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An Intersectional Feminist Analysis of Nada Faris's Short Stories *The Elephant in the Room: Stories and Articles from Anglophone Kuwait*

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موقع المجلة الإلكتروني:

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Abstract:

The aim of the present paper is to illustrate a few of the short stories by Nada Faris found in *The Elephant in the Room: Stories and Articles from Anglophone Kuwait*. *Raising Jenna*, *Thirty Year Marriage*, and *Circumscribed Criticism* are the only three short tales examined from her collection. The intersectional feminist theory is used in this essay to explore the complex systems of discrimination that Kuwaiti women face. As it examines discriminatory practices from numerous angles, it is possible to say that intersectional theory is a synthesis of various perspectives. This study aims to demonstrate the oppression of Kuwaiti women and other women in Kuwait for a variety of reasons, including, of course, their gender and ethnicity. In addition, these women are discriminated against on the individual as well as institutional/governmental levels.

Keywords :Nada Faris-Intersectional Feminism- *The Elephant in the Room-Discrimination*-Kuwaiti Society - Institutional Discrimination.

Introduction

Nada Faris, a Kuwaiti writer and performance poet, was born in 1986. Despite being her parents' only female child, she wasn't treated like a princess. She graduated with a Master's in Creative Writing from a private British school. In the present, she is working toward her PhD in the USA. She only uses English to write her literary works. *Before Young Adult Fiction* (2013), *Artemis and Other Spoken Word Poems* (2014), *The Elephant in the Room: Stories and Articles from Anglophone Kuwait* (2014), *Fountain of Youth* (2016), *Mischief Diary* (2018), and *Women of Kuwait* (2019) are just a few of the publications she has written. She also produced a ton of pieces in esteemed publications including *Kuwait Times* and *Arab Times*.

Faris received an Arab Women Award from *Harper Bazaar Arabia* in 2018. She holds a World Peace Initiative fellowship and is a Fellow in Writing at Iowa University's International Writing Program. She also serves on the board of trustees for the Kuwait Cultural Circle Prize for Arabic Short Stories (Almultaqa). She is therefore regarded as one of Kuwait's most well-known Anglophone writers.

Faris has always felt that the arts can help people grow first as individuals and later as societies. She claims in a personal interview that "I truly believe that art can change the world", and "I am a writer. My battle happens on the page, or on a mic. My role, I feel, is in changing perceptions and changing ideas." In her collection *The Elephant in the Room*, she wrote an article entitled as "Lessons from Literary History: Texts that Changed the World" where she clarifies that "Good writers don't reflect reality. They change it" (158).

Due to the fact that she writes only in English, she is sometimes accused of being a “westernized” woman, and “a traitor to authentic Arab heritage” (5). Responding to this accusation, she defends her patriotism in the following terms: “I’m patriotic. My loyalty is to Kuwait, its leaders, its people and its welfare.... I do not and will not call for a remodeling of Kuwait based on Western standards” (10). She also states her purpose for writing in English in a very straightforward manner: “The aim of my writings is to establish a serious mindset that recognizes Kuwait as a democratic, Arab sovereign state that appreciates diversity, advocates hard work (not wasta) [nepotism], and offers a safe haven for anyone (Kuwaitis and non-Kuwaitis) to work and live with respect” (6).

She adds that she seeks, through her writings, in order to increase democracy and tolerance in Kuwait: “Take our country as a metaphor for the lamb and share it by offering a third to our close family, Kuwaitis and hybrids, a third to the expats who help us run this country, and third to all the underprivileged people, the stateless and the laborers, who require our benevolence now more than ever” (113). She clarifies that she seeks to unify the Kuwaiti society rather than “magnify[ing] differences among Kuwaiti groups” (127) which the mainstream media propagates. In her poem “*Superhero Mission*”, she reveals that the motive behind Anglowaitis' writings is “to make society fair” (“Artemis” 51).

It is important to note that Nada Faris's objective is to increase public awareness, and she conveys this through her narrative decisions. The third-person narrators of the study's short stories provide the narration. They offer remarks, critiques, analyses, and descriptions. The linguistic choices Nada Fairs makes play a significant part in defining the specifics of her characters and the

settings in her stories. Her writings are a blend of the two cultures because she is a Kuwaiti who writes in English; they are full of Arabic and Kuwaiti slang terms. Such a situation demonstrates the dualistic nature of Faris' writings.

