

**Fadia Faqir's *Pillars of Salt* and Virginia  
Woolf's *To the Lighthouse*: A Socio-Cultural  
Perspective**

رواية فاديا الفقيير أعمدة الملح و رواية إلى المنارة لفرجينيا  
وولف من منظور إجتماعي- ثقافي

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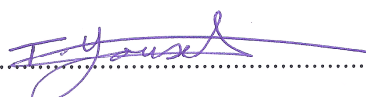


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### Committee Decision

This thesis titled “Fadia Faqir's *Pillars of Salt* and Virginia Woolf's *To the Lighthouse*: A Socio-Cultural Perspective” was successfully defended and approved on 26 / 05 / 2015

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## **Dedication**

I would like to dedicate this work to my parents for their support and encouragement. I also dedicate it to my dear brother Osama who made me what I am today .Special dedication goes to my wife for her patience and support. I also dedicate it to my supportive brothers and sisters.

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**Abstract**

This thesis introduces a socio-cultural critical study of Woolf's *To the Lighthouse* and Faqir's *Pillars of Salt* utilizing culturalism, feminism, post-colonialism, and comparative theory. It explores the cultural aspects and social conventions of the West and the East. It also examines the social relationships in both the Arab culture and the Western culture by focusing on gender roles within the society. Although the novels are set in two different cultures, yet some common similarities have been found. The social status of woman is investigated in both different cultural spheres. The patriarchal Western society portrayed in *To the Lighthouse* shares great deal of similarities with the Arab male-dominated society in *Pillars of Salt*.

In both societies woman suffers from oppression and subjugation practiced by male hegemony which is supported by the cultural norms of the society. The rebellious women against the inequity and subjugation of male dominated societies are equally suppressed by the social institutions and cultural conventions in both the Western and the Eastern communities equally. Class conflict is one of social aspects that both cultures share in the *To the Lighthouse* and *Pillars of Salt*. Virginia Woolf and Fadia Faqir have contributed remarkably in modernizing English novel. Woolf developed stream-of-consciousness technique and supported feminist movement in that time. Fadia Faqir added an innovation to the narrative technique of the novel

as she utilizes the Arabic narrative technique and Arabizes the language of the novel. This study concludes that the two novels present identical stereotype images of the superior man and the inferior woman in the Western and the Eastern cultures.

**Keywords:** Socio-cultural perspective, Feminism, Post-colonialism, Comparative Theory

## رواية فاديا الفقير أعمدة الملح و رواية إلى المنارة لفرجينيا وولف من منظور اجتماعي- ثقافي

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إشراف الاستاذ الدكتور : توفيق يوسف

### الملخص

تقدّم هذه الرسالة دراسة لرواية إلى المنارة لفرجينيا وولف و رواية أعمدة الملح لفاديا الفقير من منظور اجتماعي ثقافي إستناداً إلى النظرية الثقافية و النظرية النسائية و نظرية ما بعد الاستعمار ونظرية الأدب المقارن. و تستعرض المظاهر الثقافية والأعراف الاجتماعية للمجتمعين الشرقي و الغربي, وأيضاً تبحث هذه الرسالة في العلاقات الاجتماعية في الثقافة العربية و الغربية وذلك بالتركيز على أدوار الجنسين في المجتمع. وعلى الرغم من أن أحداث الروايتين وقعت ضمن ثقافتين مختلفتين فإن هناك نقاط تشابه مشتركة بينهما. وتناقش هذه الرسالة الوضع الاجتماعي للمرأة في كلا المجتمعين الثقافيين المختلفين, ويشمل المجتمع الغربي الذكوري - الذي تستعرضه رواية إلى المنارة- على العديد من التشابهات مع المجتمع العربي ذي الهيمنة الذكورية والذي تستعرضه رواية أعمدة الملح.

في كلا المجتمعين تعاني المرأة من الإضطهاد و الإستعباد الذي تمارسه هيمنة الذكور مدعوماً من قبل المبادئ الثقافية في المجتمع , حيث أن النساء الثائرات على انعدام المساواة و الإضطهاد من المجتمعات الذكورية تقمع من قبل المؤسسات المجتمعية و الأعراف الثقافية في المجتمعات الغربية و الشرقية على حدّ سواء. ومن احد المظاهر الاجتماعية المشتركة بين الروايتين هو صراع الطبقات. ساهمت كل من الروائيتين فرجينيا وولف و فاديا الفقير في حداثّة الرواية الإنجليزية بشكل ملحوظ, فقد طوّرت وولف أسلوب تيار الوعي ودعمت الحركة النسائية في ذلك الوقت, أمّا فاديا الفقير فقد أضافت على أسلوب السرد القصصي حيث أنها إستفادت من أسلوب السرد القصصي للرواية العربية و من تعريب اللغة الرواية الإنجليزية . وتخلص هذه الدراسة أن كلا الروائيتين تقدم صوراً نمطية متشابهة للرجل المتفوّق والمرأة الدونية في كلا الثقافتين الشرقيّة و الغربيّة .

**الكلمات المفتاحية:** النظرية الثقافية- الاجتماعية , النظرية النسوية, الادب ما بعد الاستعمار ,

نظرية الادب المقارن.

## Chapter One

### Introduction

#### 1.1 Background of the study

The impediments between the Western readers and the Middle East culture have been reduced since the flourishing of the Arab Anglophone fiction. Thus Arab Anglophone fiction becomes vital as it surpasses the necessity of translation and directly addresses the Western reader. One of the most important figures of this current is the Jordanian- British author Fadia Faqir. In 1956 Faqir was born in Jordan of a multicultural marriage. Her father is a Bedouin who descends from the Al Ajarmah tribe and her mother descends from a Circassian family in Jordan. Faqir graduated from the University of Jordan and completed her MA in Creative Writing at Lancaster University in Britain. In 1990 she was awarded a Ph.D. in Creative and Critical Writing from the University of East Anglia.

One of the most important works of Fadia Faqir is the novel *Pillars of Salt* (1997) which introduces particular themes and aspects that are reminiscent of Virginia Woolf's novel *To the Lighthouse* (1927). Faqir's *Pillars of Salt* sheds light on Arab culture. On the other hand, Woolf's *To the Lighthouse* portrays the Western culture, specially the British one. To study the two works, it is important to utilize a comparative perspective so as to study literature varieties in language, culture and nation.

Faqir's *Pillars of Salt* has been studied under the postcolonial approach which has been inspired by anti-colonialism ; hence it celebrates some cultural, social and economic impacts upon colonized nations caused by colonial powers. Although post-colonialism as a critical approach goes back to the period of World War One, it has become more prominent at the end of the seventies, when many prominent scholars of this approach such as Frantz Fanon, Gayatri Spivak and Edward Said published their influential works. Habib (2005) suggests that the argument of post-colonialism spreads out to cover issues like gender, race, ethnicity and class. He adds that " class divisions and gender oppression operate both in the West and in colonized nations" (p.272).

Woolf's *To the Lighthouse* falls within feminism which is the approach that is concerned with gender differences and the inequality between man and woman within society. Habib asserts that feminism has grown in a systematic manner as a result of women's strife for their political rights in the early years of the twentieth century. It is also worth mentioning that cultural criticism encompasses ideologies and various political issues such as gender, race and class. In addition, the methodology of cultural studies comprises not only the analytical reading but also critical observation.

Faqir is known for her interest in feminism too. She explains, in an interview with Moore (2011) that: " feminism is being taken to the Arab world and changed and mutated. Arab women are running away with it". (p.5). Faqir's *Pillars of Salt* (1997) explores the status of women who suffer oppression and inequity in the Arab society. This vision is clearly embodied

in the character of Maha, the protagonist, and Um Saad who both come from two different social spheres. Detained in an asylum, they recount their melancholic stories which portray their struggle in a male-dominated society. The major events of the novel started during the time of British mandate over Jordan. The novel inspects various cultural aspects of two different societies in Jordan: the Bedouin society which is framed by tribal rituals and traditions, and the urban society which consists of different cultures and origins. Still both societies are subcultures of the general Arab culture. Um Saad was born in Syria and her father emigrated from Syria to Jordan because of the French occupation. Maha who is the daughter of Sheikh Nimer and Maliha is a Jordanian Bedouin woman. The social formation constructs the relationship of man and woman and their roles.

*Pillars of Salt* evokes other themes such as orientalism which is present in the character of Sami al Adjnabi. In an interview with Moore (2011) Faqir explains: "I see the storyteller as an Orientalist in cahoots with both the colonial forces and indigenous patriarchy—the three work hand-in-hand." (p.7). In the preface of his book Edward Said (2003) sets out to show that the structure of Orientalism is made out of "lies and myths". He adds that Orientalism is a representation of the Western power over the East. This vision supports the idea of Faqir's depicted in the character of the story teller in *Pillars of Salt*.

Post-colonialism is also one of the themes tackled in *Pillars of Salt*. As clearly seen, from the very beginning of the novel, the British Mandate over Transjordan is the time in which the events of the novel begin. Harb,

Maha's husband, fights bravely against the Mandate to achieve independence of the society. The presence of Balfour Declaration in popular songs is a symbol of the people's discontent with colonial domination of the Jordanian society.

The author of *To the Lighthouse* (1927), Virginia Woolf was born in London in 1882. Her father was Sir Leslie Stephen who was an author, a critic, and a historian. After her father's death she moved to Bloomsbury where she met the literary figures who formed what is known Bloomsbury Group which is a group of influential English writers and intellectuals from the upper-middle class who used to share ideas and notions and work on their literary works together in Bloomsbury in London. Woolf suffered mental illness because of her melancholic course of life. Her major novels are *Mrs. Dalloway* (1925), *Orlando* (1928) and *The Waves* (1937). Woolf is considered a vital figure of English literature for utilizing the stream of consciousness in her novels and the recreation of feminism criticism at her time. Stream of consciousness is a narrative technique that is evidently deployed in *To the Lighthouse*. It pictures the flow of thoughts and sentiments which pass in the mind.

Woolf's *To The Lighthouse* has been seen by some critics as a kind of biographical statement of Woolf's specific period of life, when she went with her family to St Ives, Cornwall where Woolf's father had rented a house. Nicolson (2000) states that Woolf's half-sister Vanessa said that reading the novel's sections describing Mrs. Ramsay were like seeing her mother. On the other hand, the novel tackles cultural issues and feminist issues. In her novel,

Woolf discusses the male and female relationship in the British society and the constraints that surround woman's creativity. The family of Ramsay could be considered a simple representation of the British society of that time. Woolf was able to maneuver comfortably to evoke multiplicity of cultural and social issues in *To the Lighthouse*. The hegemony represented by Mr. Ramsay may articulate the patriarchy that existed in Western societies during the Victorian period and the early decades of the twentieth century.

## **1.2 Statement of the problem**

Descending from Arab roots, Fadia Faqir, through her novel *Pillars of Salt* (1997) depicts the Arab culture presented in Jordanian society from a feminist point of view. On the other hand, Virginia Woolf, in her novel *To the Lighthouse* (1927) draws a picture of the British society in the early twentieth century and addresses certain Western cultural issues. This study attempts to examine the similarities and the differences between the two different societies rendering distinct social, cultural and political gender issues. It is these issues which the thesis will examine with reference to the above mentioned two novels that come from two different cultures but nevertheless bear clear similarities that represent universal themes and human concerns.

