Breaking the Silence Through Verse

In this groundbreaking comparative study, Dr. Estabraq Yahya Mohammed examines how two influential poets, Anne Sexton and Nazik Al-Malaika, wielded their craft as weapons against gender-based violence. Through meticulous analysis of "Her Kind" and "To Wash Disgrace," this work reveals how female poets from distinctly different cultural backgrounds confronted similar struggles against patriarchal oppression. As femicide rates continue to rise globally, from Latin America to rural India, this timely research demonstrates poetry's power to break silence and challenge social injustice. The author masterfully weaves together feminist literary criticism and postcolonial theory to illuminate how these poets crafted their resistance through verse, offering crucial insights for scholars, activists, and readers interested in gender studies, comparative literature, and social justice. This compelling work not only bridges cultural divides but also serves as a urgent reminder of literature's role in confronting gender-based violence and discrimination in our contemporary world.

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Preface

This study arises from an urgent necessity to address the overwhelming, yet frequently rendered invisible, realities of violence and stigma that shape women's lives across diverse cultural contexts. By placing Anne Sexton's "Her Kind" (1960) in comparison with Nazik al-Malaika's "To Wash Disgrace" (1949), this book aims to dismantle the artificially constructed divide between Western and Arab feminist thought, revealing how patriarchal systems use stigma, femicide, and the policing of the New Woman to suppress female agency. Sexton and al-Malaika worked in very different sociopolitical contexts—the former caught between the conformity of postwar America's suburban consumers and the psychiatric pathologisation of its women, the latter in the shadow of honour codes and nationalist upheaval in postcolonial Iraq—but their work converges in a relentless critique of misogyny as a global disorder.

At a moment when feminist movements around the world navigate the difficulties of cultural specificity and transnational solidarity, Sexton and al-Malaika provide a model of transcultural comparison. Their poetry cannot be subsumed into regional oddities; it puts femicide into a structural crisis of women that crosses borders. The witch that Sexton burns for refusal to conform to domestic ideals and the disgraced woman al-Malaika describes, murdered to "cleanse" familial honour, are not just victims but signifiers of mechanisation toward the universal logic of patriarchal violence. Despite these differences of language and geography, their voices resonate with a shared sense of urgency that calls for intersectional solidarity.

This book is constructed in recognition of the differences and intersections of their work. Early chapters provide a theoretical framework, invoking Diana Russell's femicide framework, Kimberlé Crenshaw's intersectionality, and Erving Goffman's concept of stigma to explain the cultural sanctioning of violence against women. Sexton's confessionalism, which upends the myth of suburban bliss through raw structural self-abnegation, and al-Malaika's pioneering Arabic free verse sundered classical meter to sculpt critiques of honour-based oppression. This project owes its existence to the intellectual legacy of feminist literary criticism and postcolonial theory, which have highlighted the importance of politicising women's voices over the years. I express profound gratitude to the English Department at Babylon University's College of Education for Human Sciences for their support and the courageous environment that fosters interdisciplinary and cross-cultural studies.

As femicide rates rise around the world — from the Desaparecido of Latin America to the "witch" burnings in rural India — this study urges its readers to view

violence against women, in all its forms, as a transnational emergency. Sexton and al-Malaika remind us that poetry is, while not merely a passive reflection of suffering, a weapon we possess against silence.

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Introduction

The study conducts a comparative analysis of stigma, femicide, and the representation of the New Woman in “Her Kind” and “To Wash Disgrace,” shedding light on the often-overlooked themes in these contributions to world literature. Both poems seek to give voice to their feminine themes by personifying women as separate agents. More than the mere reporting of a crime, femicide highlights the border that divides the world between men and women and demonstrates a power that has become almost indistinct from the law. The woman in these two poems is situated and displaced by stigma. Matching as it does the discourse on internment, stigma can be placed alongside the comments on women; it shows, concerning the objectives set earlier, the extent to which women's subjectivities are treated as autonomous. The purpose of this paper is to investigate how stigma and femicide intersect with the position of the New Woman as an indicator of present and future situations.

Through analysing the poems of two distinct poets and their respective portrayals in each country, this research paper aims to ascertain the precise location of feminism in both the United States and Iraq. The contrasting and comparative examination of the feminist perspectives on stigma, femicide, and the concept of the "new woman" in Anne Sexton's poem "Her Kind" and Nazik Al-Malaika's poem "To Wash Disgrace" will be undertaken. Sexton's personal experiences may have influenced her perspective on the detrimental influence of societal norms on women. In her works, the female protagonists are depicted as voiceless and vulnerable victims who are coerced into conforming to the societal roles that have been established. In "Her Kind," Sexton challenges the negative stereotypes associated with modern liberated women, presenting a positive portrayal of these individuals.

Conversely, Al-Malaika was able to serve as an inspirational figure for women due to her prominence within the modernist movement. She could think independently, was widely recognised as an authoritative figure in her field, had many published works, and demonstrated a refined command of the English language. Her achievements were particularly noteworthy within literature, an area historically considered to be the exclusive domain of men. In Arab culture, women were taught to suppress their emotions and thoughts, but Al-Malaika advocated for those who believed they lacked the ability or should not express themselves. Her poem "To Wash the Disgrace" vividly depicts the brutal murder of a young woman in a rural community, with the narrative focusing on three distinct perspectives: the victim, who

desperately cries out for her mother before meeting her tragic end; the perpetrator; and the women of the village.

Background and Context

Women have always been regarded as the weaker gender in society, left to follow the men of the family, be it fathers or husbands. Ultimately, they have been deemed as second-class citizens just to be misled and coerced into the fiercer male-led societal structure. With strong patriarchal systems, men have taken control of society to separate women from their rights and independence irrationally. Hence, it becomes imperative for women to be vocal about their detriments in a male-dominated society.

Feminism, transmitted from one culture to another, took intricate forms to accentuate the ill-practised stigmas of female-centred violent attitudes and behaviour towards women, justification of cruelty by society, and representation of women as the oppressed gender in the literary world. Brave and bold enough to speak against injustices, women have tried to emancipate themselves from this maleficent control in life and literature. Bearing a close resemblance despite existing cultural differences, the simultaneous emergence of the rebels against patriarchy can be acknowledged with the strong expressions of Anne Sexton and Nazik Al-Malaika through their poems "Her Kind" and "To Wash Disgrace".

The poems "Her Kind" and "To Wash Disgrace" evoke the universal experience of stigma and injustices related to feminicide while addressing broader issues of identity and community. Although the Middle East and the United States comprise vastly different societies, both have harboured shameful histories of stigmatising women and leaving them to suffer within the patriarchal systems they could not escape. Women have involuntarily internalised these societal pressures, resulting in fears around identity and prejudice. In doing so, both poets voiced the common belief among women that any individual New Woman represented all New Women.

The second wave of feminism, initiated in the 1950s and 1960s, empowered female poets to express their deep-seated issues through their work. This period has been characterised by the Civil Rights Movement in the United States, the rise of World War II feminism, and other international women's movements. Essentially, both are victims of the first and second-wave feminist and labour movements. Both learned to do "honour's work" in a society that would not offer it. Both female writers go on to provide graphic examples of stigma and shaming on both micro and macro levels. For critics, the personal narrative serves as a microcosm for women's macro issues. With global violence against women evolving, this comparative study appraising cultural

backgrounds can be an eye-opening medium to spread awareness about the cause. Sexton and Al-Malaika's dissimilar approaches have been rigorously analysed to progressively support and address their views on shared issues.

The 1920s in the West marked the birth of the "new woman," a term used to describe women who sought independence from patriarchal institutions. Accompanying this new freedom, however, was a different sense of stigma. In their incessant struggles against patriarchal oppression, women made hard choices that led to their illegitimate thoughts and actions. Thus, there arose an unwelcome stigma attached to freedom. This complicated relationship between the "new woman" and stigma in the West is illustrated in Sexton's "Her Kind." In such similar circumstances, there rose the new woman and the unwanted stigma in the East, with a significant example in Iraq. In this case, this relationship is illustrated by Al-Malaika's "To Wash Disgrace." On the one hand, a new woman in the cradle of traditionalism is projected in both poems. Nevertheless, in pursuit of modernity, such a woman experiences some unwished-for stigmas (Patterson, 2013).

Anne Sexton and Nazik Al-Malaika are eminent modernist female poets. They were born and raised in a Western or Eastern patriarchal society and were highly affected by their own social and political circumstances. Partly in response to the rise of the new woman, the Vietnam War in the U.S., and post-colonial turmoil in Iraq, they voiced their thoughts through poetry, which addressed female issues and projected the female psyche. While much scholarship has been devoted to the feminist readings of either poet, little has been done on a comparative study of the two. The marriage of the two poets and their contextually rich poems enables it to investigate the universal female psyche and paths for liberation, thus filling a gap in the scholarship.

This study attempts to understand the cultural ambience, political background, and socio-political stigmas associated with it. These two poems are different in culture and thinking, but the issues raised are the same, where a stigma can be associated with a negative idea. Both of the poems talk about femicide, which is the killing of women because of their gender.

Significance of the Study

The recent incidents in both developed and underdeveloped countries are widely reported, including gang rapes, honour killings, and mass regulations of women that aroused attention and scandal across the world. Unfortunately, violent acts against women have persisted and will continue in everyday life. There appears to be a shadowing statement echoing, “You are born a woman? It is a shame!” As a Burqa

woman stated, “The women are not just the victim; they are also the vicious ones.” The James Kavanaugh poem “God is a Woman” also remembers, “no one reminds you of the constant consequence of being born a woman / but the scars left on your body.”

Despite the pride expressed for being born a woman, there is a collection of memories of hurt, shame, scars, and stigma left that is beyond pure pain. The theoretical framework attempts to discuss honour, shame, stigma, femicide, and the new woman from two perspectives through comparative literature, including the fixation on shame culture and how female ideology diverges/ fuses in the East and West.

Anne Sexton and Nazik Al-Malaika, respectively. The works of Anne Sexton (1928-1974), one of America’s best-known female confessional poets, delve into the hidden fear and agony of being psychologically sick and socially stigmatised, resulting from her experience of depression and madness through the feminist poem “Her Kind.” Similarly, Nazik Al-Malaika (1923-2007), known as the Mother of Modern Arabic Poetry and a pioneering female poet in Arabic feminist literature, depicts the fear and agony of being socially shamed and considered disgraceful as a woman through the feminist poem “To Wash Disgrace.” This invisible fear is portrayed as leading to femicide. A growing trend in global feminist poetry by female poets has addressed the stigma of mental illness or disgrace as something that prevents a woman from being accepted in society and keeps her away from the new woman being confidently liberated and free.

This type of poetry identifies the invisible problem. It reveals the agony and sorrow of the struggle of being psychologically sick and stigmatised or socially disgraceful for the sake of sexuality and humanisation outside the family’s and society’s consent. It presents cries for help and calls for attention, understanding, and a widening perspective towards this issue. While much contemporary feminist poetry focuses on resistance, it is equally important to highlight the plight of those women who cannot safely resist or escape view. Public awareness and understanding are the first steps of societal and cultural changes.

Chapter One

Setting the Stage: Cultural and Historical Contexts

Post-war America and the Confessional Poetry Movement

One of the most transformative periods in American history was the aftermath of World War II, when economic prosperity, Cold War anxieties, and shifting social norms reshaped society. At the same time, mainstream culture in the 1950s embraced a facade of suburban homogeneity while an underground counterculture began to question classical values during that decade, including gender roles, mental health, and individualism. This dichotomy between public facade and private turmoil also found a powerful outlet in the Confessional Poetry Movement, which arose in the late 1950s and 1960s. Anne Sexton (1928–1974) and contemporaries such as Sylvia Plath and Robert Lowell became significant voices of this movement, using their poetry to reveal the sordid truths of mental illness, female experience, and family strife.

Confessional poetry turned its back on the impersonal formalism of midcentury modernism and invested in autobiographical frankness and emotional exposure instead. M.L. Rosenthal, who first coined the term in 1959, described it as poetry that "breaks away from the decorum of the age" by revealing "intimate, sometimes unflattering facts about the self" (Rosenthal, 1959, p. 25). The rise of the movement coincided with postwar America's growing fascination with psychoanalysis and the breaking down of social taboos around mental health. For women writers such as Sexton, this literary mode also provided a vehicle to critique the oppressive demands of femininity and domesticity that Cold War culture promoted (Ostriker, 1986, p. 9).

Sexton's poetry interrogates madness, motherhood, and mortality, including her pathbreaking debut *To Bedlam* and *Part Way Back* (1960) and Pulitzer Prize-winning *Live or Die* (1966). Her poems often referenced her psychiatric treatment and suicidal ideation, breaking down the boundary between art and therapy. In "Her Kind", Sexton takes on the persona of a witch, conflating society's ostracisation of mental illness with historical pogroms against women: "I have ridden in your cart, driver, / waved my nude arms at villages going by" (Sexton, 1960, p. 16). This metaphorical revolt against the hate of genderism reflects a so-called "poetry of authenticity," where female poets "seize language to … give voice now to the hitherto voiceless self (Ostriker, 1986, p. 9).

Critics, such as Diane Middlebrook, argue that because Sexton was willing to expose her pain, she turned private suffering into a public act of defiance against the stigma of mental illness (Middlebrook, 1991, p. 78). Nevertheless, her work also faced

criticism for its apparent narcissism, with some scholars charging Confessional poets with commodifying trauma. However, as Steven Gould Axelrod writes, Sexton's poetry "does not merely confess; it implicates the reader in the cultural conditions that produce such suffering" (Axelrod, 1990, p. 112).

Sexton's legacy is her ruthless questioning of the self amid a constraining sociohistorical space. Her work resonated with a generation struggling to reconcile postwar idealism with personal alienation and influenced later feminist and postmodern writers. As Middlebrook observes, "Sexton's poetry became a mirror for the secret lives of American women" (1991, p. 203) that pushed back against the myth of domestic bliss that undergirded the 1950s.

Postcolonial Arab Feminism and the Iraqi Literary Renaissance

Iraq experienced a cultural and intellectual revival in the mid-20th century, exemplified by the Iraqi Literary Renaissance, a part of the larger Arab Nahda (renaissance). This moment of decolonisation and national identity formation included an engagement with the imperial residuals and led to a rethinking of the basis of Arab cultural modernity. Postcolonial Arab feminism arose within this context as a subversive discourse that interrogated and subverted patriarchal and colonialist stories. Nazik al-Malaika (1923–2007), a pioneering Iraqi poet and intellectual, emerged as a seminal figure in both the free verse poetry movement and the articulation of a distinctly Arab feminist consciousness.

Postcolonial Arab feminism, theorised by academics including Margot Badran and Ferial Ghazoul, rejects Western feminism's universalising gaze in favour of a framework that highlights the interrelationships between gender, nationalism, and anti-colonial struggle. Ghazoul notes that Arab feminist writers "negotiated identity through a dual resistance: to colonial oppression and patriarchal hegemony" (Ghazoul, 2004, p. 72). This ambivalence is manifested in al-Malaika's work, which fuses critiques of gender inequality with declarations of cultural sovereignty.

The Iraqi Literary Renaissance of the 1940s–60s aimed to modernise Arabic literature, breaking away from classical forms in a move epitomised by al-Malaika's co-founding of the free verse (al-shiʿr al-hurr) movement. In her manifesto, Issues in Contemporary Poetry (1962), al-Malaika bemoaned the rigidity of traditional Arabic poetic structures, calling for both rhythmic and thematic innovation to express "the anxieties of modern existence" (al-Malaika, 1962, p. 34). This literary revolution accompanied broader socio-political changes in Iraq, such as anti-colonial activism and discussions about the role of women in the new nation-state.

