CONTRASTING TABOOS AND EUPHEMISMS IN LAWRENCE'S *LADY CHATTERLEY'S LOVER* AND BEN JELLOUN'S *LAYLET EL QADR*

Dr. Nadia GHOUNANE
Saida University

ALGERIA

Ms. Hanane RABAHI
Mascara University

ALGERIA

ABSTRACT

Euphemisms and taboos are employed not only in daily speech, but form also the basis of erotic and pornographic literatures, which reflect the socio-cultural background of a society in a given time. The use of euphemisms and taboos in novels in particular, has a function. They are also driven by some social and psychological factors. Thus, the purpose of this research work is to explore the use of sexual discourse in the field of literary texts. In this account, a contrastive study in two novels; Lawrence's *Lady Chatterley's Lover* and Ben Jelloun's *Laylet el Qadr* was made, when a thorough examination of euphemistic strategies and taboo words was held with the help of a number of theoretical approaches in sociolinguistics, literature, and pragmatics. To this end, characters in *Lady Chatterley's Lover* and *Laylet el Qadr* have been put in spotlight. Hence, the findings reveal that the frequency of taboos is high in both works, although their authors resort towards the use of euphemistic strategies to overcome the overuse of sexual scenes. They also prove that both writers employ female sexuality as a tool to question gender inequality. The results also show that characters employ polite forms of address and dialect as a strategy of face saving and threatening. Said differently, the euphemistic and tabooed features in the novels spring from the same theme and differ in their formation since they represent distinct cultures.

Keywords: Euphemisms, taboos, novel, culture, society, English and Arabic literature.

INTRODUCTION

Literary works are also considered as complex means of human interaction. This is because a poet or a novelist may take months, and years thinking on how to put the right words in the right places. For this reason, literary discourse has attracted many researchers in pragmatics, sociolinguistics and queer linguistics, which supply the field of literature with methods that help to explore this part of human discourse.

On the other side, there is a disagreement on the point that literary discourse is not worthy for investigation because it is fraught with ambiguity due to the lack of scholarship, although linguistics in general, and queer linguistics in particular have taken the challenge to bridge the gap between linguistic analysis, and literary discourse. In connection with this, pragmatic theories have been taken as a point of departure to investigate literary discourse. However, early theories have focused on poetry to the exclusion of other literary texts due to the impact of the new criticism. By the beginning of 1980's, pragmatic theories including Politeness strategies, Cooperative maxims, and Conversational analysis have helped a lot in investigating other literary forms.

Further, reading literature critically by many literary theorists helps in understanding some aspects of human psyche on one hand, the principles of cultures, and their societies on the other. In this sense, literature has taken its roots and bases from other disciplines including psychology, sociology, and linguistics, in order to provide a critical overview of human nature, and present appropriate methods to analyse literary discourse. Crucially, literature forms a part of culture, and constructs the people's way of thinking, and their attitudes towards certain subjects such as eroticism, and themes related to sexuality. Therefore, it reflects the society's perception, and provides a rich material for all domains of research as psycholinguistics, sociology, linguistics, and literary criticism.

In this respect, we intend to contrast two different pieces of literature, although their writers are from different eras and cultures. Lawrence represents a revolt against the Victorian literary, and cultural traditions, whereas Ben Jelloun tackles females' issues and their protest against Muslim societal values that favour male's domination, that is, he reflects a combination of two types of fiction, namely, French and Arabic. So, both writers are seen as founding fathers of Modern erotic literature. Lawrence leads the modern fiction, whereas Ben Jelloun paves the way to Post-colonial Francophone writers for the exploration of the triangle of taboos through a naked language that has no link with their sociocultural background.

Within this course of thought, the purpose of this study is presented in four objectives. In its preliminary phase, it may help in shedding light on erotica in literary discourse in both Arabic and English cultures. At the second position, this research work aims also to test the frequency of using euphemisms, taboos and their different types in both languages. In other terms, it strives to examine the degree of euphemisms, taboos and politeness used by characters in both novels, so that to see the position of politeness as a part of euphemism, and its perception in both Arabic, and English cultures. Thirdly, it examines the distinction between both cultures in terms of politeness presentation, euphemistic strategies, taboos and erotica, hoping that this may help in contrasting the two cultures and literatures. In other words, the focal aim of this study is to contrast *Lady Chatterley's Lover* by Lawrence, and *Laylet el Qadr* by Ben Jelloun, and find out differences in the way they present the subject of sexuality. Lastly, this research work will offer a close reading of both novels in terms of subjects related to eroticism including lesbianism, heterosexuality, and female sexuality. Henceforth, these pieces of work reflect contemporary views about the future of both Arabic, and English literatures due to the fact that the central concern of today's novelists is sexuality and its related subjects, mainly, homosexuality. In this sense, *Lady Chatterley's Lover* addresses topics of heterosexuality, and female sexuality, which have been the focus of late Victorian era, and early modern period, whereas *Laylet el Qadr* tackles subjects of lesbianism, heterosexuality and Muslim female sexuality. Notably, these themes play a pivotal place in modern Arabic literary discourse of sexuality that emerges by the late of 1950s and early 1970s. Thus, it offers a selective overview of works on erotica, and its main topics, mainly, heterosexuality through focusing on many theoretical frameworks, especially feminist criticism since it sheds light on related subjects to gendered sexuality including lesbianism, female sexuality, heterosexuality and sexual transgression, in addition to other literary theories: psychoanalysis trend, and its interpretation of sexuality, queer theory, and pragmatic approaches: politeness framework. Therefore, the background of this piece of work is dissatisfaction within the framework brought to the study of erotica, the use of taboos and euphemisms in literature due to the lack of previous scholarship that explores that part of fiction.