### 1.3 Objectives of the study

This study aims to:

- 1- Scrutinize the cultural structures, and social conventions and traditions implied in Faqir's *Pillars of Salt* and Woolf's *To the Lighthouse* viewed from cultural critical approach.
- 2- Explore the social relationships portrayed in Arab culture and the Western culture utilizing the feminist approach, the postcolonial approach and the comparative literature perspective.
- 3- Analyze the similarities and difference of the major themes and modernistic aspects of the two novels pertaining to the Socio-Cultural perspective.

### 1.4. Questions of the study

1. What are the cultural aspects and the social conventions implied in Faqir's *Pillars of Salt* and Woolf's *To the Lighthouse*?
2. How are the social relationships in Arab culture and the Western culture portrayed in Faqir's *Pillars of Salt* and Woolf's *To the Lighthouse*?
3. What are the similarities and the differences between the major themes and modernistic aspects of Faqir's *Pillars of Salt* and Woolf's *To the Lighthouse*?

## 1.5 Significance of the study

The significance of the current study stems from the fact that it sheds light on a novel written by an Anglo-Arab writer and another one by an English writer both of whom have contributed considerably to Arab and English culture and literature respectively. The present study attempts to compare the Western culture depicted in Woolf's *To the Lighthouse* with the Arab culture portrayed in Faqir's *Pillars of Salt*, utilizing the cultural, feminist and the postcolonial approaches. Moreover, the importance of this study emanates from the fact that it highlights the picture of the relationships of man and woman, and the social relations within the community in two diverse cultural environments: the British culture and the Arab culture trying to investigate their similarities and differences.

## 1.6 Limitations of the study

As the study focuses on the cultural aspects in Faqir's *Pillars of Salt* and Woolf's *To The Lighthouse*, some other aspects are bound to be uncovered because of the limitation of the subject presented in the two novels. In addition, the findings cannot be generalized for all the novels that discuss similar issues.

## 1.7 Definition of terms

1- Post-colonialism : It is a critical approach of literary criticism which emphasizes political economic, psychological and cultural impacts of imperialism and the liberation from colonial domination.

Post-colonialism reexamines the history of colonialism from the perspective of the colonized to determine the economic, political, and cultural impact of colonialism on both the colonized peoples and the colonizing powers. (Habib, p.272)

2- Feminism: It is the accumulation of the trends and the ideologies that endeavor to protect and defend the equality of woman in economic, political, educational and social levels. Feminism has been also defined as "a movement that strives to end sexism, sexist exploitation, and oppression". (Hooks, p.1)

3-Cultural Criticism: It is an approach of criticism "that grounds literature in a larger framework which can include the economic institutions of literary production, ideology, and broad political issues of class, race, gender, and power. Hence cultural analysis tends to stress what is specific or unique – in terms of time, place, and ideology – to a given cultural and literary moment (Habib, p.276).

4- Comparative Literature: The branch of literary studies that deals with literary relationships, similarities and differences among different literatures, cultures and countries. De Zepetnek (1998) defines comparative literature as " the knowledge of more than one national language and literature, and/or it means the knowledge and application of other disciplines in and for the study of literature" (p.15). Comparative literature emphasizes both the content and form in order to make it easier to study the cross-cultural literature.

5- Stream of consciousness: It is a literary technique that is based upon the intensive flow of thoughts and feeling in a moment of time in the mind of the character. Matz (2004) describes:

"This way of thinking became the dominant one in psychology, which now saw mental life as something far more obscure and fluid, far less even and coherent, than people had presumed it to be. Thoughts built themselves up out of sensations and perceptions in precarious ways; desires were often unknown to those who felt them, or likely to change in unpredictable ways.(p.17)

## Chapter Two

### Review of related literature

This section is divided into two sections: theoretical and empirical studies. The theoretical studies section inspects theories and views concerned with cultural criticism. The second section addresses the empirical studies which tackle Fadia Faqir *Pillars of Salt* and Virginia Wolf's *To the Lighthouse* with a special focus on the comparative dimension.

#### 2.1 Theoretical Studies

Deninis Walder (1998) asserts that the majority of vital and attractive English creative writings are connected, in one way or another, to the countries which were under British colonization. He mentions that the focus of post-colonial literature is upon particular issues such as race, gender, and language. Then he moves to discuss some works of post-colonial writers such as Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*.

Tyson (1999) defines culture as the process that includes the intersection of gender, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, occupation, socioeconomic class. Tyson indicates three distinguishing features of cultural criticism. The first feature is being more clearly political since it upholds the oppressed class. The second one is the cultural criticism that uses other political theories such as Marxism and feminism in its analysis. The third one

is the cultural criticism that is concerned with popular culture. Tyson maintains that: "cultural criticism views oppressed people as both victimized by the dominant power structure (of the society) and capable of resisting or transforming that power stature."(p.294)

Exploring the concept of feminism, Hooks' (2000) believes that feminism does not mean the hatred of men but it is a movement to defend women's rights and to support oppressed women all over the world. She adds that before reacting against patriarchy, women should raise their consciousness and change their vision of the society. She asserts that man had treated woman as an inferior, and women had suffered the patriarchal thinking. She maintains that the society and the family structure represented by the parents reinforced the patriarchal notion. Hooks considers literature as being extremely important in trying to change the social vision of woman, and explains:

"Producing a body of feminist literature coupled with the demand for the recovery of women's history was one of the most powerful and successful interventions of contemporary feminism". (p.20)

Bourdieu (2011) tries to find answers for the "paradox" which incorporates the idea that the world order is respected by all even those who suffer from its oppression and inequality. He explains that the domination of man is supported by various social institutions. Analyzing the findings taken from his research on Berbers of Kabylia, he clarifies how the society is organized by the "androcentric principle" and the inequality of gender. Unlike

previous theorists, he emphasizes that the inequality between man and woman is an unconscious process powered by the social institutions and the structure of the society which shape the individual behaviors and attitudes. He asserts that the masculine domination subsides in modern societies after the awakening of the "second-wave feminism".

In his comprehensive book, Habib (2005) introduces various types of critical approaches one of which is feminism. He argues that some Arab writers adopted feminism with specific connotation of cultural concerns. He refers to Woolf as the best representative of the early twentieth century feminist writers. He argues briefly that the feminist features marked in Woolf's *A Room of One's Own* and how Woolf embodied woman's psychology and woman social status in a primarily literary frame.

Parker (2008) explains that the term cultural studies laid a great deal of focus upon the resistant part of popular cultural dilemmas. He claims that scholars of cultural studies read literary texts as related to other cultural practices, and they believe that literature is a partial image of culture. In a comparison between New Historicism and Cultural Criticism, Parker finds that Cultural Criticism tends to be more optimistic about oppression resistance.

In an interview presented by Lindsay Moore (2011), Faqir criticizes the nucleus of the Arab society which is the structure of the family, and she describes it as an "oppressive structure". She explains that the Arab family is controlled by the male figure who is the father who treats everyone in the family as unknowledgeable and he is the omniscient one. She sees in this

practice a clear example of the lack of democracy within the Arab family. Faqir explains that whenever there is a kind of external force dominates the Arab world, the conservative structure turns to be stronger. She moves to a socio-political view represented by the Story-Teller, Sami Al Adjnabi in *Pillars of Salt*. Faqir recognizes the colonial and Oriental aspects in this character since he lives on the outskirts of society and imagines things and tells lies wherever he travels.

Robyn Warhol (2012) believes that patriarchy has not vanished in the Western culture but it still dominates in society as well as in literary theory and criticism. Examining the feminist narratology theory, Warhol asserts that the classical narratology was created and developed in a male dominated "academic culture" 'with special concentration on the text rather than the context. She also points out that feminist narratology theory takes into consideration the context which includes the historical background and the cultural conventions related to the literary work. Moreover, she highlights some characteristics of the narratology theory, such as " self-consciousness about methodology" and its transparency of what questions to be discussed about the literary text.

## 2.2 Empirical Studies:

Hull (2003) views women in the Arab society as being oppressed and constrained by the social conventions. Focusing on the character of Maha in *Pillars of Salt*, he describes her as "the strongest female character", as she is fearless to express her desire toward her husband particularly in the romantic meeting with Harb in the Dead Sea. Hull adds that Faqir confirms that she might not be able to publish this novel as it is about an Arab society. It "simply wouldn't be accepted" because of the description of the man in the Bedouin society and the unbalanced relationship between man and woman and the rebellious character of Maha against Arab conventions.

The social and cultural norms of the Bedouins toward women are portrayed as fierce. In "Language and Style in Faqir's *Pillars of Salt* (2004) Bouterra argues that the Bedouin cultural norms treat woman as inferior to man. She asserts that the social inequality and injustice support man's evil attitudes toward the innocence of woman. She supports her argument with the instance of Nasra's rape by Daffash (Faqir.P.11). Bouterra comments that in a male-dominated society the cultural norms exonerate the malicious Daffash and convict the innocent Nasra. The consequence of this instance upon Daffash is giving him more freedom to recommit the crime against Salih's wife. On the other hand, Nasra's life is ruined since she is no longer virgin. In another image of societal violence Salih's wife would be slaughtered if her husband knew about it.

Poreskey (2008) examines the family nexus of Ramsay. She presents Mr. Ramsay as the patriarch of the family who controls all familial

issues, and Mrs. Ramsay as a loving and good wife. Poreskey supports her discussion with the scene of serving dinner by Mrs. Ramsay for her guests which in particular portrays the image of domestic and obedient wife. Poreskey draws attention to Mrs. Ramsay's characteristics describing her as "the mother who tries to preserve her children's bliss and knows that children never forget"(p. 80). The social setting in *To the Lighthouse* is presented clearly in Poreskey's comparative study. She also describes the attitudes of the Ramsay's friends towards the family. In her article, Poreskey aims to reveal the similarities between *To the Lighthouse* and *The Professor's House* in order to prove the existence of a literary dialogue between Virginia Woolf and Willa Cather. She concludes that the similarities prove the existence of certain dialogue between the two authors.

Throughout Woolf's novels, the aesthetic aspect of the art intermingles with the social political insights at that time. Barber (2009) illustrates that Woolf utilizes art to criticize Europe's political and social history. She describes the situation in Europe at that time as "varieties of dictatorship". Illustrating the political notion in Woolf's works, Barber asserts:

The difficulty in Woolf's art is due to an unavoidable and unending connection between the care of the individual soul and political actuality. The former, as Woolf theorizes it, is attentive to and engages with the historically constituted social practices- political, familial, education- of which one is a part , even as it

provides when successful, a means of escape from subjectifying constraints. (p.200)

Later, he points out Woolf's image of women in politics using the term "bio-politics" and examining what Woolf thinks of the participation of women in the public sphere. Barber's study aims to examine the political notion in Woolf's novels. He focuses on two novels by Woolf; the first is *The Years* and the second is *Three Guineas*. Barber defends his argument by quoting from Woolf's letter to Roger Fry which shows that there is no direct political message implied within the novel. Barber concludes that there are political views expressed by Woolf in her two novels *The Years* and *Three Guineas* including nationalism and fascism.

In her M.A. thesis, AL Fadel (2010) explores the image of woman portrayed by two works. The first one is Charlotte Perkins Gilman's short story "The Yellow Wallpaper" and the second is Fadia Faqir's, *Pillars of Salt*. Al Fadel examines the two works using the feminism approach. She focuses upon the status of women within the two societies. She concludes that women in the two novels are confined by the male-dominated society and are struggling for their own independence.