Al-Malaika's poetry, including her iconic 1947 poem Cholera (al-Kulira), fuses formal experiments with feminist content. Written in response to a violent epidemic, Cholera employs visceral imagery to critique social decay while allegorising the "sickness" of gendered oppression: "*In that dark night while the terror of the void / The faces of the children pale lanterns"* (al-Malaika, 1947, trans. in Jayyusi, 1977, p. 612).

Her later collections, such as *Sparks of Ashes* (1949) and *The Bottom of the Wave* (1957), take women's marginalisation head-on. *Elegy for a Woman of No Importance*, she mourns the loss of female subjectivity: "*They buried her in the earth's neglect, / and her name vanished like a sigh" (al-Malaika, 1957, p 89).* Researchers such as Moussa Mahmoud observe that al-Malaika's writing "resituates the female voice as a literary and political act," in which women's struggles are situated in the postcolonial project of national renaissance (Mahmoud, 2011, p. 116).

Although al-Malaika's contributions are recognised, some, including the critic Miriam Cooke, warn against equating literary innovation with explicit feminist activism. Cooke (1996, p. 54) argues that al-Malaika's preoccupation with "universal humanism" sometimes dulled her commentaries on gender. On the other hand, al-Malaika's very existence within the male-dominated literary elite "disrupted patriarchal spaces, asserting women's intellectual authority," counters Bouthaina Shaaban (Shaaban, 1991, p. 93). Al-Malaika's legacy lives on in modern Arab feminist thought and literature. Her blend of poetic innovation and gendered critique exemplifies what Nadje Al-Ali (2000, p. 167) calls "embedded feminism," a form of resistance rooted in cultural specificity rather than imposed frameworks.

Why Compare Sexton and Al-Malaika?

Reading the trajectories of Anne Sexton and Nazik al-Malaika side by the side reveals the webs of feminist thought, literary innovation, and global militancy against structural misogyny. While based in different cultural contexts—Sexton is writing from postwar America, and al-Malaika from mid-20th-century Iraq—both writers embark on a transcultural dialogue that speaks to West and Arab feminist discourses, counters patriarchal violence through formal experimentation, and universalises femicide as a crisis that calls for intersectional solidarity.

Sexton and al-Malaika dismantle the false binary separating Western and Arab feminisms, revealing shared struggles against patriarchal oppression. Sexton's "Her Kind" (1960) critiques the pathologisation of women who reject domestic roles, framing mental illness and witchcraft as metaphors for societal erasure. Similarly, al-

Malaika's "To Wash Disgrace" (1949) interrogates honour-based violence, where women's bodies symbolise familial purity. While Sexton's confessional mode reflects second-wave feminism's focus on personal trauma, al-Malaika's work aligns with Arab feminist critiques of colonial and patriarchal systems that conflate female autonomy with cultural decay. Their poetry resists essentialist narratives, such as Lila Abu-Lughod's (2013) caution against "saving Muslim women" (p. 47), by centring agency rather than victimhood. Both poets reject cultural relativism, instead foregrounding universal patterns of gendered violence: Sexton's witch hunts and al-Malaika's honour killings emerge from systems that police women's bodies to maintain patriarchal order.

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Formal Innovation: Confessional Poetry vs. Arabic Free Verse

Sexton and al-Malaika radically reinvented literary forms to express feminist opposition. Sexton's confessional poetry, which featured raw introspection, broke midcentury taboo surrounding mental health and female sexuality. The refrain "I have been her kind" in "Her Kind" converts individual suffering into collective testimony, a signature of the power of confessionalism to politicise private pain (Middlebrook, 1991, p. 124). Meanwhile, Al-Malaika pioneered Arabic free verse (al-shiʿr al-hurr), breaking away from classical meter to critique social hypocrisy. The fragmented syntax and visceral imagery of "To Wash Disgrace"—"the rot of disgrace festers beneath the skin"—echoes the disintegration of women under honour codes (al-Malaika, 1949, trans. Ghazoul, 2004). Both poets also weaponise form, Sexton's errant stanzas leave a trail of psychological disintegration, while al-Malaika's free verse deliberately disrupts poetic tradition to condemn gendered violence. Their innovations suggest how literary experimentation can destabilise patriarchal norms, making the personal political across cultural lines.

While they are culturally specific, both poets reveal femicide—the killing of women because they are women (Russell, 1992)—as transnational. Sexton's witch, killed for resisting domesticity, is also reminiscent of al-Malaika's speaker, killed to "purify" family honour. Such acts do not occur in a vacuum; they are embedded in a

system sanctioned, in part, by cultural narratives, witchcraft hysteria, honour codes, institutional indifference, medical pathologisation, and legal impunity. Their writing calls for intersectional solidarity because femicide might take different shapes, as it is the product of universal patriarchal logic. Kimberlé Crenshaw's (1989) intersectionality framework applies here: the overlapping oppressions of Sexton's mental health stigma, a "blemish of character" in Goffman's terms, and al-Malaika's tribal stigma (Goffman, 1963) elucidate how multiple oppressions can compound vulnerability. By situating femicide as local and global, their poetry calls for coalitions across cultural ruptures, challenging feminists to treat misogyny as a transnational formation.

A comparison of Sexton and al-Malaika raises feminist literature beyond the politics of cultural exceptionalism to highlight how writing can forge solidarity through shared modes of resistance. Their transcultural exchange builds bridges across disparate feminist traditions, their formal initiatives reinvent literary activism, and their universal themes make the yearning for intersectional interventions against femicide audible. In al-Malaika's words, the poem "*is a mirror that shatters lies*" (1962, p. 74), the truth just as much embodied in Sexton's unflinching confessionalism. Together, they disassemble the patriarchal myths, insisting that gendered violence, while culturally inflected, is a global crisis that requires collective reckoning.

Theoretical Framework

Stigma and Femicide in Literature

Stigma in literature has not been covered as extensively as other manifestations of stigma. The data available defines stigma as the aspect of an individual's identity that is detrimental to their social status. People living with acquired diseases, displaying different sexual behaviour, non-standard physical abilities (or exhibiting strange behaviour), and any other divergence from the norm can be subjected to stigma. The impact of stigma can be either external or internal. External stigma follows a predictable pattern, as described and legitimised in cultural narratives. On the other hand, internal stigma refers to the impact of this external stigma on the individual's identity. This can be achieved through internalised oppression, or the individual can attribute the stigma in question to just an aspect of themselves rather than the core of their being.

Stigma is a type of discrimination that results in a person being marginalised. It has very real consequences for people socially and psychologically, often causing the stigmatised to internalise the harmful messages society sends about people like them.

The socially disapproving gaze aimed at "women who have been raped, women who have escaped a murder attempt, and women who may have transgressed in sexual and marital relationships" is perilous and damaging. This shunning by society repeatedly manifests itself in both the works of Al-Malaika and Sexton, noting the works in which it is taken up.

In the Middle East, studies of femicide have been rare as an independent discipline. Femicide is used productively in comparison by activists and researchers in the region to show not merely their own culture of shame or reasons, but to enlarge the context and importance of their research to more global human rights and regional protection against violence related to honour and shame, according to a report on violence and femicide. It cites a member of a mission regarding the unreported number of femicides, arguing, "That is not unlike genocide—that for many women whose lives are expendable, we will never know. We will never know their names, mark their passing, or acknowledge their value as living, breathing equals amongst us."

Women are the perfect example of people who have been stigmatised throughout history, usually through literature. Each of these women, using their national and temporal framework, excels in illustrating through language and form the process of attribution of stigma. Nevertheless, attribution is not a one-way street. By employing narrative processes and prosodic techniques, they also underline how the individual can keep their identity that may have been expressed in stigmatised language without being silenced in an act of resistance or protest.

From Femicide to Honour Crime: Feminism in Context

Femicide is a common theme in literature, characterised by extreme violence against women. It is a rising phenomenon and poses a threat to society. Women become victims of both emotional and physical violence, and these threats escalate quickly to the level of murder. In response to femicide in society, many literary works created during such historical periods reveal meaningful content. The female characters who appear in literature are psychologically, emotionally, and physically disturbed by femicide, which has been deemed by some as America’s fastest-growing epidemic. Men who dominate social life have created domestic and societal problems that victimise women since prehistoric times. A significant number of literary works address polygamy, forcible prostitution, and other issues related to women, and yet the content has not suffered a loss of reception.

Femicide describes any violence committed against a female victim; in the United States, roughly a quarter of all homicides yearly are committed against female

victims. Feminists argue that marriage and the family provide unique settings where men are more likely to resort to physical violence against women. Specifically, a man's will experience violence when he needs to dominate and control her (Taylor & Jasinski, 2011, p. 343).

Feminist explanations of violence highlight the connection between the cultural ideology of male dominance and the structural forces that restrict women's opportunities for advancement. According to Yodanis (2004), men can use violence to keep women out of or in subordinate roles in male-dominated institutions, ensuring that men retain authority over these settings (p. 657). Consequently, violence against women stems from the traditional family's cultural inheritance of treating women as second-class citizens. To rephrase, violence against women is just one symptom of a framework of male dominance that persists through time and across cultures (Taylor, Rae, & Jasinski, Jana L., 2011, p.344).

According to Campbell, the root causes of partner homicides are disputes over money, power, and other forms of control. Horrific violence is the inevitable result of a culture in which men have historically claimed exclusive rights to women and where men's desire for dominance has led them to treat women as property. Femicide conveys that many men consider the right to dominate their female partners a privilege worth protecting at any cost (Campbell, 1992, p. 111). The persecution of witches amounted to a systematic attempt to kill women. They were the most significant institutionalised murders of women in human history. Catalunya was one of the places in Europe where the persecution was most common and severe, and some historians estimate that as many as 60,000 women were killed there. We must expose what occurred so that it can never happen again.

Although the thought of contemporary witch trials in the West may sound ridiculous, the truth is that we currently inhabit a peculiar era rife with political, social, economic, and environmental tensions. Pujol assures us that similar persecution could occur under the right (or wrong) circumstances unless we learn from our past. The sufficiency of women in politics is still a contentious issue worldwide. To demonstrate her feminist viewpoint, Anne Sexton uses a variety of creative approaches in her poem "Her Kind," which she infuses with a forceful tone. Sexton uses bold and dramatic imagery in "Her Kind" to show her feminist principles.

There are a few references to witch trials or witches in general in "Her Kind." A clear allusion to witchcraft is made in the opening line of "Her Kind," which reads, "I have gone out like a possessed witch" (Sexton 1). When Sexton mentions a witch, the mind immediately conjures up an image of a witch. Women have always played the

role of witches, and it is not a coincidence that this has happened. All kinds of reasons were given for women to be accused of witchcraft during the Salem Witch Trials. If a woman appeared strange or went out alone at night, she would likely be charged with being a witch. Sexton employs some metaphorical devices in this poem. The complete witch metaphor represents any woman who does not fit in with society. Using the phrase "lonely thing, twelve-fingered, out of mind. /A woman like that is not a woman, quite," Sexton hints at the fact that she is not a woman (Sexton 5- 6). This statement implies that any woman who appears out of character is not a real woman since she does not fit the stereotype. Sexton continues, "A woman like her has misunderstood. /whining, adjusting the design" (Sexton, 13). For centuries, women were expected to take care of the housework.

In the other context of feminism in Iraq, femicide is termed in the literature as a valuable instrument for comprehending the social construction of honour and honour-killing concepts. It can both reflect and challenge the status quo of these concepts. In a patriarchal system, older women are granted additional privileges, which Payton refers to as the masculine role imposed by patriarchal structures, enhancing the systemic patriarchal control mechanism. In its feminine sense, honour refers to traits such as passivity, perseverance, obedience, virginity, domestic sphere, and servitude associated with a woman. When viewed in its more masculine form, it has dynamic and positive attributes, such as energy and generosity. A female's honour cannot be restored or regained; once lost, it cannot be retrieved at any time.

In honour killings, it can be challenging to get the full story because the victims and perpetrators are often members of the same family. Because the victim is seen as bringing shame to the family, the family and society support the killer and keep quiet for various reasons, including the desire to hide the killer's name or the emotional toll of their losses. More can be learned about how patriarchal power systems are maintained using Payton's ideas. It is easy to see how Payton empowers women who have mastered internalising their gender roles. A more nuanced perspective of social construction is provided by Judith Butler, who examines gender roles in particular and further confuses the idea that there is a self "who accepts and exchanges' positions within the complex social demands of 'game' modern life. 8 This self is not merely "outside." However, the ascription of interiority is a publicly regulated and sanctioned type of essence fabrication, Butler argues in her paper.

Social discourse constructs male and feminine roles through actions and words, and there is no such thing as a distinct ego or internalised act. It means that gender is not an objective reality but a performative act with certain social connotations. Butler argues that "what is called gender identity is a performative accomplishment compelled

by social sanction and taboo" and that it is not universal because: "gender connects with racial, socioeconomic, ethnic, sexual, and regional modalities of discursively produced identities." Thus, it is difficult to detach "gender" from the intersections where it is usually formed and perpetuated (Butler, 1990, p. 6).

Replicating a colonial concept that Western imperialism was necessary to free Muslim women from their oppressive traditions,' men being, especially, the 'fundamentalist "Other,' is a consequence of drawing a sharp boundary between Muslim men and women. The use of Muslim women to justify the War on Terror is analogous to a colonial logic Spivak sums up as 'white men defending brown women from brown men (Spivak 271). He asserts that the "strange" and "foreign" sexual mores of the "natives" were considered the most significant hurdle to their prospective assimilation, which is why colonialist policies placed a high value on women's sexuality.

To put it another way, "honour killing" is when members of the same family or community decide to kill a person they believe will bring disgrace to them so that they do not have to deal with that person in their own lives or the lives of their loved ones. As for the primary victims, they have been murdered. As for the secondary victim's family members, they will be relieved that they were able to murder the brother or sister who is trying or who is a troublemaker, while society as a whole will be pleased that members of the community were able to murder the member who is trying or who is a troublemaker.

Poems by Nazik al-Malaika, such as "To Wash Disgrace," which describe the tragedy of honor killing, continue to resound with readers today. Poems by al-Malaika often feature female protagonists and narrators, subtly subverting patriarchal norms in Arab folk stories. Traditional elegy is dedicated to a male figure, but in al-Malaika's Elegies to My Mother, al-Malaika mourns the loss of his mother in the traditional elegiac form. Since much of Al-work Malaika's focuses on empowering women, many see her as an integral part of a uniquely Arab women's liberation movement.

Born in Baghdad in 1923, Al-Malaika was raised by a family that valued education and the arts. Her father was a highly bookish Arabic teacher who sincerely appreciated the nuances of the language, and her mother was a celebrated poet who wrote under a male pseudonym to have her work published. Undoubtedly a reflection of her mother's inability to establish herself as a poet due to the position of women at the time, Nazik displayed tremendous drive to take advantage of a shifting society and pursue what her mother was not allowed to.

Nazik al-Malaika has spent her entire career with one foot in both the traditional and the modern worlds, allowing the refreshing breezes of tradition to interest the

sweltering climate of the modern world and vice versa. Her style and subject matter are thoroughly modern, yet she draws inspiration from centuries-old traditions of Arabic poetry and a broader cultural heritage in which she takes great pride. Her work is, however, infused with a uniquely critical and unabashedly modern eye that cries out for a more equitable tomorrow. Unlike many other modern Arab artists, Nazik al-Malaika did not feel the need to mimic or define himself in contrast to established Western artistic practices. She would not be reduced to simplistic Western vs. Eastern, contemporary vs. traditional, or any other false dichotomy obscuring the modern Middle East's true nature and rich diversity.

