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**Re-Presenting Marginalized Woman's
Role in Ali Ahmed Bakathir's *The Secret of Shahrazad***

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Abstract

This research deals with an important area of study, Arabic literature; it examines a play from Arabic drama written by the well-known Yemeni playwright and novelist, Ali Ahmed Bakathir. To be sure, most of female characters in Arabic plays are doubly marginalized. They are marginalized as women, a muted, dispossessed and oppressed fringe of patriarchy. Also, they are marginalized because of the social, cultural, political or intellectual position of the group, community, society they belong to. This paper thus aims to investigate whether these female characters are truly marginalized or they have been given leading roles in Arabic drama. It also aims to study these female characters who are oppressed and distressed and yet up to challenge social orders and establish hierarchical ideas of knowledge and truth and analyzing their roles in Bakathir's 'The Secret of Shahrazad.'

According to the finding of this study, the status of woman in Bakathir's play has been subjected to perceptible changes. Shahrazad, a heroine of the play, is a much more astute character than her predecessors were. She discusses how she came to be a woman trapped by the domestic role, and she enumerates the personal ramifications of her situation of her life. In fact, she is the only female character to do anything about her situation. She does not outright to leave her husband 'Shahryar', but she grants him a lot of marital rights and privileges under the roof that they share. She effectively shuts off his brutal power. Indeed, Bakathir tried to justify woman from marginalizing and from men's domination by giving her leading roles in his play. He significantly introduced her as a modern, a new, an educated and an open-minded woman who studies music and knows how to dance. He also re-presented woman's roles by providing her capability of taming the man, freeing him from his complexity and psychological problems, and changing his ideas to become a man who believe in otherness and coexistence with woman.

Key words: Ali Ahmed Bakathir, The Secret of Shahrazad, Arabic Drama, Woman's Role, Feminism, Representation, and Marginalization.

Objectives of the Research

The present study aims to explain the roles of woman in Bakathir's *The Secret of Shahrazad*. It will investigate these female characters oppressed by male domination. It tries to recognize the presentation, portrayal and treatment of women in Arabic drama. In other words, it is an attempt to answer the following questions:

What are the roles of female characters in the play *The Secret of Shahrazad*? And how Bakathir represented their roles in the play?

The sub-questions are:

1. Who is Bakathir and what is his significance and contribution to Arabic literature?
2. What is the summary of Bakathir's play *The Secret of Shahrazad*?
3. What are the conceptual relationship between Feminism and Representation; Feminism and Marginalization?

Significance of the Research

It is, no doubt, that very little is known about Arabic Literature in general and Arabic Drama in

particular in English culture. The international libraries lack references written about Arabic Literature to the English reader. This research paper will contribute to shed light on Arabic Literature and convey it to non-Arabic speakers and learners. Another significant point of this research is that it is one of the rare English researches in the field of Arabic drama that highlights Bakathir's contributions which did not get much attention as other Arab authors.

Limitation of the Research

This research is limited to a play titled *The Secret of Shahrazad* written by Ali Ahmed Bakathir. More particularly, the study focuses on the representations of women's role in the play.

Methodology of the Research

This is a theoretical research and the study is qualitative in nature. Since the aim of this study is to know the presentation, portrayal and treatment of women in Arabic drama, it will depend on Feminist Criticism as a theoretical effort seeking review, accountability, criticism and correction for a stable social order. The study investigates the portrayal of

women, represented by Bakathir, who demand equity and social justice in the face of patriarchal Arab society. Therefore, the study involves textual analysis, the most appropriate research method to facilitate in achieving the necessary findings is a technique referred to as descriptive and analytical approaches. It focuses on the analysis of the representation of woman's roles in Bakathir's play *The Secret of Shahrazad*.

The Parts of the Research

1. Introduction: This part is divided into five parts:
 - 1.1. Introduction .
 - 1.2. Bakathir's life.
 - 1.3. Bakathir's significance and contribution to Arabic literature.
 - 1.4. Summary of *The Secret of Shahrazad*.
 - 1.5. Bakathir's view of woman.
2. Feminism, representation and Marginalization:
 - 2.1. Feminism in an Islamic and Arabic Context.
 - 2.2. Feminism and Representation.
 - 2.3. Feminism and Marginalization.
3. The Representation of Marginalized Woman Role in *The Secret of Shahrazad*:
 - 3.1. The role of Shahrazad.
 - 3.2. The role of Budour.
 - 3.3. The role of Duniyazad..
4. Discussion.
5. Conclusion.

1.1 Introduction

Aristotle declared that 'female is female by virtue of a certain lack of qualities' (Kharbe 2009) and St. Thomas Aquinas believes that 'woman is an imperfect man.' (Prasad 2007) In fact, feminism of course is a long political history developing as substantial system. It is culture politics that shows how woman is marginal, subaltern and oppressed by patriarchy system. Radical feminist theory is chiefly concerned with issues arising out of sexual harassment, rape and woman bettering. It uses the oppression of women as fundamental and most basic form of oppression and all this oppression stems from male dominance. Woman is supposed to bear male oppression saliently and meekly where they fail to do so, they are branded as crazy, punished and hysterical.

The experiences and spaces of marginalized women are subversive and have multiple shades of formation and understanding. The term marginalized refers to people who, for different reasons, are dislocated from society, and relegated to its fringes. Any human society is a combination of the two sets of people: powerful or dominators and weak or submissive types. This categorization can be further extended to various levels ie. cast, creed, gender, race, nationality, culture and religion. The marginalized women are those who are living in the peripheral line of living in terms of their gender discrimination, class differences and caste position, particularly as

indigenous woman. These kinds of women are usually unseen in the 'common' society. Their sufferings are long been avoided and do not consider as 'wrong' but the usual consequences of everyday life.

The purpose of this paper is to study the roles of women in Bakathir's play *The Secret of Shahrazad*, and investigate whether one of these women is marginalized or not. This part introduces a general background about Bakathir and his vision of woman with a general and brief survey of his contribution to Arabic literature. It is divided into four subtitles, the first introduces Bakathir and his life, significance and contribution to Arabic literature, summary of *The Secret of Shahrazad* and the last presents his view of woman.

1.2. Ali Ahmed Bakathir

Ali Ahmad Bakathir was born on December 21, 1910, in Surabaya, a town in East Java of Indonesia for Arab parents originally from Hadramaut (Yemen). He was the first child of Arab parents who had come to Indonesia from Hadramaut. When Bakathir was eight years he was sent to Hadramaut (Yemen) for his Islamic education. He studied Islamic theology and Arabic language in Sayoun and started composing poetry at the age of thirteen. When his father died in February 3rd, 1915, Bakathir (aged fifteen years then) wrote an elegy poem of more than seventy lines. After studying at "Al-Nahdha school" in Sayoun, Bakathir worked in teaching and became the principal of the same school in 1926. During his stay in Sayoun, Bakathir was involved in the literature live and participated in publishing "Al-Tahthib" magazine. When Bakathir was eighteen years old, he married a girl two years younger than him. While he was on a journey to the HAJAZ, his wife died giving birth to their first child. The pain of his loss was so great that he refused to go back to Hadramaut. After the death of his beloved wife, Bakathir left Hadramaut in 1932 to Aden. After staying in Aden for few months he left to Somalia, Ethiopia, and then stayed in Hijaz (Saudi Arabia), where he wrote his first poetic social play. In 1934, he was allowed to go to Egypt. He registered in the Department of English of the College of Arts at Fuad University; the first University (now Cairo University) where he obtained his degree in 1939. In the same year he married for the second time-an Egyptian widow whose two children he adopted. In 1940 he obtained his diploma at the 'Teachers' Training College. From 1940 to 1955 he taught English at Mon-soura and in Cairo. In 1955, he joined the Ministry of Culture and National Guidance. He had acquired Egyptian nationality in 1945. Although he expressed the desire to do so, he never went back to Hadramaut or Indonesia. Between 1954 and 1968 Bakathir traveled privately or officially as a member of Egyptian delegations abroad to France, Romania, Russia and Britain. He also traveled widely in the Arab World.

He died in Cairo on the 10th November, 1969 (Omotoso, 1972).

1.3. His Significance and Contribution to Arabic literature

Bakathir was a productive Arab playwright, novelist and poet of the 20th century who contributed immensely to the development of Arabic and Islamic literature. Along with Mahmud Taymur and Fathi Redwan, Bakathir is considered by some as one of the successors of Tawfiq al-Hakim, (Badawi, 1987, P. 88) one of the best known and most important figures in the history and development of Arabic drama due to his ingenuity and output. Ali Ahmed Bakathir is basically an Islamic playwright, novelist and poet, and is even considered as one of the pioneers of Islamic literature, Arabic free and blank verse, political drama, historical novels, and an innovator of several styles (Basibrin, 2003, P. 8).

