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Identity Contamination and the Symptoms of Subalternity in Khadra's *The Swallows of Kabul*

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Dedication

In accordance with His saying, Almighty, "And lower unto them the wing of submission and humility through mercy, and say: 'My Lord! Bestow on them Your Mercy as they did bring me up when I was small.'" Surah Al-Isra (17:24)

I dedicate the fruit of my efforts to those who cleared the thorns from my path to pave the way of knowledge for my beloved father, and to the source of tenderness and paradise, to those who taught me since the softness of my nails that success is achieved, not given, and who supported and encouraged me, my dear mother, and to my dear grandmother who always encouraged me and cared for my education from a young age. I pray to God to prolong her life and protect her from all harm.

Lahcen

This small work is dedicated to everyone who believed in me and encouraged me throughout my career

Boudjemaa

Acknowledgements

Allah the Exalted said: 'And (remember) when your Lord proclaimed: 'If you give thanks (by accepting Faith and worshipping none but Allah), I will give you more (of My Blessings).'" - Surah Ibrahim (14:7)

We extend our heartfelt thanks and appreciation to Dr. Mohammed Gouffi for his supervision of the work and his constant commitment to providing guidance and advice."

We also thank our teachers in our department for their efforts along five years.

We thank everyone who helped us, whether a little or a lot, to complete this work, our family members and friends. Thank you all.

Abstract

The present dissertation analyses how the harsh socio-political environment affects and damages the identities of people. Yasmina Khadra's novel, *The Swallows of Kabul,* is the corpus of this study, concentrating first on the central issue: how the characters' identities are shaped by the oppressive setting in Afghanistan, highlighting the symptoms of identity contamination and subalternity prevalent throughout the narrative. The research analyses the novel's narrative and characters using essential concepts from postcolonial studies. The findings reveal that the oppressive power structures and social hierarchies create identity loss and mental stress, reflecting Subalternity, which concentrates on the impact of marginalization and cultural oppression. The research concludes that the novel presents a deep understanding of identity-power relations, giving insights into the struggles of voiceless and marginalized individuals in a postcolonial world, echoing the theories of Gayatri Spivak.

Keywords: Yasmina Khadra, Identity, Subalternity, Afghanistan, Oppression, Marginalization.

ملخص

تتناول هذه المذكرة بالتحليل مدى تأثير البيئة الاجتماعية والسياسية على تكوّن الهويات الفردية. وتمثل رواية ياسمينة خضرا "سنونوات كابول" المدونة التي تم الاشتغال عليها، ويرتكز الاشتغال الرئيس لهذه الرواية في إبراز الكيفية التي تتشكل بها هويات الأشخاص داخل البيئة القمعية التي تعيشها أفغانستان، من خلال مناقشة أعراض التلوث الهوياتي وتمظهرات تكوّن التابع من خلال السرد. تحلل هذه الدراسة السرد الروائي وكذا الشخصيات الروائية باستخدام مفاهيم أساسية مأخوذة من الدراسات ما بعد الاستعمارية. تكشف نتائج هذا البحث عن مدى إسهام القوى القمعية والنظام الاجتماعي في خلق أزمة هوياتية، مما يولّد نظاما اجتماعيا قائما على التبعية بمفهومها الذي نظرت له الناقدة " غاياتري سبيفاك"، وهو نظام قائم على التهميش والقمع الثقافي. تخلص الدراسة إلى أن الرواية تقدم فهمًا عميقًا للعلاقة بين الهوية والسلطة، مما يوفر رؤى لمعاناة الأفراد، والنساء خاصة، الفاقدين لكل قدرة على التعبير.

الكلمات المفتاحية: ياسمينة خضرا، الهوية، التبعية، أفغانستان، القمع، التهميش.

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General Introduction

In a world dominated by war and struggle, conflicts between political systems, ethnic races and social groups are common issues. Identity becomes the main battlefield in which individuals, social groups and nations aim to realize themselves. In such circumstances, identities are more vulnerable to contamination on multiple levels. Relevantly, Subalternity emerged as a result of representative systems especially in third world nations and societies.

The narration through fiction is considered as one of the most famous expressive tools that have the ability to portray these issues. Yasmina Khadra (1955-present day), the pseudonym of Algerian author Mohammed Moulessehoul, and the writer of *The Sirens of Baghdad (2006), The Attack (L'Attentat) (2005), and What the Day Owes the Night (Ce que le jour doit à la nuit) (2008*), through his novel *The Swallows of Kabu*l, deals with the impact of wars and political-religious regime on Afghan society through depicting challenges faced by personal and national Afghan identity and affected its ability to express itself.

The contamination of identity in this novel refers to the negative psychological effects of the Islamic extremist regime of the Taliban on individual and national Afghan identity. Subalternity, meanwhile, relates to this same regime but by dealing with the voiceless and marginalized women. This research aims to clarify how identity and subalternity appear in this novel, and highlights the strong relationship between these two issues and the imposed political-religious system of the Taliban in Afghanistan.

The study tries to examine identity contamination and symptoms of subalternity in Khadra's *The Swallows of Kabul* due to the deep interest in and commitment to human rights.

This topic is particularly relevant now, given the ongoing political instability in places like Afghanistan. the aim is to address gaps in current literary and psychological analysis, especially the detailed human impacts of living under oppressive regimes, and how these effects intersect with aspects such as gender, class, and politics. Through this research, the hope is to enhance the appreciation of literature to contribute in examining some social issues, inform policy and advocacy efforts, and provide educational value by fostering a deeper understanding of the personal and societal effects of oppression. The richness of Khadra's work and its poignant exploration of these themes make it an ideal source for such a detailed analysis.

This research aims to address the issues of identity contamination and subalternity under the oppressive shadow of the current insurgent Taliban rule by analyzing Khadra's novel. Through its characters and events, the study provides a fresh perspective on how the harsh political and social climate affects individuals. In this context, identity contamination refers to the transformation of humane and sympathetic characters into violent and inhumane beings, driven by uncontrollable circumstances involving violence, extremism, and oppression.

The novel also explores the subalternity of women, depicting them as helpless and vulnerable under the tyranny of the Taliban regime. Women are forced to wear the burqa and follow strict rules that strip them of their rights, leading to extreme physical and emotional abuse. Confined to their homes, they endure constant humiliation, which crushes their spirits and erases their identities.

Characters like Zunaira and Musarrat exemplify the struggles of women trying to survive in a society that disregards personal rights and freedoms, highlighting the gender and

social injustice. Through their stories, the novel sheds light on the profound impact of such an oppressive regime on the lives and identities of women.

This study seeks to answer the following main question:

-How does Khadr's novel "*The Swallows of Kabul*" portray identity contamination and subalternity of Afghan women under the Taliban's extreme Islamic regime?

In the process of analysis and explanation, the study addresses pertinent sub-questions that contribute to understanding the main question:

-How is the Afghan individual contaminated by extreme Islamic ideology?

-How does the novel portray the concept of subalternity by depicting the position of Afghan women in society oppressed by extreme Islam?

The literature review for a study on identity contamination and symptoms of subalternity in Khadra's *The Swallows of Kabul* brings together prior studies regarding aspects of identity, symptomology, subalternity, and the psychological effects of living in oppressive regimes. Several studies have examined Khadra's work.

Among these works, we can name Dr. Assia Kaced in her article: "Memory between Nostalgia and Madness: The Legacy of War in Yasmina Khadra's *The Swallows of Kabul*." The objective of this article is to show how memory and nostalgia have become important mechanisms used by the protagonists of Yasmina Khadra's novel to escape the misery and hardships of the present. Another important contribution is by Dr. Bellour Leila in her article: "Debunking the Western Myth about the Veil in Yasmina Khadra's *The Swallows of Kabul*." This article is a critical reading of Khadra's novel *The Swallows of Kabul*, which is set in

Kabul under the reign of the Taliban. The novel debunks the Western myth which associates Islam with terror and violence. Furthermore, in 2022, Zineb Allouache wrote an important article entitled: "The Agony and Resilience of Afghan Women in Yasmina Khadra's *The Swallows of Kabul* and Khaled Hosseini's A Thousand Splendid Suns." This article attempts to compare Yasmina Khadra's *The Swallows of Kabul* (2002) with Khaled Hosseini's *A Thousand Splendid Suns* (2007). To do so, both Postcolonial Feminism and Trauma Theory have been applied in order to explore the female protagonists' oppression by their male counterparts and the traumatic experiences they endure, ranging from loss and violence to total marginalization and invisibility.

Additionally, Hadi, Hamida, and Fatiha Guerdah in their dissertation: "A New Historicist Reading of Yasmina Khadra's *The Swallows of Kabul*" (2002) provide an analysis. The chief aim of this dissertation is to analyze Khadra's depiction of the Afghan people under the reign of the Taliban by relating it to the most pertinent and relevant concepts of New Historicism, such as power, subversion, and containment.

Similarly, Antony, Susy, in her work: "Chapter Eight: Gender Equity, Spirituality, and Marginalized Sexuality in Yasmina Khadra's *The Swallows of Kabul*," found in *Literature, Theory, and the History of Ideas: An Updated Compendium* (2021), investigates the issues of gender equity and marginalized sexualities set against a spirituality-barren mindscape in Khadra's novel.

