

# Sovereign Account of Muslim Female's Ethnic Imagination: An Interpretation to the Narratives of Leila Ahmed and Amina Wadud

**Rafia Rehman**

Research Scholar,

Department of English

Mewar University (Rajasthan)

## Abstract

“Professing the Renaissance: the Poetics and Politics of Culture” by Louis Montrose revived his concern about literary productions, historical, political, and social terms (1989). He proposed a forum for the interpretation of autonomous aesthetics and intellectual concerns as inextricably related to other speeches. I argue here that although autobiography is seen as a “writing back,” it's a strategic transformative act that attaches the past with the current and restores the future. Although an autobiography is very personal, it is seen from a personal viewpoint as a record of public events. A woman's journey (2012) and African American philosophy professor Amina Wadud's Within the Gender Jihad (2008) are some of the development of interwoven private as well as public history, for example, A Border Passage from Cairo to America by Leila Ahmad. The personal introduction in these stories is an independent act that starts interdisciplinary dialogues that motivate and bring about future variations. Such autobiographies are not necessarily accounts of the past. In this context. Inversely, the poetics and politics of society are instruments to proofread the contributions and thereby reposition them in testimonials. The study aims to objectively read both autobiographies, scholarly and personal, as exemplary models of private/public cultural negotiations, using postcolonial, Islamic feminism and modern historicism. It also attempts to investigate the dialogue, as it represents the future of women in Muslim cultures and Diasporas, between literary, historic, and social aspects.

**Keywords:** Amina Wadud, Women in Islam, New Historicism, personal narratives, post-colonialism, Leila Ahmed, non-white feminism, autobiography

## 1. Introduction

The expressing of the Renaissance: poetics and cultural politics of Louis Montrose have reaffirmed his responsibility for the historical, political, and social conditions of literary productions (1989). He introduced a forum that would make it possible to grasp autonomous aesthetics and scholarly concerns as inextricably related to other speeches and activities (Rivkin & Ryan 2004). Literary debates at present indicate a strong demand for a return to the past of literary studies that offer timely critical views to transfer literary readings from either a “text-centered” method (Myers 27). In that respect, as an analytical approach 'Modern Historicism' shows the realistic capacity to read such literary texts as they link the text to its political and social contexts and give the reader a more holistic view. He points out that literature is the key subject of the campaign. Stephen Greenblatt who created the “New Historicism” signed the word “the Poetics of Culture,” In his Renaissance-style Greenblatt viewed literature as one of the social forces leading to the development of humans (4). The critical interpretation of extensive reading from an ancient point of view can also propose improvements and suggest new steps into the future. Authors and literary theorists, such as Eric Sundquist, have also shown how literature influences real world views and shifts in the structures of the social world (620). Additional literary analytical instruments may also be used to allow thorough critical reading of texts with multiple elements. The crossroads between postcolonial and feminist reading are now more used since the poetics of texts are well understood by Greenblatt. It also offers a better picture of its impact on identity formation (7).

Feminism however according to D, in particular. G. Myers appears to have explained the dilemma of reading mythical texts as an “ethereal entity” which is beyond the strife of culture, since it wishes that literary criticism will improve and proposes to change society (28). As conversations about multiculturalism are going on across the world, particularly in a society with migrants from numerous roots, many women, in particular, who do not adhere to the white euro feminist tradition, are especially concerned about the cultural gap. The critique of black women, for example, constantly illustrates the challenges of white universalism and homogeneity (Smith 1982). As Akila Choudhry notes out, Black feminism, analytical feminism of colour, postcolonial feminism, and even theological feminism are assumed to have stagnated epistemological authority, starting to challenge the dominating inclusion of liberal white feminism (228). Similarly, the two scholars mentioned, Ahmed and Wadud, emphasized that the mainstream White feminists is Islamic feminism (Ahmed, Border 291-3, 296 & Wadud, inside 55-87). Islam is not only the legal means for Muslim women's feminism scholarship but also the basis for their sovereignty and speech control. It is the distinction between both personal and cultural of their cultural poetics. Leila Ahmed and Amina Wadud talk as champions of the equity of Muslim women of the presumption of Islamic past, which they would use to attain equity inside Islam as legitimacy. According to Akila Choudhry, women of specific indigenous cultures must be activated using their religious and cultural systems to have physical power over their bodies, voices, and self-reliance. According to Choudhry, historical sovereignty must be accomplished without the interference of others (242).