It should be noted that Nada Faris considers it her responsibility as a writer to fight against harmful cultural conventions and customs. By doing this, Faris provocatively illustrates these conventions and habits. Faris targets negative sociocultural practices that are solely the result of ingrained traditions and ideas. In this way, the majority of her articles examine ideas related to Arab/Kuwaiti norms.

Discrimination in all of its manifestations, including sexism, racism, and classism, is one of these issues. Faris sheds light on Kuwaiti women's oppression, denigration, and lack of value. They face discrimination not because of their gender but because of their social class and race. The intersectional hypothesis offers an explanation for this. Faris' articles demonstrate how prejudiced Kuwaitis remove mixed-race Kuwaitis and children of foreign mothers from society. She also brings to light the reality that some Kuwaitis are classist and abuse domestic workers and children.

Theoretical Framework

Intersectionality

Employing the intersectional approach, the present paper probes deep into three of Faris' Story Collection *The Elephant in the Room-Discrimination* namely "Raising Jenna", "Thirty Year Marriage", "Circumscribed Criticism. It can be said that intersectionality is a set of various theories because it examines the discriminatory system in different perspectives. This theory

first appeared in Crenshaw's paper "Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics", published in 1989, as she is considered to be the first to coin the term in 1989 (Cooper, 2016). However, Cole, E.R. (2009) states that even when the term "Intersectionality" was coined by Crenshaw, its idea's roots can be observed in "A black feminist statement" (1977). At first, intersectionality aimed at demonstrating the oppression practiced on black women. As according to a research paper titled "Using intersectionality to understand structural inequality in Scotland: evidence synthesis", published in 2022, the term "roots" goes back to "Black feminist activism". Crenshaw's usage of the term was in order to refer to "the double discrimination of racism and sexism faced by Black women, critiquing the "single-axis framework that is dominant in antidiscrimination law ... feminist theory and anti-racist politics." (Crenshaw, 1989). Crenshaw also addressed how the systems of power "affect those who are most marginalized in society" (Cooper, 2016). It, however, can be now adopted to study the experiences of any sect so as to dive into their experiences of oppression and exclusion. In 1991, Marilyn Loden and Judy Rosener formed a "Diversity Wheel" in Their book intitled "Workforce America! Managing Employee Diversity as a Vital Resource", implying that the term "Intersectionality" is not only connected to one race or identity.

In their groundbreaking book "*Intersectionality: Key Concepts*" Patricia Hill Collins & Sirma Bilge clarify the intersectionality as following:

"In the early twenty-first century, the term "intersectionality" has been widely taken up by scholars,

policy advocates, practitioners, and activists in many places and locations. College students and faculty in interdisciplinary fields such as women's studies, ethnic studies, cultural studies, American studies, and media studies, as well as those within sociology, political science, and history and other traditional disciplines, encounter intersectionality in courses, books, and scholarly articles. Human rights activists and government officials have also made intersectionality part of ongoing global public policy discussions” (11).

According to Al-Fahim et al.:

“Intersectionality was initially introduced as a concept that centered Women of Color scholar and activists working in liberation-focused social movements and was subsequently incorporated into the academy (Hancock 2011, Harris & Leonardo 2018). Its genealogy in the United States includes a long lineage of Black feminist thinkers as well as other Women of Color scholars and thinkers” (*Intersectionality: From Theory to Practice*, 247).

In “Analyzing Gender, Intersectionality, and Multiple Inequalities: Global-transnational and Local Contexts” (2011), many texts within the book claims that even when “Intersection” was an exclusive term for Blacks in Crenshaw’s definition, many evidences around the world suggest how intersections and discriminations are a global issue more than a race related one. The book gave some examples as well of the issue existing for both genders.

Stigma

Through Nada Faris' short stories, it is observed how Faris discusses more issues than oppression, like social stigma, which happened to Emily Pulleyen in "*Raising Jenna*", as she was oppressed for nothing but her nationality/being a foreigner. Another example of high stigma considered to be deeply implied through Faris' stories is the fate many of her female characters faced by the end of her short stories for only having roots out of the Kuwaiti, like Ameena in "*Circumscribed Criticism*". It reflects the way society looks down upon non-Kuwaiti women, and how they, because of stigma, receives even more oppression than other Kuwaiti women. In defining the term "stigma", Goffman states:

The term stigma, then, will be used to refer to an attribute that is deeply discrediting, but it should be seen that a language of relationships, not attributes, is really needed. An attribute that stigmatizes one type of possessor can confirm the usualness of another, and therefore is neither creditable nor discreditable as a thing in itself (1986).