Moreover, the article "Manifestations of Paratext in the Novel *'The Swallows of Kabul*' by Yasmina Khadra" by Rafika Smaahi discusses paratexts, focusing on a novel from Algerian literature written in French, namely *The Swallows of Kabul* by Yasmina Khadra. This novel is rich in paratextual elements including its front and back covers, main title, subtitles, publisher's note, and cover design, all of which interactively relate between the

publisher and the author, the narrative text, and the reader. The choice of these elements, whether in the original or translated novel, including the cover image and color, were meticulously selected, creating a paratextual blend that forms interactive relationships between the publisher and the author, the narrative text, and the reader. This analysis highlights how paratextual elements contribute in shaping the reception and interpretation of the novel, influencing the reader's engagement with the text and its broader cultural and literary context.

However, while all these research projects focus on some particular issues in the novel, our study gains its originality by focusing on the structure of the troubled identity that the novel's characters suffered from and its impact on creating a kind of closed identity, which led to identical psychological crises within an Radical Islamic regime. This study examines the identity crisis by investigating almost all levels of identity in this novel.

On the other hand, the present study deals with the *burqa* as a double-significant symbol, referring to concrete and psychological coverage, by using a postcolonial approach. In a sense, considering that the Taliban regime is not a traditional colonizer, but uses the same tools and ways of colonization, it is considered as a local colonization.

The epistemological framework of this study is based on a postcolonial analytical approach accompanied by sociological and critical theories for exploring the issues of contamination of identities, as well as subaltern symptoms in Yasmina Khadra's *The Swallows of Kabul*. The choice of the research paradigm takes into consideration the colonial consequences in shape identity in general, and within the novel in particular. Sociological frames expand on the contributions of the analysis by describing the systemic dynamics of oppression and how the processes of gender, class, and ethnicity converge to create the subjectivity of subalternity. The research methodology included the gathering of primary data

by performing textual analysis and search for identity contamination and subalternity in the novel, secondary data sources that presented theoretical interpretations and historical background information.

Structurally speaking, this research is organized into two main chapters. The first chapter, entitled "Afghanistan, Identity and Subalternity: Theoretical Framework", is divided into three sections. The first section, titled "Between Modernity and the Taliban Rule," offers a comprehensive analysis of Afghanistan's historical evolution, from its pursuit of modernity to the emergence of Taliban rule. This section provides a nuanced exploration of Afghanistan's socio-political landscape, beginning with an examination of its historical and social context, followed by an in-depth study of the rise of Taliban rule and its ramifications on the country's contemporary era.

Section two shifts the focus towards the concept of subalternity within a postcolonial framework, beginning with an exploration of colonial discourse and the responses it elicited from the Third World. This is followed by an examination of Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak's critical theory on subalternity and its relevance within postcolonial studies. The section concludes with an analysis of subalternity intersecting with gender dynamics in the Islamic world, shedding light on the experiences of marginalized groups within Islamic societies. Together, these sections offer a multidimensional understanding of Afghanistan's history and its place within broader discourses of power, resistance, and marginalization.

The third section focuses on the issue of identity and its related definitions. We chose a philosophical perspective that allowed us to address the issue of identity as an objective value that can be determined by establishing its boundaries.

Chapter two, entitled "The Positionings of Identity and Subalternity in Khadra's *The Swallows of Kabul*," is divided into two sections. The first section attempts to delve deeper

into the identity structure of the characters, which is characterized by disintegration, conflict, and crisis. We have dealt with these identities on two levels. The first level represents the Afghan national identity with all its contemporary turmoil, while the second level represents the personal identities, which are a reflection of that national identity. We addressed these identities through two types of social relationships, namely the marital relationship and the parental relationship, and we concluded that all of these relationships end in a kind of madness.

The second section, under the title "The Clash of Militaries and Values: Taliban's Extreme Version of Islam and Women in Modern Afghanistan," delves into the multifaceted relationship between women, morality, and societal expectations within the context of Afghanistan. It particularly focuses on the symbolism and implications of the burqa, the question of a woman's visibility in public spaces, and the association of women with notions of sin. It suggests an examination of the *burqa* as both a physical garment and a symbol of moral coverage within Afghan society, exploring its role in enforcing gender segregation and perpetuating traditional gender roles. The inquiry extends to the extent of women's visibility in public spaces, considering cultural norms, religious interpretations, and legal frameworks that shape their participation. Additionally, the section delves into the association of women with sin, reflecting patriarchal attitudes and religious interpretations that often subject women's bodies and behaviors to scrutiny and policing, impacting their self-perception and agency within Afghan society. Overall, it offers a nuanced analysis of the complex interplay between gender, morality, and societal norms in shaping women's experiences in Afghanistan.

Chapter One:

Afghanistan, Subalternity and Identity: socio-historical context and theoretical framework

Introduction

Identity crisis and the subalternity in Afghanistan are heavily tied with the socio-political issues within the country. In this sense, the Taliban regime plays a basic role in shaping these two issues, the latter are presented in this chapter through different lenses including philosophical background, colonial discourse and critical theories highlighting their concepts and debates around them in both the Islamic and third words.

1. Afghanistan Between Modernity and the Taliban Rule

Afghanistan's complex history is shaped by geopolitical, sociocultural, and historical factors at the crossroads of Central and South Asia. The country has a rich heritage spanning millennia, marked by empires, cultural exchanges, and enduring traditions. Recent decades have seen Afghanistan in the global spotlight due to conflict, foreign interventions, and Taliban rule. Postcolonial perspectives reveal the lasting legacies of colonialism and imperialism in Afghanistan. Social structures and identities are shifting within the country, intersecting with postmodern notions of identity. Subalternity in Afghanistan highlights power dynamics and hierarchies in society. Through a postcolonial lens, we can understand power, resistance, and agency among marginalized groups. Critical engagement with these themes deepens our understanding of Afghanistan's past, present, and future trajectory. This analysis contributes to a more nuanced view of Afghanistan's place in the global landscape. Afghanistan's intricate dynamics offer insights into both challenges and opportunities for the nation moving forward.

1.1. Early history

Afghanistan is an ancient land. Its early history, like the early history of the republics of Central Asia to the east of the Caspian Sea, is virtually the same as the history of ancient Iran. The historical link between Asia to the east of the Caspian Sea and ancient Iran highlights the enduring cultural and geopolitical significance of the region. "Situated in the heart of

Central Asia, the region east of the Caspian Sea, known as Sīstān in ancient times, has been a crossroads of civilizations and a melting pot of cultures for millennia. Its history is intimately intertwined with that of ancient Iran, sharing commonalities in language, religion, and socio-political developments" (Bashiri 2). Iranian cosmology and mythology, in other words, are also the cosmology and mythology of the Afghan people, reaching back to the Achaemenians and the Alexander interlude. However, it is the Arab, later, and Turkich influences that significantly shaped the course of Afghan history. In 962AD, Alptekin rebelled against the Samanids and founded the Ghaznavid dynasty, marking a pivotal moment in Afghan history.

Following the Mongol devastation in the 13th century, the Ghurid dynasty ruled until the rise of Muhammad Shaybani Khan in 1451. Shaybani Khan's conquest of Transoxiana forced Tamerlane's descendants into Afghanistan and India. The subsequent division of Afghanistan among the Safavids, Mughals, and Uzbeks persisted until Mir Wais' independence of Qandahar in 1707. His son, Mahmud, invaded Iran, temporarily placing a significant part of the Iranian plateau under Afghan rule.

Nader Quli, a Safavid commander, later expelled the Afghan invaders from Iranian territory in 1703. Nader Shah's subsequent rule extended to Afghanistan, Central Asia, and northern India. However, his murder in 1747 marked a turning point. Ahmed Durrani, his Abdelli commander, returned to Qandahar and, with the support of an Afghan Loya Jirgah, proclaimed himself king, establishing the Kingdom of Afghanistan. Ahmed Shah Durrani ruled from Qandahar for 26 years before the capital moved to Kabul in 1773.

Afghanistan has long been the target of invasions by foreign armies and leaders; it served as the gateway to both the west and the east, the center of several empires, and the route for international trade. The multitude of cultures that have coexisted in Afghanistan over the years has greatly influenced its language, religion, economy, and social structure. These

traces have contributed to the country's current state. The most obvious influences on modern-day Afghanistan are Iranian and Arabic, although the legacy of the ancient Greeks, Central Asian nomads, Buddhists, and Zoroastrians is not nonexistent. Afghanistan was once thought of as an extension of Irani-Persian civilization for millennia; the majority of the languages still in use today, such as Pashto and Persian-Dari.

1.2. Social Order

Although industry and capital had been introduced into Afghanistan by the early 1960s, the country was still predominantly feudalistic. The smallest unit in the social order was the family, but the lifestyle of the families differed drastically. This difference played a major role in the eventual modernization and industrialization of the country and is a major factor in the country's ability to become independent and to form a nation.

The Afghan family unit fits into either a settled lifestyle or a nomadic lifestyle. The settled families live in villages administered by maliks. Larger villages become townships, and eventually, cities are formed. This is the segment of society that understands modernization and, to a degree, abides by its rules. These rules encompass embracing technological advancements, promoting economic development, respecting human rights, participating in democratic governance, and engaging in global trade and diplomacy. Divided into a center and several provinces, this population can easily be ruled by a king or a president. The nomadic families from lineages, clans, and tribes. The family is administered by the head of the extended family under the supervision of a person assigned by the lineage head. Similarly, chieftains appointed by the heads of clans administer the lineages. The heads of families, lineages, and clans all form an assembly that is administered by the chief of the tribe.

As it can be seen, two totally different systems of government are side by side. Each has to be cognizant of the needs of the other and take those needs into consideration. Deviation

from this rule brings two major segments of the society into conflict. The tribal chief is as powerful as the feudal lord. In order to regulate the affairs of the tribes and the settled population, ancient Afghan rule appoints a number of rich safids (elders) as arbiters of the needs and rights of both populations.