In Arabic literature in common or Arab woman writings in specific, the tradition of autobiography is precisely modern. In this dominated by men arena, from which women have been regarded for centuries “ghostly absence” it easily differentiates itself (Nash 351). Strategically, new, socio-political opportunities for Arab women can be used as a back door path to criticizing the status of women by writing personal accounts (Vinson 78). Such true self-narratives challenged the traditionally oriental-based literary imagined of Muslim women, who resonated steadily after 11 September. They deliver an authentic insider voice that contradicts the picture generated by the so-called “fantasy echo” (Yaqin 172). As autobiography is a “writing back” (dinner 15) as a point of view in the literary text, I contend that it is a transitional strategic act, connecting past with today and restoring the future. The self-biography as a story gives the writer a critical view of the cultural heritage, encouraging the narrator, also to its impact on individual and public life, to include the incident and her outlook on it. This paper is concerned with the cultural/gender problems that Muslim women face in Arab cultures as in the diaspora in terms of independence and self-realization.

Rocio David's (2009) scholarly autobiographies provide readers with a very rich account of their personal life from a technical and academic viewpoint. Some similar explanations are shared by these narratives; both are presented by women scholars with a special importance in Muslim women's studies. In the field of empowerment and autonomy, the two authors already have written and discussed it thoroughly. Both statistics are also well-known in the area. They both come from Africa and work and teach in the Americas at the moment. Both memoirs occur in Islamic history at an important period, when debates on Islam in general and women in Islam, particularly, are at their highest. Even if they differ greatly in their stories, it is their interest to make Muslim women more understandable by rethinking Islamic history and culture. They share the interests of Muslim women. Both authors include evidence of Muslim women's battling for the Islamic and cultural heritages they own through their observations into their autobiography. The critical views of the two authors are more applicable to this paper as they use their life as a corpse for a reflection and examination. The intimate opening of the two texts instigates the explicitly intended intercultural dialogue since it combines a variety of national, religious, literary, and linguistic influences.

The initially intimate accounts must then be viewed as very social and group testimony as Gillian Whitlock 2015 clarified and vary greatly from the overwhelmingly white Western autobiographical canon (2-3). Authors both use academic experience and practice to reconstruct independent tales of Muslim women as they compose their lives. The goal of this analysis is to examine the two autobiographies through post-colonial, feminist, and modern methods of historicism as indicators of the self-fulfillment of Muslim women and their repositioning in their communities and their diaspora's political and cultural poetics. It also attempts to examine the literary, historical, and linguistic discourse in the selected accounts. While the theoretical re-reading of the role of women in Islamic history and culture indicates that both scholars support the advancement of Muslim women. It also discusses their attempts to mould Muslim women's studies in Western feminist academies.

The work of Leila Ahmed, as a historian and theologian, is primarily concerned with discovering the voice of women by studying their role in pre-and early Islamic history. To identify answers to the dilemma for women in Islam and to include women in debates on Islam and modernity, she used historically focused feminist analyses. The historic response of Ahmed to find power to enact reforms by women's groups is seen by Anne Tuppurianen as a retrograde approach to the women's issue because she relies more on tradition and history. In its review events (249). Conversely, Amina Wadud's *Looking ahead* takes a linguist and hermeneutical view and demands that Muslim women's authors establish structure and unity (Tuppurianen 225). Ahmed and Wadud both write their own lives as an act of autonomy to write female narratives into their people's literary cultures (Vinson 2008 90).

## **2. Leila Ahmed: Identifying Muslim Women Voice in Personal / Professional Narratives:**

Leila Ahmed is an Egyptian upper class; she was a witness during the 1952 revolt to the country's shifting political and social environment. The open-mindedness, compassion towards women, and respect for world leaders like Gandhi inspired her father. Her aversion to Arab nationalism and opposition to the rule of Jamal Abdel Nasser also affected her. This opposition would ultimately lead to all her belongings for the family. The openness and inclusion towards others, which became important in the midst she later played, ties West and Near East cultures, were influenced by Ahmad's Catholic nanny who spent many of her childhood (Tuppurianen 107).

Thomas Tweed's philosophy of faith in the case of crossing boundaries favourably impacts Ahmed's attitude to her memoir (Barbour 722). It creates understanding bridges, as its "Passage" crosses the limits which restrict the identification of the diaspora of itself and other Muslim women. She explains:

"For after that my life will become part of a colourful storey in America, women's storey in America, Muslim storey in America, and a part of the storey of America and the People of America in an universe of boundaries dissolves, borders vanish." (*Border* 296).

Ahmed's Islamic school as a young girl was incomplete to the short passages of her grandmother's Qur'an, something which she shared with many girls of the highest class. She also was taught and encouraged the use of English in her social circles to interact with her brothers. Due to her varied education and Western education, she established ties with girls of different religions. Ahmed is positive about her western life like all her brothers. The bulk of teachers was not Arabs in Cairo and enrolled in an English School. She graduated in Background from Girton College in England and studied in Cambridge. In the late 1970s, Ahmed moved to America and began her academic life at Amherst College as a part-time teacher of women's studies and then as a Harvard full-time lecturer.