In fact, it was Bakathir's commitment to Islamic ideology throughout his entire life which made him unique among his contemporary Arab dramatists; his works were dedicated to representing the Islamic ideology in all aspects of life. His artistic mission was to establish firmly Islamic drama in the field of Arabic literature. Despite the above, Bakathir never seems to gather as much attention as other productive writers of Arabic Literature, specifically Drama. There are a number of possible reasons for this, including: firstly due to a perfectionistic Islamic approach, Bakathir's works mainly attract only those with a similar ideology. Thus, at times, his works have little appeal to secular and liberal people particularly those who have different faiths and ideologies. This occurs despite his contributions and stature in modern Arabic and Islamic literature. Secondly, ignorance concerning his works may be unintentional and partly due to Bakathir's nature of avoiding the spotlight. (Alalfi 2003). Thirdly, There is a dichotomy of opinions on the works of Bakathir amongst scholars of Arabic literature. The first group, due to their Islamic inclinations, are favorable towards his works. Their analyses tend to revolve around the Islamic ideology of Bakathir and the effectiveness of his works as a vehicle for instructing and admonishing Muslims. The second group, coming purely from a critical literary approach, are less favorable. They regard Bakathir's idealistic Islamic worldview as a form of 'tunnel-vision' that significantly inhibits all aspects of his work, causing predictability, blunting sensitivity and limiting creativity (Badawi, 1987, P. 129). Academics of this type prefer the ideological freedom that is virtually non-existent in Bakathir's works. Yet, at the same time, they do acknowledge some of the outstanding works of Bakathir in terms of ingenuity and style. Naturally, biases are witnessed from both groups and both approaches form an integral part of literary analysis. Nonetheless, it is an essential part of

literary analysis to be able to appreciate the writer's context, background, ideology, intentions and implications (Hassim, 2009, P.9).

At any level, due to his acclaimed contributions towards Arabic and Islamic literature, Bakathir certainly deserves more readership and academic study, at least by his intended Muslim audience. Currently, there are very few published books devoted entirely to Bakathir and various aspects of his works. It appears that all of these have been written by academics with Islamic inclinations, such as Abdulla Al-Tantawi and Abu Bakr Hamid. As to the small number of recorded postgraduate research on Bakathir's works, almost all of these were conducted at Islamic universities such as Al-Azhar, the International Islamic Universities of Islamabad and Malaysia, Imam Muhammad b. Saud University, and a number of other Middle Eastern institutions. Abu Bakr Hamid's dissertation completed at the University of Illinois, in 1988, however, is an exception (Hassim, 2009, P. 9).

Furthermore, Bakathir's dramatization is a new interpretation in the light of psychological insight. This play *The Secret of Shahrazad* is among Bakathir's best works in its treatment of great universal themes; hence it represents new method in his thought and dramaturgy. The practice of Bakathir, the dramatist, reinforces his artistic intention to create moral dramas for Islamic theatre and to offer new conceptualization to contemporary Eastern drama and criticism. Lastly, a number of his plays enjoyed some measures of success on the stage and some popularity. Even if the bulk of Bakathir's production failed in theatre.

1.4. Summary of the Play *The Secret of Shahrazad*

The play *The Secret of Shahrazad* has four acts in 125 pages and each act has one scene except the fourth act which has two scenes. We can sum up the most important theatrical events of the play in the following paragraphs:

The play begins with a scene of the king 'Shahryar' in the bedroom of the queen 'Budour', his wife, who returned from outside and began her dialogue with 'Shahryar'. Budour is jealous from the maids because of Shahryar's tendency and love toward them. However, Shahryar rejects this view and claims that he loves 'Budour' only and there is nothing in his heart except her. After she refused to do showering with him in a public tub in the palace, Shahryar decides to take a bath with maids. Consequently 'Budour' got angry and ordered 'The Black Slave' to enter her room to provoke Shahryar's jealousy. She wants to provoke the feelings of her husband and convey a message that his relationship with maids is completely wrong. After 'The Black Slave' enters her room, she asked Alqhrmana to tell Shahryar.

After that Alqhrmana decided to tell Shahryar about 'The Black Slave', as a result he became so angry and takes decision to kill them both 'Budour' and 'The Black Slave'. After entering her room, Shahryar first killed 'The Black Slave', and then he killed Budour. In fact, Shahryar knows that his wife (Budour) did all these things to raise his jealousy, but he psychologically does not accept Budour's clarification and killed her. Thus, the first act of the play ends by Budour's murder.

Act II begins with Shahrazad, a daughter of Nourodinne and the heroine of the play, who is staying at her home thinking about Shahryar's request to spend a night with her and kill her, like others, in the morning. Family of Shahrazad requests Wise Redwan, a teacher of Shahrazad and Shahryar at the same time, to intercede Shahryar to give them time. Shahryar did not accept Redwan's intercession but he gave them opportunity of one week. After that those two old friends of Nouredine, a father of Shahrazad, came to his house asking him to revolt against Shahryar. Henceforth, Nouredine agrees to revolt against the king (Shahryar). Later, Shahryar came to his house and threatened to kill him and his daughter. Nouredine understood that those two friends who encouraged him to make revolution are spy of the king. Meanwhile, Shahrazad appeared in beautiful clothes, talking with Shahryar and prepared to become his bride at night. Shahryar decided to accept Shahrazad's proposal and he left Nouredine's house. Then, Shahrazad's parents showed their grief and sorrow about Shahrazad's decision to become a bride of the king because they think that he will kill her on the next day as he did with other brides. Shahrazad does not care about her parents' sorrow and she begins dancing and singing with Dunyazad, her sister, and with this, the second act of the play ends.

Act III begins in the king's palace. Shahrazad's mother farewell her daughter with deep sorrow and pain. Shahrazad was wearing wedding dress. She tried to calm her mother who was crying and bemoaning. Shahrazad told her mother that she will not die tonight and she will win. After Shahrazad's mother left, Shahryar enters and begins talking with Shahrazad. He admired her wonderful and beautiful style of talking. After trying to sleep with her, Shahrazad told him that her sister, Dunyazad, is sleeping there. At the beginning Shahryar got angry, but when Dunyazad pretended that she wants to be a partner in her sister's wedding. This raises Shahryar's admiration and he started to laugh. At the end of the act, before she wants to sleep, Dunyazad asked her sister to narrate a story in order to sleep. Shahrazad begins narrating the story by this speech: I was told, a happy king! and the third act ends.

The first scene of the fourth act begins with Shahryar who got up from his bed and went to a room of Budour to kill the ghost of Budour and The Black

Slave. Then he returns to bed. Shahrazad and Redwan observed this scene. Shahrazad asked Redwan what is the solution to this problem, and he confirmed that there is only one solution!

In the second scene, Shahrazad brought a maid who wore dress of 'The Black Slave' as Budour did in the first act. She keeps the maid in her room. As a result, Shahryar was astonished to see this scene and he remembered the scene of killing Budour and The Black Slave. He begins to cry and blubbing because he knows that they were innocent. He psychologically and emotionally feels guilty and he confessed that he made a big mistake. He asked Redwan of the solution to this spiritual crisis. Redwan advises him to give compensations to the relatives' victims and embrace dowry to those who want to get married. Shahryar accepted Redwan's proposal and decides to walk to unknown destination to make adventures as Sinbad did. Shahrazad rejoices of this decision and confirmed that she would accompany him in these travels and adventures.

1.5. Bakathir's View of Woman

Ali Ahmed Bakathir's reading of woman and his treatment to this important issue is influenced by his own philosophy and his Islamic ideology. Bakathir protested against the position of women, their rights and their being neglected in society. He stresses a new beginning and reform self-realization. Like other playwrights, he wants to change and reform, including woman's position too. He desires to fight for the improvement of women's position and their education. He has his own unique way of presenting woman in a distinguished and bright image. His representation of woman is an output of his Islamic views and morals, his own vision of woman and his views that are colored by some modern trends, which believe that woman should be respected and valued and she has to contribute actively in all fields of life. Bakathir explicitly and implicitly depicts woman's position as a deprived and dependent creature whose humanity and individuality is taken from her. Bakathir pointed out his own about woman and his dissatisfaction with some disadvantageous which affected the expected role of woman; Bakathir stated:

In my opinion, the woman of modern age is no more a female one because she leaves her home and works and does many activities which make her extending the limits of her feminism. Furthermore, she did not pay the sufficient attention of the works of her home, and she neglected the children because she believed that these tasks are the responsibility of the servants (Abobakr, 1997, P.66).

However, this does not mean that Bakathir stands against the woman and her rights to work outside. He thinks that a woman has a prodigious purpose in life, and she has a duty to do the jobs and works that suit her abilities. When he was asked,

"do you think that woman should not work?" He replied:

No, she should work but she should not be transferred into a male because of her extroverted behaviors; it is not suitable for her to undress her body in a disgusting way, even the husband does not like to see his wife naked. She would be annoyed in her way, in transportation and in her job if she behaves openly and impolitely. She should be introvert so that she can avoid the annoyances of others. She should do the works that suit her nature and she also should avoid the behaviors that make her fall in the trap of those who run after their sexual motifs (Abobakr, 1997. P. 66).

This vision of Bakathir about woman and her roles was basically based on his Islamic view; Bakathir declared "I always think of Islam as a powerful civil and spiritual power and humanity will be in need to be enlightened and guided by this power" (Abobakr, 1997. P. 99). Thus, Bakathir's positive view of woman controls his literary vision and treatment of female characters. concerning this view, Al-Zabidi declared that Bakathir has introduced a bright modal of woman in his works; Al-Zabidi states:

Bakathir has introduced bright modals of woman in his literary works and he put woman in her right place, which was never done before by other writers, as I know. He did not only introduce woman in a positive and bright image in his works but more he rewrote some historical and legendary works, which humiliated woman and looked down upon in a way to keep the prestigious status of woman. Bakathir praised the roles and contributions of Muslim and Arabic Woman. (Al-Zabidi, 2008)

In other words Muhammad Gebril, a famous Arabic author confirmed this Bakathir's view about women in an article entitled 'Woman Equitable and Fairness in the Genius of Ali Ahmad Bakathir'. Gebril stated:

The genius contributions of Ali Ahmad Bakathir the poet, the dramatist and the novelist represent clear representation of the role of the Muslim and Arabic woman. This role of woman includes her contributions in taking care of the husband, children, which expanded to include her contributions to the general life (Gebril, 2013).