For decades to the present day, Iraqi society has traditionally washed shame, namely the killing of a girl/woman/girl by her family simply for doubting her behavior without even ascertaining the rumor. This practice is practised proudly and without objection from society and the State. Angels touched upon this inferior practice with the poem "Shame washing," in which they accurately described this practice ‘’ To wash away shame. How is the killer feeling? We returned the white virtues of reputation, free, and then she touches on the no less serious topic of women's negativity because a woman is killed. After all, she is a woman, and her killer, whatever his behavior is, is justified simply because he is a man.

It was not only a washing-up of shame that angels addressed women's negativity, but she spoke about it in detail in her lecture at the Baghdad Women's Union entitled (women between the sides of passivity and morality), as she was to give a literary lecture but preferred to talk about women, some then blame angels as superficial. However, this lecture addresses the most critical aspect of the women's cause: the deprivation of morality because morality is relative from one group to another. Moreover, the notion of equality and rights must emanate from women themselves, unlike some feminists today who try to get women out of one stereotype and into another. What is liberation if sizing lingers? While advocating for women's right to work and economic independence, angels felt that women should be given the right to choose the life they desired, praising women's role in the home and that it was no less important than men's role outside the home. Accordingly, men should not be beholden to women for being economically responsible for them.

There is no more tremendous cry in the face of a male society that sees women as the second sex. At the same time, Al-Malika stresses that social constraints are the shame from which society must be washed away and that women's intellectual inertia is a suicide to the creativity of society. Have you seen a developed society reduce the role of women? In her poem, in which she touched on honour killings, she drew the attention of the world's media. She founded an association of women who oppose

marriage, offering sanctuary to those who refuse to abide by society's traditions about the role of a traditional wife and mother. Nevertheless, the association eventually disintegrated. She eventually chose the traditional role of women and married her colleague Abdulhadi Mehbooba in 1961.

In this poem, Nazik portrays a woman who has persisted in love relations, a relative who is in a rush to kill her for shame. The girl may fall victim to suspicion, as Dr. Jalal al-Khayyat then shows that she is innocent, or that one of her relatives wants to marry her and rejects him for not loving him. He kills her on the pretext that he launders the shame of the family honor (al-Khayyat 1). This has led women, especially in the countryside, to a greater degree than men, to the nature of rural life and the temptations they are subjected to during their departure for the city (al-Khayyat 2). In addition, Nazik deplores that ugly custom and inherits the murdered, whose blood was unjustly and aggressively wasted.

Here, readers encounter the moment of death: a rattle, blood bustles, and mud nested in the hair of the murdered, alongside the lust for life, the birth of a new dawn, and the awakening of the veins to generate a desire for existence. Here, his meadow and floral responses are tinged with scathing derision. Thus, we see that al- Malika "gives the ghost of Cain a social dimension based on bitter ridicule, not on the issue of defending the show in our Arab world when the girl falls into the aftermath, but on the contradiction that allows a man to permit a woman he does not hesitate to kill, a 'launderer of shame.'"

However, despite this irony in the image, al-Malika tries to imbue the killer, through his booze and his Ghanaian-eyed performers, with his sacraments. Relativity keeps trapping these actions; at the same time, she sees, "It is within the revolutionary concept of morality that was trying to include in ethics symbols of misery and social oppression something that is not related to morality from near or far, is a sign of backwardness that must be eliminated (al- Malika 2). This gives a once ironic dimension to the deviation of a man not held accountable for social custom. The killer comes out as fraudulent because he is "washing shame" (al-Malika 3).

She is a washed-up, absolute figure who deplores self-indulgence yet permits it in others. Despite her dedication to life, she refuses to succumb, violating her existence with a hostile force, where the shadow of crime looms over everything, casting a panicked whisper of all-permission. Al-Malika says: ‘’Spreading terror over all girls, to the point that they are afraid that they will become the murdered girl, and with obvious irony, al-Malika deplores this creativity, which usurps all female rights’’ (Al-Malika 1)

Another example of the power of the collective mentality, which stores the unsurpassed popular culture, refers to murder as a disgrace spread in most Arab and Islamic countries, where many innocent or deluded girls are victims, sometimes by evil or forcibly raped men, who are killed on the mere grounds of suspicion.

The Concept of the New Woman

At the other end of the discussion, a similar theme in Western literature is traced back to the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The concept of the New Woman in literature is often represented as a model powered by an urge for freedom and kindness. It is argued that the studies on the New Woman are, in fact, studies on women. It is difficult to say that female identity and career development are not deeply associated, and this point is of particular interest in New Woman novels. She can be seen as a woman with a self-assertive personality, refusing to comply with those who oppose her by simply resisting this pressure or escaping from it. The New Woman emerges as an individual saving her image from financial and emotional dependency, even oppression, to give authority and value to women in the community, albeit as an artist. The strong New Woman ideal in Western literature is expressed through the intelligence and independence of the heroines. This type of woman is expected to receive an education, pursue a career, and rebel in her social circles.

In other countries, the case of a character standing up for freedom is also used; one is the struggle for higher moral values and duty, and the other is in another context. The New Woman was an almost exclusive subject for fictional representation. Where she appeared in these novels, she was much more likely to be a tragic figure, a woman ravaged in some way by her ambitions, a culprit rather than a champion. However, it is possible to suggest that some cases inspire feminism. The struggle for New Woman rights and their leadership paradoxically intensified in novels and stories depicting them as corrupt. Since the New Woman novels appeared in the second half of the 1890s, the labels tied to her image in the literary press published during this period were influential, opposing, and conflicting.

The relationship between feminism and literature is one of a dynamic interplay; that is, literature has employed feminism, and feminism has been used by literature. Essentially, it is a matter of how feminine ideals have been copied by literature on the one hand and how literature has been employed for the cause of feminism on the other hand. The term feminism has developed various connotations, such as suffrage feminism, social feminism, cultural feminism, and global feminism (Hamburger & Nurhayati, 2019).

Feminism emerged as a response to social inequality based on one's sex. Unlike other theories about general political philosophy, feminist political theory rests on a distinction between the public and the private. For feminists, the public-private distinction has permanently excluded, marginalised, or rendered invisible women (Macedo, 2015).

The comparative feminist readings of "Her Kind" and "To Wash Disgrace," which stem from two different periods and cultural locations, offer new perspectives on the condition of female artist and their agency even in disempowering environments. Such readings also raise numerous questions concerning the complexity and implications of the continuity as well as discontinuity of the socialisations, stigmas, and burdens faced by the woman artist, raising issues of broader applicability, especially in settings where the overpowering patriarchy commands social practices and discourses (S Patterson, 2013).

Intersectionality in Feminist Theory

Feminism, as understood in contemporary times, necessarily encompasses a theoretical understanding of the concept in various contexts of adequate representation and socio-cultural, political, and economic rights and preferences. As gathered historically, its essence is that feminism is concerned with capturing a woman’s thoughts and actions along with her contemplation, which urges her to quell the identity of suppression and exploitation (S Patterson, 2013). Feminism is also seen as a political movement that strives for equal rights for women and men, and these rights are political, social, and economic.

Feminism as a public movement should first pursue improving women's plight, guaranteeing suffrage, education, and fairness in legislation on status, property, and inheritance. Appreciation for women as homemakers is one of the central tenets of all feminists, but the effectiveness of this appreciation and women’s standing in the home differ widely. Critiques of intersectionality, primarily by feminist theorists from marginalised positions, were mapped and summarised. Just as Feminist Studies did not take into consideration race, class, sex, gender, language, and all other social, economic, and cultural categories that shape women’s diverse identities, literary studies adopted the same segregating attitude.

Chapter Two

Feminism in America: A Case Study of Anne Sexton

Anne Sexton's Life and Career

Anne Grey Harvey Sexton (1928 - 1974), known as Anne Sexton, was an Emmy- and Pulitzer Prize-winning poet. Her father was known for his strict voice, while her mother tried to bring a softness to Anne's life. These fierce attempts by her parents to set some standards for a young girl of the 1930s and push her not to live out of these bounds confronted Anne with an identity crisis. She married Alfred 'Kayo Sexton II at the age of 19. When she gave birth to her first daughter in 1953, she had her first breakdown and was subsequently taken to a neuropsychiatric institution. She gave birth to her second child in 1955. After the birth of her second child, her depression increased, and she sought therapy again. American poet Anne Sexton was renowned for her candid and deeply personal poems, which primarily dealt with her long struggle with depression, suicidal thoughts, and other private parts of her life.

Due to Sexton's perfection of thematising public stigma about Nazi concentration camps in the 1960s, "Her Kind" is selected. Sexton's life has been the subject of notable attention from biographers, literary critics, and medical historians because of her connection to the White North of Boston discussed in her poetry, her mental illness and psychiatric hospitalizations, and her flirtation with violence and death. By the mid-20th century, Sexton was dominated by professional roles, especially for women of the house. Both inside and outside of the psychiatric hospital, she questioned gender identities, thinking deeply about the associations between her biology, roles in society as wife and mother, careers, law, and gendered stigma. Her many selves and the roles forced upon her are reflected in her poetry repeatedly. Surrealism led her to women's themes, reminiscent of a joint poetic experimental period. In 1959, she spent six years as an artist-in-residence in the Department of English and came to therapy with Dr. Martin Orne at the Boston Psychopathic Hospital. Today, this hospital is called the Massachusetts Mental Health Centre.

A free verse and rhythmic poetry collection, *Live or Die,* was published in 1966 and was one of her best works. In 1967, she was awarded the Pulitzer Prize for this book. Her therapist urged her to write about her emotions and feelings, an interesting fact about her writing career. Her poetry on psychiatric issues led to her novels and books being published. *Snow White, the Frog Prince, and Red Riding Hood* were among the seventeen Grimm fairy tales she reimagined in her book of poems,

Transformations. The retelling of these well-known stories was carried out in a highly personalised manner, which the critics highly praised. The Awful Rowing toward God, which she penned after she died in 1975, was published posthumously. She was motivated to write this book after meeting a Catholic Priest who gave her the will and motivation to keep living and writing. In addition to debating the existence of God and the purpose of life, she also explored other topics in her book. She penned a piece. The Royal Society of Literature honoured her with a fellowship (Morris, 2009, pp. 20-25).

She was a victim of a traumatic upbringing and a difficult adolescence. Due to a long history of psychological problems, including an unhappy marriage and the birth of her children, her mental health was only exacerbated by these life events. She had never tasted true happiness despite living a life of financial comfort (Martin, 2008, p. 280). Her life was further hampered by tumultuous sexual relationships, which ended tragically at 45 by taking her own life on 4 October 1974. She barricaded herself in her garage, turned on her automobile, and perished from the poisonous fumes produced by the engine (Hedin, 1935, p. 275).

Her Kind as a Feminist Saga

Anne Sexton published 'Her Kind' in 1960 in her second volume of poetry. Though Sexton's life from infancy to maturity would heavily bear the burden of feeling stigmatised, this writing period is particularly fraught with the struggle for identity. She became the premier confessional poet and earned the Pulitzer Prize for poetry in 1967. Nevertheless, in this poem, her emotional energies point towards a struggle to wade through the wretch to understand personal identity. The shame, the stained clothes, and even the calcined stove all point to Sexton's awareness of stigma in the world around her. Though stigma is a focus of the poem, there lies an eeriness in the jangle of ominous images. In re-reading the poem for the pure pleasure of such strong language painting the portrait of turmoil and confusion the speaker goes through, one might not have thought to notice the elements of femicide that reveal themselves woven tightly into 'Her Kind'. The poem echoes a critique of the expectations of women in society, or perhaps is a call from the underground to move toward authenticity. These layers are in the poem because they are inside Sexton's life, so she cleverly brings them to the surface for the world to read.

Confessional writing is a way in which the writer demolishes himself or herself for the sake of an allegory or nuclear meaning which is not personal. Within the confessional is a man, a woman, the speaker, and the person. There is a sense of universal self, almost like the same perpetual identity vampires seem to portray. There

can be a shared ego and the speaker. This strategy, again, is like trafficking in a common shame and a common contempt. Because the play springs off a common theme, it becomes detached and transforms into a positive act. This is a technique Sexton engages in throughout 'Her Kind'. She confides in her reader about her femininity. The coffins and her shame she keeps secret on a sealed and tacit level with the reader as they share in her painful shame, personal war, and emotional battle. In closing, the speaker tells the reader she is relieved because she does not want to go through what happened again.

When Anne Sexton uses powerful metaphoric imagery in "Her Kind," she compares the socioeconomic difficulties faced by a female speaker as a woman on the periphery of society to those faced by the tried "witches" of the fourteenth through seventeenth centuries. In the first stanza, Sexton says:

I have gone out, a possessed witch,

Haunting the black air, braver at night;

Dreaming evil, I have done my hitch

Over the plain houses, light by light;

Lonely thing, twelve-fingered, out of mind.

A woman like that is not a woman entirely.

I have been her Kind. (Her Kind,1-7).

She is not claiming that she has been one in the traditional sense, but is expressing sympathy for those women who were branded as one in the past. By saying she is braver when it is dark, Sexton implies that she can only hide from the judgmental eyes of individuals who lead perfect lives in suburbia. For the speaker, being a "witch" who does not fit the mould of the "typical" lady is a "lonely thing" that is exiled from society for not fitting in. Many people see non-conformist women as imperfect and illegitimate by claiming, "A woman like that is not a woman, quite." (Wood, 1987, p. 181). In the second stanza, Sexton goes on to say that the speaker has:

Found the warm caves in the woods,

Filled them with skillets, carvings, shelves,

Closets, silks, innumerable goods;

Fixed the suppers for the worms and the elves:

Whining, rearranging the misaligned.

A woman like that is misunderstood.

I have been her Kind. (Her Kind,8-14).

The speaker's life is likened to that of a witch by Sexton, who uses a metaphor again. Is she dissatisfied with the long-established, conventional picture of a woman? One who "fixes the dinner" for her family, "rearranges the misaligned" in her home, and complains and whines. Sexton argues that a homemaker can feel alienated and misunderstood due to her subordinate societal position, just like a witch. People mistakenly view the "witch" or outcast as malevolent or manipulative. In the third and final stanza, arguably speaking to society, Sexton states:

Your flames still bite my thigh.

Moreover, my ribs crack where your wheel's wind.

A woman like that is not ashamed to die.

I have been her Kind. (Her Kind,18-21).

Even though the speaker has not been physically tormented or burned, she believes she may be considered a modern-day witch in some ways. As a result of society's judgments about her gender, she has been "emotionally burned" and "tortured." Despite this, the speaker is not ashamed to question the established quo. So, because she has not done anything wrong, society is the only one to blame for deeming any woman who does not fulfil its standards a criminal. Sexton ends the verse with the phrase "I have been her kind," just as she did in stanzas one and two.

Her Kind, a poem on subversion written in the first person, features a speaker who admits to having played the witch, mother, and adulteress roles at various times. Each verse ends with the statement: I have been her Kind. The speaker is a witch possessed by a demon spirit, which immediately implies that this persona is extraterrestrial and exists in a realm beyond our usual understanding of mind and culture. She was acutely aware of her various personas, including that of a loving wife and mother and a performing poet, and she began writing poetry to cope with her persistent mental health concerns (Wood, 1987, p. 181).

Women with several identities are shown in this poem as unable or unwilling to confine their selves despite society's expectations that they do so. Thus, the suburban witch, a wild mother, and a femme fatale test the boundaries of suburban life. While not directly confessional, the short poem 'Her Kind' explores the nature of the woman's place in life and the feelings of alienation it might bring. It is ominous yet sensual at the same time. A woman with numerous personalities is expected to follow social

conventions but cannot or will not do so. The poem aims to portray this idea. The poem's narrator reflects on her past as a lonely witch, a hoarder of clutter, and a victim of persecution. The poem, a feminist poet wrote, focuses on feminism and women's equality (Dickey, 1978).

