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Afro-Arab Women and the Media Misrepresentation: A Literary Panacea

Akewula Adams Olufemi¹

Abstract

Over five decades, there has been a steady growth of interest in studying the representations of Afro-Arab women in media as shown by the increasing number of journal articles of scholars who have abundantly discussed about the ugly images of these women that have been shown in western media for years. However, research lacks explanation and sufficient solutions to ameliorate such images. Therefore, this paper is an attempt to facilitate the understanding of Afro-Arab women images drawing on the bulk of the theorizing and explain how literature can help undo the mischiefs of misrepresentation. Moreover, it also explores the ways in which the teaching and the promotion of Arabic fiction can help dismantle the misrepresentation of Afro-Arab women in the Western media. Particularly, it demonstrates how Egyptian fiction writer Ikbāl Barakā's *Li-nazallasdiqā' ʾila-l-abad* (Let's Remain Friends Forever) can be used to correct misrepresentations of Afro-Arab women that appeared in media for a long time.

Keywords: Afro-Arabs, Western-Media, Women Representation, Literature

Introduction

Afro-Arab women have suffered from negative media coverage and stereotyping in the western world for over 50 years. This has resulted in many people seeing Afro-Arab women as unenlightened, uneducated and being shaped as second class human being compared to their western contemporaries. Literary critics and Islamic clerics have attempted to expose the misrepresentations, show their persistence, and offer solutions. However, little attention has been given to advance the explanation of such representations how, when, and why are they formed? And how do they

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affect North African women? Moreover, scholars' solutions to alleviate misrepresentations of Afro-Arab women do not suffice, as the misrepresentations have continued in abundance. Because literature has the potential to change our perceptions of others, this paper endeavours to show that Arabic literature can reduce the negative representations of Afro-Arab women presented in the Western media. This paper attempts to explore the psychology of Arab women misrepresentation and how it affects people's perceptions, judgments, emotions, and actions regarding Arab women from North African countries. This paper also seeks to investigate the negative representations of Afro-Arab women; and finally, to illustrate how teaching Ikbal Baraka's *Li-nazallasdiqā' ila-I-abad* (Let's Remain Friends Forever), can be used to correct faulty representations of Afro-Arab women in our modern society.

Ikbal Baraka, Egyptian journalist and novelist born in 1942, She received a B.A. in English from Alexandria University, as well as a BA in Arabic in the same University. She has worked in public relations for Philipians, as a simultaneous interpreter, for an English-language school in Kuwait, and as an announcer in English-language radio. She was an editor at *Sabah al-khayrand* in June 1993 became editor in chief at *Hawwa'*, where she still works. She is a member of the Journalists' Syndicate, the Writers' Union, and the Association of Women Writers. She also founded the Association of Egyptian Women Filmmakers and has written many works for the big and small screens. Her novels have been translated into Japanese, Chinese, English, and French. She published the non-fiction work, *Hiwarhaw lqadaya Islamiyah* (A Conversation on Islamic Issues). (Paul Starkey 2006: 138).

Arab Women and the Journalistic Trends: Historical Background

An assessment of Arab women's literature is incomplete without evaluating Arab women's journals. For the first half of the twentieth century, there were major platforms for Arab women writers at a time when women usually published short pieces in journals and magazines rather than writing entire books. (Arebi, S. 1994: 35) argues that the dividing line between journalists and writers that exists in the West has always been blurred in the Arab world. Many Arab journals and newspapers were launched by writers and educators who considered journalism an extension of other forms of writing. Between 1892 and 1940 the period that marked the rise of political consciousness, first against the Ottoman Empire and then against Western mandates, Arab women writers concentrated their efforts on publishing

journals that featured poetry, fiction, and critical pieces, as well as essays relating to different academic disciplines, all written by women.

In 1892, a Syrian woman named Hind Nawfal started the first Arab women's journal, *Al-Fatāt (Young Girl)*, in Alexandria, Egypt, ushering in a flourishing phase of Arab women's journals that brought Arab women writings into the limelight. Before World War II, there were over twenty-five journals in the Arab world that were owned, edited, and published by women. The editors of these journals made clear that their most important concern was women: women's literature, women's rights, and women's future. (Arebi, S. 1994: 39).