Stigma is seen as a product of society; therefore, it can be changeable since the term is considered not to be natural, but rather cultural. Brenda Major and Laurie T. O'Brien (2005) argues that "Most stigma scholars regard stigma as a social construction – a label attached by society – and point to variability across time and cultures in what attributes, behaviors, or groups are stigmatized" (395). According to them, stigma is not a thing that relates only to gender, ethnicity or religion, but a "social construct". Faris points out the issue through her stories, focusing

more on how females face more oppression through the Kuwaiti society, regardless of their ethnicity, or religion.

“An ontological deficit. It is not that a person said to possess a stigmatizing condition, trait or attribute has ‘done something wrong’, rather that he/she is in some sense ‘imperfect.’ It is his or her ‘being’ that is socially unacceptable and occasions social distancing and ‘othering’” (Scrambler, 2020. Page 19).

In her short story collection “*Notes on the Flesh*” (2017), Al Shamari reflects from her point of view the way non-Kuwaiti women get stigmatized. Since her mother was Palestinian, Al Shamari suffered unclear reference from stigma and discrimination of the “strictly Bedouin Culture” of her father (1). She was directly regarded as nothing but an “outsider to them”. “A stranger”, Al Shamari follows, “and she remained a stranger”. According to Al Shamari’s conclusion, time changes nothing in the matter, which means that even if the woman was born and raised for years in Kuwait, she will still be treated the same. And marrying a Kuwaiti man can not fix that. Al Shamari includes how her father was “cursed” by the family for marrying a “stranger”, accusing him of “tainting the blood of the tribe” (2).

According to Al-Kandari and Al-Hadben (2010), “Tribal fanaticism generates sectarianism and increases categorization, whether ethnic, religious, or familial” (269). It gives an insight of how the Kuwaiti society is ruled by tribalism and social exclusion, as until the day, the tribe can still be seen as an “important authority in determining the behavior of sons and

daughters, especially with regard to marital choice” (El-Haddad 2003: 3).

Brenda Major and Laurie T. O’Brien (2005) write on the same aspect:

In stigmatization, “marks” become associated with “discrediting dispositions”—negative evaluations and stereotypes (Jones et al. 1984). These stereotypes and evaluations are generally widely shared and well known among members of a culture (Crocker et al. 1998, Steele 1997), and they become a basis for excluding or avoiding members of the stereotyped category (Leary & Schreindorfer 1998, Major & Eccleston 2004). Although both powerful and powerless groups may stereotype and negatively evaluate the other, because the former control access to resources, their beliefs are likely to prevail. (395)

Implying

Writings by Nada Faris are notable for their struggle against patriarchal societies and androcentric worldview. She challenges the traditional social roles of women as wives and mothers, saying that they should solely be concerned with housekeeping. The majority of Kuwaitis view and degrade women as inferior to males. Women should stay at home since they are dominated by their male family members. Faris depicts women's situation both publicly and privately. Faris serves as an example of how some social groups undervalue women's capacity to establish herself and hold high-ranking positions that are only open to men. The political emancipation that Kuwaiti women attained in 2005 is depicted in Faris. Faris often states that her intention to write

about compelling strong Kuwaiti women is to propagate and enhance the image of Kuwaiti women in front of the world.

It is important to highlight that Faris's treatment of the subject of gender inequality functions as a call to action for Kuwaiti women and those who are denied even the most basic human rights. The idea of literature coupled with activism expresses these appeals and goals. Nada Faris is a feminist activist in addition to a writer. She views literature and activism as powerful tools for promoting social change. Activism is an “effective agent of social change than electoral politics” (Humm, 1989). Faris’s writings’ primary preoccupation is to “change the world” (67) when it comes to the issues of gender.

