

**THE REPUBLIC OF TURKEY
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DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE**

**BEING A WOMAN IN RAFFO'S *NINE PARTS OF DESIRE*
THROUGH A COUNTRY OVERSHADOWED BY WAR**

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T.C
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**Raffo'nun "Nine Parts of Desire" adlı Eserinde Savaşın Gölgesinde
Kalan Kadın Sorunsalı**

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YÜKSEK LİSANS TEZİ

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<p>Süleyman Demirel Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü Lisansüstü Eğitim-Öğretim ve Sınav Yönetmeliği hükümleri uyarınca yapılan Yüksek Lisans Tez Savunma Sınavında Jürimiz 18/09/2015 tarihinde toplanmış ve yukarıda adı geçen öğrencinin Yüksek Lisans tezi için;</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OY BİRLİĞİ <input type="checkbox"/> OY ÇOKLUĞU²</p> <p>ile aşağıdaki kararı almıştır.</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yapılan savunma sınavı sonucunda aday başarılı bulunmuş ve tez KABUL edilmiştir. <input type="checkbox"/> Yapılan savunma sınavı sonucunda tezin DÜZELTİLMESİ³ kararlaştırılmıştır. <input type="checkbox"/> Yapılan savunma sınavı sonucunda aday başarısız bulunmuş ve tezinin REDDEDİLMESİ⁴ kararlaştırılmıştır.</p>		
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¹ Tez başlığının DEĞİŞTİRİLMESİ ÖNERİLDİ ise yeni tez başlığı ilgili alana yazılacaktır. Değişme yoksa çizgi (-) konacaktır.

² OY ÇOKLUĞU ile alınan karar için muhalefet gerekçesi raporu eklenmelidir.

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LİSANSÜSTÜ EĞİTİM-ÖĞRETİM VE SINAV YÖNETMELİĞİ Madde 28-(4) Tezi hakkında **DÜZELTME** kararı verilen öğrenci sınav tarihinden itibaren en geç üç ay içinde gereğini yaparak tezini aynı jüri önünde yeniden savunur.

⁴ Tezi **REDDEDİLEN** öğrenciler için gerekçeli jüri raporu eklenmeli ve raporu tüm üyeler imzalamalıdır. Tezi reddedilen öğrenci, yeni tez konusu belirler.



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YEMİN METNİ

Yüksek tezi olarak sunduğum “BEING A WOMAN IN RAFFO’S NINE PARTS OF DESIRE THROUGH A COUNTRY OVERSHADOWED BY WAR” adlı çalışmanın, tezin proje safhasından sonuçlanmasına kadar ki bütün süreçlerde bilimsel ahlak ve geleneklere aykırı düşecek bir yardıma başvurulmaksızın yazıldığını ve yararlandığım eserlerin Bibliyografya’da gösterilenlerden oluştuğunu, bunlara atıf yapılarak yararlanılmış olduğunu belirtir ve onurumla beyan ederim.

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Declaration

I hereby certify that this thesis "*BEING A WOMAN IN RAFFO'S NINE PARTS OF DESIRE THROUGH A COUNTRY OVERSHADOWED BY WAR*," is entirely the result of my own work, using only the sources listed in the bibliography.

Fahad Mohanad Abdul Rahman

30 August 2015

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To the first in my heart and mind, to the four pillars of my life: Allah, my family, my wife and my daughter. Without you all, my life would fall apart. I might not know where the life's road will take me, but walking with you, through this journey has given me strength. My Mom, you have given me so much, thanks for your faith in me, and for teaching me that I should never surrender. Daddy, you always told me to "reach for the stars." I think your words were my light during the dark days. My wife, you are everything for me, without your love and Understanding i would not be able to make it. Thanks for my brother and my sister for standing and supporting me during my journey.

ABSTRACT

BEING A WOMAN IN RAFFO'S *NINE PARTS OF DESIRE* THROUGH A COUNTRY OVERSHADOWED BY WAR

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This thesis deals with how Hithier Raffo treats the Iraqi women's political and social problems in her play *Nine Parts of Desire* (2006), a portrait of the extraordinary and ordinary lives of a whole cross-section of Iraqi women, this solo work lifts the veil on exactly what it means to be a woman in the age-old war zone, Iraq. It also depicts how women, as painters, suicide attack survivors and mothers, are oppressed and stick to life in a war ridden country. It exhibits how these oppressed and suppressed women face the harsh realities of life. The aspirations, desires and expectations of the Iraqi women experienced during the war have been dealt with as in line with *Nine Parts of Desire*.

Keywords: Iraqi women, Hithier Raffo, Nine Parts of Desire, Islam, War

ÖZET

Raffo'nun "Nine Parts of Desire" adlı Eserinde Savaşın Gölgesinde Kalan Kadın Sorunsalı

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Bu çalışma, Hither Raffo'nun "Nine Parts of Desire" (2006) (Arzunun Dokuz Yönü) adlı eserinde savaş ve işgal yıllarında Iraklı kadınların yaşadıkları siyasi ve sosyal sorunları olağanüstü bir üslupla ele alarak, Irak toplumunun bütün kesimlerinde yaşayan ve sorunlarını dile getirmekte zorlanan kadınların yaşadıkları sorunların üzerindeki örtüyü kaldırmaktadır. Bu çalışma aynı zamanda savaştan harap düşmüş Irak toplumunda intihar saldırılarından kurtulan anneleri ve hayatın binbir güçlükleriyle yüzleşen bastırılmış Iraklı kadınları resmetmektedir. Savaş yıllarında Iraklı kadınların yaşamış olduğu bütün sorunları, arzuları ve tutkuları Raffo'nun "Arzunun Dokuz Yönü" adlı eseri baz alınarak incelenmiştir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Iraklı Kadınlar, Hither Raffo, Arzunun Dokuz Yönü, İslam, Savaş

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CONFARMATION PAGE.....	i
STATE FROM THE HOLY KORAN.....	ii
DICLIRATION.....	iii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	iv
ABSTRACT.....	v
ÖZET.....	vi
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	vii

CHAPTER I

1. INTRODUCTION.....	1
1.1. Aim of the study.....	2
1.2. The Significance of the Study.....	2
1.3. The Scope of the Study.....	2
1.4. Methodology.....	3
1.5. The Review of Literature.....	3
1.6. Limitations.....	5

CHAPTER II

2. The Women Issue with a Historical Perspective.....	6
2.1. Gender.....	6
2.2. A Historical Overview on the European and American Women Condition.....	10
2.3. The Women Situation in the Arab Homeland.....	29
2.4. The Past and the Present Condition of the Iraqi Women.....	36

CHAPTER II

3. Heather Raffo's life and the Social Background of her Works	44
3.1. Heather Raffo's Life.....	44
3.2. The Treatment of Women in <i>Nine Parts of Desire</i>	48
CONCLUSIN	64
BIBLIOGRAPHY	66
C.V	71

CHAPTER I

1. INTRODUCTION

This study includes the analysis of the Iraqi women's social and political situation in Hithier Raffo's play *Nine Parts of Desire* in terms of Iraqi women's conditions. It is clear that there is a strong connection between the period after and before 2003 in Iraq with the play's events and characters.

The thesis is made up of three chapters. The first one focuses on the aim of the study, the significance of the study, the scope of the study, methodology, the review of literature and limitations.

The second chapter is dealing with the gender and sexes with some theories on them, introducing important names as Ann Oakley, Simone de Beauvoir, Shulamith Firestone, Movia Gatens, Judith Butler. Those are the voices for most of the women who were seek for the equality, peace and free will. They Left a profound impact on the women Issues. Also in this part we mentioned notable organizations dealing with the same area such as The National Organization for The Women (Now), The Organization of Women's Freedom in Iraq (OWFI) and The General Federation of Iraqi Women (GFIW). This chapter is also introducing the European, American and Arabian women situations (included Iraqi women) with a historical perspective. The main focus is on the condition of the Iraqi women and their place in history has been revealed. Their roles in all spheres of life have been expressed historically.

The third chapter is dealing with the play itself *Nine Parts of Desire*, deep inside the work with critical view on the writer's style. Showing and represented the situation in a series of monologues by nine Iraqi women, and the characters are separated by age, status and location, but connected by the deep truth of what they've experienced and what they love. It depicts the characters' struggle experienced during the severe war conditions of Iraq. The Iraqi women's fight for democracy and equality is exhibited.

The feminist struggle was and still existing in all over the world but mostly in America and Europe have been dealt with. What we see is that the obvious face of that struggle in the conditions of the Iraqi women but the most unique and amazing that the play written by an American playwright whose roots from Iraq with a Middle Eastern flavor, that was the main reason which made us very interested in this study because such mix and mating came from a western open mind with an Iraqi Conservative background can easily and effectively explain the situation, diagnosing the defect and find the modern and most effected solution for the problems.

1.1.Aim of the study

The goal of the study is to expose the situation of the Iraqi women and community in a war-ridden country. The cruel, political and inhumane atrocities faced by the Iraqi people, in particular the Iraqi women, are depicted with a particular reference to Raffo's *Nine Parts of Desire*.

1.2. The Significance of the Study

The studied play *Nine Parts of Desire* was published as a book in 2006 but performed for the first time in August of 2003 at the Traverse Theatre in Edinburgh, later the play was moved to the Bush Theatre in London's Off West End where it was selected both as "First Choice / The Best Shows in London" by The Times, and as one of the "Five Best Plays" in London by The Independent.¹ *Nine Parts of Desire* is currently being translated for international productions in France, Brazil and Turkey.

This study is the first of its kind. It focuses on exhibiting the difficulties, inhumane, political and social harsh treatments faced by Iraqi women in a civilized world. It also shows how the Iraqi women contributed to the society throughout ages and their importance in the Arabic world in general.

¹ Laura Banken, "9 Parts of Desire study guide", 2011.

1.3. The Scope of the Study

This study covers the Iraqi women's situation their achievements and setbacks. We have given information about the European, American and Arabian women's situation through the time, but the play in question is mainly devoted to display the Iraqi women's situation after and before the American invasion of Iraqi soil in 2003. The study treats the Iraqi women's situation in two levels: the first one from the established Iraqi kingdom till the American sanctions during 1990s, the second level is the period since 1990 to our recent time especially after the American invasion of Iraqi soil. The study tries to reflect the characteristics and problems of that time.

1.4. Methodology

In this study we have used textual analyses. The reflection of the Iraqi women is dealt with a particular reference to Raffo's *Nine Parts of Desire*. The related literary and critical texts have been analyzed to assess *Nine Parts of Desire*.

1.5. The Review of Literature

We should state that there are not sufficient sources on this topic and on Raffo. Many kinds of materials such as books, articles and interviews have been examined. We could numerate the main sources as following: Marianne van den Wijngaard *Reinventing the sexes: the biomedical construction of femininity and masculinity*, *Race, gender and science*, Al-Hegelan Nouha's *Arab Woman Potentials and Prospects*, Marjorie P. Lasky, *Iraqi Women under Siege*, Yasmin Husein Al-Jawaheri *Women in Iraq: the Gender Impact of International Sanctions*, Romanska, Magda *Trauma and testimony: Heather Raffo's Nine Parts of Desire*.

According to the previous statement we can say that the investigation in the theatrical literature and the people's life on the reality ground basically focusing with no a doubt on the extent to which the literature is a successful way of inciting the audience for changing their bad reality on the both social and political levels.

Recently, the consideration and the positive point of view on the theatrical literature have been raised as one of the most important devices for making a positive change as being opposed to other functions considering the literature as an entertaining or cathartic function.

It's not a secret that the theater has gained an exceptional importance nowadays because of the growing role which the theater and the playwrights played. Theatre explains and simplifies the political and social changes and reactions reflected literary productions. Just like Shelley's favorite words "The True legislators of the world."²

The end of 20th century and the beginning of the 21st century and because of the radical changes observed in these eras, the expectations and disappointments of the writers forced them to find themselves unable to take a romantic attitude far away from the severe reality which their communities are living now have been talked about much. It is known that those mentioned situations demolished their "Ivory Towers"³ to bring them down to earth.

That made us thinking that the writers out of their countries found a rich material for criticizing and interpreting the reality because they were living in a historical moments without the censor scissors, founding themselves in the heart of time, place and the social events in a way that never ever make them able to be isolated from responding to such events and human reactions in this modern era but in spite the idea of translating the true reality from one nation to another, this idea is not the only one which dominating in our recent era.

Magda Romanska described the significant of Raffo's play in her *Trauma and Testimony: Heather Raffo's Nine Parts of Desire*, she said "What also attracted me to Raffo's play was her painful attempt to bridge the gap between her two identities: American and Iraqi".⁴ Although born in the US, Raffo found her in a situation all too familiar to emigrants and refugees, the need to balance and reconcile two separate, often antagonistic, social, political, and cultural paradigms.

²Shelley Percy Bysshe, *A Defense of Poetry, Romanticism: An Anthology*, Oxford: Publishers, 1998, p. 944.

³*Song of Songs*, the Old Testament, 7:4, p. 348.

⁴Magda Romanska, "Trauma and Testimony", *Alif* 30, (2010), p. 211.

As Brecht famously put it:

The best school of dialectics is emigration. The most acute dialecticians are refugees. They are refugees as a result of changes, and they study nothing but changes. Out of the tiniest signs they conclude the greatest events. When their opponent wins, they calculate how much the victory cost, and for contradictions they have a refined eye. Dialectics, here's to you!⁵

After all we reach to a fact that Heather Raffo's work is the best example for the woman who carries the concerns of her homeland problems despite of her living in a different environment with a very different community aspects and interests.

1.6.Limitations

There are mountains of documents and studies about the women history, women's rights, liberation movements in Europe and America, but unfortunately there are small amount of information and studies about the Arabian women in general. There is scarcity of sources on Iraqi women. Therefore, the study, in hand, has aimed to depict the heartbreaking conditions of the Iraqi women from Raffo's point of view.

The play adds an example of how literature can rebuild the world and articulately name pain, the play brings news of the inner life of the brutalized and authorizes us to think about the unthinkable. When you think of feminism, your first thought probably isn't of women in Iraq, for that reason *Nine Parts of Desire* needs to be shared with the world. The nine-woman show, written by Heather Raffo, is based on a series of real-life interviews conducted with Iraqi women about their experiences with war and oppression so the most haunting and beautiful thing about *Nine Parts of Desire* wasn't the acting, or the visuals or the effects. It's that these Iraqi women finally got the chance to talk about their suffering and deliver their message for the western world.

⁵Bertolt Brecht, "On Hegelian Dialectics", Denmark or Humor (1940–41): *Flüchtlingsgespräche*, p.63.

CAPTER II

2. The Women Issue with a Historical Perspective

2.1. Gender

It is wise to start with the definitions of gender and sex. "Femininity is a set of attributes, behaviors, and roles generally associated with girls and women, Femininity is socially constructed, but made up of both socially defined and biologically created factors."⁶ This makes it distinct from the definition of the biological female sex, as "both men and women can exhibit feminine traits, people who exhibit combination of both masculine and feminine characteristics are considered androgynous."⁷

On the hand it is a fact that "the modern concept of femininity began during the English medieval period at the time of the Black Death in the 1300s, women in the Early Middle Ages were referred to simply within their traditional roles of maiden, wife, or widow."⁸ After the great epidemic of bubonic plague that killed a large part of the population of Europe in the mid-14th century, the common gender roles of wife and mother changed, and opportunities widely opened up for women in society.⁹ Chaucer said "the words femininity and womanhood are first recorded in 1380 the concept of (woman) changed during this period."¹⁰

In feminist writings and other sociological discourses the concept of gender became popular in the early 1970. In simple terms:

"Gender explains the differences between men and women in social terms as men, and as what a man can do; as woman, and as what a woman can or cannot do, therefore, gender is an analytical category that is socially constructed to differentiate the biological difference between men and women."¹¹

⁶Marianne van den Wijngaard, *Reinventing the sexes: the biomedical construction of femininity and masculinity*. Indiana University Press, 1997, p. 171.

⁷Hale Martin, *Masculinity and Femininity*, U of Minnesota Press, 2010, p. 310.

⁸Allen, "The Early Humanist Reformation," *The Journal of Religion*, Volume 2, Part 1, 2014, p. 6.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 6.