Indeed, Bakathir has shown the boundless role of Muslim and Arabic woman in the history of both modern and old. Gebril pointed out that woman has a positive role in the bright history both old and modern (Gebril, 2013). He confirmed on the effective role of Muslim and Arabic woman in modern and old history which was depicted by Bakathir in most of his works. Moreover, Bakathir defended woman against fabricated allegations of others and he believed that woman shared man in the great deeds and changes in the history. This point comes out of Bakathir's own philosophy and vision, which believes in

woman's fairness. He also called for woman's education and believed that she should have an effective role in several fields of life. This view of Bakathir influences and governs his presentation of woman in his literary works (Al-Shami, 2016, P. 307).

2. Feminism, Representation and Marginalization

Feminism can broadly be defined as advocacy of the sociopolitical rights and enfranchisement of women and full gender equality. This part discusses the terms related to the research paper. It is divided into three subtitles, Feminism in an Islamic and Arabic Context, Feminism and Representation; and Feminism and Marginalization:

2.1. Feminism in an Islamic and Arabic Context

Historically, before Islam woman was considered as a victim of cruelty and an object of entertainment. She was completely controlled by patriarchy system and she had no liberty of thought or expression. At a time when the rest of the world considered women as no better than slaves, with no rights what so ever, Islam acknowledged women's equality with men in many great respects (Sheikh Yusuf Estes, 2016, April 2).

Armstrong shares the same view that in the pre-Islamic period mostly women could not own property. They have no freedom or any individual rights. She agrees that Muhammad (PBUH) had a profeminist agenda. Muhammad (PBUH) basically gave women all social and economic rights in the 7th century which consider something appreciated and valuable :

"The Quran was attempting to give women a legal status that the most Western women would not enjoy until the nineteenth century." (Armstrong, 2006, P. 147)

The Holy Quran states in Surah Al-Ahzab about the dignity and position of woman:

Remember that society consists of both men and women, who have to go through life hand in hand. If one of them lags behind, it is bound to hamper the progress of the other. It should be well understood that there is no difference in the potentialities of men and women; except certain biological difference" (33:35).

Thus, it is important to notice that Islam has declared long time ago-that a woman is equally proficient and holds substantial position in the family and the society as well. She has been given potentialities in all respects. Hence, it can be viewed, as Dr. Fahmida has pointed out that Islam is the first religion that brought drastic changes in the environment for women, who could now breathe the air of freedom. The burial of female child ill-treatment to her was forbidden. She was given access to education and the right to express her opinion in marriage, she was given a share in inheritance. These are indeed revolutionary measures (Hussain, 2001, P. 112).

On the other hands, Islamic feminism aims to recover the notion of gender equality that introduced into 7th century (C.E) by the Qur'anic revelation. Human equality, from which gender equality cannot be separated, did not sit well with the patriarchal cultures into which Islam was first introduced and spread. Meanwhile, Patriarchal believed, traditions, and conducts mostly continued resistant over time to the revolutionary Qur'anic concept of gender equality to the extent that the equation of 'patriarchy and Islam' became self-evident. Thus, Islamic feminism has taken on the two-fold task to show up and enucleate patriarchal ideas and practices glossed as Islamic naturalized and perpetuated in that guise and to recuperate Islam's core idea of gender equality (indivisible from human equality). For this Islamic feminism has incurred enemies from within and without the Muslim community: firstly from within men who fear the loss of patriarchal privilege and women who fear the loss of patriarchal protection, and secondly from without those whose pleasure and politics are found in denigrating Islam as irredeemably anti-women (Barden, 10 February, 2006).

The discourse on Islamic feminism has generated a language that many young women in the Muslim world are able to draw upon while challenging patriarchal norms, which are culturally entrenched within the family and society, by arguing that they have nothing to do with Islam and everything to do with tradition. Their insistence on following what is Islamic rather than familial or cultural can potentially enable them to recover their long obfuscated rights. In the non-Western societies, feminism has largely been considered an alien concept, contrary to indigenous norms and traditions. Associated with Western colonial intrusion, feminism per se and Western feminism in particular, are easily discredited as an attack on the cultural authenticity of non-West societies and a corrupting influence (Ahmed, 2015, P. 2).

The constant aim of feminism is to change women's position, for the advocates of feminism indicate that women are set aside or neglected, an exclusion must be encountered by all possible means. Thus, it is obvious that Islam has given women their own rights in all fields of life. Apart from this, the need to define feminism in an Islamic sense is so demanding. This is due to the belief that Islam is based on 'faith' and feminism is seen in some societies as a western product that ought to be rejected and contested. On the other hand, there are those who think that "feminism has no place in Islam but rather is a Western invention that has led to drastic and unwelcome social changes. They base their argument on the pretext that feminism is a part of western colonial agenda to create disorder in Arab and Muslim countries. Others argued that 'feminism and Islam are compatible and that seen in the proper light Islam is truly feminist (Kecia and Leaman, 2008, P.37).

Omya Abdulatif and Marina S. Ottaway who are critical of the rise of Western feminism movements in Arab countries states:

' these women's organizations belief that woman in Islamist movements are the best confused and misled, that their representation is token, and that they are only passive actors, shackled by the movement's strict codes of conduct and assigned few if any significant roles shaping their politics. (Abdulatif and Ottaway, 2007, P. 8)

2.2. Feminists and Representation:

Equally important to the term feminism, there is the concept of 'representation' which needs to be highlighted in this research paper. In his book, Representations and Signifying Practices, Stuart Hall defines representation as follows:

The production of the meaning of the concepts in our minds through language, which enables us to refer to either the 'real' world of objects. People or events, or indeed to imaginary worlds of fictional objects, people and events (HALL, 1997, P. 17).

Within the definition of Hall, representation is the process by means of which we tend to link things, concepts and signs altogether to produce meaning. It is not only concerned with what is shown and expressed directly, but rather it involves the way we present and represent a particular thing in a certain way. As seen by John Downing and Charles Husband, representation has become a preferred expression for the process of imagery construction (Downing and Husband, 2005, P. 41).

When we discuss representation, the notion of 'reality' becomes equal in importance. In his book, representation and Reality, Putnam thinks that:

Words, sentences and other 'representations' have meaning; Representation may refer to (I e., be true of) some actually existing thing or each of a number of actually existing things; .. representations may be about something which does not exist; ...a state of mind may have a 'state of affairs' as its object (Putnam, 1998, P. 1).

However, what is being represented should not be necessarily real. It could be falsification, fabrication, misrepresentation or a manipulation of reality. Dealing with representation from feminist perspective, it is found that representation has been central to feminists' concerns from the start of feminism. It was believed that the way women look at themselves and the way they are perceived were shaped by the ways in which images of women were constructed and thus rendered to the society as a whole. Those images of women carried of perpetuated the dominant ideologies of gender differences. Maggie Hum states: *"feminists argue that representation continually creates, endorses, or alter idea of gender identity (Maggie, 1989, P. 189).*

Women tend to create new realities of women and write different subjects than those of men.

Furthermore, feminists show concern for the representation of marginalized women too. In this regard, the notion of 'women's representation' in literature indicates two feminist approaches: the feminist critique and gynocritics. Feminist critique is the process of the feminist reading of male-authored texts; it appeared as a first step and initial emphasis on women's images or representations in male writers' text. While gynocriticism has come as an alternative practice to criticizing women's images aiming at changing the stereotypical representation of women in the traditional masculine-dominated canon. It is based on the belief that women's writing can have impact only if it is read in a proper way away from the patriarchal eye adopted by male-dominated criticism. In fact, the establishment of literary practice like gynocriticism encourages women to write subjects very much related to them and their experiences.

The emerging role of women – and the physical and rhetorical violence that color that role – has highlighted the gulf between secular feminists who embrace the Western ideal of a liberal democracy and Islamic feminists seeking to shape their future within the context of religion. However, the secular approach to women's rights is a luxury few Muslim women in the Middle East care to indulge in.

2.3. Feminism and Marginalization

Approaching the literary canon from a feminist perspectives is one of the most influential and methodological ways of discursive thoughts nowadays. Feminist theory aims to understand the landscape of inequity of females and highlighting on sexuality, gender issues and power relations. It also fights on social issues such as generative privileges, sexual harassment, domestic violence, equal pay, discrimination and sexual abuse. Jane Moore elaborated:

" *How a text represents women, what it says about gender relations, how it defines sexual difference. (A few texts, of course, do not depict any women at all, and say nothing about gender relations..(Mcleod, 2000, P. 173)*

Women's positions in society, particularly those of marginalized/ peripheral ones positions are very preoccupied with the sense of docility and negligence.

Marginalization is the social process of being relegated to the fringe of society. One such example of marginalization is the marginalization of women. The marginalized women are those who are living in the peripheral line of living in terms of their gender discrimination, class differences and caste position, particularly as indigenous woman. Those marginalized women are usually victims of patriarchal system and are unseen in the common society. Their roles are mostly marginalized socially and politically. To be sure, their sufferings are long been avoided and do not consider as wrong but the usual consequences of everyday life. Furthermore, these marginalized

women do not have any ability to speak regarding their control on their own body and ordinary life of living. Indeed, woman's body is mostly controlled by the superiority of male partner. Also, the act of disfigurement of female's body is considered as a normal act in case of those women who are truly marginalized.