In her editorial in the first issue of *Al-Fatāt*, Nawfal wrote: "*Al-Fatāt* is the only journal for women in the East; it expresses their thoughts, discloses their inner minds, fights for their rights, searches for their literature and science, and takes pride in publishing the products of their pens."³² Also in the same issue, editors of other journals published by women urged women "attentive to the future and betterment of their sex to write so that their works may be read and become in the meantime a part of the literary heritage. (Akwela, 2014: 56). These journals, which appeared in Cairo, Beirut, Damascus, and, to a lesser extent, Baghdad, published poetry, fiction, critical essays, feminist articles, and biographies of both Arab and Western women.

Although the journals as a whole regularly covered the experiences and particularly the achievements of Western women, and although they all stressed the need to learn from women's movements in the West, they also focused on positive elements in Arab culture. The journals made the point that women's emancipation should go hand in hand with national independence rather than be deferred to a later stage. This argument was based on the premise that no country can be truly free or independent as long as its women remain shackled. To paraphrase Louise Bernikow, the problem remains that the importance-and even the survival-of women's literary heritage depends on who notices it and, then, whether such notice is actually recorded. (Arebi, S. 1994: 43)

Modern journalistic Needs and Political Factors

Although women's opportunity is related to such legitimizing elements as their accessibility to educational training, their participation is also linked to the ideological functions literature has come to serve and to the processes of

modernization. Modernization processes in North Africa have required the mobilization of all social resources to fill the newly developed roles in different fields. As a pool of educated women, women writers provided a reserve army of workers able to occupy the newly created roles in the literary field.

The presence of women in the field of journalism has an additional advantage for the publishers of newspapers and magazines. It responds not only to modernizing needs but also to the journalistic necessities of publishing, since local newspapers rely heavily on advertisements for funding, and most advertised products are geared toward women and the household environment. These advertisements often are promoting the latest in Western consumer products, such as fashions, perfumes, watches, home appliances, and fast-food and take-home food items (Arebi, S. 1994: 54). The importance of women as consumers and as targets of Western and local business has had an impact on both the content and format of Arabian newspapers. Women's sections, usually seen by women readers as a sign of recognition for women, have become instrumental in attracting women readers to serve commercial purposes.

This marketing function that newspapers serve is stronger today than ever. But it is no longer served through women's sections alone but also through the general readership that individual women writers attract. It is difficult to assert with any degree of certainty whether the publications of women writers are read more by women or by men. But editors acknowledge that the readership many women writers attract, among men as well as women, establishes more loyalty to these writers than to the newspapers themselves. Because of difficulties in distribution, people tend to buy the most easily available local newspapers, and newspaper owners usually capitalize on the readers' loyalty to certain writers to guarantee the survival of their newspapers.

Although, most women writers acknowledge more response from men than from women in the form of readers' mail, many indications point to the emergence of women as consumers of literature. One major indication is the growing literacy among women, but of no less importance are the pervasive changes related to life in the home. With the rising standard of living in Africa the tendency is to build more spacious homes.

Despite the increasing reliance of most major newspapers and magazines on

their daily or weekly columns, Afro-Arab women writers have also developed the reputation of discontinuity in their writing. Although men may exhibit as much discontinuity if not more, men often quip about women's constant need for periods of withdrawal to attend to family matters, such as marriage and childbirth. In addition to their works outside the home, family responsibilities have been acknowledged by many women writers as constraints on their production, both quantitatively and qualitatively.

Afro-Arab women writers enjoy a higher visibility than men writers. Consequently, when male writers withdraw, their withdrawal is not subject to generalizations about their disappearance, as is the case for women writers. Men may withdraw for any period of time for what is viewed as "legitimate" reasons, such as their jobs or families, explaining that they have less time to attend to writing in comparison with women who spend more time at home. Men also point to the unfavorable economic compensation for writing, which is by no means sufficient to meet a male's traditional financial responsibilities for his family and kin (Suleiman, Y, 2006: 29). Within a financial structure in which the writer is often paid by the piece, it would seem that only those who are relieved from economic responsibilities, and presumably have more time, would be likely to engage in the profession (i.e., women, the wealthy, or both would be the best candidates). One is justified in surmising that without these two categories, writing in Egypt, Tunisia, Libya and other North African countries is almost bound to be a profession lacking practitioners, despite the number of middle-class men who are eager to accumulate the "capital" of prestige.

