, blending serendipity with causal links. Feminist critics like Judith Newton and Marguerite Waller caution that NH risks "endless research" without ethical outcomes and may recycle feminist strategies while remaining patriarchal, though Veeser notes NH's strong female tradition (e.g., Catherine Gallagher, Natalie Zemon Davis). Historians critique NH's methodological "anarchy," but Veeser points to "New Cultural Historians" sharing three assumptions: societies are governed by "master fictions" (ideological stories) alongside force; all signs (verbal or nonverbal) are interpretable; and thick description reveals rhetorical layers.

Resistances persist, including charges of quietism (due to containment), lexical misuse (e.g., diluting terms like "imperialism"), and ahistoricism. Veeser traces NH's "dodgy pasts" to American pragmatism, old historicism, and influences like Foucault, while noting its "happy hollowness"—embracing capitalism's empty, mobile selves (e.g., go-betweens like Iago) over modernist laments. NH's focus on capitalism distinguishes it from Foucault's emphasis on

power microstructures, instead highlighting self-disrupting market logics where value oscillates (e.g., garbage as treasure in Gallagher's analysis of Dickens).

NH originated in Renaissance studies because the era epitomizes emerging subjectivity and individualism—the "delivery room" for modern selves—amid nascent capitalism, allowing NH to analogize past and present anxieties. Critics like Jean Howard and Marlon Ross see Renaissance scholars projecting their own "gap in history" onto the period, where potentially modern elements (e.g., self-expression) clashed with traditional hierarchies. This relevance grounds NH: born from analyzing texts like Shakespeare's or Marlowe's, it demonstrates how expressive acts are embedded in socio-material contexts, with time and place shaping reality. Literary history thus integrates with broader cultural history, serving as both foreground (active influence) and background (contextual frame) for texts. Without this Renaissance tie, NH might remain abstract; it instead evolves into a tool for examining power, identity, and authority across eras, resonating with contemporary concerns.

The introduction shifts to post-Renaissance applications, where new economics demand new poetics: progress from "status to contract" hollows personalities, mirroring money's free circulation (e.g., in Michaels's analysis of Hawthorne, where anti-market sentiments reinforce corporate logics). Finally, "futures and fractures" show NH's extendability, with non-NHs like Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, Dipesh Chakrabarty, Jane Gallop, and Barbara Harlow adapting its methods—e.g., Gallop's autobiographical "bad girl" critique of feminist anthologies or Chakrabarty's anecdote-driven questioning of Indian subjectivity—while ignoring aspects like skepticism toward fixed histories. Veeser suggests NH's infinite adaptability, from medieval to postcolonial studies, ensures its ongoing vitality.

2-Fundamentalism as a religious movement and theme in *This Side of Paradise* and *Houaria*

As a second key framework in our dissertation study, we employ Fundamentalism, conceptualized not only as a religious movement but also as a conservative ideological stance characterized by strict adherence to sacred texts. Originally associated with American Protestantism and its insistence on the Bible's inerrancy, Fundamentalism has, since the late 20th century, been applied to a broader range of religious movements across various faiths. In our analysis of F. Scott Fitzgerald's *This Side of Paradise* and Inaam Bayoud's *Houaria*, we use Fundamentalism to explore how rigid adherence to religious principles shapes characters' behaviors and societal values, contributing to the theme of declining values. This framework was chosen for its clarity, simplicity, and ability to illuminate the influence of religious ideology on individual and collective ways of thinking.

A pivotal contribution to the study of Fundamentalism is The Fundamentalism Project (1991–1995), a series of five volumes edited by American scholars Martin E. Marty and R. Scott Appleby. They define Fundamentalism as a militant rejection of secular modernity, emphasizing its inherently political nature, even when this dimension remains latent. Marty and Appleby argue that Fundamentalism is not merely traditional religiosity but a movement that seeks to reshape society and governance according to religious principles, often exhibiting totalitarian tendencies. This perspective informs our analysis by highlighting how Fundamentalism, in both novels, fosters religious rigidity and influences moral and social decline. Critics, however, note that Fundamentalism's motivations may not solely stem from rejecting modernity but can also reflect efforts to preserve cultural or religious identity in response to external pressures.

In the context of Inaam Bayoud's *Houaria*, we examine Islamic Fundamentalism, often referred to as Islamism by scholars who prefer the term to distinguish it from broader Islamic

practice. Since the late 20th century, Islamic Fundamentalism has gained attention in both popular and scholarly discourse, particularly in the West, where it is sometimes mistakenly equated with Islam itself. Our study clarifies that not all Muslims adhere to a literal interpretation of the Quran, nor do they universally support the establishment of a state governed by Islamic law. In *Houaria*, Islamic Fundamentalism manifests through characters whose lives are shaped by rigid religious ideologies, reflecting tensions between traditional values and modern influences. For instance, some Islamist movements, as depicted in the novel, draw on conservative principles, while others incorporate elements from ideologies like Marxism, illustrating the diversity within Fundamentalist thought. A notable real-world example is Hamas's 2006 victory in the Palestinian Legislative Council elections, which raised questions about whether a group historically associated with terrorism could transition into a modern political entity.

Fundamentalism, as a broader concept, involves a strict, literal interpretation of ideological texts, often emphasizing purity and resisting perceived external corruptions. In our study, this framework applies to both the Christian Fundamentalism implicitly critiqued in *This Side of Paradise* and the Islamic Fundamentalism explored in *Houaria*. By analyzing Fundamentalism as a reform movement that seeks to eliminate non-conforming influences and establish ideologically pure systems, we uncover its role in shaping the decline of values in both texts. This dual application of Fundamentalism, alongside New Historicism, provides a comprehensive lens to examine the interplay of religion, culture, and morality in Fitzgerald's and Bayoud's works.

2-Materials

- **Summary of *This Side of Paradise***

F. Scott Fitzgerald's *This Side of Paradise* (1920), a semi-autobiographical novel, traces Amory Blaine's coming-of-age in early 20th-century America, exploring the decline of moral and social values in a society transformed by World War I and the Jazz Age. Set against the elite backdrop of Princeton University and the disorienting post-war era, the novel portrays a generation grappling with the erosion of traditional ideals—honesty, loyalty, and social integrity—amid materialism and shifting norms.

Raised in privilege by his aristocratic mother, Beatrice, Amory begins with a sense of entitlement but faces social struggles in Minneapolis and at St. Regis boarding school, eventually gaining popularity through charm. At Princeton, he navigates its competitive social hierarchy, forming friendships with literary Thomas Park D'Invilliers and radical Burne Holiday. His romantic pursuits—Isabelle Borgé, Rosalind Connage, and Clara Page, a virtuous widow bound by duty—reveal the decline of genuine love, as materialism taints his relationships. Clara's rejection of Amory, prioritizing her moral obligations, underscores the fading of traditional values against the Jazz Age's hedonism. The deaths of his idol Dick Humbird in a drunken crash, his father, and his mother, alongside financial decline, shatter Amory's belief in aristocratic superiority, reflecting the collapse of social structures.

World War I deepens the erosion of values, as Amory, serving as a second lieutenant, witnesses the loss of friends and returns to a society prioritizing wealth over integrity. His heartbreak with Rosalind, who chooses a richer suitor, and a reckless affair with Eleanor Savage, ending in her suicide attempt, highlight the commodification of love. Guided by Monsignor Darcy and influenced by Burne's rejection of elitism, Amory critiques capitalism's moral decay. The novel culminates in his solitary walk to Princeton, where he declares, "I know myself" (Fitzgerald, 1920, p. 305), accepting his place in a world where traditional values have

crumbled. Through Amory, Fitzgerald captures the disillusionment of a generation navigating a morally fractured society.

- **Summary of *Houaria***

Inaam Bayoud's *Houaria* (2023), published by Dar Mim, portrays the decline of moral and social values in Algerian society across nearly two decades, before, during, and after the Black Decade (1991–2002), a period of violence, terrorism, and fear. Set in the crime-ridden Akmeel neighborhood of Oran, the novel blends mythical fiction with social reality, depicting a community unraveling under poverty, loss, and rigid traditions.

The story centers on Houaria, a poor woman called "the unlucky one" ("المنحوسة") by her mother and "the Disaster" ("المصيبة") by her brother Houari. Awakening in a neurological hospital with partial amnesia, she becomes a palm reader, attracting clients across social classes seeking hope in a morally decaying world. Her role reveals a society clinging to mysticism as trust and integrity erode.

Houaria's life intersects with characters embodying moral and social decline. Her lover Hisham, raised in a broken family with an alcoholic father, turns to drug dealing and meets a tragic end, reflecting the collapse of familial loyalty. His brother Hani, "the redhead" ("الروجي"), an intellectual disillusioned by his surroundings, flees Algeria, signaling the loss of hope and community. Heba, a researcher studying shrine rituals, shares Houaria's grief, her scholarly pursuits contrasting with the neighborhood's decay yet unable to restore lost values. Haddiya's affair with Doctor Hashmi exposes class divides and shallow relationships, while Houari's repressive contempt for women further erodes communal bonds. Settings like the bathhouse and cemetery symbolize women's confined roles, underscoring societal decay.

The novel ends tragically: Houari disappears, Haddiya is imprisoned, Heba is left alone after family deaths, and Houaria remains with her dying mother. Through these intertwined fates, *Houaria* vividly captures the moral and social disintegration of a society fractured by violence, poverty, and tradition.

Results

This comparative study produced significant results in analyzing the decline of moral and social values in F. S. Fitzgerald's *This Side of Paradise* (1920) and I. Bayoud's *Houaria* (2023). The analysis, organized into two chapters, provided key insights into the ideological dynamics of the American Jazz Age and Algeria's Black Decade (1991–2002).

The first chapter applied New Historicism, as outlined in Veeser's (1994) The New Historicism Reader, to examine the portrayal of women in both novels, revealing the ideologies prevalent during their respective periods. Despite their distinct temporal and geographical settings, Fitzgerald and Bayoud depicted female characters with shared ambiguities, emphasizing their physical appearances, personal desires, and adherence to societal norms. These portrayals highlighted women as central to the conflict between progressive and conservative forces, reflecting the erosion of values in their societies.

The second chapter analyzed the theme of conservatism, particularly the influence of fundamentalism, in contributing to moral and social decay. In This Side of Paradise, Fitzgerald portrayed the Jazz Age as a period of tension between conservative norms and progressive exuberance, where rigid traditional values fostered disillusionment. Similarly, in *Houaria*, Bayoud depicted the Black Decade's ideological struggles, with fundamentalist principles reinforcing conservative resistance to social change. Women emerged as pivotal figures in this clash, their freedom or oppression signaling shifts in the balance of power between opposing forces. These findings showed how fundamentalism, as an expression of conservatism, intensified value decline by upholding inflexible societal norms.

Overall, this study demonstrated that shared socio-historical dynamics—specifically, the tension between conservatism and progressivism—shaped parallel literary representations in *This Side of Paradise* and *Houaria*. The analysis clarified how social behaviors and historical forces influenced the novels' portrayals of value decline, offering insights into the interplay between literature and ideology in modernist and contemporary contexts.

Chapter I

The Portrayal of Women in F. Scott Fitzgerald's *This Side of Paradise* (1920) and Inaam Bayoud's *Houaria* (2023)

Introduction

This chapter examines the portrayal of female characters in F. Scott Fitzgerald's *This Side of Paradise* (1920) and Inaam Bayoud's *Houaria* (2023) through a New Historicist lens, drawing on Veeser's (1994) The New Historicism Reader to analyze how historical and cultural contexts shape character portrayals. The analysis focuses on the main female characters—Clara Page, Eleanor Savage, Rosalind Connage, Henoudda Zina, Hala, and Haddiya—by connecting their portrayals to the dominant ideologies of 1920s America and 1990s Algeria. The post-war era's decline in traditional values led many individuals to prioritize personal desires over principles, sacrificing moral convictions to pursue fleeting pleasures while grappling with an inner struggle to reconcile their identities with rapidly shifting societal norms. In 1920s America and 1990s Algeria, these female characters navigate their identities amid rapidly changing social landscapes, reflecting the ideological tensions between traditional gender roles and emerging modern values, which result in significant social and personal conflicts. Notably, the impacts of war and modernity profoundly shaped these women, as some confronted and challenged traditional gender roles, leading to confusion and uncertainty about their identities, while others resisted societal shifts, prioritizing their roles as devoted wives and mothers to uphold familial duties over embracing modern changes.