In her article, Sheridan (2011) asserts that the social construction of gender is based upon the notion that man and woman are seen as "social actors". She explains that the social construction of gender disassociates men and women as two distinct groups according to the society's cognition. In the analysis of the character of Charles Tansley in *To the Lighthouse*, Sheridan perceives him as a "representation of omnipresent ideologies" which

subjugate women in various aspects starting from domesticity and ending up with education. Sheridan imputes such behaviors to the social gender differentiations and describes them as "a destructive force". According to Sheridan, Mr. and Mrs. Ramsay in *To the Lighthouse* are a personification of the ideology of "separate spheres". She explains that this ideology is employed by sociologists to justify the low participation of woman at the beginning of twentieth century. The two characters play their social roles as man and woman according to gendered stereotypes of that time. Sheridan's objective is to highlight the sociological issue of gender tackled in Woolf's *To the Lighthouse*. In the conclusion of the article Sheridan explains that "True femininity" portrayed in *To the Lighthouse* is not subjection but a sort of social acceptance of man's and woman's roles.

In a comparative study between Faqir's *Pillars of Salt* and Salwa Baker's *The Golden Chariot*, Sinno (2011) discusses the role of art in society. Sinno refers to the incomplete exhausting journey of women in *Pillars of Salt* as a search for social justice. Sinno interprets the last scene of *Pillars of Salt* when the protagonist surrenders to the electric shock treatment in the asylum as an emphasis of the writer upon "self-reflexive" stance explaining that it might be perceived as the author's denial of the social role of art.

The preceding review of related literature clarifies the main issues often tackled in the two novels concerned. The cultural approach which will be used in the research provides a good basis for the discussion of the various aspects that will be raised in the study. On the other hand, the

empirical studies will provide the researcher with the ideas and methodologies that had been utilized to study the two novels and shed the light on the weaknesses and the strengths of certain approaches. Furthermore, they enhance the researcher's perception of the social and cultural aspects of the two novels selected for this study.

## Chapter Three

### Methods and Procedures

#### 3. 1 Methods:

The method to be utilized in this thesis is basically analytical, descriptive and comparative. It will be based upon the socio-cultural perspective, the feminist approach, the postcolonial approach and the comparative literature approach. The researcher traces the cultural aspects and social conventions in Faqir's *Pillars of Salt* and Woolf's *To the Lighthouse*. The study intends to explore the social relationships in the Arab culture and the Western culture depicted in the two novels. Tackling comparative literature principles, the study attempts to reveal the similarities and differences among the two works with regard to their major themes and their modernist aspects.

The researcher will analyze the common aspects of the two novels based upon the feminist approach, and the focus will be upon the cultural criticism approach to elucidate the aspects of the Western society and those of the Eastern or Arab society. Comparing and contrasting the similarities and differences of both cultures is another methodology to be utilized.

### 3.2 Procedures of the study

- 1- Reading Faqir's *Pillars of Salt* and Woolf's *To the Lighthouse*.
- 2-Utilizing post-colonialism , feminism and the cultural approach.
- 3-Exploring the previous studies related to the current study.
- 4-Studying Faqir's notions about the Arab culture and the influence of the Western culture on her writings.
- 5- Analyzing major themes and the similarities and differences between Arab culture and Western culture as depicted in the two novels.

### 3.3 Socio-cultural Perspective

One view of literature is the socio-cultural perspective which manifests certain attitudes and values of societies and cultures around the world including some features such as race, religion, gender, and social class. Socio-cultural perspective has been part and parcel of analyzing literary works. The nature of human beings, which imposes on them to live in societal groups, is reflected directly or indirectly in most literary works. Literature is man's creation and hence cannot be without the cultural and social foundations. One of the major functions of literature is the depiction of the social conventions and traditions in a particular time and place; therefore by examining literature diachronically and synchronically, common features of literary works could be found to characterize the image of society in a

certain era. The image drawn describes the positive and the negative characteristics of the society as it is expected to be a true reflection of that society.

The realization of the role of culture in literature and in literary criticism is reflected in the works of the early nineteenth century for instance, "way of life". Matthew Arnold in *Culture and Anarchy* (1869) demonstrates that culture plays a vital role in human relationships and affairs. He adds that it can be a useful tool to examine what is good and what is bad in any society.

As a comprehensive approach, the socio-cultural perspective expands to cover other theories such as feminism and post-colonialism since such theories study the images and issues of cultural identity which reveal some of the fundamental structures through which societies are shaped. Edmond Hall (2001) explores the postcolonial theory involving race, ethnicity, and the relation between the colonized and colonizer from the cultural perspective considering it as a subdivision of the general theory which is the title of his book "*Cultural Theory*". Also he investigates feminist theory, which is connected with gender and the subjugation of women by the patriarchal society, and considers it as part of the cultural theory, since man and woman construct society and culture which form an inseparable unity.

Nasir (2006) explains the historical background of the cultural theory and according to her; the theory is rooted back in Lev Vygotsky's works of the early 1900s. She adds that: "socio-cultural perspectives examine the roles of social and cultural processes as mediators of human activity and

thought" (p.485). Nasir combines the human activities which represent the experiences and practices of the social life with the mental activities which represent the psychological aspect of human intelligence. In general terms, socio-cultural theories tackle multiple focal themes. Hence, socio-cultural perspective is a comprehensive approach that could be utilized as an effective tool to analyze literature. It provides illustration and guidance for cultural phenomena in literary texts since it contains historical, social and other cultural components.

According to Storey (2008) culture is the accumulation of people's experiences in a certain place and of a certain era. Through studying the documents that are the residue of particular society, the features of people's culture can be highlighted and analyzed. Storey states that:

Lived culture is culture as lived and experienced by people in their day-to-day existence in a particular place and at a particular moment in time; and the only people who have full access to this culture are those who actually lived its structure of feeling. Once the historical moment is gone the structure of feeling begins to fragment. Cultural analysis has access only through the documentary record of the culture.  
(2008.p.46)

In Story's opinion, culture maintains its own structure which is shaped by the practices of people in their daily life in a certain place. The cultural structure could be what people agreed on and what they adopt of costumes, traditions and beliefs.

### 3.4 Feminism:

In its dictionary meaning, feminism is: "the policy of political, economic and social equality for women" (New-Webster.p.346). Chandra (2005) mentions that woman's studies appeared as a result of the growing interest in women's issues. He adds that the movement was part of "political project "to change women's position in the society and it aims at drawing a complete picture of the reality of the society and to fill the insufficiencies of understanding society. Chandra writes:

The feminist theory and practice have brought into notice the discursive construction of gender and sexuality and of social and domestic relations. The concern of feminist studies has been to explore the ways in which women's voices are marginalized, suppressed or appreciated in various literary works. (p.206)

That is to say, the social relations between men and women, on all levels, are to be scrutinized according to the feminist theory in order to investigate the extent of which women are subdued or subjugated in their societies.

Das (2002) asserts that feminist criticism can be reviewed through two main principles; the first one explores woman as reader or "woman as the consumer of male-created literature" (p.43). The second one explores woman as writer, "woman as the creator of literature" (p.43). He adds that "phallocentrism" is a type of feminist criticism created in literature by male writers who portray women in various manifestations. But the term

"Gynocriticism" discusses the literature by female writers who write about woman's issues.

Benstock (2002) asserts that feminism as a separate movement standing alone began in the early of 1960s, but before that date it was a part of a wider political movement to defend woman's rights. The roots of feminism go back to Mary Wollstonecraft's *A vindication of the Rights of Women* (1792). But the first wave of feminism dates back to the nineteenth century, and it challenged certain standards to advocate woman's rights in education, profession, and political institutions. The first wave shed light on the relation between "gender and genre" (p.153) in a particular literary form of the novel. Virginia Woolf is considered one of the prominent pioneers of this wave. The second wave emanated in 1960s tracing the steps of Woolf who led the first wave and concentrated on the position of woman in literature. It could contribute to literary criticism and forge a "female canon" by stressing gender differences in writing, society and culture. Subsequently, the third wave emerged in the early of 1990s during which the movement has become a distinct form of literary criticism and expands to defend woman's rights around the globe.

Barry (2002) defines patriarchy as " the cultural 'mind-set' in men and women which perpetuated sexual inequality" (p.122). The vital role of feminism is to change the patriarchal system in society. Patriarchy can be defined as a social system that organizes and controls society and it is represented by male authority. In such societies, the family is managed by the figure of the father who has authority over woman, children, and property.

The society is institutionalized by male hegemony, and is dependent on female subordination.

Reviewing the representation of woman in literary works, Barry (2002) adds that it "was felt to be one of the most important forms of socialization", since it provided the role models which indicated to women and men what constituted acceptable versions of the 'feminine' and legitimate feminine goals and aspirations"(p.122). Critics have pointed out that in the literary works of the nineteenth century woman had almost no participation in the economic field since she did not work and it was man's duty or social role to provide for the family. On the other hand, woman's role was restricted to marriage which represents her social role as a loving wife and a mother, and her happiness depended on these factors.

The above mentioned views on feminist will be drawn upon in analyzing the two novels to be discussed in this research. Other views highlighted in the review of the related literature section will also be utilized for exploring the two novels.

### 3.5 Post-colonialism

Post-colonialism is an academic discipline which is concerned with the intellectual discourse that clarifies, interprets and answers the cultural legacy of colonialism upon the colonized peoples and traces human consequences and the exploitation of indigenous people and their land. The definition of post-colonialism implies a reference to the period of time that followed colonialism and when the colonized gained their independence. Postcolonial literature represents the literary works which picture opposition and refute colonial forces and their impact upon the colonized nations.

In his book *The Location of Culture*, Bhabha (1994) relates the theory of post-colonialism to the cultural perspective as he explains that postcolonial theory describes "unequal and uneven forces of cultural representation involved in the contest of political and social authority within the modern world order"(p.171). He believes that postcolonial criticism historicizes and scrutinizes the injustice and oppression of cultural aspects drawn on various fields, and mainly on the political and social ones. Later, he illustrates post-colonialism by evoking Fanon's *Black Skin, White Masks* (1952). He discusses the colonial impacts upon the colonized and the superiority of the white over the inferiority of the black. He explains that society and man as an individual have no identity as a result of the destructive forces of colonialism. The black man, the colonized, feels inadequate in a society ruled by the white man who is the colonizer. The consequence is the loss of the native cultural identity which comes as a direct

result of embracing the culture of the mother country or the colonial culture, an act that leads to inferiority.

Parker (2008) introduces some themes which can be considered as essential components of post-colonialism. One of the important themes is that of the cultural and political relations between the colonized and the colonizer under which he explains the "cultural hybridity" that stems from sharing the knowledge between the colonized and colonizer. Then, he introduces the theme of race for which he reviews the works of some literary figures such as Frantz Fanon and includes certain ideas like slavery, identity and color. Bahaba's views as well as other relevant ideas on post-colonialism will form an adequate basis and method for the current discussion.

### **3.6 Comparative literature:**

Comparative literature is considered to be one of the methodologies to study literary texts specially those which have different cultural themes and spring from different cultural spheres. Comparative literature is a theory of study that had arisen first in the European literature then extended to American literature and later turned out as a universal cultural and literary theory.

Lenout (2006) criticizes the theory of studying the text as a separate entity and believes that the text and the context construct one unity. To understand the other cultural and literary texts, it is important to gain knowledge about the context in which they are acquainted. He adds that the

linguistic competence is vital and necessary for the success of comparative literature.

In *The Norton Anthology*, John McGowan (2001) states that comparative perspective is a wide ranging approach. As a result, it may include numerous aspects such as autobiographical evidence. He adds that comparative literature can be related to historical studies as well because it may tackle particular themes of history such as the biography of authors. He adds that:

Nothing can be more stimulating to critical analysis than comparative literature. But it may be conducted only superficially, if the comparisons are perfunctory and mechanical, or if the scholar is content with merely making the parallel citations. (p.1116)

McGowan points out that comparative literature is an interesting perspective but he recommends avoiding superficiality in the process of analysis.