Historically at least, the first women who attempted to take up writing were those from upper-class families. Owning books has always been a status symbol in Arabia, and upper-class women enjoyed their family libraries. These women have also enjoyed a higher degree of mobility in terms of travel abroad, whether for family vacations, education, or fathers' business trips. This meant that their access to book production centers in Cairo was greater than for women from lower classes. Today most women writers belong to the middle-class; but now, since the introduction of more Universities and media course in the region, they share these advantages formerly enjoyed only by the upper class. Many of these middle-class women writers also reveal that, early in their lives, they took advantage of traveling with their families or had a male family member bring home books from abroad (mostly from Egypt and Lebanon). Many writers state that it was through these books that they became acquainted with universal

thinkers who wrote in Arabic or in foreign languages (whether in translation or in the original language), and that they owe the development of their interest in certain topics and issues to such books, whether written by men or women.

Contemporary Literature: Journalism and the Question of Creativity

After World War II, new literary forms and styles found their way to Arabia through the early groups of Arabian students in Egypt and Lebanon. Writers have experimented with these new models, which have been most adventurous in poetry (Arebi, S. 1994: 67). The new types of poetry, free in style and different in content, have modified the traditional structure of the old Arab ode or *qasidah*. Poets employed new poetic forms, different in rhythmical patterns, and created new images and symbols. This was deemed a violation of the conventional definition of poetry as "rhymed and metered speech," and a divergence from the aesthetic ideals of classic literature. Even more serious is the fact that the new forms, considered as Western influences, served as a constant reminder of the threat and thrust of the West on the Islamic and Arabic tradition. This has resulted in rendering everything "new" as Western, and everything "unfamiliar" as illegitimate innovation, or *bid'a* (Arebi, S. 1994: 70). The ideal expectations in matters of taste and evaluation are not only formed in relation to the classical tradition but also the status of contemporary literature is further complicated by the institutionalization of journalism for disseminating ideas. Journalism, with its attendance to the tastes of wide audiences, caters to the newspapers' need for survival, both economically and politically. Writers are required not only to "communicate" certain ideas but also to "represent" them in a "literary" manner. This has given rise to what is often called "literary journalism" in which the writer can accommodate the requirements of journalism, with its tendency to immediacy and communicational priorities, within a creative literary work. It is this blurring of the distinction between journalism and creative writing that constitutes one of the obstacles in according status to contemporary literature. Contemporary literature, because it clearly diverges in aesthetic matters at least from classic literature, is relegated to a marginal status or ignored as required reading in schools, and the few courses that are taught at one or two universities have yet to come to terms with a clear conception and definition of the field.

Media and Afro-Arab Women Representation

One can propose a simple a question, where exactly do the

misrepresentations come from? Brown provides a simple answer: “they are embedded in the culture in which we are raised and live, and that they are conveyed and reproduced in all the usual socio-cultural ways.” (AlSultany, E. (2012: 35). The socio-cultural ways include school (through reinforcing some individuals and ignoring others,) parents (through forbidding their children to play with specific other children,) and more importantly, media (through the representations of ethnic groups). These are the potent sources of stereotypes. However, the fact that stereotypes derive from different records of culture does not necessarily mean that the media cannot be held accountable for the massive spreading and perpetuating, or even creating stereotypes. While it is easy to create stereotypes, it is important to remark that changing stereotypes can be very hard. (AlSultany, E. 2012: 39). That does not mean we give up, but rather we need to understand that it is going to be a difficult job. It is important to assert that Afro-Arab women's misrepresentation has been around for centuries. The media, however, have helped intensify and circulate most of these old images, as well as create, and spread new ones. To understand the ways in which the images have evolved, one must look at Edward Said's revolutionary work, *Orientalism* (1978). But first we need to establish a clear distinction between Arabs and Muslims. Frequently Muslim and Arabs get intertwined and mistakenly equated as belonging to each other's group. Because the Arab region is the cradle of Islam, often people assume Arabs and Muslims are the same. There are over nearly 1.5 billion people following Islam and Arabs constitute only one-fifth of Muslims. (Arebi, S. 1994: 35) Arabs are an ethnic group whose defining characteristic is the language. (Arebi, S. 1994:35) The Arab world is comprised of different countries, with diverse cultures, beliefs and a variety of religions. There are millions of Arabs who are not Muslims—they are Christians, Jews, and even atheists.