Breakdown of this system gives undue power to clan heads and regional warlords who would easily carve a portion of the country as their territory and, with the help of their allies among the other social classes in the region, especially the military and the clergy, become independent rulers of those regions. Often they contend for the highest position, be it the position of a grand Khan or that of a president.

The most difficult part of this coexistence is in the area of legislation and enforcement of laws. In both societies, Islamic Shari'a law takes precedence over civil law. This shows that the clergy have the enviable ability to swing the fortunes of the country depending on the social and political dynamics of the time. The Shari'a court and the Islamic police are usually the enforcers of the laws. In matters of sexes, men are given power over women. Women receive half the amount of inheritance received by a male and the testimony of two women is equal to the testimony of one man in marriage and divorce cases. The man makes all decisions.

While it may not be common practice these days to concentrate on and thoroughly research the religious makeup and influence of religion on the contemporary society of a modern nation, this aspect is vital and essential to comprehending Afghanistan's society, history, and present. In actuality, Afghanistan's economy and society are premodern, and religion serves as a guide for how Afghans and their institutions should live their daily lives. Religion permeates every aspect of society, including social behavior, social divisions, economics, and both internal and external politics in the village, the region, and the nation. In Afghanistan, religion serves as a unifying and concrete force (Giulio 17).

1.3. The Rise of the Taliban and Its Impact on Modernity

The Taliban movement emerged in Afghanistan in 1993-1994, led by Afghan Islamic student Mullah Omar. The movement aimed to bring peace and introduce Islamic values to the country. The Taliban captured over 90% of Afghan land without fighting and did not engage in looting, rape, or mindless destruction. They were welcomed as the new rulers of Afghanistan and supported by the United States through Pakistan and Saudi Arabia. The Taliban were graduates and students of religious seminaries, playing a significant part in the struggle against Soviet occupation but lacking organization and experience in government administration. Their main objective was to establish a "Pure Islamic state" and implement Sharia Laws. They implemented strict interpretations of Sharia laws and banned women's employment, The Taliban in Afghanistan imposed strict dress codes on both women and men, leading to a shift in US policy. Secretary of State Madeleine Albright called the Taliban "despicable" for their gender policies, arguing that women and girls need access to schools, healthcare, and economic participation. A UN survey in 1996 revealed that 70% of school teachers, 50% of civilian government workers, and 40% of doctors in Kabul were women.

The Taliban's strict interpretation of Sharia laws deprived boys of their earnings, leading to 50,000 refugees fleeing to Pakistan. The Taliban stated that the halt was temporary and would consider allowing women to work once arrangements were made. The world community criticized the Taliban's discriminatory approach towards women's rights and minorities, but the Taliban's social and economic context facilitated systemic human rights abuses. The Taliban's commitment to the welfare of the population is compared to the Western concept of social well-being, which is more individualistic in Afghanistan. The Western

approach to life has been preferred by a small minority in Afghanistan, with the USA and Europe primarily recognizing the Taliban's policies and actions as unacceptable. This has led to the Taliban's isolation internationally, as they considered the world body inherently biased and had no incentive to cooperate with it. The Taliban regime has been subject to doubt due to its questionable human rights practices, unlike other regimes with questionable practices. Economic sanctions were imposed on Afghanistan under UN Resolution 1333 in 2000, which harmed Afghan civilians more than the Taliban's officials.

However, the Taliban were not the first Afghan authorities to abuse human rights, and their rule improved law and order. The Taliban's ideology has historical roots in the growth of madrassas across Pakistan, which they used to attract large funds from Saudi and other Gulf countries. The world community has not shown concern for the thirteen girls' schools opened by the Taliban in Kabul. The Taliban in Afghanistan has gained significant attention since the end of the Cold War due to their isolation, grievances against the international organization, and harsh international criticism. In 1996, Osama Bin Laden moved to Afghanistan, and the Taliban welcomed him due to their distrust of the U.S. Bin Laden's network, Al-Qaeda, took advantage of Taliban hospitality and military training. Afghanistan became an ungoverned land for jihadists, militancy, and extremists, with approximately 87% of the world's heroin produced in the country (Shabnum). Rashid Ahmed in his side highlights that: "The Taliban's rise to power has had a devastating impact on Afghanistan's modernity. Their strict interpretation of Islamic law, combined with their suppression of women's rights and education, has set back the progress made in the country over the past decades" (Ahmed 14).

In post-Taliban Afghanistan, the challenge of building a viable state and economy loomed large. The Taliban regime's collapse left a power vacuum and a devastated infrastructure, exacerbating existing economic and social problems. Rebuilding efforts faced

numerous obstacles, including widespread corruption, weak institutions, and ongoing conflict. Despite international assistance and investment, progress remained slow, with many Afghans struggling to access basic services and livelihood opportunities. The legacy of war and instability continued to shape Afghanistan's political and economic landscape, underscoring the complex interplay between conflict, development, and governance in fragile states (Barnett 1789-1803).

2. Subalternity in Postcolonial era:

The term "subalternity" has emerged as a natural concept that expresses a crucial side of the relationship between colonizer and colonized. Even though it was practiced in many third-world societies since early times, it is mainly related to critical postcolonial theory and refers to voiceless people in the imperial era.

2.1. Colonial Discourse and Third World Written Responses

In Edward Said's seminal work, *Orientalism*, he introduced the concept of colonial discourse, which has since become central to colonial discourse theory. Said adeptly applied Foucault's notion of discourse to analyze the mechanisms through which power operates within colonial contexts. According to Foucault, discourse is a system of statements through which dominant groups construct knowledge and truth, thereby exerting power over marginalized groups. In the colonial context, European representations of non-European cultures and peoples serve as a prime example of such discourse.

Said argues that colonial discourse enables colonial powers to assert authority over their subjects, portraying them in ways that reinforce power differentials. The colonizers arrogate to themselves the right to define and speak for the colonized without seeking validation, thus perpetuating a one-sided narrative that legitimizes colonial rule. This

discourse, through its representations, facilitates and justifies various forms of domination—political, economic, cultural, and social—over colonized peoples.

In numerous subsequent studies, scholars have explored how colonial discourse constructs specific images of non-Europeans, portraying them as savage, effeminate, primitive, and so forth. These depictions serve to dehumanize and justify the subjugation of colonized peoples by reinforcing stereotypes and hierarchies of power (Said 7-9).

This passage encapsulates the profound impact of colonization as articulated by *Discourse on Colonialism*. It delves into the destructive nature of denying people their history and culture, highlighting the consequent erosion of identity, autonomy, and community cohesion. Moreover, it emphasizes the importance of recognizing and preserving diverse cultural heritages to uphold the richness and integrity of humanity's collective tapestry.

The quote by *Discourse on Colonialism*, "*To destroy a people, it is sufficient to deny them their own history and culture*," (Césaire 24) highlights the destructive nature of colonization. By erasing a people's history and culture, the colonizers strip them of their identity, autonomy, and sense of belonging. Denying individuals the opportunity to learn, celebrate, and preserve their own traditions and customs weakens their connection to their roots, leading to a fragmentation of the community's spirit. Without a sense of historical continuity and cultural pride, a people's collective memory is eroded, and their present and future become vulnerable to external domination. Ultimately, this quote emphasizes the importance of recognizing and respecting the diverse histories and cultures of all peoples as a means of preserving the rich tapestry of humanity.

2.2. Subalternity in Spivak's Critical Theory

Gayatri Spivak's seminal 1988 postcolonial studies essay presents a critical analysis of the plight of the most marginalized in society, whom she terms "subalterns." She argues that these individuals lack a platform to express their concerns and influence policy debates, thus denying them a fair share of societal resources. While Spivak's focus is on exploring how subalterns can attain agency, this paper specifically examines how Western scholars unwittingly reinforce dominant structures in their work.

As a scholar herself, Spivak is acutely aware of the challenges of speaking on behalf of the subalterns she studies. Her work primarily engages in the critical thinking skill of interpretation, delving into the true meaning of available evidence while highlighting issues of definition.

This work holds significance as a key interpretive piece in the Macat library due to its underlying importance. Interpretation here revolves around the difference between allowing subalterns to articulate their own narratives and imposing scholarly frameworks onto them, which, despite good intentions, can perpetuate forms of oppression akin to colonial structures. Spivak's critique of scholarly interpretation serves as a stand against intellectual forms of marginalization and oppression. (Riach 12)

In her influential essay "Can the Subaltern Speak?," Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak delves into the complexities of representing the voices of marginalized groups within postcolonial discourse. *"White men are saving brown women from brown men."* (Spivak 65)

In this succinct statement, Spivak critiques the paternalistic and colonialist attitudes that underpin the notion of Western intervention in non-Western societies. She highlights the

power dynamics at play, where white men position themselves as saviors while perpetuating stereotypes of both brown men as inherently oppressive and brown women as passive victims in need of rescue.

This critique serves to unravel the complexities of race, gender, and power within colonial and patriarchal systems, emphasizing the need for intersectional analyses in understanding systems of oppression and liberation.