Ahmed has three parallel lines of geographical, scholarly, and personal autobiography: historic; post-colonial, and feministic; critical study and autonomy. The three of them are interspersed with her contemplation and the reader's life. When she reflects on her past and the individual narrative follows the articulation of public history, she uses the story of her life as the basis of criticism (Davis 110). Ahmed's memoir uses the conversation between the intimate, the technical, and the public as a technique for other women scholars. It can be considered an innovative mix using theoretical agency to maximize opportunities. The content of the reminder is an act of openness to the past and an exploration of our position through numerous lenses.

The three focal points of Ahmed's life tale are Europe, Cairo, and America, which reflects the passage of his personality. Their quest to redefine their voice also reveals. Ahmed's speech indicates intimate and technical redefinition; she reflects on a Western intellectual journey thus reconstructed in the language that was still beyond definition when she grew up her history as an Arab and a Muslim. She stressed that my infancy collapsed because the words "imperialism" and "Western" were not yet associated with "racism, oppression and exploitation" (Border 5). Various self-definitions are created by looking back to her own story, which was re-defined during the Nasr era of the 1950s, mostly during the Egyptian revolution, in collaboration with other Egyptians.

From the "Harem" to the beginning of the Harems days, in the realms of her grandmother at a young age, she proposed in the chapter headings of her narration Ahmed's memoirs where it ends, Sharawi's Memoir (Nash 354). Even though the "Harem" issue is a confrontation in Arab and Muslim women's writings, Ahmed's use of the Harem does not in any way reflect a recycling of the above-mentioned "fantasy echo" (Yaqin 172). On the opposite, it was used to mention the close of an era and the start of a new era. She pointed out that her key motivation for writing her Memoir is to respond to Western stereotypes regarding Muslim women: generally very misconceptions about Islam or about what a Muslim girl is like and how culture is like and so on. In addition to saying "no, it wasn't like that" and responding in general, I did not have a means of conveying the true sense of that universe. And this book was partially written for having to say here, this is how a Muslim girl grew up, read this (Ahmed *Border* 1).

She defines Girton as the "Harem perfected" not the western notion of masculine supremacy and patriarchal women, but as a harem that reflects the feminine freedom, the elderly oversight, hierarchy, and, above all, a permanent lack of male authority (Border, 183). Girton has a similar influence in its class separation and rigid customs, not only in being a sex-separated group. Ahmed did not completely embrace the Harem because she said she was "privileged" for living the two Harem customs, She also saw an end to both the Turco Egyptian and the British, as Girton was permitted to have male teachers in her postgraduate years (Border 183).



For the entire environment, Ahmed felt absolutely at home at Girton, and the countryside reminded her that she had grown up in the countryside, hierarchies, and customs. The comparison based her attention on Western liberal views and criticizing Third World society and the patriarchal social class systems attacked opposite (*Border* 183). She opposed the “guilt-free” culture that legitimizes the abuse of others by coating “democratic” names for the facts of the things. It criticizes white Western feminism for its embrace of bad treatment and excuse as long as the desire for “higher things” is supported (Ahmed *Border* 182).

While she does not accept the master/servant arrangement common to civilization, Ahmed deems it more civilized and caring than a trained dry gypsum teacher and Girton's legalized assist who symbolizes colonial double standards. While she has power relationships, she is more familiar with her maid Umm Said and her mother with Fathia than she has seen with the faculty of Girton and the viewpoint or assistant. In her grandmother's house in Zatoun, she sees Umm Said lying in the field massaging her grandmother's legs peacefully. And their servant, Fathia, is calling for a snapshot of her mom hanging on the wall as an indication of the intimacy Girton lacks since her death (*Border* 103, 183)

The encounter of Ahmed Girton has opened the eyes to western feminism's sexism and its false plurality and inclusion. These experiences have changed her prospect of learning the viewpoints of Muslim and Arab women by the Euro-White feminists generally, and their discriminative categorization of harem women, such as Harriet Martineau's portrayal of them as inferior, dumb, mindless, and pointless. Even though she does not see the importance or sense of the debates she has heard in the female culture and harem of her family, she does not embrace sexist remarks, such as those written during her visit to Egypt by Martineau. She particularly doesn't speak Arabic, so she should not be judged and biased against all Muslim women, according to Ahmed (*Border* 193). Akila Choudhry has discussed Ahmed's study of and identifies the convergence of colonial and feminist reading of women from particular societies as “backward.” Choudhry stressed the importance of tying and raising the pressure on the female shoulder of the link between “backward cultures” and colonialism (240).

She realizes that she needs to differ from that prototype because it reflects what she does not want to be, Ahmed's sense of self-realization which is brought up in the solitary culture of the harem. She was oblivious of the Western women that she read in books and saw in movies (*Border* 193). But, after she came into the United States in the early 1970s and entered the field of studies for women, she found that White/Western women's battle for equality is not properly reflected as they are battling for a selective discriminatory point of view. Like other coloured women in the West, Ahmed understood that bigotry is thus a supplementary view, which addresses Muslim women's issues (*Border* 291). She has been hit by the dam, animosity, and ignorance she has noticed and hurry against Islam in general in the women's research group.

