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MARGINALIZATION OF THE SELF AND THE OTHER IN FEMINIST NARRATIVE: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF INAAM KACHACHI AND DORIS LESSING

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ABSTRACT

In the feminist narrative, the women writers have represented different manifestations of the core axis in order to interpret different forms of protest and opposition. These can be seen in the actions and utterances of the women in the narrative text. This was seen in the invoking of the experiences of women in a particular historical period, as well as the uncovering of the sufferings of women in the face of a reality that was deeply rooted in customs and traditions that wanted to dominate the fate of the women in the narrative. Such a reality wanted to exclude women from the efficacy of the society, as it wanted to place them in a marginal model that was not part of the vital role of the society.

KEYWORDS: Center and Margin, Feminist Narrative, Self and Other.

1. INTRODUCTION

The dialectic between the "Self and the Other" in the relationship between man and woman has transformed into a dialectic between the "Subject and the Other" in the cultural field and all other fields. Within a broad historical perspective, woman has moved from the position of the Other to that of the Subject. The latter has conferred upon her qualities and characteristics that she was not accustomed to in the past. It has given her a double efficacy by means of which she has occupied positions from which she was banned in the past. By becoming a new self, she has become a possessor of particularity, representations, and influential action in fateful decisions, which has been a mission to found a new image, in opposition to the Other and its image.

The change in the dialectic between woman and man has brought about a change in some systems. It has created new structures and bonds, giving rise to a unique identity that has distinguished woman and her position in society on all levels. Thus, women writers employed feminist narrative, an ideology that created a distinction between them and men in the field of literature, to rebel against the patriarchal society that ruled in the country in an attempt to liberate women from the shackles of men. This feminist experience has created content that has allowed it to penetrate the male experience with full efficacy and objectivity. It has given rise to a significant representation of the feminist self, which has been paramount in the formation of a female discourse in opposition to the discourse of marginalization and hegemony.

1.1 Problem Statement

The purpose of this study is to comprehend and decipher texts through the analysis of literary works of novels. It seeks to explore the connotations that reveal the different patterns that the two authors wanted to clarify by developing a common discourse between the Self and the Other. Through different techniques, the authors focus on the Other in feminist narrative to show the success of the authors in describing the dialectic of society.

1.2 The Research Objectives

The present study aims to reveal the concept of Other in its true form and how it was utilized by women writers to convey their concerns in society. The two writers, by supporting the circumstances women had to endure for decades, highlight this important scene in society where woman sought to

prove herself in the midst of contradictions surrounding her. The aim, therefore, is to create a new horizon for women to express themselves in a way that will have the desired effect they have always sought in all aspects.

1.3 The Research Hypotheses

The present study assumes that the feminist discourse developed by the two authors calls for the significant treatment of the women's issues raised in the novels. The authors employ this as an essential tool for altering aspects of the reality of women's life, while altering some of the manifestations of it in order to create a better future where the woman strives to prove herself and entity.

1.4 The Significance of the Study

The present study is of great significance as it reveals the various discourses utilized by the two writers. The texts affirmed and transferred levels of consciousness from a female discourse in a reality that tried to freeze her presence and marginalize her existence. Through the voices of their society, the two writers conveyed an image to create a new discourse portraying woman as a pillar of society and its complement.

1.5 The Research Procedures

Analyzing the level and pattern in the texts provided by the authors reveals signs and significations in their works to emphasize the artistic means through which they expressed the reality in which they lived, despite the difference in their personal experiences. The provided texts are historically significant in that they are accounts by each author regarding women's experiences in society.

2. CENTER AND MARGIN

The terms Center and Margin are essential in modern critical discourse and have been successful and important tools for various intellectual and ideological movements in analyzing cultural and literary discourses. Utilizing these terms is a means of discovering the deep structure of a text and how it functions. Within this process, Feminist Narrative was created as an important site where women writers have been successful in expanding the use of this binary model in two ways:

1. Working from the Margin to reconfigure the relationship between Margin and Center in a manner that makes the Margin a site for the woman's voice and a means of enacting her social and cultural presence.

2. Exchanging places in a manner that places the woman in the Center and situates the Other in the Margin.

In this manner, feminist discourse is an important moment in the crystallization of woman's narrative identity and self, resulting in a qualitative shift in the structure of modern literary discourse.