2.3. Subalternity and Gender in the Islamic World

Given the abundance of negative portrayals associated with Islam and Muslims in the collective consciousness of the West, it is hardly surprising that, since the collapse of the Soviet Empire, the Islamic world has been perceived as the new adversary, perhaps even more daunting and inscrutable than the previous one. The pervasive depiction of Islam as a religion spread by the sword, characterized by "Holy War," and Muslims as brutal, backward, fanatical, and volatile, has resulted in a disturbing rise in "Muslim-bashing"--verbal, physical, and psychological--in several Western nations in recent times. Amidst such widespread animosity towards Islam and Muslims, the apparent sympathy shown towards Muslim women by the West seems, on the surface, to be a remarkable contradiction. After all, are Muslim women not also followers of Islam? And are they not also victims of "Muslim-bashing?" Few of us can forget the horrific burning of Turkish Muslim girls by German criminals or the brutal rape of Bosnian Muslim women by Serbian soldiers. How, then, am I--a Muslim woman--to interpret the "sympathy" extended to Muslim women by the prevailing discourse of the West?

As a Muslim woman who has spent the majority of her life in the West, I find it challenging to believe, based on my lived experience, that there is genuine concern for Muslim women in many Western countries or among their people. The concern that does exist in a

country with a significant Muslim population--such as England--seems to revolve around ensuring that the cultural norms and values of British society are not undermined or compromised by "foreigners" like Muslims. A considerable number of Muslims living in England happen to be blue-collar workers... (Hassan 40).

In comparison to South Asia or the Middle East, Islam in Southeast Asia is often viewed as moderate, especially concerning its treatment of gender roles. Historically, there have been numerous documented cases where women held positions of power as sultans and queens, participated in battles as resistance fighters, or even led guerrilla movements. Traditional roles for Southeast Asian women include working as artisans and traders, owning land and homes, and holding respected positions in clan hierarchies. Some societies in Southeast Asia have female-centered kinship systems, granting women special rank higher than men.

This elevated status of women in Southeast Asia is attributed to traditional social structures prevailing in the region, which have garnered praise in the social and cultural sciences. However, some assumptions made by Western observers, such as the idea of "unisex societies," have been challenged by more recent ethnographic studies. Despite this, weak gender hierarchies are still evident in many Southeast Asian societies.

Southeast Asia is not an isolated region unaffected by outside influences; it has been shaped by centuries of interactions with traders, missionaries, and colonial powers. Islam, introduced as early as the eighth century by Indian traders and Sufi missionaries, blended with local traditions to create syncretistic systems compatible with existing social structures. However, since the nineteenth century, modernist interpretations of Islam have challenged traditional gender relations. Today, Salafi and Wahabi varieties of Islam continue to influence gender dynamics in the region. (Schröte 7-52).

3. conceptualizing Identity:

Identity is considered one of the most complicated notions because it directly relates to the human being. In other words, the person dealing with the issue of identity is also the one who owns it, making them both the searcher and the subject matter simultaneously. Furthermore, many domains share an interest in the notion of identity, and this multifaceted nature has led to a wide range of questions about it. Depending on the starting point and the aim of the discussion, scholars have raised various questions about identity. Some of these questions were mentioned by Darin Barney:

> Where does a person's identity come from? Can a person choose her identity, or is it something assigned to her by others? Does it derive from characteristics internal to a person, or from the environment in which she exists? Is the source of identity primarily spiritual, intellectual, cultural or biological? Is identity a reflection of natural attributes, or is it socially constructed? What are the most important contributors to a person's identity? Is identity constant and immutable, or is it historically contingent and dynamic? (Barney 159)

These questions and others show us in which extent identity has been a subject of significant interest and debate in modern thought, with scholars considering it as an interdisciplinary project, and prompted them to explore the complex relationship between identity and culture, since culture in its side provides a difficult and problematic meaning as Raymond Williams (1977) aptly noted: “Culture is one of the two or three most complicated words in the English language. This is so partly because of its intricate historical development, in several European languages, but mainly because it has now come to be used for important concepts in several distinct intellectual disciplines and in several distinct and incompatible systems of thought” (87). Williams in his book intitled (Sources of Hope) attaches culture with personal aspects, he writes: “the questions I ask about our culture are questions about

our general and common purposes, yet also questions about deep personal meanings, culture is ordinary in every society and in every mind" (04).

This quote highlights the pervasive nature of culture in shaping individual identity. While also highlighting how difficult to identify this relationship, but there is a common point by which they attached, this is the fact of making meaning of things, "Meaning is what gives us a sense of our own identity ,of who we are and with whom we 'belong '— so it is tied up with questions of how culture is used to mark out and maintain identity within and difference between groups (hall 3) , this groups of cultural identities is exist across various levels ranging from individual entities to social groups and their diverse extensions.

3.1. Identity as an essence: philosophical background

In the realm of philosophy, two contrasting perspectives on the issue of identity emerge. The first perspective posits that the human mind serves as the comprehensive faculty through which individuals can reason about things in their true and complete form. From this standpoint, identity is viewed as an objective value, suggesting that its boundaries can be clearly delineated. In contrast, an opposing philosophical stance contends that there is no objective means of accessing identity; rather, we are only able to perceive multiple subjective viewpoints regarding the identities that surround us. This perspective asserts that our judgments are inherently linked to our ontological positions as individuals situated within the world where these identities exist

On one hand, the notion that identity can be objectively modified through scientific (empirical) methods has given rise to the idea of an objective meaning, which has its roots in Greek philosophical tradition but gained prominence with the French philosopher René Descartes. Descartes illuminated the nature of human consciousness and its processes,

famously articulating his perspective through the statement "Cogito, ergo sum" (I think, therefore I am) to convey his view on the essence of truth, he writes in his second mediation:.

> There is some deceiver or other who is supremely powerful and supremely sly and who is always deliberately deceiving me. Then too there is no doubt that I exist, if he is deceiving me. And let him do his best at deception, he will never bring it about that I am nothing so long as I shall think that I am something. Thus, after everything has been most carefully weighed, it must finally be established that this pronouncement "I am, I exist" is necessarily true every time I utter it or conceive it in my mind (Descartes 64).

Descartes' philosophical project was deeply concerned with establishing the degree of certainty one could possess about the world, including the existence of other minds. His foundational principle, the Cogito ("I think, therefore I am"), served as the starting point for this inquiry. Descartes employed a method of systematic doubt, separating himself as an observer from all preconceived notions and beliefs, in order to arrive at indubitable truths free from subjective biases. Skepticism, therefore, became the primary adversary in his pursuit of knowledge. As Tieu (9) notes, "Descartes' epistemological and metaphysical analysis had led him to conclude that the non-physical mind was unified, stable, and existing over time independently of the body and hence fundamentally distinct from the material/physical world." This conclusion highlights the dualistic nature of Descartes' philosophy, emphasizing the separation between the mind as a thinking substance and the physical world as the realm of extended substance.

This state of mind, which remains distinct from the entities it seeks to understand, allows for the perception of other identities as complete, finite, and total entities which have their own truth.

After more than two centuries, the German philosopher Edmund Husserl drew upon Descartes' Cogito to develop his own perspective on the relationship between the "I" and the "object" through his phenomenological theory. Husserl believed that by engaging in cognitive

processes known as "phenomenological reductions," he could attain an understanding of the truth of any object, which he referred to as the "thing itself", he writes:

> The correct performance of a pure phenomenological reflection, as an originary intuition of the psychic in its pure particularity, is fraught with great difficulties; and the possibility of a pure psychology - and hence, of any psychology at all - depends on recognizing and overcoming them, The method of "phenomenological reduction" is the basic method for throwing into relief the phenomenological-psychological field, and it alone has made "pure psychology" possible" (Husserl 90).

By applying Husserl's phenomenological theory to the field of identity, it is posited that the recognition of identities in their objective sense is achievable through subjecting these foreign identities to phenomenological psychological processes. Through these processes, the "I" surpasses its subjective fluctuations and apprehends the pure truth of the "other" in its transcendental essence. This approach offers a potential solution to the challenge of Relativism, which poses a significant threat to scientific methodology.

Conclusion

To conclude with, the modern history of Afghanistan shows specifically the Islamic extremist regime (Taliban) that affected all the aspects of the country. On the other hand, identity in this contemporary era becomes more closed as the ongoing circumstances and which made people isolated surrounding themselves with thick walls, cutting the interaction with the other. From the other side, the relation between the colonizer and the colonized produced the notion of subalternity which is presented by postcolonial theory thinkers namely Gayatri Spivak to shed light on the voiceless and the marginalized people. This theory is used in different studies to highlight to relation whether between the self and the other between the individuals of the one society or between nations.

Chapter Two:

The Positionings of Identity and Subalternity in Khadra's

The Swallows of Kabul

Introduction:

The Swallows of Kabul, authored by Yasmina Khadra, weaved a thick fabric of the complexity of identity and subalternity into the narration throughout the novel. Khadra's novel exemplifies a gruesome reality under the Taliban rule by presenting a comprehensive examine of the characters' multifaceted identity crises and the layered experiences of subalternity.

This chapter is compiled into two main sections to address and explore the intricate identity crisis ventured by the characters in Yasmina Khadra's novel. The two key themes we have excavated are identity crisis and subalternity and gender under Radical Islam.

This chapter explores the identity crisis the characters faces in *The Swallows of Kabul.* Through a sequential examination we probe the identity crisis in various forms; collapse under the weight of international invasion and national identity, the paradox of marriage and loneliness, and the portrayal of social absurdity and madness. These examples help illustrate the internal and external components that guide the characters' views of self as they navigate the tasks of keeping themselves whole culturally and personally in a series of chaos and oppression.

Our second theme, subalternity and gender under extreme Islam, focuses on the women and their gender specific experience under the Taliban regime in *The Swallows of Kabul*. In particular, some of the egalitarian experiences of women, including: the burqa as a double physical and moral covering, the drastic limitation of women as instigators of social visibility, and the fallacious link between women and sin in contemporary extremism. Throughout the analysis we hope to unveil the over exposure of women that

were made invisible and inhumane by the novel, in an extreme demonstration of the marginalization and dehumanization of women in contemporary Afghanistan.