DeZepetnek (1998) asserts that there are certain principles of comparative literature to follow. For example, the hypothesis of the research is constructed by "how" not by "what". Also the research shall represent a cultural dialogue by discussing themes such as language. He adds that the comparatist should be qualified and knowledgeable since studying comparative literature is related to other fields of the humanities as the social sciences. Furthermore, the methodology is to concentrate on literature within the context of culture and to take into consideration the ideological and

political approach, adding that the research might be extended to other minor fields. In addition, he believes that the inclusion of the other may lead finally to the acceptance of the otherness so the content is global rather than local, which is actually a paradoxical development in literary perspectives and theories.

Remak (1973) asserts that the French school of comparative literature is based upon "factual evidence" and the evidence of origin or of influence by tracking the roots of an idea. He adds that the function of comparative literature is to construct a bridge between the international literary works which are related in one way or another. In addition, it also helps to reach a better understanding of literature by widening the investigation in literature. In a comparison between "world literature" and comparative literature, he points out: " comparative literature, at least in theory, may compare anything that is comparable no matter how old or how recent the work(s) may be " (p.10). Remak explains that the methodology of comparative literature centers on collecting, interpreting and sifting the evidences upon which the research is based on.

Naturally, a study like the present one is closely connected with the comparative approach. The two novels selected for study will, therefore, be examined in the light of comparative theory. Thus, the similarities and the differences between the two works will be addressed in an attempt to establish the possible links between these two works and the two cultures they belong to, that is English culture and Arab culture.

## Chapter Four

### Woolf's *To the Lighthouse* and Faqir's *Pillars of Salt*

#### 4.1 *To the Lighthouse*

Virginia Woolf is considered one of the important writers of modern fiction. Since she witnessed two eras (the 19<sup>th</sup> and the 20<sup>th</sup> centuries), she was aware of the social and cultural changes which occurred in her times. The industrial revolution caused many great changes in the western society. Thus, various impacts resulted in the European community especially in the British society because Great Britain at that time was the leading industrial country in the world. One of those impacts, upon the social level, was the recession of the role of religion. People started losing faith in religion because of the technological invention and revolutionary intellectual theories at the time. Another impact of the industrial revolution was the change in the image of man, which led to the change in the construction of the British family. Man represented the working force and the one responsible for financial issues of the house and Woman is the caring and loving wife or mother.

Woolf (1882) was born into a typical British family at the time. Woolf's works were affected by her social environment and in particular, her family. Beja (1982) mentions that the setting of Woolf's *To the Lighthouse* is similar to Woolf's childhood summer residence in St Ives in Cornwall. He also suggests that the characters of Mr. and Mrs. Ramsay resemble Woolf's parents, Mr. and Mrs. Stephens. Moreover, he states that the novel is "autobiographical fiction", and argues that *To the Lighthouse* is still a novel

not a biography, and despite the similarities between the characters and Woolf's family, the author's family is not completely presented in the novel.

Some scholars believe that the novel is a sheer reflection of Woolf's family life, and a representation of the author's memories of her childhood and a description of the features of the British society at the time. For example Zwerdling (1986) argues that:

in *To the Lighthouse* Woolf tried not only to recover the memories of her childhood but also to record her tangled feelings about Victorian marriage and family life as well as about the substitutes for them that some rebellious modern spirits had proposed. (P.181)

According to Zwerdling, Woolf recalls her memories in *To the Lighthouse* and pictures man-woman relationship specially marriage and family life and expresses her dissatisfaction with the social status of women of her time.

*To the Lighthouse* was first published in 1927, and it has been regarded as one of the most important works of Virginia Woolf. The novel has also been considered one of most admired works of the early twentieth century that tackle social and cultural issues. The novel is composed of three sections; "The Window", "Time Passes" and "The Lighthouse".

"The Window" focuses upon the central female character of Mrs. Ramsay who presents the Victorian stereotypical woman. The events start before the First World War. Cygan (2010) suggests that that "The window" is basically built upon Mr. and Mrs. Ramsay but with more concentration on

Mrs. Ramsay. He states that "Mrs. Ramsay who, like Clarissa in Mrs. Dalloway, brings people together, or rather, holds a world together: the family life in question" (p.79). It is obviously emphasized in the episode of dinner during which Mrs. Ramsay performs a central role. At the beginning of this section, Woolf portrays the gender role in the reaction of Mr. and Mrs. Ramsay to James's request of visiting the Lighthouse which is across the shore. Jingrui (2014) asserts that the response of the mother is warm and compassionate as Mrs. Ramsay says that they will go there next day if the weather permits. He adds that Mr. Ramsay's reaction is "cold and rational" because he expects that the weather won't be promising. Mrs. Ramsay in this episode draws the perfect image of the passionate mother and she tries to maintain equilibrium unlike other characters. Misiak (2012) maintains that "the characters of Mr. and Mrs. Ramsay function in a contraposition to each other, whereas their mutual relationship constitutes their existence"(p.62). The characteristics of Mr. and Mrs. Ramsay are typically fit to their gender roles in their society.

During the dinner party which was not successful. Lily is deeply agitated by Charles Tansley opinion that "Women can't paint, women can't write " (p.35). Sheridan (2011) explains Lily Briscoe's reaction as acceptance of criticism but she is never to be compared to Mrs. Ramsay who willfully "subjugates herself". On the other hand, Banks wonders how a middle-class family that is not very rich hospitalizes guests. His opinion reveals the differentiation in social classes in that time. Night falls down, and Mrs. Ramsay leaves the dining party. Later, Mr. and Mrs. Ramsay sit together in the parlor. Mr. Ramsay reflects that he wants Mrs. Ramsay announce her

love for him, but she does not and discusses the weather of the next day which is not appropriate for the trip *To the Lighthouse*. Thereafter, the night draws on.

In "Time Passes" many events happen and time passes quickly. Linebaugh (2011) suggests that "the events in "Time Passes" are scattered in the void, sequenced but not connected, sped up but unevenly so" (p.40). War breaks out in Europe, and Mrs. Ramsay dies. Andrew Ramsay died in the war and Prue Ramsay died after childbirth. The summer house is deserted and the family no longer travels there. Time treatment in this section reflects an important issue in Woolf's writings because she broke the traditional chronological narration and introduced an innovative and unusual one represented by stream-of-consciousness.

In the section of "The Lighthouse" time passes slowly just like the first section. The focus in this section is made upon the second important female character of Lily Briscoe who is rebellious against the patriarchal institutions. Nunez (2013) points out that Lily Briscoe, in the dinner party, understands that to comfort and please men is a feature of the Victorian women. In the morning of the journey *To the Lighthouse*, the delay turns Mr. Ramsay nervous. He turns to Lily to feel comfort but Lily does not appear to be like Mrs. Ramsay and she looks like helpless. Lily determines to finish her painting of Mrs. Ramsay, the Victorian mother, after expedition leaves *To the Lighthouse*. Finally, in the summer house Lily finishes her final version of painting and puts down her brush.

#### 4.1.2 Social status of man and woman in *To the Lighthouse*

The image of English woman described in *To the Lighthouse* appears to be shaped by the British culture. The institutions of English society determine the woman's role which is restricted to domestic practices. Mrs. Ramsay represents the image of the ideal English woman of the early twentieth century which is most likely the image of the traditional Victorian woman. Mrs. Ramsay is the loving mother who is only concerned with her children's comfort and she is the devoted and loyal wife for her husband. Mrs. Ramsay considers family as an important source of happiness; she exclaims: "poor man! who had no wife no children" (p.61). She is a skillful housewife; she knits, prepares good food and takes a good care of her guests. Since childhood, women were raised to perform the domestic role, and the ultimate goal for them was to get married and have children to take care of. Mrs. Ramsay thinks that without a family one can never be happy. Her thought stems from the cultural background in which she was raised. She is an old woman who has absorbed the cultural concepts of the Victorian age. This explains clearly why she plans to arrange marriages for her children and for Lily Briscoe; she wants them to be happy.

Selden (2005) states that the second wave of feminism was provoked by the fact that women were "trapped in domesticity" (p.120). In *To the Lighthouse* the identity of the female character is marginalized by the dominance of the male, Lily Briscoe refutes the marriage institution which restricts her in the domestic sphere. The independent Lily Briscoe seeks liberation from male dominance and finds in art her real comfort. Also her

attitudes are the product of social conventions, as she maintains rebellious ideas about the role of woman in British society. She rejects the notion that woman can only act domestically within the home sphere. Happiness for her is not as for Mrs. Ramsay. She is insistent to prove that she's able to perform an influential role in the society, as a good representative of Woolf's view of what an English female should be. Thus, in the end of the novel when she puts the final touches on the last version of her painting, she could feel finally a complete comfort and wash away all the insecurities she had before.

In contrast, the male represents the hegemony that reduces the role of woman in the public field. Mr. Ramsay, the typical Victorian man, is the head of the hierarchy who makes decisions and controls the house. He plays a vital role in the novel, representing the superior power that places woman in an inferior status. Mr. Ramsay is the intellectual and educated person who suffers, to a certain extent, from megalomania. He is unkind with little James who wishes to visit the lighthouse, he "is lean as a knife narrow as the blade of one" (p.1). He is short-tempered and rude sometimes. For instance, his behavior with Carmichael who asks for another plate in the dining party can be described as discourtesy and rudeness. On the other hand, he enjoys a good social status in his community and he is respected and honored. On the other hand, woman lacks such status in the society. Mrs. Ramsay is confined by the domestic sphere she lives in. This contradiction highlights the oppression and the injustice that English women suffered from at that time.

The family resembles a nucleus of the society as a whole. Tadmor (2004) suggests that the English family in the eighteenth and the nineteenth

centuries consisted of two parts; the first part is the "head" or "the master" represented by the male figure who is the father and the second part is the "servants" or "the dependents". The dependents are the children and the mother. He adds that the female performs the role of the housekeeper. The English family presented in Woolf's *To the Lighthouse* can be taken as a model of all British families in that era. Mr. Ramsay is the master of the house and his eight children and Mrs. Ramsay are the dependents. Mrs. Ramsay is also the housekeeper. Mr. Ramsay has hegemonic power in his family. This situation affects woman's participation in family and society, and finally leads to the female's revolt against the patriarchal society. Mrs. Ramsay is a central character suppressed by her husband. On the other hand, other members of the family contribute to her mental evolution. In addition Mrs. Ramsay is attractive, warm-hearted, polite, and trustful and admired by those who socialize with her.

Thus it is obvious that the cultural and the social role of woman in the 19<sup>th</sup> century continued into the twentieth century because daughters of the late Victorian age reached adulthood in early years of twentieth century. Of course it is not a complete picture of women's lives in the nineteenth century, since many women had a life outside the confinements of home, family and motherhood, because various factors affected this image such as the social class and the economic situation. But the percentage of working women in that time was very low and those who worked were forced to work by their inconvenient circumstances. The status of woman has changed over time as woman became more active in the public sphere as in 1928 when woman gained political rights as the man. In 1928 "the Representation of the People

Act" gave the chance to all women over the age of 21 years to vote for the first time in the United Kingdom and before that time only women who were over 30 years old and had particular qualifications could vote.