1-The Presentation of Woman's Fidelity : Clara page and Henouda Zina as Cultural Archetypes

In societies worldwide, women have historically served as stabilizing forces within family structures, often prioritizing their children's welfare over personal aspirations. This dynamic is powerfully depicted through two seemingly disparate literary characters: Clara Page in F. Scott Fitzgerald's *This Side of Paradise* (1920) and Henoudda Zina in Inaam Bayoud's *Houaria* (2023). Through these characters, Fitzgerald and Bayoud explore the intricate

interplay among maternal duty, personal identity, and societal expectations, revealing striking parallels across diverse cultural and historical contexts.

1-1-Clara Page: The Victorian Ideal in a Modernizing America

Clara Page, Amory Blaine's third cousin, steps into *This Side of Paradise* as a widow in Philadelphia, first seen as poor but soon revealed as elegant, her "rippling golden hair" and "steely blue eyes" lighting up the page (Fitzgerald, 1920, p. 150). That "golden radiance" she carries has a way of transforming those around her, turning everyday folks like her uncle or a telegraph boy into figures brimming with charm and originality (Fitzgerald, 1920, p. 151). This glow ties beautifully into what Veeser (1994) suggests in his first assumption from

The New Historicism Reader—that every expressive act is caught up in a web of material practices (p. 2). It's not just about Clara looking pretty; her beauty and moral pull are shaped by the tough economic realities, social pressures, and historical moments of her time, which in turn shape how she moves through the world. You can see this in how she embodies the Victorian "angel in the house," a figure from Coventry Patmore's (1854) poem of the same name, where women were idealized as nurturing mothers and submissive wives, keeping the home a moral haven while men dominated the public sphere of business and politics. But her poverty and widowhood ground her in the gritty 20th-century American landscape, where women often had no choice but to stay homebound due to financial need. Veeser (1994) brings in Jonathan Dollimore, a cultural materialist who uses Marxist ideas to unpack how literature mirrors power struggles, noting that Renaissance works blended with social actions to favor deeds over symbols (p. 14). For Clara, this shows up when she pours her energy into her kids and turns down Amory's proposal, putting duty first—a choice shaped by the limits of her situation. Her radiance feels less like a gift and more like a role she's playing, molded by the era's expectation that women shine morally even when money's tight.

That brings us to Veeser's (1994) second idea: every critique or pushback borrows from

the systems it challenges and might end up tangled in them (p. 2). Clara's hold on Victorian values—selflessness, motherhood, restraint—feels like a quiet jab at the Jazz Age's wild individualism, seen in flappers like Eleanor Savage and Rosalind Connage. When she says, "I'd never marry again. I've got two children and I want myself for them" (Fitzgerald, 1920, p. 158), she's choosing family over the marriage market's cold calculations. But here's the catch: that choice, while strong, props up the patriarchal box that keeps her in place. Judith Newton, a feminist critic who digs into gender in Victorian literature, points out in Veeser's (1994) book that New Historicism often leans on feminist tools while siding with "elite male values" (p. 18). Marguerite Waller, a feminist scholar of Renaissance texts, adds that early New Historicist works carry unexamined patriarchal baggage (p. 18). Clara's sacrifice, though it shows her will, locks her into the home, making her critique of modern freedom complicit—meaning it accidentally supports—the norms she lives under. This echoes Veeser's (1994) "strong containment thesis" (pp. 3, 6-7), where even rebellion, like in Greenblatt's take on Marlowe, ends up reinforcing the status quo (p. 6).

Veeser's (1994) third thought, that literary and non-literary texts flow together inseparably (p. 2), helps us see Clara in a wider cultural conversation. Her story vibes with non-literary pieces like Victorian conduct manuals and Catherine Beecher's (1841) *Treatise on Domestic Economy,* which Jane Tompkins—a feminist who rethinks how sentimental fiction shapes culture—mentions in Veeser's (1994) volume as boosting women's home power (p. 24). Clara's knack for lifting her surroundings mirrors Beecher's "Christian family" ideal, though Tompkins flags its imperialist edge, hinting at a push to spread domestic control worldwide (p. 24). Her radiance isn't just a writer's trick but a echo of a culture casting women as moral guides, even while hiding bigger ambitions. Veeser (1994) shares how Stephen Greenblatt—whose "cultural poetics" traces social energy across texts—links a conquistador's log with Othello to reveal cultural layers (p. 16). Similarly, Clara's character dances with early 20th-

century writings on women's roles, showing how her Victorian goodness swims in a sea of unwritten rules, expectations, and norms that lift her up yet hold her back.

Veeser's (1994) fourth point—that no discourse holds timeless truths—highlights how Clara's virtues depend on her specific historical moment, not some eternal standard (p. 2). Amory sees her as "the first fine woman he ever knew," her goodness a bright spot (Fitzgerald, 1920, p. 154). But Tompkins notes how Uncle Tom's Cabin, once revered with deep respect and admiration, later got called "morally false and artistically naive" as tastes changed (Veeser, 1994, p. 24). Clara's selflessness fits the Victorian mold but looks old-fashioned next to the Jazz Age's "me-first" vibe. This fits Veeser's (1994) view of the Renaissance as a breaking point for modern identity (p. 13), mirrored in the early 20th century's shift from Victorian restraint to modern freedom, with Clara holding onto a fading moral past. Her goodness isn't forever; it's a snapshot of her time, soon outshone by flappers' boldness.

Finally, Veeser's (1994) fifth idea—that criticism must wrestle with capitalist poetics—frames Clara in a market-driven world (p. 2). Catherine Gallagher, a Victorianist who ties literature to economics, explores this in Veeser's (1994) text with Daniel Deronda, noting the "self-sustaining anxiety" of capitalist life where people are caught in market flows (p. 20). Clara's refusal to marry Amory dodges turning love into a transaction, yet her widow's money troubles tie her to capitalism's grip. Veeser (1994) paints the "hollow" capitalist figure, like La Malincha or Iago, oscillating back and forth like stock prices (p. 4). Clara's hollowness comes from leaning on Victorian roles, limiting her in a world obsessed with movement and trade. Her devotion to her kids, while heartfelt, roots her in place amid this churn, reflecting Veeser's (1994) nod to capitalism as both "garbage and treasure" (p. 19). Her saying no to Amory, though an act of will, also shows her struggle to keep identity intact where everything's for sale, as Brook Thomas—a critic linking law and literature—notes in his "status to contract" take (Veeser, 1994, p. 23).

Clara also taps into “arbitrary connectedness,” where small details uncover big truths (Veeser, 1994, p. 8). Her golden glow ties to Victorian morals, while her poverty reflects widowhood’s economic sting. This mirrors Greenblatt’s use of John Sarracoll’s log to spot moral emptiness (Veeser, 1994, p. 5). Her no to marriage, a quiet move, highlights the tug between her agency and social limits, much like Renaissance masques tied to political games (Veeser, 1994, p. 15). She becomes a nexus—a web of connections—showing how personal choices echo cultural shifts from Victorian stability to Jazz Age freedom.

Critics, as Veeser (1994) notes, question this view. The “quietism” critique—that New Historicism sees resistance as contained, dulling its political edge (p. 7)—suggests Clara’s stand against modern ways might prop up patriarchy. Newton and Waller argue it overlooks women’s power, focusing on “powerful men” (p. 18), yet Gallagher and Tompkins show figures like Margaret of Cavendish pushing back (p. 19). Clara’s refusal to marry Amory feels feminist but also locks her in tradition, echoing the containment paradox. She oscillates between agency and limits, mirroring the shift from status to contract that Thomas describes (Veeser, 1994, p. 23).

Ultimately, Clara Page captures a changing America. Her radiance and devotion nod to a fading Victorian ideal, but her financial bind and constrained choices tie her to Jazz Age capitalism. Through New Historicism, she’s neither fully rebel nor fully trapped—a product of a fractured moment where old and new collide. Her story, like Veeser’s (1994) favored anecdotes, weaves personal and cultural threads, showing identity as fluid, ever-shifting, and open to many readings.

1-2-Henouda Zina: The Beating Heart of an Algerian Family

In Algerian society, women often serve as a vital element navigating the tensions between tradition and adversity with remarkable resilience. Henouda Zina, the mother of Hichem in Inaam Bayoud’s *Houaria* (2023), embodies this role through her duties as a nurturing mother, provider, and community caretaker. A New Historicist analysis, drawing on the

introduction by H. Aram Veeser in The New Historicism Reader (1994), provides a lens to examine how Henouda's character reflects the interplay of material practices, cultural texts, power dynamics, and capitalist influences. This discussion applies Veeser's five fundamental assumptions to her portrayal, revealing how her life both mirrors and shapes the socio-economic and cultural contexts of her world.

Henouda's actions are deeply embedded in the material practices of her environment, aligning with Veeser's first assumption that every expressive act is intertwined with a network of material conditions (Veeser, 1994, p. 2). Her work in a restaurant kitchen in Oran, a hub for foreigners and affluent patrons, is more than a job—it is a critical practice that sustains her family of seven sons and extends to her community. She brings home leftovers of luxurious foods, such as foie gras and caviar, which she shares generously with neighbors:

المهم ان تشبع البطون فقد كانت امي تعمل في مطبخ مطعم راق في وسط وهران يرتاده الاجانب و الموسرون و غالبا ما تحضر معها بقايا الأطعمة الفاخرة من لحوم و اسماك و في المناسبات تأتي بأطايب لم يسمع بها اهل اكميل في حياتهم مثل الفواغرا و الكافيار كنا نوزعها على الجيران لهذا السبب كان الجميع في الحي يحب والدتي .(Bayoud, 2023, pp. 25, 27–28)

[Translation: "What matters is to fill stomachs, for my mother worked in the kitchen of an upscale restaurant in central Oran, frequented by foreigners and affluent people, and she often brought home leftovers of luxurious foods such as meats and fish. On special occasions, she would bring delicacies unknown to the people of Kamil, like foie gras and caviar, which we shared with our neighbors. This is why everyone in the neighborhood loved my mother."]

This act of sharing transforms her labor into a cultural expression of care, embedding her generosity within the economic realities of her workplace and the social fabric of her neighborhood. Her food distribution becomes a material practice that fosters community, illustrating how everyday actions are inseparable from their socio-economic context.

Yet, Henouda's generosity, while celebrated, is critiqued by her son Hichem as naive, resonating with Veeser's second assumption that acts of critique often employ the tools they condemn (Veeser, 1994, p. 2). Hichem observes:

و هي إمرأة طيبة الى حد السذاجة تأخذ كل ما يقال لها كحقيقة مسلمة لا تحمل هما و كل النوائب عندها نوافل يمحوها الزمن. (Bayoud, 2023, p. 25)

[Translation: "She is a kind woman to the point of naivety, accepting everything said to her as unquestioned truth, and all calamities to her are mere trifles that time erases."]

His critique reflects a pragmatic skepticism shaped by the same patriarchal society that undervalues Henouda's emotional labor. By labeling her naive, Hichem inadvertently reinforces the structures that marginalize her efforts, using the cultural lens he critiques to evaluate her. This tension highlights the New Historicist insight that critique is often complicit in the systems it seeks to challenge (Veeser, 1994, p. 2), as Henouda's self-sacrificing generosity is both celebrated and undermined within her own narrative.

The circulation of literary and non-literary texts, as per Veeser's third assumption, shapes Henouda's identity in *Houaria* (Veeser, 1994, p. 2). Her nickname, "Henouda Zina," connects her to the cultural imagery of Indian film heroines due to her kohl-lined eyes:

ينادونها تحببا بهنودة الزينة تصغيرا لاسم الهندية و قد سميت كذلك لان عينيها مكحلتان كبطلات الافلام الهندية (Bayoud, 2023, p. 28).

[Translation: "They call her affectionately Henouda Zina, a diminutive of the name Hindiyah, and she was named so because her eyes are enhanced with kohl, like the heroines of Indian films."]

This nickname fuses local practices, such as kohl application, with global media influences, illustrating how her identity is constructed through a blend of literary narrative and popular cultural discourses. The novel's portrayal of Henouda intertwines with non-literary texts like social naming practices and gender norms, showing how her story is inseparable from

the broader cultural narratives that define Algerian womanhood.

Veeser's fourth assumption, that no discourse accesses unchanging truths or unalterable human nature, is evident in Henouda's response to her husband's absence (Veeser, 1994, p. 2). Her patience and hope for his return are not universal traits of motherhood but responses to specific socio-economic conditions:

هكذا وجدت نفسي كبير العائلة لاخ غائب في عوالمه الخفية و لاب غائب لا نعرف له مستقرا و لم نفكر فيه يوما كرب اسرة .(Bayoud, 2023, p. 24)

[Translation: "Thus, I found myself the head of the family, with a brother absent in his hidden worlds and a father absent, whose whereabouts we do not know, and we never considered him the head of the household."]