Even though studies were still a relatively new region at the time, Ahmed stressed that while she thought it was hard to replenish Islamic heritage (*Border* 292–3), she would have consciously denied her Islamic identity, as did most Muslim scholars. Ahmed said that her studies were a relatively new field (*Barbour* 721).

After a couple of years of returning to Cairo and contributing to a post-graduate fellowship in Cambridge, she questioned her identification as an Arab, at the similar time as affirming her Egyptian and Islamic self (Barbour 719). And she was inspired to write her book, seeking to describe herself (Ahmed Border 253). She was back in England in the late 1960s when Frantz Fanon's theories of hegemony were at their height. She studied Alberto Memmi, Paolo Friere, and Edward Said along with other people including Fanon. The emerged academic thinking of post-colonialism and imperialism allowed her to investigate her life and "interrogation, reinterpretation and re-assessment of life and work of previous generations... and see what they had not seen, the psychological implications of colonialism, and the quiet and insidious method of internalizing colonialism" (ibid 33-4).

The second step of Ahmed's life, Cambridge, was the creation of self-description in Egypt's non-existent free-thinking environment. However, Ahmed felt isolated and confused at Cambridge, when she first encountered Edward Said's insensitive, pitiful behaviour towards Arabs (Barbour 717). Ahmed and other third world scholars, as she explains: 'we too have lived in a culture that insidiously and omnipresently demoralized our individual experience, our viewpoint, the 'problem without any name' Ahmed met in what she described the "Problem without any name." (Border 226). The work of Ahmed and other writers helped to analyse orientalism, as it gave them the vocabulary to speak. With Said's other works, she defines the book as "transformative" because it changed the intellectual environment and described its self-realization (ibid 242). In her *Women and Gender in Islam*, Ahmed explains in the intersection of the after colonial and the feminist review that expiation of native culture is a cure for the inequality of women only in colonized or controlled society, rather than in western society. Ahmed also describing the development of women in Islamic history (1992 129-68).

As its title means, Ahmed's path to understand and re-envision self-realize autonomous past is a transfrontier journey. It's a journey to create ties among the numerous cultures to which she belongs. She says her story is found in other stories:

It is an aspect of America's feminism narrative, America's women's story, the American history of the cultured, America's Muslim story and America itself, and American exists in a domain of boundary breakdown and boundary disappearing (Ahmed *Border* 296).

Ahmed uses a series of strategies to reinvent her narrative to reinforce the subject and intent of the crossing and gives an indication of the state of women both at home and in Muslim communities. In addition to critical readings that distance their memoirs from being merely a historical record, she mixes in excerpts from Arabic and French literature; she also cites Rumi as pointing to the universality of faith and the internationalization of civilization.

### 3. Amina Wadud: An Example of Woman's Struggle for Equity

Amina Wadud is an African-American Islamist who has recently said that she has learned coincidentally that her parents are Moorish-Muslim (Wadud "American by Force" 2011). The hermeneutical method as a response to Islam's women's problems, she is a feminist theorist and university professor, who have a notable influence on discussion about Islam and women. Her intellectual method is governed by her twofold status as both a female and an African descent, which includes a view of the problems of women from a particular viewpoint, such as Hooks and Audre Lorde (Tuppurianen 249).

Before and after their conversion to Islam, an individual with racial exclusion focuses his answers to the questions of women in Islam on seeking and emphasizing the idea of equality as an important Muslim principle in the Qur'an. After her college years of adopting Islam, she made this decision in time for her thesis. She promised to read the book herself and she hoped not to be a Muslim until she heard some mention of women's inferiority (Hammer 446). It is through the Quran that we will find the best sense of freedom, in which Wadud was the pioneer to express the Quranic philosophy of human and human affairs (Al (Sahrmani 87). She presents in 1999 her coran and feminist confirmation that Islam's gender equality is based on the full significance of mercy: "The more graciously I have researched the Quran, the more... The further I asserted that a female person in Muslim should be a complete human being primordial, cosmological, eschatological, metaphysical and moral". Wadud is currently America's most known Muslim woman who pursued a gender redefinition of the Quran (Hammer 444).

The Quran follows a hermeneutic view, reexamining the text from a sex-sensitive viewpoint to affirm the voice of women. Her well-known Wadudian Hermeneutics not only finds the motivation of the text to be a common method for interpreting spiritual scriptures but also that of the reader (Jardim 9).