In fact, the marginalization of female roles in Arabic drama does not take place in a vacuum; rather there are definite aspects that lead to have woman marginalized. It is stereotypically a traceable phenomenon back to the early times, since it is unanimously shared that men have the upper hand over women. In social context, marginalization is an attempt at belittling or excluding someone from society. It shows that those who lack required characteristics or move away from what is collective are socially excluded and described as 'undesirables' (Marginalization, Wikipedia contributors).

The experiences and spaces of marginalized-dominated women are subversive and have multiple shades of formation and understanding. To be sure, the marginalized women are those who suffer from patriarchal system because of living in terms of their gender discrimination, caste position, class differences and, mainly as aboriginal woman. These types of women generally are invisible in the ordinary society.

The notion that women are victims of social marginalization is a dialectical issue in feminism and the argument over the subject still continues. However, in a world dominated by men, women, as feminists believe, are pushed in the background, whereas men are in the foreground. Women mostly find themselves move in the world of patriarchy which means "the rule of the father" (Marginalization, Wikipedia contributors). Later this patriarchal domination has been extended to refer to the governance of men. Indisputably, men play a rather greater role than women in society. Thus, this male domination, a sense of inferiority is superimposed on women who completely refuse to come under such influence. Feminists accordingly have the task of expounding how women suffer different kinds of marginalization. Marginalized women, the tribe or the poor women and the outcast or the rebellious women, do not have any 'decent' or 'proper' position and identity in society. Marginalized Women's sufferings have long been avoided, and were not even considered as 'wrong' but the usual consequences of everyday life. Indeed, every woman does not belong to the upper class or face the fate of misery or not, every single woman has the same tragedy to endure but many of them have similar stories. They have indifferent pronunciation and different situations (Nowshin, 2014, P. 4).

The marginalization of Muslim women and the control of their movements are the key concerns of the hermeneutical presuppositions of many authors

including Bakathir. Their worries owe mainly to Western feminism and contemporary Islamic thought. Nevertheless, they never accept Western feminism in its comprehensive concept. To them, the Western traditional patriarchy looks at women as passive and inferior while in Islam, female sexuality is considered active and dangerous. For Muslim women, the ultimate end is not equality with men but an overall dismissal of the sexual patterns attached with female (Ishaque, 2013, P. 339).

3. The Representation of Marginalized Woman Role in *The Secret of Shahrazad*

This part discusses the representation of women's role in Bakathir's play: *The Secret of Shahrazad*. It is divided into three subtitles, The role of Shahrazad, The role of Budour and The role of Dunyazad:

The Secret of Shahrazad transforms the stories of Arabian Nights into something new. This transformation is not effected, it seems, on the visual representation of the characters, locales or material cultures; rather, it seems to be located in the ways in which the plot of the story is played out in the narrative (Bakathir, P. 53-54).

The researcher tries to identify an important aspects of female roles in the play *The Secret of Shahrazad*. Indeed, Bakathir does not get much attention from researchers as a playwright who gives a supervisor position of women in his writings; a position which is almost unique among modern writers. Most of modern Arab writers gave females marginalized roles in their writing, but Bakathir has represented this marginalized role, and submitted models of bright and honored woman who fought for her rights and position in the society. Unlike other Arab playwrights, he gives his female characters a leading role by reinterpretation of the historical legends, myths and fables as in his play *The Secret of Shahrazad*.

Bakathir does not only portrayed women in an honorable image in his creative plays, but he has deliberately focused on historical myths and fables to representing the marginalized and victimized roles of women to give them sanctity and saintliness. Moreover, If he finds any negative image of woman or a negative attitude towards her in any historical fables, he tried to rewrite that story by correcting the mistakes and reinterpreting the legend. In order to prove his representation of marginalized woman roles, the researcher investigates how Bakathir represented woman role in the play *The Secret of Shahrazad*. Also, we try to see how Bakathir reinterpreting the Legend of *One Thousand and One Nights* in a new way by which he gives woman a dignity, chastity and honesty images. We can summarize the representation of women's roles as follows:

3.1. The Role of Shahrazad

Bakathir has given 'Shahrazad' a new presentation; so she is the modern, educated girl who is

studying music and know how to dance. Likewise, Bakathir's view of women has been portrayed in the play through the character of Shahrazad who played a great role as a protagonist and open-mind woman. She is also capable of taming the man, freeing him from his mysteries and psychological problems. She is able to return him to merge and adapt with the others in the society. Others here means 'women'.

Shahryar in the play *The Secret of Shahrazad* knows that his first wife 'Budour' is innocent and did not commit a sin with slave 'Masror', but 'Shahryar' killed Budour and accusing her in her honor because he once thought that she accused him in his manhood. Then, he marries every night a virgin, and kills her without approaching her to keep his secret hidden, until he married 'Shahrazad' who is educated and cultured. Shahrazad knows his secret through her teacher Redwan, she is able to satisfy his ego and become a favorite woman to him. This brutal and barbaric person becomes able to live his life with the other without fear and miseries:

Shahrazad: *You may get bore from me someday and leave me?*

Shahryar: *Woe! What do you say? Getting bored from you? Leaving you?*

Shahrazad: *It is the habit of life my Lord! Everything became bored if it remains on the same pace!*

Shahryar: *But you are not like this Shahrazad; your attractions renewed every time. Every day you reveal new side from your beauty and your magic talking.*

Shahrazad: *The beauty, my Lord, cannot endure in this life, and the magic of talking may drained someday when the inexhaustible resource end.*

Shahryar: *No. This source will not be inexhaustible. Here has passed One Thousand and One Nights, and among those nights, there is no even a single night passed without joy of a wonderful story, or an interesting chapter from an ingenious story.*

Shahrazad: *Aren't you afraid my lord to be tired of my talk?*

Shahryar: *No, the talking of Shahrazad is not boring ever! (Act IV. 112)*

This is what are between 'Shahrazad' and 'Shahryar'. What are the traits that characterized in this female character and make her able to change the eastern man and tamed him? Additionally, what are the features that made her a new model for modern women which raised by Bakathir in the play and made it one of the great successes that succeed when it was performed in the Opera House in 1952. However, Bakathir, through his representing women roles in the play, he gives Shahrazad as female character a lot of characteristics that value female in the eye of the man and representing her role in the society. These characteristics can be summarized as follows:

A. Her Faith

Shahrazad has spaciousness perspective and good heart even she surrounded by risks from each

side. She complemented by deep faith that makes her reassured for tomorrow. She has confident in God and she is wise and never take any decision only after a long and deep thinking. She was haunting to kill herself by knife in order to prevent wedding to Shahryar but she had fear of God. Then she changed the idea of killing herself and this is clear in her conversation with her sister Dunyazad:

Dunyazad: *Do you think I had even a nap last night?*

Shahrazad: *Poor!*

Dunyazad: *I have spent the whole night sleepless on my bed, thinking of your destiny, why don't you tell me what is in your mind and I tell you what is in mine, so we can be guided to the path for your rescue?*

Shahrazad: (Looking at her admiringly) *You are right my sister. I am in need for a big heart like yours helping me for what I am going to do?*

Dunyazad: *So show me what is in your hand?*

Shahrazad: (Show the dagger) *It is my father's dagger Donya.*

Dunyazad: *Are you intending to kill yourself?*

Shahrazad: *I don't lay to you; Yes I whisper to myself about that but I feared torment of God, so I abstained. (Act II. 38-39)*

B. A Developing and Progressing Character

The fear of God makes her thinking of affirmative action for girls of her gender. She thinks to kill this tyrant 'Shahryar' to relieve the society from him. But the modern woman who heralded by Bakathir should not be killer or murderer, even if she talked with herself about such plans:

Dunyazad: *Do you know what comes in my mind last night while I was on my bed sleepless?*

Shahrazad: *What did you have in your mind?*

Dunyazad: *If you take it 'dagger' with you at wedding night and hide it in your clothes as you did now?*

Shahrazad: *For killing The Tyrant?!*

Dunyazad: *To relieve the world of this evil.*

Shahrazad: *Hush. Don't tell your father.*

Dunyazad: *Neither my mother nor my father, nor anybody, only us, you must keep this secret between you and me.*

Shahrazad: *Bless you Donya, I swear I wasn't known that I can depend on you. Thanks God, my heart reassured. (Act II. 39)*

Because she is a developing and progressing character, her idea of killing herself changed to be an idea of killing a tyrant 'Shahryar' who is marginalizing females and killing them every morning. Then, she changed the idea of killing Shahryar to think about the possibility of coexistence with him. This thinking has not come suddenly, but it was built on a dialogue with her sister:

Dunyazad: *Beware that this hypochondria comes to you again?*

Shahrazad: *No my sister, rest assured. (Dunyazad gets out)*

Shahrazad: (Breathe a sigh of relief) *This little girl has opened new door of hope. A door really dire, but it must break into if there is no need for it. That is the ultimate goal of ordeal, I got used myself on it, and everything less than it trivialized. Then who knows I might not need anything of that. Doesn't the tyrant accept Redwan's intercession. Isn't possible for him to die tonight suddenly? Isn't permissible to get himself when he sees me and send me to sword executioner? They said that the snake may wraps around its prey and then it leaves her for a while before eating it... and Shahryar, even he is a tyrant, he still a good human being after all, he is not a snake that has distasteful look. Oh if I could be cured him! So I can save myself and save him from the evil (her face brightens cheerily). (Act. II. 40-41)*

Thus, we have seen her deep thinking turns out three times: firstly from killing oneself as the character "Cleopatra" killed herself at the death of "Cleopatra" for Ahmed Shawqi so she doesn't swallow humiliating cup. Secondly, her thinking to kill the other who spent three months taking every night a "virgin" girl and kills her in the morning. All this happened because of claiming that he had found a woman cheating him. He took revenge on all women because he thinks that all of them are whores and cheaters, having no religion and honor. She decided to kill him to relieve the world from his madness. Thirdly, her thinking develops ultimately to raise the possibility of living with him as a wife and queen. It means she can change him to be a good human being.