#### **4.1.3 Man and woman relationship in *To the Lighthouse***

Woolf's *To the Lighthouse* reviews the unease and perplexity of human relationships through the presentation of the characters' consciousness, utilizing the technique of stream-of-consciousness. The relationships between men and women in the novel are based apparently upon respect, love and friendship, although on some occasions there is a sense of inequity and imbalance as man feels superior to woman. When Mr. Tansley comments that: "Women can't paint, women can't write..." (35), this shows how man perceives woman as inferior and unequal to him. Tansley detracts woman, especially Lily Briscoe who rebels against the idea that woman is inferior. Lily Briscoe and Tansley have contradictory views which can never meet, but they share a relation based upon respect since they are just guests in a friend's summer house.

Love joins Mr. and Mrs. Ramsay together although such relationship does not demolish the differentiation of gender. Still, Mr. Ramsay shows superiority over his wife. The old friendship relation that joins Banks and Lily shows a sort of understanding between male and female. Although she refuses marrying Banks, they still enjoy a good relationship. Lily enjoys her

freedom away from social institutions. Bourdieu (2011) theorizes that social institutions support the social inequality between man and woman and that Woolf pictures that the social institution of marriage depriving Lily of her liberty and independence.

A complex relationship joins Lily, the modern English female, and Mrs. Ramsay, the Victorian mother. Tilak (1980) suggests that Mrs. Ramsay is the fictional literary character of the real mother of Virginia Woolf, Julia Stephen. This explains the tender and emotional relationship between Mrs. Ramsay and Lily. If Mrs. Ramsay resembles Julia then Lily represents Virginia, the author. In fact there are numerous similarities that Virginia and Lily Briscoe share. First, they are both artists who employ their art to defend their own thoughts and ideologies. Second, they are both rebellious against British patriarchal society.

Although the characters of *To the Lighthouse* share various kinds of relationships, the communications among them are incomplete and intermittent. Sometimes they appear to be isolated in certain social situations, just like what happens to Mrs. Ramsay during the dinner party. She is completely out of place. Later, she leaves lonely upstairs, without even being noticed by the others. Her gender may affect her social position and identity. The social ideology at that time concentrates on man more than woman. Mrs. Ramsay, who attempted to show the best hospitality for her guests, is not even noticed and seen a minor.

#### 4.1.4 Social aspects of the British Community In *"To the Lighthouse"*

Ayers (2004) argues that "Woolf appears to find little cause for optimism in the theories of social progress which were available to her" (p.93). This explains how Woolf explores particular social theories in an optimistic manner. Since she adopts the ideology of defending woman's rights, she is incapable to liberate her works from social elements. In the novel there are some events through which the author expresses her social and cultural insights.

The visit to the town by Tansley and Mrs. Ramsay reveals some aspects of the British society. The novel explains the problematic issue of the social classes in the society. Tansley's father was a working man, "a chemist" who could not afford a "return hospitality" (p.9) and could not offer his son a ticket to go to circus. Tansley and Mrs. Ramsay discuss the working class problems and difficulties. The conversation between the two characters can be explained as a dialogue between the social classes of the western culture. Mrs. Ramsay shows a sense of understanding and warmth towards Tansley.

The dinner party is one of the important episodes of the novel because it portrays the social image of the English society at that time. It reflects the social order and the social chaos within the community. Many reasons cause this turbulence. For example Carmichael offends his host when he asks for another plate, and Mr. Ramsay responds rudely. Tansley reflects his cultural ideology about the position of the English female in the society, and he stimulates Lily Briscoe who does not accept his declaration. Tension

prevails over the situation. But Mrs. Ramsay is isolated and remote, and later she walks without being given attention from anyone.

Moreover, the party highlights certain social codes that construct male and female roles and relations in such social gatherings. The female should amuse the male; it is a social code of behavior. Social conventions instruct that a woman in a social gathering such as a dinner party should flatter and provide a social aid and this is her role to do. Obviously, in the novel Mrs. Ramsay performs this role but in the end she feels alienated and goes up stairs.

The period in which Woolf wrote *To the Lighthouse* was characterized by turbulence and evolution. In 1918 the First World War finished and left its influence upon Western nations. The horrors of the war and radical ideologies emerged in societies which experienced the war. In the novel, Woolf writes: "Andrew Ramsay's death (he was killed in a second by a shell; he should have been a great mathematician) Mr. Carmichael had "lost all interest in life"(p.144). Andrew Ramsay is killed in a battle. Although it is not mentioned what battle it was, the context of the novel indicates it is the First World War. Mondt (2006) states that "the Window suggests the imminent destruction that will result from war"(p.13). The change in characters' view comes after the section "Time Passes", which indicates somehow the social change after the war. "I have had my vision" (p.154) Lily Briscoe reveals. She makes her final change to the portrait, and James is no longer interested in visiting the lighthouse.

As mentioned previously, Woolf was raised in an educated family that did not pay a lot of attention to religion. One of the aspects of the Victorian era is skepticism and doubt about the existence of God. The new intellectual works of art and new innovations had deviated people from their old beliefs in that time. Mrs. Ramsay, the Victorian mother, shows how she thinks about the existence of God. In *To the Lighthouse* she announces:

It will come, it will come, when suddenly she added, we are in the hands of the Lord. But instantly she was annoyed with herself for saying that. Who had said it? Not she; she had been trapped into saying something she did not mean. (p.46)

Probably, in the past she used to use such expression "in the hands of the Lord" but now she feels that it is inappropriate since she no longer believes in it.

Nancy Ramsay maintains her father's concept about the existence of God in the universe. On the shore, the narrator reveals what she has in mind:

Brooding, she changed the pool into the sea, and made the minnows into sharks and whales, and cast vast clouds over this tiny world by holding her hand against the sun, and so brought darkness and desolation, like God himself, to millions of ignorant and innocent creatures, and then took her hand away suddenly and let the sun stream down. (p.55)

She has an apocalyptic image about God. The creatures are "innocent, ignorant" and poor, what brought them misery, sadness and even destruction

could be God. She reveals agnosticism, since creatures are "ignorant" and she is one of them. Moreover, at the end of the novel, Mr. Ramsay standing in the boat brought to his son James an atheistic vision about his father. "James thought, as if he were saying, "There is no God," " (p.154).

Zehra Yunlu (2010) in "Spiritual in *To the Lighthouse*" tries to inspect the beliefs that the characters have and the image of the spirituality depicted in the novel. Yunlu states that the concept of God is refuted in the novel. Because of the lack of religion, the characters live in a state of chaos and they find life very difficult to understand. She concludes that "Art is religion for them through which they try to find meaning in life" (195). Art becomes sacred as the novel progresses and the characters who are skeptic embrace it as alternative.

#### 4.1.5 Modernistic elements in *To the Lighthouse*

Virginia was born at the end of the Victorian era, and she was raised in a Victorian family and her father was a well-known critic and writer in his time. What makes her different and unusual phenomenon is the "newness" and modernity which she created, particularly, in English literature, and then world literature as a whole. She started as a writer in the early years of the twentieth century when models and principles of the Victorian era were dying.

Woolf believed that the traditional techniques of writing constrained the sequence of events and other vivid elements of the novel such as characters. She replaced the old narrative technique with "stream-of-consciousness" which is an aesthetic subjective narrative technique that depicts the intensity of thoughts and feelings that pass through the mind of the character in a moment of time. This technique resembles vividly the flow of psychological inner thoughts of the character. Edward Albert (1979) comments that:

*To the Lighthouse* (1927) shows a still firmer mastery of the stream of consciousness technique, and is by many accounted her finest work. Its study of the relationships of the members of the Ramsay family achieves a greater artistic unity than is found in her previous novels, and yet preserves all her usual subtlety of analysis." (p.516)

Stream-of-consciousness technique prevails in the novel because it is based upon this technique. Woolf utilizes this technique intelligently to describe the characters development through the course of events. For instance in chapter XVII of the "Window" Mrs. Ramsay catches sight of her husband frowning and the narrator describes "What at? She did not know. She did not mind. She could not understand how she ever felt any emotion or affection for him" (p.60). Then she realizes that she is helpless to speak out her thoughts and feelings. There is a difference between what passes through her mind and what she actually does, the narrator explains:

As she helped the soup, as if there was an eddy—there— and one could be in it, or one could be out of it, and she was out of it. It's all come to an end, she thought, while they came in one after another, Charles Tansley—"Sit there, please," she said—Augustus Carmichael—and sat down. (60)

It is a striking innovation that a writer could do in the early of twentieth century. Other contemporary writers such as James Joyce shared Virginia Woolf this technique, and used it as his basic narrative technique.

In addition the "interior monologue" used by the characters is related to the same technique and it is part and parcel of stream-of-consciousness. The narrator portrays what passes in the characters' minds and it comes out to be as an actual dialogue. The discussion between Mrs. Ramsay and Tasley about the circus can be a good example. The two characters do not talk physically that much but by the depiction of their inner thoughts can show a real dialogue that enhances the episode.

Woolf utilizes the third person narration in the novel, which is a common type of narration technique. But the methodology that she follows in the novel, such as the indirect speech, intensifies the mental soliloquies and attracts the reader's attention toward the character's psychological state. Such strategy enhances the focus upon the mental state of the characters rather than the process of events. For instance Woolf at the very beginning of the novel provides the reader with the feelings that James has for his father; meanwhile she maneuvers to describe Mr. Ramsay's actions and sayings artistically.

The fragmentation of time or the new chronological narration in the novel is one of the obvious modernist aspects of Woolf's writings. The novel is divided into three parts. The first, "The Window", explores a summer during which the family spends a short time with some friends in a summer house on the bay. The narration in this part can be described as detailed and informative. The second part of the novel is "Time Passes". It is the shortest part in description while it is full of events and it is the longest regarding the passage of time. Ten years pass quickly and lots of actions are recounted directly without details. The third part narrates the return of the family to the summer house after ten years of departure. This part is similar in narration technique to the first part, since time passes slowly and the narration is detailed and informative.

In the modern novel the themes do not tackle social concerns of the individual behaviors and the universality of theme related to ethics and morality has lost its place in the modern novel. *To the Lighthouse* represents

a total break from the past restrictions. One of the major themes is the transience of life. Woolf expresses through Mr. and Mrs. Ramsay that life, sooner or later, will come to an end. For instance, Mr. Ramsay explains that Shakespeare is not immortal by revealing that:

What, indeed, if you look from a mountain top down the long wastes of the ages? The very stone one kicks with one's boot will outlast Shakespeare. His own little light would shine, not very brightly, for a year or two, and would then be merged in some bigger light, and that in a bigger still. (p.26)

On the contrary, art immortalizes people. Mrs. Ramsay who died in the section of "Time Passes" would vanish into oblivion unless Lily Briscoe immortalizes her through her portrait. Lily Briscoe reflects that when she looked at the picture "presumably— how "you" and "I" and "she" pass and vanish; nothing stays; all changes; but not words, not paint". (p.133)

Another significant theme that persists during the course of novel is artist's different mentality and artist's relationship to society. Lily Briscoe is detached from all around her even female characters as Mrs. Ramsay does not understand Lily. Mrs. Ramsay reflects that: "her dear Lily, her little Brisk, was a fool" (p.36). It seems difficult to define art except by viewing it as the production of the individual, emphasizing her or him in society. The cultural circumstances and the environment shape the work of art. Woolf's expresses oppression practiced in society against woman because she lived in a patriarchal society herself and suffered hegemony of male-dominated society.