In her personal experience and her story in scholarly studies, Wadud's *Inside Gender Jihad* re-reads women's role in the Qur'an as *Islamic Holy Buch* and *Muslim Women's History* in 2008. Wadud's *Within Gender Dijk* 2008 focuses on women's problems of Islam. Much like Ahmed, Wadud's memoir is not historical; it is a vital evaluation of personal and cultural history. Her arrangement varies from the stream of Ahmed's methodology of consciousness by thematically organizing her narration and building a chapter in each of the Muslim women's debates on a specific topic. Wadud who has comprehensive experience in Arabic and who has been a long time studying at Middle East universities uses Italic Arabic and Islamic language frequently in her writings (Hammer 452). Instead of the Egyptian conference used by Ahmed in his memoir, she routinely includes phonetically transcribed standardized Arabic words that identify and define those meanings.

The title of Wadud sums up her life story and her inspiration to publish it. It reveals her quest for fairness and equality at the level of race and gender. The subtitle "Women Reform Islam" explains its use of independent organization and promise to change. It also stipulates the tone of the plot and the goal of the protagonist to



“reform.” She intends to show how to give up with God, which is the central meaning of the book introduced by Khaled Abou El Fadl

The commitment of Islam to justice, integrity, truth, and resistance to all types of domination and oppression is inexorable. Islam this means a Jihad against human vulnerabilities the meaningful abandonment. Jihad or “to strive” for judges not only points out the existence and scholarship of Wadud but also has been deemed “a necessity for survival” (Inside 254).

A man of religion who existed and died weak, a Black man who had endured racial injustice in the American Society, Wadud identifies her as a strong spirituality and inherited her profound faith in divine righteousness from her father as Methodist pastor (Inside 4). Wadud analyzed her past from an Islamic viewpoint while revisiting her life: “I relived my concept of meaning via words in learning the Qur'an in my infancy” (ibid 9). The Qur'an stresses that “a viable social structure on earth that is ethically sound” (Inside 14) is the key objective of the Qur'an to re-establish this social order created on justice and equality. Wadud opens the first chapter stating her obsession with terms and concepts that began in her early childhood and that influenced her quest throughout her lifetime in search of meanings and wider definitions. This appreciation influences her work as a linguist and hermeneutic analyst and is also seen by the narrative she uses (Inside 14). The plot is not structured chronologically, but each chapter addresses those topics. The conversation is then related to her own life, offering explanations of her own story. “This book will contain choosy references to particular of the experiences that complement my trip and theoretical conclusions” Wadud stressed (Inside 24). Wadud is a form inspired by her other scholarly works, opposed to Ahmad's literary methodology! It intertwines its outcomes and study of science with its own life and is solely based on its linguistic and hermeneutical approach. To underline these ideas, Wadud holds to her scholarly method in reading own and collective history saves for a few excerpts of poetry. Wadud's changing structure and independent projects threaten the social and gender order that Islamic tradition presumably has implied and upheld. She opposes the existing order established by the one-dimensional interpretation of the Quran, and, amid the social experience of consternation and shame, encourages women to have their divine right to absolute human dignity. With its freedom, justice, and inclusion, however, Wadud accepted Islam's incomplete, social practice both domestically and in countries such as Libya, where she existed for some years, and she pursued a moral battle to combat marginalization in Islamic intellectual legacy historical growth (Inside 3). She refers to other Muslim authors and scholars, for instance, Leila Ahmed and Fatima Mernissi, in their study of the role of women in Islam; (Inside 20). In its historical approach and use of cross-examination of orientality and gender, she had primarily an influencing influence on Ahmed (Imtoul 443).

In Wadud's story, justice as a key Qur'anic principle plays a central role. She objectively reflected on the difference between the meaning meant to be interpreted by the Quran as a text by her expert reading and by the traditional historically reinforced reading. Your Model Tawhidic Is a term that she expressed on four central truths. It uses this model as an explanation for demonstrating how hierarchies and power are applied

selectively in Muslim cultures. She remembers Islamic study groups in local mosques and neighbourhood meetings in the USA and elsewhere and reflects on the hierarchy of authority in those small communities she lived at and (Inside 25- 40). Wadud draws some personal experiences to illustrate the difference that such Coranian ideas have extended both in history and in the modern world in the everyday lives of Islamic people. The examples of her existence are evidence that Qur'anic ideas are confused and that Islam is repeatedly misapplied. Man as the Khalifa, Allah's moral representative on earth or "deputy man," is contradicting women's degrading and deprived role in Muslim societies (*Inside* 33-41).

In 1994, she led a congregation prayer in the Claremont Main Mosque in South Africa, among the most controversial occurrences in Wadud's life. In the light of negotiations on authority and leadership in Muslim societies, Wadud tells the tale, apart from the legislative controversy that this event has posed around the Islamic world which is not in the scope of this report (Inside 158-162). Despite its sincerity and significance, Wadud deplors the universal silence regarding her speech as she addresses Muslims' core questions. The discussion posed by the case did not address the content analytically. She concentrated more on her gender and wondered about the lawfulness of her prayer leadership. Sex was not used as a prerequisite for religion but rather as a product of practices of the social and cultural past (Calderini 330). She reports on the case and remarks on what she said in her memoirs

As one of the key topics to be discussed in political and female studies, Wadud finds the connection of race with gender to be a critical problem for North American society that specifically impacts Muslim societies outside the US. Her preference of the Jihad gender was her solution both at the human and technical level. She promotes her forward-looking perspective in scholarly and public debate in her memoir in a special segment. This view brings benefits for women's and women's organizations in the US and worldwide. The ongoing Jihad, as described in its final chapter titled "Why Fighting the Gender Jihad," is to begin "telling a portion of the grand story" (Inside 255).