In addition to others, Faris tries to produce a distinct of form of feminism which can be called, in a manner of speaking, ‘Middle-Eastern Feminism.’ This comes as a result of the Western Feminism’s attention to Westerners only. In this respect, Alex Onley writes: “First-world feminisms and Western feminisms both typically refer to more mainstream feminisms that centrally emphasize the demands of middle-to upper-class white women present in the Western world, such as the US and the UK” (3) Badran adds that “in the Middle East “there is considerable unease about ‘feminism,’ a lack of awareness of Middle Eastern . . . feminist history/ies, and an inability to move beyond the notion that feminism is Western and a colonial imposition” (15)

“Raising Jenna”

This story is the longest one viz-a-viz the rest of the stories. It then seems to be a novella (i. e. a short novel). It is told by a third person narrator that gives vivid descriptions of the

characters and settings. In addition, this narrator conveys the internal thoughts and emotions. Using the narrative technique, Faris lets the narrator analyze, comment, and criticize openly. The chronological line of "*Raising Jenna*" is non-linear, that is, it moves from the present to past. The reader is able to understand clearly the psychological causes of characters' deviant present behavior.

The story shows how a rich Kuwaiti man, Abdullah Al-Khadran, married his British colleague, Emily Pulleyen. This marriage is against his parents' will. The narrator expresses how Emily was oppressed by her husband and his parents. His parents refused to recognize her as a member of their family; moreover, they mistreated her. It was only her sister and brother-in-law, Noor and Ahmad, who considered her to be a family member. Shortly after Emily gave birth to her daughter Jenna, she went to Britain. The narrator then shifts to Jenna, who is 15 years old, and expresses how she suffered from being reared without a mother. She is brought up by a stiff, tough father who always treated her severely. One day, Jenna and her father find that Jenna's aunt and uncle arrived at home after they were abroad so many years ago. Abdulla's sister asks him to forgive his wife, Emily. Abdulla agrees and the story ends.

Raising Jenna can be regarded as a feminist short story. It sheds much light on the Kuwait females' problems. In addition, this novel is a call to warn the oppressive patriarchal system of what women can do to fight against the imposed social constraints. They are able to be role models who make a start towards a suitable lifestyle. In this short story, there are many situations that show female oppression and how they are mistreated as inferior creatures.

Abdulla's family is sexist and patriarchal. It is like a Victorian family in which males used to dominate and mistreat women as inferior. Abdulla is the main male protagonist, and he is extremely sexist. He thinks that his wife, Emily, naturally becomes his own possession when he pays her a "generous dowry" (Faris, "The Elephant" 57), a "price tag" (58) according to the description of Emily's mother. Emily's father feels this sexist orientation and rejects the suitor who "come[s] to purchase their daughter" (58). Abdulla does not discuss the family matters with his wife, Emily, such as calling off their wedding party, leaving Oxford to live in Kuwait. Furthermore, he does not take his wife's opinion on giving a name of their child.

Whenever she begins to protest, he utters his usual words, "That's final" (61), and turns his back to her. He believes that her only role is to satisfy his needs and desires; when she asks him about what her work in Kuwait would be, he says, "This is your career... you will be a wife" (62). In Kuwait, Emily lives in loneliness. It is not permitted for her to go out of home without a man. Abdulla's friend, Jarrah, tells Jenna: "I've never met her [Emily].... Abdulla kept her pining after him for three years! I'm sure I would have caved after the third day" (76). It should be added that Emily suffers from her husband's apathy. Fifteen years later, Abdulla clearly announces to his friend that he "was cold", "too stiff", and "didn't love her [his wife] as much as I could have" because he wanted to "protect her" by being "always right, always strong" (93). Abdulla's sister, Noor, tells Emily: "I don't know how you agreed to live like this. All I ever think about is escaping.... I can't imagine what you must be going through" (79).

It is worth mentioning that Noor herself is oppressed by her family. She dearly loves music and seeks to study it, but the male members of her family do not agree. They “expected the girls to become either engineers or doctors” (69). As a result, she leaves for England to achieve her dream of studying music. As for Emily, she flees to England leaving behind her baby with her abusive husband.

There are numerous other situations that show women's subordinate status in the society. A “too stiff and strong” (93) man is difficultly challenged by other men, but when he is associated with femininity, he is stepped over. By way of illustration, when Abdulla screams at the female secretary at his daughter's school, “his voice resounding against the walls” (56), no one of the parents rebels against him. However, when Abdulla's childhood friend calls him Om Sa'ad, the provocative nickname from childhood, a Kuwaiti man “showcase[s] his masculinity” (63), and rebukes Abdulla for screaming “like you were the king of the world, but you're not even a real man... his nose almost touching the other man's chin” (63). Like others, he supposes that Abdulla is a "jins" (61), (a gay in English.) This situation shows the subordination of women in this society.