¹⁰Chaucer Troylus, *Serpent under Femininity and Motherhood*, Oxford University Press, 2005.

¹¹ Singh N., *Gender justice, citizenship and development*, (ed.) 2007: New Delhi, p.15.

The term gender is also used to describe the differences in behavior between men and women which are described as "masculine" and "feminine", feminist writings focus on this aspect and claim that: "these differences are not just biological but are social constructions of patriarchal society."¹²

Women were considered as subordinate to men in the society as some theorists suggest:

The biological differences between men and women also result in their mental and physical differences, biologically; men are physically and mentally superior to women, also the biological differences between men and women are exaggerated; the differences are socially constructed by the patriarchal system of society by which men are described as superior to women.¹³

Ann Oakley in her book *Sex, Gender and Society* claims "in the Western culture women play the roles of the (housewife and mother); this is because women are made to play these roles because of their biology."¹⁴

The western culture also believes that any effort to change the traditional roles of men and women in the society can cause damage to the social fabric of the society.¹⁵

Oakley argues "this view regarding the roles of men and women helps to support and maintain the patriarchal society, she says that there is a constant slippage between sex and gender; for example people are generally asked to declare their gender instead of sex on an application form."¹⁶

In some feminist writings there are references to the close association of gender with the biological or natural as inevitable. Recent writings on sex and gender claim:

¹²Scott Joan Wallach, *Gender and the Politics of History*, Columbia University Press, 1988, p. 71.

¹³Afifi M., "Gender differences in mental health", *Singapore medical journal*, 2007, 48 (5)

¹⁴Anna Oakley, *Sex, gender and society*, published article in association with New Society, 1993, p. 4.

¹⁵Bhasin Kamala, "Understanding gender," 2000.

¹⁶Anna Oakley, *Sex, gender and society*, published article in association with New Society, 1993, p. 5.

Feminism has relied too much on the polarization of sex and gender distinctions, showing that the meanings attached to sex differences are themselves socially constructed and changeable. It is dependent on the way we understand them and attach different consequences to these biological "facts" within our own cultural historical context, at the same time there is an argument that biology does contribute to some behavioral characteristics.¹⁷

Simone de Beauvoir in *The Second Sex* says "one is not born, but rather becomes a woman; gender differences in the society make the man superior through his role as the bread winner that gives him a position of power in the society and family."¹⁸ Gender differences are set in hierarchal opposition such that men are superior and women are subordinate. So we can say that civilization was masculine to its very depth.

Shulamith Firestone in *The Dialectics of Sex* argues "patriarchy exploits women's biological capacity to reproduce as their essential weakness; the only way for women to break away from this oppression is to use technological advances of free themselves from the burden of childbirth."¹⁹

Few of feminists' studies and research articles accept Firestone's views because both technology and its uses are still firmly in the hands of men. But cultural feminists question whether all the main differences between men and women are merely cultural or if it's also biological differences.²⁰ They prefer to value and celebrate the mothering role as evidence of women's natural arrangement towards nurturance and would not like to give up even if they could .

Moria Gatens states "evidence points that the male body and the female body have quite different social value and significance and cannot but help have a marked effect on male and female consciousness",²¹ certain bodily events have huge significance especially of they occur only in one sex.

¹⁷Ibid., p. 4.

¹⁸Simone De Beauvoir, *The Second Sex*, Knopf, 2010, p.18.

¹⁹Shulamith Firestone, *The Dialectic of Sex: The Case for Feminist Revolution*, a Bantam Book, 1970, p. 19.

²⁰John Butler, "Performativity Acts and Gender Constitution," 1990.

²¹Moria Gatens, *Basic Concepts: sex and gender, masculinity and femininity, patriarchy*, The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1999, p. 5.

She cites the example of menstruation. She points "masculinity is not valued, unless it is performed by biological male; hence the male body its elfish imbued in our culture with the mythology of supremacy of being the human norm".²²

Judith Butler's theorization about gender introduces the notion of performativity and some other radical conceptions:

“gender is involuntarily (performed) within the dominant discourses of hetero reality; all identity concepts are in fact that effects of institutions practices, discourses with multiple and diffuse points of origin”. She further states that "sex / gender distinction suggests a radical discontinuity between sexed bodies and culturally constructed gender”.²³

This approach questions the way we make constructing of gender identity. Individuals do tend to challenge the way discourses establish and reinforce specific meanings and institution such as that of mandatory heterosexuality.

It is difficult to accept a rigid distinction between sex and gender as either wholly biological or singularly cultural. There is a constant shift between conceptualizations of human beings as controlled by either predominantly biological or social forces.

The debates on sex and gender will continue as some will argue in favor of biological differences while other feminist writers will favor the differences as socially constructed, supported by social institutions like religion, caste, family marriage and so on. The substantial shift in women's lives and expectations since the 1960s clearly explains that the category of feminine has been rather elastic.²⁴

Recently women's roles and Performances have changed drastically over the past few decades which have added new dimensions to the debates by feminists and other on sex / gender distinctions.

²²Ibid., p. 5.

²³Judith Butler, "Gender Trouble: *Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*", Rutledge, 1999, P.17.

²⁴Jane Pilcher, *Fifty key concepts in Gender Studies*, Sage Publication, 2005, p. 7.

2.2. A Historical Overview on the European and American Women Conditions

An outlook of the European and American women's history can help us to have an insight to the exercise of understanding and therefore defining feminism for contemporary readers in other settings.

As researchers in this comparative historical approach force us to broaden our perspective by examining carefully from a different, although not wholly unfamiliar, angle much that we take for granted—namely, the political, social, and economic context in which so many of our own ideas originated.²⁵

That is exactly what allows us not only to recover and dissect the prevailing and dissenting views on the organization of societies, which are embedded historically in the Western debate on the woman's questions, but also to explore the political dynamics of the interaction between these views.²⁶

Throughout history, women have been regarded as the weaker of the two sexes and therefore inferior to men, Brinjikji said "The women were weaker of the two sexes and afforded fewer rights, which include but are not limited to education, legal and career opportunities, for women, being a wife and a mother has long been regarded their most significant and only important profession."²⁷

Under the common law of England in the middle ages "unmarried woman could own property, make a contract, or sue and be sued, but a married woman, defined as being one with her husband, gave up her name and virtually all her property, inherited or otherwise, and came under her husband's control."²⁸

²⁵Karen Offen, "Defining Feminism: A Comparative Historical Approach", The University of Chicago Press, 1988, p119.

²⁶Karen Offen, "Defining Feminism: A Comparative Historical Approach", 1988.

²⁷Web. 01 May. 2015. (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Feminine_psychology).

²⁸Web. 01 Feb. 2015. (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Feminine_psychology).

During the 13th and 14th century women had a very controlled lifestyle and were always being tested and watched on their behavior and manners.²⁹

The following quote explains it well:

In the 13th and 14th century women were not valued near as much as men were. Not much respect was giving to women and girls. Often people practiced polygamy, which means the husband had more than one wife. Women were the keepers of the house, and men consider them weak and unable to do anything other than cook and clean. If the women were rich and the husbands were of fighting or traveling the wife's would be left in charge of the castle.³⁰

Barber Montin argues:

At 15 girls got married and had babies and it was not questioned or frowned upon, in fact it was encouraged and normal for marriage to take place at that age. With mirage came a dowry which is when the girl's family gives money or land to the man who marries her, as an incentive to marry their daughter. In their rooms women had a corner or a closet where they keep all their personal and spiritual belongings. Women had to dress very modest and keep everything covered and always keep your eyes lowered. If they are in a building try to stay away from windows, and avoid going into a public place, large feast, and any confrontations.³¹

This period is depicted in Pam Griffin's *Women in the 14th Century*,

All women were told regularly by the church and their husbands that being a woman meant they were naturally weak, and had a sinful nature and they could not do anything about it, women no matter what class or what their social standing was would have been expected to bear children and be submissive to their husband, women would also have been judged on how fertile they were, how the church acted toward them women and how loyal the women were to the church determined how the women were treated, women career choices were slim to none and were mostly told what they would do, getting married and having children were what the women would do.³²

²⁹Dick Montino. "Women, Display, Devotion- Florence 13th and 14th Century," 2004.

³⁰Holester, "*medieval Europe: A Short History*", New York, 1990, p. 159.

³¹Emma Rose Barber, "Women, Display, Devotion- Florence 13th and 14th Century", Web. 21 Feb. 2015. (<http://www.ringlingdocents.org/womeninflorence.htm>).

³²"Women in the 14th Century", Web. 21 Feb. 2015. (<http://www.pamgriffin.suit101.com/women-in-the-14th-century-alab543>).

Being a wife in the Middle Ages meant there were extra duties on the women shoulders more than look after the house and babies, as Pam Griffin mentioned:

The occasional women would learn to read and right so they could help their husbands run their business and help with taxes and everyday money usage, unfortunately; death still existed back then so if a women's husband dies before she did she would look after her husband's property, In some places the laws said that the sons would inherit everything and the wife would be left with nothing, the way the widow was treated depended on what the laws were for that area.³³

To some twentieth century feminists, "the women of the medieval ages as either hopelessly oppressed drudges or anachronistic feminists struggling against the patriarchy are depicted"³⁴. Neither image is correct, men certainly dominated the public space the outward business of war and politics and it is largely their names and deeds that are recorded for us. Women usually wielded their influence behind the scenes:

Around the family hearth, over the backyard fence, at the town well, they labored in public, too, often as the agents and partners of their husbands, or in their steads when they were widowed, women have always been responsible for the business of everyday life: (having and raising families, feeding, clothing, sheltering, and healing the human race), it is work that in a wage-based economy tends to be dismissed as being of little value, but the average farmer or artisan of the past knew how necessary it was.³⁵

It is known that from the fifteenth to the seventeenth century a large number of notable women who were heads of state and made a notable impact in the public sphere emerged.

These notable women include "Queen Elizabeth of England, the Queen Mother Catherine de' Medicis of France, Queen Jeanne d'Albret of Navarre, Mary Queen of Scots".³⁶ All had to deal with being both a sovereign and a woman, and each chose to solve it in her own way:

³³Ibid.

³⁴Chodorow Flox," *In Revaluating French Feminism*", Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1992, p. 136.

³⁵Ibid., p. 136.

³⁶Natalie Davis, *a History of Women in the West: Renaissance and Enlightenment Paradoxes*, Volume III, Harvard University Press, 1993, p. 160.

Elizabeth remained a Virgin Queen (politically, anyway), using her marriage prospects as a diplomatic tool, and retaining England's (and her own) independence in the meantime. She was certainly one of the key shapers of the national character of England. Catherine de' Medici was a quiet queen during her husband's lifetime, fading into the background as Henry II devoted himself to his mistress, Diane de Poitiers. When Catherine inherited the kingdom as regent for her sons, she maintained a strict public image of the proper, severe, widow protecting her children. She was widely hated for her deviousness in spite of this, but she managed to balance the crown of France between three powerful factions' for 30 years.³⁷

Another notable and noble example is the Queen of Navarre Jeanne d'Albret:

Jeanne d'Albret was a rock of moral fortitude. As Queen of Navarre in her own right, she established the Reformed religion in her lands and offered her protection and patronage to Protestant thinkers, preachers, and theologians. She was probably never particularly happy with her husband, Antoine de Bourbon; a wavering fellow, she was the one who provided the backbone to the cause when her husband lacked it. Not a particularly warm mother either, she still managed her son Henri de Navarre's career very well until her death. She died shortly before his marriage to Marguerite de Valois, which she had negotiated with Catherine de' Medici. It was widely rumored at the time that Catherine had poisoned her.³⁸

However, the lives of these famous women in history certainly do not necessarily reflect the experiences of all or the average woman. Woman's life experiences at this era were usually varied by social class.

Among the nobility, a woman's chief duty was to make dynastic marriages, serving as a device or the vehicle for her family's political and social ambitions.³⁹

Marriage for a woman of this class was as much her job as the command of troops was her brother's, and such women often married young. Many such women functioned as partners in a political enterprise. "Many of the leading Huguenots were brought to their convictions by their mothers and wives, and the women of the House of Guise were just as formidable as their more heroic men folk."⁴⁰

³⁷Ibid., p. 160.

³⁸Ibid., p. 165.

³⁹Peter Burke, "Popular Culture in Early Modern Europe", 1978.

⁴⁰Natalie Davis, *a History of Women in the West: Renaissance and Enlightenment Paradoxes*, Volume III, Harvard University Press, 1993, p. 170.

A woman of the civilian artisan and trader classes was actually take part in the family business, even though she may not have held an official situation, caring business with keeping the family connected and unified were prosperities the lower and middle classes could rarely produce.⁴¹

Magdalena Baumgartner was the wife of a Nuremburg merchant during the time of Le Poulet Gauche. While he travelled throughout Germany and Italy, placing orders, buying goods at great mercantile fairs, and trading in currency, she managed affairs at home. Her duties included receiving the goods (examining them for damage after their long journey), distributing the orders once they arrived, and collecting payments. She also managed their household staff and a small number of tenant farmers. Magdalena frequently advised her husband on what to buy and was not shy about letting him know when the goods she got were not as her specified.⁴²

Magdalena was a shining example at that period as a wife, housekeeper and a brilliant merchant not just during her husband life but also after his death.

Magdalena ran her husband's business for many years after Balthazar's death. Widows "stepping in" to take over their late husbands' businesses were sometimes a source of resentment to journeymen who could not buy or inherit a business and become a master of their guild themselves. When a woman married, she was choosing a trade as well as a husband. Le Poulet Gauche frequently employs day laborers of this kind. The inn keeps a small staff of girls who live there and work every day. When a runner arrives to make arrangements for a large party of travelers, or during a busy time such as a festival or fair, they hire on additional girls to help in the kitchen and common room. Girls were hired to serve, help in the kitchen, and does scullery work.⁴³

The lower classes are different case, "women have always worked. Since women were paid less than men and were usually more reliable, women workers were often preferred to work in farms, and certainly for domestic work. Women were always the majority of the household servants. When a country family needed money, they would often send the daughters out to service or to day labor in the big towns".⁴⁴

⁴¹Natalie Davis, *Society and Culture in Early Modern France*, 1987

⁴² "History of Women", Web.21 Feb. 2015. (<http://www.lepg.org/herstory.htm>).

⁴³Ibid.

⁴⁴Peter Burke, *Popular Culture in Early Modern Europe*, NY: Harper & Row, 1978, p. 18.

Not just that but sometimes if the daughters become a burden on their parent's shoulders they send them to any rich or comfortable family from their relatives in order to live with them for period of time and maybe the daughters will find a suitable groom and settled down forever.⁴⁵

Marriage was often delayed among the non-noble classes, as a woman could not marry until she and her prospective husband could afford to establish themselves and set up a household. This meant that the man needed some land to farm or mastership in a trade, and the woman needed a dowry. This was usually her share of the family inheritance, as well as her own earnings. Because land mostly descended in the male line, a daughter's share was in movable goods and money and went with her on her marriage. During hard times, the birth rate tended to fall because marriages were delayed even longer, and during good times it rose because people had more and felt more optimistic about being able to start a family.⁴⁶

One can't talk about women without talking about sex, "sex was considered the special province of women, and in the medieval mind women were the carnal, lustful ones",⁴⁷ that's mean men were considered the spiritual ones victimized by their temptations.

After all, they were the descendants of Eve. In art, the asexual beauty of the celestial angel was best represented by a young boy. The Victorian idea of the delicate, sexually naïve "angel in the home" did not exist. The double standard certainly did though - a woman's honor resided in her sexual exclusivity. Married men were constantly afraid of being cuckolded, and seemed to think this was almost certainly to be expected, given women's voracious appetites. A lot of this, to our eyes, is certainly men projecting their own desires onto women, and blaming women for their own actions. The idea that a raped woman had invited it was certainly common.⁴⁸

Women were also an integral part of the armies of the day. Not as combatants (at least not in the role of women), but as the support services necessary for any army.⁴⁹

⁴⁵Frederic Baumgartner, *France in the Sixteenth Century*, 1995.

⁴⁶Fernand Braudel, *Civilization and Capitalism, 15th to 18th Centuries*, Vol. 1: *The Structures of Everyday Life*, NY: Harper & Row, 1981, p. 121.

