



Literary Feminism of Laila Al-Othman: *Ṣamt al-farāshāt* [Silence of the Butterflies] as a Sample

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Abstract

Laila Al-Othman is a Kuwaiti feminist novelist and short story woman writer, who was born in 1943. She published fourteen short story collections and nine novels. Al-Othman is a major Arab female novelist and short stories writer of the mid-twentieth century, who has achieved renown beyond her native Kuwait. Several of her works have been translated into French, Russian, Spanish and other languages. In 2009, the Arab Writers' Union in Damascus placed her second novel, *Wasumayya Comes out of the Sea* (1988), on its list of the top one hundred Arabic novels. In addition to *Wasumayya Comes out of the Sea*, her last novel, *Ṣamt al-farāshāt* [Silence of the Butterflies] (2004), as well as her other novels and short stories collections, made a considerable contribution to Arab women's writing at the time. I argue Al-Othman's works reflect her engagement in social critique and in the struggle for women's sexual, political and economic emancipation. Her works offer unique insights into the period in which they were written, and add to our understanding of the evolution of Arab Kuwaiti women's writing. This study aims not only to investigate in particular feminist themes and critiques including sexuality in *Silence of the Butterflies*, and the various literary devices she employs for advancing her feminist agenda, but also to highlight her poetic and figurative language. By addressing literary analysis of *Silence of the Butterflies*, this study hopes to contribute to a fuller understanding of Kuwaiti feminist women writers of the 20th century. I will use the method of literary analysis employed which draws upon Mieke Bal's approach to narratology.

Keywords: analysis, emancipation, novelist, short- story, writing.