

SPECIMEN FORMAT FOR THESES OF MONTH

Faculty : School of Arts and Social Sciences

Department : Department of English

Branch/ Area: : English Literature/Arab and Iranian Literature

Sub Subject Heading: : =

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Title of the thesis : Trembling Tenors of Life: A Psycho-Social
Approach to Trauma in Select works of
Contemporary Arab and Iranian Women Writers in
English

(i) In Roman Script -

(ii) In roman Script -

Nomenclature of Degree: : PhD

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Name of Supervisor : Dr. S. Kalamani

Designation of Supervisor : Professor

Centre/department/school in which research was conducted : Department of English/School of Arts and Social
Sciences

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Abstract within 300 words:

Scheherazade, the legendary storyteller of *One Thousand and One Nights*, wielded her voice to defy death as a potent metaphor for how contemporary Arab and Iranian women writers like Azar Nafisi, Basma Abdel Aziz, and Jokha Alharthi use literature to resist silencing and marginalization. Just as Scheherazade's tales ensured survival, these authors navigate trauma, identity, and resistance amid Western-dominated literary landscapes.

This thesis analyses Nafisi's *Reading Lolita in Tehran*, Aziz's *The Queue*, and Alharthi's *Celestial Bodies*, examining how female protagonists endure trauma from personal and political contexts, including the Iranian Revolution, post-Arab Spring authoritarianism, and Omani colonial legacies/slavery. Characters' identities and resilience emerge amid broader socio-political forces, with trauma manifesting in intellectual repression (Nafisi), enforced silence under military rule (Aziz), and transgenerational domestic wounds (Alharthi).

Drawing on trauma theories from Cathy Caruth, Shoshana Felman, Dori Laub, and others, the study probes gender-specific responses to trauma, including navigation of class, politics, and gender roles. It explores how literature, fine arts, and crafts alleviate mental agony, enabling characters to reclaim agency against societal control. Through a postcolonial lens on trauma studies, the thesis reveals how these writers challenge colonial and patriarchal narratives, carving space for indigenous voices.

Ultimately, the works reflect societal traumas while forging spaces for healing and empowerment. This research underscores literature's role in resisting trauma, reclaiming identity, and driving personal-political change, enriching global understandings of women's narratives in Arab and Iranian contexts.

- **Major objectives:**
- To analyse how trauma shapes the identity and resilience of female protagonists in contemporary Arab and Iranian literature

- To explore how women's socio-political expression and its psychological impact are portrayed in the selected novels
- To contribute to the understanding of psycho-social dimensions of trauma in literature and its implications for feminist and post-colonial studies
- To analyse if the responses to trauma are gender-centric
- To analyse how literature, fine arts and crafts can help in alleviating the mental agony of women due to trauma

D) Hypothesis: The present study, through the lens of trauma, explores the multifaceted struggles of Arab and Iranian women against oppressive regimes and cultural constraints shedding light on their transformative resilience.

i) Methodology: A psycho-social approach, making use of the contemporary theories of trauma for the in-depth analysis of characters. This qualitative research adopts formatting techniques and regulations that comply with the *MLA Handbook* Ninth edition

iii) Findings:

- The women characters in the works under study are not passive victims of suppression; they are of a higher realm, with the potential to meet any kind of torture and endowed with extraordinary levels of tolerance
- These writers give testimony in front of the World about the sufferings and human rights violations against women under the authoritarian rule, seeking help and refuge in their agony.
- The responses to trauma are gender centric
- Literature, Fine Arts, Crafts and other forms of creativity ensure the resilience of women.
- They invest in their innate abilities as women by giving care, compassion and love for humanity and by developing relational resilience even with strangers. Humans can withstand suffering and trauma only with nurturing, warmth, and understanding

Examiners

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