To this end, this research work seeks to answer the problematic about how Lawrence, and Ben Jelloun represent female sexuality, and heterosexuality in their erotic masterpieces, and which euphemistic and tabooed devices they employ. Thus, the following research questions provide reliable answers to the problems stated above:

- How do both Lawrence and Ben Jelloun represent female sexuality and heterosexuality?
- What are the different types of figurative euphemisms and taboo devices used in both novels?
- How do characters of both novels use euphemisms to talk about sex?

Working on the afore-stated research questions, the following hypotheses are provided:

- Both writers focus on exposing marginal sexualities, societal standards and gender inequalities through a female sexual revolution as a means to regain the lost identity and put an end to repression. In other terms, they explore gender identities and power through erotica.
- Both novels are rich in figurative euphemisms including metaphors, metonym and implication. In addition, characters in both novels use euphemisms related to sex consciously at the beginning. However, they tend to employ them unconsciously during their sexual relations, although they show positive attitudes towards taboo words related to sexuality.
- Finally, figurative euphemisms in both novels are the results of personal linguistic choices. They reflect societal mores and pressures at a given period of time.

Literary Discourse as a Linguistic Property

Having mentioned the existence of the link between literary discourse, and the field of linguistics, it makes it incumbent upon us to say that language, in general, is the concern of both linguistics, and literary theories. Although there are many differences between them in terms of approaches and rules, they are still connected with a fruitful relationship. In fact, this relationship leads to the emergence of what is called linguistic stylistics, which has put the interpretation of literary discourse at the center of its deliberation. In here, many critics ask how linguistics can shed light on the structures of a literary text since they think that literary theories are not scientific approaches (Durant and Fabb, 1990). This means that literary theories cannot explain some linguistic phenomena. Taking this statement into account, Furlong (2007: 327) expresses the point as follows:

> Ultimately, the kinds of theories which are used in literary criticism […] cannot explain the phenomenon of literary interpretation, partly because they rest on a flawed model of language, and partly because they are not theories about language at all. The misuse of the term theory in literary studies- applying not just to claim about literature, but to a range of critical theories drawn from a range of fields-has led to a widely-held conviction among critics.

As the previous statement implies, Furlong tries to offer a necessarily cursory consideration of the point that most critics argue that literary theories present an incomplete analysis of literary text, since they cannot explain language use in the same way as linguistics does. She (ibid: 328) continues stating that both pragmatics, and linguistics provide a theoretical framework to discourse interpretation.

Literature and Sex

Coming to the issue of sexuality in literature, it is plausible to state that the two are connected through a relationship, since the latter can be seen as a representative of the former. Literature represents, and regulates the sexual experience of individuals, in order to test the use of sex terms in discourse. Johnson argues that the existence of literature can be linked to sexuality, men, and women because "literature could truly say what the relations between the sexes are" (Johnson, 1980: 13)[1]. Johnson adds that literature tries to comprehend the core, and nature of sexuality. In his view, it is not "only a thwarted investigator but also an incorrigible perpetrator of the problem of sexuality".

Without digging deeper on the issue of sexuality in literature, it is important to speak about the representation of sex in literature through exploring some categories including porn and eroticism. Notably, other genres are not our main concern in this place.

Pornographic versus Erotic Literature:
Goldstein et al claim that there is a huge difference between what they call erotica and pornography. Indeed, they argue that pornography can be found in most illiterate societies through erotic folktales. In his part, Kronthausens states that there is a difference between erotica and pornography. In fact, his main attempt is to distinguish between "pornography from erotically realistic art or fiction" (Goldstein et al, 1973: 7). In the same wave, Rist maintains that Kronthausens' division of sexual language into pornography, and erotica is not sufficient. He proposes what he calls conventional obscenity, which "is neutral towards sex, being concerned primarily with the social evils of particular sex patterns" (Rist, 1975: 32). He also introduces Dionysian obscenity, which regards sex as an enjoyable part of human life.

As far as the existence of pornography and erotica in literature is concerned, the use of sexual expressions has changed over time, and differed from one culture to another. English and Arabic literatures are rich in sex tales. In terms of Arabic erotic literature, Arab poets, and storytellers try to break the barriers of Arab taboos, norms, traditions, and literary conventions. These barriers, however, still exist due to the restrictions that Islam has imposed on what is called the triangle of taboos: religion, politics, and sexuality. Similarly, English novelists, and poets have challenged the norms that the British society has created. For example, English eroticism begins to flourish during the Victorian era with the work of Henry Spencer Ashbee[2] . During the 20th century, there has been a distinction between acceptable erotica, and illegal pornography. For this reason, *LCL* reflects well what is behind the morals of the Victorian society. Consequently, it was banned in Britain until the 1960's (Cavendish, 2010).