⁴⁷Peter Burke, *Popular Culture in Early Modern Europe*, NY: Harper & Row, 1978, p. 32.

⁴⁸*Ibid.*, p. 20.

⁴⁹André Corvisier, *Armies and Society in Europe 1495-1789*, 1979.

“There were no field hospitals; soldiers depended on these camp followers to take care of them when they were sick or wounded. The fighting men counted on their women to help carry their gear while on the march, to put up a tent and cook a meal at the end of the day, and to provide the usual sorts of comfort that men expect from women”.⁵⁰

In spite of all the women's help and benefits in the wars and battle fields but most of leaders and especially Puritanical leaders did not prefer to recruit them the army.

Consequently, many of women were they went with the armies carting babies along with their fifteen Pounds of clothes, tents, and cookware. In spite of their usefulness, camp followers were certainly often despised by society, and even by the ones who benefited from their services. Puritanical leaders often wanted to get rid of them, considering them a source of disorder, but until standing armies were organized with steady pay, medical services, and reliable logistics support, this just could not happen.⁵¹

The convent represented another option for women. Almost, the best positions in convents were only open to women of high ranks. Poorer women could join as lay sisters, where they did much of the domestic work of running a convent, but the choir was largely for upper class women some women exercised vast political and social influence from convents. As Corvisier claims:

The main purpose from the convents in the medieval ages is to enclose women and to encourage them to pray and not study books increased. However, a contemplative nun like St. Theresa of Avila had a big impact on the Counter-Reformation, and St. Vincent de Paul organized an order of women to do gritty social work among the poor. Hospitals were still staffed by nuns, and the idea of such an institution being secular only came about after the Reformation.⁵²

Monasteries were not in isolation from the political struggles and the waves of change, Corvisier also claims:

When the government of Protestant areas had to take over the social of the functions of the church, the closing of convents where the Reform took hold was probably a considerable loss for many women. The Protestants thought they were "liberating" the nuns,

⁵⁰ André Corvisier, *Armies and Society in Europe 1495-1789*, Indiana University Press, 1979, p. 32.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p. 32.

⁵² "Women in War and Business", Web. 25 Feb. 2015. (http://www.historylearningsite.co.uk/medieval_women.htm).

But a number of them probably didn't feel that subjecting themselves to a husband and having a dozen children or so was an improvement in their lot. In Protestant countries, single women with a vocation ended up being spinster aunts and governesses, with considerably less status.⁵³

The religion was a very important in social life during that time, not just at church you can take the religious exhortation but it was the mother's job in the house at the same time.

Although excluded from any liturgical role in the church, religion in the family had often been a women's province. Both sides of the religious turmoil created opportunities for women to exercise a larger role in their homes and communities as religious leaders. The noblewomen who patronized d'Etaples, Beza, and Calvin were essential to the success of Protestantism in France. Many ordinary Protestant women were delighted to have the opportunity to exercise their minds in the study of the scripture. Women made up a large proportion of the new religion, something that had happened in past religious movements as well.⁵⁴

Such kind of freedom for the women made the men specially the religious rank (the church) very worried from the rising role of women in society.

A young religious movement eager for converts can provide women a lot of freedom to act, to think, to challenge their old roles, to do something glorious and meaningful, to become martyrs and saints. Protestants were a "*people of the book*," and it is likely that the new religion appealed to women's intellects, letting them slake up learning and live in a world imbued with more significance than pots of burnt porridge and crying babies. The priesthood of all believers included them, and they made the most of it while they could.⁵⁵

Montaigne furthers it as "in the Italian cities he visited the greatest beauty was usually to be found among those who put it on sale. To be so beautiful, these women needed to eat and dress well and live in fine houses -- all things they had acquired through "gifts" from their patrons".⁵⁶

⁵³Peter Burke. *Popular Culture in Early Modern Europe*, NY: Harper & Row, 1978, p. 50.

⁵⁴Ibid., p. 50.

⁵⁵"Women in War and Business", Web. 25 Feb. 2015. (http://www.historylearningsite.co.uk/medieval_women.htm).

⁵⁶Fernand Braudel, *Civilization and Capitalism, 15th to 18th Centuries*, Vol. 1: *The Structures of Everyday Life*, NY: Harper & Row, 1981, p. 123.

Women have always practiced traditional medicine. This was part of any housewife's expected regimen, but some women were specialists. Concerning this the quote from Burke explains it well.

Some of medieval women's herbs and potions actually worked, but these were viewed as hedge witchery by scholars who knew all about the circulation of the four humors and their relation to the planets. These superstitious charms could be harmless enough, but if one can cure, one can harm as well. Midwives knew all the mysteries of birth (a subject that had only begun to interest educated men) and they were sometimes feared and suspected of being able to cause miscarriage and abortion as well.⁵⁷

But the masculinities power refused but to put obstacles on the women in this filed Just because they are afraid of women's control on any part from the needs of daily life, Burke also mentioned:

The unclear line between medicine and magic was quite normal, but could be turned against a woman. Even if they weren't witches, women were always being suspected of poisoning their husbands if they died suddenly - - part of the fear that the women who were so responsible for maintaining all the fundamentals of life had the power to subvert it as well.⁵⁸

The women's role and work during the 18th century was extremely difficult, exhausting, and society was unappreciative, for poor families in colonial times, women's full time job was homemaking.⁵⁹ Any single attitude may consider as dereliction was unacceptable.

Poor housewives had to cook meals, make clothing, and doctor their family on top of cleaning, making household goods to use and sell, taking care of their animals, maintaining a fire and even tending to the kitchen gardens. Middle class and wealthy women also shared some of these chores in their households, but they often had servants to help them.⁶⁰

The marital status considered a very important matter at that period so with no doubt it may be easier for the married people from the both sexes not just for women-

⁵⁷Peter Burke, *Popular Culture in Early Modern Europe*, NY: Harper & Row, 1978, p. 41.

⁵⁸Ibid., p. 41.

⁵⁹Fernand Braudel, *Civilization and Capitalism, 15th to 18th Centuries*, NY: Harper & Row, 1981, p. 123.

⁶⁰Hanna Barker, *Gender in Eighteenth-Century England: Roles, Representations and Responsibilities*, Longman, 1997, p. 17.

to become a married rather than being single to have the respect in the society, the historians mentioned that:

Both men and women had great social pressure on them to marry. Young girls were often married by the age of 13 or 14 and if women weren't married by the age of 25, it was socially humiliating. Marriage was mostly for economic benefits, not romantic situations. Widows were also pressured to get married as soon as possible. Even in some states, laws were proposed that would force widows to marry within 7 years after their husband's death. Widows, however, were often married within a year if not sooner.⁶¹

Women were considered legally dead once they were married under common. "Once married, they legally became one with their husbands. Married women had no control of their earnings, inheritance, property, and also could not appear in court as a witness nor vote".⁶²

Very little kind of rights were given to the women at that time but the man (husband) was still the ruling of the house and responsible of his wife life and attitudes.⁶³

Midlevel husbands were responsible for all aspects of their wives including discipline. Widows were better off. They had control over their property, but could only receive up to one-third of her late husband's property. A widow could also vote in some areas, but often widows were not aware of this fact or chose not to. Husbands could legally beat their wives. If a woman ran away from her husband, she was considered a thief because she was stealing the clothes she was wearing and herself. If a man murdered his wife, he would be hung. If a woman murdered her husband, she would be burned alive.⁶⁴

The American Revolutionary War brought women into much new cause. Although women's organizations had begun to appear in the late 1600's, it wasn't until the mid-1700's that these organizations involved politics.⁶⁵

⁶¹Ibid., p. 17.

⁶²Stone Olive M., "The Status of Women in Great Britain", *The American Journal of Comparative Law*, (1972), p. 20 (4).

⁶³Stone Olive M., "The Status of Women in Great Britain", 1972.

⁶⁴"Colonial times 1700-1800", Web. 25 Feb. 2015. (<http://www.angelfire.com/ca/HistoryGals/Chloe.html>).

⁶⁵Middleton and Anne Lombard, *Colonial America: A History to 1763*, 2011.

In 1766, “Sons of Liberty” and “Daughters of Liberty” started to appear throughout the country. Right away, the Daughters of Liberty was very active. When Americans began to boycott British clothing and materials, these women organizations spun clothing for their community. Also, when tea was taxed, women began a boycott and even went on to form Anti-Tea leagues. In January 1770, 538 Boston women signed an agreement, vowing not to drink tea so long as it was taxed. These women organizations also played a large role during the war. Clothing and other materials were needed to clothe Patriot soldiers, so women got together to spin and sew uniforms.⁶⁶

Women also wrote pieces in the local newspapers about the Revolutionary war, held scrap drives and even made cartridges. "Sybil Ludington, the 16-year-old daughter of a patriot general, commanded a Patriot militia unit and rode over 40 miles in the dark of the night to wake the minutemen".⁶⁷

Women loyalists also played some part in the war. "One loyalist women's organization raised enough money to buy a ship and outfit it as a privateer to fight against the Patriots. Most women loyalist organizations failed to stay active, although some loyalists acted as spies and letter carriers for the English".⁶⁸

With all the war, violence, and fighting between the French, English, Americans, native Americans, men and women alike had to learn and use some sort of protection.⁶⁹

Colonial women knew how to threaten force and even kill someone in defense. Guns were owned by just a few, so women grew accustomed to using axes, knives, gardening and household tools for defense. After the war was over and the government began to write laws and the Constitution. Women began to focus on changing the common law of total male superiority. Abigail Adams wrote a letter to her own husband, who was on the on the Continental Congress. The letter pleaded for Congress to “Remember the Ladies” when writing to new Constitution. Her husband insured her that the ladies would be taken care of, but the common law would not be changed.⁷⁰

⁶⁶Pugh Martin, *Women's Movement's origins and growth 1850-1939*, London: Longman, 1995, p. 23.

⁶⁷Ibid., p. 24.

⁶⁸Ibid., p. 24.

⁶⁹Pugh Martin, *Women's Movement's origins and growth 1850-1939*, 1995.

⁷⁰Deirdre Beddoe, *Back to home and duty: women between the wars 1918-1939*, London: Pandora, 1989, p. 14.

After the revolutionary war, more educational opportunities became available to upper class girls. "They would often be taught reading, writing, math, as well as other subjects like geometry, foreign languages, music, drawing, and dancing".⁷¹ The war was good opportunity for breaking the restricted rules.

Women often times after the revolutionary war were educated in reading and writing and even picked up on Greek, Latin, and math. Although colonial times were hard on women, it prepared them for the coming age, women were ready for change feminist ideas and social movements emerged in Europe, Great Britain, and the United States in an international context that promoted the migration of people and ideas across national boundaries; Between the publication of Mary Wollstonecraft's *Vindication of the Rights of Women* (1792) and John Stuart Mill's *The Subjection of Women* (1869) ideas.⁷²

In this era, the concept and the term women's rights and women's liberation were excessively used to point out to what we today would call feminism, Although the term feminist did not appear until the late nineteenth century in France and somewhat later in Great Britain, the U.S. and other countries, we use it here to describe earlier women's rights activists.⁷³

The feminists included both women and men who advocated greater equality for women in public institutions, such as the church and government, and in the family and household, and the equality of the sexes more generally. Some of the more radical feminists also insisted on a woman's right to exercise control over her body, including the right to remain single, to develop sexual relations and to bear children outside of marriage. Almost all feminists in this period viewed women's right to higher education as one of their most important demands. Feminist ideas were fueled by major social, intellectual, political, economic and cultural transformations in Europe and North America. Socially, the expansion of literacy created greater and more equal access to knowledge among middle-class and working class-people.⁷⁴

Intellectual changes known as the Enlightenment often challenged the authority of religion and worked independently of state-established churches, creating opportunities for feminists to do the same.⁷⁵

⁷¹Women's Press, "Colonial Times", Web. 30 April. 2015. (<http://www.womenspress-slo.org/?p=6446>).

⁷²Deirdre Beddoe, "Back to home and duty: women between the wars 1918-1939", London: Pandora, 1989, p. 15.

⁷³Pugh Martin, *Women's Movement's origins and growth 1850-1939*, 1995.

⁷⁴William J. O'Neill, "Feminism in America: A History", NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1989, p. 45.

⁷⁵Pugh Martin, *Women's Movement's origins and growth 1850-1939*, 1995.

Enlightenment thinkers valued experience and the evidence of the senses, emphasized acquired rather than ascribed traits, and raised fundamental (though unresolved) questions about traits ascribed to women. Feminists used Enlightenment ideas to emphasize women's basic humanity and equality with men. Politically, the 1688 Glorious Revolution in England set the stage for more far-reaching reforms in the following centuries. Revolutionary movements in the United States (1770s) and France (1790s), dominated by middle-class (or bourgeois) groups, overthrew monarchical orders that claimed to rule by divine right.⁷⁶

While the peoples from the average income were joined to the European industrial revolution, the leadership of this revolution from the upper class dramatically relied on them and especially on the women's involvement in the revolution just to extend their popularity in the society, unfortunately after the middle-class reached to the government the brogues generally limited or denied women's participation in the new European governments, finally women lost any chance in meaningful political participation the historians mentioned that:

In Europe and Great Britain socialist movements vigorously critiqued the new industrial order of the 1830s and 40s, and joined with middle-class and working-class movements in the revolutions of 1848 to extend popular rule. Advocates of women's emancipation joined these movements and defended women's right to participate in public life. Middle-class leadership won out when the revolutions triumphed, and they generally limited or denied women's participation in the new European governments. When even these moderate republics were overthrown in the counter-revolutions of 1848-49, women lost any chance at meaningful political participation.⁷⁷

The revolutionary war economically brought the industrial revolution and expansion of consumer markets transformed the production and distribution of goods, wealth, and services on both sides of the Atlantic.⁷⁸

In the process, the home was reconstructed, ideally, as a place of middle-class child rearing, consumption, and leisure, rather than productive labor. Factories, shops and other public venues were now considered the primary arenas of production, Feminists insisted on women's right to support themselves through meaningful work whether centered in the household or in the wider society.⁷⁹

⁷⁶Mary Wollstonecraft, *the Rights of Women with Strictures on Political and Moral Subjects*, 2006, Molly McLay, Document1, p. 111.

⁷⁷Ibid., p. 111.

⁷⁸Charles Sellers, *The Market Revolution: Jacksonian America, 1815-1846*, 1992.

⁷⁹Mary Wollstonecraft, *the Rights of Women with Strictures on Political and Moral Subjects*, 2006, Molly McLay, Document1, p. 112.

The feminist movements depended on taking the advantage from the industrial revolution to its full rang for harness the Revolution for their own personal interests in order to serve their cause and delivered their ideas to the world,

Communication and transportation revolutions wrought by mail service, telegraph; railroads and steamships carried ideas and people further and faster than previous generations had dreamed possible. Feminists in the U.S., Europe, and Great Britain used these new forms of communication with prodigious effects.⁸⁰

Culturally, Romanticism created new ideas and values that blended with older Enlightenment ideas and values to produce unprecedented optimism about human destinies and capabilities.

Many radical Christian movements, working outside state-sponsored churches, also endorsed gender equality and added religious zeal to the momentum for change. Feminists insisted that women's rights were God-given and should not be curtailed by human custom or law. They also robustly criticized traditional obstacles to women's abilities to control their own lives and destinies. In the early 20th Century suffrage was again an issue, as women began participating more in public life. Still, everything that was important, in terms of power and prestige, was under male control: politics, economy, etc...⁸¹

Vassar opened in 1865; the first college aimed exclusively at educating women, the ideas of equality began rising.⁸² With more education, more women were allowed to participate in society, but it was really only upper class women, whose families could bear the expense of the education.

The success of Vassar and the other women's colleges that followed in its success, germinated the idea that in education, if nowhere else, the roles could be equal. Women could be the intellect partners of men, even if they couldn't be professional partners. From the late 1860s to the early twentieth century, women began to press to be allowed into professional occupations, as doctors and lawyers.⁸³

⁸⁰Mary Wollstonecraft, *the Rights of Women with Strictures on Political and Moral Subjects*, 2006, Molly McLay, Document1, p. 112.

