

Abstract

The intention of this doctoral thesis is to present a comprehensive account of the evolution of the way sex and sexuality are portrayed in modern Arabic novel and put it in the context of given era, culture and religion. On a selected sample of 30 novels printed between 1934 and 2009 we can trace clear evolution of the central themes, all of which are constantly present throughout the hundred-years-existence of modern Arabic novel.

For the sake of greater comprehensibility the thesis is split in two big parts, i.e. female and male sexuality, and further arranged into thematic subchapters all of which discuss specific issues related either to male or female sexuality. Furthermore, individual chapters deal with the topic in general, put it in proper cultural-religious framework and fill in all available historical and statistical data. Next comes the part dedicated to analysis of selected novels portraying sex a sexuality with excerpts translated directly from primary sources. Aside from peculiar themes typical for Arabic culture such as honor, virginity and related issue of honor killings this thesis discusses the way modern Arabic novels deals with both female and male homosexuality, discovering one's body and masturbation, abortion, sexual violence, impotence, infertility and prostitution. Also it deals with female circumcision, a phenomenon present in Arabic world exclusively in Egypt and Sudan.

The analysis of presented novels clearly illustrates a progress towards more frequent and open portrayal of sexual life of characters. At the time goes novels gradually lose their educational tone and there are apparent attempts to break seemingly unbreakable taboos related to sex and sexuality. With the creation of modern states in the region comes big increase in number of printed novels in all relevant countries. Even today the majority of books and novels in particular still come from Egypt but starting from the second half of 20th century our selection of works comprise novels from various countries including pieces from Morocco, Sudan, Lebanon, Syria, Palestine, Saudi Arabia and Kuwait.

Moreover this thesis finds out the issue of sex and sexuality is more prevalent in novels written by women then in works by men, in the same time men-writers prefer female characters to male characters.

The aim of this doctoral thesis is to present for the very first time a thorough and complete description of development of the sex-theme in modern Arabic novel and put this development in social, historical and cultural framework.

Key words: Arabic, novel, sex, sexuality, Islam, Middle East, Northern Africa, corporeity