Nada Faris also illustrates a fresh social issue brought on by gender inequality. It's the 'Boyat' phenomena. Females who reject their feminine physical attributes and choose a masculine way of life are referred to as boyas. These rebels want to reclaim the rights that their society has denied them. These women crave the dominance of men. It is a result of the dominant worldview regarding the place and value of women. Mariam, Noor's friend, is a clear example of a 'boya'. Faris does not clarify details about her social circumstances, but reflects Mariam's male behavior. It

is discovered, indirectly, that she/he cannot stay for a long period with a girlfriend and is like some single men in Kuwait, flying from one flower to another in "Kuwait's notorious Messila beach" (84). Emily asks Noor: "Is she [Mariam] going to settle down with her new girl?" Noor replies, "I doubt Mariam entered the police academy to settle down" (84). It should be mentioned that although women are permitted to attend the police academy, the idea is not socially accepted. Mariam wants to be in power in a male-dominated job. Faris clears out how oppressing and underestimating females have bad social influence in Kuwait.

In *Raising Jenna*, Jenna and Emily are oppressed because of their race. The society in the story is discriminatory par excellence. Abdulla's father "didn't want a foreigner in the house. Neither did his mother" (61). Abdulla's parents ask him to "stop this madness" (61), arguing that he is "acting as a terrible role model for the rest of his siblings" (61). In their view, his deed shows great rebellion over the mainstream values of society. In this haughty family's house, Abdulla's mother forces Emily not to speak English as it is a "no-English-in-the-house rule" (69) and thus she "prevented Emily from conversing with any one" (69). This is an example of double discrimination—it is based on gender and ethnicity.

She thinks that her son should have married "a Kuwaiti wife who's more worthy of begetting" (70). Noor says to Emily: "you've gone through so much here. I'd like to apologize to you on behalf of my family and my country but I know it won't change anything" (85). Furthermore, Abdulla's mother refuses to take care of her granddaughter Jenna and accounts for her choice by saying, "I'll be busy raising your legitimate children" (90). Jenna's

grandmother excludes her due to her hybridity. As a result, she is put under the mercy of a senseless, psychopath father.

As mentioned earlier, Emily is not discriminated only for her gender, but rather for her race/ethnicity. However, it can be said that her femininity has the most important role in letting the Kuwaiti society oppress her. This means that she seems to be oppressed and marginalized for her ethnicity, but, in fact, the central factor of her oppression is her gender.

What proves the idea that women in Kuwait are discriminated for many things when Faris draws the character of the Lebanese secretary who adheres to a poor social status. Abdullah rudely screams at her in the full view of people, paying no attention to her feelings. All he is afraid for is himself and what he possesses. It is noteworthy to mention that he considers Emily and Jenna as things he possesses. Abdulla's toughness and boorish attitude are expressed in the nicknames his brother gives to him, "Godzilla" and "Monster" (99).

Intersectionally speaking, all of the female characters in the novel experience oppression and abuse on multiple levels. They are not as severely oppressed, though. While Noor is simply oppressed because she is a woman, Emily is oppressed because she is a foreigner. The Lebanese secretary experiences discrimination on account of her gender, class, and nationality. There are at least three forms of discrimination in this situation. In her Ph. D dissertation "Literary Activism In Anglowaiti Writing: Gender In Nada Faris's Literature" Mihaela Tirca:

"Raising Jenna puts a spotlight on the increasing indifference and aggression in the depicted society. Abdulla is an unsympathetic aggressive man who undervalues others'

feelings and despises whoever does not share his gender, origin, cultural and religious background, and high economic status. For example, when he proposed to Emily's parents, he showed a great deal of indifference and rudeness because he believed that they raised their daughter improperly. He disrespects them by saying, "She [their daughter] spent the night crying at my doorstep because I wouldn't let her in. I had to step over her body to come here....I'm here to fix Emily" (58).

In "Analyzing Gender, Intersectionality, and Multiple Inequalities: Global-transnational and Local Contexts" (2011), many texts within the book claims that even when "Intersection" was an exclusive term for Blacks in Crenshaw's definition, many evidences around the world suggests how intersections and discriminations are a global issue more than a race related one. The book gave some examples as well of the issue existing for both genders.