⁸¹Ibid., p. 112.

⁸²Kimberly M. Radek, "Women in the Twentieth Century and Beyond", 2001.

⁸³Kimberly M. Radek, "Women in the Twentieth Century and Beyond", Kimberly press, 2001, p. 2.

Step by step the women's liberating movements started to crash the wall of fear towards women.

In the beginning they could get the degrees but not the licenses to use them, underlying all of these theories about women's suitability or lack of suitability for professional public work was the idea of suffrage. Voting was seen as symbolic of all the rights women were denied, and they believed voting would allow them to get into other areas of influence in society. For the most part, men didn't want women to vote, usually for a number of reasons; they feared a loss of the control of women, they didn't want women to vote as a block, a very logical fear as women represent 51% of the population.⁸⁴

The political battle for suffrage—equal voting rights—took many years with women and men working together, but the 19th century amendment was eventually passed in 1920.⁸⁵ The feared voter block never materialized, as women voted with their husbands or fathers, a logical occurrence since, after all, women tend to share the same concerns, economically, socially, and politically, as the men in their lives.

Finally women voted in their first federal election in 1922, many women believed that they were the political equals of men, and the target of their activism shifts, and women begin to pursue more personal freedoms. Women begin engaging publicly in “male” activities. They begin to drink publicly, which was also an illegal activity at the time, since it was during the prohibition, when alcohol consumption was a crime. Skirt lengths went up, and thus were less constraining of women's movements.⁸⁶

The women freedom aspects increased not just by the right of voting but even in their behaviors, clothes, body and life style.

Their hair was cut shorter than in the past, to be more associated with men's traditionally shorter hair, and indeed the “bobbed” hair became a symbol of freedom. Women began smoking, and they worked toward attaining sexual freedom, as well, trying to combat the traditional double standard which saw men who had taken many lovers as healthy but women who had many as evil or flawed. Cosmetics and change in dress styles are marketed to women during this time period to represent that new freedom, and that freedom was ultimately represented by the flappers of the time.⁸⁷

⁸⁴Ibid., p. 3.

⁸⁵Kimberly M. Radek, "Women in the Twentieth Century and Beyond", 2001.

⁸⁶Hanna Barker, *Gender in Eighteenth-Century England: Roles*, Longman, 1997, p. 19.

⁸⁷Ibid: p. 19.

When the Americans reached the 1940s, the involvement in the Second World War changed gender roles once again. In time of crisis Americans altered their understanding of roles and gender appropriateness, as the men went to war and the women filled in the production and wage-earning gaps.⁸⁸ The escalation of the war furthered these changes.

Before the attack on Pearl Harbor, only single women worked in labor force, after the attack, married women were also pressed into outside employment. Women working were seen as a national necessity and a patriotic duty. The media and government propaganda worked to convince women that they could retain their femininity and still hold men's jobs. These women were given new training and became very skilled. Women also become better educated, as a group, during this time, as since the younger men (18 to 21-year-olds) were at war, women needed to fill college seats to keep colleges' open.⁸⁹

The mess came after the war was finished; the men returned back demanding for their situation as the dominate mankind.

By the end of 40s, however, the war had ended and men wanted their old roles as leaders, breadwinners, and workers back, and justifiable felt entitled to this, as they had risked their lives for democracy and American values. Again, many women were fired and removed from their jobs—after all leaving those jobs was now their patriotic duty—but this time many women were angry and resentful because they had found a degree of self-definition they had not previously known.⁹⁰

It is known that the 1950s were the years of great consumerism. As the American economy was flourishing it created prosperity and opportunities for many consumers. Items were marketed toward the idea of providing women with more time and freedom.⁹¹

⁸⁸Ryan O'Donnell, *Women's Rolls*, 2000.

⁸⁹"Women's History in America", Presented by Women's International Center. (c) 1994, 1995 Compton's New Media, Inc., p. 30.

⁹⁰*Ibid.*, p. 30.

⁹¹Kimberly M. Radek, "Women in the Twentieth Century and Beyond", 2001.

1950s America invented the vacuum cleaners, toasters, and washing machines—even baby formula and cake mixes—could satisfy their needs for technology and help, women become more efficient at their domestic duties. Men worked designing, manufacturing, and marketing these items, while women stayed home and worked to create a “haven” for men who would come home tired and exhausted from the endless need to produce. The goal it seemed for all Americans was to produce a happy family. The baby boom increased the population and exacerbated the difference in gender roles.⁹²

Establishing big families became the norm in 1960s this new situation forced men to work longer and harder to provide the Family needs and keeping women more tied to the home. As the more kids for which they were responsible the more work they had and the more exhausted they were likely to become, these great demands set the stage for the 1960s, when both women and men begin to rebel against these rigid expectations.⁹³

The 1960s were an era of rebellion. Students protested the establishment’s decision on American involvement overseas, and activism increased on national issues like civil rights, as well. Most of these protests were male-dominated, however, and women began to protest on their own, but they begin to protest their exclusion from male arenas and leadership roles in addition to the concerns of the male protesters. Women were particularly incensed that even male protest leaders (who wanted equal civil rights) felt that women were only good as menial subordinates or as sex objects.⁹⁴

Betty Friedan’s said "The Feminine Mystique in 1963 fueled the feminist movement, which had been nearly dormant after 1920, and women began to demand change in politics, education, and business, and brought the gender role debate into the national conscience".⁹⁵

In the Civil Rights Act of 1964, proponents of the bill wanted to eliminate discrimination—on the basis of religion, race, ethnicity, and age.

⁹²"Women's History in America", Presented by Women's International Center. (c) 1994, 1995 Compton's New Media, Inc., p. 30.

⁹³"Women's History in America", Presented by Women's International Center. 1994-1995.

⁹⁴William Chafe, *American Women in the 20th Century*, Oxford University Press, 1991, p. 35.

⁹⁵Ibid., p. 35.

Gender was not initially included as people were still debating whether there could be discrimination on basis of sex, when sex was a clear natural difference. Southern congressional leaders added Title VII, which included sex, as a joke with the intention of sabotaging the whole thing. Surprisingly, when the time for the voting came, it passed, and then became a symbol of the issues women faced. When the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission refused to enforce the legislation, Friedan and others founded the National Organization for Women, which lobbied politicians, who eventually compelled the epoch to enforce this law.⁹⁶

The 1990s have been characterized by great and significant changes in gender definitions. "Worldwide, we have seen women accepted as soldiers in their armies; in fact, much like ancient Egypt, both men and women are compelled to serve in the American army".⁹⁷

In the 1990s, American women learned that they can rise to leadership roles, but surveys show that it requires more effort, that they have to be exceptionally better, and that they must devote a great deal more time, than men. In addition, conservative groups like the *Promise Keepers* formed, and conservative movement picked up, as more people are striving for the ideal of family values.⁹⁸

Despite all the freedom and rights that were given to women but the problem of racism and gender remained rampant in society, this is the result of years of repression of women and suppression of freedom.⁹⁹

The 1990s showed that race and gender are still problems in the society during the 1991 Anita Hill and Clarence Thomas hearings, a political fiasco so large that for the first time women were more likely to vote as a block, and their efforts helped to removing President Bush and elect more female representatives to government positions than ever before, in Illinois, Carol Mosely *Braun* was elected, becoming Illinois's first black, first female, senator. That attitude toward the importance of equality, however, did not last, as she was defeated in 1998 by an arch-conservative devoted to family values.¹⁰⁰

⁹⁶Ibid., p. 35.

⁹⁷Baber K. M., *old dilemmas. Sex Role, College women's career and motherhood expectations*, NY US: W H Freeman, 1998, p. 19.

⁹⁸William Chafe, *American Women in the 20th Century*, Oxford University Press, 1991, p. 35.

⁹⁹Human Rights Watch, World Report, 2013.

¹⁰⁰William Chafe, *American Women in the 20th Century*, Oxford University Press, 1991, p. 36.

Even the more American president's grants to freedom William Jefferson Clinton was vulnerable to attack from the extremist community and the ruling class which they were the decision-makers, only because he gave a prominent place for women.¹⁰¹

Even the popular treatment of new President William Jefferson Clinton underscored a marked hostility toward non-traditional women. During first term in office, he appointed his extremely educated and qualified wife to a political position and fell under criticism for not being able to control her and insinuations that she, not, he, was the real acting president.¹⁰²

On the side for increased equality, Hilary Rodham Clinton was able to win a senate seat in New York, acting in a public professional political role and she was already became one of the American's competitions on the White House presidential race.¹⁰³

But unfortunately she failed. "However, in the Republican White House sex-dictated dress codes were reinstated—female White House employees are not allowed to wear pants—and funding has been restricted to any organizations associated with abortion and/or family planning".¹⁰⁴

Today at the dawn of the 21st century the women in Europe and America are placed at a position of advantage. They are really on the move; they are paying heed to their inner voice, they are finding their individual and collective voice, they are aligned with their conscience, moving ahead with purposeful strides.¹⁰⁵

Also today and since we are on the threshold of the 21st century women should not to look at the historical injustices done to them, it's the time to put all that behind them and look forward to their empowered role in this new age.

¹⁰¹Human Rights Watch, World Report, 2000.

¹⁰²William Chafe, *American Women in the 20th Century*, Oxford University Press, 1991, p. 37.

¹⁰³Human Rights Watch, World Report, 2013.

¹⁰⁴Knox, C. *A Brief Multicultural history of families and children in the United States*, Humboldt State University, 2014, p. 215.

¹⁰⁵Human Rights Watch, World Report, 2013.

Women today need not look anywhere for a perfect role model, they need to look within and listen to their intuition, to take the suitable action at the exact time, all they need right now is to set the right intention, and all their intentions will bear fruits sooner than later.¹⁰⁶ Such is the strength of the New Age, Feminists' in 21st were those men and women who wrote, spoke and acted on behalf of women and their rights to social, economic and political equality.¹⁰⁷

Famous writer Rebecca West defined feminism the best with her now famous comments, "I myself have never been able to find out precisely what feminism is: I only know that people call me a feminist whenever I express sentiments that differentiate me from a doormat, or a prostitute." ¹⁰⁸

In this phase, women tried to equate themselves with men by proving that they were as good as men, if not better. The future of gender roles in the 21st century are of course depending on our behaviors and definitely up to the way which we can make our dreams in equality and security will come true.

2.3.The Women Situation in the Arab Homeland

Most of Arabs share basic beliefs and values that cross national and social class boundaries. "Social attitudes have remained constant because Arabian society is more conservative and demands conformity from its members".¹⁰⁹

It is important for Western observers being able to identify and distinguish these cultural patterns from individual behaviors. Although most of the Arabians countries including Iraq are secular countries, the traditional Islamic culture predominates, with Qur'anic Law playing an active role in the day-to-day life in the country.¹¹⁰

¹⁰⁶ Ryan O'Donnell, *Women's Rolls*, 2000.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid.

¹⁰⁸ Ann Norton, *Paradoxical Feminism: The Novels of Rebecca West*, International Scholars Publications, Conference Paper, Colombia University, 2006.

¹⁰⁹ Bakhtari H. (1995), "Cultural Effects on Management Style," *International Studies of Management and Organization*, 25, 97-118.

¹¹⁰ Nouha Al-Hegelan, "Arab Woman Potentials and Prospects", 1980.

As Nouha comments:

Arab's families are often large and strongly influence individuals' lives. The family is the basic societal unit and is very strong and close-knit. Arabs gain status by being born into the right family. A patriarchal system, the father is the head of the family and is considered a role model. Few women work outside the home, though the number has increased with urbanization. Each gender is considered its own social subgroup, interacting only in the home.¹¹¹

The family relationships is very strong so most activities are circling around the family, the success of any one from the family is a success for all and vice versa the setback or the fail of any member inside the family is a collapse for every member in the same family, Al-Hegelan, Nouha mentioned that:

All activities revolve around family life, and any member's achievement advances the reputation of the entire family. One's family is a source of reputation and honor, as well as financial and psychological support. Arab's first loyalty is to the family, which cannot be dishonored. Therefore, maintenance of family honor is one of the highest values in Arab society. Since misbehavior by women can do more damage to family honor than misbehavior by men, clearly defined patterns of behavior have been developed to protect women and help them avoid situations that may give rise to false impressions or unfounded gossip. Traditional Arab women are subordinate to men in their society. The extent varies by country, and we cannot generalize.¹¹²

In some countries like Lebanon, Syria, Iraq and Egypt, it is no imposed upon them and women are free to choose whether to wear veils; however in other and some restricts in the countries previously mentioned, all women even non-Muslims wear veils out of fear of mistreatment by fanatics or those who pretend to be guardians of Islam.¹¹³

The most restrictive conditions exist on the Arabian Peninsula, and the most relaxed conditions exist in Egypt, Iraq, Syria, Tunis and Lebanon, according to Islam women are supposed to wear veils. In some countries, like Lebanon, Syria, Iraq and Egypt,

¹¹¹Nouha Al-Hegelan, "Arab Woman Potentials and Prospects", Three articles that published by *Arab Perspectives* in its October, 1980 issue, Vol. 1, No. 7, p. 30.

¹¹²Ibid., p. 32.

¹¹³Barry Rubin, *Islam, the Arabs and Middle Eastern Society*, 2012.

It is no imposed upon them and women are free to choose whether to wear veils. However, in other and some restricts in the countries previously mentioned, all women, even non-Muslims, wear veils out of fear of mistreatment by fanatics or those who pretend to be guardians of Islam.¹¹⁴

The living conditions of Arabian women before Islam were different, there were no Arab's countries just like nowadays but tribes each tribe is different from the other one in the matter of behavior with the women's issues, Al-Hegelan said:

Before Islam, women in the Arabian Peninsula followed the cultural bonds of the tribe. Each tribe had its own laws regarding women. Some were emancipated even in comparison with many of today's standards; other lived in very chauvinistic societies. In some instances, women were chattels and men often buried their newly-born daughter's alive.¹¹⁵

The Islamic religion liberated the women from such cruel heritage and gave them the respect of humanity and the glory of being a woman. Islam projected a woman as being parallel to a man and embodied the philosophy of being both equal and different.

Fourteen hundred years ago, Islamic women were given the right to run their own businesses, to keep their financial autonomy after marriage and, more importantly, the right to learn-the key to emancipation, from the beginning of Islam, 1400 years ago, the Moslem woman was born with all the rights -cultural and spiritual - due a human being. When the Christian Church was still debating the existence of a woman's soul, women in the Islamic world knew they had one. They knew they were full entities and as free human beings, had choices.¹¹⁶

Many American women in the past several years have sought to keep their maiden names after marriage; this tradition has been enjoyed by Islamic women for centuries and rightly so.¹¹⁷

After all, the wife is one of a pair, a couple - terms literally conveying equality.

¹¹⁴Nouha Al-Hegelan, "Arab Woman Potentials and Prospects", Three articles that published by *Arab Perspectives* in its October, 1980 issue, Vol. 1, No. 7, p. 32.

¹¹⁵*Ibid.*, p. 32.

¹¹⁶*Ibid.*, p. 33.

¹¹⁷*Ibid.*, p. 33.

The Arabic word for wife, "Alzawja", literally means "one of a pair", so when we compare Western woman in the medieval ages with the Arabian woman of that time, we find that women had little or no rights under Roman law. They were under perpetual tutelage from childhood on and deprived of the freedoms that the modern Western woman takes for granted. Prior to the year 1000, recognition of a woman as a human being was still in dispute.¹¹⁸

Women counterpart in the Arab world fared much better. "There were many remarkable examples for successful Arabian women like the prophets' Mohammed (peace and blessings be upon him) first wife, Sheika Nafissa and queen Zubaida".¹¹⁹

One can imagine the surprise among feminists when they learn that:

The Prophet's Mohamed first wife, Khadijah, was an able business woman; that Sheika Nafissa was a theologian from whom the Imam Shaffei, one of the four scholars of Islam, was proud to say he had learned. How many Western women know that, even at this early date, Arab women fought in battles alongside the men in full equality or that the glamorous Queen Zubaidah built a canal to provide water for the pilgrims in route to Mecca, since the 10th century, Arabian women throughout the Islamic world have been doctors and nurses.¹²⁰

The Prophet (peace and blessings be upon him) was "most emphatic in enjoining upon Muslims to be kind to their women when he delivered his famous khutbah (speech) on the Mount of Mercy at Arafat in the presence of one hundred and twenty-four thousands of his Companions who had gathered there for the Hajj al-Wada (Farewell Pilgrimage)".¹²¹

In it he ordered those present, and through them all those Muslims who were to come later, to be respectful and kind towards women. He said:

"O Believers fear Allah regarding the women. Verily you have married them with the trust of Allah, and made their bodies lawful with the word of Allah. You have got (rights) over them, and they have got (rights) over you in respect of their dignity, freedom according Quran, food and clothing according to your means."¹²²

¹¹⁸Ibid., p. 34.