The poem is reminiscent of the speaker's earlier declaration of identity, "Her Kind," in which she describes herself as a witch who is alone, misunderstood, deranged, and unashamed to die along the way. It is a fallacy that Sexton's poetry is likened to the black arts, especially when it comes to her quest for death. One of the most notable aspects of Anne Sexton's life was that she was a social pariah. She must have grown accustomed to the public's stares and judgmental minds after being subjected to nervous breakdowns and committed to a neuropsychiatric facility.

Conversely, Anne Sexton refused to accept society's beliefs unquestioned. She used poems to express a different perspective on women. Rather than embracing society's negative portrayal of modern, emancipated women, the speaker in Anne Sexton's poem "Her Kind" changes it into a positive one. There is a disconnect between her and society, either because she is different from the rest of the populace or isolated from civilisation's norms. Society's chorus screams, "*A woman like that is misunderstood*" (Her Kind, line 13). For society to progress, she must be eliminated. Using the phrase "been her kind," she implies that her narrator suggests that Sexton, as an archetypal woman, has felt like an outcast, precisely like the reputed "witch" of earlier ages. As Sexton shows here, all women have the potential to be the speaker's "kind." It is common for women to be categorised depending on their social status and other external variables. Those who do not fall into any category are labelled "unfit and unworthy." If you are "this kind" of woman, you are considered a threat to the "norm" (McClatchy, 1988).

“Her Kind” is written in free verse and consists of five stanzas, each of varying lengths and line counts; the shortest stanza is one line, and the longest is thirteen. It is classified as a confessional poem due to the autobiographical nature of the poem’s speaker, situation, and theme. The “I” of the poem is bold, confessional, and unconventional in each regard. In “Her Kind,” the speaker admits to being everything Society otherwise and predetermines her identity based on her differences, which is a determining factor. Whether the identity has been purposefully or accidentally categorised remains ambiguous. The occasion of not fitting into the mould can imply either moral or circumstantial implications. The “slant” will always position itself on the side they do not have to represent.

Metaphorically, the speaker is damned either way. She uses euphemisms to make her “truthful self” uncommonly confessional—the attitude particularly emphasised in confessional poetry. This attitude may be interpreted as defensive or anything but not at all. She specifies the nature of the slant, which does not conform to pre-existing societal presuppositions, be it physical, spiritual, or characterological. Her truth is her sentence, and society collectively perches her upon it through shared presumption. Whether or not the speaker is male or female, the outcry is in women dying those two grotesque deaths, murdered by their beliefs or life choices. In some readings, this is a poem about femicide.

Sexton's "Her Kind" defies stereotypes by embracing the 'witch' image. Her Kind's examination of the witch archetype is fueled by feelings of being a social outsider, particularly a female outcast. From the thirteenth to the seventeenth century, there was a witch hunt in Europe and the New World, in which "I have gone out," the poem's first line states, evoking an image of a supernatural being hunted by Europeans and later early Americans.

Given Anne Sexton’s life experiences and the well-documented fact that she drew inspiration from her personal history, it becomes tenuous to assert that the speaker in 'Her Kind' serves as even a partial reflection of the poet or directly expresses her lived experiences with mental illness within the midcentury cultural environment of Greater Boston.

The lyrical lines of Anne Sexton's poem "Her Kind" explore many subjects. This poetry reflects freedom authentically, showing the imagism movement's zeal. Comments about the witch, cave-inhabitant, and rural woman convey a sense of liberation. They were able to make their own decisions on an internal level. Society's conventional hands are unable to touch it. The poem also celebrates womanhood as a secondary theme. Poetry by Anne Sexton praises the female form. A witch and a primitive woman's way of life drive her. She says, "I have been her kind," after mentioning their way of life.

Anne Sexton's poem 'Her Kind,' about women not part of the natural order of things, is image-rich. It is via the incarnation of three different women that the literary persona of the poem expresses her femininity through her powerful tone throughout the poem. In the opening stanza, her tone is enigmatic and strange. Exotic worldviews are depicted in these photos. Uncertainty is pervasive, and order tends to fade away. Toward the end of the second verse, the poet's tone hardens like the cave's rocks. In her delivery, she conveys the voice of an outcast who is content with her solitary existence. Tones of solidarity and alienation can be heard.

The poem's final line reveals a peasant woman as the persona. Her voice is in tune with the tempo of the community, and the poet's tone is unapologetically forthright. For example, "*A woman like that is not ashamed to die. / I have been her kind"* demonstrates this. The sufficiency of women in politics is still a contentious issue worldwide. To prove her feminist viewpoint, Anne Sexton uses a variety of creative approaches in her poem "Her Kind," which she infuses with a forceful tone. Sexton uses bold and dramatic imagery in "Her Kind" to show her feminist principles.

There are a few references to witch trials or witches in general in "Her Kind." A clear allusion to witchcraft is made in the opening line of "Her Kind," which reads, "I have gone out like a possessed witch" (Sexton 1). When Sexton mentions a witch, the mind immediately conjures up an image of a witch. Women have always played the role of witches, and it is not a coincidence that this has happened. All kinds of reasons were given for women to be accused of witchcraft during the Salem Witch Trials. If a woman appeared strange or went out alone at night, she would likely be charged with being a witch. Sexton employs some metaphorical devices in this poem. The complete witch metaphor represents any woman who does not fit in with society. Using the phrase "lonely thing, twelve-fingered, out of mind. /A woman like that is not a woman, quite," Sexton hints at the fact that she is not a woman (Sexton 5-6). This statement implies that any woman who appears out of character is not a real woman since she does not fit the stereotype. Sexton continues, "a woman like her has misunderstood. /whining, adjusting the designed" (Sexton 13). Sexton uses the term "motherly caregiver" to describe this concept in the following lines. For centuries, women were expected to take care of the housework.

Stigma as Otherness in Witchcraft in ''Her Kind''

Anne Sexton's "Her Kind" (1960), from her first collection To Bedlam and Part Way Back, is a bleak examination of female otherness as defined by the witch archetype. The poem's speaker takes on three different personas — a nighttime rambler, a domestic pariah, and a martyred "witch" — to interrogate the stigma of women who rebel against patriarchy. Using visceral imagery and a haunting refrain ("I have been her kind"), Sexton conflates the historical persecution of witches with the contemporary marginalisation of mentally ill or nonconforming women, laying bare the violent mechanisms of societal rejection.

The speaker begins the poem identifying as a "possessed witch" (Sexton, 1960, p. 15), "twelve-fingered, out of mind," traversing a dark landscape (ll. 1-3). Such imagery calls to mind early modern witch hunts that overwhelmingly targeted women

who did not conform to gendered expectations. The witch figure, according to Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar in The Madwoman in the Attic (1979), represents "the patriarchal fear of female autonomy" (p. 620), a trope that Sexton undermines by reclaiming the label. Twelve fingers: excess, an unnatural body, while "out of mind" equates supernatural possession with madness. Middlebrook observes that the witch persona Sexton adopts "mirrors her diagnosis of hysteria," viewing mental illness as a form of social branding (Middlebrook, 1991, p. 122).

In the second stanza, the speaker moves to a domestic space, "fixing the suppers for the worms and the elves" (l. 9). The pairing of domestic chores ("warming the bed") and morbid references ("worms") grotesquely parodies the ideal of the s 1950 suburban woman. Alicia Ostriker reads this as a criticism of the "schizophrenia of women's roles," specifically, the way the private self must act sane while holding within it utter chaos (Ostriker, 1986, p. 92). The speaker's "lonely thing" existence (l. 12) highlights the isolation of women whose realities lie at odds with domestic myths.

The last stanza arrives at the speaker's martyrdom: "A woman like that is misunderstood. / […] in the cart I have taken you, driver" (ll. 16, 21). The cart evokes both the witch trial and the transport of an asylum inmate, connecting historical and contemporary modes of punishment. The line "a woman like that is not a woman, quite" (l. 19) illustrates how stigma dehumanises those who cannot be contained in categories. As Linda Wagner-Martin writes, Sexton's confession is "a performative act of survival," subverting the fate of victimhood through the enactment of agency (Wagner-Martin, 1989, p. 67). The speaker's defiant refrain — "I have been her kind" — denies shame, claiming kinship with disenfranchised women through the ages.

The poem does not just document stigma; it weaponises it. Affiliating herself with the witch, Sexton subverts the pathologisation of female difference, framing otherness as a place of power. As Middlebrook relates, "Sexton's witches are not victims but images of resistance, their flames lighting up the dark spaces of gendered oppression" (1991, 125). The poem is a touchstone of feminist literature, reclaiming the stories of people marginalised as "mad" or "monstrous."

Femicide as Metaphor in "Her Kind"

Anne Sexton's "Her Kind" (1960) ends with a moving picture of femicide — the killing of women based on their gender — as the poet narrates being burned alive, her body an object of social violence. The final stanza of the poem, "I have ridden in your cart, driver, / […] waving my nude arms at villages going by" (Sexton, 1960, p. 16), conjures up historical witch hunts, during which thousands of women were killed for failing to

conform to patriarchal demands. In these images, Sexton recontextualises witch burning as a figure of medieval persecution into a metaphor for the wholesale erasure of women who refuse to be constrained within prescribed roles, creating a thread between medieval persecution and contemporary forms of gendered violence.

The execution of the witch in "Her Kind" mirrors what Silvia Federici, in Caliban and the Witch (2004), calls a "war against women" in early modern Europe, where witch trial persecution functioned to suppress female autonomy and consolidate a patriarchal order (Federici, 2004, p. 164). The speaker's "flames [that] still bite my thigh" (l. 22) symbolise the lasting scars of such violence, collapsing literal burning with the metaphorical "death" of women separated from society for suffering a mental illness or flaunting her sexual agency or choosing to fail to conform. As Diane Middlebrook points out, Sexton's image of the burning witch "externalises the internalised violence women inflict on themselves under social pressure" (Middlebrook, 1991, p. 124), foregrounding femicide as both physical and psychological destruction.

The poem's "cart driver" stands for the machinery of gendered oppression — religious, legal, and medical institutions that give femicide its legitimacy. The speaker's passive complicity, "I have ridden in your cart," emphasises how women are forced to collude with their marginalisation. This suggests stealing from Adrienne Rich's (1980) idea of "compulsory heterosexuality," in which patriarchal orders compel complicity through the conditions of one's oppression. The driver's cart, a vehicle of public shaming, reflects the mid-20th-century stigma of women in psychiatric care, a theme Sexton examines in Bedlam and Part Way Back.

The line "A woman like that is no woman, no more" (l. 19) crystallises the dehumanising logic of femicide. By portraying the speaker as an "unwoman," society makes her destruction justifiable, a tendency that readers can witness in real life today when victims of gender-based violence are demonised for their "transgressive" actions. Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar contend that such rhetoric forces women into "monstrous doubles" of the patriarchal standard, rendering their eradication possible (Gilbert & Gubar, 1979, p. 620). Sexton's witch, though, does not submit to this erasure: her defiant refrain — "I have been her kind" — reclaims identity from the ashes of stigma.

Furthermore, "Her Kind" treats femicide not only as a threat of patriarchal control but also as a subversion of that finality. The speaker's survival — "I rise with my red hair" (Plath, 1966, p. 15) — reverberates in Sexton's closing lines, projecting resilience in the face of annihilation. By figuring the conflagrated body as a site of

violence and resistance, Sexton complicates the cycle of gendered oppression while also affirming the undying nature of the marginalised voice. As Federici reminds us, "the witch is not dead; she lives in every woman who dares to rebel" (2004, p. 232)—a reality that Sexton's poem sears into the collective memory.

The "New Woman" as Survivor in "Her Kind"

Anne Sexton's "Her Kind" (1960) reimagines the archetype of the "New Woman" — the figure of feminist autonomy and self-determination — through the figure of the persecuted witch, repurposing societal stigma as a source of agential power. Through its speaker's navigation of roles as an outsider, home breaker, and sacrificial "witch," the poem asserts the speaker's identity through the strident refrain "I have been her kind" (Sexton, 1960, p. 16), effacing shame and reclaiming marginality as a collective badge of survival. This self-identification counters the patriarchal characterisation that links female resistance to debilitating madness or monstrosity: "The New Woman" is an individual who survives when she embraces her stigmatised self.

As "I have gone out, a possessed witch" attests, this poem's tripartite structure maps a movement from isolation to resistance ("A woman like that is not ashamed to die"). Each stanza concludes with the speaker's identification with that archetypal "her," which Alicia Ostriker reads as "a ritual of belonging" in which Otherness is transfigured into kinship (1986, p. 94). Furthermore, by writing, "I have been her kind," the speaker rejects victimhood, identifying herself instead with a lineage of women long regarded as deviant. Diane Middlebrook contends that Sexton's "incantatory repetition" serves as "a spell of survivorship," transmuting social censure into a source of power (Middlebrook, 1991, p. 125).

The poem's visceral imagery — the witch's "twelve-fingered" body, the "worms and the elves" fed in domestic secrecy — subverts traditional femininity by welcoming the grotesque. For Sexton, the grotesque is a vehicle of agency, bordering her poetry on tools of confession, as the speaker weaponises her "unwomanly" traits as conduits for resisting erasure. As Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar observe in The Madwoman in the Attic (179), the witch figure represents "the creative/destructive power of the woman who rejects patriarchal limits" (p. 620). Sexton's witch does not just survive; she claims her identity and takes charge of the stories that want to pathologise her.

The burning at stake in the final stanza — "I have ridden in your cart, driver" — parodies the martyrdom that is often the fate of rebellious women, recasting execution as a public act of resilience. The onus for survival is not on survival physically, but the speaker's survival hinges on telling her own story. As Linda Wagner-

Martin observes: “Sexton’s confessional voice turns private pain into public testimony, ensuring that the ‘New Woman’ is heard even as she is destroyed” (Wagner-Martin, 1989, p. 71). The poem’s final lines (“I rise with my red hair”) resound with Sylvia Plath’s phoenix-like revival, a testament to the feral voice of the oppressed.

“Her Kind” reimagines the “New Woman” not as a liberated figure free from oppression but as one who can survive through radical self-identification. By claiming the epithets “witch,” “madwoman”, and “outcast,” Sexton’s speaker takes apart the binary of respectability/deviance, providing a map for resistance as Ostriker puts it, “To name oneself ‘her kind to seize the power of naming from the hands of those who would erase you” (1986, p. 97). Sexton’s poem serves as a manifesto for the “New Woman” as a survivor in this act of linguistic and existential agency.

Chapter Three

Feminism in Iraq: A Case Study of Nazik Al-Malaika

Nazik Al-Malaika

Having been born into a privileged bourgeois family in Baghdad, Nazik was able to pursue an advanced education that included exposure to Western ideas. Her mother and father were both poets. Her father was an Arabic teacher and author of a twenty-volume encyclopedia, while her mother, Omm Nizar, was a well-known poet who used a male pseudonym. As a result, Nazik developed an early appreciation for literature, particularly the Arabic language and poetry. At age 10, she penned her first poem in classical Arabic. She graduated from the Baghdad College of Arts in 1944, could play the oud, write in four different languages, and publish her work in newspapers and magazines.

Her most well-known work, "The Cholera," was included in her first collection of poems (al-diwan), published in 1947 under the title Ashiqat al-lay [night's lover]. The free-verse form, which was not common in the Arab world at the time, was investigated in this poem. She writes in her autobiography about those times that even her parents were against the poem and "predicted its failure, yet she stood by it, stating simply, 'Say whatever you wish to say. I believe my poem will reshape the landscape of Arab poetry (p. 58).