Stepping back to the difference between erotica and pornography in terms of their use in literature, it is important to point out that the distinction appears with the second feminist wave during the 1960's, when Gloria Steinem "differentiated erotica from pornography based on the amount of tenderness expressed by the two sexual partners and the lack of coercion involved" (Cavendish, ibid: 215)**.** Cavendish adds that some feminist writers see pornography as a sort of oppression for women, and do not give importance to plot or characters, whereas erotica describes the sexual journey of characters, and how their sexual relations influence them as individuals, and their societies in general. In this point, erotica is not designed to explore the romantic relationships between characters, but it has goals to

---

[1] As quoted in Bullough and Brundage (1996: 345).

[2] Henry Spencer has written a sexual memoir entitled "My Secret Life".

realise unlike stories, which are written to incite the reader to orgasm. This sort of literature does not give any importance to the plot, and characters of the story.

Transgressing Social Boundaries in *Lady Chatterley* and *Laylet el Qadr*

A shared aspect between the novels is that they transgress all the social boundaries. Lawrence endeavours to change the Victorian societal norms, and transgresses the old class structure, while Ben Jelloun attempts to change the Moroccan societal values. Indeed, both writers introduce new narrative techniques as a way of social reform. The first part of the novels represents the problems, whereas the second stage reflects how the main characters transgress the taboos made on female body and sex. Thus far, Lawrence is criticised on the basis that he encourages adultery on one hand, changing the societal structure through ruining the rigid system, and inserting what he calls 'class consciousness' on another. This is apparent in the first lines of the novel, when Lawrence addresses directly the reader towards the actual system and how individuals suffer from its rules as the following lines propose:

> Ours is essentially a tragic age, so we refuse to take it tragically. The cataclysm has happened, we are among the ruins, we start to build up new little habits, to have new little hopes. It is rather hard work: there is now no smooth road into the future: but we go round, or scramble over the obstacles. We're got to live, no matter how many skies have fallen.
>
> (*LCL,* 1930: 01).

Accordingly, it is Lawrence who paves the way for other Western novelists to change the social order for the concept of sexuality, which has been regulated by Victorian ideals. Later on, other authors do not limit their themes for female sexuality and heterosexuality, but they extend their fiction to take new phenomena with the recognition of homosexuals, and the spring of lesbian feminism, which in turn leads to the dawn of what is called lesbian and gay literatures. Thence, Lawrence transgresses his societal values, since he gives superiority to masculinity, and the opportunity to femininity for liberation. An additional fact that should be discussed in this respect is the issue of transgression itself. Through a detailed analysis of the novel, it is essential to note that Lawrence transgresses Victorian morals, and class boundaries in purpose. Remarkably, he wants to preserve marriage and family as essential features in the British society. These features should be preserved from the effects of class structure, the influence of modernism, and the cataclysm of the First World War. In his view, the structure of family should be built on real love and passion, not on money, power and prestige. Outstandingly, Lawrence wishes to change the old view of sexuality through transgressing gender boundaries through which he tries to show that Connie is a slave of her female character, and his hatred of femininity through the character of Mellors, and how he undermines women. This is because his wife tries to dominate him sexually. As a matter of fact, Characters in *LCL* transgress their societal values to link body with emotions.

In contrast, Ben Jelloun, who takes Western spirit, revolts against the religious, and cultural norms of his society through, firstly, rape, and then adultery, which is considered as the first tabooed topic in Islam. However, this revolt is not an attempt to end the religious norms, but to insert the new form of Western thinking. In almost all his novels, Ben Jelloun transgresses the norms that Islam has put to restrict sexuality. According to Ajah, Ben Jelloun gives a vivid description of sexuality through deconstructing the knowledge that Islam has put to regulate sex, and sexuality. In this vein, Ajah (2013: 26) underscores the following:

> In the writing of Ben Jelloun, his literary world shows a vivid representation of these emerging sexual concepts and their relationship with Maghrebian woman and her society at large. The writer creates a

web of relationship between patriarchy and Islam, struggling to deconstruct and reconstruct those religious beliefs that undermine the liberation of Moroccan women in particular.

Ben Jelloun does not stop at this stage, but he attempts to reconstruct his model of sexuality that he takes from lesbian feminist movement. Through changing the narrative traditions, Ben Jelloun calls for a change of the social order of his society, thus far transgressing the religious order that builds the basis of all Muslim societies.   In addition, Ben Jelloun questions the position of females in Islam through transgressing the taboos surrounding Muslim women's sexuality by dealing with adultery, or prostitution as a form. In Ajah's view idem), Ben Jelloun "blurs the hegemonic boundaries of gender, religion and space".

Sociolinguistic Features in Sexual Discourse in *Lady Chatterley* and *Laylet el Qadr*
There is a gap in scholarship about the study of euphemisms, linguistic taboos, and their use not only in literature, but also in daily speech due to the sensitivity of the subjects, since they are strongly linked to the socio-cultural background of their societies, especially in the Arab world. Besides, it is claimed that the study of these phenomena in particular, and the use of sexual language in general has been the concern of queer linguistics that has recently come to life. In the other side, sociolinguistics helps queer linguistics with scholarship that supports exploring the use of taboos, and euphemisms in relation to certain parameters including gender, age, and the socio-cultural background of the people who use them. Thereby, many linguists, and sociolinguists tend to make researches, in order to define the exact features that can be used to study taboo language in daily speech and literary language as well.

Notably, some studies in the field of queer linguistics focus on studying the dialogues of the literary texts to identify the taboos used, while others focus on gender, and the socio-cultural background of the literary piece. On the other side, some scholars tend to study the stereotypes of the literary texts like Robert Queen, and the use of lesbian language in literature. Thus far, this study will concentrate, mainly, on employing the following features as social structure, gender, and the frequency of using taboos and euphemisms in the previously mentioned masterpieces.