¹¹⁹Ibid., p. 34.

¹²⁰"Islam is the Great Religion", Web. 30 May. 2015. (<https://islamgreatreligion.wordpress.com/tag/muslima/>).

¹²¹Nouha Al-Hegelan, "Arab Woman Potentials and Prospects", Three articles that published by *Arab Perspectives* in its October, 1980 issue, Vol. 1, No. 7, p. 35.

¹²²"Islam and Women", Web. 30 May. 2015. (http://www.islamswomen.com/articles/mothers_in_islam.php#).

The Prophet said, "Women are men's sisters".¹²³ The Koran confirms the equality of both sexes: "We have created you, men and women, tribes and nations so you would get to know each other and to realize that the best among you is the most righteous."¹²⁴

Islam grants to the woman the responsibilities due to her as a human being; a woman must pray, must fast in the month of Ramadan, must go to the pilgrimage once in a lifetime if possible and she must give alms.¹²⁵ Just as a man, if she fails her responsibilities, she will not go to heaven; she will go to hell. She must choose her own path; she must choose between right and wrong.

The Koran says, "The believing men and believing women are allies of one another. They enjoin what is right and forbid what is wrong and establish prayer and give zakah and obey Allah and His Messenger. Those - Allah will have mercy upon them. Indeed, Allah is exalted in Might and Wise".¹²⁶

The treatment of women in general and especially the high position mothers hold in Islam. Amongst the clearest examples of Islam's honoring women is the great status of the mother in Islam. "Islam commands kindness, respect and obedience to parents and specifically emphasizes and gives preference to the mother".¹²⁷

Islam raises parents to a status greater than that found in any other religion or ideology. The command to be good to one's parents begins right from the Qur'an. Allah says:

And we have enjoined upon man, to his parents, good treatment. His mother carried him with hardship and gave birth to him with hardship, and his gestation and weaning [period] is thirty months. [He grows] until, when he reaches maturity and reaches [the age of] forty years, he says, "My Lord, enable me to be grateful for Your favor which You have bestowed upon me and upon my parents and to work righteousness of which You will approve and make righteous for me my offspring. Indeed, I have repented to you, and indeed, I am of the Muslims."¹²⁸

¹²³Mohammed. R, Web. 25 Feb. 2015. (<http://www.muhammad-pbuh.com/en/?p=236>).

¹²⁴Quran Kareem, sūrat Al-Hujurat, 49:13.

¹²⁵Nouha Al-Hegelan, "Arab Woman Potentials and Prospects", 1980.

¹²⁶Quran Kareem, sūrat Al-tawbah, 9:71.

¹²⁷Al-'Adl. Ansar, Web. 20 June. 2015. (http://www.islamswomen.com/articles/mothers_in_islam.php).

¹²⁸"Islam and Women", Web. 30 May. 2015. (http://www.islamswomen.com/articles/mothers_in_islam.php#).

Even in the capacity of exercising authority and power there is no difference between men and women. "Islam then proclaimed a woman capable of exercising all her rights with no exceptions; to pursue her social activity, to own, to sell, to buy and get married, all without limitation or without tutelage of any other human beings".¹²⁹

Arabs were a great empire and many nations recognized it because of their services in various fields of science and other aspects of life.

With Islam as a starting point, Moslem women flourished and bloomed as sisters within the society, a society which expanded from the Arabian Peninsula to the borders of China in the East and the borders of France in the West. The Arabian people brought their knowledge with them. Amazingly few Westerners, even well-educated ones, know how much Western culture owes to these early transactions with Arab culture. The Arabs were not only fierce warriors; they were poets, philosophers, astronomers, mathematicians, scientists, doctors, nurses, and theologians.¹³⁰

Unfortunately nothing long last the Arabic great empire eventually collapsed, but not before it has given great knowledge to the world like threads from the rich structure of its culture, threads that are readily notable in the structures of Western culture, economy and politics concepts.

Instead of one great empire, "the Arabic great empire was divided into countries and caliphates that became smaller and smaller as time went by, this fragmenting environment produces the right climate for the successful invasion of colonialism".¹³¹ Eventually, the seeking for creativity as the primary attention for Arabs was replaced by the seeking for peace as a primary goal.

There was a new Arab awakening. A new independence was in the air and with it a growing evolution toward emancipation, first of men and then of women. The stirrings of this new emancipation started by the end of the 19th century in most Arab countries. Arab and Moslem women have been a viable entity for a long time; they have struggled, realized and enjoyed emancipation in their daily lives for centuries.

¹²⁹Ibid., p. 12.

¹³⁰Elmer Bendinar, "The Rise and Fall of Paradise: When Arabs and Jews Built a Kingdom in Spain", New York: Barnes & Noble Books, 1983, p. 21.

¹³¹Nouha Al-Hegelan, "Arab Woman Potentials and Prospects", Three articles that published by *Arab Perspectives* in its October, 1980 issue, Vol. 1, No. 7, p. 36.

As for the Moslem woman, no one can take the Word of God through his Messenger from her. Her evolution is her own and she knows she can accomplish her emancipation on her own.¹³²

None of this is meant to demean the struggle of the Western woman. All women involved in this kind of difficult human endeavor understand the hardships only too well.

All involved women know that the woman's struggle-in day-to-day low profile or high media terms-continually confronts the limits of social pressures. We are cognizant of the finite nature of the political environment of any given hope for change. Women's changing status is not different from other political, cultural or social processes. This realization suggests another aspect of the "born yesterday" misperception; one doesn't have to be a trained sociologist to recognize the continuity-discontinuity of all social process.¹³³

Each one on the earth man was or a woman should be proud on himself / herself as soon as he or she work hard for change his or her situation to better, even if the results came late or not as what he / her wants but the honor of trying is enough.

Each and every person working for change in the status quo is a part of the culture within which he or she struggles. It is not surprising that the end result at any point in time is a function of the twists and turns, advances and retreats, fortunes and misfortunes of a given epoch of war and peace, insurrection and stability, affluence and depression, colonialism and independence that by chance or direction, an individual calls "my life". All these forces shape what is considered "right", "proper" or "natural."¹³⁴

Arabic people were no exception to this rule. In the long history of rise and decline, despite and often because of their struggle, the position of Arabian women rose and declined many times.

The modern Arab woman has been emancipated in current times as early as the 1920's in some Arab countries like Egypt, Iraq and as late as the 1960's in some others. Like all change it is uneven, complemented and continually in a process of alteration. Ignorance of the Arab woman is the main problem. The sudden scarcity of oil has created a highly intense focus on Arab people in an atmosphere characterized by a near total absence of knowledge.¹³⁵

¹³²Hakeem, Muzaffar. *The Sun Is Rising in the West*, Beltsville: Amana Publications, 1999, p.30.

¹³³Snarey, J. R. *Cross-cultural universality of social-moral development: a critical review of Kohlbergian research*, Psychological Bulletin, 1985, Vol. 97, p. 32.

¹³⁴*Ibid.*, p. 32.

¹³⁵Nouha Al-Hegelan, "Arab Woman Potentials and Prospects", Three articles that published by *Arab Perspectives* in its October, 1980 issue, Vol. 1, No. 7, p. 36.

Unfortunately, sometimes the broad cultural, economic and social differences between the west and the east leading to huge misunderstanding in recognizing the problems and obstacles which it were faced by the Arabian Women.

It is revealing to see that the struggle over the era is largely a struggle between women. In the same way, it is also revealing that American women are the sole proprietors of defining and evaluating Arab women. That can be changed with information and a willingness to listen. Many start with the history of the Western women and evaluate the Arab woman in a distinctively Western mirror. To make matters worse, many Westerners women are often only slightly aware of their own history to any level of usable sophistication.¹³⁶

The Arabian woman appreciates the concern of her western counterparts. "She understands the excitement that Western women feel having so recently discovered their own freedom; the Arabian woman knows however that she must go at her own pace, on her own terms and within the finite reality of her own culture in its particular historic moment, the Arab woman has the benefit of wisdom accumulated over nearly 14 centuries. Most of all, she has the advantage of making her own choices in creating and experiencing an entirely new epoch of emancipation, she is experiencing the joy of new growth but she understands that impatient tugging at a plant just breaking soil will only retard or even kill, Although she appreciates the concern of others".¹³⁷ The Arabian woman is too utterly involved in her own evolution to be envious of the struggle of other women, East or West.

2.4.The Past and the Present Condition of the Iraqi Women

Iraq has a great cultural diversity; Although Iraqis commonly are a religious and conservative people, there are powerful secular tendencies in the country.¹³⁸The majority of Iraqi people are Muslim nation with the presence of non-Muslim minorities with Arabic and Kurdish as its official languages. Weekends in the country are Friday and Saturday, as opposed to the Western version of Saturday and Sunday.

¹³⁶Hakeem, Muzaffar. *The Sun Is Rising in the West*, Beltsville: Amana Publications, 1999, p.31.

¹³⁷Nouha Al-Hegelan, "Arab Woman Potentials and Prospects", Three articles that published by *Arab Perspectives*, October, 1980 issue, Vol. 1, No. 7, p. 37.

¹³⁸Helen Chapin Metz, *MESOPOTAMIA: Iraq- A Country study*, 1988.

There are many values that are honored in the Iraqi culture, including hospitality, generosity and humility, men commonly shake hands or kiss each other when greeting, but this is traditionally not the case for men and women. Respect is given to the elderly and women, especially those with children.

From 1958 to the 1990, Iraq provided more rights to women than most of its neighboring countries.¹³⁹ The twelve years of severe sanctions reduced these opportunities. Before the occupation women were active in many aspects of the society.

Dr. Nadia Al-Ali writes in her article about Iraqi women "women were once among the most educated in the region, participating in all sectors of the labor force and playing an important role in the public life, Now that situation has dramatically changed 'since the invasion of the U.S in 2003.'"¹⁴⁰

Since the establishment of the Iraqi kingdom to the present, Iraq has passed through radical changes and new laws shaping the Iraqi Personality.

The new Iraq of 1958 under King Faisal declared in its new constitution that "the people are the source of all powers." "Citizens are equal before the law in their public rights and obligations, and there shall be no distinction between them by reasons of race, origin, language, religion, or belief." As for civil liberties, "Freedom of thought and expression are guaranteed and shall be regulated by law.... Freedom of the individual and the inviolability of the home are safeguarded, and shall not be violated except according to the requirements of public safety. These principles shall be regulated by law.... Freedom of religions is safeguarded and religious rites shall be respected, provided they do not violate public order or are contrary to public morals" Furthermore, "Islam is the Religion of the State."¹⁴¹

In order to transfer the country from old laws to the modern one, the Iraqi government of (Abdel Khareem Qasim and Abdel Salam Arif) shifted power away from the Shari'a courts regarding women.¹⁴²

¹³⁹ Yasmine Jawad, *The Plight of Iraqi Women, 10 years of suffering*, Independent Iraqi Sociologist, 2013, p. 3.

¹⁴⁰ Marjorie, P., *Iraqi Women under Siege*, Code Pink Women for Peace, Code Pink, 2006, p. 18.

¹⁴¹ Ibid., p. 18.

¹⁴² Yasmine Jawad, *The Plight of Iraqi Women, 10 years of suffering*, Independent Iraqi Sociologist, 2013, p. 3.

The new legislators in 1960s introduced a Personal Status law (ILPS) that granted equal inheritance and divorce rights, relegated divorce, inheritance and marriage to civil instead of religious courts provided for child support. Shari'a was still allowed to adjudicate cases that ILPS did not cover, and polygamy was permitted under certain circumstances.¹⁴³

Marjorie explains it as following:

The Iraqi economy in 1972 began to flourish and rise up directed by the Western thirst for oil, and the nationalization of the oil industry created amazing job opportunities with huge salaries that women were encouraged to fill in. Gender equality in education, civil service jobs, and equal pay for equal work, maternity benefits and freedom from workplace harassment, became the focus of the government so the government was very interested in educated women and involved them in the industrial life in order to become ready in case of war when the men would be called to the fronts because of that, when the Iraqi-Iranian war broke up (1980-1988), Iraqi men went to the front, women worked and Iraqi women assumed positions that were predominantly filled by males".¹⁴⁴

Iraqi government before the occupation established the General Federation of Iraqi Women (GFIW).

In 1970 (GFIW) was the key tasks were Operating mainly through female-based community centers to offer educational, job-training, and other social programs. More importantly the government passed laws to ensure literacy for the entire population, between the age of 6 and 45. Women were given the right to vote in 1980 and to be elected to the National assembly, although the number of female representatives remained small. Around the same time, laws on divorce, polygamy, and inheritance further improved women's rights.¹⁴⁵

The new constitution of the 1990 provided more access for all citizens to education and free healthcare, the Iraqi society offered free access to education for all and special attention was paid to women's education, education became entitlement for all and not a privilege for few, progressive legislation regarding marriage, divorce, maternity leave, and polygamy improved the role of women in society.¹⁴⁶

¹⁴³Marjorie P., *Iraqi Women under Siege*, Code Pink Women for Peace, Code Pink, 2006, p. 17.

¹⁴⁴Ibid., p. 19.

¹⁴⁵Ibid., p. 20.

¹⁴⁶Yasmin Al-Jawaheri, "Women in Iraq: The Gender Impact of International Sanctions", *International Women's Studies* 2009.

"The campaign against female illiteracy succeeded to drop illiteracy rates from 91% in 1957 to 12% in 1990. Thus in 1990 Iraqi women in Iraqi universities and research centers made up more than 30% of faculty members. About 67 % of the teaching staff in primary, secondary, and high schools in Iraq were women during the eighties".¹⁴⁷

The achievements of Iraqi women began to decrease with the UN sanctions against Iraq after the second gulf war. Prior to the sanctions, the Iraqi government had been among the most generous in the Arab Homeland.

Even the private sector was open to women. In this context, Iraqi women had the possibility to strive for progress regardless social and patriarchal boundaries contrary to critics by the "the free world." All women's achievements in the educational, health and employment sectors began to curtail under the imposition of sanctions from the beginning of the 90s on. An Iraqi testified about this impact:

It felt as if the earth was shaking. Things were getting out of control so suddenly. I started to realize that there was nothing that could help me. My work had become worthless, when there is no sense in your work, it becomes a burden. However, I still hoped that the world would not let us down. I could not believe that more than thirty countries would bomb us, but it happened! Then, I did not want to believe that the sanctions would last for long, but this has also happened! I realized that nothing is history except our dreams for a better live.¹⁴⁸

The welfare decreased gradually when the sanctions began to take effect, the period of freedom had ended so when the economy began to sink, the first victims were women.

Motherhood leave, child care and public jobs were undermined in Iraq during the sanctions, the Access to education and lack in paying salaries, even for the most educated, drove teachers and professors to leave the country in the seeking of a better life, books became a luxury so most the Families started to employ private tutors to teach their children and the disadvantaged preferred sent their boys to work or beg, unfortunately Girls had to remain at home and assist with in the household.¹⁴⁹

¹⁴⁷"The situation of Iraqi women during war and occupation 2003-2013", Web. 16 May. 2015. (<http://Brussel Tribunal.org>. Belgium).

¹⁴⁸Yasmin Al-Jawaheri, "Women in Iraq: The Gender Impact of International Sanctions", *International Women's Studies* 2009, Vol.10, p. 3.

¹⁴⁹Ibid., p. 4.

Yasmine Al-Jawaheri writes "In the vast disorder that had befallen the country under sanctions, women's rights were the easiest to sacrifice".¹⁵⁰

In this regard illiteracy rate among adult females was 77 percent. Along with these structural effects, the Iraqi family began to decompose. Males were either killed or emigrated in search of a better job and better life.