In exploring the culture, identity and subalternity in each section we desire to provide a platform for understanding what a complicated example of identity and subalternity is illustrated in the novel. We do that by not only offering a micro view of the characters, but reflecting on the socio-political culture of Afghanistan during these trying times.

1. Identity Crisis in Khadra's Novel

In a world that facing a great Security and ideological challenges, Yasmina Khadra is known as one of the most famous novelists that devoted his time and effort to discussing these issues, "Abandoning genrefiction for the post-9/11 market in novels about the geopolitics of "terror", Khadra successfully repositioned himself as a "serious" international writer of literary bestsellers such as Les Hirondelles de Kaboul (2002; *The Swallows of Kabul*)" (Deckard 75). In Khadra's *The Swallows of Kabul*, identity is considered an initial notion that serves on different levels, but there is a significant paradox in the process of building the modern Afghan identity in this novel. When the collective identity was supposed to be deconstructed in the war era against the Soviet Union, it remained knit and strong. However, the opposite happened after the war when the Taliban became the rulers of Afghanistan and succeeded in unifying most Afghan territories under one regime. Under this regime, personal identities became very torn and weak. Bob Corbett describes this novel as "a dark, sad and very powerful novel. It is about 1989 in Kabul, Afghanistan. The Russians had invaded about 10 years earlier. The war brought the Taliban to power and the rule of the terror of the Taliban and their stringent religious rule" (Corbett).

1.1. International Invasion VS National Identity

The novel's events unfold through two main eras: the past and the present. This temporal distinction has crucial significance on Afghan's national identity structure, and how it manifests in each era depends on the degree of self and collective cohesion within each. The novel's events in the present time describe what Afghanistan and Kabul in particular have become under the Taliban regime.

This present period, considered the main era in which most of the novel's events occur, refers to the total ruin and deconstruction of social values in contemporary Afghanistan. This hard situation stems from the imbalance between the real values that Afghan people have taken from Islamic teachings and the extreme applications of those teachings by the Taliban group, Taliban in this case can be seemed as a local colonizer, What Homi Bhabha said about the relationship between the Colonizer and the Colonized applies to it when he argues that:

> We can now understand the link between the psychic and political that is suggested in Frantz Fanon's figure of speech: the colonialist is an exhibitionist, because his preoccupation with security makes him 'remind the native out loud that there he alone is master'.25 The native, caught in the chains of colonialist command, achieves a 'pseudo-petrifi-cation' which further incites and excites him, thus making the settler-native boundary an anxious and ambivalent one. (116)

Even Homi Bhabha wants to to convince us of his idea about hybridity between the Colonizer and the Colonized, but this idea but this idea leads to negative results in Khadra's novel, because it shows the extent of the impact of this hybridity on the isolation of the characters. The novel begins its first page by describing Kabul in this time:

> IN THE MIDDLE of nowhere, a whirlwind spins like a sorceress flinging out her skirts in a macabre dance; yet not even this hysteria serves to blow the dust off the calcified palm trees thrust against the sky like beseeching arms. Several hours ago, the night, routed by the dawn and fleeing in disorder, left behind a few of its feeble breezes, but the heat has scorched and smothered them. Since midday, not a single

> raptor has risen to hover above its prey. The shepherds in the hills have disappeared. For miles around, apart from a few sentries crouched inside their rudimentary watchtowers, there is not a living soul. A deathly silence pervades the dereliction as far as the eye can see. The Afghan countryside is nothing but battlefields, expanses of sand, and cemeteries. Artillery exchanges shatter prayers, wolves howl at the moon every night, and the wind, when it breathes, mingles beggars' laments with the croaking of crows. (Khadra 03)

This passage shows how Kabul has become under Taliban rule. Destruction has occurred not only in physical spaces but also in all aspects of life in Afghanistan: in the weather, in animals, and in people's souls. It seems as though all the evils of the world have gathered in Kabul, even the name of swallows, found in the novel's title, is a symbol that holds plenty of positive references, such as spring and optimism in ordinary use. However, in the novel, it's related to the terrible "*the terrified swallows dispersed under a barrage of missiles*" (11), and the infirmity "*flocks of infirm swallows—blue, yellow, often faded, several seasons behind—that make a mournful sound when they come into the proximity of men*" (60). This regrettable portrayal refers to the contemporary identity of Kabul in the collective consciousness of the people, rather than a physical description of it. "When discussing identities of spatial objects or places (regions, countries or cities) with regard to concepts of reality, the focus is on how they are perceived by individuals or how they are anchored in a group's collective imagination" (Weichhart, 5). From this point of view, Kabul failed to build a national identity during the Taliban regime because there is a large gap between what the Taliban aims to do and what the people believe. This conflict of values appears in its clearest form when the Taliban forced people to do what it wants: "Taliban militiamen are patrolling the perimeter of the sanctuary in packs, seizing men who are passing by and forcing them manu militari to join the assembled faithful" (Khadra, 21).

While the present time of the novel refers to the position in which Kabul lost its identity and fell into ruin, the real national identity remained strong only in the past, during

the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan. This war unified the Afghan national consciousness against the foreign enemy, and the Jihad was the embodiment of this complete identity. Historically, Afghans are known as a brave, hardy, and independent race as Friedrich Engels declared (Cummins 141). by developing a creative language, Yasmina Khadra inspires the Afghan history to use it as a fictional element. During the 1980s, the *Mujahideen* succeeded in concretizing their goals with the help of the USA, forcing Mikhail Gorbachev to accept withdrawal in his famous speech of February 8, 1988 (Afghanistan: Towards an Islamic republic 140). Khadra displays this bright picture of national identity as memories of some of the secondary characters who lived through that war. This group of disabled veterans described how they struggled against the Soviet military.

> But the disabled veterans are still there, exhibiting their mutilations like so many trophies. The legless man is ensconced in his barrow, listening intently to his companions' stories, ready to assent and even readier to object. The Goliath has returned; sitting next to a one-armed man, he listens obsequiously as a graybeard relates how, with a handful of mujahideen and only one light machine gun, he succeeded in immobilizing an entire Soviet tank company. (29)

The quote shows the distinction between the present and the past through its description. The tragic situation these fighters are living in at the present time is highlighted by describing their handicaps, while their memories talk about the past as a time of victories and happiness, even though they lived through war. They lived with true faith in their principles.

This great past is also described by two other characters, Mohsen Ramat and Nazeesh. The first one considered the past as a time of all great emotions and feelings. All things were in the right places, and all dreams were possible to concretize with his love and his wife, Zunaira, later on.

> They had met at the university. He was the son of a middle-class family; she was the daughter of a prominent man. Mohsen was studying

> political science and looking forward to a diplomatic career; Zunaira's ambition was to become a magistrate. He was a straightforward, decent, moderately religious young man; as an enlightened Muslim, she wore assertive head scarves and modest dresses, sometimes over loose trousers, and actively campaigned for the emancipation of women. Her zeal was unmatched, save by the praises heaped upon her. She was a brilliant girl, and her beauty lifted every heart. (33)

While the second one, Nazeesh, was an old man who was almost mad, his past was truly brilliant as a Mufti in Kabul, especially when his children were killed during the war against the Soviet.

> He wasn't an object of adulation, but hundreds of the faithful would gather to hear his Friday sermons. He lived in a big house with a garden and a wrought-iron gate, and sometimes it happened that he was invited to official ceremonies, where he received the same treatment as the notables. His sons were killed in the war against the Russians, a fact that elevated him in the esteem of the local authorities. He never seemed to complain about anything, and no one knew anybody who was his enemy. (Khadra 30)

In this novel, the present relates to the past and vice versa. It is not possible to read the present of Kabul with all its components without turning to the past, as if the past is the only thing that saves this city from complete collapse. The present situation is the measure that gives value to the past, and without a terrible present, the past remains a normal past far from this holy value. This positioning of the past and present creates an opposite kind of national identity. While the present represents Kabul's shattered identity, the past represents the escape to which the characters flee in order to feel a purer national identity. This identity is based on how each period dealt with the teachings of Islam.

1.2. Identity crisis: The Paradox of Marriage/Loneliness

If Kabul is mired in a disintegration of its national identity, it is because it failed to create coherence between its personal identities and the collective identity that the Taliban tried to impose and Khadra here "*abandoned detective fiction for "literary" fiction mapping*

the geopolitics of terror, albeit in the crudest form, thus exchanging the black frivolity of noir for the earnest ideology of anti-Islamist fiction" (Deckard 78), thus the novel expresses a significant gap between the characters, each isolated within their own borders, making communication difficult. Instead, there are flourishing monologues through which each character expresses their own world, dreams, and hopes, seeking an escape from their current reality under the Taliban's patriarchal regime, this characters' silence can be visible through the domination of description rather than inter dialogue, this means that this voiceless relates to the weakness. basing on subaltern- identification theory, JAMSHEED AHMAD has demonstrated that "*Voice, power and identity are inter-related. Literally 'voice' means any audible sound or an expression of opinion. Symbolically voice represents power, control and authority (...) The power gives identity*" (04). From this perspective all novel's characters experience an identity crisis, except for a few who align with or benefit from the existing regime, such as Mirza Shah, a corrupt and pragmatic man, and Qassim Abdul Jabbar, a Taliban member with aspirations of leadership.