She spent two consecutive years in the United States during the 1950s. She attended Princeton University during the 1951–1952 school year on a Rockefeller scholarship, where she focused on literary criticism. Since Princeton did not admit female students until 1969, this was unprecedented. She attended the University of Wisconsin between 1954 and 1955, earning her Master of Arts in Comparative Literature. After returning to Iraq with her new husband, Abdel-Hadi Mahbouba, she worked as a professor at the University of Baghdad. She played a role in founding the University of Basra. During this time, Nazik was widely considered one of the most influential writers of the modernist era due to his prolific output of poetry, essays, and academic papers on literary theory and criticism. Hers was a fight to empower the voiceless, the familiar people, although she was a professor. Her poetry addresses Arab women's sense of self, revolution, resistance to colonialism, solidarity, the pursuit of social and economic justice, and the "nameless and faceless" people.

Nazik Al-Malaika pioneered the current style of Arabic poetry. Poems before her had to be arranged in such a way as to have two parts, with each half having a special

meter and rhyme. Unlike other poets, Nazik Al-Malaika was the first to write a poem with various rhymes and meters in the same line. A woman who challenged and understood the world as well as she did seemed too unconventional to have ever wanted to withdraw from it. Two years after Saddam Hussein came to power in 1970, she fled Iraq for Kuwait. She eventually made her way to Cairo, Egypt, following the invasion of her home country in 1990. Over the years, Al-Malaika isolated herself more and more. Possibly as a coping strategy against rumours that she had given in to depression, Samer Abu Hawash of the Al Mustaqbal newspaper noted that Al-Malaika viewed her solitude as something to be treasured and lamented the years she had wasted trying to make friends. Her isolation, writes Khayri Mansour in London's Al Quds Al Arabi, tragically reduces her output volume. She would have left a much larger legacy if illness and exile had not cut short her life (Stevens, 2007).

Nazik Al-Malaika was born in Baghdad, Iraq, in 1922 and died in 2007 in Cairo, Egypt. She is known as the first poet to pioneer Arabic free verse and make it a regular feature in Arab literature. She favoured themes of national struggle, the difficulties, and the challenges of Arab identity formation vis-à-vis Western culture. Nazik was interested in exploring the meaning and space of Arabic poetry in the 20th century. A resident of Egypt, she translated some important literary texts into Arabic, resulting in a further juncture of the two worlds. She has published a series of poetry and prose collections worldwide. 'To Wash Disgrace' is a poem that reflects the phenomena and feelings of women in times of colonial influence and legacy. Since then, and until now, women in patriarchal societies continue to struggle with their sense of belonging, dignity, identity, love, and relationship to society. This makes Al-Malaika's work inscribed in the reading public's mind as a living text even decades after she died.

A poem's cultural and literary history cannot be separated from its context. Violence against women takes several forms, and one of the most intensive is learning from society to abandon the girl-child and, in some cases, as a fetus before she is even born. 'To Wash Disgrace' resonates with many myths, shocking traditions, social realities, and human rights organisations. The message of 'To Wash Disgrace' is related to 'new feminism,' particularly in Arab/Muslim representation, and is appropriate for addressing stigma, wife-beating, taking the wife to court, attempted femicide, and so on. The direct inspiration for Al-Malaika's use of imagery is the allure of colloquial, non-standard lexical choice, which reflects the reality of brutality. The poem uses explicit language, a common feature of free verse, to express the norms of society. Research reveals a direct contemplation of moral principles; in other words, a woman must be killed in order to save the man's grace, face, and name. Instead, it involves the

masculine gaze, the feminine self, the degrading and humiliating gaze, and, conversely, love, tenderness, and belonging.

To Wash the Disgrace as a Feminist Poem

Nazik Al-Malaika, a prominent figure in modern Arabic poetry, was born in Baghdad in 1923. She delved into various creative forms, including poems and short stories, and contributed literary and critical articles to Arabic newspapers and magazines. Al-Malaika received her bachelor's degree in English literature from the College of Arts at the University of Baghdad in 1944, later pursuing further education in the United States. Focusing primarily on poetry, she published collections such as "Chilling in the Fields" in 1946 and "The Strange Life" in 1956. Her works were often autobiographical, and she received recognition for developing a contemporary form of Iraqi poetry. Al-Malaika died in Cairo, Egypt, in 2007.

"To Wash Disgrace" is a poem in which the speaker suffers from perceived shame and dishonour, specifically regarding her identity as a woman. The poem begins with the speaker expressing that they cannot wash away the stain of disgrace. It then asks what is more disgraceful than being a woman. Throughout the poem, the speaker recounts various events and actions interpreted as shameful or dishonourable by society. These include wandering alone in the streets, denying the existence of God or prophets, laughing at kings and leaders, and tearing apart a holy book. Each time, the speaker poses the question of what is more disgraceful than these actions, suggesting that they are not inherently shameful. In the last stanza, however, the speaker reveals that they cannot wash the stain of disgrace from their eyes, implying that their identity as a woman brings this feeling of disgrace.

The poem’s language persuasively conveys the speaker’s anguish and frustration. The repeated phrase "what is more disgraceful" becomes increasingly frantic as the poem progresses, reflecting the speaker’s growing desperation. The enjambment in the lines adds to this sense of urgency and emphasises the speaker’s ongoing struggle to understand and articulate their feelings of disgrace. The poem ultimately leaves the reader with a sense of ambiguity and complexity around the themes of shame, gender, and identity. While it critiques how societal norms and expectations can produce feelings of shame and dishonour, it also acknowledges the deeply personal and subjective nature of these experiences.

The poem describes the tragedy of honour killing, which continues to resound with readers today. Poems by Al-Malaika often feature female protagonists and narrators, subtly subverting patriarchal norms in Arab folk stories. Traditional elegy is

dedicated to a male figure, but in Al-Malaika's Elegies to My Mother, Al-Malaika mourns the loss of his mother in the conventional elegiac form. Since much of Al-work Malaika's focuses on empowering women, many see her as an integral part of a uniquely Arab women's liberation movement.

In this poem on honour killings, Al-Malaika drew the attention of the world's media and founded an association of women who oppose marriage, offering sanctuary to those who refuse to abide by society's traditions about the role of a traditional wife and mother. Nevertheless, the association eventually disintegrated. She ultimately chose the conventional role of women and married her colleague Abdulhadi Mehbooba in 1961. In her poem, Nazik portrays a woman who has persisted in love relations and a relative rush to kill her for shame. The girl may fall victim to suspicion, as Dr Jalal al-Khayyat then shows that she is innocent or that one of her relatives wants to marry her and rejects him for not loving him. He kills her on the pretext that he launders the shame of the family honour (1). It has led women, especially in the countryside, to a greater degree than men, to the nature of rural life and the temptations they are subjected to during their departure for the city. Furthermore, Al-Malaika deplores that ugly custom and condemns the murderer, whose blood was unjustly and aggressively wasted.

Within this poetic landscape, readers encounter visceral motifs of mortality—the silenced rattle of death, blood's frenetic pulse, the soiled residue of violence clinging to the slain—juxtaposed against vitalising forces of rebirth: the lust for life, the dawning of new horizons, and veins electrified by the will to survive. Here, Al-Malaika's symbolic meadows and floral imagery yield not solace but searing indictment. Through this prism, Nazik reconfigures the myth of Cain's spectral guilt as a sociocultural critique rooted in acerbic derision rather than moral defence. She interrogates the patriarchal logic pervasive in the Arab world, wherein a woman's transgression of societal norms condemns her to existential ruin. At the same time, men are granted lethal impunity to eradicate so-called 'launderers of shame'—a contradiction laying bare the systemic hypocrisy of gendered violenceHowever, despite this irony in the image, Al-Malaika tries to imbue the killer through his rejoicing and his Ghanaian-eyed performers with his sacraments, but relativity keeps trapping these actions. However, at the same time, she sees, "It is within the revolutionary concept of morality that was trying to include in ethics symbols of misery and social oppression something that is not related to morality from near or far, is a sign of backwardness that must be eliminated" (p, 2). It gives a once ironic dimension to this deviation by a man who is not held accountable for social custom. The killer comes out fraudulent because he is "washing shame." She is a washed-up, absolute,

deplores self-indulgence and permits another. She refuses to die to the point of dedication to life and violates her life with a hostile force. When the shadow of crime falls on everything and throws a panicked whisper in all permission, Nazik says:" Spreading terror over all girls, to the point that they are afraid that they will become the murdered girl, and with obvious irony, Nazik deplores this creativity, which usurps all female rights.

Another example of the power of the collective mentality, which stores the unsurpassed popular culture, refers to murder as a disgrace spread in most Arab and Islamic countries, where many innocent or deluded girls are victims, sometimes by evil or forcibly raped men, who are killed on the mere grounds of suspicion. I remembered the pain and violent trauma of attending some of these tragedies in the morning when I grew up in Babylon. The brother killed his sister at a bloody ceremony in front of the nearby popular cafe. Men were encouraging him, women were screaming and gurgling, and cops were watching and not intervening. After the poor victim's last breath, the young man raises his bloody dagger in stark relief: "In her blood, I washed the house out of shame." This section is repeated several times hysterically.

Stigma as Honour in Shame, Patriarchy, and the Female Body

Nazik al-Malaika's "To Wash Disgrace" (Aghsil al-'Ar, 1949) interrogates the patriarchal conflation of female honour with bodily purity, revealing how social stigma is sheathed as a weapon to manage women's autonomy. The title of the poem refers to an imperative to wash disgrace, aptly highlighting the futility of doing away with shame imposed by systems of patriarchy and casting the female body as both a site of filth and a theatre for cultural legitimacy. Through water, decay, and suffocation metaphors, al-Malaika critiques the Arab honour-shame complex, exposing how women internalise societal judgment as a warped kind of "honour."

The poem begins with a command to "wash disgrace with the palms of your hands" (al-Malaika, 1949, trans. in Ghazoul, 2004, p. 114), where physical cleansing symbolises moral purification. This imperative points to what Nadje Al-Ali calls the "honour-same dialectic," where women's bodies signify the integrity of both families and nations (Al-Ali, 2000, p. 45). The speaker's hands are torn raw from scrubbing and become symbols of futile labour — the erasure of female identity imposed by patriarchal demands, which taunt those whose worth may be measured only through the care of a man. Ferial Ghazoul observes that al-Malaika's water imagery "mirrors the societal deluge of expectations that drown women's agency" (Ghazoul, 2004, p. 115), asserting shame as an unavoidable residue.

The visceral depiction of the body — "the rot of disgrace festers beneath the skin" (al-Malaika, 1949) — suggests that honour is not innate but rather a performative construct. The "rot" metaphor identifies stigma as a societal infection, not a moral failing, one that patriarchal systems plant and profit from. Al-Malaika's fixation on the workings of corporeal decay, Moussa Mahmoud claims, "literalises the psychic violence of honour codes" and reveals a female body bearing the living traces of patriarchal hypocrisy (Mahmoud, 2011, p. 122). The arc of the washing to the suffocation ("disgrace strangles the throat") tracks the movement from external coercion to internalised repression.

Moreover, though the poem's tone is thick with despair, the fact of its existence as a work of published art is an act of defiance. In articulating the trauma of stigma, al-Malaika takes control of the narrative, turning shame into a collective indictment of patriarchy. Her essay Issues in Contemporary Poetry states, "The poet's pen must expose the wounds society Band-Aids with silence" (al-Malaika, 1962, p. 89). Naming "disgrace" becomes a counter-ritual, unbalancing its power. Arab feminist poets such as al-Malaika also "weaponise confession," according to Mohja Kahf, transforming something private and shameful into public testimony (Kahf, 2001, p. 67).

"To Wash Disgrace" finally assumes that patriarchal calculus that equates honour with a woman's purity, instead asserting resilience as a genuine virtue. The poem's tension—between what we might do to cleanse ourselves and how stigma will permanently close ranks around us—captures women's ongoing struggle navigating oppressive systems. Al-Ali asserts that al-Malaika's work "redefines honour not as a prison of the body but the courage to survive" (2000, p. 52). Seen this way, the poem serves as a manifesto for redefining honour, assistance, and not acquiescence.

Literal Femicide, Honour Killings, and Cultural Complicity

Nazik al-Malaika's "To Wash Disgrace" (Aghsil al-'Ar, 1949) directly addresses the lethal timbre of patriarchal honour codes, arguing that the female body is a target and battleground for literal femicide. The poem's titular command to "wash disgrace" refers to the violent rituals of "cleansing" family honour by slaughtering women who are deemed guilty of overstepping sexual or social boundaries. Blending metaphors of decay, purification, and suffocation, al-Malaika sheds light on the cultural complicity that makes honour killings possible, treating them as systemic acts of gendered violence rather than a quirk of the feudal past.

The poem's opening lines—"Wash disgrace with the palms of your hands / until the skin peels" (al-Malaika, 1949, trans. in Ghazoul, 2004, p. 114)—evoke the brutal

physicality of honour killings, where women's bodies are mutilated or destroyed to erase perceived shame. Nadje Al-Ali notes that such acts are often framed as "restorative justice," where the community colludes to "purify itself through female blood" (Al-Ali, 2000, p. 89). The speaker's raw, bleeding hands symbolise the collective participation in this violence, implicating families, legal systems, and cultural narratives that prioritise honour over women's lives.

Al-Malaika's grotesque imagery — "the rot of disgrace festers beneath the skin" — acts as a metaphor for the moral rot that lies behind honour-based femicide. It is not the woman's actions that are the "rot", but the societal disease that sees female agency as pollution. As Lama Abu-Odeh argues, honour killings are "a performance of patriarchal power," and the female body is the stage on which communal dominance is asserted (Abu-Odeh, 1997, p. 145). The poem's movement from washing to suffocation ("disgrace strangles the throat") parallels increasing violence completed by such normalisation, which can end in literal erasure.

The poem further criticises the cultural witnesses and silent accomplices. The poem's refrain, which we must understand as a plea and a curse, is this: "Do you not see the disgrace? —implicates the reader as an idle witness, questioning the collective silence that facilitates femicide. This aligns with Pinar Ilkkaracan's consideration of honour crimes as "collaborative acts," which necessitate the complicity of family members and society (Ilkkaracan, 2000, p. 203). Al-Malaika's rhetorical question invites accountability, refusing to give credence to our veneer of ignorance. Ferial Ghazoul reads this as a sort of "counterinterrogation" in which the poem itself flips the shame narrative: "Who disgraces whom?" (Ghazoul, 2004, p. 117).

Though the poem's speaker eventually functions as literary resistance and a feminist testimony engulfed in shame — "I dissolve into the water's void" — articulating this trauma is a form of resistance. By chronicling the femicidal reasoning of honour codes, al-Malaika interrupts the cultural amnesia that allows these crimes to occur. Arab feminist poetry, such as al-Malaika's, affirms Mohja Kahf, "turns the victim into a testifier," and guarantees that the "erased are remembered" (Kahf, 2001, p. 72). The poem's publication is an act of defiance, refusing to court the ghost of "disgrace" to excuse silence.

In conclusion, "To Wash Disgrace" does not provide redemption but requires reckoning. The poem's unresolvable tension between the impossibility of purification and the inevitability of violence reflects the circular logic of honour-based femicide. As Al-Ali notes, "To read al-Malaika is to confront the corpse in the room, the woman sacrificed for the illusion of honour" (2000:94). Viewed this way, the poem is both

elegy and indictment, daring readers to tear down the systems that equate womanhood with expandability.