In Said's *Orientalism*, the terms “Arabs” and “Muslims” have been into an intertwined representation. Through Orientalism's lenses, we see how the representations of Arabs have been ingrained in the West conceptualization since the Middle Ages. Said states that Orientalism emerged first as an academic discipline. (Edward, Said. 1978: 45) Then the term Orient was equated with Islam, as Islam appeared to Europe in the early Middle Ages. (Edward, Said. 1978: 46) Said claims that after Islam grew colossally, that is after the conquest of Persia, Syria, North Africa, and Egypt, Islam came to represent “terror, devastation, the demonic, hordes of hated barbarians.” (Edward, Said. 1978: 48) Attributing prejudiced beliefs to the Orient created the whole idea of a divided world by using the concept of “our”

and “theirs”.

At the turn of the 20th century, after the Arab Revolt, the domination of Europe over the Orient became fewer firms, which caused changes in the symbolic structures of Orientalism—the Orient appeared to be a challenge as fears emerged that the Orient would get an upper hand over Europe. (Edward, Said. 1978: 49) As a result, racist propaganda increased, such as “that the Orientals' bodies are lazy, that the Orient has no conception of history, of the nation...that the Orient is essentially mystical—and so on.” (Edward, Said. 1978: 50) Later, Orientalists had immense influence in the American popular culture, academia and politics, which led to cultural stereotypes of Arabs. In the twentieth century, America borrowed a system of ideas about Arabs and Islam, which have made Arabs among the most stereotyped groups in modern life. The biased values, which Europe had assigned to the Orient, have been promoted through a discourse that helped to justify them. Douglas Little shows that what has become “American Orientalism” in the twentieth century maintains the popular stereotypes of Arabs as “backward,” sexually depraved, and congenitally violent people.” (Edward, Said. 1978: 53) The idea of Arabs being “other” or “enemy” has strengthened in the American media in the twentieth century, most notably in films and TV programs.

Media have come as the primary source of information about Arabs. Semmerling, T. (2006: 34) Images of Afro-Arab women are seen everywhere across media and the prominent ones are negative, as observed in newspapers (Nacos & Torres-Reyna 2007; Semmerling 2008: 208), TV (Shaheen 1984; Alsultany 2012), movies (Shaheen 2001; 56); children literature (Schmidt 2006: 76); and video games (Sisler 2008: 89). The negative images of Arabs are omnipresent and continue to appear. Lester writes, “television, movie, and news images of Arabs as villains and terrorists continue in abundance that women are using Hijab to disguise.” Having examined 1000+ movies, Shaheen (2001), contends that “a consistent pattern of dehumanization emerges here.” The deleterious representations of Arabs in media are not new. They started in film at the beginning of the twentieth century and since then, they have spread widely to other forms of media. Since then, the images of Arabs (as being racially inferior) have become staple of the Western popular culture.

The influence of Fiction Writing

Scholars have been tracking the influence of fiction (novels, short stories) on

people's lives and how its impact extends beyond providing pleasure. But until recently, the attention has shifted from the general understanding of the role of fiction to the specific understanding of empathetic reading. In her groundbreaking book, *Empathy and The Novel*, Suzanne Keen scrutinizes the relationship between reading literature and empathy induction. Keen elucidates the meaning of empathy in reading when she writes, "empathy, a vicarious, spontaneous sharing of affect, can be provoked by witnessing another's emotional state, by hearing about another's condition, or even by reading." A stimulus elicits empathy in us whether by watching or listening or reading. Because this paper is concerned with reading literature, the focus will be on empathetic reading. (Mar and Oatley 2008: 173) assert that fiction offers an opportunity for empathetic growth. Fiction trains us to understand people's beliefs, empathize with individuals with whom we have no personal experience, and eventually reduce bias against outgroup members. Because literature has the power to foster this emotion's recognition, this paper asserts that through the pedagogy of carefully-crafted Arabic fictions, readers are more likely to exhibit less bias toward Arabs. The idea that teaching a literary work can promote transformative possibilities for changing our mental structures—creating new schemas that readers will use is not new. Research shows that literary study can have powerful implications for social justice. (Bracher, M. 2012: 83) argues that teaching Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin* can promote social justice through exposing false cultural representations of others. The central element to social justice, as Bracher stresses, is emotion.