Her endurance is a historically contingent strategy to navigate patriarchal neglect and economic necessity, challenging essentialist notions of women as inherently nurturing. Her actions are shaped by her context, revealing the fluidity of gender roles and the absence of fixed truths about human behavior.

Finally, Veeser's fifth assumption, that critical methods describing culture under capitalism participate in the economy they describe, illuminates Henouda's role within a capitalist framework (Veeser, 1994, p. 2). Her labor in the restaurant kitchen positions her as a participant in a market economy, where her work sustains her family but also reinforces her role as a laborer in an exploitative system. By sharing food leftovers, she engages in a form of economic exchange that undermines the power and authority of capitalist logic by prioritizing communal welfare over profit. This duality reflects the New Historicist view that capitalism "metabolizes all of art as well as life" (Veeser, 1994, p. 3), as Henouda's generosity both participates in and resists the commodification of relationships. Her labor embodies the "hollow personality" of capitalist exchange, where identity is shaped by economic roles, yet she infuses this hollowness with communal meaning, navigating the market's demands with resilience.

In conclusion, Henouda Zina's portrayal in *Houaria* reflects the complex interplay of material practices, cultural texts, power dynamics, and capitalist influences, as illuminated by Veeser's introduction in The New Historicism Reader (1994). Her generosity, critiqued as naive, navigates the tensions of critique and complicity. Her identity, shaped by literary and non-literary discourses, challenges fixed truths about gender and motherhood. Her labor within a capitalist economy reveals both participation in and resistance to market logic. Henouda's story underscores the New Historicist insight that individual lives are deeply intertwined with broader socio-economic and cultural forces, offering a nuanced portrait of resilience and sacrifice in Algerian society.

New Historicism illuminates Henouda Zina and Clara Page as cultural archetypes by situating their maternal devotion within the material, social, and economic contexts of their respective worlds. The theory's emphasis on embeddedness reveals how their actions—Henouda's food-sharing and Clara's moral restraint—are responses to specific socio-economic pressures, not merely personal choices. The paradox of critique shows how their agency reinforces patriarchal norms, highlighting the complexity of their roles. NH's focus on circulating texts connects their stories to broader cultural narratives, from Algerian communal traditions to Victorian domestic ideology. By rejecting unchanging truths, NH frames their devotion as historically contingent, challenging universal notions of motherhood. Finally, NH's capitalist lens exposes how their sacrifices engage with market dynamics, both empowering and constraining them. This approach deepens our understanding of Henouda and Clara as archetypes of feminine resilience, revealing the interplay of agency, constraint, and cultural expectation across diverse contexts.

2-Defiant Women: Eleanor Savage and Hala as Problematic 'New Women' in the Jazz Age and the Black Decade

F. Scott Fitzgerald's *This Side of Paradise* (1920) and Bayoud's *Houaria* (2023) present Eleanor Savage and Hala as compelling embodiments of the "new woman," navigating the cultural and social upheavals of their respective eras—the Jazz Age in 1920s America and Algeria's Black Decade in the 1990s. Eleanor, a rebellious flapper with intellectual aspirations, and Hala, an educated elite fleeing violence, reflect the tensions between individual agency and societal constraints in periods of profound transformation. Applying New Historicism, as outlined by H. Aram Veeser in *The New Historicism Reader* (1994), this analysis explores how their narratives are embedded in the material practices, circulating discourses, and capitalist dynamics of their respective times.

2-1-Brilliant and Unmarriageable: Eleanor Savage's Feminist Lament

F. Scott Fitzgerald's *This Side of Paradise* (1920) portrays Eleanor Savage as a striking representation of the cultural and social transformations of the 1920s, especially the evolving roles of women during the Jazz Age. Through the lens of New Historicism, as detailed in Veeser's (1994) introduction to The New Historicism Reader (p. 2), Eleanor's character illuminates the conflicts between personal autonomy and societal limits, the fusion of literary and nonliterary narratives, and the impact of capitalist market forces on individual identity.

Eleanor's characterization as a "wild" and "reckless" individual, with a surname—Savage—that suggests an untamed essence, places her within the material practices of the 1920s, a period when women began to resist traditional gender norms (Veeser, 1994, p. 2). Her upbringing, marked by time in France with a "restless mother" before moving to Maryland, mirrors the mobility and lack of roots typical of the era's growing cosmopolitanism (Fitzgerald, 1920, p. 249). Veeser's (1994) first assumption—that every expressive act is rooted in a network of material practices (p. 2)—is evident in Eleanor's defiance of her Baltimore relatives,

who embody the firmly established social order. Fitzgerald (1920) wrote, “She had a wild winter and arrived in the country in March, having quarrelled frantically with all her Baltimore relatives, and shocked them into fiery protest” (p. 249). This rebellion aligns with the flapper archetype, a cultural shift that rejected Victorian restrictions for personal liberty, as women adopted new freedoms like dancing, smoking, and sexual expression (Veeser, 1994, p. 2). Yet, her resistance is deeply tied to the broader material context of a modernizing society, where economic growth and urban expansion spurred demands for women’s independence.

The second New Historicist principle—that acts of critique and opposition may inadvertently reinforce the systems they challenge (Veeser, 1994, p. 2)—emerges in Eleanor’s efforts to assert her independence amid the patriarchal frameworks of marriage and debutante culture. Her reflection, “Here am I with the brains to do everything, yet tied to the sinking ship of future matrimony” (Fitzgerald, 1920, p. 255), highlights her recognition of societal pressures to marry despite her intellect. While her criticism of this “sinking ship” is compelling, her involvement in debutante culture,a ritual preparing women for matrimony, ties her to the very structure she opposes. Veeser (1994) observed that New Historicists encounter a similar dilemma, as their analyses of power structures can strengthen those same systems (p. 2). Eleanor’s embrace of her “wild” nature challenges convention, but her concern that remaining unmarried reduces her chances with a “first-class man” (Fitzgerald, 1920, p. 255) reveals a self-defeating tension, consistent with New Historicism’s view that resistance often operates within dominant constraints (Veeser, 1994, p. 2).

The third assumption, that _literary and nonliterary texts are inseparably intertwined (Veeser, 1994, p. 2), is apparent in how Eleanor’s portrayal draws from and shapes 1920s cultural dialogues. Fitzgerald (1920) described her as a flapper with “pale skin, the color of marble in starlight” and “eyes that glittered green as emeralds” (p. 243), evoking the era’s romanticized yet perilous image of women. This depiction resonates with nonliterary sources

like magazine ads and films that celebrated the flapper's allure while warning of moral risks (Veeser, 1994, p. 2). Veeser (1994) emphasized that New Historicists pair literary works with historical records to uncover their mutual influence (p. 2). Eleanor's character echoes contemporary accounts, such as Zelda Fitzgerald's writings or newspaper articles publicly denouncing the "shocking" behavior of modern women. Her "Summer Storm" romance with Amory Blaine reflects the sensational youth narratives in the media, blurring the boundaries between Fitzgerald's story and the period's cultural concerns (Veeser, 1994, p. 2).

The fourth principle—that no discourse provides access to immutable truths or fixed human nature (Veeser, 1994, p. 2)—underpins the fluidity of Eleanor's identity as a modern woman. Her statement, "I must descend to their level and let them patronize her intellect" (Fitzgerald, 1920, p. 255), shows her awareness that societal expectations for women are constructed and changeable. Veeser (1994) argued that New Historicists reject stable human nature, focusing instead on how texts mirror the uncertainties or chance elements (contingencies) of their time (p. 2). Eleanor's experience reflects the Jazz Age's dual narratives: the flapper's promise of liberation versus the enduring demand for marriage. Her "magnificent" yet burdensome beauty and intellect (Fitzgerald, 1920, p. 243) do not reveal a universal womanhood but highlight the era's conflicting expectations (Veeser, 1994, p. 2). Veeser (1994) noted that New Historicism disputes claims of exceptionalism, such as unique Renaissance subjectivity, asserting that each era forges its own truths (p. 2), a perspective that frames Eleanor's flapper identity as a product of 1920s conditions.

The fifth assumption—that critical methods and language describing capitalist culture are part of the economy they analyze (Veeser, 1994, p. 2)—provides insight into how market dynamics shape Eleanor's subjectivity. Veeser (1994) referenced Sir Henry Maine's idea that societies evolve "from status to contract," eroding personal identity into a currency-like fluidity (p. 2). Eleanor's lament about marriage as a "sinking ship" (Fitzgerald, 1920, p. 255) signals

her resistance to being a commodity in the marriage market, though her debutante role casts her as an exchangeable object in a capitalist system. Her beauty and intellect emerge as marketable commodities (assets, meaning valuable qualities that can be exchanged in a market), governed by the circulatory logic New Historicists associate with capitalist poetics (Veeser, 1994, p. 2). Veeser (1994) highlighted that New Historicists examine "go-betweens" and "middlemen" who fluctuate like market values, a role Eleanor fulfills as she balances rebellion and conformity (p. 2). Her relationship with Amory, marked by intense yet impermanent (transient, meaning does not last) passion, mirrors the market's emphasis on mobility and detachment, where personal traits are negotiable (Veeser, 1994, p. 2).

Eleanor's character aligns with the New Historicist notion of "self-sustaining anxiety," as explored by Catherine Gallagher in her analysis of *Daniel Deronda* (Veeser, 1994, p. 20). Unlike the externally imposed anxieties of Renaissance texts, her anxiety is internal, arising from her rootlessness and the inevitability of compromise (Veeser, 1994, p. 20). Her claim, "I am too bright for most men" (Fitzgerald, 1920, p. 255), reveals a self-generated unease about her role in a patriarchal society valuing women as wives. This tension drives her oscillation between defiance and acceptance, resembling the "hollow personalities" Veeser (1994) linked to capitalist subjectivity (p. 2). Eleanor's effort to align her intelligence with societal norms reflects a broader shift from status-based to contract-based identities, requiring constant self-negotiation (Veeser, 1994, p. 2). Moreover, her role as a flapper archetype can be analyzed through "arbitrary connectedness," where seemingly unrelated or dissimilar elements expose deeper cultural patterns (Veeser, 1994, p. 2). Her "witch-like" appearance and defiance tie into 1920s anxieties about women's autonomy, echoed in nonliterary texts like sermons and editorials warning of moral decline. Veeser (1994) explained that New Historicists use anecdotes to highlight accidental and situation-dependent uncertainties (conditional contingencies), showing how texts are both randomly selected and contextually linked (p. 2).

Eleanor's narrative, with its vivid imagery and emotion, serves as an anecdote revealing the Jazz Age's ambivalence toward the modern woman (Veeser, 1994, p. 2).

Critics of New Historicism, as Veeser (1994) acknowledged, contend that its emphasis on local knowledge and contingency may overlook broader historical narratives (p. 9). Yet, Eleanor's character illustrates how New Historicism connects individual and societal dimensions (Veeser, 1994, p. 9). Her personal struggle mirrors the 1920s feminist awakening, as women challenged the "sinking ship" of traditional roles. Veeser (1994) cited Jane Tompkins's analysis of sentimental fiction, which positions the domestic sphere as a source of cultural power, a lens applicable to Eleanor's resistance to patriarchal norms (p. 23). However, like Tompkins's study of Harriet Beecher Stowe, Eleanor's rebellion carries imperial overtones, as her privileged background and cosmopolitan life distance her from less advantaged women, underscoring the class and racial limitations of the flapper movement (Veeser, 1994, p. 23).

In conclusion, a New Historicist reading of Eleanor Savage in *This Side of Paradise* reveals her as a complex figure embodying the Jazz Age's contradictions. Her beauty, intellect, and rebellion are embedded in the material practices of a society shifting from status to contract, where women's new freedoms clash with persistent patriarchal constraints (Veeser, 1994, p. 2). Her critique of marriage risks reinforcing the market dynamics she rejects, and her story intertwines with nonliterary flapper discourses (Veeser, 1994, p. 2). By denying unchanging truths, New Historicism highlights Eleanor's unstable subjectivity as a product of her era, while her anxiety reflects the capitalist poetics of a market-driven world (Veeser, 1994, p. 2). Eleanor Savage, both "garbage and treasure" (Veeser, 1994, p. 13), captures the excitement and disillusionment of a woman navigating a society undergoing rapid change (in flux), making her a compelling case for New Historicist study. As noted earlier, Fitzgerald embeds symbolism in her name—Eleanor Savage—where "Savage" evokes an untamed, primal nature that underscores her rebellious spirit, contrasting with the refined expectations of her social class.