Gender Roles
Among the shared aims of both novels is to throw some light upon gender roles, and female position in both Moroccan, and Victorian societies. However, it is not our concern to cite some common aspects because the focal aim of this research work is to contrast the above mentioned masterpieces. In his part, Ben Jelloun questions the Moroccan patriarchal system, and how it ignores the roles of females in this society. In contrast, Lawrence addresses the problem of women's restricted freedom. Moreover, Ben Jelloun shows clearly his revolt against Islam. In other words, he undermines Islamic norms through exposing sexuality as a mode of revolt, although Islam has valued females' position in society, and gives them a place better than men, whereas Lawrence foregrounds the existing problems in the VS for political reasons. Besides, Ben Jelloun attracts public attention to the social status of the Moroccan society through giving an orientalised description of some existing phenomena including rape, and prostitution, whereas Lawrence exposes the tyranny of the Victorian system through introducing female sexuality, and the betrayal of an Aristocrat woman, who is supposed to behave in a way that reflects her conservative society.

A critical reading of the novels gives much importance to the analysis of the major reasons that drive Lawrence, and Ben Jelloun to write such literary pieces. In part of Lawrence, the novel takes an imperial principle that is also shared by feminist writers. This principle focuses on females' equality to men because it is believed that many problems are raised as a result of gender differences, while Ben Jelloun's main reason is to revolt against the structure of Arab societies, and how it affects the position of both males and females. Although the novelists try to treat gender roles in their societies, they differ in the way they handle the subject. Ben Jelloun tries to make Zahra as a representative of gender power, while Lawrence tends to shed light on the structure of hierarchical classes, and how they affect female freedom.

Erotic Themes in *Lady Chatterley's Lover* and *Laylet el Qadr*
Both novels share some erotic themes that describe in detail male and female bodies. In his part, Lawrence wants to liberate women from Victorian sexual order, and how it restricts sexuality to marriage, Ben Jelloun revolts against the Islamic borders that put rules for sexual practices. Actually, the way Ben Jelloun eroticises sex, and heterosexuality raises the anger among religious men, although some critics propose that they have to look "beyond the veil of eroticism to bring out the authorial intention of eroticization" because Ben Jelloun "publicises the private, says the unsaid and unveils the veiled, by his representation of the erotic" (Ajah, 2013: 31). Contrary wise, Lawrence focuses on using realistic, and symbolic language such as nouns, adjectives, and expressions that denote the use of eroticism in *LCL*. However, to explore eroticism in these novels, the current study will concentrate on the main erotic themes used by the writers, while the lexicons will be explored in details in linguistic taboos.

Heterosexuality in *Lady Chatterley*
Heterosexuality is the first theme that Lawrence tackles in *LCL*. His major concern is the natural sexual relationship between men and women. In his part, this relation is far from class clash, and gender domination. Indeed, he concentrates on what he calls 'sexual consciousness' because he thinks that the natural relation between both sexes is influenced by the impact of the industrial revolution. In other words, it is based on parameters that these changes impose on males and females, in order to follow their minds. These changes affect even their marriage, and make it artificial as it has already been explained previously. Admittedly, Lawrence provides the reader with a detailed description of body parts, and sexual scenes as it is evident in this celebrated passage:

> And there his hand softly, softly, stroked the curve of the flank, in blind instinctive caress […] 'You lie there' he said softly, and he shut the door, so that it was dark, quite dark. With a queer obedience, she lay down on the blanket. Then she felt the soft, groping, helplessly desirous hand touching her face softly, softly, with infinite soothing and assurance, and at last there was the soft touch of a kiss on her cheek.
>
> (*LCL*:98)

Arguably, Lawrence employs many adjectives, and nouns that denote body parts, and sexual intercourse. In his view, sex should be connected with love and feelings not with mental consciousness. In other terms, it should be associated with what he calls 'the democracy of touch'. In his view, love and sexuality are mysterious and sacred because they define human existence through the natural connection of human body:

> He laid his hand on her shoulder, and softly, gently, it began to travel down the curve of her back, blindly, with a blind stroking motion, to the

curve of her crouching loins. And there his hand softly, softly, stroked the curve of her flank, in the blind instinctive caress.

(*LCL*, idem)

From the foregoing quote, it is important to assume that Lawrence is aware that his message to his readers cannot be transmitted if he does not bring a new technique to realise that. Obviously, he introduces a new erotic language, which focuses on providing a detailed description of the natural relation between a man and a woman.

Female Sexuality in *Laylet el Qadr*

Arguably, female sexuality has been considered as a central theme for many writers, and readers in the Arab world from 1980s onwards. This is due to the spring of the sexual revolution, the effects of lesbian feminist movements on Arab writers, and the dawn of queer studies in the 1990s. In this context, it occupies a great deal of later novels of both Maghrebian, and Middle East writers.

In *LEQ*, identity and sexuality are deeply intertwined for the latter is a sort of revolt to regain the former. Actually, the narrative devices, that Ben Jelloun employs, help him in exposing Zahra's sexual journey in quest for her real feminine identity. According to Hamil, Ben Jelloun links the real with the imaginary, facts with dreams, and the sacred with the profane, in order to free Zahra's identity from the constraints of the patriarchal system that most females suffer from. In the light of this idea, Hamil acknowledges that Zahra experiences a journey "across prohibited territories, whether linguistic, cultural, political, or pertaining to the Name/Law-of-the-Father" (Hamil in Mortimer, 2001: 62). He also contends that the quest for Zahra's identity reflects Ben Jelloun's own research of his lost belonging, "voice and identity" (Hamil in Mortimer, idem).