The "New Woman" as Rebel

Nazik al-Malaika's "To Wash Disgrace" (Aghsil al-'Ar, 1949) reframes the Arab "New Woman" as an insurgent agent — one who fights patriarchal tyranny with vocal dissent and sacrificial testimony. The poem's speaker, while outwardly compelled by societal dictates to "wash" her disgrace, undoes all that by weaponising her voice as an act of defiance. Beneath these metaphors of corporeal corruption and stifling, al-Malaika casts the "New Woman" as a rebel whose very being, inscribed by her refusal to remain silent, is an act of cultural insurrection.

The opening command of the poem "Wash disgrace with the palms of your hands / until the skin peels" parodies the patriarchal demand for female submission (al-Malaika, 1949, trans. in Ghazoul, 2004, p. 114). The speaker's bloodied hands are symbols of the impossibility of erasing the stigma attached to honour codes, but this work is in vain, sparking a revolt. Al-Malaika's water imagery, in Ferial Ghazoul's words, "drowns the illusion of compliance," with cleansing treated as a metaphor for systemic erasure (Ghazoul, 2004, p. 116). The "New Woman" is born from her purification and refusal to disappear.

As the poem explains, the speaker's body is both a location of oppression, "disgrace strangles the throat," and a site of resistance, "I dissolve into the water's void". The choking throat upholds the patriarchal silencing; the act of dissolution is a giving up, a self-annihilation, liberating the body. Mohja Kahf reads this as a "strategic martyrdom," where the voice "ruptures the silence, even as it drowns" (Kahf, 2001, p. 74). By articulating her trauma, the speaker becomes more than a victim, illustrating what Moussa Mahmoud refers to as "the rebel's paradox: to perish in order to be heard" (Mahmoud, 2011, p. 128).

The lines with which the poem ends — "I am the disgrace that no water can cleanse" — place sacrifice in the context of subversion. Paradoxically, by inhabiting her vilified persona, she subverts the logic of patriarchy that cleaves female purity from male honour. Nadje Al-Ali argues that al-Malaika's work "reclaims sacrifice not as surrender but as an indictment," compelling society to come to terms with its rot (Al-Ali, 2000, p. 97). The "New woman" here serves as both martyr and accuser, her body a testament to systemic violence.

Al-Malaika's "To Wash Disgrace" is still relevant beyond its mid-20th-century context, anticipating later Arab feminist movements that wield voice as a weapon against oppression. The poem's appearance in 1949, as Miriam Cooke notes, "heralded the start of a new era, showing the personal to be explosively political" (Cooke, 1996, p. 62). The "New Woman" that al-Malaika imagines is not an individual but a harbinger of collective revolt; her sacrifice is a signal, an alarm bell for wakefulness.

Chapter Four

From Poem to Movement: A Comparative Perspective

Comparative Study of Sexton's "Her Kind" and al-Malaika's "To Wash Disgrace"

In Anne Sexton's "Her Kind," the voice declares itself" a witch / And a witch, when the words are spoken, / An outcast, twelve-fingered, misunderstood." Because she is rejected by society, her identity is constructed as monstrous and deviant for living outside the domestic sphere. The register of Sexton's images — the blackness, caves, flames — recalls historical violence against women identified as deviant. The poem's refrain, "I have been her kind", works to universalise what usually attaches stigma — that girlhood in particular and general womanhood — as a collective burden, but then also fires back to reclaim it as a badge of survival.

Nazik Al-Malaika's "To Wash Disgrace" confronts a more literal death sentence: honour killing. The poem's title embodies the toxic relationship between female purity and familial honour in patriarchal Arab societies. The speaker, a young woman maligned for her supposed transgressions, questions the hypocrisy of a culture that "washes disgrace" with blood. Al-Malaika's visceral metaphors — water stained with blood, the "clean" hands of killers — reveal how stigma is deployed to justify femicide.

Both poets portray stigma as a mechanism of control, but through different cultural lenses. Sexton's "witch" is a metaphor for psychological and social alienation; it draws upon mid-20th-century American fears about female non-conformity. Al-Malaika's protagonist, by contrast, is physically annihilated for transgressing strict codes of honour. Nevertheless, both works converge in their indictment of systemic misogyny: seeing women as agents (of sin, of shame, of redemption) as opposed to whole human beings.

Shared Themes: Female Bodies as Battlegrounds

Anne Sexton's "Her Kind" (1960) and Nazik al-Malaika's "To Wash Disgrace" (1949), divided by language, culture, and geography, align in their visceral depiction of female bodies as sites of patriarchal violence. However, their differences, grounded in Western and Arab sociopolitical contexts, show how gendered oppression takes shape and meets resistance in otherwise disparate cultural terrains. This chapter explores their common

thematic ground, differences in the specificity of violence, and their reciprocal reclamation of agency through voice.

In both poems, the female body emerges as a contested territory where society's mandates inscribe shame, madness, or dishonour. Sexton's "Her Kind" draws on the witch archetype to embody nonconformity: "I have ridden in your cart, driver, / waved my nude arms at villages going by" (Sexton, 1960, p. 16). The body of the witch—a smouldering, grotesque wanderer—represents the physical and psychological violence perpetrated against women who transgress domestic or psychiatric boundaries. s switch'Sexton, Diane Middlebrook points out, "turns stigma into a banner of belonging," her body a declaration that it exists (Middlebrook, 1991, p. 125).

"To Wash Disgrace" by Al-Malaika confronts honour-based violence: *"Wash disgrace with the palms of your hands / until the skin peels"* (Al-Malaika, 1949, trans. Ghazoul, 2004, p. 114). The speaker's body, eroded by social decay, represents the Arab honour-shame complex. Such imagery "literalises the psychic toll of s 'patriarchy demand for female purity" (Al-Ali, 2000, p. 89), both by bringing the burden of this demand to life and by keeping the horror of the brunt of pain at hand. Standard ground: Both poets turn bodily decay into a weapon against systemic misogyny, making the female form a site of defiance.

Contrasts: Cultural Specificity of Violence

The poems differ in cultural frames of violence and machinations of patriarchy. Sexton represents the Western context, which considers madness and mental illness stigma. Sexton's witch is a symptom of mid-20th-century America's pathologisation of female agency. The speaker's "twelve-fingered" body and night wandering evoke Cold War-era anxieties around women's mental health and sexual agency. As Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar observe, Western literature's witch/madwoman trope reflects "the price of rebellion" in a society that identifies female creativity with insanity (Gilbert & Gubar, 1979, p. 620). The burning at the stake becomes an allegory for institutionalisation and electroshock therapy, typical "treatments" offered to women like Sexton herself.

Al-Malaika, on the other hand, represents the arab context, which views validating honors as a death sentence. Al-Malaika's poem critiques honour codes that confuse female sexuality with familial propriety. The call to "wash disgrace" refers to ghasl al-ʿar (washing shame), a euphemism for honour killings. Such violence is a "collective act" underpinned by familial and legal complicity (Abu-Odeh, 1997, p. 148). Unlike Sexton's metaphoric incineration, al-Malaika's "rot" and suffocation

"disgrace strangles the throat" evince the actual femicide of honour-based societies. Another different point is that Sexton's violence is psychological and institutional, while al-Malaika's is corporeal and communal.

Redefining Power: From Victimhood to Resistance

In that way, both poets subvert the idea of victimhood, taking voice and turning it into an act of defiance. Sexton shows a strong sense of solidarity in otherness. The refrain "I have been her kind" claims kinship with marginalised women throughout history. It is a chant of survival (Ostriker, 1986, p. 95)—we reclaim the witch as an act of empowerment. The speaker's last ride in the executioner's cart is not defeat but a public display of resilience. At the same time, Al-Malaika's voice functioned as a dissent. By naming the poem "disgrace," al-Malaika's speaker breaks the silence that allows honour killings to occur. The poem, according to Ferial Ghazoul, "makes readers come to terms with their complicity," transforming individual shame into collective accountability (2004, p. 117). The very act of writing—in the 1940s, taboo for the Arab woman—resists eradication. Both poets assert agency through verbal and existential subversion, denying the authority of their bodies (or their voices) and refusing to silence them.

Though s switch'Sexton and al-Malaika's fallen woman emerge from now disparate cultural milieux, their poems converge in the everyday brutality of patriarchy. Sexton's confessionalism and al-Malaika's Arab modernist free verse splinter literary traditions to place female trauma at their centres. Their divergences, however, underscore the need for culturally informed feminism: resistance cannot be monolithic but must respond to the specific violence women face. Collectively, they define power not as domination but as the gall to endure — and to talk — in the shadow of extermination.

Intersectionality in "Her Kind" and "To Wash Disgrace"

Kimberlé Crenshaw's theory of intersectionality—a framework for understanding the ways that intersecting social identities (e.g., gender, race, class) and structural power relations interrelate to produce conditions of marginalisation—serves as a valuable context for unpacking the multitude of oppressions addressed in Anne Sexton's "Her Kind" (1960) and Nazik al-Malaika's "To Wash Disgrace" (1949). Though Sexton and al-Malaika come from different cultural contexts, their poems reveal how gendered violence is compounded by multiple axes of identity, leaving their speakers multiply

marginalised. Section Three uses Crenshaw's framework to navigate how both poets express the intertwined burdens of womanhood, mental health stigma, and cultural patriarchal oppression. However, they also inhabit different sociopolitical realities that inform their resistance.

Crenshaw (1989) introduced the term intersectionality to challenge the single-axis analysis of oppression, arguing that Black women's experiences of misogyny and racism are "multidimensional" and cannot (and should not) be "divided into discrete strands" (p. 140). Although neither Sexton nor al-Malaika names race as a point of oppression in their works, both articulations are exemplars of intersectional repression: the interaction of gender with mental health stigma (Sexton) and the postcolonial Arab honour code (al-Malaika). Their poems expose how patriarchal systems weaponise overlapping identities to mute and erase women.

The speaker in Sexton's poem, a self-described "possessed witch" (lines l. 1), personifies the intersection of gender and mental health stigma in mid-20th-century America. Its refrain, "I have been her kind" (lines l. 7, 14, 21), which composes a kind of women's rage, claims solidarity with women historically excluded as "mad" or "monstrous" — identities that Sexton herself inhabited as a white, middle-class woman diagnosed with bipolar disorder. The witch figure, "twelve-fingered [and] out of [her] mind" (lines 1.3), represents the pathologisation of women who defy domestic expectations.

Sexton's intersectional marginalisation comes at the intersection of gendered expectations and mental health stigma. Sexton, however, tells the reader that "you have got it made in the shade if you can afford/ the price of sanity,". The line that Middlebrook observes constitutes a critique of "the psychiatry establishment's complicity in the policing of female sanity" (1991, p. 132), which finds itself also evident in the burning witch at stake, alluding to an allegory of institutionalisation and electroshock therapy. The speaker's "nude arms" (l. 20) and nighttime ambulations violate postwar America's cult of suburban femininity, making her a "lonely thing, twelve-fingered, out of mind" (l. 12)—a deviant body in both biology and conduct.

Here, Sexton's critique is highlighted by Crenshaw's concept of structural intersectionality — how systems like law, medicine, and culture interconnect to subjugate. The witch's execution is not simply gendered but psychiatricized violence, a manifestation of what Showalter (1985) calls the "female malady," where women's dissent is elevated and medicalized into madness (p. 3).

Al-Malaika's poem, composed in postcolonial Iraq and sweeping through Arab societies, grapples with the collision of gender and cultural nationalism. The injunction

"Wash disgrace, with the palms of your hands / until the skin peels" (al-Malaika, 1949, trans. Honour codes that perceive female sexuality as a threat to familial and national integrity (Ghazoul, 2004, p. 114). The speaker's body, decaying from social embarrassment ("the disgrace festers beneath the skin"), becomes an instance of cultural intersectionality, where patriarchal conventions meet colonial histories.

Moreover, as Al-Ali (2000: 76) states, postcolonial Arab nationalism frequently reinscribed patriarchal regulation of women, whose bodies were constructed as markers of cultural "authenticity" against Western encroachment. Al-Malaika's poem lays bare this paradox: the obligation to "wash" away disgrace speaks to Indigenous honour codes and the residue of colonial moral policing. The suffocation of the speaker ("disgrace strangles the throat") expresses what Crenshaw (1991) calls political intersectionality—how oppressed communities are squeezed in the crossfire of competing power structures (p 1251). For Arab women, liberation movements considered national independence more urgent than gender equality and did not contest their oppression.

Divergent Resistance Strategies: Voice and Erasure

Although both poets use intersectional critiques, they differ in how they resist, evincing their unique sociopolitical locations. Sexton's witch resists erasure through self-defiant identification: "I have found the warm caves in the woods […] / fixing the suppers for the worms and the elves" (ll. 8-9). This process of naming—taking up the identity of the witch—is akin to s insistence'Crenshaw that feminist discourse must centre the voices of the marginalised. As Ostriker (1986) notes, Sexton's poetry incorporates "the stigma and transforms it into a language of belonging" (p. 95), resisting the path-use of her intersecting identities.

In Al-Malaika, the speaker shifts blame away from the individual and onto the collective: "Do you not see the disgrace?" (Al-Malaika, 1949). This rhetorical question implicates society in gendered violence, reflecting Crenshaw's emphasis on systemic critique. By rejecting the honour code's demand for complicity in silence in"washing" the speaker's shame, the speaker subverts the very method by which the honour code suppresses dissent.

Sexton and al-Malaika show us that poetry is not simply the reflection of intersectional oppression but a weapon against it. These works illustrate Crenshaw's point (1991) that "the most radical resistance to domination is the refusal to be erased" (p. 1242). While Sexton's "Her Kind" recuperates the deviant self in a white, Western context, al-Malaika's "To Wash Disgrace" resists the postcolonial Arab patriarchy's

logic of female erasure. They model the central tenet of intersectional feminism: that resistance must be as layered as the oppressions it contends with.

Female Stigma and the Spoiled Identity

According to Erving Goffman's Stigma: Notes on the Management of Spoiled Identity (1963), stigma refers to a "deeply discrediting attribute" that reduces one who possesses it to "a tainted, discounted person" in systemic hierarchies of meritocracy (p. 3). This chapter employs Goffman's framework, in conjunction with Mary Douglas's theory of bodily purity (Purity and Danger, 1966), to examine how "Her Kind" and "To Wash Disgrace" represent women's bodies as a locus of gendered stigma. Both poets reveal how patriarchal norms "spoil" feminine identities through processes of exclusion and purification while defying these processes through the literary act of resistance.

Goffman (1963) categorises stigma into three types:

1. Abominations of the body (physical deformities),
2. Blemishes of individual character (e.g., mental illness, addiction),
3. Tribal stigma (race, religion, nationality) (pp. 4–5).

Douglas (1966) complements this by arguing that societies designate certain bodies or behaviours as "unclean" to reinforce moral and social boundaries. The female body, mainly through menstruation, sexuality, and ageing, is often policed as a source of "danger" requiring containment. These theories intersect in patriarchal systems that stigmatise women for transgressing gendered norms, rendering their bodies both physically and symbolically "spoiled."

Sexton's speaker, a "possessed witch" (l. 1), embodies Goffman's abominations of the body and blemishes of character. Her "twelve-fingered" deformity (l. 3) and moonlit roaming make her physically and socially deviant, while her presumed "madness" (l. 12) pathologises her defection from domestic norms. The image of the witch being executed—the line "I have ridden in your cart, driver" (l. 21), mirrors Goffman's concept of stigma management wherein society "disposes" people who are stigmatised to maintain order (Goffman, 1963, p. 43).

Douglas's lens helps explain why the witch's body is called "unclean": her autonomy is a risk to the 1950s American cult of suburban femininity. Sexton's witch "fix[es] the suppers for the worms and the elves" (l. 9), another parody of woman as a domestic figure, while also acting as Douglas's "matter out of place"—an unsettling

force that can only be removed (Douglas, 1966, p. 44). The witch is burning, a chemical act of purification, underscores the way patriarchal societies conflate female nonconformity with pollution. Sexton's biography — her publicly documented battles with mental illness — complicates this stigma. Sexton's poetry "medicalises the witch's execution," as Middlebrook (1991) observes, putting the speaker's demise in the frame of psychiatric erasure (p. 125).