C. Her Ability to Change a Man

In fact, Bakathir's reverence for women does not stop at the possibility of living with a criminal man, but we find that he makes Shahrazad, a beautiful and soft girl, succeeded in taming this beast humanitarian -Shahryar- and in controlling his illness and cure his brutality. She has created from Shahryar a human being and a lover of goodness and beauty. She makes him atone for his crimes to pay compensation for every victim who lost youth and virginity. More importantly, she changes him and makes him to declare to the peoples that anyone wants to marry, he will pay a dowry. However, Shahrazad makes him abdicated from his throne and plans to tour east and west to track the traces of Sinbad stories which was narrated by Shahrazad:

Shahryar: *Take me with you away from this palace.*

Shahrazad: *To where, my lord?*

Shahryar: *To a place where we follow traces of Marine Sinbad.*

Shahrazad: (Mostly joyful) *Really darling. You planned for it?*

Shahryar: *If you wish and accept my love.*

Shahrazad: *How do I not accept! And this is my great wish! (Act IV. 12)*

Through the previous conversation we can understand that Shahrazad has the ability to change

Shahryar and this show that Bakathir gives woman significant status in his play. Shahrazad was able to, in her first individual meeting with a monster Shahryar, to change his grudge against the women. Also, she was able to make him feel in his manhood, this sense which he was missing from inside. She has felt that she began to tame the monster that is living in the soul of Shahryar, she touch on his weakness in order to revive his losing oneself as eastern man. (Cover the veil on her face again)

Shahryar: *Woe, What you do?*

Shahrazad: *My lord, fearing of glimpses of your eyes, they are frightening.*

Shahryar: *What scares you from me?*

Shahrazad: *In my eyes, the inexperienced girl scared from active man.*

Shahryar: (His face shines optimistically) *Active? How do you know that I am active?*

Shahrazad: *My lord, the talking of whole people.*

Shahryar: *What do people say about me?*

Shahrazad: *You will give me safety?*

Shahryar: *Yes.*

Shahrazad: *They say you are the biggest womanizer that woman gave birth ever?*

Shahryar: (Laughs) *You scared from me for what you heard?*

Shahrazad: *O lord, I scared from you for what I've heard, but now....*

Shahryar: (His face shines optimistically) *What?*

Shahrazad: *I have feared from what I saw!*

Shahryar: (His face shines again) *What did you see?*

Shahrazad: *Pardon My Lord..*

Shahryar: *No, you have to say!*

Shahrazad: *What do I say? I have seen something that I cannot describe .. something that my heart is filled with horror of it, and myself longing attracted to him, something tantalizes death to escape from it, and tantalizes death to escape to it. (Act III. 74-75)*

The dialogue here reveals her intelligence when she describes herself as inexperienced girl who has little experience. Unlike Budour, Shahrazad describes Shahryar as an active and an expert man who is as subject-matter of people talking and a person who is the biggest womanizer ever. To change him, Shahrazad tried to give him confidence in himself and tried to raise the idea to his mind that he is, for her, everything. To prove this idea, she tried to belittle the role of her family. Here she tried to belittle the role of visit of her father:

Shahrazad: *He makes me and himself busy by undue visit. Do you know what he said?*

Shahryar: *What he said?*

Shahrazad: *He said that he left his work to visit Me and he found me more wellness than him!*

Shahryar: (Giggling laughingly) *How facetious he is! How facetious all of you Nouriddine family! (sighs) I very owe you all.*

Shahrazad: *No, we do owe you.. you made my father a minister and made me a queen. (Act IV. 102)*

D. Her Beauty

Shahrazad's beauty falls on other's hearts. She enters to her father, "Noureddine" who is in a quarrel with Shahryar after the later threatened Nouriddine to take Shahrazad at night and kill her on the next day. She enters to them wearing her mantle and held on her head a cover of shiny silk:

Shahryar: (Looks at her surprisingly) *Are you Shahrazad?*

Shahrazad: *Yes, I am Shahrazad who gets God's generosity by your proposal. Do you give permission My Lord for your pride to get happy by wedding to you tonight without her distress of killing her father tomorrow? This is my hope, my lord, and the last hope for me in life, do you accept it?*

Shahryar: (In flirting tone) *Love for you sweet and dignity. Any generous and expert in kindness like me cannot refuse a please of glamour girl like you. (Act II. 63)*

When "Shahrazad" wed to "Shahryar" and reveals her veil from her face, and ask: What do you see, My Lord? He (sigh) says:

Shahryar: *Oh, How beautiful you are indeed! I don't know that Noureddine has a jewel like you.*

Shahrazad: *Don't be exaggerated My Lord, you outwear thousands of jewels before me.*

Shahryar: *I don't think I got someone among them like you. (Act III. 72-7)*

In other situation, Shahryar says:

Shahryar: (Sighs) *Oh Shahrazad, I have spent a thirty-five-year-old in the most beautiful gardens and purer hills, I swear God, my eyes never seen as flower or basil as beautiful, brightest or purer as you. (Act IV. 113)*

E. Her Power of Humor

Shahrazad's power of humor is evident when she found her father and mother sad after she got engaged to Shahryar. Her engagement means her death at Shahryar's hands. She took tambour and Donyazad took another tambour:

Shahrazad's mother: (Emotively) *Donia! What is this my daughter! Are you crazy?*

Shahrazad: *No, my sister doesn't be crazy ma. She knows this is my wedding day, and we should rejoice in it and mirth.*

Shahrazad's mother: (Denounced) *Rejoice and mirth?*

Shahrazad: *Yes, we should sing and dance, come on and wipe your tears. You should not welcome my wedding day with tears.*

Shahrazad's mother: *Your wedding day!*

Shahrazad: *Yes, my wedding ma, and perhaps it may turn to a day of crown me as a queen.(Act II. 65-66)*

Then she begins singing with her sister. By this sense of humor she is trying to confiscate the grief of her mother and father who are sad because of their

daughter's destiny. Also, when her mother told her that she forgot some advices at wedding night which she has prepared to give to her daughter on her wedding night. She forget because of the horrific situation, and fear for her daughter who is going to send to a tyrant, but Shahrazad responded her mother and comforting her:

Shahrazad: *Do not be afraid for Shahrazad. She will work on all of your commandments, even you said it or not.*(Act III. 69)

F. The Power and Self-confidence

Since she has got engaged to a tyrant Shahryar, Shahrazad knew that he used to kill a virgin every night, and he has spent three months on this habit. Her mother was scared of Shahryar saying: *"a disaster settled on us, and everything is finished. He will kill you tonight, my daughter, then kill your father after nights."* (Act. III, 65) But Shahrazad is confident of herself and has the ability to tame his soul. She knew his psyche personality and weaknesses from his mentor Redwan (who was a teacher to Shahryar before). This knowledge gives her power and trust to change Shahryar and control him. She says to her mother:

Shahrazad: *I have enough confidence and power to control him.* (Act. II. 60)

After this dialogue, a dance scene followed. Through this dance, we see the confidence of Shahrazad that she will be a queen and she will not killed by Shahryar as he killed others during the last three months. Her mother shows her severe panic on the fate of her daughter who may not be seen again. Unlike her mother, we see Shahrazad composed, mentally fixed, strong character, depending on her strong will, after reconciling of God.

(Shahrazad 's mother in the most cases of anxiety and confusion, with tears in her eyes)

Shahrazad: *Come on ma and move, you should rest assured, by God willing I will not get hurt.*

Shahrazad 's mother: *Let me kiss you my daughter before I leave (approaching to kiss her cheek)*

Shahrazad: (Forsake from her kindly) *Hey, it is not right to spoil make-up ma!*

Shahrazad 's mother: *I will kiss you on head (kissing her head), maybe I will not have a chance to kiss you again.*

Shahrazad: *No, my dear .. tomorrow you will hurt my cheek by your kisses, and hurt your cheek by my kisses.*

Shahrazad 's mother: *God hears you, my daughter (wiping her tears and stay calm). Listen Shahrazad .. faddish and coax him . Obey him in everything my daughter. Strive to smile and courted to him. Whatever he is asking, you have to accept.*

Shahrazad: (Smiles lamentedly at her mother's commandments which are different to the manner which she is intending to do) *Okay ma I'll do it all.*

Shahrazad 's mother: *I know you have violence and hardiness, beware my daughter, don't insult him. Approaching him, and give him your sedating and obedience. Remember that your mother will die after you melancholy, and remember your father, his days are few.*

Shahrazad: *But I will live for you and you will live for me. Trust me ma God is with us.* (Act. III. 68-69)

G. Her Intellectuality

The intellectuality of Shahrazad appears in many parts of the play. When she has married Shahryar, she knew that he kills every night a bride, keeping their death secret by putting their bodies disappeared under the earth. Also, as discussed earlier, she learned from her mentor, Redwan, the tragedy of Shahryar (his sexual inability, lack of ability that makes him a monster revenge from all women. Accordingly she should to make him feels that he is virile and she is weak from the first moment of meeting him:

Shahrazad: (Raises her head to the sky praying) *O Lord, grant me the strength of your own.*