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"Thirty Year Marriage"

The story is told in the third person by Jassem and Haifa, a Kuwaiti couple who have been married for thirty years. Jassem wants to divorce Haifa and accuses her of being indifferent to his emotional needs. He claims that he has always been waiting for her to change her attitude. He orders her to take all of her possessions and leave. When Haifa is left alone, she cleans up the apartment and does the housework before taking a nap while sitting on her chair in waiting for her husband to come back in a better mood, and the story ends.

Faris illustrates a social problem in *Thirty Year Marriage*: ladies try to please their husbands and do their prescribed responsibilities (like cleaning, for example). Haifa has a crush on Jassem, her husband. She attempts to take care of her husband's physical requirements and is consistently clean and organized. She is a willing and forgiving wife who simply relies on her husband to keep her safe and provide for her financial needs. Haifa embodies every conventional gender role for a woman. She fulfills her part of their marital contract, in her opinion, thus it is difficult for her to understand why he wants to get a divorce.

On the other side, her husband, Jassem, is a writer and does not believe in this obsolete idea of gender roles. He needs a wife who does not only satisfy his physical needs but he wants a wife that shares him his feelings and thoughts; he needs a strong wife who is “padding your [her] damn insecurity because I [her husband] came home late” (136), who is able to go shopping on her own when he cannot accompany her. He waits thirty years for Haifa to change and “to grow up” (135), but in the end he says: “I've been alone for thirty years, suffering, I can't do it any more” (136). Through *Thirty Years Marriage*, Faris shows that what has been thought as the mainstream femininity for so long is starting to lose its influence in the modern Kuwaiti society. In Feminist terms, Haifa represents the subordinate female who surrenders and for her husband’s indifference. She is seen by him as “a hot nauseous fear bubbled in the pit of Haifa’s throat as she remembered her groceries swimming in a puddle of filth in front of her husband’s apartment” (98).

This anecdote is significant because it illuminates a hitherto unrecognized facet of Kuwaiti women's status. Any feminist will typically let men take full responsibility for female oppression.

Rarely does a feminist search for the ingrained culture or the norms and ideals that women voluntarily uphold, despite the fact that doing so would be incredibly oppressive for them.

In "*Thirty Year Marriage*," the wife, Haifa, objects being a tool that solely does housework, ignoring her femininity. Surprisingly, a man is the author of the feminist viewpoint in this narrative. According to intersectionality, even how people react to femininity varies, which is why women have different experiences. *Circumscribed Criticism*

Ameena is a Kuwaiti writer who fights for women's rights and calls for merging them in the political sphere. Her rebellious writings pique the anger of the Kuwaiti government. Therefore, she undergoes a prison sentence where she chooses not to fight against any political or social issue. Then, Ameena is allowed to keep writing but against the rebels themselves. She gets married to her cousin and takes the traditional role of an Arab wife. She becomes a subordinate wife and a hypocrite writer who praises the status of Kuwaiti women. Nevertheless, a critic doubts Ameena's true beliefs and writes an article that defends her by shedding light on some of her separated words. His article, "In Defense of the Craftiest Feminist in Kuwait" doubts the veracity of her loyalty and submission to her husband. Therefore, Ameena is imprisoned for the second time.

Asked about the significance of showing strong Kuwaiti women in her writings, Ameena answers: "it functions as a reminder.... you see, female principles bear immense responsibilities, but still, people tend to forget that because the mainstream media projects the notion that women who enter the parliament will only talk about clothes and makeup" (36-7). It is

noteworthy to mention that her writings are disturbing to the majority and government. Thus, they become submissive to her social will.

Intersectionally speaking, Ameena is oppressed for many things including gender and ethnicity. Due to the fact that Ameena is of Iraqi origin, all people in the Kuwaiti society exclude and marginalize her; she is seen as an outsider, another victim like Al Shamari's mother (2017) of stigma. Scambler (2020) adds on being an outsider: As outsiders, they were stigmatised as unclean and deviant, leading to 'us' versus 'them' representations and enactments (Smith, 2001). Most significant therefore was the binary: established 'versus' outsiders. The former were characterised by strong social cohesion and networks and shared backgrounds, while the latter comprised novitiates who were essentially strangers to each other and lacked access to significant networks and influential (institutional) positions." (19)

Ameena dies in jail after knowing about the protest of "Karamat Watan" (Arabic for "Nation's Dignity"). The author shows that the "Karamat Watan [Nation's Dignity] march, the anti-governmental rally where a hundred thousand Kuwaitis took to the streets on the 21st of October, 2012 in protest of governmental corruption" (42) led for toppling the Kuwaiti government, the prime minister and other ministers. It is one of the greatest political reforms.