## 4.2 Faqir's *Pillars of Salt*

In 1997 Fadia Faqir wrote her second novel *Pillars of Salt* which emphasized her position among the Anglo-Arab writers and her recognition as a postmodernist feminist writer. Faqir was born in 1956 at the time of dismissal of British officers from the Jordanian army, or at the time of Jordan's independence from British rule. Her father descends from a Bedouin tribe and her mother is Circassian. Fadia grew up in a traditional Muslim family. Faqir (2007) narrates her struggle in a patriarchal society represented by her father, the head of her family who tried to force her to wear the veil more than once. She describes how merciless her father was, and how reluctant and resistant she was. The only person who was compassionate with her was her mother who "hugged her in tears" after her first visit to Jordan. The cultural features and the social conventions she lived in are reflected in her works.

In an interview with Rachel Bower (2012) Faqir highlights that the environment which the writer lives in affects his or her literary works. She mentions that "If you are born in an area of conflict, writing 'art for art's sake' becomes a luxury. However, my literary journey shows how writing political fiction can also change" (p.7).

*Pillars of Salt* is an account of two Arab women who met in an asylum and begin narrating their life experiences in Trans-Jordan during the British mandate on Jordan in the early 1920s and after the independence of Jordan. The novel is narrated by three characters, Sami al-Adjnabi the male storyteller who is a traveler and two female characters who come from

different social milieu: the Bedouin Maha and the urban Um Saad or Hanniyeh. Maha, the traditional Bedouin villager, is loved by her parents and her husband but receives injustice and brutality at the hands of her brother Daffash and other members of the tribe. Um Saad, the urban woman from Amman the capital of Jordan, is humiliated by both her father and her husband and is treated with indifference from her own sons. The storyteller recounts the tale of Maha in an exaggerated way.

Maha and her father are devastated after the loss of her mother, but her brother, Daffash shows little concern about her difficult situation. Maha possesses the unusual qualities of a woman in a male dominated society. She is tough, hardworking, brave and compassionate woman. Her father appreciates her courage and resents the disappointing son, Daffash who spends most of his time in the city with the English officers. Daffash is a womanizer who enjoys harassing and raping women. He raped the poor shepherdess Nasra who is, consequently, unable to get married because Bedouin men do not marry women who are not virgin. (Faqr:1997.p.9-15)

Harb, who loves Maha, maintains the perfect qualities that a man could have. He is honest, brave and a patriot. He marries Maha and they both enjoy married life but unfortunately not for long because Maha does not get pregnant at the beginning, which is a shameful serious issue in the Bedouin society, so she has to find a remedy. Consequently, she is taken to an old woman, Hulala, who is the folk healer, where she suffers from the prescribed medicine, the cauterizing.

Harb who fights against the mandate forces is wounded in his shoulder and after recovering, he and his colleagues are betrayed by a spy and bombarded before attacking English troops. Maha's heart is broken again for the loss of her husband. Meanwhile, she discovers that she is pregnant. After her husband's death she has to go back to her father's house. Maha takes good care of her son and her father who gets older. But when the Sheikh finally dies and Maha receives a proposal of marriage from another sheikh, things start to go bad for her. Sheikh Nimer dies, and when Sheikh Taleb proposes to Maha, she refuses in every possible way and finally ends up in the asylum. Sinclair (2012) comments: "Maha's brother Daffash is ultimately to blame for her fate and disempowerment, which is heavily influenced by his culture" (p.4).

Hanniyeh suffers similar maltreatment from the urban patriarchal society which shares the same social conventions of the Bedouin society. Her father compels her to stay at home and never leave it because he felt that she had some feelings for Mohammed, the Circassian shop keeper. Later, Mohammed proposes to Hanniyeh, but he is rejected and she is forced to marry an older ugly man, Abu Saad, the butcher. She has nine children from her marriage, and she spends her entire life serving her husband and her children. Later, her husband marries a younger woman and Um Saad has to serve them all. She is troubled and ends up meeting Maha in the asylum.

#### 4.2.1 The social status of man and woman in the Arab society:

*Faqir's Pillars of Salt* gives descriptions about the Arab family in the early twentieth century represented by two Jordanian different families: the Bedouin and the urban. In both spheres, the male figure or the father is the head of the family. The other members of the family are followers, since decisions and rules are set by the father figure. Sheikh Nimer, Maha's Father, helped in the development of Maha's character by accompanying her to hunting. He gave her the chance to work in the garden. Maha says " Since I had become a woman, he did not want me to work in the field because it was exhausting and shameful. A woman's place was in well-closed room" (p.20). Her father allowed her to take care of the field because no one would do so. After the death of her mother, Maha lives with her father and her brother who is lazy and hates her. Maha's words express that the social codes were strictly constructed to constrain woman's freedom at that time. The only suitable place for woman is not the field nor hunting or working but the home. Since early childhood, women are fed the traditional concept of woman's role and duties. Although Maha marries the one who adores her, Harb, it does not change her social role as a wife and mother. She reveals: " yes, I would sleep next to Harb every night of my life; yes I would wash his cloak, cotton shirts and drawers. I would prepare a meal for him and see his sparkling golden tooth every day for the rest of my life" (p.23).

On the other hand, the father of Um Saad subjugated her and forced her to stay at home and to marry a man she does not like at all. Her husband destroyed her completely. After long years of being a loyal servant, he

marries another woman. Though there is slight difference between the two women's living conditions, they are both subjugated by the male-dominated society. Um Saad resembles the ideal Arabian daughter, wife and mother in a society controlled by man in that time. She receives no mercy, neither from her own father nor from her own sons. Al Fadel (2010) explains that Faqir embodies Um Saad with these characteristics to highlight how brutal and violent the patriarchal society can be. She is marginalized, oppressed by her husband and everyone around her. She says: "I cannot stand happiness. I cannot bear happiness. I cannot smell happiness" (p.50). She lives in total despair. Um Saad summarizes her role as an ideal woman by revealing: "Twenty five years have passed. Like a blink of an eye. Just incubate and boil caraway" (p.130). Her role is restricted to domesticity, inside the walls of the house.

In contrast, man in both societies performs external works. In the Bedouin society, he hunts, works in the field and takes care of the sheep. In the urban society, he holds different jobs as shopkeeper, butcher and worker. At home man is the decision maker. For example, Sheikh Nimer is the decision maker who forgives Daffash for his shameful deeds, and Um Saad's father decides to marry her to the butcher without consulting any family member. Man has unlimited freedom to do whatever he likes. In the incident of raping Nasra by Daffash, the reaction of the father, Sheikh Nimer, is tepid. Maha narrates: "he said to Daffash, if you ever come near this woman again. Daffash said, I am sorry father" (p.13). Simply, Daffash, the man, is forgiven and Nasra, the woman, is to be blamed. Even the conditional sentence of Sheikh Nimer is incomplete, and the reply of the son "I am sorry" explains

that the settlement is done, Daffash is forgiven, and Nasra's life is destroyed since she has lost her virginity.

The image of man in novel is depicted from different perspectives. There are good and bad men. For instance, Daffash , Sheikh Taleb , Samir Pasha are shameful images of man but Sheikh Nimer and Harab represent the good side of the Bedouin society. In the urban society Faqir introduces only one good male character, Mohammed, about whom not much is known, except that he is a Circassian shop keeper. The other characters appear to be vicious, cruel and selfish. The Storyteller seems to be ignorant, ridiculous and a liar.

The rebellious female image is embodied in Maha, who refuses to surrender to the subjugating cultural norms she's been through. She rejects the proposal of Sheikh Taleb who is a dominant figure in his society .The Arabian society presented in *Pillars of Salt* gives hegemony to man and sees woman as inferior to the man who controls all social institutions. On the other hand, the submissive female image is characterized by Um Saad who accepts the subservience and the humiliating treatment from men in her life, since she has no other choices.

Bertens (2001) states that: "Literary representations of women repeated familiar cultural stereotypes. Such stereotypes included the woman as an immoral and dangerous seductress, the woman as eternally dissatisfied shrew, the woman as cute but essentially helpless, the woman as unworldly, self-sacrificing angel, and so on" (p.97). Faqir, as a feminist writer, combines three cultural stereotypes of woman. Nasra is seen by Sheikh Nimer as a

seductive wicked woman whereas Daffash is taken to be an innocent man, though he is really wicked and bad. Maha a rebellious woman and Um Saad a helpless or "the self-sacrificing angel". It seems that the characters of in this novel reflect the same cultural stereotypes Bertens is writing about. Moreover, the role of woman in Faqir's male-dominated society is the traditional cultural feminine role.

#### **4.2.2 Man and woman relationship**

*Pillars of Salt* introduces the Arab society represented by the Jordanian Bedouin and urban societies. The unbalanced and unequal relationships dominate the stories of both women in the novel. In the Bedouin society, the superiority of man allows him to treat women unequally. On the familial level, the relation between father and daughter is based upon the respect for the head of the family and the daughter has to respect the male's decisions and orders. Brother and sister relation has the same kind of characteristics because in childhood children are taught the social conventions that organize people's relation in a society. Maha has to respect her brother who keeps on beating her violently. Maha says: "He yanked my hair. Filthy rat, ugliest woman on earth. Do what I tell to you. All that would check the flow of insults and slaps was my father's long wooden stick" (p.21).

Husband and wife relationship is not necessarily based upon love. An exceptional case is Maha's marriage that is somewhat happy since she loves her husband and he loves her back but unfortunately he soon dies,

leaving her to the mercy of her brother. On the social level, woman is not allowed to come into direct contact with man, Maha explains that "a woman's place was in a well closed room" (p.20).

Daffash has only sexual desires for Nasra. He does not have love feelings for her. He raped her with the force of his dagger as Nasra explains that " under my breast his dagger, I swear" (p.12). Surprisingly, later, Maha discovers that Nasra has love feelings for Daffash, unrequited love relation. She reflects that " she [Nasra] was in love with Daffash, who raped her, made her life miserable, and slept with other women. By the life of Sabha my grandmother, I did not understand. For the second time Nasra had saved his neck" (p.67). This way shows that some women unconsciously support male hegemony. Daffash's vision about woman is equal to what Um Saad reveals:" Um Gharib, may Allah reward her, used to say that we are just vessels. That is how men see us. That is what men care about" (p.159).

Human relations in the urban society are complicated just as the Bedouin societies because the cultural norms are the same in both communities. Um saad is prisoned at home by her father who beats her and punishes her severely. And earlier, she has to obey her father without questioning, because her father is the patriarch of the house. Um Saad's relation with her husband is based upon the duties she has to do which are forced on her by the social institution of marriage. She has no feelings for her husband. She reveals that " when Abu Saad slept with me I kept my mouth shut. I had a husband, children and grandchildren. I got used to the lack of conversation between us. We just coexist" (p.158). The familial connections

are missed in Um Saad family. Even her sons do not respect their mother's feelings. Um Saad explains that "she [Abu Saad's new wife] would play cards with my sons, listen to English songs with them, dance and crack jokes" (p.185). Obviously, male and female relation is based upon who is superior and who is inferior.

#### **4.2.3 Social aspects of the Jordanian community in *Pillars of Salt***

*Pillars of Salt* depicts two distinct communities of the early twentieth century; the Bedouin and the urban. In both societies, the social conventions and norms are almost the same. In the novel, the Bedouin society maintains the old traditions and patrimonies of the Arab nomads who used to travel from one place to another, hunt, and enjoy the pastoral life. The concept of " Sheikh " refers to the social position that the honorable man holds among his tribe members. The Sheikh is the leader of his tribe and solves the problems of its members. Every tribal member must obey and listen to the "sheikh" and he should be present on all tribal occasions. For instance, in the biggest tribal social gathering, Maha describes her engagement that " Sheikh Talib refused to accept the cup of coffee offered to him" until Sheikh Nimer accepts to marry Maha to Harb. The speaker is the sheikh and the one who answers is the Sheik too .Maha keeps dubbing her

father as " Sheikh Nimer" though he is her father for feeling proud that she is a daughter of an honorable man. For instance she reflects: " My father, Sheikh Nimer, was still asleep, was still dreaming of my mother Maliha" (P.9). In this Bedouin society, the hierarchal tribal structure reinforces the male hegemony.