2-2-Educated, Elite, and Escaping: Hala as Algeria's Problematic New Woman

The Black Decade in 1990s Algeria, sparked by the 1991 election cancellation, involved a violent conflict between the government and Islamist insurgents like the Islamic Salvation Front (FIS), targeting women with enforced veiling, harassment, and assassinations, especially intellectuals (Bayoud, 2023). Hala, the wife of Hachemi in Bayoud's (2023) *Houaria*, a beautiful blonde from an aristocratic Tlemcen family, embodies the "new woman" through her intelligence and privilege, yet her indifference raises questions about freedom versus responsibility. Applying New Historicism (NH), as outlined by Veeser (1994) in The New Historicism Reader, examines her narrative's reflection of the era's dynamics (Veeser, 1994, p. 2).

New Historicism, as articulated by Veeser (1994) in The New Historicism Reader, rejects a unified doctrine, embracing a heterogeneous set of practices that analyze texts within their socio-historical contexts (p. 1). Its five fundamental assumptions—that every expressive act is embedded in material practices, that critique and opposition may reinforce the systems they challenge, that literary and nonliterary texts circulate inseparably, that no discourse provides access to unchanging truths, and that critical methods under capitalism participate in the economy they describe—offer a lens to examine Hala's role as a "new woman" (Veeser, 1994, p. 2).

Hala's character is deeply rooted in the material conditions of 1990s Algeria, aligning with the first assumption. Her aristocratic background from Tlemcen, with a doctor father, grants her privileges unavailable to most Algerian women, who were often confined to domestic roles amid the Black Decade's violence. Bayoud (2023) portrays her poetically: " كطيف سماوي ينيره الذكاء في وسط من الألوان الصباغية الرقيقة التي يمحوها وهج السطوع" (p. 121) ["like a celestial apparition illuminated by intelligence amidst delicate morning colors erased by the brightness"]. Her elite

lifestyle is further detailed by Hachemi's mistress, Haddiya:

" تراجع دروسها في فيلتهم الفخمة بحي سانت أوبير وخادمتها تحضر لها القهوة بالحليب والمعجنات على صينية ملبسة بالفضة وتنجح كل سنة بامتياز ليهديها والدها الطبيب عقدًا من اللؤلؤ أو الماس، من يدري؟ أو يرسلها مع أمها إلى باريس لتشتري عطورها وملابسها الفاخرة" (Bayoud, 2023, p. 187) ["She studied in their luxurious villa in the Saint-Opear neighbourhood, with her maid bringing coffee with milk and pastries on a silver-plated tray. She passed every year with honors, and her father, a doctor, gifted her a pearl or diamond necklace, or sent her with her mother to Paris to buy perfumes and luxurious clothes"].

These material markers—wealth, education, and global mobility—position Hala as a "new woman" defying traditional expectations to prioritize family and community. However, her privilege isolates her from the violent realities faced by women resisting Islamist oppression, such as targeted intellectuals, highlighting the disparity between her freedom and the broader female experience (Veeser, 1994, p. 2).

Hala's challenge to traditional gender norms reflects the second assumption, that critique and opposition may inadvertently reinforce the systems they challenge. Her self-reliance and pursuit of personal comfort critique the conservative image of Algerian women as communal caretakers, yet align with the capitalist logic of mobility and impersonality identified in modern subjectivity (Veeser, 1994, p. 4). Her focus on luxury, evident in her Paris shopping trips (Bayoud, 2023, p. 187), reflects market-driven individuality. This is starkly illustrated in her reaction to a young man's death in place of her husband, Hachemi, a modernist aI was astonished by her indifference, as if a young man's death were an ordinary event dvocate:

" أدهشتني اللامبالاة التي قابلت بها الخبر كما لو كان من عاديات الأحداث أن ينحر شاب في مقتبل العمر، وما أدهشني أكثر هو رد فعلها حين أنبأتها بأنني كنت المقصود، اكتفت بأن نظرت إلي كما لو كانت تريد أن تتحقق مما قد يحدثه اختفائي، والأرجح أنها وجدت الأمر محتملاً من السرعة التي غيرت بها الموضوع (Bayoud, 2023, p. 194) "

Translation: I was astonished by her indifference, as if a youngman's death were an ordinary event. More surprising was her reaction when I told her I was the intended target; she merely looked at me, as if assessing what my disappearance would mean for her, and likely found it manageable , given how quickly she changed the subject.

Hala's apathy mirrors the "hollow" personality associated with capitalism, where personal gain overshadows communal loss (Veeser, 1994, p. 19). By critiquing traditional norms, she adopts the market's tools, becoming complicit in the individualism she opposes, akin to Renaissance lawyers whose subversive masque, intended to critique power, reinforced King Charles I's pleasure by entertaining him, thus stabilizing his rule (Veeser, 1994, p. 15).

The third assumption, that literary and nonliterary "texts" are inseparably intertwined, is apparent in how Hala's portrayal draws from and shapes 1990s cultural dialogues. Historical records document Islamist efforts to control women through enforced veiling and violence, targeting those who resisted as symbols of Western influence (Bayoud, 2023). Hala's depiction as an educated, elite woman intersects with these texts, highlighting her exceptional freedom in a repressive society. Her poetic portrayal as a "celestial apparition" (Bayoud, 2023, p. 121) echoes Renaissance courtly rhetoric, where aesthetic language masks political tensions (Veeser, 1994, p. 16). Her narrative thus circulates with historical texts to reveal the irony of her agency amidst widespread female subjugation, similar to Montrose's analysis of courtly performances smoothing over conflicts (Veeser, 1994, p. 17).

The fourth principle—that no discourse provides access to immutable truths or fixed human nature—underpins the fluidity of Hala's identity as a modern woman. Her self-reliance and focus on personal comfort challenge the fixed image of Algerian women as family-oriented. The Black Decade's ideological battles destabilized universal notions of womanhood, as women navigated modernist and Islamist pressures. Hala's indifference and flight to France

with her children (Bayoud, 2023, p. 194) reflect a fluid subjectivity shaped by her era's instability, meaning her identity shifts with the violent and uncertain context, adapting to survival rather than adhering to a static role. This aligns with NH's rejection of timeless truths (Veeser, 1994, p. 18). Her actions parallel Renaissance figures like Mary Frith, whose role-shifting defied stable identities (Veeser, 1994, p. 19), suggesting Hala's "new woman" persona is a product of her historical moment.

The fifth assumption—that critical methods and language describing capitalist culture are part of the economy they analyze—provides insight into how market dynamics shape Hala's subjectivity. Her pursuit of safety reflects the "hollow" personality associated with capitalism's demand for mobility (Veeser, 1994, p. 4). Her flight to France prioritizes personal comfort, embodying the "self-sustaining anxiety" Gallagher identifies in capitalist subjects (Veeser, 1994, p. 20). Unlike Renaissance anxieties imposed externally, Hala's stems from her internal conflict between freedom and responsibility, evident in her dismissal of Hachemi's danger (Bayoud, 2023, p. 194). She resembles NH's "go-betweens" like La Malincha, oscillating between roles without fixed allegiances (Veeser, 1994, p. 4). Her narrative thus participates in the capitalist economy it critiques.

In conclusion, a New Historicist analysis of Hala in *Houaria* reveals her as a paradoxical figure in Algeria's Black Decade, embodying the "new woman" through her defiance of traditional norms, yet compromised by her market-driven indifference. Her narrative, interwoven with the era's material and historical realities, reflects the struggles of Algerian women navigating modernity and tradition amidst violence, raising questions about balancing personal freedom with social responsibility (Veeser, 1994, p. 2).

New Historicism illuminates Hala and Eleanor Savage as problematic "new women" by revealing the historical and material contingencies of their autonomy. NH's emphasis on

embeddedness shows how Hala's elite privilege and Eleanor's flapper rebellion are responses to the Black Decade's violence and 1920s cultural shifts, respectively. The paradox of critique highlights how their defiance—Hala's escape and Eleanor's lament—reinforces the systems they challenge, complicating their liberation. NH's focus on circulating texts connects their stories to cultural narratives of modernity and feminism, framing them as archetypes of contested progress. By rejecting unchanging truths, NH underscores that their autonomy is context-specific, not universal, challenging romanticized views of the "new woman." Finally, NH's capitalist lens reveals how their rebellions engage with market-driven systems, amplifying their privilege but isolating them from communal expectations. This approach deepens our understanding of Hala and Eleanor as symbols of progress and backlash, navigating the fraught path of female autonomy in societies in flux.

3-Love and Rebillio: Breaking Norms in *This Side of Paradise* (1920) and *Houaria* (2023)

Rosalind Connage, the dazzling flapper of F. Scott Fitzgerald's *This Side of Paradise* (1920), and Haddiya , the captivating yet controversial heroine of Inaam Bayoud's *Houaria* (2023), are strikingly similar figures—women who wield their beauty and sexuality as both power and provocation in societies that simultaneously idolize and condemn them. Though separated by time, culture, and geography, both characters embody the tensions between female autonomy and societal repression, challenging the moral codes of their respective worlds. Rosalind, navigating the shifting gender dynamics of America's Jazz Age, and Haddiya, trapped in the rigid expectations of Algerian Muslim society during the Black Decade, each represent the paradox of the "liberated" woman—desired yet demonized, free yet fettered. Their stories expose the hypocrisy of societies that celebrate male conquest while punishing female desire, forcing them into roles that are both empowering and entrapping. Through their

defiance, sensuality, and ultimate disillusionment, Rosalind and Haddiya serve as mirrors of their eras, revealing the high cost of female rebellion in worlds unwilling to accept it.

3-1-Rosalind Connage: A Flirtatious Reflection of the Jazz Age

F. Scott Fitzgerald's *This Side of Paradise* (1920) casts Rosalind Connage as a quintessential flapper, embodying the Jazz Age's allure and contradictions. Through the New Historicist lens, as articulated in H. Aram Veeser's The New Historicism Reader (1994), Rosalind's character reveals the interplay of personal charisma and societal expectations, shaped by the consumerist culture and shifting gender dynamics of the 1920s. Her effortless charm, calculated flirtations, and urban sophistication position her as both a rebel against traditional norms and a participant in the social systems she navigates. By applying Veeser's five assumptions, we can uncover how Rosalind reflects the era's tensions between liberation and commodification, offering a window into the Jazz Age's complex cultural landscape.

To start, Veeser's first assumption—that "every expressive act is embedded in a network of material practices" (1994, p. 2)—anchors Rosalind's character in the economic realities of the 1920s. Fitzgerald describes her as having "glorious yellow hair" that fuels the dye industry and a "small, slightly sensual" mouth that captivates onlookers (1920, p. 70). These features tie her to the burgeoning cosmetics and fashion industries, which transformed women's appearances into marketable assets. Her graceful movements, described as "a delight to watch her move about a room, walk along a street" (Fitzgerald, 1920, p. 70), are a performance suited for the urban ballrooms and social gatherings of the Jazz Age. Unlike the Victorian era's emphasis on modesty, Rosalind's beauty functions as a form of social capital, securing attention and status in a consumer-driven society. This connection highlights how her identity is woven into the material fabric of the 1920s, where personal expression and economic exchange converge.

Transitioning to Veeser's second assumption, that "every act of unmasking, critique, and opposition uses the tools it condemns and risks falling prey to the practice it exposes" (1994, p. 2), Rosalind's flirtatious rebellion reveals a nuanced paradox. She defies traditional expectations of female propriety, boldly stating, "I've kissed dozens of men. I suppose I'll kiss dozens more" (Fitzgerald, 1920, p. 101), embracing the era's relaxed sexual mores. Her ability to enchant suitors effortlessly, as Fitzgerald notes, "She never makes the slightest effort to have men fall in love with her" (1920, p. 81), underscores her skill in social manipulation. However, this power depends on the patriarchal marriage market, where her value is tied to attracting eligible men. Her rebellion against Victorian norms thus operates within the system she critiques, reinforcing the dynamics of desire and exchange. This tension reflects the broader Jazz Age struggle, where women's liberation was often constrained by societal structures, making Rosalind's defiance both bold and limited.

Shifting focus, Veeser's third assumption—that "literary and non-literary 'texts' circulate inseparably" (1994, p. 2)—illuminates how Rosalind's character engages with the cultural narratives of the 1920s. Her "radiant, restless" energy and bobbed hair (Fitzgerald, 1920, p. 75) mirror the flapper archetype popularized in fashion magazines, advertisements, and films, which celebrated modern femininity through short skirts and carefree attitudes. Her interactions, leaving suitors "speechless with admiration" (Fitzgerald, 1920, p. 75), resonate with media portrayals of flappers as alluring yet elusive figures. These non-literary texts, from Vogue spreads to newspaper debates about "modern girls," shaped public perceptions of women's roles, blending fascination with moral concern. Rosalind's character thus participates in this cultural dialogue, reflecting and amplifying the Jazz Age's obsession with the flapper as a symbol of both liberation and controversy.