Alqhrmana: (Coming back quickly) *My Highness King is coming* (Static stands next to the door, Shahryar enters swaggering as he deliberately want to show his strength and his power)

Shahryar: (Looking to Shahrazad awhile, then turns and finds Alqhrmana standing) *Woe! Do you want to look to us?*

Alqhrmana: (In fear) *Excuse me, Your Highness, I was waiting for the permission of My Lord.*

Shahryar: *Get out of my face!*

Alqhrmana: *Ok My Lord* (She gets out)

Shahryar: (Coming near Shahrazad who sitting like a statue) *Shahrazad!*

Shahrazad: (Standing for greeting him) *Your new queen My Lord.*

Shahryar: (Denying) *My queen!*

Shahrazad: *Queen of your country and your people, My Lord.*

Shahryar: (Mutters angrily) *Daughter of Noured-dine!!*

Shahrazad: *Nothing to do tonight with Noured-dine or others my lord. I am now your nation.*

Shahryar: *My nation!*

Shahrazad: *My lord, a good wife is the one who is to her husband a nation.*

Shahryar: (After silent a moment) *To became her husband a slave for her.. huh.*

Shahrazad: *That is the matter of husband My lord, and the value of his generosity and prowess!*

Shahryar: (In a bit of admiration) *Your voice is so sweet!*

Shahrazad: *Better than this sweet voice My Lord is the ear which hear!*

Shahryar: *But the most delicious of all is the mouth that sings!*

Shahrazad: (In coquettish) *My Lord!!*

Shahryar: *Let me reveal this veil from you .. removing the veil from her face.*

Shahrazad: (Smiling) *How do you see, Your Highness?*

Shahryar: (Sighs) *Oh How beautiful you are indeed! I don't know that Nouredine has jewel like you.* (Act. III. 71-72)

Through her intellectuality, she makes Shahryar confessing that Shahrazad has saved him from the criminal world and his admiration in her personality:

Shahrazad: (Smiling with lough) *What else?*

Shahryar: *What to say? You saved me, that is enough.* (Act IV. 103)

Shahrazad: *You are proud of yourself or of me?*

Shahryar: *Proud of you, how you fascinated me, and proud of myself as how I have undergone for your fascination? Tell me Shahrazad how was your emotions that night?* (Act. IV. 104)

As a result of her intellectuality, Shahryar describes Shahrazad as a green paradise and the winner is the happy human who enter her world:

Shahryar: *You are that green paradise, Shahrazad, and I'm that happy man who entered! Uh oh if have feather from your imaginary wing, so I can snap some of what you have in my heart!* (Act. IV. 107)

Hence, the intelligent of Shahrazad led her to call him active and womanizer! What a sweet charge to his heart! It removes from him hatred and resentment of the soft sex, and then she remains as his wife; she saves other girls from this monster, after she was estimated to be tamed him.

H. Her Sacrificing

Shahrazad is an example of a sacrificing woman. Bakathir, by his women's representation, wants to prove that woman is a sacrificing figure for her family and society as well. Shahrazad's sacrificing is clear through introducing herself to Shahryar instead of Kareema:

Shahrazad: (Removing her tears) *It is not only for you, dad.. it is because of all virgins of the country (looking to Om Kareema) for Kareema?!!*

Om Kareema: (Rush to Shahrazad and catch her hand crying) *Oh I don't want my daughter. I swear God that you are dearer and most valuable than Kareema.*

Shahrazad: *Go back now to your house to wipe tears of your daughter.*

Om Kareema: *I wish I could not come to you today!*

Shahrazad: (Consoling her humor) *Send my regards to Kareema, and tell her to forgive me if I take her night!* (Act. II. 64-65)

3.2 The Role of Budour

Budour is a simple and kind hearted woman though she is stern and overbearing figure to her husband Shahryar. She is not the heroine of the play but she is also the character around whom the major conflicts in the play revolve. It is disappointing, therefore, that she is allowed to play a more active role in

weaving her own fate. Since she is living in a patriarchal society, it is understandable that a male who almost lead her to her doom. She is a simple character who follows social conventions. She is not clever enough to understand her husband and realize how to deal with him and with a society. Unlike Shahrazad, Budour doesn't know the tragedy of Shahryar, so she failed to know his psychology and his temper. She does not know that he is sexually weak, not functioning, and unable to make relationship with her. In the first act of the play, Budour called him 'Oh man' so he erupts and became very anger. Thus, he was doubted of being a man, and this hard conversation took place:

Shahryar: (Angrily) *You make fun of me, Woman!*

Budour: (Mistakenly has slip of tongue) *What makes me to do so man?*

Shahryar: (It seems he is nod...muttering) *Oh man! Oh man!*

Budour: (Regretful for what she has slipped in his right) *You called me a woman, I called you a man.*

Shahryar: (In his revitalizing and unhinging) *Oh man!*

Budour: (Begging) *Your kindness my lord! I swear in God, I never mean any abuse.* (Act. I. 10)

As a wife, Budour feels unhappy and discomfort when Shahryar spends whole the night away from her, and came late at night. He did not give her any consideration, and this raised her jealousy towards him. In fact he spent whole night with his maids in the palace for pleasure and fun

Shahryar: *Are you jealous of those Bodour?*

Budour: *If I don't love you Shahryar, I would not be jealous on you! I'm jealous on their luck in you.*

Shahryar: *Doesn't matter my love... The luck of one of them to me is one night and then I do not come back to her ever.*

Budour: *I never have seen them only as a woman robbed your heart from me, so I have no longer any share of it.*

Shahryar: *No my dear, my whole heart is for you.... For you only, without any other participator.* (Act. I.11)

Shahryar as oafish and unpleasant king used to lie to his wife (Budour) though his sense of superiority and he is a man of nobility. This makes Shahryar feel justified in acting cruelly and harshly to Budour. His hypocrisy made him to jilt Budour:

Shahryar: *I swear by the One who give me this power, Budour, what I said is eye of truth! You are the only woman I adore in this world.*

Budour: (Flirtatiously and joyfully) *My lord! I'm your servant who love and worship you.*

Shahryar: *No, you are my lord whom I love and worship.*

Budour: *Shahryar! I forgive you for all the past and I consider it has never existed. Hugs me between your arms now and consider me as your new slave manifested on you.*

Shahryar: (Hugging and catching her to his chest) No, *you are my first love who renew her cuteness every time. My love since old time.* (Act. I.12)

In fact, Shahryar feels inferior even he is the king. This feeling of inferiority makes him criticizing Budour in any word she speaks. This usually makes him changing his attitude to her according to his temper:

Shahryar: *Budour* (Approaching his mouth to her)

Budour: *Shahryar:* (Kissing him with her mouth, hooping his neck with her arms, while he hooped her waist by his hands.)

Shahryar: (Repressing burn) *uh..* (Removing his hands from her waist then he took away her hands from his neck and muttering) *Today the weather is very hot....*

Budour: (In depression and disappointment) *Something!*

Shahryar: (In sharpness) *Do not you see sweat in my forehead... (Wiping his face by his handkerchief) Even in your forehead too?*

Budour: (Muttering lamentedly) *You are right ... weather is very hot today!*

He always fights to act as superior though he is mean, haughty and abrasive for Budour:

Budour: *So I swear in God I do not care, I will live for you and flow in your veins.*

Shahryar: (Hugging strongly then loosening his grip slowly then pushing her away from his arms and his face changed and he exhaled aptly) *uh!*

Budour: (In depression) *What's wrong your highness?*

Shahryar: (Trying to hide his troubles) *My sermons Budour, I became suspicious of the sincerity of what you are saying!*

Budour: *Suspiciously, in what your highness?*

Shahryar: *If you're really honest, you would give everything I ask.*

Budour: *My lord, anything you ask I shall give! I'm at your disposal.*

Shahryar: *In everything?*

Budour: *Yes, in everything.* (Act. I. 13)

Though Shahryar shows his power and cruelty, he confesses in impotence and inability in womanizing. This inability could not be understood by Budour:

Shahryar: (Calling) *Oh Saeed! Oh Saeed!* (Sighs murmuring) *How great my misfortune is! Having all this beauty and I cannot enjoy it, and I'm still so young. Where is the damn Qahraman? (very loudly) Saeed! Saeed!* (Act. I. 14)

In other situation, he expresses his circumstances:

Shahryar: *What does Redhwan want from me? This wise man who could not treat me in his medicine. Philosopher!! What to do with his philosophy?* (Act. I. 16)

In spite of all those accidents, it is obvious that Budour could not understand the reasons of his

departure from her. She thinks that he hates her and fed up of living with her:

Budour: (Muttering) *He hates me... he likes to find something making him away from me.* (Act. I. 15)

In other place she expressed her frustrated relation with Shahryar to Al-Qhramana (Jumana)

Budour: *No Jumana, he hates me, no doubt about that.*

Al-Qahramana: *He never hates you my princess. Where he can find someone like you?*

Budour: *The bed of maid who kissed by the hands of slave's traders is better for him than this protected bed. He giggles with his tapsters among cups tune with the smoking of tobacco and opium. Those are more dabble to his heart than my pure and innocent smiles.*(Act. I. 24)

When Shahryar was cohabiting maids in the palace, Budour seems self-confident and poised in spite of her suffering, agony and misery:

Shahryar: *I'm afraid of your place in my heart but you are not afraid of the same.*

Budour: *If you don't love me, I have no place in your heart. If you loves me so I do not afraid of my place in your heart from anyone!* (Act. I. 23)