There are varieties of traditional sayings and proverbial expressions Bedouin and urban people use for different social situations. These short verses have large contexts and convey certain meanings and sometimes are ambiguous. For example, Maha reflects that" the goat would not feel the pain if flayed after being slaughtered" (p.32). She uses such an expression in her engagement party when they have to cut the slaughtered goats into pieces to cook them. The expression is usually used to express the consolation of one's misery. Maha implicitly describes woman's agony as she became senseless to feel more pain.

At the beginning of the novel Um Saad refers to a serious social problem in Jordan which is the rivalry between social classes. On first seeing Maha, Um Saad expresses her displeasure; as Maha says:" Suddenly, her small eyes met mine ."what ? A filthy Bedouin woman. Cannot you smell the stink of dung. You sleep with your sheep?" .... I am urban woman from Amman. I refuse to share the room with grinning Bedouin" (p.6). It highlights how the urban people look at the Bedouin people as superior and inferior. They feel that they are more civilized than the Bedouin. The irony is that Um Saad spends her life in cleaning the stinky boots of Abu Saad who works as a butcher in offal market and when she sees Maha, she feels classy

and superior to share her room with a Bedouin, because Bedouins are known for taking care of sheep.

When Abu Saad returned from work, I used to place his feet in a bowl and wash them with soap and water. He was a butcher...his long black boots were always covered with blood and dung of sheep and goats. By your life, I used to spend hours scrubbing and cleaning to get rid of the clinging smell. (Faqr.1997.p.121)

The social structure in Jordan in early part of twentieth century can be classified mainly into two parts: the Bedouins in villages and the urbans in cities. Both classes look at each other as inferior, the Bedouin are proud of their traditions and the urban are proud of being civilized and developed.

Faqr sets the story in the early part of twentieth century, in which Great Britain declared the mandate of Transjordan. The presence of colonialism appears clearly in the story of Maha who laments the loss of her beloved husband Harb who fought against the British forces. The mandate over Transjordan has affected the country not only politically but also socially. It has changed the lifestyle of people, especially in Amman by introducing them to modernity which is opposite to the traditional norms. In an interview with Rachel Bower (2012) Faqr explains:

In *Pillars of Salt*, I moved on to explore imperialism and sexual politics and used the oral tradition and the tradition of travel writing..... All my novels are socio-political, but I hope the tone, style and structure have evolved. In other

words, novels are windows to the world; they humanize, bring injustice to the readers' attention, and act as cultural bridges. (p.7)

Faqir sheds light on the theme of imperialism or politics in general which is included in most of her works. She also considers her novels as "cultural bridges" that link one culture to another and open new venues on other cultures and societies.

Maha describes the visit of city women to the house, stating that: "My father shuffled into the room and looked disapprovingly at the uncovered legs of the city women. His eyes did not meet mine when he said: " May Allah protect you, my sweet child" (p.40). Apparently, Sheikh Nimer, as representing the traditional norms, refuses modernity which is brought by the colonizer. Daffash is fascinated by city life and he despises the Bedouin traditional lifestyle. Daffash's father states: " My son is lured by the city lights. He navigates by false stars" (p.21). Daffash the son of Sheikh Nimer spends most of his time in the city with his friends instead of working in the field and helping his old father. Daffash resembles the negative image of the colonized that foolishly facilitates the mission of the colonizer. Maha recounts:

The dark woman asked in her watered down Arabic: "what about officer's friends?" Daffash twisted his moustache and said, staring at the blonde "what about me? I've spent a long time translating old Arabic inscriptions for travels. " He patted him on the shoulder and said:" You are an open

minded Arab. Not many of them around."....He whispered,  
 "we just want your approve and acceptance". (p.41)

The inferior and colonized Daffash asks only for the acceptance of his superior colonizer. By such description Faqir refutes the collaboration with the British mandate. She shows how humiliating the treatment of the colonizer can be even for those who cooperate with them. Maha reflects that: " Daffash was stupid" (p.41), later she declares that " I don't talk to servants of the English" (217).

People are affected by the lifestyle that the colonizer has brought. the cultural impact upon the urbans also is uncovered by Um Saad's story. Um Saad says:

She would play cards with my sons listen to English songs with them, dance crack jokes. The way they used to dance was strange. They would shake all of their body and jump up and down like monkeys. Very different from our smooth swinging and swaying. (p.185)

People at that time, specially the youth, were fascinated by the "false star". One of the social features, Faqir evokes as an effect of colonialism, is listening to the colonizer's music and dancing like them.

The novel also invokes a clear sense of Oriental life. Faqir states clearly in an interview with Moore (2011) that the character of the Storyteller represents the Orientalist, and then she adds:

The Arabian Nights was studied by Orientalists and is seen by some as representative [of Arab culture], but it is not. So I created a narrator who paints a picture of Arabs that's not true. [...] *The Arabian Nights* is held in such esteem in the West but it's rarely read in the Arab world. What you do have there is a strong oral culture (p.7).

Edward Said (2003) states that Orientalism is based on "lies and myths" as the Oriental works do not represent the truth about the East. The narrator of Faqir's novel echoes the criteria of Said's. Sami Al Adjnabi, the narrator of Maha' story, fabricates the real story and falsifies it to come up with a different story than the original. Faqir sees in the Storyteller a clear message to the West about Orientalists.

Religion is considered as an important aspect of the oriental society. In Arabian societies Islam and Christianity are the wide spread religions. In *Pillars of Salt* the main characters come from Islamic societies. In the Bedouin society religion is presented mainly by the character of Imam who works at the mosque. The incident of the death of Sheikh Nimer uncovers important social facts. After the members of the tribe washed the dead man's body to pray for him, Maha reflects that: " I did not know how to pray so I aped Tamam who kept hissing incomprehensible words, bowing, kneeling, then prostrating" (p.181). Obviously, it shows the recess of religion, since young Maha is ignorant about the most important issue in her religion, the prayer. Sinclair (2012) expresses that Maha's faith starts to wane after the death of her husband.

In Addition, cursing occurs repeatedly during the course of novel which indicates the rejection of religion. When Nasra gets angry for seeing her best friend in pain after cauterizing, she starts cursing and says: "curse their religion" (p.97). Nasra seems to have no religious knowledge; she is just uneducated simple shepherdess. Also in the story of Um Saad when Um Saad is taken to Sheikh to heal her, she meets an old woman there who comments: "Don't you know that Sheikh Saleem is a crook? Curse your religion" (p.186). The old woman is saying a truth about that Sheik who does fraud and takes women's money.

When Maha comes back from the Dead Sea where she hides to protect herself from marrying Sheik Talib, Imam Rajab the religious representative says: " may Allah damn the sinner. You are all infidels" and adds " stone the sinner" (p.216). Maha is a sinner because she only slept outside her house and is considered as a prostitute. In Islam the judgment of stoning is only for married women who commit the sin of prostitution. In this incident Imam Rajab himself is ignorant of religion because to condemn someone of prostitution in Islam one should bring four witnesses who saw the crime with their bare eyes; otherwise, he/she is to be convicted of lying and to be punished.

Moreover, Imam Rajab uses verses from the holy Quran on wrong occasions, as when he stimulates Daffash to beat Maha. Maha describes: "Imam Rajab winked at Daffash and reminded him " Allah said in his Wise Book, "beat them up" (p.217). According to IslamWeb (March, 2015), the interpretation of this verse concerns the wife who does not give her husband

his rights, and it is the final solution to beat woman because in Islam both the husband and the wife have rights and duties toward each other.

In addition, the title of the novel has a religious connotation related to the story of the prophet Lot and his wife who disobeyed him and looked back, and then God punished her and turned her to a pillar of salt. While Maha was hiding trying to spend her night in the Dead Sea, she says: "I would try to forget about the pillars of salt under the water and the vipers lurking in the dark" (p.212). Maha refers to people of Lot who were sinners and were punished by Allah.

#### 4.2.4 Modernistic Aspects in *Pillars of Salt*

Faqir's skill is reflected in the incorporation of her message in an interesting novel that uses post-modernistic aspects such as her use of the narrative technique. The narrative technique to a certain extent is multiple, as it uses more than one point of view. Faqir utilizes three narrators, and each narrator has a vital role to do. The Storyteller is not trustworthy since he makes up events. The other two narrators are Maha and Um Saad who are locked in an asylum. They tell their past life stories to each other which refer to their connection with their unhappy past that is uneasy to forget. They narrate past episodes and bring those events to life again. Depending on the theory of Freud "talking cure", their narration gives them the chance for feeling relief.

Faqir utilizes the Arabic conversational style in the language of the characters. The language is close to Arabic dialect and everyday conversational speech. In an interview with Moore (2011) Faqir states:

One of the things I wanted to do with *Pillars* was to push the narrative and the English as far as possible, to Arabize it... to create something similar to what Indian authors have achieved—a hybrid English. Therefore I used the oral tradition and the Qur'an and *the Arabian Nights* in the storyteller's section. (p.7)

Faqir attempts to create a new narrative technique by "Arabizing English". Also she refers to the Indian English as an inspiring tool.

### 4.3 Woolf's *To the Lighthouse* Faqir's *Pillars of Salt*: A Comparative Perspective

Woolf's *To the Lighthouse* (1927) discusses the cultural and social subjugation of woman. It portrays the struggle of women searching for identity in a patriarchal society in Great Britain, while Britain was the Great Empire that colonized most countries around the world and among them was Transjordan. Woolf describes in *To the Lighthouse* the English middle class society from which she came. Woolf benefits from her own life experience to write the novel. Many critics believe that the family in *To the Lighthouse* Woolf's family, specially the characters of Mr. and Mrs. Ramsay who are similar Mr. and Mrs. Stephens with slight differences.

Similarly, Faqir's *Pillars of Salt* (1997) goes back in time to treat the same core issue of Woolf's *To the Lighthouse* which is the oppression of women in the Arab male-dominated society in Jordan of the early twentieth century when woman was treated as the property of her husband. Women did not have the freedom to perform their role in society as men did, because they were totally submissive to men all their life even if men were worthless or mean, like Abu Saad and Daffash. Faqir draws some autobiographical images in *Pillars of Salt*. The Bedouin society of Maha is similar to Faqir's father's tribal society. And the society of Um Saad is the society in which Fadia Faqir was raised. In her article "As soon as the fresh air touched my hair I began to cry", Faqir(2007) describes how she herself was oppressed and subjugated by the patriarchal society she was in and how her father forced her to wear the veil although she begged him to allow her to uncover

her hair. Also, Faqir was deprived from her son after getting divorced. The two societies depicted in pillars of salt are familiar and close to Faqir's life.

*To the Lighthouse* is based upon two female characters: Mrs. Ramsay and Lily Briscoe. Mrs. Ramsay shares main characteristics with Um Saad in Faqir's *Pillars of Salt*. They are both obeying wives and good mothers and oppressed by their husbands. Lily Briscoe also has similarities with Maha in *Pillars of Salt* where Maha rebels at the end of the novel against the patriarchal society. Lily Briscoe also rebels against the male-dominated society as she refutes marriage. The consequence of their rebellion is that they are both left alone.