Moving to the fourth assumption, Veeser asserts that "no discourse, imaginative or archival, gives access to unchanging truths or expresses unalterable human nature" (1994, p.

2). Rosalind's identity as a flapper is not a universal trait but a product of the 1920s' specific historical context, marked by economic prosperity, women's suffrage, and evolving gender roles. Her "eternal irresponsibility" (Fitzgerald, 1920, p. 81) would have been scandalous in the Victorian era, where women were expected to prioritize modesty and marriage. In the Jazz Age, however, her carefree charm is celebrated as a hallmark of modernity. Veeser's reference to Jane Tompkins's analysis of shifting literary values (1994, p. 23) applies here: just as texts like Uncle Tom's Cabin were reinterpreted over time, Rosalind's allure reflects the 1920s' rejection of traditional norms, underscoring the contingency of her identity and the fluidity of societal expectations for women.

Finally, Veeser's fifth assumption—that "a critical method and a language adequate to describe culture under capitalism participate in the economy they describe" (1994, p. 2)—sheds light on Rosalind's role as a commodity in the social marketplace. Her "unimpeachable skin" and captivating presence (Fitzgerald, 1920, p. 70) make her a prized asset, yet her tendency to grow "bored with admirers who fail to challenge or excite her" (Fitzgerald, 1920, p. 90) reflects the capitalist demand for fluid, impersonal identities. Veeser's concept of "hollow personalities" that mirror money's mobility (1994, p. 2) resonates with Rosalind's transient relationships, where suitors are interchangeable in her pursuit of novelty. Echoing Catherine Gallagher's analysis of Daniel Deronda, where characters are "treasure because they are garbage" (Veeser, 1994, p. 13), Rosalind's value lies in her circulation within the marriage market, where her charm is both a commodity and a fleeting performance. This capitalist poetics underscores her role as a flapper navigating a world of exchange and impermanence.

In conclusion, a New Historicist reading of Rosalind Connage reveals her as a vibrant figure whose charisma and defiance capture the Jazz Age's cultural contradictions. Rooted in the material practices of consumer culture, her rebellion against traditional norms is tempered by her reliance on the marriage market. Intertwined with non-literary discourses, she embodies

the flapper's allure and the era's anxieties about modernity. Her contingent identity, shaped by the 1920s' historical context, and her fluid subjectivity reflect the capitalist dynamics of mobility and exchange. Through Rosalind, Fitzgerald offers a compelling portrait of a woman balancing liberation and constraint, illuminating the complexities of identity in a transformative era.

3-2- A Body in Revolt: Haddiya's Defiance of Algerian Sexual Morality

In Inaam Bayoud's (2023) novel *Houaria*, Haddiya's character offers a compelling lens for New Historicist analysis, as outlined by H. Aram Veeser in his introduction to The New Historicism Reader (Veeser, 1994), where he identifies five key assumptions: (1) every expressive act is embedded in a network of material practices; (2) every act of unmasking, critique, and opposition uses the tools it condemns and risks falling prey to the practice it exposes; (3) literary and non-literary "texts" circulate inseparably; (4) no discourse gives access to unchanging truths or expresses inalterable human nature; and (5) critical methods under capitalism participate in the economy they describe (Veeser, 1994, p. 2). Veeser's five assumptions illuminate Haddiya's navigation of beauty, sexuality, and defiance within the socio-historical context of Algerian Islamic society during the Black Decade (1991–2002), a period marked by civil conflict and intense moral scrutiny. Her marriage to Houari, in particular, serves as a critical site for exploring how her actions both reflect and challenge the power structures, gender norms, and economic realities of her time.

Haddiya's beauty is a cultural and economic asset, deeply entwined with the material practices of Algerian society, aligning with Veeser's (1994) first assumption that expressive acts are embedded in material networks (p. 2). This means that cultural expressions, such as Haddiya's physical allure and behaviors, are not isolated ideals but are intertwined with tangible

societal systems like economic exploitation and patriarchal power structures, much like how Renaissance masques blended art with political influence. Bayoud (2023) portrays her as effortlessly captivating: "كانت هوارية ترى هدية جميلة في كل حالاتها" (p. 20) [Translation: "Houaria used to see Haddiya as beautiful in all her states/conditions"]. This subjective portrayal from Houaria's perspective positions Haddiya's body as a commodity within the patriarchal and capitalist structures of her society, akin to the Renaissance masques Veeser describes, where cultural forms merge with power (Veeser, 1994, p. 14). Her allure is vividly detailed in a passage describing her sipping coffee, her wet face sparkling, and her almond-shaped eyes gazing into the void:

> أنوثتها الفياضة، وغنجها غير المتكلف يثيران إعجابي ودهشتي .ترشف قهوة بالحليب بطرف فمها ووجهها لا يزال مبللا، وتمسح شفتيها بلسانها بحركة دائرية بعد كل رشفة فتومضا بألف بريق .كانت تبدو عضة وشهية كفاكهة بكر باغتها الندى تحدق بعينيها اللوزيتين الواسعتين في الفراغ منفصلة عن المكان وعن العالم وتفتل بأناملها خصلات شعرها الجوزي المائل للحمرة، والمسترسل على كتفيها ليغطي منبت ظهرها المقوس .كل ما فيها ملائكي، في تقاطيعها المرسومة بما يحاكي الكمال، وفي حركاتها العفوية نفحة من الارستقراطية التي تنقلب لنقيضها بمجرد ان تفتح فمها لتتكلم (Bayoud, 2023, p. 133)

[Translation: "Her overflowing femininity and her unpretentious charm evoke my admiration and astonishment. She sips coffee with milk at the edge of her mouth, her face still wet, and wipes her lips with her tongue in a circular motion after each sip, sparkling with a thousand gleams. She looked ripe and tempting like a dewy fruit, gazing with her wide almond-shaped eyes into the void, detached from the place and the world, while she twirls with her fingers the strands of her chestnut hair tinged with red, flowing over her shoulders to cover the curve of her back. Everything about her is angelic, in her features drawn to perfection, and in her spontaneous movements, there is a hint of aristocracy that flips to its opposite as soon as she opens her mouth to speak"].

Her marriage to Houari exemplifies this commodification, as he orchestrates a scheme to exploit her beauty for personal gain. Houari collaborates with a deceitful partner who lures Haddiya into a compromising situation, resulting in photos used to blackmail her into marriage. As his wife, she becomes a source of income, with Houari arranging for other men to pay for sexual encounters with her, offering nothing in return (Bayoud, 2023, p. 106). This arrangement underscores Veeser's point that "Society's dominant currencies, money and prestige, are invariably involved" in cultural exchanges (Veeser, 1994, p. 3), as Haddiya's aesthetic allure is embedded in a network of economic exploitation.

The marriage itself defies the conventions of Algerian Muslim society, which traditionally prioritizes a woman's honor, and its unconventional nature is starkly illustrated in the wedding night scene. Bayoud (2023) describes: " مع أنه لم يختل بي منذ ليلة الدخلة، وقد كانت ليلة غريبة بحق، فقد فض بكارتي باصبعه، ومسح نزفي بمنديل خرج به نافشا صدره كالديك" (p. 106) [Translation: "Although he did not penetrate me since the wedding night, which was indeed a strange night, he took my virginity with his finger, and wiped my bleeding with a handkerchief, flaunting his chest like a rooster"]. This passage reveals the performative and manipulative nature of the marriage, where Houari's act is less about intimacy and more about asserting control, parading the proof of her virginity as a trophy. Surprisingly, Haddiya appears to embrace the arrangement that follows, as she had engaged in similar sexual activities before the marriage and continues to find pleasure in them afterward. This aligns with Veeser's fourth assumption that no discourse accesses unchanging truths or unalterable human nature (Veeser, 1994, p. 2), as the sacred narrative of marriage and female chastity is subverted, exposing honor as a contingent cultural construct rather than a universal truth. Veeser's reference to Jane Tompkins' analysis of Uncle Tom's Cabin, which shows how texts' moral value shifts with cultural contexts (Veeser, 1994, p. 24), parallels this, as Haddiya's marriage challenges the fixed moral expectations of her society during a time of ideological upheaval.

Haddiya's pursuit of sexual freedom within this exploitative marriage engages with Veeser's second assumption that acts of critique risk reinforcing the systems they oppose (Veeser, 1994, p. 2). She acknowledges empowerment through her encounters: " ولا انكر اني كنت أبلغ ذروة اللذة مع اللطفاء منهم وان كانوا قلة، وكان ذلك يمدني بنشوة الانتقام لجسدي ولكبريائي" (Bayoud, 2023, p. 106) [Translation: "And I do not deny that I reached the peak of pleasure with the nice ones among them, even though they were few, and that brought me a thrill of revenge for my body and my pride"]. Her pursuit of pleasure and vengeance defies the conservative norms demanding female chastity, positioning her as a rebel. However, her agency is facilitated by Houari's scheme, which relies on the same patriarchal structures she challenges. This mirrors the Renaissance lawyers' masque described by Veeser, which critiqued King Charles I but used a fantastical form that delighted the king, nullifying its subversion (Veeser, 1994, p. 15). Haddiya's rebellion, enabled by her commodification, risks reinforcing the market logic that objectifies her, embodying the self-undermining dynamic Veeser associates with New Historicism (Veeser, 1994, p. 16).

The circulation of literary and non-literary texts, as per Veeser's third assumption (Veeser, 1994, p. 2), is evident in how *Houaria* engages with the social discourses of the Black Decade. Rumors about Haddiya's behavior proliferate: " وهناك من يحلف بأغلظ الايمان بأن هدية تواعد أشخاصا في هدأة القيلولة أو عتمة الليل خلف ذلك السوق، وبأنها تفضل الوضعيات التي لا ينجر عنها تبعات وهو ما يفضله أيضا غالبية عشاقها" (Bayoud, 2023, p. 102) [Translation: "And there are those who swear with the strongest oaths that Haddiya meets people in the quiet of the afternoon or the darkness of night behind that market, and that she prefers positions that do not result in consequences, which is also what most of her lovers prefer"]. These rumors reflect the non-literary texts of gossip and moral judgment that policed women's sexuality during the Black Decade, when Islamist movements and state policies intensified control over female behavior. Veeser notes that New Historicists juxtapose texts to reveal how "the world irresistibly contaminates the literary text"

(Veeser, 1994, p. 16). Haddiya's literary narrative is inseparable from these societal discourses, which frame her as an outcast and highlight cultural anxieties about women's autonomy in a volatile period.

Haddiya's role within her marriage and beyond reflects Veeser's fifth assumption that critical methods under capitalism participate in the economy they describe (Veeser, 1994, p. 2). Her marriage, sustained by her commodified sexuality, positions her as a "hollow" figure, akin to Veeser's go-betweens like Shakespeare's Iago or La Malincha, who embody market-like mobility (Veeser, 1994, p. 4). Her relationship with Hashemi, a married doctor, further illustrates this: " ابتدأت العلاقة بينهما بسرعة لم تجد لها تفسيرا، راودته عن نفسها فاحتواها دون مقدمات، كانت تظن بانها مجرد مغامرة عابرة تزول بزوال النشوة لكنها استمرات وتوطدت وتعقدت" (Bayoud, 2023, p. 133) [Translation: "The relationship between them began quickly without finding an explanation for it; she seduced him, and he embraced her without introductions. She thought it was just a fleeting adventure that would fade away with the thrill, but it continued, deepened, and became complicated"]. This relationship, initiated by Haddiya, mirrors the "mobility and impersonality" of capitalist interactions, where individuals resemble "money itself—a medium totally free, unconstrained by silly principles" (Veeser, 1994, p. 4). Yet, her participation reinforces her commodification, aligning with Veeser's view that New Historicism accepts the "inevitability of emptiness" in capitalist subjectivities (Veeser, 1994, p. 19).

Haddiya embodies the New Historicist tension between arbitrary and conditional contingency (Veeser, 1994, p. 4). Her sexual choices appear arbitrary, driven by desire, but are conditionally tied to the patriarchal and economic structures that enable her, as seen in her marriage to Houari. This oscillation reflects the "self-disrupting logics of capitalism" Veeser describes (Veeser, 1994, p. 13), as she navigates between victimhood and agency. Feminist critiques of New Historicism, noted by Veeser through Judith Newton's claim that NH prioritizes "elite male values" (Veeser, 1994, p. 7) and Marguerite Waller's critique of

Greenblatt's sexism (Veeser, 1994, p. 18), are relevant here. Haddiya's empowerment through sexuality could be feminist, yet it risks reinforcing patriarchal objectification. However, her defiance aligns with feminist New Historicists like Catherine Gallagher, who explore women's subjectivities within constraints (Veeser, 1994, p. 19), as Haddiya tests freedom and repression, akin to Mary Frith in The Roaring Girl (Veeser, 1994, p. 19).