The Center and the Margin form a binary that dominates the contemporary critical approaches, capturing the interest of many intellectual trends that are obsessed by the obsession of change and the rehabilitation of the Margin as a viable identity seeking to change its status in a manner that is different from the Center (Hashimi, 2014). The Center represents an attachment to a dual perception of the Self and the Other; a perception that is founded on differentiation, hierarchy, and transcendence, developed through time as a result of the repetitive narration of stories in which a carefully chosen image is seen to face different challenges (Abdullah, 2001). The Center is defined by a set of interests and is guided by ideological visions, thus representing a form of bias through which the roles are redrawn and positioned to affirm the superiority and dominance of the Self by marginalizing and excluding the Other (Hashimi, 2014). The Margin, on the other hand, appears as an unfixed element as a unified frame because it is defined by difference, plurality, and conflict (Afiya, 1988).

3. CENTER AND MARGIN IN FEMINIST NARRATIVE

Tackling Center and Margin in relation to feminist theories requires going back to the Feminist Movement. It is the movement that raised the issue of how women have been relegated to the Margin, while men have occupied the Center. Therefore, feminism was created to destroy this hierarchy and search for a new discourse in which all the parties can participate, in order to empower women to move from the Margin to participate in the creation of the Center from which they had been excluded for a long time. Therefore, feminist discourse was not just a critique, but rather a creation of a new form of collective imagination in which the Margin becomes an active participant in the critique of the Center (Narayan and Harding, 2023).

Feminism was created to realize the reality that women, in their various social positions, have been relegated to the Margin in various ways: the housewife has been relegated to an unknown space, the working woman has been subjected to exploitation and relegation to the Margin in the

labor market, and the colonized woman has been relegated to the Margin of the Margin, controlled by the man and the colonizer. However, the educated woman, who has high intellectual capabilities, has been portrayed as an abnormality to herself. These portrayals have been mechanisms of exclusion, which have caused women to feel like they have lost their identities and do not belong anywhere (bell, 2015).

Most importantly, the feminist movement did not just emerge in the form of mere slogans, but it has invested theoretical and practical efforts in examining, criticizing, and exploring the dominant social system in which the Man has been constructed and positioned as the Center and Human, while the woman has been constructed and positioned as a secondary gender or lower Other. This social system imposed limitations on the woman. It deprived her of the potential for development and growth just on the basis of being a woman. Moreover, it also disvalued feminine characteristics, considering them to be merely feminine. It also constructed civilization as a product of masculinity, aiming to consolidate the power of men and to affirm the position of woman as a marginal and subaltern figure in society (Shepherd, 2004).

However, the discourse of feminism did not just highlight the Margin, but it has also transformed it into a starting point for its discourse, using the Center-Margin binary in its favor to negate the dominant discourse of patriarchy. Feminism has emerged from a discourse of self-consciousness in which women have learned to live in the Margin not just as a space of silence, but as a space of resistance and discourse production. The discourse of feminism has not just sought to consolidate the power of the Center, but has also sought to incorporate the experiences of women who have been positioned in the Margin to reveal to the world that the Margin is not just a shadow of the Center, but a space of discourse production. Thus, the feminist movement has sought to position what has been constructed and positioned in the Margin as a starting point for a comprehensive discourse of feminism, transforming women from mere objects of silence in the Margin to mere subjects in the Center, writing their own narratives of existence in their own voice (bell, 2015).

Women writers started where the feminist movement ended, that is, where the feminist movement stopped merely talking about the margin and sought to penetrate the essence of the self by breaking the barriers that had always limited the

female experience under the pretext of privacy or particularity. It is in this context that the particularity of woman emerged as a means to express the essence of woman away from the captivity of the image of the center, and to adopt an image of woman that returns her to her original nature, that is, the center of the world (Salih, 2014).

The cumulative work of feminist narrative has been to dismantle the structure of the masculine form and destroy the pillars of the structure that supported it. The feminist narrative has moved away from the conventional forms that limited the relationship with Man to the dialectic of opposition. It has avoided the tendency to limit the narrative of the feminine form to the ideological struggle that is limited to the body, instead embracing the tendency to reveal the social positions of women in different contexts. It has also tried to reveal the marginalization practiced against women on the social and cultural levels of the patriarchy, including the details of the life of the woman from the time of her birth as she enters the system of marginalization that strips her of her humanity in the face of the authority of the Man/Center. From her position of marginalization, the woman writer has tried to establish a new center that challenges the centrality of the male form and seeks to revive the voice of the marginalized female form (Salih, 2014).

The trends of the feminist narrative regarding the dialectic of the Center-Margin can be summarized as follows:

1. The first trend: The positioning of the woman in the social contexts that reveal the patterns of marginalization through narration, as well as the revelation of other margins in society without being directly influenced by an explicit feminist ideology.
2. The second trend: It is characterized by the presence of an explicit feminist ideology that relies directly on the ideas that it presents, including the subjective experiences of the woman writer, without being overly concerned with her position in the general structure of society.