Polygamy after UN sanctions became an option for women seeking an "economic security" and "gender imbalances" raised. Patriarchal control began to take over. Women were exposed to increased domestic violence and forced into prostitution and begging. Violence in the streets, abductions and gang activities became widespread. The state of insecurity and fears forced even the most educated women into veils in order to avoid being sexually harassed or attacked. The lack of basic essentials caused high levels of stress, resulting from the inability of people to act upon their circumstances to remove the source of such tensions.¹⁵¹

The U.S. and Britain invaded and occupied Iraq under the pretext of "liberating Iraq from its oppressor regime".¹⁵² A new chapter from Iraqi history started with the invasion. The majority of the disadvantaged and especially the poor believed it. They believed after the cruel regime overthrow everything would come back to normal with economic prosperity and freedom like in the U.S.

The occupiers gave the impression to the Iraqi people that they were going to see a light at the end of the tunnel. The media propaganda created such an illusion. Under this pretext, Iraq was occupied and destroyed. The "current Iraqi constitution" of "new democratic Iraq", led to sectarian and religious divisions that had a disastrous impact on all social layers, especially the women.¹⁵³

Just like the constitution in 1958s the new constitution holds that Iraqi citizens are equal before the law regardless sex, religion and ethnics, adding that no law can be established that contradicts the "principles of democracy".¹⁵⁴ Meanwhile it writes that Islam is the religion of the state but there should be no laws that contradict the "established ruling of Islam".¹⁵⁵

¹⁵⁰Ibid., p. 5.

¹⁵¹Ibid., p. 6.

¹⁵²Marjorie, P., *Iraqi Women under Siege*, Code Pink Women for Peace, Code Pink, 2006, p. 18.

¹⁵³Ibid., p.19.

¹⁵⁴Ibid., p.19.

¹⁵⁵Ibid., p.20.

The new constitution of Iraq after 2003 was a big disappointment for most of people because of so many disagreement points made the Iraqi community in a struggle with rights and the shape of the identity. A woman from 'Organization of Women's Freedom in Iraq (OWFI)' said that:

“Under the new Iraqi constitution and spatially under the statement of religion, Islamic provisions will turn Iraq into Afghanistan under the Taliban, where oppression and discrimination of women is "institutionalized". In this regard, women's personal status is left to interpretations of different groups of Islamic sects and schools according to their own jurisdiction. A female Islamic blogger wrote that "the problem is not with Islam, the problem is with the dozens of interpretations of Islamic rules and principles. The legal rights of Iraqi women were not the only setback; there are various setbacks on the grounds of education, health and employment and political rights".¹⁵⁶

Year after year the situation of women in Iraq began to deteriorate in both sides politically and socially, the life after the American invasion it was not as rosy as some predicted.

From a political ground, the constitution of the occupier gave women 25% of the seats in the "National Assembly" in which it is considered to be the real gain for Iraqi women. Iraqi female constitute about 55-65% of the Iraqi population. During the 1980s Iraqi women were able to vote and held 20% of the seats in the parliament and some women even obtained prominent cabinet positions. Regarding education, though education for males and females is free, only primary education is "mandatory".¹⁵⁷

All the experts and social institutions efforts to make the girls return back to education and to the school seats ended with a disappointing failure.

As young girls dropping school, some women advocated that secondary education should be mandatory but in vain. With regard to employment, an Iraqi University professor showed in her survey that at least 85% percent of educated women are unemployed due to the deteriorating security. Around 11% of adult women are employed compared to one-third of men.¹⁵⁸

¹⁵⁶Ibid., p.20.

¹⁵⁷"Iraqi Women under Siege", Web. 18 May. 2015. (http://www.wilpf.org/files/peacetables_toolkit/IraqiWomenReport.pdf).

¹⁵⁸Ibid.

A report established 2008 by women commission fact Sheet on Iraqi women demonstrates the bleak reality of Iraqi women since 2003.¹⁵⁹

Around 4.5 million Iraqis have been displaced inside Iraq since 2003, which is the largest number of displacements in Middle East since 1948. About 83 percent of the displaced are women and children. In 2010, one out of every eight displaced families is headed by women, 71% of whom would be able to work yet cannot find employment.¹⁶⁰

Single mothers are worse off.

The Single mothers are face social stigmas and are treated inhumanely if they try to get an employment or additional educational opportunities. About 33% of women has not received any humanitarian assistance since 2003; 76% of widows do not receive a pension and sometimes they are forced to go into temporary marriage with one of the bureaucrats who distribute the funds. In s sense it is a flourishing of sex exploitation of Iraqi women. Today, 52% of women are unemployed; 55% displaced and 55% have been subjected to violence. Around 47% of the children in household headed by women do not attend school.¹⁶¹

Ordinary Iraqi women suffer from systematic discrimination with no protection of their rights, which affects all aspects of life, including education, employment and social relations. The legal position for the women in the republic of Iraq is terminated with the excuse of religion and traditions, they are treated during day when they go to work or schools, they need to be secured and accompanied by men

In order to be protected and in safe so there is no security for ordinary Iraqi women, let alone Iraqi women detainees and Iraqi women detainees are supposed to fall under the rules of International law, however they are exposed to discrimination and abuse like sexual harassment and rape.¹⁶²

After the occupation of Iraq and the election that followed, an elected Iraqi government came to power and established a new law under the auspices of the "liberators of the U.S. and Britain". Thus, Iraqi women prisoners must be treated according to the standard of care and dignity but how Iraqi

¹⁵⁹"Bleak Reality of Iraqi Women Since 2003", women commission fact Sheet, 2008.

¹⁶⁰Souad N. Al-Azzawi, *Deterioration of Iraqi Women's Rights and Living Conditions Under Occupation*, B. Tribunal, 2007, p. 2.

¹⁶¹*Ibid.*, p. 3.

¹⁶²Marjorie P., "Iraqi Women Under Siege", 2005.

women are detainees really treated in the newly "liberated" Iraq? On the 22nd of February 2013, the Iraqi channel "Al Sumaria" broadcasted a 52 minutes program called "Women behind Bars"; this revealed how Iraqi women prisoners are badly treated.¹⁶³

Iraqi women have faced three wars, sanctions, occupation and now face not stable governments and the right of clerics to decide their personal destiny. The lacks of infrastructure, the rise of Islamic sectarian groups, instability and terror have overturned the majority of Iraqi women into prisoners of their own houses.¹⁶⁴

Most of Women nowadays without jobs especially privet jobs because the lack of the electricity and other requirements services.

Due to the collapse of the formal economic sector,

The female heads of household have cannot earn their living and a "non-sectarian wave of assassinations against academics, journalists, and scientists has not spared women". Poorness, daily privation and insecurity have pointedly influenced the gender relation.¹⁶⁵

Nadja Al-Ali mentioned in an interview that:

The close-knit relationships within Iraqi families are being sundered by envy and competition in the struggle for survival. Nuclear families are becoming more important than extended families. Some women have stopped visiting relatives to avoid embarrassing families too poor to offer visitors food or any other kind of hospitality which is an important aspect of Iraqi culture.¹⁶⁶

To conclude, Iraqi women deserve a better life and better conditions than what the so called liberators said "liberation of Iraqi women". The wright's and position of the women in Iraq need to be studded and examined by all human rights organizations in the world. There is a deliberate silence against the violation of women's rights in Iraq. The plight of Iraqi women has deepened and worsened due to occupation and under Subsequent governments.

¹⁶³"Women Behind Bars", Web. 22 May. 2015. (http://youtu.be/Jz6T8yC_N38. 22nd February 2013. AlSumeriah Iraqi Channel).

¹⁶⁴ Khalif Deen, *Women May Lose Basic Rights Under New Constitution*, 2005.

¹⁶⁵ Gilbert Burnham, "Mortality After the 2003 Invasion of Iraq: A Cross-Sectional Cluster Sample Survey" *Lancet*, 2006, p.14.

¹⁶⁶Nadje Al-Ali, "Iraq's women under pressure", *Le Monde Diplomatique*, 2007, p. 5.

CAPTER III

3. Heather Raffo's life and the Social Background of her Works

3.1. Heather Raffo's Life

Heather Raffo is an actress, playwright and librettist, performs a powerful excerpt from her one-woman show *Nine Parts of Desire*, her off Broadway hit which details the lives of nine Iraqi women and she wrote the libretto for the opera *Fallujah*, based on the Second Battle of Iraqi well known city Fallujah.¹⁶⁷ She was magnificent in her creation and performance of *Nine Parts* and its national and international tour, Heather garnered many awards including; a Lucille Lortel Award, the prestigious Susan Smith Blackburn and Marian Seldes- Garson Kanin playwriting awards and Helen Hayes, Outer Critics Circle and Drama League nominations for outstanding performance.¹⁶⁸

Maysoon talks about Heather as follows:

Heather Raffo (1970-) is an Iraqi-American actress and a playwright. She was born in Michigan from Iraqi father and Irish American mother. She grew up in Okemos, Heather holds the BA from the University of Michigan, an MFA from the University of San Diego and she also studied at the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art in London. Having been born in the United States, she and her family visited Iraq in 1974 when she was a little girl and again in 1993.¹⁶⁹

We can see obviously that the writer did not live in Iraq but her love for her father's family and for her root made her interact emotionally with her country problems and she was determined to deal with her country's women issues as in line with the western society's women's struggle for their rights.

¹⁶⁷Heather Raffo, Web. 1 June 2015. (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Heather_Raffo).

¹⁶⁸Ibid.

¹⁶⁹Tengku Sepora M. & Maysoon Taher M., *Shahrazad Tells her Stories in Raffo's Nine Parts of Desire*, International Journal of Social Sciences and Education, Volume: 2 Issue: 1 January 2012, p. 1.

Raffo's work focuses on the lives of women in her father's homeland, and was originally conceived in 1993 after a visit to her Iraqi relatives.¹⁷⁰ It was also inspired by Raffo's trip to the Iraqi Art Centre in Baghdad. Later, in a back room, she saw a painting of a nude woman clinging to a barren tree.¹⁷¹

She took a photo to the painting of the nude woman, returned to America and devised a way of replicating the painting into a play.¹⁷² A decade later she completed the play, which features monologues by nine highly distinct Iraqi women, all played by herself. When asked about *Nine Parts of Desire*, she comments:

I visited Amariya bomb shelter where many Iraqi civilians lost their lives when the shelter became a target in the 1991 war. I went to the Iraqi Art Center, the modern art museum of Baghdad, then I wandered into a back room and there was a haunting painting of a nude woman clinging to a barren tree. Her head was hanging, bowed, and there was a golden light behind her, like a sun. I stood motionless in front of the painting. I felt as though this artist had painted me exactly. The painting was titled "Savagery"; this was my inspiration to write the play.¹⁷³

The success of the play drew much media attention to Heather, after the media's attention to her she appeared numerous times on TV screens and public appearances and interviews on American and British television shows, Also she spoke to the National Press Club, as well as featuring in *O: the Oprah Magazine* as part of her "Aha Moment".¹⁷⁴

With such major success in London, Los Angeles, New York, Seattle, Chicago, Philadelphia and Washington DC, *Nine Parts of Desire* is currently being translated for international productions in France, Brazil and Turkey. On July 18, 2008, she recreated some of her monologues from "*Nine Parts of Desire*" at the New York Open Center.¹⁷⁵

¹⁷⁰Pamela Renner, "Iraq Through the Eyes of Its Women". *American Theatre*, 2005, p. 20.

¹⁷¹*Ibid.*, p. 20.

¹⁷²*Ibid.*, p. 20.

¹⁷³"Heather Raffo", Web. 1 June. 2015. (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Heather_Raffo).

¹⁷⁴*Ibid.*

¹⁷⁵Pamela Renner, "Iraq Through the Eyes of Its Women", *American Theatre*, 2005, p. 3.

She shared what she has learned from what John Lahr in *The New Yorker* called "an example of how art can remake the world".¹⁷⁶ Heather has also been approached by International press about doing stories on her show, but she refused as she did not want to draw attention to her family in Iraq, as it could put her relatives' lives in danger.

We know from her works and interviews that she was always concerned about her legacy and she wanted to solve the identity confusing problem, the struggle between her roots and her birth country, "she spent the last decades of her life devoted to bridging her Eastern and Western cultures – bringing the worst of war into a sacred artistic experience".¹⁷⁷ The legacy she is working to bring about is a movement that "uplifts the feminine experience, that addresses our relationship to violence and that integrates the Middle Eastern voice into the American theatrical canon".¹⁷⁸

Once Raffo revealed her own ideas on the issue at hand as:

An American with a father who was born in Iraq, I naturally live on both sides of the issues. The first Gulf War was the most defining moment of my life. I was in school at the University of Michigan. I remember watching many of my fellow students at the bar cheering the war as it played out on TV, while I was worried if my family in Baghdad was even going to survive. Over a decade later, I think Americans are deeply questioning their place in Iraq, and wondering about its history: Who are its people? What do they want? Why are we there? Did we do the right thing?¹⁷⁹

The above quote clearly demonstrates Raffo's true feelings on war. As she was born in the USA, Raffo finds herself in a situation all too familiar to emigrants and refugees: "the need to balance and reconcile two separate, often antagonistic, social, political, and cultural paradigms".¹⁸⁰

¹⁷⁶ "Heather Raffo", Web. 1 June. 2015. (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Heather_Raffo).

¹⁷⁷ Julie, S. Web. 1 June 2015. (<http://blog.tedmed.com/heather-raffo-placeholder/>).

¹⁷⁸ Ibid.

¹⁷⁹ "Heather Raffo", Web. 5 June. 2015. (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Heather_Raffo).

¹⁸⁰ Pamela Renner, "Iraq Through the Eyes of Its Women", *American Theater*, 2005, p. 19.

As Brecht famously put it:

The best school of dialectics is emigration. The most acute dialecticians are refugees. They are refugees as a result of changes, and they study nothing but changes. Out of the tiniest signs they conclude the greatest events. When their opponent wins, they calculate how much the victory cost, and for contradictions they have a refined eye. Dialectics, here's to you! ¹⁸¹

In an interview, she said:

"Oh, I am not just from Michigan—I'm living in Michigan with a big family in Iraq. I'm not on one side of this war. I can't sit in a bar with people cheering as bombs are going off. My body, my blood and my psyche want my family to live. What if I never see them again? What if they're just in the wrong place in the wrong time?"¹⁸²

Raffo presents women who "suffer from cruel world of wars, of materialism, of political agenda, and of capitalism";¹⁸³ her play gives a complex picture of the Iraqi-American relationship contextualized by Iraqi history in the last 50 years. In one of her interviews, Raffo says she wanted "American audiences to ... understand how difficult it is to grasp the psyche of people who have lived under the government roll before 2003 for 30 years with American support, then had a war with Iran, resulting in 1.5 million deaths, followed by 13 years of sanctions and two wars under American firepower".¹⁸⁴

After all we should know that the writer came from a mixed background gave her the authority to stand aside as critical inspector beyond the authoritative educational discourse, she tried to be the bridge between the two totally different cultures and playing the role of the true messenger to represent alternative discourses that create a cultural conversation.

Raffo's play is an attempt to shattering the walls of silence, portraying the life of brutalized, so that to give new and real image of what was going on in the land of civilization. However, understanding the humanistic image and portraying the pain is only possible if the dramatist or the writer is

¹⁸¹“Bertolt Brecht”, Web. 10 May. 2015. (<http://www.autodidactproject.org/other/hegel-brecht.>).

¹⁸²Pamela Renner, "Iraq Through the Eyes of Its Women", *American Theater* 22.4 (April 2005): p. 20.

¹⁸³“Heather Raffo”, Web. 1 June. 2015. (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Heather_Raffo).

¹⁸⁴Personal Interview, November 16, 2006.

standing aside as critical observer, beyond the authoritative cultural discourse. Raffo's straddling between two cultures in her play, and her position as an intermediary and messenger, help her to represent alternative discourses that create a cultural conversation. In her play, Raffo tries to heal her women from their trauma, for narrating one's trauma is a necessary step in the healing process, but having someone else frame, contextualize, and narrate it in the poetic language of metaphors and symbols can have both a liberating and numbing experience.¹⁸⁵

To conclude, Raffo's topics revolving around the oppression of women. Its overall purpose is to understand the women behind the veils and why the Muslim women take up the hijab. The purpose is also to show how political, religious, and cultural factors shape the women's lives in Iraq.