On the other hand, Budour tried to keep her marriage in contempt since it is a way of marginalizing her role as a queen whose duties and rights be equally balanced. Nevertheless she played a minor role, she was completely impatient and credulous:

Shahryar: (Open the sward) *Where is the slave?*

Budour: *He is here in bedchamber, my lord, eating apple.*

Shahryar: (Looking at the door of bedchamber) *Eating apples... hh?*

Budour: *Yes my lord.. I gave him dish of apples to reassure.*

Shahryar: *To reassure? Hh?* (Moving towards the door of bedchamber)

Budour: (Encountered in his way) *Your affection my lord. Don't intimidate him... from the time of his entrance, he is shivering of fear.*

Shahryar: *Of fear? Hh?*

Budour: *I beg you my lord.*

Shahryar: (Pushing her aside) *Stay away from my way, whore!* (Act. I. 31)

In rebelling against her husband, therefore, Budour emerges as a woman of tremendous determination, courage and strong conviction. She tried to revenge against Shahryar:

Budour: *I will let him know that we can take revenge if we wish! Go Jumana and tell your husband to bring The Slave who I request!*

Al-Qhramana: (In fear) *But this is terrifying matter My Princess.*

Budour: *No escape from this treatment... only this does work with him.*

Al-Qhramana: *Can you postpone it to the next time?*

Budour: *No, I have postponed it many times; it is no longer tolerating delay. Go ahead Jumana.*

Al-Qhramana: *Ok my princess.. God protect. (She got out) (Act. I. 24)*

Before killing her, Budour does not care about her future. She is a woman who will not continue on living her life on illusions and with strange man anymore. She called him a mad person:

Shahryar: (Entering and the sword dripping blood in his right hand) *You are crying him in front of me???* (Intending to attack her then back away)

Budour: (In scolding without looking at him) *I have no talk with you.*

Shahryar: *Don't be sad.. I will let you follow him now!*

Budour: (Looking at him, getting afraid of his terrifying face) *Woe! Do you believe that I am.....!!*

Shahryar: *Woe on you, do I lie my eyes? (She walked to the left door to run) Heh .. you want to run from me.*

Budour: (Take her back to door and summon her courage) *Control yourself... you just killed innocent man, so don't kill other innocent woman.*

Shahryar: *Don't you said before: kill me instead of killing him.*

Budour: *But you killed him now.*

Shahryar: *I will also kill you whore.*

Budour: (Blowing in his face) *You are liar, God knows that it's you who is bawdy.*

Shahryar: (Retreat slowly, his face seems satisfaction) *Bawdy? Bawdy Budour? I am bawdy to you?*

Budour: *To all people.*

Shahryar: (In stranger smile) *To you also?*

Budour: *You are mad.*

Shahryar: (Smile disappeared in his face) *Mad!*

Budour: *Yes, mad. (Act. I. 32-34)*

However, Bakathir cares about the dignity of Budour's life and he considers that the life without dignity and honor is a tasteless life:

Budour: (Impatiently) *Kill me! I am not afraid of death; death became better than living with you. (Act. I. 34)*

In another situation, Bakathir illustrated the importance of women's dignity and honor:

Om Shahr: *Hush Om Kareem... don't raise your voice like this.*

Om Kareema: *I will raise my voice on the cover-ups, and they can kill me if they want. What is the value of life after Kareema? How bawdy he is? His promiscuous wife betrayed him with The Black Slave so what is the guilt of my daughter Kareema? What is the guilt of your daughter Shahrazad? What is the guilt of all peoples' daughters to take revenge from them and slaughter them?!* (Act. I. 60)

(Shahryar suddenly appears from right door with a scaring smile)

Om Kareema: (Continuously revolt without aware of what happened) *All of them in his claim are*

traitors and whores, so he should let them for other people, what would he do with them? (Act. I. 60)

3.3. Role of Dunyazad

Dunyazad does not play a prominent role in the play. She is a sister of Shahrazad and she has supported her sister in decision to marry Shahryar. She is humorous character who gives fascination and fun to the play:

Dunyazad: (Protesting) *Little girl? No, don't believe her my lord, I am not little girl... I am good in playing like her .. do you like to dance for you a sweet dance?*

Shahryar: (Smiling) *Show me!*

Dunyazad: *But I do not dance alone. Come my sister to dance together for our happy husband king!*

Shahryar: (Laughing) *Our husband?*

Dunyazad: *Yes, my husband, and her husband.... (Act. III. 82)*

In another situation she shows her witty and humor:

Dunyazad: *We know whole people's dances, so which one you like to begin?*

Shahryar: *As you like.*

Dunyazad: *Indian dance my lord.*

Shahryar: (Agree) *Dance of India.*

Dunyazad: *Come on Shahrazad. (Act. III. 83)*

The king, Shahryar, embraced by her humor, funniness and comicalness:

Shahrazad: *Woe, don't sleep here.*

Dunyazad: *So where to sleep?*

Shahrazad: *There on the carpet where you slept before.*

Dunyazad: *No, I slept there because I was scared of that old butler. But now no need for fear.*

Shahrazad: *But this is the bed of our lord king.*

Dunyazad: *If he likes to sleep, the bed is so wide; the bed can accommodate a three of us.*

Shahryar: (Laughing) *Let her sleep wherever she wants.*

Dunyazad: *Thank you my lord. (Act. III. 85)*

Dunyazad was not afraid of the king. She has the courage to speak freely without any chains. Her seduction to the king is so clear in the following conversation:

Dunyazad: *Narrate a beautiful story sister, so I can sleep and my lord king can sleep if he wants.*

Shahryar: *What the girl said?*

Shahrazad: *She used to listen to such stories my lord, so shall I narrate a story?*

Dunyazad: *Yes, the happy king will enjoy for your stories and he will kip down and sleep beside me happily.*

Shahryar: (Smile and makes a gesture to Shahrazad to do that)

Shahrazad: (Sitting on the edge of bed and saying by her pure voice and beautiful performance, and her face to the king, and her eyes walking in the head of her prone sister) *Dear happy king I get ... (Act. III. 86)*

4. Discussion

Despite the diversity of his literary writings, the poet, novelist, playwright Bakathir is one of few contemporary writers who respected women and gave them dignity, honor and right. Through his literary works, he was able to rehabilitate woman and highlighted her in an honorable status. He was able to re-correct some of historical myths by giving women leading and bright roles in his plays.

Bakathir has taken this idea of his play of folklore tale *One Thousand and One Nights*. If the play was adopted from the folklore, it should be characterized by certain characteristics in terms of building the dramatic events, representing a narrative style of the nature of the plays, resulting the absence of conflict and this leads to control normative descriptive method in the plot. Bakathir avoids this narrative style but he has introduced characters engaged in dialogue, grappling and integrates or repels each other to provide us with high-quality text.

Bakathir has read the legend *One Thousand and One Nights* like those who read it, but he represented the plot of the legend in which the King Shahryar was having a virgin girl every night and then kills her in the morning of the following day. Shahryar does this allegedly because his wife (Budour) betrayed him with one of Palace's slaves, and when he knew it, he killed both of them and decided to marry each night a virgin girl and then kills her on the next day as retaliation from women gender. The fate of women have continued to death until Shahrazad managed by her intelligence and sophistication to protect herself from this horrific destiny. Bakathir scrutinized the elements of the legend and he does not agree with this serious accusation of women as entrusted traitor of the family.

He tried to prove that the interpretations of the legend is illogical and trivial. His main question is 'why did the king kill his wife? He is wondering by saying: "Why did Shahryar kill his wife? Is it because she betrayed him with a 'Black Slave' as the legend says? If she wishes to betray him, she would choose the most handsome young man as there are many young slaves in the palace? Or if she had fallen in love with a Black Slave or having sexual deviation, is it worthy to be careful in the palace from the eyes of others, particularly her husband, the king himself? On the other hand, if his wife did this illegal practice, why he announced the scandal to the people? Isn't better for him to cover it and does not let anybody know? Isn't his indecent assault? Isn't the announcement of his wife scandal degrading his status among his own people? He could have killed her and claimed to people that she was dead! What makes him marry each night a virgin girl and then killed her the next day? The story clarifies that he takes revenge from the women gender, all women! But does Shahryar heartless to this extent? Also, did he calm

down after killing dozens of women? In other words, if Shahryar is brutal, barbarian and savage king, how he suddenly became kind and affectionate after he married Shahrazad? Thus, the play *The Secret of Shahrazad* gives answers to all these questions with a logical explanation of Shahryar's dementia. According to Bakathir's interpretation, Shahryar suffered from impotence as a result of his excessiveness of drinking wine and sleeping with women. He used to marry a virgin every night and when he fails to have sex with her, he deliberately kills her in order to keep his secrets never disclosed.

Shahrazad has known about Shahryar's mystery from his doctor Redwan before her marriage with the king. She has cooperated with the doctor to recover her husband from his illness, so she got Shahryar's love and compassion that retained for her life. Unlike Shahrazad, Budour, Shahryar's first wife, has noticed his departure from her but she does not know his mystery, and she thought he completely renounced her and he no longer loves her. To excite the jealousy of the king, she has schemed innocent trick with Al-Qhrmana, the custodian of the palace, to bring a slave to her room in order to be captured by the king. She thinks if he got excited and angry, she will tell him that the arrangement of such a trick is because of admonishing his abandonment for her.