Generally speaking, the impact of Algerian civil war during the 90s on Yasmina Khadra as an old army officer gave him further sights to deal with the terrorism in other areas in his novels as Karl Agerup argues when highlights that "*The perspective of the individual victim that he had developed in his novels on the Algerian Civil War and the suspense and plot-making of his Algiers-based crime stories were combined and transformed to match the situation of the suffering populations of Afghanistan, Israel, and Iraq, as he imagined them*" (182). In our novel, two levels of individual identity crisis can be distinguished based on two main types of relationships: marital relationship and parental relationship. These two levels encompass nearly all personal relations in the novel and reveal the dimensions of each character's identity.

Marital relationships are portrayed as crucial in the novel, highlighting the impact of the failed national identity. Each husband lives in emotional and physical isolation from his wife. The first example is the relationship between the protagonist Atiq Shaukat and his wife Musarrat. Atiq does not love his wife; he merely respects her. Now that she is sick, he feels a moral duty to care for her because she nursed him back to health after he was injured during the war against the Soviets. This situation causes internal conflict for Atiq as he grapples with feelings of neglect towards his wife.

> His wife is sick. Is that her fault? Has he forgotten the sacrifices she made for him after his platoon, defeated by the Communist troops, left him for dead in a wasted village? How she hid him and nursed him for weeks on end? How she transported him on the back of a mule, through hostile territory in snowy weather, all the way to Peshawar? Now that she needs him, he shamelessly flees from her side, running to left and right behind anything that seems likely to take his mind off her. (Khadra 24)

This situation has a strong relationship with Atiq's profession as a jailer, which never satisfied him and caused a bad psychological state. This led him to prefer self-centering by turning his focus toward himself. His interactions with others were motivated by professional duty (with Qassim Abdul Jabbar mainly) or moral duty (with his wife), in both cases using a dry language to transfer messages far from all emotions. Even when he tried to express himself to his childhood friend, Mirza Shah, he regretted it because his friend could not share his feelings with him.

Atiq's profession as a jailor is not insignificant in this case; he was jailed within himself, his imaginations, and inner conflicts. His self-walls are too hard to destroy and penetrate, with all others being outside of himself, even his wife Musarrat, who was convinced of this truth. When she recognized that there is someone who succeeded in penetrating that wall and reaching his heart (his love for Zunaira), she preferred to sacrifice herself in order

for her husband to find harmony with himself. Musarrat looks like a psychological doctor when she expressed the change that happened to her husband when love touched his heart.

> Atiq, my man, my husband, you've been blessed. Listen to your heart. It's the only voice that's talking to you about yourself, the only counselor that knows the real truth. Its reasons are stronger than all the reasons in the world. Trust your heart and let it guide your steps. And above all, don't be afraid. Because this evening, you of all men are the one who *loves* .... (Khadra 70)

Atiq's love for Zunaira, who was his prisoner after she caused the death of her husband Mohsen, restored his psychological, emotional, and identity balance. But it seemed as if it was his destiny to live in an identity crisis. Zunaira ran away and left him alone, driving him to madness.

The second model of marital relationship was Mohsin Ramat and his wife Zunaira. This couple exemplified a good model of love. Mohsin loved Zunaira deeply since their university days and did everything he could to fulfill her desires. Zunaira, on the other hand, "*fell in love with him at first sight*" (Khadra 33). However, their love alone was not enough to shield them from the chaos outside. Slowly but surely, this destruction seeped into their relationship, causing them to distance themselves from each other. Mohsin would spend most of his days wandering outside, battling his own fears and depression. Meanwhile, Zunaira chose to stay at home and endure this situation rather than venturing out and confronting the fanatical Taliban who sought to strip her of her true identity. This feeling of fear intensified when Mohsin suggested that they go out together in an attempt to revive their love and break down the walls of estrangement between them. She responded:

> I don't feel like coming home heartsick, Mohsen. The things that go on in the streets will just ruin my day, to no purpose. I can't come face-to-face with horrors and just keep on walking as if nothing's happened. Furthermore, I refuse to wear a burqa. Of all the burdens they've put on us, that's the most degrading. The Shirt of Nessus wouldn't do as much damage to my dignity as that wretched getup. It cancels my face and takes away my identity and turns me into an object. (Khadra 35)

Unfortunately, what Zunaira feared happened, and they were insulted by Taliban agents. This event led to a complete separation between them, resulting in Zunaira causing her husband's death and being sent to prison.

The third model was between Mirza Shah and his four wives. Mirza considered them untrustworthy individuals, creating a significant divide between himself and them. Mirza was completely taken aback when Atiq spoke to him about his wife's illness and expressed his sadness for her.

> My poor Atiq, I live with four women. I married the first one twenty-five years ago, and the last one nine months ago. I feel nothing but suspicion for the lot of them, because I have never for a single moment had the impression that I understood anything at all about the way things work in their heads. I'm convinced that I'll never fully grasp how women think. (Khadra 17)

The three models of marital relationships are completely different. The first one is based on ethical values, far from any ambition. The second one is more loving and ambitious, while the third one is pragmatic. However, all these models share the feeling of separation, reflecting what is happening in Afghan society's destruction. Atiq and Muhsin, in their marital relationships, are forced to be alone due to the imbalance between their desires and reality. This psychological conflict results in complex identities that try to create strong boundaries but fail to establish positive communication. This lack of connection leads to tragic endings in both cases, offering readers insight into what may occur in Afghan society under Taliban rule, this political position that is consistent with the West's stereotypical view of Afghanistan, "With regard to western perceptions of the country's history and culture, traditionally the focus has been with the Afghans' apparent resistance to the "modern" world, something often described in terms of a pathological predisposition towards violence and lawlessness" (Kingsbury 02).

On the other hand, Mirza Shah appears to be coherent with himself and his surroundings. His relationship with his wives is acceptable to him because he sees them as bodies rather than souls. This stable identity reflects the extent of corruption and hypocrisy in Afghan society.

1.3. Identity Crisis: Social Absurdity and Madman:

The second level of personal identity crisis is seen in paternal relationships, specifically in the cases of Nazeesh with his father and Qassim Abdul Jabbar with his mother. In both instances, there is an absurd tendency reminiscent of Albert Camus's work. The theme revolves around the death of a parent, similar to Camus's "The Stranger," where the protagonist deals with his mother's death in an absurd manner in the first paragraph of his novel: "*Maman died today. Or yesterday maybe, I don't know. I got a telegram from the home: "Mother deceased. Funeral tomorrow. Faithfully yours." That doesn't mean anything. Maybe it was yesterday.*"(Camus 03). In Khadra's novel, Nazeesh contemplates the possibility of his elderly father's death.

> Two days ago, he wouldn't wake up. My daughters shook him and sprinkled water on him; he didn't move. I felt his wrist—no pulse. I put my ear against his chest—no breathing. I said, Okay, he's dead; we'll notify the family and give him a fine funeral. I left the house to tell the neighbors the news (…) I spent the morning receiving condolences and demonstrations of sympathy. Around noon, I go back home, and who do I find in the courtyard, bitching at everybody? My father, in flesh and blood, very much alive and kicking… (30).

The life of Nazeesh's father is faced with the apathy of his son, as if he doesn't hold any emotional value towards him. The case of Qassim Abdul Jabbar is no less absurd. It appears to be even more similar to Camus's case, as both of them lose their mothers whom they live far away from and have almost no emotional connection with. Qassim visits his mother after her death out of a moral motive rather than an emotional one.

> He thinks (…) about his dilapidated village, where he saw no reason to linger for any length of time. Had it been up to him, he would never have set foot there again. But his mother died a few days ago and was buried yesterday. He arrived too late for the funeral services, so he contented himself with a brief period of meditation at her grave. A few minutes of silence and a verse from the Qur'an were sufficient. Then he slipped a bundle of banknotes inside his father's vest and ordered the driver to take him back to Kabul. (Khadra 46)

The simulation between this passage and the one of Camus is very clear, even on a linguistic level, as the language used reflects the characters' psychological state with cold and emotionless words. However, we can distinguish between the nature of absurdity in Camus's novel and Khadra's novel. Camus's vision is based on a philosophical concept of life known as Absurdism, while Khadra's novel starts from a social perspective that impacts the personal experience of life. This social absurdity is a result of the disintegration of identities in Afghan society during the Taliban era, where each individual lives in their own misery, influenced by the misery of others.

The situation as described above leads most of the characters to madness, madness in its vast notion. This word refers to mad people in a literal sense, but it also refers to all acts that are irrational, such as what the Taliban applied to Afghan society. The more unreasonable the Taliban's practices become, the closer the characters get to madness. The two most important characters in the novel are considered as the best examples of this link between the Taliban's practices and the madness of the characters. The first one is Atiq and the second is Muhsin; both of them experience a progressive state of madness that ends with the death of both of them. Michel Foucault, in his famous book entitled "*Madness and Civilization*" mentions the structure of madness when he highlights that.

> There exists in madness, even in its most agitated forms, an element of weakness. If in madness the spirits are subjected to irregular movements, it is because they have not enough strength or weight to follow the gravity of their natural course; if spasms and convulsions so often occur in nervous illnesses, it is because the fiber is too mobile, or

> too irritable, or too sensitive to vibrations; in any case, it lacks robustness. (159-160)

The two characters expresses an inner weakness, this weakness leads them to a psychological trauma which caused an isolation ended later on by madness, Atiq has suffered from the unbalance between his principles and his profession, between the illness of his wife and his inability to help/ live with her and lastly between his love of Zunaina and her disappear and taking him alone, while Muhsin suffered from the contradiction between his love of his wife Zunaira and his hard social situation that oblige him to quite her in one sense.