3.2. The Treatment of Women in *Nine Parts of Desire*

The title originates from a statement for Al-Imam Ali Ibn Abi Taleb (May Allah be pleased with him) the fourth Caliph in Islam that "God created sexual desire in ten parts; then he gave nine parts to women and one to men".¹⁸⁶ Lauren Sandler of The New York Times wrote "The play's emphasis on sex is inherent in its title".¹⁸⁷ The statement, embarrassingly expresses basic contradiction toward women: The nine parts of desire can make women superior but also dangerous. Desire emerges as a common thread in the monologues of the nine characters Raffo embodies, but sexuality marks only one aspect of her subjects' lives explored onstage. Raffo voices Iraqi women's desires for justice, peace, and freedom; expresses female artistic and intellectual aspirations; and depicts with compassion and dignity women's struggles to survive war and other forms of systemic violence. The diversity of desires she presents characterizes the overall complexity of the piece: *Nine Parts of Desire* is a provocative title because of the multiplicity of ideas, emotions, and political viewpoints Raffo incorporates into her collective portrait.

¹⁸⁵Magda Romanska, "Trauma and Testimony in Heather Raffo's *Nine Parts of Desire*". (2010) *Alif: Journal of Comparative Poetics*. No. 31: 211-239.

¹⁸⁶Terry Teachout, "Invisible Women", the Wall Street Journal, January 14, 2005. P. W7.

¹⁸⁷Lauren Sandler, "An American and Her Nine Iraqi Sisters", the New York Times, October 17, 2004.

In Raffo's play the black irony of this sentiment emerged step by step from the bits and pieces of the stories: The lives of Raffo's nine characters are deformed by the one part of male desire that, as John Lahr notes, turns "men into savages--brutes, betrayers, rapists".¹⁸⁸ The title is as significant as it originally refers to the physical place of Iraqi women in the world, to their desires.

The play has come to represent the dark ocean of wants of an entire people. In these women's lives, there is this division between freedom and safety: the women have become a country of desires. These women speak of the desire for friendship for love, the pain of rejection, the need to memorialize the murdered and to need to survive.¹⁸⁹

Nine Parts of Desire is one woman show but with contrastive nine characters. In the monologues, "Raffo efforts to bring to life nine various Iraqi women whose extremely different tales convey the complex and disturbing reality of being female in modern-day Iraq, their monologues become a series of overlapping conversations leading to a breakdown in communication reflecting the chaos of Iraq intensifies".¹⁹⁰

Raffo presents characters of broken women because of the cruel world of wars; these Iraqi women who produce varied population, events, stories and experience write their own history as it is no one written about them before. The history of war and its effect regarded as male discourse and where women are hidden, it is now uncovered by these women experiencing different situations.¹⁹¹ Terry Teachout in her article praises Raffo's plays, saying "Heather Raffo brings us closer to the inner life of Iraq than a thousand slick-surfaced TV reports".¹⁹²

In the same vein, Lahr describes the welcomed impact of *Nine Parts of Desire*, as

"The first Gulf War came to us via satellite and without words. The road to Basra—the totem of that military cakewalk—was a silent spectacle of incineration. Now, in the second Gulf adventure, Americans can hear the war, but the wall of silence around the female experience of carnage remains more or less intact".¹⁹³

¹⁸⁸ John, Lahr, Web. 19 June. 2015. (<http://heatherraffo.com/9-parts-of-desire-the-new-yorker-review>).

¹⁸⁹ Pamela Renner, "Iraq Through the Eyes of Its Women", *American Theater* 22.4 (April 2005): p. 20.

¹⁹⁰ John Lahr, "*The Critics*: The Theater: The Fury and the Jury: Women, and Men, Make Themselves Heard," *The New Yorker* 80.34 (November 8, 2004): 136.

¹⁹¹ Nina Nijsten, *Some things we need for a feminist revolution*, 2011.

¹⁹² Terry Teachout, "Invisible Women", *The Wall Street Journal*, January 14. 2005. p. W7.

¹⁹³ *Ibid.*, p. W7.

The characters in the play are deeply engaged in circumstances unique to them as Iraqis and yet through their passions seem to answer the concerns of the west. The readers play a vital role in the work with each Iraqi character speaking directly to them in English as if they were a trusted western friend. It was important to create a safe environment to experience both horror and humor, but ultimately to see the play as a celebration of life. *9 Parts of Desire* is also about the need for feminine strength as a necessary part of any culture's endurance. So before we start the treatment of Raffo's women characters one by one, we should identify the characters' difficult names, jobs, linguistic affiliation and symbolism which it may become difficult for the reader to understand such strange and unfamiliar aspects:

- 1- Mulaya - The first character in the play, "She is a woman who responds and lead calls to women at funerals, her mourning is directed at all of Iraq rather than a specific person, she is more symbolic figuration than character ".¹⁹⁴
- 2- Layal: "one night, she is the play's main speaker. An artist from Baghdad, Layal is the curator of the Iraqi Art Center, Layal has a privileged position and she is the only artist in Iraq allowed to make nude paintings during the period before 2003".¹⁹⁵
- 3- Amal – it means hope. "She is a Bedouin woman who talks about her romantic issues".¹⁹⁶
- 4- Huda (or Hooda) – "she is 70 years old, is a resident of London who believes that the United States should have removed the cruel Iraqi regime from power during the 1991 Gulf War".¹⁹⁷
- 5- The Doctor – "A woman, educated in the United Kingdom, she had returned to Iraq in order to help her country".¹⁹⁸

¹⁹⁴Magda Romanska, "Trauma and Testimony", *Alif 30*, (2010), p. 217.

¹⁹⁵Ibid., p. 218.

¹⁹⁶Ibid., p. 218.

¹⁹⁷Ibid., p. 218.

¹⁹⁸Ibid., p. 219.

- 6- The Girl (Samira) – "A nine-year old girl, this character has no name. She enjoys listening to 'N Sync".¹⁹⁹
- 7- Umm Ghada – (mother of Ghada), "She describes the February 13, 1991 Amiriyah shelter bombing by the United States, She lost her family in the bombing, She had since become a caretaker of the site, and serves as its guide".²⁰⁰
- 8- The American - "An Iraqi American woman exile in Manhattan has family in Iraq and watches the news of the war in Iraq. Her monologues are scattered throughout the play".²⁰¹
- 9- Nanna – "An elderly street peddler who had lived through Iraq's political turmoil, she sells objects salvaged from destroyed structures to U.S. Marines".²⁰²

The play starts with Mulaya, who enters the stage singing "Che Mali Wali", a traditional Iraqi song whose title translates ambiguously as "Because I Have No Guardian [Protector/Master]".²⁰³ Mulaya "carries a great bundle on her head. She empties her load of shoes into the river".²⁰⁴

She mumbles metaphorical verses about lost souls/soles. From the Western perspective, the fact that Raffo chooses to open her show with the verses of the hired mourner is already startling. Sigmund Freud writes:

“Mourning can be healthy and unhealthy. Healthy mourning resolves itself in time and eventually finds closure; unhealthy mourning, either prolonged, resisted, or sublimated, turns into a melancholia and can manifest itself through a variety of symptoms of PTSD”.²⁰⁵

¹⁹⁹Ibid., p. 219.

²⁰⁰Ibid., p. 220.

²⁰¹Ibid., p. 220.

²⁰²Ibid., p. 221.

²⁰³Magda Romanska, "Trauma and Testimony", *Alif* 30, (2010), p. 218.

²⁰⁴Ibid., p. 217.

²⁰⁵Sigmund Freud, "Trauer und Melancholie", passage verlag, 1917, p. 8.

Mourning and concussion are inevitably connected, but in Raffo's play, mourning is a commodity; it is staged and performed as required by cultural standards, how then can such mourning for which one pays and performs be designated as either healthy or unhealthy? How does it work itself out in individuals and in culture?²⁰⁶ The play does not state for whom Mulaya is mourning or who has hired her.

In a way, she is more symbolic figuration than character, and her wailing is directed at no one in particular and for no one in particular. In fact, what she mourns is the nation as a whole: its past, history, and culture.²⁰⁷

She closes her speech with a melancholic and bitter tribute:

And now the river has developed an appetite for us
Its current runs back
beneath Iraq.
Underneath my country
there is no paradise of martyrs
only water
a great dark sea
of desire. (*Nine Act 1. Scene i*)

The river here is a "marvelous image just like an album or an unavoidable turn of history that is not supposed to repeat itself, yet which is refined, each time with bloodier outcomes".²⁰⁸ Iraq is a very rich country on both sides naturally and socially:

Rich in natural resources, Iraq is the land between the rivers, has been ravaged by centuries of conflict: from the Ottoman Empire to British rule, from the regime before 2003, the Iraq-Iran war, and ethnic conflicts to the first American invasion and international sanctions. The river and the mourning in Raffo's play has a much broader context, and it encompasses trauma as a shared national experience, one that is as much a response to the breakdown of the nation as it is a source of national identity²⁰⁹

²⁰⁶Magda Romanska, "Trauma and Testimony", 2010.

²⁰⁷ Ibid.

²⁰⁸Magda Romanska, "Trauma and Testimony", *Alif* 30, (2010), p. 218.

²⁰⁹Ibid., p. 136.

Mourning here is a response to the trauma of the loss of what Benedict Anderson would call an "imagined community of the nation-state that transforms fatality into continuity, contingency into meaning".²¹⁰ It is a trauma of the nation that has lost its sense of history besides the traumatic experience itself, and that has no other source of identity but the prolonged state, not of mourning, but of trauma.

Cathy Caruth calls PTSD "a pathological symptom, not a symptom of the unconscious, but a symptom of history. The traumatized we might say, carry an impossible history within them, or they become themselves the symptom of a history that they cannot entirely possess".²¹¹

By narrating the life stories of women with different ages and backgrounds who share a common nationality, Raffo narrates a traumatic experience that goes beyond any limited geographic or historical framework "a collective trauma transcends the contingent relationships between individual persons and forges them into a collective identity".²¹² It is a shared sense of national belonging, tragically rooted in one's awareness of its loss. *Nine Parts of Desire* presents a global theme, "it is not only about the ordeal of Iraqi women; rather, it is about the women across the culture since to many women all wars are the same".²¹³

Mullaya is usually hired by others, but her Raffo has not tell us who hired her and whom she is mourning. It seems that Mullaya laments a whole nation, its culture, its history and its people.

This prolonged mourning encompasses trauma as a national experience and as a source of national identity since all Iraqis share the same the traumas of loss. Moreover, starting with such lyrical mourning is startling for the audience, as it emphasizes the tragedy of Iraq.²¹⁴

²¹⁰Benedict Anderson, "Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism", p.19.

²¹¹Cathy Caruth, " *Trauma: Explorations in Memory*", Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995, p. 4.

²¹²Bernhard Giesen, " *The Trauma of Perpetrators: The Holocaust as the Traumatic Reference of German National Identity*", p. 113.

²¹³Tengku Sepora M. & Maysoon Taher M., *Shahrazad Tells her Stories in Raffo's Nine Parts of Desire*, 2012.

²¹⁴Ibid.

Yet, the play shows that women in our world have no right to experience their total freedom. The artist Layal the second character in the play described as sexy and elegant woman, says:

I will never leave/ Not for freedom you do not even have.
Call me what you like, look at me how you will
I tell you/So many women have done the same as me
Everywhere they have to do the same.
If I did the same in your England or America
Wouldn't they call me a whore there too?
Your Western culture, sister, will not free me
From being called a whore/Not my sex
Women are not free. (*Nine* Act 2. Scene v)

Layal wants to survive, to live freely, yet she rejects leaving Iraq, despite having the means to do so, she says, "I don't know/maybe I feel guilty/all of us here/it's a shame if all the artists leave too".²¹⁵

This seems to be a burden of guilt, gathered by a deep self-awareness, she bears is making her expecting the universal justice that against the immoral world that surrounded her.²¹⁶ She says, "I am aware that I will die / I am complicit".²¹⁷

This fictional character of Layal appears with a contradictory identity; "she is a sympathizer or a collaborator, a critic and victim of the regime, such trap does not help her to maintain a coherent self-image and moreover, this contradicting shows her traumatic and the kind of horror that Layal has suffered from, that she does not dream but of survival".²¹⁸ She rhetorically asks "Isn't everything in this country a matter of survival?"²¹⁹ Layal's character is a reflection to a real Iraqi artist "Layla Al Attar who created a marvelous works, has been killed by US air strike in 1993".²²⁰

²¹⁵Heather Raffo, *Nine Parts of Desire*, Northwestern UP, (2006), p. 9.

²¹⁶Magda Romanska, "Trauma and Testimony", 2010.

²¹⁷Heather Raffo, *Nine Parts of Desire*, Northwestern UP, (2006), p. 10.

²¹⁸Magda Romanska, "Trauma and Testimony", *Alif* 30, (2010), p. 220.

²¹⁹Heather Raffo, *Nine Parts of Desire*, Northwestern UP, (2006), p. 10.

²²⁰"Hugh. P", Web. 10 Feb. 2015, (<http://www.proquest.com/en-US/catalogs/databases/detail/newsstand.shtml>).

These women's speech of love and peace is "intermingled with the sound of tanks, of bullets, women's mourning and children's crying".²²¹ The third character in the play Amal articulates ideas that picture the passions of desert simple people:

I see with my heart/not with my eyes. /I am Bedouin /
I cannot tell you if a man is fat or if a man is handsome
only I can tell you if I love this man or not
I think you see with your heart like a Bedouin. (*Nine* Act 3. Scene i)

Amal's character is a seeker of freedom and change, "she leaves Iraq to marry a man in London, but she decides to leave London and return back after her husband's betrayal with one of her friend, then she gets married a Palestinian tribesman, a friend of her father and she leaves him because he wouldn't keep his promise to leave the Middle East and go to Canada".²²² She says, "I am looking for this freedom/and he says 'No, we are not going to Canada./so I care very much for him, but again/I left".²²³

When Amal returns back to Baghdad she "begin a phone relationship with a friend of her ex-husband, after a year they finally meet in Dubai, but he rejects her. Too ashamed to return back to Iraq and meet her family, Amal decides to return to her first husband in London, thinking that she can get more freedom, peace or love".²²⁴ Amal is desperately searching for someone to listen to her, to fill the void she feels deeply. She thinks naively that when she will find the man, the void will be vanished: "I do, I very much feel this void/I have no peace/Always I am looking for peace".²²⁵

Amal's choices may seem incomprehensible; her decisions erratic and somewhat as if made outside of herself. In search of something she cannot name—she calls it peace—she goes back and forth between West and East, running away from one man toward the phantom of another. But the more she persists in her search, the emptier she feels, unable to see the absurd futility of her plight. It is only when she finds someone who listens to her story, when she can finally find her own voice that she discovers, to her surprise that the peace she has been so desperately searching for is nowhere else but within her.²²⁶

²²¹Magda Romanska, "Trauma and Testimony", *Alif* 30, (2010), p. 221.

²²²*Ibid.*, p. 221.

²²³Heather Raffo, *Nine Parts of Desire*, Chicago, IL: Northwestern UP, (2006), p. 10.

²²⁴*Ibid.*, p. 11.

²²⁵Magda Romanska, "Trauma and Testimony", *Alif* 30, (2010), p. 221.

²²⁶*Ibid.*, p. 221.

The fourth woman in the play is Huda, a seventy-years-old "whiskey drinker with fifty years as a smoker".²²⁷ We knew from the sequences of the play that Huda is "an emigrant living in London who drowns her nostalgia in alcohol and political views, just like Layal, Huda is perhaps the most complex of the nine characters in the play, She left Iraq a long time ago, and by now should have adjusted to her new life, but she couldn't forget her past, reliving traumatic memories from the old country".²²⁸

In 1963 when the regime before 2003 took the power in Iraq, Huda was a member of the opposition and was rounded up with 18,000 other members of the resistance and thrown into prison:

We could hear things, all night, always rape
or rape with electronic instruments.
But their way, I promise you, their way
was to torture the people close to you
that is how they'd do it. (Nine Act 4. Scene i)

Huda always does her best to fight these cruel memories; and so on, in a way or another she grows anaesthetized to them. She chooses to escape from her miserable memories and from the struggles inside herself by her addiction to alcohol. She was involved in Politics by her participating in the march for peace in Vietnam and Chile.