The belief is that fiction has the capacity to induce empathy with outgroups members and which will eventually establish a change of attitude. Studies have shown that children's attitudes toward African-Americans exhibit less bias and prejudice after being exposed to African-American characters in their readings. (Barakaat H, 1980: 36) Another study has revealed that empathy induction reduces stereotypes. A third study has disclosed that feeling empathy does not only improve attitudes toward stigmatized groups, it also increases understanding and eventually helps the group in question (Albalawi, M, 2015). Research on the role of literature in reducing prejudice toward Arabs is fairly scarce. However, there is evidence to suggest that literature has power to prompt empathy and reduce implicit and explicit prejudice against Arabs whose study, "Reading Narrative Fiction Reduces Arab-Muslim Prejudice and Offers a Safe Haven From Intergroup Anxiety," Johnson validates this paper's claim that Arabic fiction can elicit empathy and reduce prejudice and negative stereotypes of Arabs. Results

demonstrate that fiction reduces prejudice and that effects it generates empathetic responses toward Arab-Muslims.

This paper has established the importance of fiction as it serves as a vehicle for empathic growth, which leads to the reduction of misrepresentations, stereotypes and prejudice. The main argument of this paper is that teaching Arabic fiction serves as a mechanism by which the negative representations of Afro-Arab women in Western media can be alleviated. In lieu of this belief, what follows is a thorough discussion on one selected Arabic narrative work to reveal how Arabic fiction can replace faulty representations of Arabs.

A Close Reading of Ikbal Baraka's *Li-nazallasdiqa' ila-I-abad* (Let's Remain Friends Forever)

Hailed as “a canonical work in the Egyptian oeuvre,” *Li-nazallasdiqa' ila-I-abad* reflects not only the Egyptian woman's pursuit for freedom, but also the hope that overshadowed a lot of displaced Arab families. (Starkey 2006) notes that *Li-nazallasdiqa' ila-I-abad* “expresses the essence of the Arab women in Africa who face challenges of life. The struggle and success experienced by the heroine—Salwa—serve to symbolize the plight of thousands of Arab women in Africa who attempt to pursue a better life, and show pain and suffering under which they go through. *Li-nazallasdiqa' ila-I-abad* was published originally in Arabic in 1990. Ikbal narrated the story beautifully in ten chapters that revolve on the harsh conditions of the heroine's life. The first three chapters introduce a heroine—Salwa. The remaining chapters display her journey of life which ended successfully. Salwa lost her father before her birth and mother when she was two years old. She was under the care of her Aunt; Zaynab who runs from pillar to post to ensure that Salwa meets up with her colleagues in school. At age twelve, she moved to Palestine, the home of her mother to continue her secondary school education, but unfortunately, she could not because of the death of the entire family of the mother during the Israeli-Palestinian war. About their death (Bowder G. 1980) writes, “Their individual experiences up to the point of setting out on their last fateful journey mirror the pain, humiliation and degradation felt by thousands of women in their daily lives.”(120). This kind of portrayal is absent in western media's representations of Afro-Arab women. Shaheen states, “The West is ignorant about the history and plight of the Arab people.”

But fiction, as embedded here in *Li-nazallasdiqā' ila-I-abad*, offers another

kind of Afro-Arab women's portrayal, even if it is a harrowing one. Ikbal portrays two axes of meaning: one is centered on the silence of the world toward their suffering and second is whether there is a future for the Afro-Arab women identity. The point of view of *Li-nazallasdiqā' ila-I-abad* is third person and omniscient. The story of the heroine is a story of pain and suffering—a story that provides a mechanism by which readers' empathy may be elicited and eventually lead to attitude change. Because of space limits, this paper will deal only with the sufferings and success the heroine, but several other stories depicted in the novella lend themselves to similar treatments.