In *A Sociology of Shame and Blame: Insiders Versus Outsiders*, Scambler (2020) writes:

As outsiders, they were stigmatised as unclean and deviant, leading to 'us' versus 'them' representations and enactments (Smith, 2001). Most significant therefore was the binary:

established 'versus' outsiders. The former were characterised by strong social cohesion and networks and shared backgrounds, while the latter comprised novitiates who were essentially strangers to each other and lacked access to significant networks and influential (institutional) positions. (19)

Faris shows how the discriminated and silenced females can benefit from what the courageous writers did. Faris brilliantly links Ameena's courageous writings with two real political reforms. The narrator shows that Ameena's article 'Anything He Can Do I Can Do Better' "sparked the Blue Revolution of March 8, 2005, where thousands of Kuwaiti women, in blue clothes, raised slogans of protest in front of the parliament....saying: 'Half a democracy is not a democracy' and 'Give women their rights right now'" (36). As a result, Kuwaiti women were given the right to vote and to run for election. Ameena's role as a social critic and reformer is clearly admitted. It should be added that Faris demonstrates that Ameena's struggle against discrimination is a great source of inspiration for various oppressed females.

One thing so be seen in the story is how even academic, educated females can remain silent instead of using their knowledge as a weapon against stigma and discrimination. In an article written in 2019, Sarah Jane Aiston states that "Academic women are consciously making the decision to remain silent, even when subjected to discriminatory comments and behavior. Not speaking out, not speaking up, is taken as a strategic decision in order to safeguard future career prospects. Being too vocal is associated with risk". In the same article, she mentions how even in cases where "academic women" speak, they get quickly

silenced. This shows that in some cases, educated women remain silence not as a sign of acceptance to the discrimination in which they continuously face, but as the only way to be safe. In the same article, Aiston writes that: “Women who are not silent are positioned as ‘aggressive’ or ‘bitches’, which is why asking academic women to ‘lean’ in is highly problematic.” She ends up by saying: “Paradoxically, women’s silence is both an enabler and a barrier to their career progression. Despite legislation, policies and initiatives – albeit not in all international contexts – there remain ‘sticking points’ where women academics are not reaching the most senior ranks and leadership positions. Given this, there is a strong case to be made for taking micro-inequities in the academy far more seriously.”

In intersectional terms, Ameena’s struggling is branched in more than directions. This means that she does not only struggle for women for being women. Rather, they struggle for feeble and helpless females. For example, a strong, rich woman does not need someone to defend her, at least, as much as a weak, young girl needs. What asserts this idea is that the movement of ‘Karamat Watan’ is mainly ‘political.’ It addresses the political problems that negatively affect the status of females.

This sheds much light upon the fact that the Kuwaiti government practices intersectional; institutionalized forms of discrimination. There is no equality between men and women, indeed, nor between women themselves. As a consequence, Ameena does not fight against only certain individuals, like the other protagonists, but she also tries to give a voice for those who are oppressed. She tries to attract the attention to her cause. Her goal is to fight against the discrimination itself, whether it is macro or micro, and give a new aspect of dealing with

discrimination. It is not one-axis based but it is based on multiple axes (i. e. gender, ethnicity, social class etc.)

In the book “*Institutionalizing Intersectionality: The Changing Nature of European Equality Regimes (Gender and Politics)*” Krizsan et al. clarify the due perspective that world’s governments should adopt viz-a-viz perceiving the nature of discrimination:

“Some countries continue to maintain a single approach, frequently asserting the primacy of gender, while others maintain multiple approaches, focusing on a few politically-privileged inequalities. Yet others opt for integrated equality institutions, assuming the similarity of state responses across different inequalities. Some countries maintain separate political administrative structures for certain protected inequalities, while others have created equality bodies for legal protection at the expense of equality bodies previously in place” (5).