Haddiya's marriage to Houari, marked by blackmail, exploitation, and a performative wedding night, encapsulates her complex role in Algerian society during the Black Decade. Her beauty is commodified, her rebellion critiques yet reinforces patriarchal norms, and her story intertwines with societal gossip. By challenging moral truths and embodying capitalist mobility, Haddiya exemplifies New Historicism's focus on contingency, paradox, and the inseparability of culture and power, raising questions about women's agency within restrictive societal frameworks.

New Historicism provides a powerful lens for understanding Haddiya and Rosalind Connage as figures of sexual rebellion, revealing the historical and material contingencies of their defiance. NH's emphasis on embeddedness shows how their sensuality—Haddiya's commodified encounters and Rosalind's flirtatious charm—is shaped by the patriarchal and capitalist economies of 1990s Algeria and 1920s America. The paradox of critique highlights how their resistance to repression reinforces the systems they challenge, complicating their autonomy. NH's focus on circulating texts connects their stories to cultural narratives of scandal and liberation, framing them as archetypes within societal fractures. By rejecting unchanging truths, NH underscores that their rebellion is context-specific, not universal, challenging romanticized views of female freedom. Finally, NH's capitalist lens reveals how their actions engage with market-driven systems, amplifying their allure but exacting social exile and disillusionment. This approach deepens our understanding of Haddiya and Rosalind as tragic icons, exposing the high cost of female agency in societies that both desire and demonize it. As

tragic figures, they pursue sexual freedom—Haddiya through commodified encounters amid the Black Decade's economic desperation, and Rosalind via flirtatious charm in the Jazz Age's superficial liberation—only to face isolation, exploitation, and disillusionment. The "high cost" manifests in social exile (e.g., rumors policing Haddiya's behavior) and emotional voids (e.g., Rosalind's rejection of genuine love for material security), while their societies desire their allure for patriarchal or capitalist gains yet demonize it as defiant, reinforcing NH's view of embedded power structures and self-undermining critique.

Conclusion

To conclude our chapter, New Historicism illuminates Henouda Zina, Clara Page, Hala, Eleanor Savage, Haddiya, and Rosalind Connage as cultural archetypes shaped by their historical and material contexts. Their maternal devotion, autonomous rebellion, and sexual defiance respond to specific socio-economic pressures, from Algerian traditions to 1920s cultural shifts. The paradox of critique reveals how their agency often reinforces patriarchal and capitalist systems, complicating their roles. By linking their stories to broader narratives of motherhood, modernity, and liberation, and rejecting universal truths, NH underscores their context-specific nature. A capitalist lens highlights how market dynamics empower yet constrain them, amplifying resilience or allure at the cost of isolation or disillusionment, deepening our understanding of these women as complex symbols of agency and cultural expectation.

Chapter II

Conservatism in F.Scott Fitzgerald's *This Side of Paradise* (1920) and Inaam Bioud's *Houaria* (2023)

Introduction

The 1920s in America and the Black Decade in Algeria, though separated by time and place, mirror each other in their struggles between conservatism and the drive for modernity and personal freedom. Conservatism, an ideology that prioritizes tradition, social stability, hierarchy, and maintaining the status quo (Merriam-Webster, n.d.), serves as a tool of patriarchal and authoritarian control in both contexts. In the United States, the Jazz Age's vibrant cultural shifts—new dance styles, bold clothing, and daring literature—collided with a conservative framework upheld by Republican presidents and restrictive laws like Prohibition and the Mann Act (Phillips & Rael, 2006; Rose, 2014). Conversely, Algeria's 1990s saw a regressive push from post-independence modernity toward religious fundamentalism, as groups sought to enforce rigid gender roles and suppress artistic expression, presenting their ideology as a defense against Western influence (Harlow, 1994).

This chapter examines how conservatism limits personal freedom and cultural creativity in these mirrored settings through a comparative analysis of F. Scott Fitzgerald's *This Side of Paradise* (1920) and Inaam Bayoud's *Houaria* (2023). In 1920s America, the transition from Victorian conservatism to Jazz Age modernity is reflected in This Side of Paradise, where caractères like Amory Blaine challenge traditional expectations through romantic and intellectual pursuits, embracing the era's cultural liberation. In contrast, 1990s Algeria moved from modernist aspirations toward fundamentalist conservatism, as depicted in *Houaria*, where the protagonist resists patriarchal restrictions, exposing the hypocrisy and decline of fundamentalist ideals. By highlighting the characters' resistance to conservative constraints, both novels underscore the persistent human desire for individuality and freedom in the face of oppressive moral systems.

I-Conservatism in *This Side of Paradise* (1920) by F.Scott Fitzgerald

During the 1920s, Americans embraced many new customs and social trends, experimenting with fresh dance styles, innovative fashions, and some of the most creative art and literature the nation had ever seen. However, despite these cultural shifts, the decade remained largely conservative in American society. Voters consistently chose conservative Republican presidents—Warren Harding, Calvin Coolidge, and Herbert Hoover—and broadly supported traditional social and political policies (Phillips & Rael, 2006; Rose, 2014) aiming to preserve moral standards .

1-Prohibition as a Manifestation of 1920s Conservatism in This Side of Paradise

One of the clearest manifestations of conservative sentiment in 1920s America was the national campaign to ban alcoholic drinks, known as Prohibition, reflecting an ideology that prioritizes tradition, social stability, hierarchy, and maintaining the status quo (Merriam-Webster, n.d.). The term "Prohibition" refers to the outright banning of liquor through the Eighteenth Amendment (1919) and the Volstead Act, which prohibited the manufacture, sale, or transportation of alcohol (Phillips & Rael, 2006). Supported by conservative rural Americans, often aligned with religious groups like the Women's Christian Temperance Union and the Anti-Saloon League, Prohibition aimed to eliminate alcohol, which they viewed as morally corrupt and a cause of social issues like poverty and domestic violence, often calling it the "devil's work" (Rose, 2014; Phillips & Rael, 2006). However, enforcement met resistance in urban areas, where speakeasies and bootlegging flourished, revealing a cultural divide between conservative rural supporters and liberal urban populations (Phillips & Rael, 2006; Rose, 2014).

In F. Scott Fitzgerald's *This Side of Paradise* (1920), Prohibition illustrates the conflict between conservative moral regulation and individual freedom, particularly through the

protagonist Amory Blaine's struggle with personal loss. Devastated by his failed romance with Rosalind, Amory turns to excessive drinking as a way to escape the emotional pain of rejection, embarking on a reckless "three weeks' spree" of bar-hopping that defies the conservative expectation of emotional restraint. This self-destructive behavior reflects his attempt to reclaim personal agency in a society bound by traditional values. The sudden enforcement of Prohibition, however, halts this escape, as Fitzgerald depicts:

> The advent of prohibition with the "thirsty-first" put a sudden stop to the submerging of Amory's sorrow, and when he awoke one morning to find that the old bar-to-bar days were over, he had neither remorse for the past three weeks nor regret that their repetition was impossible. He had taken the most violent, if the weakest, method to shield himself from the stabs of memory, and while it was not a course he would have prescribed for others, he found in the end that it had done its business: he was over the first flush of pain. (Fitzgerald, 1920, p. 223)

This passage captures the abrupt impact of Prohibition, a conservative policy that interrupts Amory's coping mechanism, symbolizing the era's shift from postwar indulgence to enforced moral discipline. The phrase "the old bar-to-bar days were over" illustrates how Prohibition imposes external control on personal behavior, forcing Amory to confront his emotions without alcohol's numbing effect. This conflict highlights the broader struggle between conservative efforts to regulate morality and the modern desire for personal freedom, evident in urban defiance through speakeasies and bootlegging (Phillips & Rael, 2006).

While *This Side of Paradise* portrays alcohol as a means of freeing characters from conservative constraints—allowing them to express emotions and desires suppressed by societal expectations—it also examines how conservative values criminalized non-marital sex. Amory's passionate but fleeting relationship with Rosalind challenges the era's strict moral codes, reflecting the Jazz Age's rebellion against Victorian restraint. This resistance to

conservative norms reveals the tension between traditional expectations and the emerging modern ethos of the 1920s, as characters navigate desire, restraint, and rebellion in a rapidly changing society.

2-Conservatism and the Mann Act in F.Scott Fitzgerald's *This Side of Paradise*

In the novel This Side of Paradise, many characters embody the youth culture's embrace of sexual freedom in the post-World War I era, a period marked by tension with the lingering Victorian values of chastity and prudishness that governed early 20th-century America. These conservative ideals, rooted in the Victorian era's emphasis on modesty and sexual restraint, were upheld by laws like the Mann Act, also known as the White-Slave Traffic Act. Passed on June 25, 1910, and named after Congressman James Robert Mann, this U.S. federal law criminalized the transportation of women across state lines for "immoral purposes," such as extramarital or non-marital sexual activities (Rose, 2014). Such behaviors were considered serious offenses, potentially leading to imprisonment or significant social repercussions, as they clashed with the conservative movement's efforts to preserve traditional moral standards.

In the novel, Amory Blaine and his friend Alec Connage find themselves in a precarious situation at a hotel in Atlantic City, suspected of illicit behavior involving a woman named Jill. House detectives investigate a potential violation of the Mann Act, as Amory and Jill arrived together in a car licensed in New York, and the hotel setting suggests an improper encounter. Fitzgerald illustrates the tense confrontation with the detectives as follows: "Suddenly a steady, insistent knocking began at Amory's hall door and simultaneously out of the bathroom came Alec, followed by the vermillion-lipped girl. They were both clad in pajamas" (Fitzgerald, 1920, p. 264). The detectives' suspicion demonstrates the conservative moral climate of the 1920s, rooted in Victorian ideals, where non-marital sexual activity was heavily scrutinized under laws like the Mann Act, which aimed to enforce traditional values amid a changing social landscape

(Rose, 2014). Amory, however, is unconcerned with what transpired between Alec and Jill in the bathroom. Instead, he takes the blame to protect his friend, who has a family and more at stake. Amory takes Jill into the bathroom and claims she was with him all evening, presenting himself as the primary culprit. His sacrifice is evident in his directive to Alec:

> "Do what I say Alec_do what I say. Do you understand?" Alec looked at him dumbly_his face a tableau of anguish. "You have a family," continued Amory slowly. "You have a family and it's important that you should get out of this. Do you hear me?" He repeated clearly what he had said. "Do you hear me?" "I hear you." The voice was curiously strained, the eyes never for a second left Amory's. "Alec, you're going to lie down here. If any one comes in you act drunk. You do what I say_ if you don't I'll probably kill you." (Fitzgerald, 1920, p. 267)

Amory's decision to shield Alec highlights his willingness to sacrifice his own reputation, as he has less to lose compared to Alec, who faces familial and social consequences. However, Amory's actions lead to his name being published in newspapers, a public warning against scandal and a reminder of the punitive measures for violating the Mann Act and the conservative moral standards of New York society at the time (Phillips & Rael, 2006).

Despite the detectives' investigation, no punitive actions are taken against Amory that night, and he is allowed to leave the hotel with a warning. This episode illustrates the conservative societal framework of the 1920s, influenced by Victorian values of chastity and propriety, where laws like the Mann Act enforced moral boundaries in response to the perceived permissiveness of the post-war youth culture (Rose, 2014). The public shaming of Amory in the newspapers demonstrates the era's emphasis on upholding traditional values, as such scandals could damage social standing and reinforce conservative norms (Phillips & Rael, 2006). In This Side of Paradise, Fitzgerald uses this incident to highlight the tension between individual desires and the restrictive moral codes of the time, showing how conservatism sought

to regulate personal behavior in a rapidly modernizing society.

3-The Jazz Age's Rejection of Conservatism in F. Scott Fitzgerald's *This Side of Paradise*

Despite strict laws like Prohibition and the Mann Act, aimed at purifying society by restricting immoral practices such as alcohol consumption and non-marital sexual activity, the youth of the Jazz Age—the culturally dynamic 1920s—defied societal norms through petting parties and clandestine affairs that challenged conservative morality (Phillips & Rael, 2006; Rose, 2014). In This Side of Paradise, F. Scott Fitzgerald (1920) captures this cultural transition through Amory Blaine's observations of American youth culture. The novel highlights changes in women's behavior, illustrating the decline of Victorian conservatism, which valued chastity and propriety, in post-World War I America. Amory is shocked by "petting parties," social gatherings where young people engaged in romantic or sexual caressing, defying Victorian norms of formal courtship (Merriam-Webster, n.d.; Fitzgerald, 1920, p. 64). These events alarmed older generations, as "Victorian mothers" remained unaware of their daughters' bold romantic behaviors (Fitzgerald, 1920, p. 64).