The heroine Salwa is the first to be introduced. Through her reminiscence of the past; we learn that she is the mother of a young boy later in her life (Qayum) and a baby girl (Hosna) who died because she was extremely emaciated. Moreover, we learn of his close relationship with the departed Ummu Selim. The way Salwa remembers Ummu Selim draws a desolate picture of how life is before Salwa embarks on her quest: “The mercy of God be upon you, Ummu Selim, the mercy be God be upon you. God was certainly good to you when He made you die one night before the wretched village fell into the hands of the enemies, one night only. O God, is there any divine favor greater than that?... You saved yourself humiliation and wretchedness, and you preserved yourself from shame...” The prevalence of death in *Li-nazallasdiqā' ila-I-abad* is the most obvious indicator that life of women in that period has gone terribly wrong. Salwa's reminiscence about Ummu Selim embodies the disastrous effects of the Israeli settlements that drove many to poverty. Salwa is torn as she is between the past's honor and stability and present's “humiliation” and “wretchedness”. She is in extreme distress as evidenced by her glorification of her teacher's death Ummu Selim. Clearly, Salwa fears being plunged further into poverty as she has already lost her family, teacher and main source of income, her olive trees. The theme of poverty appears for a while in *Li-nazallasdiqā' ila-I-abad*, but most notably in Salwa's story. The interesting thing about Ikbal's approach to poverty is that she employs it first in her heroine's story in order to reveal the damage the economic status has had on families. Here we see grown lady, who lost a baby due to her abnormal thinness and whose family is to be starving to death unless she manages to get money.

The novel of Ikbal then ends with Salwa discussing the trip's arrangement with a man— only referred to as “the fat man”—who will smuggle her to Egypt. Salwa tries to lower the price but the smuggler refuses and states that

the price is fixed. Helpless she is, Salwa agrees. Displaying smuggling as profitable business, the author shows the pervasiveness of displacement in Arab women's lives during that period. There is nothing in Salwa's mind but her homeland, Egypt. The author shows in the last few sentences of the chapter the passion Salwa feels for her beloved country, "She felt that her whole head had filled with tears, welling up from inside, so she turned and went out into streets. There human beings began to swim behind a mist of tears, the horizon of the river and the sky came together, and everything around her became simply an endless white glow. (Ikbal. 1990: 37). These lines portray strong feelings of agony that has escalated out of dispossession and poverty, none of which are confined to Salwa. Salwa's inability to see people clearly reflects her traumatic episode of her life that has been entwined with the Palestinian-Israeli conflict which affects her secondary education. She settled down in Egypt where she sells *Abayyah* and women outfits later in her life.

Conclusion

This paper contends that *Li-nazallasdiqā' ila-I-abad* works as a significant tool that can be used to reduce the negative images of Arab women in Africa that have appeared in Western media in the past decades. The trauma explored in this chapter establishes a move from the media's negative portrayals that dehumanize Arabs and therefore offers a more complex and human representation of them through their own stories.

Because research has shown that people's attitude can be changed through empathy, readers of *Li-nazallasdiqā' ila-I-abad*, can change their attitudes toward Arab women through empathizing with the heroine: Salwa. To induce the readers' empathy, research shows that three appraisals are needed: understanding the significant suffering of the Others, understanding that the others' suffering is beyond their control, and recognizing the Others' common humanity. The traumas of the heroine in *Li-nazallasdiqā' ila-I-abad* can serve as a mechanism by which readers' empathy may be elicited. Moreover taking the perspectives of Others is another useful strategy in eliciting the readers' empathy. Bracher notes that by doing so, readers "produce visual stimuli for themselves that are similar to the experiences by Other." In other words, readers of *Li-nazallasdiqā' ila-I-abad* can imagine themselves in Salwa's situation so their empathetic responses can be triggered.

In summary, the absence of positive portrayal of African women from the

North Africa (the Others) has been conceptualized in discourse. Bhabha notes, "An important feature of colonial discourse is its dependence on the concept of 'fixity' in the ideological construction of otherness." The Western media—in their ideological difference with Arabs—has given demeaning and fixed images of Afro-Arab women. Bhabha claims that colonial discourse—in this sense the Western cultural colonialism—creates the colonized as "a social reality which is at once an 'other' and yet entirely knowable and visible."

This discourse employs, in its representational modes, a form of realism that appears to constitute the others (North African Women). This explains the orientalist's power, as Said's analysis affirms, that has emerged to designate the Orient world as a geographically, politically, and culturally fixed reality. The lenses through which Palestinians have been observed are ought to be replaced by new ones that will eventually shape the perception of the encounter between the East and the West. It is in this context that this project wants to assert that the plight of Arab women in Africa described in *Li-nazallasdiqa' ila-I-abad* has the potentiality of constructing a form of reality, which blends concepts from literary study and methods from cognitive science.

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