Conclusion

It can be concluded that Nada Faris’ Short Stories *The Elephant in the Room: Stories and Articles from Anglophone Kuwait* show different forms of female oppression. Her stories do not focus exclusively on one group of women. Faris instead creates female characters from 'different' social origins. It's important to realize how revealing the word "diverse" is. Diversity is a fundamental topic in feminist theory. For instance, since all women cannot be grouped together, their experiences are not all the same and are instead varied. The intersectional theory was developed in this way to draw attention to the reality that women are oppressed in many 'intersectional' ways.

As for Faris' *The Elephant in the Room: Stories and Articles from Anglophone Kuwait*, there are two types of females, viz., Kuwaiti women and foreign women living in Kuwait. This means that both types of women are of different cultures and backgrounds. In 'Raising Jenna', due to the fact that she is a British woman, Emily confronts, at least, two forms of discrimination which are 'sexism' and 'racism.' On one side, her husband Abdullah treats her as inferior who should not give her opinion on anything. On the other side, Abdullah's family disdains her as a foreigner. Furthermore, they force her not to speak English which is her native language. This form of oppression has nothing to do with her gender but it is closely related to the fact that she is an 'immigrant.' It should be noted that preventing Emily from speaking her native English represents the family's refusal to accept Emily. Such a refusal is called 'marginalization'. This shows, according to the author, how being marginalized is not exclusive for being only a foreigner, but also for being a female. The oppression which Emily gets to face throughout the story tells how society can treat a female differently only based on things that she never chose to have, such as her skin color, ethnicity, language and roots.

In "*Thirty Year Marriage*", Faris demonstrates a good example of Kuwaiti men. She hints at the idea of 'internalized discrimination.' It is so strange that it is the wife, Haifa, who voluntarily surrenders herself to her husband. Furthermore, it is her husband that does not like such surrendering. In "*Thirty Year Marriage*", Haifa, the wife, ignores her femininity and objectifies herself as a tool that only performs the house chores. The feminist voice in this story, surprisingly, comes from, a male. According to intersectionality, even the responses to femininity vary, and this the female experiences do. The story sheds light on how some

females are oppressing themselves without being pushed to it, implying the fact that society and stereotypes managed to lead them into such a conclusion. It narrates the story of how ideologies affect the individuals even when they never directly faced it, making them follow some codes that were issued long ago, and looked upon as nothing but the natural way in which society should follow. In the short story “*Thirty Year Marriage*”, males can also be seen as individuals whom stands against the oppression which society creates on females, making them unconsciously following its codes. A male here suffers from the affects of such an ideology, while seeing his wife surrendering by herself.

In *Circumscribed Criticism*, When we talk about institutionalized prejudice, we mean that the government, not just people, engages in and supports discriminatory actions. Nada Faris demonstrates this. This short story takes issue with the fact that in their male-dominated society, even some powerful, educated Kuwaiti women can be subdued and silenced.

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تحليل نسوي تقاطعي لقصص ندى فارس القصيرة الفيل في الغرفة: قصص ومقالات من الكويت الناطقة باللغة الإنجليزية (الانجلويتي)

الملخص:

الهدف من هذه الورقة هو توضيح بعض القصص القصيرة لندى فارس الموجودة في كتاب الفيل في الغرفة: قصص ومقالات من الكويت الناطقة باللغة الإنجليزية. تربية جينا، و"زواج ثلاثين عامًا"، و"النقد المحدود" هي الحكايات الثلاث الوحيدة التي تم فحصها من مجموعتها. تُستخدم النظرية النسوية التقاطعية في هذا المقال لاستكشاف أنظمة التمييز المعقدة التي تواجهها المرأة الكويتية. وبما أنها تدرس الممارسات التمييزية من زوايا عديدة، فمن الممكن القول أن النظرية التقاطعية هي توليفة من وجهات نظر مختلفة. تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى إظهار اضطهاد المرأة الكويتية وغيرها من النساء في الكويت لعدة أسباب، بما في ذلك، بالطبع، جنسهن وعرقهن. وبالإضافة إلى ذلك، تتعرض هؤلاء النساء للتمييز على المستوى الفردي وكذلك المؤسسي/الحكومي.

الكلمات المفتاحية: ندى فارس، النسوية التقاطعية، الفيل في الغرفة، التمييز، المجتمع الكويتي، التمييز المؤسسي.