Accordingly, the war against Iraq is against all her beliefs, yet she declares the need of this war saying: "Because Saddam/Saddam was the greater enemy than, I mean, /imperialism We all can say/congratulations/the regime is gone/Saddam is gone".²²⁹ She announces her preference to "chaos to permanent repression and cruelty".²³⁰ She cannot reconcile her past with her present moment and her future, just like her inability to reconcile her love to her hate for the old regime and the American invasion. Huda states: "I am in a period of disheartenment everywhere. Maybe I should be there. /I don't know what to do with myself now; I have doubts, yeah, well/About my whole life".²³¹

²²⁷Ibid., p. 221.

²²⁸ Geoffrey H. Hartman. "On Traumatic Knowledge and Literary Studies", Vol. 26, the Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995, p. 545.

²²⁹Magda Romanska, "Trauma and Testimony", *Alif* 30, (2010), p. 224.

²³⁰Heather Raffo, "Nine Parts of Desire", Chicago, IL: Northwestern UP, (2006), p. 19.

²³¹Ibid: p. 21.

Huda cannot come to terms with herself; a prisoner of historical circumstances, all she can do is making herself drugging with alcohol and thoughtless discourse: "My self, too, it takes a lifetime to be liberated", ²³² she says sadly.

The fifth woman is an Iraqi origin British-educated doctor. She loves her country very much so she wants to help the people. "She chooses to return to Iraq because of the obligation for her country and its people". ²³³

But instead of treating children's colds, chicken pox and such ordinary cases, she finds herself delivering mutant babies: "Here, it is your first son, I am sorry he has two heads, six babies no head, four abnormally large heads, now today another one with two heads". ²³⁴

In any war, all are losers and victims (children, women and men). Jean Bethke Elshtain argues, "Wars destroy and bring into being men and women as particular identities by ... giving permission to narrate. Societies are, in some sense, the sum total of their 'war stories.'" ²³⁵

The doctor narrates in the play the story of her husband's case which is similar to many men in Iraq who lost part of their bodies because of the wars, "My husband he sits at home without his legs". ²³⁶

It is so difficult for her "to live in a world subdue with death and deformity, but she has to live, for the survival instinct is very strong in Iraqis, she knows very well the consequences of radiation in Iraq because of the American booms which were hit the Iraqi soil during the war, and how it is the main reason behind the different kinds of cancers and the increasing number of malformed babies". ²³⁷

²³²Geoffrey H. Hartman. "On Traumatic Knowledge and Literary Studies", Vol. 26, the Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995, p. 546.

²³³Magda Romanska, "*Trauma and Testimony*", Alif 30, (2010), p. 225.

²³⁴Heather Raffo, "*Nine Parts of Desire*", Chicago, IL: Northwestern UP, (2006), p. 20-21.

²³⁵Romanska, Magda, "*Trauma and Testimony*", Alif 30, (2010), p. 225.

²³⁶Geoffrey H. Hartman. "On Traumatic Knowledge and Literary Studies", Vol. 26, the Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995, p. 546.

²³⁷Magda Romanska, "*Trauma and Testimony*", Alif 30, (2010), p. 226.

Nevertheless, she shocks her audience by her announcing that she is a pregnant, for she also might give birth to a double-headed baby "No I'm fine, I'm fine/I'm pregnant".²³⁸

Samira is the sixth and youngest women in the play; she is only nine years old. She complains that her mother does not allow her to go to the school, from the visiting of the American soldiers to her school and having fun with girls to make them laugh, it seems that the mother is afraid that such laughter might make her daughter endangered for both cultures.²³⁹

The mother told her daughter that "she is so stupid to go to the school, just to justify her fears; only her father who disappeared after the war got used encouraging her. The little girl gives a fresh perspective to the fears and frustration of living and growing under the American occupation. In bitter comic moments, she expresses her fear that her mother might be also kidnapped or disappeared".²⁴⁰

But she convinces herself that her mother will not be kidnapped because she has awful hair, "her hair is not that nice,"²⁴¹ she says:

[My mother] is afraid of getting stolen by gangs--now
they steal women for money/ or to sell them. /
I try to tell momma she won't get stolen/ her hair is not that nice.
They only steal people whose [sic] families have money. (*Nine* Act 6. Scene i)

Like any other child of her age, she watches different American programs and she is fascinated to the extent that she wishes to be stolen and taken to another country,²⁴² "maybe I should get stolen/so I could leave my country".²⁴³

²³⁸ Geoffrey H. Hartman. "On Traumatic Knowledge and Literary Studies", Vol. 26, the Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995, p. 546.

²³⁹Tengku Sepora M., "Shahzad Tells her Stories in Raffo's *Nine Parts of Desire*", 2012.

²⁴⁰Magda Romanska, "*Trauma and Testimony*", *Alif* 30, (2010), p. 225.

²⁴¹Geoffrey H. Hartman. "On Traumatic Knowledge and Literary Studies", Vol. 26, the Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995, p. 547.

²⁴²Tengku Sepora M., "Shahzad Tells her Stories in Raffo's *Nine Parts of Desire*", 2012.

²⁴³Geoffrey H. Hartman. "On Traumatic Knowledge and Literary Studies", Vol. 26, the Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995, p. 547.

What more shocking for the readers and audience, is, that the terrible experiences of losing her father and the afraid of losing her mother, these experiences cause trauma for any one, nevertheless, she out of boredom has learned to distinguish between the different kinds of weapons by listening to the type of shot sound.²⁴⁴

Samira's character let one think about the kind of future for this new fresh generation:

I am not stupid/ I count bombs even
I count between the/ hissing when it is high
until the sound becomes low/ then two seconds--and it explodes!
If I hear the hissing I know it's in our neighborhood
like in a few blocks/ then I hear glass breaking for 4 seconds
after the hit./ I can tell if it is RPG's or American,
tank or armor vehicle,/ Kalashnikov or M16. (*Nine* Act 6. Scene i)

The seventh character Umm Ghada's painful experience is moving. She vividly portraits how she has lost her family in a bomb shelter called "Amiriyya" to an American smart bomb.

Perhaps the most tragic of all nine women is the one who renamed herself Umm Ghada, "the mother of Ghada," after her daughter, who perished during the American raid on the "Amiriyya" bomb shelter, which Umm Ghada miraculously survived, and in which 408 civilians, including her nine children, evaporated, "fused" together, in one instant.²⁴⁵

Umm Ghada makes her life's "mission to let the world aware of the tragic event in this shelter".²⁴⁶ The content of the spoken passages are horrifying in detail, as she is giving a tour of the shelter as it were a museum:

This is Amiriya bomb shelter. / Here they write names /in chalk over the smoked Figures. / Here, on the ceiling, you can see/charred handprints and footprints from people who lay in the top bunks. / And here a silhouette of a woman vaporized from heat. / This huge room became an oven, and they pressed to the walls to escape from the flames. (*Nine* Act 7. Scene i)

²⁴⁴Tengku Sepora M., "Shahzad Tells her Stories in Raffo's *Nine Parts of Desire*", 2012.

²⁴⁵Magda Romanska, "*Trauma and Testimony*", *Alif* 30, (2010), p. 227.

²⁴⁶*Ibid.*, p. 227.

Fixated on the horrific images of destruction, Umm Ghada exemplifies what Hartman calls the traumatic "rupture of the symbolic".²⁴⁷ Relinquishing her individual identity, Umm Ghada loses herself in the symbolic order of communal memorial, but guarding the memory of the dead does not necessarily bring her relief. On the contrary, the repetitions of memory trap her in the moment of the event, or as Hartman puts it:

Repairing the breach between the symbolic order and the individual seems to be an endless task. . . . The repetitions, too, though cathartic, suggest an unresolved shock: a rhythmic or temporal stutter, they leave the storyteller in purgatory, awaiting the next assault, the next instance of hyper arousal. Concerning such repetitions Yeats said that a personal demon always brings us back to the place of encounter—to make it final.²⁴⁸

The Iraqi-American woman is the eighth one in the play; this woman might be Raffo's ego. She is an American young woman who "hasn't left her studio apartment in New York City for days".²⁴⁹ Her family still lives in Iraq, so we see her as "transfixed in front of the TV, watching the progress of the Iraq war and caught in a frenzy of worry over relatives there."²⁵⁰

She narrates:

"I watch TV/looking for faces of our family/so all I do is cry.
I'm on my knees usually/ in the middle of my apartment with my mom/
we're on the phone/I'm watching/I'm holding a rosary watching/ CNN/ I
want to pray/but I don't have/words." (Nine Act 8. Scene ii)

The most amazing thing in her is "watching the bombs come down on her family neighborhood, the American is stunned by her own sense of alienation, she has grown to identify herself as an American, and now, she is asked to view herself as the other, the enemy".²⁵¹

²⁴⁷Ibid., p. 229.

²⁴⁸Ibid., p. 229.

²⁴⁹Magda Romanska, "Trauma and Testimony", *Alif* 30, (2010), p. 228.

²⁵⁰Heather Raffo, *Nine Parts of Desire*, Northwestern UP, (2006), p. 30.

²⁵¹Pamela Renner, "Iraq Through the Eyes of Its Women". *American Theater*, 2005, p. 22.

At the same time, ingrained in the American lifestyle, she is shell-shocked at the realization that it can be so easily numbing:

A woman actually turned to me and said that
she said "The war it's all so heartbreaking."
She was getting a pedicure.
I was getting a fucking pedicure. (*Nine* Act 8. Scene ii)

A television exploded image of war becomes an ordinary of the twentieth and the twenty-first century. "Raffo's American is always known by her own increasing anesthesia to what surrounds her.

In order not to drive her crazy, she must engage in all the trifles of life, but living itself becomes a burden. She cannot run away from the memories of what she has seen because get-away means betrayal".²⁵²

The American, ironically speaking, mentions the notion of trauma, explaining the gap between what she sees and actually lives in America and the horrors of war-torn Iraq²⁵³:

Here/ there's space/we throw our arms wide amber alerts and/ seven men
get trapped underground and we stop everything/we fly in engineers/to
save/everything we make a movie/ we go on Oprah, we talk about it like
we are moving on/ or maybe/ we can't move on/ but just one trauma we say
ok/ this can change you/ possibly/ your psychology, for the rest of your life
ok/ But there's no one saying-when/ their parents get/ blown apart in front
of their eyes. (*Nine* Act 8. Scene ii)

All these aspects of entertainment "TV programs, pedicure, the image of death and bloodshed in Iraq, is a message from the writer to look more carefully at the other side of the tunnel, to be more human, to understand that in this world there is more serious things that need your attention".²⁵⁴

²⁵²Magda Romanska, "Trauma and Testimony", *Alif* 30, (2010), p. 228.

²⁵³Tengku Sepora M., "Shahzad Tells her Stories in Raffo's *Nine Parts of Desire*", 2012.

²⁵⁴Pamela Renner, "Iraq Through the Eyes of Its Women". *American Theater*, 2005, p. 23.

The Old Nanna is the last of the nine women, "She wears the abaya traditionally Iraqi Islamic over for the women head so only her face and hands remain showing. [She is] an old, old woman, scrappy and shrewd; she has seen it all".²⁵⁵

She said in the play, "I have too much existence/ I have lived through twenty-three revolutions my life has been spared-if/ my life has been spared to whom do I owe my debt?"²⁵⁶

Nanna who is an old woman thinks she lives for long time, and she like others has this sense of guilt for being survival. She is living day by day, by selling whatever she got. She calmly narrates the destruction of her culture and Iraqi identity:

I saw/ Iraqi peoples/ bringing petrol,/ Shhh/ and/ burning/
all/ National Archives,/ Qur'anic Library/ all--
Our history is finished./ Sunni, Shi'a, Kurd,/ Christian even, Jew--/
if they take what we share/ it is easier/ to finish. (*Nine* Act 9. Scene i)

Due to the chaos after the American invasion of the Iraqi soil, "Nanna sells whatever bits and pieces of Iraqi history she can find in the ruins of plundered museums and archives: books, carpets, shoes, paintings, "very old" things. Her selling may be an indication that Iraqi heritage, culture and creative works are offered for sale after the occupation".²⁵⁷ Nana also offers updated commentary on the looting and lack of stability in the new Iraq.

However, the last item she tries to sell is Layal's painting 'Savagery.' It is an announcement by Nanna to us that Layal is dead:" an American bomb fell on her house".

Heather Raffo in the production notes that accompanied a published version of the play, she explains that: "Nanna's selling of the painting Savagery functions then as an epilogue to remind us finally that everything we have witnessed has a price".²⁵⁸

²⁵⁵Heather Raffo, *Nine Parts of Desire*, Chicago, IL: Northwestern UP, (2006), p. 45.

²⁵⁶Ibid., p. 46.

²⁵⁷Patrick. C, Web. 19 June. 2015. (<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/middle-east/book-market-fire-piles-on-the-misery-for-broken-baghdad>).

²⁵⁸Heather Raffo, *Nine Parts of Desire*, Chicago, IL: Northwestern UP, (2006), p. 47.

This paint is depicting" a nude woman clinging to a barren tree. Her head was hanging bowed, and there was a golden light behind her, like a sun".²⁵⁹

Raffo and her women leave the audience and reader at the same time wondering, whose savagery has Layal depicted? Is it the regime before 2003? Or it is America? Maybe she meant the men in general? Who is responsible for all what these women are suffering from the fate and destiny or may be a multiple complex aspects and problems gathering with no reasonable solution since the establishment of Iraqi kingdom until now?

²⁵⁹Ibid., p. 43.

CONCLUSION

Living in a country overshadowed by war and its consequences upon people most particularly on women has been explored with a particular reference to Raffo. The challenge faced by the Iraqi people after the American invasion of the Iraqi soil has been illustrated through the voice of the characters in *Nine Parts of Desire*. It is a fact that the Iraqi women who have paid a high price for the war and occupation of their country were the most affected victims of that destructive war.

Despite the rhetoric of the western reports those women's lives have improved since the overthrow of Iraqi regime the fact is that they still face all hardships of daily life in a war-torn country. The women are still facing a new series of challenges that some say have rolled back decades of Iraqi women's struggles for equal rights.

The new Iraqi Constitution, while guaranteeing increased political participation by women, leaves open the possibility that conservative clerics could soon have more control over Iraqi women's lives than ever before; Iraqi women have been besieged by violence. The lack of security in Iraq and increase in crimes like rapes, murders, and kidnappings have made many women afraid to leave their homes and led them to keep their children, especially girls, home from school.

It is clear from the information presented in this thesis that the war against Iraq has not change to better the Iraqi women's conditions and situations. But instead of that, it has replaced the brutality of the ex-Iraqi regime with a new brutality that challenges the security, safety and well-being of women and their families in a different ways. But most of the Iraqi peoples still believe that the hope is exists for increasing the political participation by women in the new Iraq, the women in Iraq couldn't be able to practice the full range of their rights as long as their country is overshadowed by war and unsettled conditions. As the political problems and violence continue, people in all over the world should think out how we can take an action to back up the Iraqi women until they could overpass their plight.

In a nutshell, we have tried to demonstrate the great sufferings of the Iraqi women through Raffo's remarkable play, *Nine Parts of Desire*. In the play the playwright exhibits the Iraqi women's struggle and fight for their rights, the hard times they experienced on their way to freedom as their western peers.

Raffo most beautifully exemplifies how hard the Iraqi women try to overcome all the hardships and obstacles they faced in every sphere of their lives. What we have tried to do in our study is to shed a light on the forgotten Iraqi women. Raffo's play is, in many ways, the voice of the unvoiced (the Iraqi woman).

We accept that while carrying out our search on the theme we have found out the scarcity of literature on that. In spite of its shortcomings, it is the first study of its kind, so the future researchers will further it. It may contribute a lot to the layman and those who are interested in literature, especially drama.

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