

Research paper

## WOMAN'S WRITING IN MOROCCO: REACTION OR CREATION?

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### Abstract

The diversity and multitude of women's literary production in Morocco clearly demonstrate the evolution of this writing not only in the Maghreb but also worldwide. It breaks away from traditions and reflects a growing awareness of a distinct writing style, even though there are still unexplored areas. The stakes of this literature represent a field of reflection inspired by the instruction of a marked literary value. Analyzing this theme in various articles allows for the identification of some main issues in this literature: positioning itself at the forefront of literature by placing the cause of women at the heart of their productions, expressing themselves through writing in a language that has proven to be more liberated and daring than writing in Arabic, without fearing parental constraints. This literature gives significant space to desire as well as the expression of suffering. It portrays the experiences and emotions of women in a way that challenges societal norms and empowers them to assert their voice and identity in their literary creations. The focus on issues related to women's lives and their struggle for empowerment and recognition has led to a thriving and vibrant literary scene that continues to gain recognition and appreciation both locally and internationally.

### 1 Introduction

Women's writing is a complex field of study that merits special attention, as it is the fruit of a reflection that requires a different reading and analysis, advocating freedom through an assumed commitment. Indeed, from the outset, it has been a targeted object of criticism and writing. It is a statement of position in a society where "literature has been in the spotlight with good Y chromosomes"(1). It reads like a break with the past and a renewal towards an enchanted future. It opposes archaic mentality and takes on a

feminine sensibility that has been able to rival male production. For a woman, writing means escaping to a world where voluptuousness is combined with dreams, in order to find herself and reach out to others. It reads like a flight, like an exile: "Writing is the only way to escape nostalgia. (...) memory can be painful; memory of a lost land of childhood and adolescence, of an identity in search of partial truths behind multiple masks"(2).

The subject of female identity in Ghita El Khayat's work cannot be addressed without mentioning Moroccan women's literature and the issues at stake. While Maghrebian literature was born out of historical and political conditions, women's literature is the result of a reflection on the inner reality experienced by women. It is the result of a quest for identity:

That's why writing with other women is so important; because these whispers side by side will forever prevent us from regaining the silence that imprisoned our compatriots just a few decades ago. All around us, the terrifying illusion of the virtue of obedience and silence is returning. Like a viper that throws its head back when it dies, women and men who love humanity, that's why we write, and we write more and more to prevent stupidity and violence from filling the void. We write to "make" beauty, to awaken people's desire for light, love, innocence, perhaps to give hope against the absurd, against the idiosyncratic logic of practice. This is my dearest wish as a woman, as a Moroccan and as a writer [2].

For a woman, writing is a necessity, a means of liberation, an outlet, a therapeutic process in the form of public confessions.

Talking about women's literature allows us to frame the theory of work and study it in a defined context, especially as it can be read as a break with the established classical order. We wonder how it becomes a tool for breaking through, and in what sense this writing takes on a whole culture of the feminine world, a whole sensuality, a whole expressive gaze?

This work highlights the complex dialectical relationship between writing and reading, which influences and shapes individual and collective identities through the exchange of ideas and experiences. For a long time, literature was a male affair, with women confined to a maternal and conjugal role. It wasn't until the 1980s that the first women's writings began to appear, and women began to emerge from their mute shadows. This literature sees itself as a lucid awareness and, above all, a stance on the situation of women.

Women's literature and its issues are a key focus of our research, and we can only endorse the evolution and the demands of this literary production. It helps us to understand ourselves, to discover ourselves and to reflect on ourselves. Kateb Yacine said that "a woman who writes is worth her weight in powder".

## **2 Methodology**

The procedures used to develop knowledge in this field of research in the Moroccan context after the 90s are manifold. In our case, we opted for documentary methodology, drawing on various documents dealing with the subject of women's literature from official and university sources: periodicals, specialized reviews and library issues. To achieve this, we first resort to thematic division, looking for the common theme of women's literature and its issues, then analyzing how it has been approached by the authors, and finally connecting the whole in order to interpret them.

## **3 Different topics of women's writing in Morocco**

Women's literature tackles a variety of themes through bold writing that goes beyond taboos: it is endowed with an erotic dimension that speaks of the body, love and sensuality as an expression of transgression; transgression of all writing codes, an expression of freedom. Through words, the author reveals women's feelings and leads to the detection of "literary fantasies".

by Fatima Mernissi, a pioneer of women's literature in Morocco, is known for its thematic richness: collectivism, female solidarity, the embellishment of the body and its independence, the imagination of the future... Ghita El Khayat, who sees writing as a means of liberation, her work reads like a feminist promise, a space for the expression of desire, her desire and that of other women.

The body' is undeniably present in women's literature. Indeed, it wasn't until Mernissi and El Khayat that literature experienced a turning point, revealing the fantasies and anxieties of Moroccan women, who had previously conceived of the female body as a fixed object, a polemical subject and an object of study.