By the same token, the character of the mother in both novels seems to have numerous similarities. In *Pillars of Salt* the mother of Maha, Maliha, is the most beautiful woman in the tribe. She is also loving, loyal and passionate woman. Sheikh Nimer misses her and keeps on remembering her through the course of the novel. On the social level, when Maliha passes away, she leaves a gap in the structure of the family which causes a state of chaos among family members. In *To the Lighthouse* Mrs. Ramsay is praised for her beauty most often especially by male characters such as Tansley. She represents the Victorian woman who is compassionate, loyal and loving mother. In the first section Mrs. Ramsay maintains a sort of order. Kaehele and German (1982) believe that "Lily realizes that Mrs. Ramsay has created order and permanence out of chaos just as Lily tries to create stability in art" (p.202). In "Time Passes" Mrs. Ramsay passes away and leaves a gap after

her in the family. Her husband misses her the most. Lily Briscoe while painting expresses the importance of Mrs. Ramsay in her portrait.

The character of the father in *Pillars of Salt* has two main images the first is in the story of Maha. Sheik Nimer, Maha's father, is the head of his family who is respected at home and in his tribe. However, he is uneducated and supports patriarchal conventions although he shows compassion to his daughter and wife. The second is Hanniyyah's father who is a tyrant. He subjugates Hanniyyah brutally and destroys her life and future after forcing her to marry Abu Saad who ruins her completely. In *To the Lighthouse*, Mr. Ramsay represents the stereotype of the husband and father of the middle-class in the late Victorian era and early twentieth century. Unlike the character of the father in *Pillars of Salt*, Mr. Ramsay is a well educated man and intelligent. On the other hand, he is a tyrant and autocrat just like the image of the Jordanian father in the early twentieth century that Faqir depicted in *Pillars of Salt*. Mrs. Ramsay subjugates Mrs. Ramsay by limiting her thoughts and life in domestic chores. He does not respect her feelings and even curses her: "Damn you, he said" (p.31).

One of the important themes in both novels is love which is connected to the institution of marriage. In *To the Lighthouse*, Mr. and Mrs. Ramsay love each other. Paul Rayley and Minta Doyle get engaged and fall in love. In *Pillars of Salt*, Sheikh Nimer shows how much love he has for his dead wife by keeping on remembering her beauty. Maha admires Harab and marries him and becomes obsessed with him.

Woolf introduces the theme of death in "Time Passes". Prue Ramsay dies because of a disease connected to childbirth. Mrs. Ramsay dies unexpectedly and her son Andrew is killed in a battle. Woolf gives two images of death: the first is on deathbed and the second is in war. Similarly, Faqir has the same representation of death in *Pillars of Salt*. Maliha and her husband Sheikh Nimer die on deathbed while Harab, Maha's husband, is killed by a shell. The theme of war in both novels refers to the destruction and annihilation that drags humanity towards savagery, brutality and turbulence. In *Pillars of Salt* war is carried out so as to gain independence from the British mandate but in *To the Lighthouse*, there is no clear reason for war. Sinno (2011) compares colonialism to patriarchy and the results of war are close to those which emerge from the hegemony of patriarchy. She writes:

The damage inflicted by colonialism and patriarchy on Jordanian society in Faqir's novel is evident through the personal losses suffered by many, as well as through Jordan's public losses during and after the British mandate period. (p.77)

Both patriarchy and colonialism are detrimental to Jordanian society. Characters such as Maha, Um Saad and Nasra are the victims not only of their patriarchal society that gives authority to men over women but also to the colonial rule that enables such figures as Daffash to gain power over women. Were it not for his collaboration with the British soldiers from whom he derives power and influence, Daffash would not be able to exercise

such an authoritative role in the novel and such an influence over the novel heroine, Maha.

## Chapter Five

### Conclusion and Recommendations

#### 5.1 Conclusion

After the analysis of particular thematic issues in Woolf's *To the Lighthouse* and Faqir's *Pillars of Salt*, this chapter is devoted to shedding the light on certain important notes, results and conclusions. Although the two novels are set in different social cultural environments, multiple similarities have been found. For instance, both writers belong to feminist movement. Faqir as a feminist writer of the twentieth first century is influenced by Virginia Woolf who is one of the major founders of this approach.

*To the Lighthouse* is one of Virginia Woolf's great novels which tackle important social and cultural issues of that time. Woolf *To the Lighthouse* modernizes not only the technique of the novel writing but also the social status of woman as it asserts the position of woman in art and society. It pictures the Western society, particularly, British society which has suffered the hegemony of the males over a variety of cultural and social institutions. In the late years of the Victorian era and the early of twentieth century, woman had almost no contribution in the public sphere because patriarchy, supported by the state legislations, deprived woman of having her own societal identity.

Woolf combines two different images of woman at the time. The first one is rooted in the Victorian era and the other is the rebellious woman against social norms. She also instigates women to demand and fight for their

rights and to participate efficiently and effectively in society. Women "can write and paint"; they can perform their vital cultural role since they have the ability to do so. Lily Briscoe at the end of the novel proves that woman can do what man thinks she cannot. This underscores Woolf's vision of woman in British society as strong enough to perform her social duties.

*To the Lighthouse* explains how hegemonic and dominant the husband is within family institution. Mr. Ramsay dominates the entire family and expects obedience from all members. Woman's role is not restricted to household duties as Charles Tansley in *To the Lighthouse* believes. Because the patriarchy, that Tansley seeks, operates to maintain the gender inequities which are necessary for the domination of man. Domestic activities and their results support the subordination of woman as the domestic sphere represents the major participation of woman which leads to maintain patriarchy itself. The institution of the household is one of the most crucial structures of patriarchy.

*To the Lighthouse* explores question of gender in English middle class community. Skillfully, Woolf portrays the relationships on various social levels. Basically, patriarchal discourse prevails in the novel. Furthermore, the social gathering represented in the dinner party is an important aspect of English middle class society which characterizes the relations among middle class people. The diversity of the characters invited to the summerhouse is to provide a sample of the society and the lack of harmony among the characters emphasizes the state of chaos within the Western society at that time.

*To the Lighthouse* represents innovative modernist techniques that Woolf contributed to literature. One of the great innovative modernist aspects is the stream-of-consciousness technique, whereby Woolf attempts to picture the characters' consistent flow of internal thoughts. Woolf reframed the dialogue among the characters utilizing stream-of-consciousness. Direct speech is scarcely apparent in the novel and the third person narrator utilizes indirect discourse to explore in the characters' minds drawing for the reader a vivid image of the psychological state of the character.

*Pillars of Salt* presents a great contribution in the Anglo-Arab fiction which enlightens cultural and social Eastern features of Arab societies. Faqir's *Pillars of Salt* tackles various cultural issues within the Arab society. She critiques the status of woman in the Jordanian patriarchal society of the twentieth century. Also it discusses the British mandate and its catastrophic consequences on people. Moreover, the novel responds to Orientalism that portrays unreal images of the East.

As a feminist writer, Faqir repudiates patriarchy as a social and cultural system because it deprives woman from her own basic rights. She describes the misery and anguish in which Arab woman lives. In *Pillars of Salt* Maha and Um Saad suffer a lot because of the social system they live in. since childhood they were both raised to perform the obedient servant role, and the irony is that, after all, they are rewarded by confining them in an asylum. Both novels suggest that since childhood, man and woman are raised to perform their own different roles as male and female in male-dominated society. Moreover, woman is raised to be wife and mother and to do domestic

chores because of her weakness. On the other hand, man is seen as strong and raised to be dominant and to do an outdoor role.

The social relationships in the Arab society, especially that between man and woman, is described in *Pillars of Salt* as unbalanced and unequal. Man is seen as superior and woman as inferior since he is at the top of the hierarchal social system and the others are dependents or servants. Sheikh Nimer addresses Daffash " you are the master of the house. No one will disobey you" (p.174). Although Daffash is mean and treacherous, Sheikh Nimer describes him " the master of the house" because he is just a man.

The major themes discussed in *Pillars of Salt* are the oppression and the subjugation of woman in the Arab society which are imposed by the cultural and social institutions. Another theme is imperialism represented in the novel by the British mandate over Transjordan. Faqir depicts two images of the relation between the colonizer and the colonized. The first is represented by Daffash who works as a servant for the British generals and the second by Harb, the patriotic man, who fights and sacrifices his soul for the liberation of Jordan. Yet, another theme is Orientalism which is mainly represented by the Story Teller. Faqir made an apparent innovation in novel narration by utilizing Arabic style of narration and Arabizing the language of the novel. For example, Maha addresses her father : "By my mother's soul, I will compensate you, father," I said. He ran his flaky fingers over my plaits and said," may you never see a bad day, Maha" (Faqir, 1997).

As it has been seen, both writers seek to fight phallocentrism in society. Both Western society and Arab society have suffered from

patriarchal hegemony although there are disparities between the two cultures. The hierarchal social system in both societies looks similar; man dominates and in this he is supported by cultural norms and social institutions. In comparison with British society, the roles of man and woman in Jordanian society seem to have the same features: Woman is confined to domestic chores and man does the outdoor duties. The Western culture and Arab culture both see man as superior and woman as inferior and the relationship between them is based upon this vision.

The time tackled in both novels is almost the same, although there is a gap of fifty years between the two authors. Both novels are influenced by their author's own private lives. In *Pillars of Salt*, Faqir describes Bedouin society and urban society, both of which she experienced and had connections with. *To the Lighthouse* is a biographical novel by Virginia Woolf which depicts many aspects of her own life. The two writers have contributed a great deal to modernizing the narrative technique of the novel. Woolf developed the stream-of-consciousness and added new stylistic technique to the third person narrator by allowing the narrator to explore the characters' thoughts and emotions. Faqir merged the Arabic narration style into English novel writing techniques and used literal translation from Arabic to English for characters' direct speeches to emphasize Arabic identity in the novel.

One of the major differences between the two works that have been discussed is that Faqir's *Pillars of Salt* tackles important thematic issue of post-colonialism and the novel can be categorized among post-colonial texts

as well. Orientalism is referred to by Faqir in the novel to present a counter image of the Orientalist and to convey the reality of the East. On the other hand, Woolf's *To the Lighthouse* does not tackle such issues of post-colonialism and it can be classified among modernistic texts.

The social gathering in *To the Lighthouse* is represented mainly by inviting friends to the summer house and dinner party where men and women are gathered on a dining table. This social image explains the Western cultural conventions and lifestyle. In *Pillars of Salt*, social gathering is depicted in the wedding rituals where men are gathered in tents drinking coffee and women are separately gathered in the house. This gender separation is emphasized by Arab social and cultural norms.

On the level of social structure, *Pillars of Salt* introduces two main social spheres in the Arab world. The first is the Bedouin sphere and the second is the urban one; each side has its own particularity, even though basic social and cultural norms are common for both. *To the Lighthouse* presents particularly British middle class community and hints to other classes in society. Woolf's *To the Lighthouse* combines class discrimination problem with gender discrimination resulting in cultural social system representing life and gender roles in the early twentieth century England.

## 5.2 Recommendations:

Finally, this thesis has dealt with the socio-cultural perspective in Faqir's *Pillars of Salt* and Woolf's *To the Lighthouse* and focused on feminism. On the Western level, numerous literary resources are available in various forms that tackle modernism in Woolf's texts and especially *To the lighthouse* but still there is more to study about cultural perspective in Woolf's works. As a contemporary Arab-British writer, Faqir has not received the amount of critical attention she merits. Even though this study has attempted to shed light on the socio-cultural perspective in *Pillars of Salt*, still the subject may require more investigation and can be studied from other perspectives.

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