Wadud struggled to get the gender jihad to "eliminate blinders that only view the illusion of fragmentation and then construct arrangements and systems to support the view that it is true" on the intimate, academic, and public levels (ibid 257). In her slogan "I think of Islam beyond patriarchy" Wadud hopes for upcoming Islamic dispensation in which women are completely emancipated (1999, 91). The hermeneutics of Wadud go beyond the bounds of the past, as not only does it ask for the Quran to be re-read to refrain the voice of women. She also looks forward to developing inclusive women's organizations in Muslim communities to introduce and strengthen women's voices. She is advocating for an ethnic grouping of feminist feminists to be overridden by represented authority in women's organizations rather than over them (Tuppurianen 2010, 251). The emphasis of her continuing work has therefore been the reconstruction of the Koranic understanding of men and women in a pluralistic and egalitarian way (Smith 2011, 194).

#### 4. Conclusion

In conclusion, the present thesis shows both authors' skill in using their personal and university narratives to inspire independent social promotion to replace themselves in their societies' cultural poetry. In line with the key goals of this report, it highlighted the authors' methods to reexamine women's personal and popular stories and to reconstruct a better view of Muslim women at home and in the diaspora both today and in the future. The thesis varies greatly from prior studies in the area because it explores at the same time the personal and community backgrounds of the two writers. The research also examined autobiography's significance as a literary text to integrate linguistic and historical dialogue in personal stories. The personal group testimonials are offered in the simple example of Leila Ahmed's *A Border Passage* and Amina Wadud's *In the Gender Jihad*. The two authors rebuilt their personal lives as illustrations of how their cultures develop the status of women. Although the US is both alive and involved, it is in particular Egypt and the Middle East that they establish vital ties to Muslim women's past with Ahmed and other Muslim nations as well as Indonesia with Wadu. Revising their cultural poetics involved an integration of personal life as Muslim women themselves, as experts in women's studies, with scholarly and technical study. As both scientists have faced numerous challenges in their individual and wise course, their memoirs encompass the subject of crossing and overcoming. Both memoirs are composed from the modern viewpoint of historicism, which incorporates historic incidents in the principal literary text. In its repositioning of women in Islamic history, Leila Ahmed and Amina Wadud have incorporated personal and community tales. While they have taken diverse approaches, both reflect a paradigm change in women's past in Islam, both have used their personal stories as a corpus to explore questions of sexism, justice, and equality. Although autobiography is considered a "writing back" craft in general (Golley 15), both authors included observations and critique along with their own stories clearly illustrated more facets than a simple act of storytelling. Moreover, the survey shows clearly how the two authors enabled the sovereignty of Muslim women. Tuppurianen has identified Ahmed's approach as a reverse approach that relies on his past and successes (224, 228), but the current reading in this paper as obvious proves that Ahmed's method used history as a starting point to instigate autonomy and action on Muslim women. In the analysis, the use of hermeneutic to pave the way for collective acts of Muslim women and their sovereignty was demonstrated by Wadud. Tuppurianens define a method that relies primarily on the re-reading of the Quranic text. The research reveals how Wadud used her narration to focus on her scholarly writings and to relate them to inspire Muslim women's development.

Education represents a shared thread in the works both of Ahmed and Wadud amid their various methods to redefining women in Islam and obvious inconsistencies in their methodologies. They both consider women's education as an enabler that helps women to reclaim their place in Islam in compliance with the Qur'an, Islam's leading source. The education in Ahmed's life was a freeing force, allowing her to redefine herself and to substitute herself as a popular female research player. She analyzed the development, particularly at the start of the 19th century, of liberating revolutions and enlightenment in the Middle East and presented evidence of the effect of education on female identity in the area (Gender 1992 189-209). Wadud is also a

leading liberator of women from historical/cultural crises of one-way and stagnating roles of men and women in the Islamic past and the religion (*Inside 262 & Quranand Women 1-15*).