In exploring sexuality, Ben Jelloun focuses on Zahra's first emotions, and desires through dreaming with a prince on a horse. This dream raises on Zahra **"**the strange sensation**"** to express her "sexual desire" that she misses "for almost twenty years" (Hamil in Mortimer, ibid: 73). According to Hamil, Ben Jelloun concentrates on exposing Zahra's female sexuality in an episode called 'the perfumed garden' which is depicted from [ɛɾæwd̞u lʕæːtiro]by Sheikh Al-Nafzawi. In the perfume garden, sexuality is regulated by certain norms and standards. Although the first step to open the gate of sexuality happens when Zahra escapes her past life, this liberation takes place in her unconscious side through dreams. It is until her encounters with the Consul that Zahra experiences her sexuality as a female, and becomes the Consul's favourite prostitute and "through him, Zahra discovers, though by proxy, the secret language of sexuality**"** (Hamil in Mortimer, ibid: 75).

Factually, female sexuality, as the central topic of the novel, has passed through many stages to be achieved. Indeed, the introduction of this subject represents a direct attack to Islamic standards, the effect of colonialism, the new political and social rigid. It also represents Ben Jelloun's lost identity, voice, culture, and total alienation to Western norms.

Euphemistic Substitutions in *Lady Chatterley* and *Laylet el Qadr*

Although some critics highlight that *LCL* is a tale that encourages the use of taboos, some scholars have found that the novel is also rich in the use of euphemistic substitutions, mainly,

sexual euphemisms. Indeed, Lawrence employs this type to lessen the power of taboo words, and sexual scenes as it has been mentioned in the third chapter.

A closer look on the novel reveals that Lawrence utilises euphemisms in purpose, in order to show differences in values. While some characters from the upper class tend to use indirect terms taken from other languages, other characters including Mellors employs direct euphemistic expressions taken from his dialect.

Sexual Euphemism in *Lady Chatterley*

Sexual euphemism is a common feature that characterises *LCL*, in order to lessen the power of taboo language, and sexual scenes that lead critics to agree that the novel is a pornographic literary piece. A succinct analysis reveals that most of sexual euphemisms are employed to describe body parts, and their functions. As a matter of fact, Lawrence chooses to employ nicknames related to genitalia, such as Lady Jane and John Thomas (see appendix 7). According to Nash (1995), the use of euphemism as in 'John Thomas' is a feature of the mid-nineteenth century novels, although Lawrence introduces a new form of sexual euphemism, or what is called intimate sexual euphemism, which differs largely from the Victorian sexual euphemism (Linfoot-Ham, 2005). Indeed, this type of euphemism is taken from slang vocabulary. Similarly, Ferguson (2004: 141) asserts that Lawrence employs slang as a part of sexual euphemism, in order to create **"**a new aristocracy (a sexual or natural aristocracy with a natural marriage that could be represented as a counter to legal marriage)".

As a sum to what precedes, the hidden aim behind the use of sexual euphemism in *LCL* is to lessen the overuse of taboo words and sexual scenes through the use of slang expressions, which signal the intimate connection between the two lovers, and how it succeeds by the end. In what follows some forms of sexual euphemism are cited.

Euphemistic Strategies in *Laylet el Qadr*

Arguably, Arabic euphemism has undergone many formations starting its evolution in Classical Arabic, and its change because of the influence of Western writings in the Modern era. Henceforth, Modern Arab linguists try to build some bases for Arabic euphemism that can be understood by Western scholars. As far as *LEQ* is concerned, euphemistic strategies are influenced by the translation of the novel. In what follows, some euphemistic substitutions, which focus on sexual euphemism, are cited.

Sexual Euphemism and its Main Forms

Ben Jelloun gives much importance to the use of taboo words, since the novel is an erotic masterpiece. He also introduces sexual euphemisms to cover up the overuse of sexual scenes. Actually, euphemistic expressions belong to figurative language that Modern cognitive Arab linguists try to provide scholarship with the fields of pragmatics, and sociolinguistics. In this context, the main forms of sexual euphemism in *LEQ* are classified into two essential themes; body parts (male/female genitals), and sexual intercourse.

Words Related to Genitals

Doubtless, Arabic language is rich in euphemistic terms that describe human body parts. Actually, these terms have gained much attention because body parts are seen as the most tabooed topics to be discussed. Thus, people or writers tend to euphemise them especially female organs, which take an essential lexis in both standard and dialectal Arabic such as [ɛlfæræj] (vulvar).

The translator succeeds in keeping Ben Jelloun's euphemistic expressions related to genitals, and replaces them by terms taken from Standard Arabic to describe both male, and female sexual organs, although the novel focuses on female sexuality. The characters in the novel, mainly, Zahra resorts to use [ʔæʕdæːʔiː] (my organs), or [ʕudˌwuhu](his organ) to describe her genitals, or the Consul's sexual organ. Words like [mihbæliː], or [færæʒiː] (my vagina) are mostly employed in erotic literary works to describe women's genitals; while to describe males' sexual organ, the only used word in the novel is [qæḏiːbiː] (my penis).