Al-Qhrmana responded to her request, but at the last moment, he feared the wrath of the king if he got aware of his involvement in the matter and announced to Shahryar the fact of the story of his wife and told him that The Black Slave is geld and has no interest in women. But Shahryar took advantage of this opportunity to find an excuse to kill his wife as he thinks that she knows his mystery of impotence. Thus we find Bakathir acquits woman of charges remains for more than a thousand years. Bakathir does not only absolves women from such charges but he sticks to men horrific and degraded features of patriarchy and masculinity.

In the old legend form of *One Thousand and One Nights* one might find an excuse to Shahryar's crimes because they betrayed him and pushed him to hate women, all women. I say one might find an excuse or at least the motive for the crimes of Shahryar though his revenge is greater than the crime itself. Unlike the old legend form, in the new form of the legend from the viewpoint of Bakathir, Shahryar portrayed as evil and criminal who killed his first wife despite of his knowledge of her purification and innocence. After her death, he was not satisfy of her murder, but he also spread her story with the slave to public. By doing this, according to Bakathir, he is looking for justification in front of people to kill hundreds of virgins to keep impotence hidden.

It is interesting to consider that Bakathir has chosen for his play the title: *The Secret of Shahrazad*. This makes many researchers who took the play to

study when they saw that it is better for Bakathir to give the play a title: *The Secret of Shahryar* instead of *The Secret of Shahrazad* as he reveals the secret of Shahryar. This secret discovered by Bakathir that he is impotent and due to this he has the feeling of inferiority which leads him to kill a virgin every night. Abdullah Al-Tantawi elaborated:

I think that Bakathir has chosen this title for two reasons: firstly he wanted to make Shahrazad's name on the title because she is the heroine of a play that he wanted to heal of defective charge that covered her. Secondly, he wanted to say that the secret of Shahrazad is greater than the mystery of Shahryar, regardless to the secret that makes Shahryar kills every girl at the morning after sleeping with her at night. Whether it's in retaliation for women sex or to preserve the secret of his inability or for any other reason, the greatest mystery is how Shahrazad managed to escaped from this fate? What a mystery that made Shahryar end committing these crimes after his marriage to Shahrazad? Is it really because of her mythical stories? (Al-Tantawi, 1977, P. 22).

Bakathir reveals the secret of Shahrazad who was able to heal Shahryar and tamed his brutality. This secret makes her as a title. Bakathir denied accusation of women that remains for hundreds of years, so he represented their dignity, and gave her honorable status that they deserve.

We have seen in the *Secret of Shahrazad*, Bakathir's characters through the character of Shahrazad. She is the embodiment of deep character who has integrated dimensions. The plot of the play presented logically and remains consistent till the end of the play. The text of *The Secret of Shahrazad* by Bakathir has achieved that through the ability of Shahrazad to tame the beast inside Shahryar. She has the ability to tame him and grab him to practice his normal life. This representing a logical conclusion of elaborate plot which Bakathir wanted to convey to his readers.

A woman is able to change the man (and through him, she can change the society). She has the ability to edify his nature and extracting the darkness of his heart, then send him to the society again as an effective and kind human being who is able to adapt and reconcile with himself, people and life. In the meantime, this woman, who has the ability of change the man, must be educated and modern woman, and able to recognize the atmosphere and reality of her society consciously and profoundly. The woman is not an inferior creature, but she is able to dialogue with others and participate in building societies. This is the message that Bakathir wanted to raise to the Arabic society especially politicians and leaders that they should give chances for educated, understanding and clever woman to participate in building the awareness and competence of the society. It is obvious that the woman's role during that era was

marginalized and has no chance to present her opinion in every aspect of life.

Shahrazad represents a new, modern, educated and moralistic woman. She is a representative or symbolical of degeneration and emancipation of modern woman that Bakathir tried to impose on the powerful woman of Arabic and Islamic culture. She tried to be liberal, secular and carefree but with the restrictions and moral limitations of Islamic and Arabic culture. Shahrazad was only a creation of the imagination known by western readers as *The Arabian Nights*. But Bakathir's Shahrazad is getting a powerful new image as a feminist icon, a provocative role model and an inspiration for Muslim women who are seeking to take a stronger in Islamic society without abandoning their religion or culture. In the context, the theme of Shahrazad fills two needs. It demonstrates that women need not 'westernize' to expand their rights and roles within their societies, and that Islamic history and literature may provide the most effective tools against today's Muslim zealots.

To look at Shahrazad anew is to see a Muslim woman's life before the accretions of male-centered customs and interpretations of the Quran consigned girls and women to invisible, second-class citizenship:

Shahrazad had read the books of literature, philosophy and medicine. She knew poetry by heart, and studied historical reports, and was acquainted with the saying of men and the maxims of sages and kings. She was intelligent, knowledgeable, wise and refined. (Crossette 1999, P. 7)

With her encyclopedic knowledge and imaginative skills, Shahrazad established a pattern of spinning out an exciting tale, but stopping before it reached an end, sparking the imagination of Shahryar. He decided to let her live another day to hear what happened next. She taught him not only to trust her but also to understand that there were good and bad people everywhere. She had, moreover, saved the rest of the kingdom's young women from slaughter.

While the glorification of such a character might strike some western feminists as less than stunning progress in asserting women's rights, Islamic women say that within their culture it's a good starting point:

"I speak about Shahrazad from the point of view of language: that a woman used language to deter physical violence" (Crossette 1999, P. 7). Ms. Shaaban said: "Arab women in particular have restored to the use of language as a way of fighting their battles, whether these are social or educational or political battles" (Crossette 1999, P. 9).

In the 1920's, as a number of Muslim countries began to modernize and secularize, Ms. Shaaban said *'big names in the Arab world spoke of Shahrazad as an example of intellectuals fighting for their rights'* (Crossette 1999, P. 9). Shahrazad was a fighter for the

right of free expression. Someone once made a list of theater plays inspired by Shahrazad. It was enormous:

" *This woman gained the right to live by using the right words. It is fantastic material for talking about the extremely tragic problems society has. And it teaches how to fight violence with words*" (Crossette 1999, P. 9).

Islamic women look at their own history in a range of very visible and active roles. Muslim women today are very much hampered by a lot of cultural impediments but in fact they are living their lives in a very decisive and articulate way (Crossette 1999, P. 9).

Unlike Shahrazad, Budour represents the type/class of Arab/Muslim women. She suffers from her love for her husband. Her frustration, even she was the queen, takes her to misfortune and stupidity to bring The Black Slave to her room. It is her revenge from her husband due to the ungratification of her physical and emotional desires. In the play, unlike Shahrazad, Budour led by her passion and emotions. As a woman, she doesn't try to encourage her soul after Shahryar's unwillingness towards her to live a loving life and investigate the reasons of his disinclination from her.

On the contrary, Shahrazad has her own world; the world that is full of enthusiasm and wisdom to change Shahryar from Monster to Meek. Bakathir portrays her as a sacrificing woman who condescends of her sensual and physical desires in order to save the society and protect other young girls of wicked destiny.

In the play, women were part and parcel of change in the society. The type of professional woman could not get the author's attention as we don't find a single professional woman in the play. Indeed, Bakathir represents intellectual, humorous, boldness, passion, modern, and educated woman.

4. Conclusion

Ali Ahmed Bakathir, as a famous writer with self-reflective tendencies, wields the language with calculated deliberateness. Most female characters in this play are fighting and striving, sometimes successfully and sometimes not, to change the view of patriarchy system for their present and their future. Shahrazad, a leading female character in the play, suggested that the plight for women is worse for them because they fight an almost invisible status in society. She expressed her unwillingness to remain colonized by male ideological domination. Unlike Budour, ex-wife of the king, she is engaged, at various levels of intensity, in a fight for survival. Her struggle to be accepted as free woman is actually a battle against the male domination that threatens to destroy her right and more importantly her existence.

The analysis of the characters and the discussion of the play focused on the representation of women's

roles in *The Secret of Shahrazad* by Ali Ahmed Bakathir. Women are potent symbols of identity. They signify a vision of society that identifies a nation. The analysis proved that Bakathir presents two types of female characters; the victims of man's brutality and the intellectual, clever and wily. Budour is feeble and assailable who fails to understand her husband in spite of her revolutionary actions. The author's satirical and critical attitude towards her clearly shows his dislike for the comparatively weaker and submissive women. So Budour is certainly not the representative of reformer Arab Muslim woman. On the contrary to Budour, Shahrazad, the heroine of the play, has been delineated in a more positive way. She exhibits the tolerant, educated, secular spirit and culture of Arab World. She has portrayed as a bold and powerful woman with strong ability of reformation and change. She is a key element of man's happiness and a source of inspiration. She is neither veiled nor oppressed rather she enjoys the luxuries life as a queen. However, Shahrazad seems to be more balanced woman who doesn't exhibit any moral corruption or any negative attitude.

Bakathir, however, has undermined the contribution of Muslim Woman in political sphere. Moreover, at the time to her, Arab and Muslim society face the very issues of communism, colonialism and imperialism, woman shows little interest in the political matters rather she remains indulged in extravagant life of physical relations. However, in the end of the play, woman succeed to get her right and to fight against social patriarchy and finally she won to get man's heart rather than change him to be kind, modest and, more importantly, a human.

It can be concluded that Bakathir's representing of Arab women is neither like his Arab companion authors nor does he present them as typically submissive and weaker creatures. His women are closer than typical Arab women who is a cause of inspiration and intellectuality; and a powerful woman who has the integrity and enthusiasm to change the man's behavior and philosophy. She is depicted as a modern and dreamer woman who never surrenders for the tradition and norms of society. It seems that the point that Bakathir wants to make is that despite the ordeals and mistreatment of women to make them submissive, a good segment of the Arab women continued to play their part in the society.

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