History is the protagonist of personal histories in the two books. These texts are rich in perspectives on past events and offer a Muslim women viewpoint to overwhelmed the triple discriminatory roles in social and academic institutions (racial, gender, and political). Both texts convey a picture of Muslim women's activism and liberation which is significantly distinct from the prevalent stereotype of Western white feminism as a revolutionary saviour. These two works may also record the struggle against marginalization and depreciation of non-white feminism in American studies. Both authors record such a challenge as scholarly practitioners within the theme of crossing. The other academic publications and their writers' presentations in the area of women's studies supplement these texts. They think about the area of feminist studies and recommend initiatives for the advancement of conferences and workshops through participation, diversity, and panels. Both tales indicate that the Muslim history and the current patronizing dominating society of White Feminism are liberated from the dual dominated cultural trends. Therefore both of them are advocating the sovereignty of Muslim women within Islamic tradition, and in Islamic communities both in the home and in the diaspora, a restructuring of authority. Both texts are rich material and theoretical mines and need more critique in the future. The Muslim woman's sovereignty and development only can occur as a significant element, as both writers and scholars in their narratives and other scientific works indicate. These two academics have committed to make Muslim women's voices more audible in American society in the scholarly and public sectors.

## References

About El Fadl, Khaled, Foreword, *Inside the Gender Jihad: Women's Reform in Islam*, One World Publishing, USA, 2008, vii-xvii.

Aboul-Ela, Hosam, Edward Said's "Out of Place": Criticism, Polemic, and Arab-American Identity, *MELUS*, Vol. 31, No. 4, Arab American Literature (Winter, 2006), 5-32.

Afzal-Khan, Fawzia ed. *Shattering the Stereotypes: Muslim Women Speak Out*, Olive Branch Press, US, 2005.

Ahmed, Leila, *A Border Passage: From Cairo to America- a Woman's Journey*. New York: Penguin (1999, 2012).

---- *Women & Gender in Islam*, Yale University Press, New Haven & London, 1992. ProQuestebrary.Web. 26 February 2016

---- "Early Islam and the position of women: The problem of interpretation." Keddie, N. and Baron, B. (Eds), 1991.

ProQuestebrary.Web. 26 February 2016 Retrieved from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3174138>

---- "Women and the Advent of Islam". *Signs* 11.4, 1986, 665-691.

Anderson, L. R. *Women and Autobiography in the Twentieth Century: Remembered futures*. Prentice Hall, USA, 1997.

Badran, Margot, *Feminists, Islam and Nation: Gender and the Making of Modern Egypt*; Princeton University Press, New Jersey, 1995.

Barbour, J. D., "The Consolations and Compensations of Exile: Memoirs by Said, Ahmed, and Eire. *Journal Of The American Academy Of Religion*, 79(3), 706-734, 2011.

Barlas, Asma; *Believing Women in Islam, Understanding Patriarchal Interpretations of the Qur'an*, University of Texas Press, Austin (seventh reprinting) 2011.

-----, "The Qur'an, Sexual Equality, and Feminism" University of Toronto, January 12, 2004. Online: [http://www.asmabarlas.com/TALKS/20040112\\_UToronto.pdf](http://www.asmabarlas.com/TALKS/20040112_UToronto.pdf) date of access: 1-13-2013.

Bhavnani, Kum-Kum, & Meg Coulson, "Race," *A Concise Companion to Feminist Theory*, Mary Eagleton ed. Blackwell Publishing: MA, 2003

-----"The Influence of Social Movements on Articulations of Race and Gender in Black Women's Autobiographies," *Gender and Society*, 1999, 120-37.

Calderini, S. "Islam and Diversity: Alternative Voices within Contemporary Islam". New Blackfriars, 89(1021), 324-336. 2008. Web. 13 February 2016 Retrieved from 10.1111/j.1741-2005.2008.00224.x

Collins, Patricia Hill. *Black Feminist Thought: Knowledge, Consciousness, and the Politics of Empowerment*. New York, Routledge, 1991.

Davis, R. G. Academic autobiography as women's history: Jill Ker Conway's *True North* and Leila Ahmed's *A Border Passage*. *Rethinking History*, 13(1), 109-123. 2009. Web. 13 February 2016 Retrieved from Pro Quest ebrary. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/317413810.1080/1364252080263970>

Doorn- Harder, Pieternella, *Women Shaping Islam; Reading the Qur'an in Indonesia*; University of Illinois Press, Urbana, and Chicago, 2006.

Duderija, Adis; "Review of A. Barlas: *Believing Women in Islam- Unreading Patriarchal Interpretations of the Qur'an*", *Middle East Studies Online Journal*, Volume 1 No2. 2010, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3174138> Date of access 1-13-2013.

Fernea, Warnock; *In Search of Islamic Feminism, One Woman's Global Journey* Anchor Books, and New York: 1998.

Fieldman, Keith. "Poetic Geographies: Interracial Insurgency in Arab American Autobiographical Spaces," *Arab Woman's Lives Retold: Exploring Identity Through Writing*. Nawar Al Hasan Golley (ed.), Syracuse University Press, NY, 2007.

Golley, Nawar Al Hasan, *Reading Arab Women's Autobiographies*, University of Texas Press, Austin 2006.

Greenblatt, Stephen, *Renaissance Self-Fashioning: From More to Shakespeare*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. 1980- 2005.