Words Related to Copulation

Sexual matters are also treated with care in daily speech, and literary works because they are classified as the second tabooed theme after female genital, and body parts in Arabic culture. In *LEQ*, Ben Jelloun has employed euphemistic terms related to acts denoting copulation and orgasm. Moreover, rape, adultery, and prostitution are also among the forbidden acts that are dismissed from public discussion, although they are seen as turning points in the formation of Zahra's identity. However, words related to them are few in the novel.

As far as rape is concerned, there are many substitutions in Arabic language like [jæʔχudu wæʒhæhæː] (take her face), or [jæfuðu elbikæːræ] (deflower), but the only word employed in *LEQ* is [ʔiɣtisˁæːbæːt] (rapes). Besides, the topic of prostitution has taken a considerable discussion, but most of the descriptions of the prostitutes are restricted to their body parts. Indeed, the writer mentions two terms [edæːru ʃæhiːræ] and [elmæwæːχiːr](the house of prostitution). Moreover, copulation has received an essential part in the novel and the translator resorts to euphemisms from Classical Arabic, such as [nætæḏæːʒæʕu], or [juʒæːmiʕu](having sexual intercourse)

Sexual Language in *Lady Chatterley*

A closer look on both novels reveals that they are absent from the use of pornographic features because both authors select their figurative language in purpose, and they avoid the use of clichés, and stereotypes, that characterise pornographic language. As far as the representation of sexuality in *LCL* is concerned, Lawrence seeks to introduce a new version of sexual discourse, which has been forbidden during the Victorian period. In effect, these ideals have separated the human body into the physical side, which should be covered and the mental side, which should take place instead of the animalistic nature of emotions. This is apparent in Lawrence's representation of Mr. Clifford, who concentrates on his mental ability because of his physical disability, which prevents him from experiencing his sexual life with his wife.

Again, Lawrence uses a language full of obscenity with the absence of Victorian classical euphemisms. In fact, he seeks to liberate sexuality through the employment of taboo words. The hidden aim is not to expose sexuality for a pornographic purpose, but to free sex from the taboos that surround it. Notably, Lawrence gives a detailed description of sexual scenes through the introduction of a new sexual discourse. In his view, it is the negative attitudes of people, which make some words taboo. However, he succeeds to describe what the characters feel during sexual intercourse, although he focuses on giving a detailed description of sexual scenes. Moreover, Lawrence has insisted on showing that the relation between Mellors and Connie is not only based on sexual intercourse, but it also combines their physical, emotional,

and mental sides. In this sense, this piece is erotic rather than pornographic. A good example is when Connie dances naked in the rain, and Mellors follows her. This scene does not result in sexual intercourse. This is another proof that the novel is an erotic masterpiece. Markedly, he gives power to sexual acts rather than words because he regards sexuality as an essential part to convey the power of words "where you act the words instead of saying them" '(*LCL*: 26). Actually, Lawrence wants to free both speech, and sex from the taboos that the Victorian society has put to regulate them. Succinctly expressed, he introduces a new language that expresses sex, and the sexual relation between Connie and Mellors.

Sexual Discourse in *Laylet el Qadr*
At the outset, it is made clear that *LEQ* is a tale of sensuality that links the profane with the sacred, in order to violate Islamic standards. As a matter of fact, Ben Jelloun makes erotic language as a medium to realise his hidden aims. This language serves as a touchstone to revolt against the "symbolic presence of the Name-of-the-Father-the figure of the law par excellence-in the unconscious that is responsible**"** (Hamil in Mortimer, 2001: 63). Ben Jelloun shows the symbolic revenge of Zahra through taking all her things, and burying them with the dead body of her father, then she hangs him with the cover that he obliges her to put in order to hide her breast.

As far as the use of sexual language in the novel is concerned, *LEQ* is rich in sexual features, and sentences that reflect most tabooed topics such as sexual intercourse, prostitution, and the description of male/female body parts. Notably, Ben Jelloun focuses, mainly, on the transformation of Zahra's body from masculinity to femininity through developing her sexual desire, firstly, through rape, then adultery.

Contrasting the Use of Euphemisms and Taboos in *Lady Chatterley* and *Laylet el Qadr*
As it has already been mentioned in the previous chapters, it is difficult to contrast two novels from different periods, distinct languages and cultures. As a result this study will take into account the differences between the novels at hand.

Although *LEQ* shows Ben Jelloun's attitudes towards the use of taboo lexis, it is rich in euphemistic expressions. In contrast, *LCL* reveals a great frequency of taboo usage, even though Lawrence resorts to employ sexual euphemisms. Besides, it is a problem to test the frequency of using taboos and euphemisms in *LEQ,* since the novel is translated from French into Arabic, and words lose their power through their interpretation. Consequently, this study will focus on examining the frequency of using euphemistic and tabooed lexis in *LCL* and *LEQ* depending on the most important characters as it is shown in the following table:

Table 1 Sample Size of Euphemistic Users.