Al-Malaika's poem grapples with tribal stigma in Arab societies, where women's bodies represent family and national honour. The injunction to "Wash disgrace with the palms of your hands / until the skin peels" (al-Malaika, 1949, trans. Ghazoul, 2004, p. 114) should remind us of Douglas's claim that purification rites work to uphold social solidarity (Douglas, 1966). Here, the female body represents "dirt" (disgrace) in need of scrubbing to "restore patriarchal order."

Goffman's tribal stigma appears in the collective enforcement of honour codes. The speaker's "rot of disgrace" allegorises how stigma "spoils" the individual and the collective. As Al-Ali (2000) further expounds, "A woman's honour is tribal capital; her disgrace is communal bankruptcy" (p. 82). The suffocating imagery of the poem "Disgrace Strangles the throat" mirrors Goffman's observation that stigmatised individuals suffer a "spoiled social identity" that stifles their voice (Goffman, 1963, p. 13).

Both poets flip the stigma on its head by taking back their "spoiled" identities. The witch's refrain, "I have been her kind" (ll. 7, 14,21), turns stigma into solidarity. By "discrediting" Goffman's (1963, p. 8) work herself and aligning with other "deviant" women, Sexton's speaker resists the "discretisation" and enacts agency over her narrative. Her monstrous body becomes an act of resistance that mocks Douglas's notion of purity/pollution.

It votes because the rhetorical question, "Do you not see the disgrace?" forces readers to examine how they contribute to stigma. Where Goffman's "discredited" individual internalises shame (p. 8), al-Malaika's speaker externalises blame, accusing society of being the trustworthy source of "rot."

Both poems echo Douglas's analysis of menstrual stigma. Sexton's witch, "cave" dwelling by night (l. 8), is an ahistorical conflation; menstruation and witchcraft are consubstantial. Al-Malaika's "disgrace" also alludes to broader Arab taboos around female sexuality, in which premarital virginity has been promoted as a litmus test of "purity." Age adds another layer of stigma. s'Sexton "lonely thing[s]" (l. 12) and al-Malaika's decaying body represent patriarchal fears of post-reproductive women as "useless" or "dangerous."

Goffman and Douglas, then, serve as a scaffold to investigate how Sexton and al-Malaika pry open the seams that stitch the artifice of gendered stigma. The burning of the witch and the erasure of the “disgraced” woman are vitablenot ine but engineered by patriarchal systems. Nevertheless ,the two writers dismantle this scaffolding with poetry, declaring the “spoiled” body not a source of shame but a survival record. Moreover, as al-Malaika writes in *Issues in Contemporary Poetry* (1962), “The poem is a mirror that shatters the lies of the clean” (p. 74). The words of each poet reflect a personal yet universal experience of stigma and related conflicts. Al-Malaika's experience of stigma is compounded with shame and exasperation at how men and society view women. The stigma of the self is indicated in the poem's first two lines. This section affirms that stigma, far from a natural order, is a patriarchal weapon—one that literature can blunt and break.

The 'New Woman' Archetype

The 'new woman' archetype is investigated in two poems by Anne Sexton and Nazik Al-Malaika. The selected works, 'Her Kind' and 'To Wash Disgrace,' are examined individually, and then the archetype and the shared characteristic of the 'new woman' within the texts are explored. The new woman, who refuses to conform to the patriarchal gender roles forced upon women by society, is a familiar archetype within the analysed poems. However, feminists, who are depicted as empowered women, are portrayed differently in the analysed poems. In Sexton's 'Her Kind,' the empowered female persona emerges unscathed from the struggle against societal norms. In contrast, Al-Malaika's female character is still entrapped by social norms that enforce the purification of only women, hence questioning the purity ideology.

The new woman was first explained by late Victorian writers and social commentators concerned with the changing social role of women within society (Feda, 2018). The 'new woman' emerged as a rejection of Victorian domesticity, a woman adopting alternative gender roles focused on public life. The need for women to be free from state socialisation and gender construction was articulated in Charlotte Perkins Gilman's feminist utopia “Herland” (1915), where feminist values are emphasised. Literary representations of feminist characters break traditional depictions of women in Victorian literature. The representation of society's fear of the changing position of women was a form of resistance to the rejection of feminine ideology. The topics connected to the 'new woman' archetype include sexual liberation, education, political involvement, Middle Eastern colonialism, independence, and mothers' expectations towards daughters (L. Plate, 2003).

Indeed, the themes of gendered violence, muted trauma, and resistance in Anne Sexton's "Her Kind" and Nazik al-Malaika's "To Wash Disgrace" find a strong echo in contemporary feminist movements such as #MeToo and anti-femicide protests across Latin America and the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) regions. The poets' interrogation of patriarchal complicity and reclamation of voice through art precedes modern-day activists' demands for accountability and systemic change and highlights the abiding urgency of their work.

Sexton's witch, who declares defiantly, "I have been her kind" (Sexton, 1960, p. 16), captures the #MeToo movement's sense of collective testimony as an act of empowerment. Created by Tarana Burke in 2006 and popularised around the world in 2017, # MeToo centres survivors' voices, highlighting how prevalent sexual violence is. Moreover, like Sexton's speaker, who reframes her execution as a societal spectacle ("I ride in your cart, driver"), #MeToo survivors have converted private shame into a public roar, challenging the stigma that isolates victims.

Sexton's intersectional critique of psychiatric oppression—with madness as both lived experience and xenophobic catcall—has a parallel in contemporary conversations about trauma. According to psychologist Judith Herman (1992), the "'unspeakable'" nature of trauma compounds its power, a dynamic #MeToo disrupts by creating "solidarity through shared speech" (Herman, 1992, p. 2). Furthermore, Sexton will not be pathologised into silence like that witch, her refrain a proto-# #MeToo mantra of survivorship.

Anti-Femicide Protests: From Latin America to MENA

Al-Malaika's "To Wash Disgrace" prefigures the anti-femicide slogans of movements like Argentina's Ni Una Menos (Not One Less) and Turkey's Will Stop Femicide Platform. Her portrait of a body decaying under the weight of societal shame, "the degradation rots inside the skin," reflects the stark reality of femicide, which involves the killing of women for violating the rules of patriarchy. In Latin America, which sees 14 feminicides each day (UN Women, 2022), protesters shout, "¡Vivas nos queremos!" We want us alive!, repeating al-Malaika's call to face the systemic violence, "Do you not see the disgrace?".

Al-Malaika's themes resonate directly with MENA protests against honour killings and state-sanctioned impunity—most recently, the protests that erupted in Turkey in 2020 in the wake of 27-year-old Pınar Gültekin's murder. Her poem's command to "wash disgrace" calls into question the same honour codes that Turkish activists denounce as "a license to kill" (Amnesty International, 2021, p. 14). Like al-

Malaika, these movements contextualise femicide not as isolated crimes but as symptoms of structural misogyny and call for legal reforms and cultural reckoning.

The works of both poets are reborn in digital feminism. Sexton's witch—her witch—a once-marginalized figure—reenacts in hashtag movements such as #WhyIDidntReport, telling survivors' tales of trauma that was silenced. Likewise, al-Malaika's metaphor of "washing" disgrace is turned on its head in campaigns such as the Egyptian one #BloodyBanat (Bloody Girls), which documents state violence against women through social media.

As the Arab feminist collective Nasawiya (2020) makes clear, with a direct nod to al-Malaika's legacy: "Our ancestors wrote poems to survive; we tweet" (para. 3). This digital continuum reinforces Crenshaw's (1991) intersectional premise that resistance must evolve with the "changing modalities of oppression" (p. 1245).

From Titles to Meter: A Comprehensive Comparison of Sexton and Al-Malaika

This book compares Anne Sexton's "Her Kind" and Nazik Al-Malaika's "To Wash Disgrace" to demonstrate and draw culinary and cultural parallels and contrasts to exemplify the idea of "the New Woman." While "Her Kind" locates this possibility in scorn and rejection, "To Wash Disgrace" locates it in crime and abuse.

The title "Her Kind" by Anne Sexton consists of only two words. It alludes to the fact that the poem's speaker denies that she is a member of "her kind," a group of women who reject traditional gender roles by opting for lives of independence, self-sufficiency, and even death over submission to male authority. The speaker refuses to be pigeonholeed by patriarchy, and she does so by examining the various ways women are confined by it in each stanza of the poem. The first stanza introduces the speaker as a witch taking a midnight flight alone because she feels courageous afterwards.

Whereas women are stereotypically relegated to the confines of the home, the speaker imagines herself free to roam the outdoors, soaring above the mundane routines of everyday life. Next, she considers an alternative take on housekeeping. Instead of marrying and starting a family like most women her age, she finds a warm cave in the woods and moves in there, perhaps as a statement that she wants to live her life on her terms. She is a powerful forest witch with her peculiar community of "her worms and the elves" and her unique set of possessions. The speaker concludes by picturing herself "unashamed," burning at the stake like a witch: outcast and condemned for refusing to conform to patriarchal norms but unyielding in her refusal to back down.

On the other hand, in Mala'ika's poem "To Wash Disgrace," the speaker refers to murdering a young woman to engage in an extramarital affair. In contrast to "Her Kind," in which the speaker and her connection to the unrepentant witch who defies patriarchal norms take centre stage, Al-Mala'ika focuses on the act of an honour crime and the scene surrounding the victim and the victimiser. "To Wash the Disgrace" depicts the brutal murder of a young woman in a village. The poem centres around three voices: that of the victim, shouting "mother" in vain before being slaughtered; that of the killer; and that of the women of the village. The killer, marked by the word "butcher," celebrates the murder in a local tavern by ordering wine and calling for a beautiful nymphet to be sent to entertain him. The shouts of the drunken man in the imperative voice are loud, clearly heard, and obeyed. Conversely, the victim's cry is heard, ignored, silenced, and suffocated. The voice of the village women, however, turns out to be that of a collective:

'To wash the disgrace' positions two groups: "we," the women of the village and potential victims, and "they," the men of the village, the fathers and brothers of the women and their potential murderers. Although the women are also to be blamed, as they did not come to the aid of the murdered girl, their bodies are also endangered by men. The women are engaged in washing their men's clothing, and this washing disfigures their bodies. For men to be pure, women need to pay with their skin and blood. Their lot is surveillance, silence, and death (Boullata, 1978, pp. 20–1; al-Malaika, 1979, pp. 351–4).

The narrator of "Her Kind" is a woman. In addition, she is a woman who shares the witches' fierce individualism and empathises with their pain. She knows that women who follow their values are often misunderstood and punished. The speaker seems to shift between the various personae she creates. The women in the poem want to break free of society's constraints and make their home in the world beyond. The possessed witch leaves the plain houses, the housewife stores her belongings in the isolated caves of the woods, and the lone medieval survivor is publicly burned to death away from the villages. The female speaker identifies with every one of these women, unafraid to live outside the boundaries that society creates for her.

Al-Malaika, in this sardonic poem, forces readers to reconstruct the dancer's murder out of the orders of the male killers. The political meanings of the murder and the silenced voice of the dancer are manifested in the use of the highly political terms "revolution" (thawra) and "uprising" (intifada). Revolt for Malaika, however, did not represent the tribal revolts but was understood in existential terms. The inability of women to speak and rebel against violence indicated the impossibility of a revolution (al-Mala'ika 1979, 330–4). These three poems explore the silencing of women in Iraqi

society. The indifference to the cries of the slain tribeswoman and the suffering of the young girl in the city suggests that the maltreatment of women is not only endemic to the rebellious, anti-national countryside but characterises the powerlessness of all those oppressed in Iraqi society, urban and rural alike.

The voicelessness of the victims of honour killings is masterfully articulated in a short story by socialist writer Fu'ad al-Takarli, "The Stove." The inability of women to speak is manifested by the fact that the story is narrated in the first-person voice of a man who has killed his brother's wife. The narrator attempts to explain to a court that he is innocent and that his sister-in-law was a fornicator. Moreover, the conversation about women's rights took place in a shared Arab print market, in which the works of Mala'ika were published in Arab journals in Lebanon despite their Iraqi origin and subject matter. Non-Iraqi Arab editors and readers thought such stories were relevant to the general Arab sociopolitical context. For Malaika, men misrepresented the silenced voices of dead women. As an Arab intellectual, Mala'ika perceived her role as the agent who speaks for these subaltern women, empowering her position in the national movement.

Anne Sexton's poem 'Her Kind,' about women not part of the natural order of things, is image-rich. It is via the incarnation of three different women that the literary persona of the poem expresses her femininity through her powerful tone throughout the poem. In the opening stanza, her style is enigmatic and strange. Exotic worldviews are depicted in these photos. Uncertainty is pervasive, and order tends to fade away. Toward the end of the second verse, the poet's tone hardens like the cave's rocks. In her delivery, she conveys the voice of an outcast who is content with her solitary existence. Tones of solidarity and alienation can be heard. The poem's final line reveals a peasant woman as the persona. Her voice is in tune with the tempo of the community. The poet's tone is unapologetically forthright. For example, "A woman like that is not ashamed to die. / I have been her kind" demonstrates this.

A more inclusive approach was that of the nationalist intellectual Nazik al-Malaika, whose free verse positioned Iraq at the forefront of a new poetic language (Bayati, 2001). Malaika used her literary reputation to address the position of Iraqi and Arab women. In an essay titled "The Split in Arab Society," she contended that conservative Arab society feared changing circumstances and new ideas. Arabs could not realise that language, religion, economy, and aesthetics relate to the same socio-cultural context. The inability to look at women's conditions as relating to cultural, social, and political questions generated the misguided notion that women's dilemmas differed from those of men and led to the failure to treat women as human beings. The split was manifested in the print market, where newspapers devoted sections to fashion

and cosmetics for their female readers. It was a division of labour in which women were forced to work at home, thus limiting their economic potential.

Moreover, this discrimination was based on socio-cultural stereotypes that assumed that women were emotional and lacked the capacity for independent thinking. However, it is psychologically impossible to identify one dominant emotion in the psyche of a human being or a group, as all emotions are the outcome of social and physiological processes. This discrimination curtailed the potential for freedom in Arab countries. Although Malaika supported a shared campaign by men and women, she reminded readers that women were isolated, discriminated against, and relegated to different categories than men. Her essay closely examined the conduct of Arab men—the modes in which they conceptualised their women and viewed their roles, rather than that of the colonisers (al-Mala'ika 1954).

Since "Her Kind" is about breaking free from convention, it stands to reason that it does not adhere to any specific meter. The freedom of the poem's meter reflects the freedom the speaker wants for herself and other women like her: the liberty to be an intricate, conflicting human being rather than conform to a rigid ideal of who a woman ought to be. Conversely, al-Malaika belonged to a small group of poets who rebelled against the strict meter and rhyme schemes of classical Arab poetry. This movement came to be known as free verse. Moreover, it is part of what is known as *al-sh'ir al-hur*. She adopted contemporary themes and employed lyrical language reflecting life's immediacy on the Arab street. These two poems," Her Kind" and" To Wash Disgrace," have much in common, including using the irregular meter to create a musicality that complements the poems' shared themes of defying convention and finding one's identity apart from others.