The word “madness” or one of its synonyms such as "losing his mind," "lost his mind," "convulses her mind," "men have gone mad," or "almost mad" is repeated nineteen (19) times. This repetition holds a strong significance, indicating the dominance of this theme in the novel. In addition to Atiq and Muhsin, there are other characters included in the circle of madness, such as Nazeesh and his father, along with many unidentified individuals spread widely throughout the events of the novel. Not only are the characters suffering from madness, but Kabul itself is described as the "city of madmen" by Atiq when he advises Zunaira to go away: “*Night is falling. Take advantage of it and run away. Get as far as possible from this city of madmen. Run as fast as you can, and whatever happens*” (67). Kabul is also depicted as the place where "*men have gone mad*" (08), and where the "*raging madmen are strutting around outside*" (55).

2. Subalternity and Gender: Radical Islam and Women under the Taliban Regime in Modern Afghanistan.

This short but eloquent novel, written by retired Algerian army officer Mohammed Moulessehoul, known as Yasmina Khadra, and translated from the French, may well be the messenger of a future literature that presents life in war-torn and oppression-ravaged cultures of the West Asian and Middle Eastern world. It is a story that might be compared to Voltaire’s

excoriation of war and religion, "Candide," but it does not resort to humor; or to Graham Greene's prophetic critique of American policy in Vietnam, "The Quiet American," but it does not allow the grim satisfaction of irony in human destiny. Still less does it resemble Joseph Heller's absurd novel "Catch-22," in which war becomes laughable mainly because it doesn't make sense. Yet, there is something in *The Swallows of Kabul*, a beautiful lyric of exhaustion unto death, that is akin to Yossarian's fabulous walk through the bombed ruins of Rome—something like the "eternal note of sadness" that Matthew Arnold heard on *Dover Beach*, and Sophocles, perhaps, on *the Aegean*.

The Swallows of Kabul are in fact the women of Kabul, dressed in their light blue *burqas*. They are like beautiful birds, but in a stark reversal of terms, they have been cast as the embodiment of evil in Taliban Kabul. The author continually asserts, through his description of the city and its environs, that everything has been reversed in Kabul: streets once teeming with small markets and shops are now empty; colorful gardens have shriveled to dust; laughter and small talk have become anxious sighs and frightened whispering; couples who strolled the city have become Taliban policemen wielding sticks and knives. The reversal is complete and irretrievable. There will be no future, no resurrection of the good, the healthy, the true. The city and its soil are "necrotic," and "*Nothing will ever be the same again*" (Khadra 08).

Today the Taliban no longer rule in Kabul, but they are not far away. There has been no sea-change in Afghanistan, only a shift, probably temporary, in the balance of powers as America enters with military forces, economic aid, democratic rhetoric, and oil pipeline dreams of glory. Kabul, like Yossarian's smoldering Rome, will be rebuilt, but all the heroic materialism of modernity cannot erase the tragedy of history or prevent it from recurring, borne as it is by the tidal rhythms of human oppression, greed, and evil. Perhaps this is really why Mohammed Moulessehoul, retired Algerian military officer, chose to write this book

under the nom de plume of a woman, Yasmina Khadra, in the hope of a world not doomed by the follies and vanities of men, a world redeemed by its anima, by the graceful ascent of its swallows. (Wright 131).

2.1. Burqa as Physical and Moral Coverage

In Khadra's novel features a character named Zunaira who delivers a piercing monologue that captures the significant individual and societal implications of the *burqa*, a piece of clothing mandated for women in Afghanistan under Taliban rule. Zunaira's refusal to wear the *burqa* reflects a deeply held resistance to the harsh standards imposed upon her and other women in her society. Through her impassioned words, Zunaira articulates the physical and moral burdens associated with the *burqa*, highlighting its role in erasing personal identity and dignity.

In the novel, the character Zunaira adamantly expresses her refusal to wear a *burqa*, symbolizing her resistance against oppressive norms.

> Furthermore, I refuse to wear a burqa. Of all the burdens they've put on us, that's the most degrading. The Shirt of Nessus wouldn't do as much damage to my dignity as that wretched getup. It cancels my face and takes away my identity and turns me into an object. Here, at least, I'm me, Zunaira, Mohsen Ramat's wife, age thirty-two, former magistrate, dismissed by obscurantists without a hearing and without compensation, but with enough self-respect left to brush my hair every day and pay attention to my clothes. If I put that damned veil on, I'm neither a human being nor an animal, I'm just an affront, a disgrace, a blemish that has to be hidden. That's too hard to deal with. Especially for someone who was a lawyer, who worked for women's rights. Please, I don't want you to think for a minute that I'm putting on some sort of act. I'd like to, you know, but unfortunately my heart's not in it anymore. Don't ask me to give up my name, my features, the color of my eyes, and the shape of my lips so I can take a walk-through squalor and desolation. Don't ask me to become something less than a shadow, an anonymous thing rustling around in a hostile place. You know how thin-skinned I am, Mohsen. I'd be angry at myself for being angry at you when you were only trying to please me. (khadra 35).

In this part of the story, Zunaira really does not want to wear a *burqa*. She thinks it's awful because it hides who she is and makes her feel like she's not even a person anymore. Even though she used to be a lawyer fighting for women's rights, she now feels powerless against this expectation. Zunaira wants to stay true to herself, even if it means going against what others want her to do.

This quote, probably from Zunaira's perspective, shows how she strongly refuses to wear the *burqa*. She sees it not just as clothing, but as a symbol of oppression. Zunaira feels it's a way society tries to take away her freedom and humanity. a device utilized by onerous powers to delete independence and diminish ladies to objects destitute of character, Simone de Beauvoir, a prominent existentialist philosopher, once remarked, "Representation of the world, like the world itself, is the work of men; they describe it from their own point of view, which they confuse with the absolute truth. (De Beauvoir 5).

This quote underscores the subjective nature of human perception and the tendency to perceive one's own perspective as objective reality. De Beauvoir's observation prompts reflection on the constructed nature of reality and the influence of social, cultural, and individual biases in shaping our understanding of the world.

Her position reflects a profound sense of self-respect and respect. In spite of confronting expulsion and separation, Zunaira holds onto her sense of self, denying to compromise her character for the purpose of similarity or societal desires. Her request on keeping up her title, highlights, and individual independence underscores her commitment to her possess values and principles, indeed within the confront of misfortune.

As a previous judge and advocate for women's rights, Zunaira's dismissal of the *burqa* is especially piercing. It symbolizes her immovable devotion to the cause of sex uniformity and her refusal to be quieted or marginalized by patriarchal standards. Her refusal to comply

serves as an effective act of resistance against a system that looks for to decrease her worth and smother her voice.

Besides, Zunaira's inner strife reflects the complexity of exploring societal desires and individual feelings. In spite of her firm position, she recognizes the trouble of her position and the clashing feelings it inspires. Her defenselessness in expressing her disappointments and fears includes profundity to her character, highlighting the enthusiastic toll of standing up to abuse and keeping up one's judgment within the confront of misfortune.

In general, Zunaira's refusal to wear the burqa typifies a broader battle for independence, respect, and human rights. It serves as a update of the significance of challenging onerous frameworks and standing up for singularity, indeed when it comes at a taken a toll.

2.2. Can Women Appear ?

This title inspired by Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak captures the concept that marginalized or oppressed groups often struggle to make their voices heard within dominant social structures. It highlights the power dynamics that silence certain voices and perspectives, particularly those of subaltern or disenfranchised individuals.

Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak says "*The subaltern cannot speak*"(271), this quote could be an effective explanation by that highlights the quiet and marginalization experienced by persecuted bunches inside society. Here, "the subaltern" alludes to those who are socially, politically, or financially distraught, frequently neglected or hushed by those in positions of control. The express "cannot talk" underscores the systemic obstructions that avoid these marginalized people from completely communicating themselves or sharing their encounters. It talks to the need of organization and representation managed to them inside overwhelming social structures. Basically, the quote emphasizes the significance of recognizing and tending

to the silencing of these voices in order to realize genuine social equity and balance. It calls for increasing the voices of the marginalized and making space for their points of view to be listened and esteemed in forming collective stories and societal talk.

In this vivid depiction from Khadra's writing, women hidden beneath burqas are portrayed as desperate and marginalized, reaching out for help but often met with disdain or violence. Their struggles are compounded by the presence of children in dire circumstances, highlighting the harsh realities of poverty and social exclusion. Khadra's narrative evokes a sense of urgency and empathy for these women and their children, amidst a backdrop of neglect and hardship.

> Women, segregated inside their grimy burqas, extend imploring hands and clutch at passersby; some receive a coin for their trouble, others just a curse. Often, when the women grow too insistent, an infuriated lashing drives them backward. But their retreat is brief, and soon they return to the assault, chanting their intolerable supplications. Others, encumbered by brats whose faces are covered with flies and snot, cluster desperately around the fruit vendors, interrupting their singsong litanies only to lunge for the occasional rotten tomato or onion that an alert customer may discover at the bottom of his basket. (Khadra 9.)

In this scene, women in Kabul are depicted as struggling desperately for survival. Concealed within their dirty burqas, they reach out to passersby, hoping for assistance but often receiving only meager offerings or curses in return. Despite facing harsh consequences, such as being lashed for their persistence, these women show remarkable resilience, returning to their pleas again and again. Some are burdened by children, adding to their hardships. Overall, the scene portrays the harsh reality of women's lives in Kabul, marked by poverty, oppression, and the constant struggle for survival.