The theme of sexuality remains restrictive in literary production and only emerges with modern feminist writing, especially with Mernissi, Guessous and Dialmy. The sexual motif is explicitly present in feminist production, even going so far as to speak of the sexual or erotic register. Love, too, is a crucial theme with a primordial role in female emancipation; an effective means of transformation and liberation from all constraints. Without forgetting the theme of motherhood, an essential part of Maghrebian women's literature, and an element that contributes to the construction of female identity.

## **4 Results and discussion:**

Documentary research has shown that Moroccan women's literature is positioned between dream and reality, in which women writers express their desires, their refusals, as well as their pleasures. It's an expression of hope, but also of protest. Tahar Ben Jelloun writes in Harrouda (1973): "It was necessary to speak out in a society that does not want to hear it, and denies its existence when a woman dares to speak out.

Assia Djebar confirms that writing is an act of rebirth for women, enabling them to access through the bill of words a world where they can be free and fulfilled: "In the literary world,

the pens of the women of Maghrebian literature are like living fountains that transcend imposed boundaries, raising muted voices and imbuing the page with their rich essence." [3] In this way, Assia Djebar's writing is an act of rebirth for women, enabling them to access through the bill of words a world where they can be free and fulfilled.

Fatima Arraoui's 1967 novel "Tomorrow the earth changes", the first Moroccan novel written by a woman, is an innovative title for a better future. In fact, the main challenge facing women's writing in Morocco, as in all Maghreb countries, is a process of resistance and struggle, as the following quote confirms: "It's clear that in the Maghreb, women's literature is part of a process of writing resistance and combat; a peaceful, serene and responsible resistance, subject to the imperious power of imagination and words, whose ultimate aim is to unfold in the historical process of a quest for self, recognition, revaluation and a dignified presence in the societies to which these women belong." [4]

The choice of writing in French is a conscious one, and not without meaning; this language is a tool for overcoming and for historical-political emancipation. Indeed, it is perceived as a language of deliverance, of decolonization, and above all as a tool to avoid imprisonment: "They penetrate the field of writing by gloriously and painstakingly opening a channel in words, they carry the memory and words of others for a long time, transforming whispers into affirmations, and show the world a unique gaze with clarity and enthusiasm. [5]. For a Maghrebi woman, to write is to exist, to live and to free herself: "Maghrebi women find in fiction, poems or life stories the ideal space to explain themselves, to free themselves, in short, to exist" [6].

Another issue is that of desire; feminine desire, which has long been repressed in a patriarchal society, now finds itself treated and even esteemed. Behind this contestation, this flight and escape, the woman writer dives into her feminine universe to speak of a long-oppressed desire. B. Didier agrees with us when he characterizes women's writing as the writing of desire, a particular and strangely violent force that has arisen from the recent liberation from models and constraints, and without challenging men's writing, reveals new and singularly subversive domains as women's desire becomes more victimized and repressed by society [7].

Women's literature is that space where words and phrases unfold and free themselves to say and be said. to free the imagination, to escape, to access a world where enjoyment is combined with dreams. Women's access to writing has contributed to a change in perceptions: "Since women began writing without hindrance, something has changed: the conception of the written word and literature is no longer the same" [8].

In other words, this literature can be read as a literature of suffering and struggle, a struggle against obscurantism and the confinement of a being lived under the mercy of a man: "it's a literature full of suffering, sorrow and accusation, it evokes strong feelings about the disadvantages experienced by the Moroccan female sex, leaving readers with sympathy and even indignation" [9].

In short, it's a literature that's far from tranquil, a literature of denunciation of a system that denies the reality of women's rights. The "I" is only a plural "I", speaking on behalf of all

women, with the same degree of eagerness to reveal, to lay bare their opinions. It revolves around one main axis, that of lived experience: Moroccan women's literature focuses mainly on themes of suffering, expressing dissatisfaction and existential malaise. This type of writing is far from being an easy activity, but it is reassuring, above all as a means of denouncing injustice and all forms of oppression against the legislative power.

Literature, by its very nature, is undergoing an identity crisis, calling out to a society that is looking to the past while asserting itself. These basic thematic axes prove a strong link between reality and social context [10].

Boudjedra confirms this painful implication between writing and suffering, even considering that writing is merely a reaction and externalization of this discontent on the part of artists and writers: The act of writing presupposes that you suffer. For me, an artist is a suffering being, and this suffering is always present and cannot be stopped or overcome [10].

## **5 Conclusion**

the world of French-speaking Maghrebian writing was traditionally invaded by men, and the emergence of women's writing is a challenge rather than a pleasure "Since women have been writing without hindrance, something has changed: the conception of the written word and of literature is no longer the same". (9) Her writing takes on a rhythm that moves from unveiling to revolution, while involving the female character at the center of this quest for identity: "The Maghrebi woman finds in fiction, the poem or the life story the ideal space to explain herself, to free herself, in short, to exist"(12)

The 'I' of women's writing is a plural 'I', reflecting the experiences from which they draw the sincerity of their writing. women writers recount the suffering and dreams of other women. they write to escape annihilation and express liberation and fulfillment.

## **Acknowledgement**

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