Hammer, Juliane. "Identity, Authority, and Activism: American Muslim Women Approach to Quran," *the Muslim World*, Oct. 2008, 443-64.



- Hassan, Wail, and Arab- "American autobiography and the reinvention of identity: Two Egyptian Negotiations." *Alif: Journal of Comparative Poetics* 22: 7-38, 2002.
- Imtoul, Alia "A View From Feminist Muslim Scholarship," *Australian Feminist Studies*, vol. 25, No. 66, December 2010.
- Jordan, June. *Some of Us Did Not Die*, New York: Basic Civitas Books, 2002. Karmarae and Treichler, A *Feminist Dictionary*, Pandora Press, 1985, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/464171>
- Jardim, Georgina L, Dr. *Recovering the Female Voice in Islamic Scripture*. Farnham, GB: Ashgate, 2014. ProQuestebruary. Web. 26 February 2016.
- Al Khadrawy, Deeb. *Dictionary of Islamic Terms*, Al Yamama Publication, Damascus, 2004.  
<http://www.waqfeya.com/book.php?bid=6538>
- Lorde, Audre *Sister Outsider; Essays & Speeches by Audre Lorde*. New York: Crossing Press. 1984, 2007.
- Mernissi, Fatima, *Women's Rebellion and Islamic Memory*, London: Zed, 1996.
- Montrose, Louis "Professing the Renaissance: The Poetics and Politics of Culture" in *Literary Theory: An Anthology*, Blackwell Publishing, MA, 2006.
- Myers, D. G. "New Historicism in Literary Studies," *Academic Questions*, March, Volume 2, Issue 1, 27-36, 1989.
- Nash, Geoffrey. "From Harem to Harvard; Cross-Cultural Memoir in Leila Ahmed's *A Border Passage*" In *Arab Voices in Diaspora: Critical Perspectives on Anglophone Arab Literature*. Rodopi, Amsterdam, 351-370, 2009.
- Rivkin, Julie and Michael Ryan (ed.) "Introduction: Writing the Past" in *Literary Theory: An Anthology*, Blackwell Publishing, MA, 2006.
- Said, Edward. *Orientalism*. New York: Pantheon Books, 1978.
- Sharawi, Huda. *Harem Years: The Memories of an Egyptian Feminist*. Trans. Margot Badran. Virago, London 1986.
- Al-Sharmani, Mulki. "Islamic Feminism, Transnational and National Reflections," *Approaching Religion*, vol. 4. No. 2, 83-94, 2014.
- Smith, Barbra. "Toward a Black Feminist Criticism," *All the Women Are White, All the Blacks Are Men, but Some of Us Are Brave*, Old Westbury, NY, Feminist Press, 1982.
- Smith, Jane. "American Muslims and Religious Pluralism" *1. Religion Compass*, 5(5), 192-201. 2011. doi:10.1111/j.1749-8171.2011.00270.x
- Sundquist, Eric. "Melville, Delany, and New World Slaver," in Rivkin, Julie and Michael Ryan (ed.) *Literary Theory: An Anthology*, Blackwell Publishing, MA, 2006. 621-40.
- Tuppurianen, Anne Johanna. "Challenges Faced by Muslim Women: an Evaluation of the Writings of Leila Ahmed, Elizabeth Fernea, Fatima Mernissi and Amina Wadud", Ph.D. Thesis, University of South Africa, May 2010

[http://uir.unisa.ac.za/bitstream/handle/10500/3951/thesis\\_tuppurainen\\_a.pdf.txt?sequence=3](http://uir.unisa.ac.za/bitstream/handle/10500/3951/thesis_tuppurainen_a.pdf.txt?sequence=3) date of access 31/1/2013.

Wadud, Amina. *Qur'an and Woman, Re-reading the Sacred Text from a Woman's Perspective*, Oxford University press, New York: 1999.

-----, "Qur'an, Gender and the Interpretive Possibilities," *HAWA2*, 3, Koninklijke Brill, NY, Leiden, 2004.

-----, *Inside the Gender Jihad: Women's Reform in Islam*, One World Publishing, USA, 2008.

-----, "American by Force, Muslim By Choice." *Political Theology* 12.5 (2011): 699-705. Academic Search Complete. Web. 18 Nov. 2016.

Whitlock, Gillian. *Postcolonial Life Narrative, Testimonial Transactions*, Oxford University Press, 2015.

Vinson, Pauline Homsy. "Shaharazadian Gestures in Arab Women's Autobiographies: Political History, Personal Memory, and Oral Matrilineal Narratives in the Works of Nawal El Saadawi and Leila Ahmed," *NWSA Journal*, Vo.20, no. 1 (spring). 78- 98 2008.

Yaqin, Amina. "Autobiography and Muslim Women's Lives" *Journal of Women's History*, Vol. 25.No.2. 171-184, 2013.