Novels	Euphemistic characters' number	Full characters' number
Lady Chatterley	5	15
Laylet el Qadr	3	10

Out of the total number of characters in both novels, few of them tend to employ euphemistic substitutions. This stratum displays the percentage of euphemistic usage as shown in table 2:

Table 2 Percentages of Euphemistic Usage Depending on Users

Novels	Euphemistic percentage
Lady Chatterley	33;33%

Laylet el Qadr	30%

There is another way through which the frequency of euphemistic usage can be measured. It is to count the number of words in both novels depending on their pages.
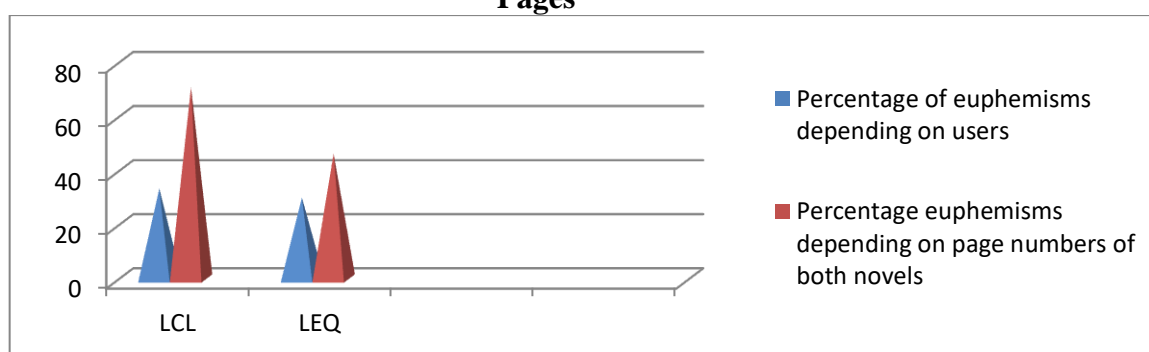
The frequency of using sexual euphemisms and their forms depend on the novels' pages as shown in table 3:

Table3 Percentage of Euphemistic Usage Depending on Pages.

Euphemisms in the novels	Percentages
Main characters in *Lady Chatterley*	70%
Main characters in *Laylet el Qadr*	46,30%

The following graph illustrates the use of euphemisms relying on the sample of population represented in the novels, and the number of pages:

Graph 1Percentage of Euphemistic Usage Depending on Users and Number of Pages

The statistics reveal that the frequency of using euphemisms has been studied according to the selected characters from *LCL* and *LEQ,* and depend also on the pages of euphemistic usage. The findings prove that there is a high frequency of euphemisms in *LCL*. About 33, 33% of the total characters reveal positive attitudes towards euphemistic substitutions and 70% of the total pages of the novel contain euphemistic expressions, whereas it is acceptable in *LEQ*. About 30% of the total population employs strategies to avoid taboos and 46, 30% of the novel's pages reveal that those characters utilise euphemisms in purpose.

Additionally, the sample of the study displays also positive attitudes towards linguistic taboos, mainly, words to describe male/female genitalia, copulation and coitus; however, the frequency differs largely between the aforementioned novels. The characters are selected following stratified sampling depending on the whole sample presented in the novels. The selection will rely largely on the main characters, who employ a great deal of taboos as shown in the following table:

Table 4 Sample Size of Taboo Users

Taboos in the novels	Characters	Full characters' number
Lady Chatterley	6	15
Laylet el Qadr	3	10

Out of the total sample which reflects the characters' use of taboos, the following table will cite the percentage, or frequency of taboo usage:

Table 5 Percentages of Tabooed Users

Novels	Taboo percentage
Lady Chatterley	40%

Laylet el Qadr	30%

The amount of taboos or their frequency can be also tested depending on the number of pages in both novels focusing on the most tabooed subjects including sex, genitalia, copulation and orgasm:

Table 6 Number of Taboo Words Depending on Pages

Main characters in the novels	Sex	Copulation and orgasm	Genitalia	Other forms	Total	Full pages of the novels
LCL	15	13	20	127	175	260
LEQ	1	20	1	24	46	149

Analysing the percentage of taboo usage in both novels focuses on counting the number of taboo words related to the most tabooed subjects. Thus, the frequency is represented in the following table taking into account the previous sample:

Table7 Percentage of Taboo Usage Depending on Pages

Taboos in the novels	Percentages
Main characters in *Lady Chatterley*	67,30%
Main characters in *Laylet el Qadr*	30.87%

The findings reveal that characters in *LCL* display positive attitudes towards taboos. The results also show that the percentage (67, 30%) is high in comparison with euphemistic usage, whereas the sample of *LEQ* tends to use more euphemisms, although they have positive attitudes towards taboos (30.87%). The analysis also reveals that taboo words related to desire, orgasm, and coitus are high in *LEQ,* while the term sex is mentioned many times in *LCL*. The following graph determines the difference in terms of taboo usage between the two novels depending on the users and the novels' pages:

Graph 2 Percentages of Taboo Usage Depending on Users and Number of Pages
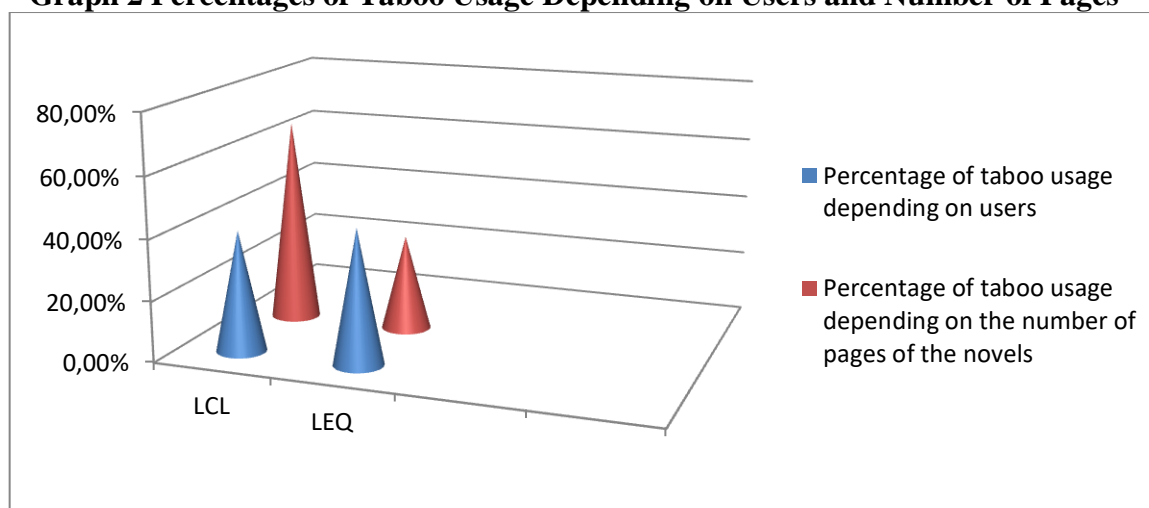
CONCLUSION

The use of euphemisms, and taboos in literature has gained much scholarly attention by the dawn of queer linguistics during the 1990s. Most of studies demonstrate how they should be learnt to discover the personality traits of characters in literary discourse, consequently,

examining the position of these two phenomena in the authors' societies and cultures. However, no study has provided a model to investigate the phenomena at hand from a sociolinguistic and literary point of view. As a result, this thesis tries to provide some findings that can be taken as touchstones for further studies.

Arguably, Lawrence and Ben Jelloun differ largely in the way they represent euphemisms and taboos because they reflect distinct cultures and literatures. Both writers explore female sexuality, but their way varies from each other. Connie tries to recover her dead identity, while Zahra searches for her lost identity through heterosexuality. In his part, Lawrence concentrates on describing sexual intercourse as a part of heterosexuality; Ben Jelloun, however, focuses on the heroine's socio-cultural conflict to prove her own femininity. As a matter of fact, Zahra's lost female character is regained gradually through rape, adultery, and later on through prostitution.

Both Lawrence and Ben Jelloun recognise that in order to change a society, it is important to start with the individual. Besides, both authors use love and passion as a way for the characters' moral salvation. Although the novelists share the same aim, they differ largely in their representation of female sexuality, for they represent totally different cultures. *Lady Chatterley's Lover* exposes sexuality, and makes heterosexuality permissible, although it takes half a century to realise that. This leads into a religious crisis in church, while *Laylet el Qadr* cannot change the correct bases that Islam puts, but it can attract attention towards the growth of some sexual phenomena such as homosexuality, and brushes the red carpet for other novelists to resolve the different reasons behind the spread of these phenomena in most Muslim societies.

Last but not least, it may be helpful to state that the areas of euphemisms and taboos remain behind the backdrop, although many researchers try to open the gateway for scholarship, in order to understand human psyche, and analyse the linguistic features used by certain queer communities including homosexuals, and lesbians. Thus far, this work intends to build a communicative bridge between sociology, psychology, sociolinguistics, and literature that might be helpful to understand the core of each society's culture because exploring the important cultural aspects of a given community is essential for foreign language learners.

REFERENCES

Ajah, R. O. (2013). "Multiples Transgressions: Sexuality and Spitually of Moroccan Diaspora in the Works of Tahar Ben Jelloun", *IOSR Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences,* Vol. 16, pp. 26-38.

Ben Jelloun, T. (1987). *Laylatu l-qadr* [The Night of Destiny] (trans. Mohammed Sharghi). Casablanca: Toubqal and Le Seuil.

Bullough, V. L., and Brundage, J. A. (1996). (eds). *Handbook of Medieval Sexuality.* New York and London: Routledge, Francis and Taylor Group.

Cavendish, M. (2010). *Sex and Society, Volume 1.* New York: the Brown Reference Group Ltd.

Durant, A., and Fabb, N. (1990). *Literary Studies in Action*. London: Routledge.

Ferguson, F. (2004). *Pornography, the Theory: What Utilitarianism Did to Action.* Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, Ltd.

Furlong, A. (2007). "A Modest Proposal: Linguistics and Literary Studies", *Canadian Journal of Applied Linguistics,* Vol. 10, p. 325-347.

Goldstein, M. J. et al. (1973). *Pornography and Sexual Deviance: A Report of the Legal and Behavioral Institute*. University of California Press, Ltd.

Hamil, M. (2001). "Rewriting Identity and History: The Sliding Barre(s) in Tahar Ben Jelloun's *The Sacred Night"*. In Mortimer, M. (ed). *Maghrebian Mosaic: A Literature in Transition* (pp. 61-80). Lynne Rienner Publishers, Inc.

Lawrence, D.H. (1930). *Lady Chatterley's Lover*. Privately printed.

Linfoot-Ham, K. (2005). "The Linguistics of Euphemism: A Diachronic Study of Euphemism Formation", *Journal of Language and Linguistics,* Vol. 4, pp. 236-263.

Rist, C. R. (1975). (ed). *The Pornography Controversy: Changing Moral Standards in American Life*. New Brunswick and New Jersey: Transaction, Inc.