The "Popular Daughter" (P.D.) archetype exemplifies this rejection of conservative norms:

> The "Popular Daughter" (P.D.), who "becomes engaged every six months between sixteen and twenty-two, when she arranges a match with young Hambell, of Cambell & Hambell, who fatuously considers himself her first love, and between engagements the P.D. (she is selected by the cut-in system at dances, which favors the survival of the fittest) has other sentimental last kisses in the moonlight, or the firelight, or the outer darkness" (Fitzgerald, 1920, p. 65).

Petting parties, rooted in "petting" (romantic caressing; Merriam-Webster, n.d.), reflect the Jazz Age's hedonism, prioritizing pleasure over propriety (Rose, 2014). Fitzgerald depicts this shift, writing, "Amory saw girls doing things that even in his memory would have been impossible: eating three-o'clock, after-dance suppers in impossible cafés, talking of every side of life with an air half of earnestness, half of mockery, yet with a furtive excitement that Amory considered stood for a real moral let-down" (Fitzgerald, 1920, p. 65). The progression from the Victorian "belle" to the assertive "flirt" and seductive "baby vamp" demonstrates women's growing agency, driven by suffrage and the flapper movement (Fitzgerald, 1920, pp. 65–66; Rose, 2014). This evolution highlights the tension between conservative societal expectations and the youth culture's embrace of modernity, illustrating how Jazz Age practices defied 1920s moral standards (Phillips & Rael, 2006).

Conclusion

In *This Side of Paradise* (1920), F. Scott Fitzgerald skillfully captures the cultural and social tensions of the 1920s, a decade marked by the vibrant exuberance of the Jazz Age clashing with the conservative foundations of American society.

Through Amory Blaine's experiences—navigating the abrupt end of bar-hopping due to Prohibition, confronting the stringent moral restrictions of the Mann Act, and observing young women redefine societal norms through bold new archetypes like the flirt or the baby vamp—Fitzgerald portrays a generation caught between liberation and restraint. Legislation such as Prohibition and the Mann Act sought to uphold traditional values by curbing alcohol consumption and behaviors deemed immoral (Phillips & Rael, 2006; Rose, 2014). Yet, the youth of the era, through their petting parties and rejection of outdated conventions, embraced a new cultural identity, defying the rigid moral framework of the Victorian era. The novel vividly illustrates the 1920s as a pivotal moment in American history, a time when society

grappled with the tension between preserving tradition and embracing modernity.

II- Conservatism in *Houaria* (2023)

Introduction

The ideological tension between tradition and modernity has profoundly influenced sociopolitical discourses in the Arab world, with conservatism often positioned as a defender of cultural authenticity against perceived Western influence. Harlow (1994) articulates this divide:

> Partisans of traditionalism insist that only a return to the authentic values and mores of the past, of the ancestors (al-aslaf), will restore the integrity of Arab character and society. Modernism's proponents, on the other hand, maintain that the Arab world must adapt to and adopt the demands of the present, usually articulated by the Western powers, if they are to enter the history of the future. (p. 297)

Conservatism, particularly in its religiously fundamentalist forms, frequently resists social change by advocating strict adherence to traditional norms to preserve cultural or ideological purity. This resistance often serves as a mechanism for patriarchal and authoritarian control, particularly through the regulation of women's autonomy and the suppression of artistic expression. Through an analysis of Bayoud's (2023) *Houaria*, this chapter examines how conservative ideologies enforce rigid gender roles, such as mandatory veiling, and condemn art and music as threats to moral order. However, these rigid rules often prove ineffective, as individuals frequently act on their desires, engaging in behaviors deemed immoral by conservative and fundamentalist standards, thus undermining the efficacy of such regulations.

1-Gender, Conservatism, and Patriarchal Control in *Houaria* (2023)

The status of women was central to the ideological conflict within this party, whose leaders viewed women's freedom as a Western, non-Islamic construct. They advocated for Muslim women to retreat to the private sphere and appear in public only when veiled. In Bayoud's (2023) novel *Houaria*, several female characters adopt veiling as a form of protective camouflage rather than out of religious conviction. From Haddiya's perspective, the enforcement of conservative dress codes serves as a clear manifestation of patriarchal control as exemplified by Houari's friend, a furniture seller:

" نساؤه و بناته لبسن النقاب حتى قبل ظهور موضة التدين (Bayoud, 2023, p. 109) "

[Translation: "His women and daughters had donned the niqab even before the rise of religious fashion"].

Haddiya offers a satirical commentary on these societal shifts, stating,

" كل ذلك لم يكن يعنيني، حتى علامات التغيير في الشكل و الهندام التي طرأت على النساء و الرجال لم تغير شيئا من عاداتي .فقد كنت منذ بلوغي ألبس الجلابة و أتوشح بشال أغطي به رأسي(Bayoud, 2023, p. 109) "

Translation: "None of that concerned me—not even the changes in appearance and dress that overtook women and men altered my habits in the slightest. Since my adolescence, I had worn a djellaba and draped a shawl over my head.

Another character, Hiba, experiences discomfort due to her choice not to wear the veil. In one instance, when Hiba goes to retrieve a package, an employee reprimands her, saying,

" لوكان جيتي بنتي ما نخليكش تخرجي عريانة (Bayoud, 2023, p. 220) "

Translation: "If you were my daughter, I wouldn't let you go out naked"]. The employee further emphasizes his disapproval by stating in formal Arabic, "الكاسيات كالعاريات" (Bayoud, 2023, p. 220) Translation: "Like the clothed yet naked women". This interaction underscores the broader theme of patriarchal control over women's bodies, where clothing becomes a focal point for public scrutiny and enforcement. The employee's remarks highlight how societal

expectations of modesty are used to regulate women's autonomy, positioning their personal choices as subordinate to communal standards.

2-Religious Fundamentalism and the Suppression of Artistic Expression in *Houaria* (2023)

Conservative religious movements often perceive art and music as threats to moral order, framing them as subversive forces that undermine ideological control. During Algeria's Black Decade (1991–2002), religious extremists systematically targeted intellectuals, artists, journalists, and women to establish an Islamic state. *Houaria* illustrates how extremists specifically targeted art as a dangerous form of subversion, attacking creativity to suppress dissent and enforce conformity (Bayoud, 2023).

This analysis examines how religious fundamentalism weaponizes ideology to demonize artistic expression, suppress personal freedom, and silence opposition, beginning with the condemnation of music and art as symbols of modernization. Fundamentalism's opposition to artistic expression follows a predictable pattern, starting with the demonization of creative works and escalating to their prohibition. This ideological assault is evident in the fictional portrayal of Houari's radicalization, where he declares, "الموسيقى تجيب الشياطين" ("Music brings demons"; Bayoud, 2023, p. 108). This statement marks a pivotal shift in his worldview and reflects broader extremist rhetoric. Houari's act of hiding the guitar symbolizes not only the rejection of music but also the deliberate destruction of cultural heritage.

Extremist groups fear art because it fosters independent thought and emotional expression, challenging their authoritarian control. Art's ability to inspire free thinking and preserve cultural memory makes it a significant threat to those seeking absolute power. This dynamic is highlighted by Haddiya's response, "الشياطين؟ وأنت واش تكون؟" ("Demons? And what does that make you?"; Bayoud, 2023, p. 109). This retort exposes the hypocrisy within extremist

ideologies, questioning the arbitrary vilification of music, which was once a normalized part of their lives. Haddiya's challenge reflects historical realities during Algeria's Black Decade, when musicians faced persecution because their songs sustained cultural memory and fueled resistance against oppression. Art, as a medium of expression, becomes a primary target for extremists because it embodies freedom and resilience. Even under systematic suppression—where societal structures, institutions, and practices create and perpetuate disadvantage for groups like artists and women based on their social identity—a song or story can preserve the spirit of resistance and remind individuals of their agency.

The experiences of characters in *Houaria*—Haddiya's defiance, Hiba's public reprimand, and Houari's rejection of music—illustrate religious fundamentalism's broader strategy of enforcing rigid norms to suppress dissent (Bayoud, 2023). Fundamentalism, as a theoretical framework, rejects pluralism, defined as the acceptance of diverse beliefs, cultures, and perspectives coexisting harmoniously, and modernity, imposing a singular, authoritarian vision of society. The novel depicts this through the policing of women's bodies, where veiling serves as a tool of patriarchal domination rather than an expression of religious devotion.

Similarly, the suppression of art and music reveals fundamentalism's fear of creativity, a force that fosters free thought and challenges ideological control. By demonizing artistic expression and enforcing strict gender roles, fundamentalist movements aim to eradicate individuality and enforce conformity. These actions align with the core characteristics of fundamentalism: a reactionary resistance to change, which opposes modernity or social progress to preserve a perceived "pure" past; a literalist interpretation of tradition, which adheres strictly to a narrow, literal reading of religious texts or traditions, ignoring historical or cultural context; and the suppression of perceived threats to its moral order, identifying anything challenging its authority as a danger and seeking to eliminate it. *Houaria* ultimately exposes fundamentalism as a quest for power rather than religious purity, seeking to silence voices that

challenge its hegemony (Bayoud, 2023). Through its narrative, the novel highlights the enduring struggle between oppressive belief and the human desire for freedom, creativity, and self-expression.

3-The decline of conservatism in *Houaria* (2023)

In *Houaria*, Bayoud (2023) critiques the oppressive dynamics of fundamentalist movements during Algeria's Black Decade (1991–2002), exposing their failure to create a "pure" society and instead fostering hypocrisy, moral decay, and rebellion. By enforcing strict laws—such as veiling for women, suppression of art, and prohibition of alcohol—these misguided religious movements sought to curb individual autonomy and creative expression under the guise of moral purity, prioritizing power over spiritual integrity. The novel illustrates this societal decline through the protagonist Houaria's defiance of traditional norms, the institutionalized exploitation of women like Haddiya, and the pervasive alcoholism that fractures families and communities in Oran. Despite public compliance with religious edicts, characters' secret acts of autonomy—through illicit relationships, sex work, and alcohol consumption—reveal the failure of fundamentalist oppression to suppress human desire, underscoring a broader collapse of moral values in a society torn by extremism and instability.

3-1Houaria's Defiance and the Erosion of Traditional Values

Houaria, the protagonist, represents the decline of the traditional ideal of Algerian womanhood, which emphasizes modesty, obedience, and moral purity. Instead, she embodies rebellion through her illicit relationship with Hicham, meeting him secretly for encounters that often lead to sexual relations, defying social and moral norms. Bayoud (2023) captures their intimacy:

"تُغمض عينيها، تحس بلفح أنفاس هشام في رقبتها، أنامل تتخلل خصلات شعرها الكستنائي المقصب .تود لو أن تلك الخصلات تربط الأنامل إلى الأبد.(p. 16) "

Translation: “She closes her eyes, feeling Hicham’s breath on her neck, his fingers slipping through her chestnut-streaked hair. She wishes those strands could bind his fingers forever.”

These meetings often occur at Mon Château, a nightclub where men and women engage in drug use, alcohol consumption, and free dancing, symbolizing the erosion of moral values under fundamentalist pressure. Bayoud (2023) describes the music:

“أغاني الشابة المختارية، كلماتها التي قطعت عرق الحياء” (p. 19).

Translation: “Songs by Cheba Mokhtaria, with lyrics that slashed through any sense of modesty.”

Hicham reveals the cost of entry:

“العريق السمعة، عليه أن يأتي إما بالمال أو المشروبات ’مون شاتو‘لم يخبرني أن من يريد الدخول إلى ملهى الكحولية” (Bayoud, 2023, p. 19).

Translation: “He didn’t tell me that anyone who wants to enter the infamous Mon Château must bring either money or alcoholic beverages.”

Houaria’s shock at the nightclub’s moral decay highlights her initial naivety, but the tragic death of Hicham at the hands of the Islamist Front—“لكن ها هو رأسه يتدحرج أمامها على الأرض، وتبتسم لها العينان الخضروان...” (Bayoud, 2023, p. 16; “And now, his head rolls on the ground in front of her, his green eyes still smiling at her...”)—reveals the violent consequences of defying fundamentalist control. Houaria’s actions reflect the hypocrisy of a society where public conformity masks private resistance, exposing the failure of rigid laws to suppress human autonomy and signaling the broader decline of conservative values.