2.3. Women and Sin :

Violence targeting women and girls in Afghanistan stands as a pressing issue, inflicting severe and enduring repercussions on individuals, families, communities, and

society as a whole. Prior to the upheaval in mid-August, gender-based violence was alarmingly prevalent, particularly in rural regions. Efforts such as the 2016 National Action Plan and constitutional provisions aimed to safeguard women's rights and access to justice, yet the Taliban's ascendancy has disrupted legal protections and hindered access to justice. The UN has expressed apprehension over the escalating violence against women and girls, exacerbated by restrictions on their mobility imposed by the Taliban.

In the past, there were a few safe havens where women experiencing severe domestic violence could find refuge. However, with the Taliban assuming control, these shelters have ceased operations, leaving countless women vulnerable to harassment and violence without a secure sanctuary. This predicament is particularly dire for those who had sought refuge in shelters but are now compelled to return to the very homes they fled due to domestic abuse. A women's activist in Kabul lamented, "*Now, we are left with no alternative but to endure both domestic violence and societal mistreatment. We find ourselves in a state of lawlessness and helplessness*". (Yasa).

The main character, Atiq, reflects on his long absence from seeing women's faces. He describes how in his eyes, women have become like ghosts—silent and unnoticed—as they move through the streets. Atiq compares them to swallows, faded and melancholic, highlighting the distance between men and women in the society portrayed in the novel.

> Atiq hasn't seen a woman's face for many years. He's even learned to live without such sights. For him, women are only ghosts, voiceless, charmless ghosts that pass practically unnoticed along the streets; flocks of infirm swallows—blue, yellow, often faded, several seasons behind—that make a mournful sound when they come into the proximity of men. (Khadra 60) .

In this excerpt, Khadra uses the perspective of the main character, Atiq, to powerfully illustrate the repressive gender relations that exist in Afghanistan under Taliban control. The harsh limitations placed on women's visibility and mobility are highlighted by Atiq's

reflection on his protracted absence from seeing women's faces, underscoring the dehumanization of these things as helpless and unattractive. Women are compared to "ghosts" and "infirm swallows" to highlight how frail and vulnerable they are in a culture that strictly enforces gender roles and segregation. In addition to highlighting the depressing nature of women's lives, this representation also highlights the psychological toll that comes with surviving in such a harsh setting, as demonstrated by Atiq's obvious desire for closeness and human interaction despite the overwhelming sense of loneliness and longing. During this section in the context of Taliban-controlled Afghanistan, Khadra provides a heartbreaking reflection on the dehumanizing impacts of restrictive gender conventions as well as the significant influence of societal and political systems on individual experiences and perceptions.

In his works *The Swallows of Kabul* and Wolf Dreams, Yasmina Khadra examines the impact of extremism on society and in particular in relation to the violence against women. In *The Swallows of Kabul*, Khadra depicts the plight of women under the rule of the Taliban, where women were subjected to severe restrictions and violent punishments. Wolf Dreams, in contrast, deals with the dangers posed by radicalized men and the general atmosphere of fear and violence. According to Senoussi and Mortad, "terrorists are represented by the wolf metaphor to emphasize man’s barbarity, and it is the incarnation of ferociousness, savagery, treachery, and bloodshed" (3). The novels help to show the different ways women are subjected to violence within extremist societies and the urgent need to resist and confront such silencing and oppressive ideologies.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the second chapter has examined themes of identity and subalternity as displayed in Yasmina Khadra’s *The Swallows of Kabul* and the complex relationship

between the individual agency and socio-political forces. It has illustrated the multiple layers of identity crises faced by the characters, which were complicated by tensions between global influences versus national identity, within marriage, loneliness, societal absurdity, and madness.

The discussion of subalternity and gender dynamics within extreme Islam has certainly captured the extensive marginalization and dehumanization of women within Afghanistan. Through the examination of the burqa as a symbol of moral and physical confinement, the lack of visibility of women in society, and the binary representation of women as either transgressors of sin, we highlighted the oppressive environment of women's existence.

Khadra's novel resonates with a political and social Afghanistan at this time. In their identificatory struggle and subalterntiy, the characters in the novel, illustrate a personal struggle but also mirrors the collective struggle of a society under extreme oppression and cultural disintegration.

By appreciating this complexity, readers can gain a new understanding of the commentary on human nature and existence under conditions of tyranny. The insights of this chapter reflect back to a larger discourse about identity, subalternity, and gender, and a resilience and survival from pervasive adversity, the reader continues to construct understanding of the diverse levels presented in the novel, and the engaging messages intended by Khadra.

General Conclusion

Throughout this study, we had the opportunity to analyze Yasmina Khadra's novel *The Swallows of Kabul* (2002) through the lens of postcolonial studies. To accomplish our objective, we explored postcolonial theory, learning from renowned scholars like Gayatri Spivak and Edward Said. Their ideas on colonialism and deconstruction, have deepened our understanding of this field.

Frantz Fanon affirmed: "The colonialist 'civilization' is, therefore, no humane civilization. It is based on oppression and servitude." Colonial powers maintain control not only through physical force but also by influencing the thoughts and beliefs of those they oppress. This means that the oppressed often internalize feelings of inferiority and accept their situation, making it harder to break free from oppression.

Our dissertation is divided into two chapters. In the first chapter, we studied Afghanistan and how the Taliban movement has historically and socially impacted modernity in the country. We also examined how identity has been distorted by colonial rule. Finally, we discussed Spivak's theory on marginalized groups, particularly women in Afghanistan. The second chapter attempts to emphasize the intersections of identity, subalternity, Radical Islam, and the status of women under the Taliban regime in contemporary Afghanistan.

Furthermore, along our study of Yasmina Khadra's *The Swallows of Kabul* (2002), we have reached two main conclusions. The first one is in the context of *The Swallows of Kabul* or Khadra's other works, postcolonial theory might be seen as crucial for

understanding the complexities of postcolonial societies, including issues of power, identity, and resistance. Through this lens, Khadra may explore the ways in which colonial histories continue to shape social structures, relationships, and individual psyches, highlighting the enduring struggles for autonomy, dignity, and justice in formerly colonized regions. The second conclusion is that Yasmina Khadra portrays in his novel the reality of Afghan society, the Afghan woman, and the suffering they endure under the dominance of controlling power, particularly under Taliban rule. Moreover, in his novel, Khadra depicts the cultural, political, and economic conditions that subjected Afghan women to oppression, marginalization, and violence by extremist religious groups, thus highlighting the challenges they faced.

We can summarize the conclusion of this dissertation in the following points:

- The study reveals that the novel constructs characters with closed identities, defined by rigid boundaries and marked by a distinct pathology. This pathology stems from the complex psychological disorders engendered by the chasm between the ruling regime's authoritarian use of religion and its extremist application. The resulting tension manifests in the characters' inability to form cohesive relationships, leaving them vulnerable to psychological collapse. This vulnerability ultimately leads to profound psychological crises for the characters, culminating in outcomes ranging from madness to death.
- The concept of subalternity, originally a key tenet of postcolonial theory, proves particularly illuminating when applied to the novel's context. Here, subalternity takes on a localized dimension, specifically focusing on the power dynamics between extremist religious authority and women. This dynamic, characterized by a form of internal colonialism, is central to the novel's portrayal of female characters. The women are depicted as subservient, denied the right to speak or even laugh freely, their identities

subjugated to an extent that even the display of their bodies is forbidden. The ubiquitous burqa, a symbol of concealment and stereotyping in the novel, further reinforces this oppression. It effectively masks individual identities, rendering women indistinguishable and reducing them to ghostly figures. The burqa, as employed by the novelist, becomes a potent symbol of the psychological struggle women face, trapped between their inherent selfhood and the disabling constraints imposed upon them.

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Glossary of Terms

Identity Contamination. A phenomenon where an individual's self-concept is negatively influenced by external factors such as negative stereotypes, traumatic experiences, or harmful social interactions, leading to diminished self-worth and identity confusion.

Subalternity. A condition of being marginalized or oppressed within a social, political, or economic hierarchy, often lacking a voice or representation in dominant power structures. The term is commonly used in postcolonial theory to describe groups who are socially, politically, and geographically outside the hegemonic power structures.

Absurdity. Refers to the conflict between the human desire to find meaning in life and the inherently meaningless or chaotic nature of the universe. This concept highlights the struggle to find purpose in a world that seems indifferent or irrational.

Postcolonial. Referring to the period and the conditions that exist after the end of colonial rule. It involves the study of the cultural, political, and economic impacts of colonization on formerly colonized countries, as well as the ongoing effects of colonialism in contemporary times. It includes examining issues of identity, race, power, and resistance, and often aims to deconstruct and challenge colonial narratives and structures.

Cosmology. The scientific study of the origin, evolution, structure, and eventual fate of the universe.

Mythology. A collection of myths, or traditional stories, belonging to a particular culture or religion**.**

Orientalism. According to Edward Said, Orientalism is a "created body of theory and practice" which constructs images of the Orient or the East directed toward those in the West.

Representations of the East as exotic, feminine, weak, and vulnerable reflect and define how the West views itself as rational, masculine, and powerful (Said).

Monologue. A monologue is a speech or performance by a single actor, character, or speaker. It typically involves one person speaking aloud to express their thoughts, feelings, or ideas. Monologues are commonly found in literature, drama, and public speaking, and they can serve various purposes, such as revealing a character's inner thoughts, advancing the plot, or delivering a persuasive argument.

Burqa. The full Arabic ensemble that covers the woman head to toe, including a veil that exposes only the eyes, is known as a burqa.