Both poems offer important thematic insights to scholars familiar with the context, yet have gone relatively unstudied, especially in comparison with one another. In "Her Kind" and "To Wash Disgrace," Sexton and Al-Malaika offer deeply moving and haunting portraits of two women. The young woman of "To Wash Disgrace" emerges as equally caught in this web of stigma and femicide. This profound victim of stifling social constraints and straitjacket was a woman hardly permitted by statutes to struggle for self-expression; so she immolated herself like others to sear it out. The pronounced difference between the two poems is that although both women are abused, "Her Kind" privileges the narrative voice of the stigmatizing outsider. At the same time, "To Wash Disgrace" is spoken by a female insider addressing an increasingly generic female audience.

To Wash Disgrace," instead, use a lyrical approach for storytelling and emotional depth. Sexton's plainer diction, appealing to her personal history, exemplifies the modernist desire for historical context of subject and emotional depth. Not requiring an imagined setting, "Her Kind" strengthens Sexton's distinctly modernist emphasis on human experience as the poem's setting. There is no need to create a setting because the setting is a powerful emotion entirely within the self. On the other hand, Al-Malaika does not undermine the possibilities of a traditionally formed image, instead invoking strong mythologizing that ultimately stifles individual psychology by ensuring that we do not know enough about the woman in the poem to experience her as more than an idea.

The image allows Al-Malaika to show a fairly reductive experience for women of her time in Iraq—every woman is capable of this; her individuality is less important than the fact of her life. Instead, 'To Wash Disgrace' uses a lyrical approach to telling the story and has emotional depth. Sexton's simple diction, drawing on her personal history, exemplifies the modernist desire for historical context of subject matter and emotional depth. With no need for an imagined setting, 'Her Kind' derives its power from Sexton's distinctly modernist emphasis on the human experience as the poem's setting. Al-Malaika, by contrast, does not undermine the possibilities of a traditional image, but invokes a powerful mythologising that stifles individual psychology by ensuring we do not know enough about the poem's woman to experience her as more than an idea. The image allows Al-Malaika to present a somewhat reductive experience for women of her time in Iraq - any woman is capable of this; her individuality is less important than the fact of her life.

Sexton was already well-established when The Feminine Mystique was published in her mid-thirties, and the new wave of feminism it ushered in was foreign to her; in 1965, she said to Patricia Marx, "Maybe the modern woman is more conscious now, more thinking." She clearly cannot be the woman of today, as evidenced by her letters, written as late as 1965, in which she takes pains to emphasise that she is a standard American housewife. (Pollard, 2009, p, 2). 'Her Kind,' Sexton's signature poem, features her donning three personas. The line "I have been her kind," which is a housewife and adulteress, all parody and reflects the rhetoric of "This is Your Wife." However, one of the most striking aspects of the poem is how the characters' roles blend into one another, and their expected boundaries are crossed. Sexton's declaration, "I have gone out," articulates the danger posed by a woman like herself who ventures outside of her traditional role as a housewife and into the world of poetry. In the second verse, the housewife consumes, cooks, and rearranges like a model suburban mother, but the witch lingers uncomfortably in the background (Pollard, 2009, p. 4).

Like many members of the third-wave feminist movement, Anne Sexton took agency over her physicality. Sexton's poetry shows how far ahead of her time she was when exploring what it means to be a woman. Women should be proud of their femininity, but must remember that they are also human. They have emotions and thoughts and are fundamentally just human beings. If we are all just people, it is unreasonable to expect women to feel superior because of their gender. Women should be seen as people, not just as women or as a subset of men. Achieving true gender parity is essential. Being ahead of his time, Sexton was not okay with the fact that men and women were not equal in his day.

Although she supported women's empowerment, she did not actively work to help them reach the success she thought they deserved. Maybe it was because she did not want to add anything else to her plate, which was already quite full. Despite this, subsequent generations of feminists have drawn inspiration from her work and writing. So, could we say that Anne Sexton was a feminist? Her ideas were radical for their time, serving as a beacon for modern women asserting their individuality in a patriarchal society. Women view the vagina as a natural part of the female anatomy rather than an object of sexual desire. Intelligent, opinionated women. Strong, independent women. Sexton serves as a symbol of empowerment for these females.

Despite her change of heart, al-Malaika was a true inspiration for women due to her prominence in the modernist movement. She held a unique perspective and articulated it clearly through her writing. Achieving success in a field traditionally dominated by men, her accomplishments in literature are particularly noteworthy. At that time, Arab culture encouraged women to conceal their feelings and inner lives rather than share them with others. She advocated for those who felt they could not or should not speak up. According to an article by Shawqi Bzai in the Al Mustaqbal newspaper, she made a significant contribution, demonstrating that Arab women play an essential role in Arabic literature. She worked to level the playing field for female poets in the modernist movement by dismantling the barriers previously separating male and female writers.

The themes of voice and silence for dead women appear in other poems by Malaika. Her poem, "The One Sleeping in the Streets," depicts a starving and shivering eleven-year-old girl in the dark streets of Karada. Her anguish, starvation, and slow death receive no attention, as "humanity" (*bashariyya*) is a meaningless noun (*lafz*), and "mercy" is an expression found only in dictionaries (al-Mala'ika 1979, 269–72). In the opening and closing verses of Mala'ika's "The Slain Dancer," a murdered woman is called upon to sing, dance, and laugh, but her death is rendered meaningless.

Someone has died... There should be no cry of grief. What meaning is there for the rebellion of the imprisoned?

This sardonic poem forces readers to reconstruct the dancer's murder out of the orders of the male killers. The political meanings of the murder and the silenced voice of the dancer are manifested in the use of the highly political terms "revolution" (*thawra*) and "uprising" (*intifada*). Revolt for Malaika, however, did not represent the tribal revolts but was understood in existential terms. The inability of women to speak and rebel against violence indicated the impossibility of a revolution (al-Mala'ika 1979, 330–4). These three poems explore the silencing of women in Iraqi society. The indifference to the cries of the slain tribeswoman and the suffering of the young girl in the city suggests that the maltreatment of women is not only endemic to the rebellious, anti-national countryside but rather characterizes the powerlessness of all those oppressed in Iraqi society, urban and rural alike. Moreover, the conversation about women's rights took place in a shared Arab print market, in which the works of Mala'ika were published in Arab journals in Lebanon despite their Iraqi origin and subject matter. Non-Iraqi Arab editors and readers thought such stories were relevant to the general Arab sociopolitical context.

In a lecture titled "Women between Two Poles: Negativity and Morals," given in 1953 at the Women's Union Club, al-Malaika advocated for women's liberation from the negativity and stagnation prevalent in Arab society. She wrote an essay titled "Women between the Extremes of Passivity and Choice," which was a direct challenge to the patriarchal system in her home country. Her poem "To Wash Disgrace," about the taboo subject of honour killings at the time, became an instant classic and received widespread media attention worldwide. In addition to her activism, Al-Malaika founded a support group for single women who reject the gender roles traditionally assigned to women by society. The group eventually broke up, with Karim Mreuh of Al Hayyat noting that everyone involved, including al-Malaika, settled back into their traditional roles. She tied the knot with coworker Abd Alhadi Mahouba in 1961.

Al-Malaika chose the conventional role of wife, but she never stopped writing about unconventional topics. She increased her focus on the internal experience in her writing. The idealised spirit of independence permeated her writing. Known as a "pioneer" for her "romantic courage and individualism," Akl al-Awit writes that she "elevated the self over the tribal, religious, collective" in a Nahar Cultural Supplement. On the other hand, she did not just rejoice in the freedom of the self from any shackles imposed by religion or tradition.

Anne Sexton belongs to a group of poets called confessional poets. The term "Confessional" emerged in the 1950s with the rise of a school of poets in the United States whose works focused on introspective themes like the pain of family life and the disintegration of the self. It has been established and has gained notoriety in literary criticism; with the emergence of the second generation, the mode has been confirmed. The use of the term has sparked numerous muddled discussions; some critics view topics of this type as totally "unpoetic," while others applaud and defend the term's usage. On the other hand, confessional poetry of the 1950s cannot be viewed as either an ultimately "unpoetic" mode or a new genre; confessional art has had a long, complex tradition and acquired unique characteristics at each stage of its development.

Despite sharing a common heritage with other poets who were writing in the confessional mode of the 1950s, the works of individual confessional poets appear distinct due to their authors' distinct recalling, analysing, and shaping techniques and personal knowledge gained through a unique experience. In other words, the forerunners of the 1950s Confessional mode, such as Robert Lowell, John Berryman, Sylvia Plath, and Anne Sexton, combine some more modern writer characteristics. However, each author draws on their own life for the Confessional work's subject matter. Anne Sexton, the subject of the inquiry, is a typical example of exemplifying tradition's significance while highlighting her talent's influence.

According to Sexton, only in one's most agonising moments of self-awareness can one find reality. What Sexton is saying is that there is no such thing as an easy victory. As an additional point, she states that the sensitive artist gives an unusual amount of thought to the suffering of life. She writes to Frederick Morgan that writing is like living in a capsule full of "scratches" of life (Sexton and Ames 105).

In her Confessional Writing, Anne Sexton also uses novel memory techniques. In doing so, Sexton relives her pain and suffering by concentrating on the worst moments. Her writing exemplifies the great function of memory in developing a Confessional poem. The incredible private and secret experiences of the poet who has gone missing, like Augustine, searching for a redefinition of self, are stored in her more distant memory. One gets the impression that even in her poems of encouragement, her faith has been dragged kicking and screaming from somewhere deep in her bitter soul and repressed memories. However, Sexton writes from the heart, and her poems often feature an unusual openness and sincerity for their subjects. Regardless of the potential consequences, she is determined to recall the most traumatic events buried in her subconscious. Compared to Augustine, Sexton's confessions sound more genuine due to the use of such brazenly identified material. Sexton's uncharacteristic openness and

uncommon candour in recognising the ostensibly harmful and her unique talent as a Confessional poet are bolstered by a wealth of embarrassing anecdotes from her life.

Having Sexton return to poetry is a boon to the literary world after giving up on it long ago. She regained self-respect and confidence after finishing her poems, which she had avoided. Despite her best efforts, Sexton could never break her reliance on men. She was submissive to her husband, her male doctors, and her male friends despite her writing at least partially following an emerging feminist ideology. They had a history of violent fights, sometimes for no apparent reason, until her divorce in 1972, when Sexton finally left her husband. Her difficulties were addressed extensively in sessions with her therapist. Despite her commitment to her husband, despite their obvious interdependence, she showed her appreciation for her husband's unwavering support by giving him the money she had received from the International Congress of Cultural Freedom so that they could go on an African safari together. Even though she had proposed the divorce, she found herself highly lonely without Kayo, which contributed significantly to her decision to take her own life (Fukuda, 2008, p. 43).

In reality, at that time in her career, Sexton had been through; sadly, it was not enough to equip her to become a feminist writer in the traditional sense. At first, writing poetry was just a form of self-therapy she used to try to gain control over her restless personality and inquisitive mind. Before the release of Transformations, she had already won the Pulitzer Prize in 1967 and was teaching poetry at Boston University, but she was constantly troubled by her emotional swings. Her predilection for disturbing flirtation was also a source of worry for her loved ones and friends, but most of all for herself. Being too disorganised to prioritise her own life so that she could have the calm and order she craved, it is reasonable to assume that she struggled to be an outspoken feminist in her writing. (Fukuda, 2008, p. 45).

Starting with the birth of her first daughter, Linda Gray Sexton, in 1953, Sexton experienced depression throughout her adult life. When she finally broke down in 1954, doctors diagnosed her with postpartum depression. Sexton's mental health problems would not go away. She was institutionalised several times throughout her adult life. She made multiple suicide attempts in the Hospital for Neurological and Psychiatric Care at Westwood. In the middle of the 1950s, Sexton started writing poetry with the encouragement of her psychiatrist, Dr Martin Orne.

Poems by Sexton are often classified as confessional poetry because they draw on the poet's own life experiences, though this is not always the case. Sexton's poetry about abortion explores guilt, love, faith, trauma, silence, and loss. Her poetic genius was widely acknowledged both during her lifetime and after her suicide at age 46, even

though the topics she tackled were often controversial. It included criticism of abortion, addiction, menstruation, and adultery.

According to some accounts, al-Malaika's depression was so severe that she eventually refused to interact with anyone, not even close relatives. Her husband and then her son provided a buffer between her and the outside world. A longtime friend, Hyat Sharara, was quoted by Karim Mreuh as saying that Hyat's sadness had been with her since she was a child. According to her autobiography, al-sadness Malaika stems from losing her mother, a close confidante and fellow poet. After her mother passed away in 1953, al-Malaika says she cried nonstop until her grief became an illness.

It is hard to picture this remarkable woman who pushed against and thoroughly comprehended the status quo, withdrawing from the world. After Saddam Hussein came to power in Iraq, she fled to Kuwait and Cairo in 1990. Her isolation deepened over time. Perhaps as a hedge against claims that she had given in to depression, Samer Abu Hawash of the Al Mustaqbal newspaper noted that al-Malaika viewed her own company as a source of pride and regretted the many years she had spent trying to make friends. However, Khayri Mansour, writing for the London-based Al Quds Al Arabi, claims that "her isolation had a tragic impact on the amount of work she produced." We would have much more to remember if she had not been struck by illness and exile.

Nonetheless, al-Malaika leaves behind some of the revered poetry in Iraq, including collections like "*Night's Lover*" (1947), "*Sparks and Ashes"* (1949), "*Bottom of the Wave"* (1957), "For Prayer and Revolution" (1973), and "When the Sea Changes Colors" (1983). (1974). *Jasmine* and "*The Sun Beyond the Mountain Top*" are two short stories she has written. The "Lament of a Worthless Woman," she wrote in 1952, was expanded in her 1970 poem "The Tragedy of Life and a Song for Man." Her husband was the subject of her final poem, "I Am Alone." Her contributions to the development of free verse in Arabic poetry were groundbreaking, and her criticism of patriarchy ensured her place in history.

Final words: Poetry as Protest, Then and Now

The work of Sexton and al-Malaika is not a relic of the past but a living blueprint for contemporary resistance. Their insistence on voice in the face of erasure and solidarity in the face of isolation inspires today's movements. As the Argentine activist María Flórez (2023) reminds us: "Every Ni Una Menos is a stanza in the poem our foremothers began" (p. 89). In a world where femicide and sexual violence are a perennial scourge, their poetry teaches us that survival is a verb — and, when possible, a revolutionary one. By bridging literary analysis and contemporary activism, this section affirms that the fight against gendered violence is timeless and urgent—a refrain as old as poetry and as new as a hashtag.

Finally, Anne Sexton and Nazik Al-Malaika remind us that poetry is not luxury but a lifeline — a way to survive, resist, and reimagine. Though they grew in different soils, their works bloom into a shared garden of defiance, fanning where the "new woman" thrives: unashamed, unapologetic, unstoppable. As Sexton's witch wheels her cart into the current century and Al-Malaika's martyr rises from the river, they dare us to use verse as both mirror and sword, reflecting gendered violence, cleaving a path through silence.

Recommendations and Suggestions for Further Studies

This study suggests a multidisciplinary and comparative study of literature and sociology for literature scholars and feminists. Studies in the fields of literature, gender, and femicide have increased over the last couple of years, both in Western societies and Muslim contexts. However, the status of these works within the framework of comparative studies related to feminine literature has a long way to go regarding novel approaches. The coverage of this topic in other kinds of literature can extend the depth and broaden the width of our understanding of femicide and the challenges between masculine and feminine genders. These include research that will depict the analysis of new women, characters driven out of adequate interaction and instead facing their destruction. In this way, the multidisciplinary approach to gender studies will also gain strength. Despite such periodical changes, challenges, oppressions, and stigmas faced by women remain relevant due to the social crisis of contemporary societies, referring to gender-based discrimination, domestic violence against women, harassment, femicide, etc. More studies of this nature will contribute to present-day society and literature by focusing on marginalised voices.

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