3-2-Institutionalized Exploitation and Gendered Hypocrisy

Bayoud (2023) illustrates the decline of values through the institutionalized exploitation of women in Oran’s infamous neighborhoods like “أبني و أسكت” (“Build and Be Quiet”), where illegally constructed buildings serve as hubs for sex work. Hicham recounts his first sexual

experience:

"قادني هوبل إلى حي قصديري عبر أزقة ترابية تملؤها النفايات والأوساخ... استقبلتنا
شعرت ببعض ...التي كنت أتوقع أن تكون امرأة بدينة متخفية وراء طبقات من المساحيق {الماطرونة}
واقيل هاد الشير – :الحرج، ورسمت خطوة للرجوع لكنها صعقتني بسؤال بدون ملطفات وجهته لمرافقي
– :فردت بلهجة رتيبة وحاسمة وهي تقودنا عبر دهليز إلى الداخل .؟ أومأ هوبل بالإيجاب...عمره ما ن
ربعين مية دورو" (p. 37).

Translation: "Houbl led me into a shantytown through muddy alleys filled with garbage and filth… We were welcomed by 'the matron,' whom I had expected to be a plump woman hiding behind layers of makeup… I felt some embarrassment and made a hesitant step to retreat, but she stunned me with a blunt question directed at my companion: – I guess this guy has never f… before? Houbl nodded in agreement. She responded in a monotonous and firm tone as she led us down a hallway: – Four hundred dinars."

Hicham's unease continues:

"...{بلوندا بلا ربي} :لم تكن الموسومات شقروات إلا واحدة كانت شقراء مزيفة أو كما يقال هنا
توجهت صوبي وسحبتني من يدي المتعرقة ارتباكاً وانزوت بي في ركن مظلم من الغرفة الكبيرة
بحثت بنظري عن هوبل لأستجيره .المخصصة للاستراحة ونزع الألبسة وارتدائها بعد الانتهاء من الحمام
عن هذه الورطة فلم أتبين سوى خياله العاري فوق إحداهن وتناهى إلى مسامعي صوته الحاد يخاطبها
بكلمات فجة قلما سمعت مثيلاتها بذاءة" (Bayoud, 2023, p. 38).

Translation: "None of the women were blonde except one—a fake blonde, or as we say here, 'a blonde without God.' She walked straight toward me and pulled me by my sweaty, nervous hand into a dark corner of the large room designated for resting and changing clothes after bathing. I searched for Houbl, hoping to escape this situation, but I could only make out his naked figure atop one of them. I could hear his harsh voice addressing her with words so vulgar I had rarely heard their equal."

This exploitation extends to marriage, as seen in Houari's treatment of Haddiya. Despite

their tarnished reputations, Houari marries Haddiya and uses her body as a source of income. Haddiya recounts:

"كان يعطيني تعليمات قبل أن يخرج، من قبيل: انتظري في موقف باص {كوكا}، على الساعة
لم أكن معنية بالمقابل المالي لما أقوم به من خدمات، تعرضت في .كذا، سيارة لونها كذا من نوع كذا
أحدهم كمم فمي وقيدني إلى عارضة سريره، وراح يطفئ .بعضها للكثير من الأذى جراء وحشية الزبائن
وحين أريت هواري ما حل بي لم يظهر تأثراً بل نهرني ...سجائره فوق إليتي وهو ينعتني بأقبح الألفاظ
شامتاً: {تستاهلي}" (Bayoud, 2023, p. 106).

Translation: "He used to give me instructions before going out, like: wait at the Coca bus stop at this hour, a car of this color and model will come. I wasn't concerned with the financial compensation for the services I offered, some of which caused me significant harm due to the clients' brutality. One of them gagged me and tied me to his bed frame, then put out his cigarettes on my buttocks while insulting me with the vilest words… When I showed Houari what had happened, he showed no sympathy. Instead, he scolded me mockingly: 'You deserved it.'"

Despite this abuse, Haddiya finds agency:

"غير أنني كنت أبلغ ذروة اللذة مع اللطفاء منهم وإن كانوا قلة، وكان ذلك يمدني نشوة الانتقام لجسدي ولكبريائي"
(Bayoud, 2023, p. 106).

Translation: "However, I used to reach the peak of pleasure with the gentle ones, though they were few, and that gave me a sense of revenge for my body and my pride."

The novel depicts widespread female involvement in sex work, with some inviting men into their homes. Houaria narrowly escapes rape:

"ذات مرة، اختلت باثنين لكنها تركت الباب مفتوحاً وأومأت لي بشد جفنها السفلي
بإصبعها للأسفل إشارة للحيطة كي أحرسها .لكن المفاجأة أن الأمور أخذت تتأزم حين اختارت
من سيبقى معها في الفراش لتمضية بقية الليلة .فما إن رآني المقصي قرب الباب حتى انقض
عليّ، وطرحني أرضاً .ثم رفع ملابسي وأمسك بفرجي بكامل قبضته، ولم أكن لأنجو لولا تدخل

هبيرة بخبرتها ومحاولتها ترضيته بأن أدخلته غرفتها لينام معها ." (Bayoud, 2023, p. 143).

Translation: "One time, she secluded herself with two men but left the door open and signaled to me—by pulling down her lower eyelid—to be alert and keep watch. But things escalated when she chose one of them to stay with her for the night. As soon as the rejected one saw me near the door, he attacked me, threw me to the ground, pulled up my clothes, and grabbed my genitals with his full hand. I would not have escaped had it not been for Habira's intervention—she tried to calm him down by inviting him into her room to sleep with her instead."

These examples reveal a gendered hypocrisy within fundamentalist oppression: strict laws demand women's modesty, yet men exploit their bodies, justifying their actions with religious phrases like "temporary marriage" or "those whom your right hand possesses." Haddiya notes:

" فلم تنل تغطية الرؤوس وإطالة اللحى من شبقية الفروج، بل صار تبرر بعبارات مستقطعة من آيات وأحاديث من قبيل: 'ما ملكت إيمانهن'، حتى النساء عثرن على عبارة 'ما ملكت أيمانهم'، أو 'نكاح المسيار'، أو 'نكاح المتعة'" (Bayoud, 2023, p. 109).

Translation: "Covering heads and growing beards didn't lessen the lust of the genitals. It was instead justified by cherry-picked religious phrases such as 'temporary marriage,' or 'traveler's marriage,' or 'those whom your right hand possesses.' Even women found a way to use the phrase 'those whom their right hands possess.'"

This hypocrisy highlights how fundamentalist control fails to curb desire, fostering a system where women are disproportionately disadvantaged, their autonomy suppressed or commodified, contributing to the broader moral decay.

3-3-Alcoholism as a Symptom of Societal Decay

Alcoholism, despite being forbidden by Islamic extremists, emerges as a pervasive

symptom of Oran's moral collapse, intertwining with violence and exploitation. The nightclub culture normalizes excessive consumption, as Hicham explains:

"العريق السمعة، عليه أن يأتي إما بالمال أو بالمشروبات الكحولية {مون شاتو}بأن من يريد الدخول إلى ملهى " (Bayoud, 2023, p. 19).

Translation: "To enter the notorious nightclub 'Mon Château,' you must either bring money or alcoholic drinks."

Hicham's father exemplifies this addiction, sending his son to fetch wine:

"روح عند كارنو قول له يعطيك قرعة شراب، وأنا من بعد نحاسبه كيما العادة ...يا الكبول " (Bayoud, 2023, p. 26).

Translation: "Hey, you bastard… Go to Carnot and tell him to give you a bottle of wine, I'll settle with him later as usual."

His drunken outbursts fuel domestic violence:

"يا - :بعد أن يختمر النبيذ في رأسه و يوسع أمي ضربا وهو ينعتها بأقبح الصفات ,إذ سرعان ما تثور ثائرته القح...منين جبتي لي هاد العرام على كل لون؟" (Bayoud, 2023, p. 24).

Translation: "As soon as the wine takes hold of him, his anger erupts, and he beats my mother while insulting her with the vilest terms: 'You whore… where did you get these filthy kids of all sorts?'"

Haddiya's history with alcohol illustrates its destructive role. Tricked into a night of heavy drinking, she is exploited:

"بدأت السهرة .نصب لي كمينا بالتواطؤ مع أحد شركائه الأشرار الذي دعاني ذات ليلة إلى بيته في حي سيتي بيتي لكن هواري جاءني بعد أيام و أراني صورا ما ,لم أرى ذلك الشاب مرة أخرى .بأقداح من لانيزيت و لا أدري كيف إنتهت إن حطت عيناي على إحداها حتى كاد أن يغمى علي" (Bayoud, 2023, pp. 105–106).

Translation: "He set a trap for me in collusion with one of his wicked associates, who invited me one night to his house in the Cité Béti neighborhood. The evening began with glasses of L'Anisette, and I don't know how it ended. I never saw that young man again, but days later,

Houari came to me and showed me pictures; as soon as my eyes fell on one of them, I nearly fainted."

Reflecting on her youth, Haddiya recalls:

"ليالي المجون في الشقق المشبوهة, سهرات العربدة في الشقق المشبوهة, و هي لم تزل بعد مراهقة مع من يكبرونها بعقود, تحتسي لانيزيت حتى تغيب عن صوابها" (Bayoud, 2023, p. 106).

Translation: "Nights of debauchery in shady apartments, while she was still an adolescent, with men decades older than her, drinking L'Anisette until she lost her senses."

Alcohol serves as both an escape from fundamentalist oppression and a weapon of exploitation, enabling abuse and perpetuating moral decay. The widespread addiction, from nightclubs to domestic settings, highlights the failure of prohibition to curb desire, fracturing families and communities and underscoring the collapse of conservative values.

Conclusion

In *Houaria*, Bayoud (2023) exposes the failure of fundamentalist oppression during Algeria's Black Decade (1991–2002) to create a "pure" society, revealing a landscape of hypocrisy, moral decay, and resistance. By enforcing strict laws—such as veiling for women, suppression of art, and prohibition of alcohol—misguided religious movements sought to curb individual autonomy and creative expression under the guise of moral purity. Yet, characters like Houaria defy the traditional ideal of Algerian womanhood through illicit relationships, Haddiya resists exploitation by finding agency in her suffering, and widespread alcoholism undermines the facade of religious control. These acts of rebellion, set against the backdrop of Oran's nightclubs, shantytowns, and broken families, highlight the fragility of fundamentalist ideologies when confronted with the human drive for freedom. The novel's critique extends beyond gendered oppression to encompass a broader rejection of individuality, as seen in Hicham's tragic death and Houari's radicalization, exposing the true aim of these movements:

power, not spiritual integrity.

A comparative analysis with F. Scott Fitzgerald's *This Side of Paradise* (1920), illuminates the universal tension between conservative ideologies and individual freedom across distinct contexts. While *Houaria* portrays resistance to misguided religious fundamentalism in 1990s Algeria, Fitzgerald's novel captures the defiance of Victorian norms during the Jazz Age. Both works reveal the fragility of imposed moral codes—whether religious or societal—when confronted with the persistent human need for self-expression and agency. From Houaria's rebellion against fundamentalist laws to Amory Blaine's rejection of traditional expectations, these narratives underscore a timeless struggle between tradition and progress, shaping societies and individuals in their quest to define their identities and futures. In *Houaria*, this struggle is poignantly grounded in the Black Decade's turmoil, where the erosion of conservative ideals reveals the enduring resilience of human autonomy against oppressive control.

General Conclusion

This dissertation has explored the theme of the decline of values in F. Scott Fitzgerald's *This Side of Paradise* (1920) and Inaam Bayoud's *Houaria* (2023), analyzing characters within American and Algerian post-war societies.

The first chapter examined the portrayal of women in post-war contexts through the lens of New Historicism, demonstrating their significant role in reflecting the erosion of traditional values under distinct social and historical circumstances. In *This Side of Paradise* (Fitzgerald, 1920), female characters, influenced by the aftermath of World War I during the Roaring Twenties, reject societal norms by prioritizing self-interest over emotional fulfillment, embodying a broader decline in traditional values. In contrast, in *Houaria* (Bayoud, 2023), female characters, shaped by the post-Algerian War of Independence during the Black Decade, symbolize the disintegration of social norms and familial ideals, despite previously being revered as emblems of pure families. The second chapter investigated the effects of conservatism, relating it to the concept of Fundamentalism, and explored the influence of non-conservative minorities within these distinct post-war societies.

Despite their cultural and contextual differences, both authors successfully address the universal theme of the decline of values, offering profound insights into the challenges and struggles faced by individuals within their respective societies. *This Side of Paradise* and *Houaria* serve as compelling reflections of their historical epochs, capturing the societal shifts of their times.

As the first study to explore the decline of values in Bayoud's *Houaria*, this dissertation aims to motivate students to engage further with the works of Fitzgerald and Bayoud. We hope this work will serve as an inspiring and practical model, encouraging

future scholars to pursue similar academic endeavors and providing valuable guidance for their research. We take pride in contributing to the scholarly exploration of these texts and anticipate that this dissertation will inspire continued investigation into these authors' works.

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