The combination of the two trends has been the most prominent features of the Feminist Narrative in relation to the Center and the Margin, which reveal the awareness of the feminist writers of the dominant discourse that revealed the hegemony of the masculine center over everyone (Salih, 2014).

4. MARGINALITY OF THE EGO AND THE OTHER

For the feminist narrative to arrive at this stage, this represents the apex of its awareness and human maturity. The women writers have been able to

present the image of mutual loss between the Ego and the Other. Both man and woman have lost their status as semantic centers in the narrative and have transformed into partial voices under the pressure of hegemony. Therefore, the image of these writers has come from a deep understanding of the reality that man and woman are no longer opposites, but rather fellow victims of a higher power that transcends and supersedes them both. Thus, the woman for them is no longer a center, and the man for them is no longer another, but rather both have been marginalized in a larger margin, and they share weakness and impotence in the face of a harsh reality that has nullified the individual subjective centrality of both.

The marginalities of this feminist narrative have been manifested in the form of the subject of discourse and its assessments, which have been fundamentally built on the basis of a predetermined image of the Other and the level of its knowledge and understanding of the subject matter. This subject has continued to shape the presence of the Other in discourse, choosing what it believes to be ambiguous to the Other and discarding what it believes to be within the reach of the Other's understanding and linguistic perception. In this way, the Margin comes into existence as the place where the speaking subject proclaims the existence of itself within the diegesis, while the Other comes to be seen as a companion element within the production of discourse, as a participant within the production of meaning itself. As such, feminist discourse comes to be seen as a form of representation of the relationship between the Ego and the Other within the space of the Margin, where the subject and the other come together within a form of narrative that reveals the Woman's awareness of this situation, and subsequently, her involvement within the production of re-establishing her presence within the margin itself (Al-Badi, 2023).

In such a way, what can be seen as the 'birth' of the Margin within feminist discourse came into existence, a new form of awareness that came into play within the production of rearranging the epistemological system of the Ego, the Other, and the Center itself. The Margin is no longer seen as a form of movement within the conditions of vision, but rather as a movement of re-thinking the existence of the self and the other outside of the authority of the cultural and social center itself. As such, the movement of feminist writers into the margin itself within this stage can be seen as a new form of space for action and responsibility, where

writers came to realize that the Margin is not the end of existence, but rather the beginning of existence itself; subsequently, feminist writers came to re-represent the relationship between the Ego and the Other, not within the production of a struggle for the Center, but within the production of a shared awareness of the disappointment and oppression brought about by the higher authorities (Salih, 2015). Consequently, the preoccupation of the writers at this stage was to express the marginalized spaces and their private affairs, as well as the inner self through the deconstruction of grand signs, also known as grand narratives, and presenting an alternative reading of the world through minor signs, also known as marginalized signs.

The grand signs of War, Subjugation under Tyranny, Suicide, Exile, and Alienation are all signs in which woman and man are found in the margin. Therefore, when the feminist writer discusses the grand signs, it is in the position of the margin to discuss the minor signs; in other words, it is deconstruction in relation to the body of the narrative, authority, and the grand sign itself. In other words, it can be said that in relation to the feminist narrative, Ego and the Other are in one Margin since their self meets in the grand signs created by war, exile, and authority. In other words, it is an attempt to understand the world through what has been marginalized in it rather than what has been central in it (Salih, 2015).

Amongst all the signs at the forefront in relation to the narrative of the margin, War emerges as the cruellest and fatal form of marginalizing Ego and the Other in the narrative. The effects of war and siege are amongst the most important factors in relation to the deconstruction of the centrality of Ego and the Other in the narrative to turn it into a space that embraces all the shattered Egos and Others in it. The writer has been able to portray with sensibility and awareness the reflections of war on the human being as a shattered entity living in the world with the divergence and imbalance in values, the blockage in horizons, and the tyranny of evil with precision through the machinery of war to portray the status of woman and man as victims in the margin of reality (Mutassim, 2004).

Feminist narratives have created the scene of war as a tragedy and have changed the positions of the Ego and the Other in the text. The writers have placed this scene of war, which was filled with blood and violence, in the heart of the feminist narrative, highlighting its consequences: the destruction of families, the abortion of dreams, and the destruction of the self in front of the violence of

reality. In this way, war has been created not only as a political event, but also as a destructive force, which destroys emotional and social structures, and ends up destroying the relation between woman and man, who have fallen under its weight and have transformed into marginal beings, besieged by isolation and loneliness, and who have lost the power to cling to the center of their existence and entity (Zain Al-Din, 2010). In this way, war has been created by the writers as a mirror, reflecting the disappearance of the limits between the victim and the executioner. Violence has been created as a blind force, emptying all of their humanity. The Woman, who has sought safety and tenderness, and the Man, who has considered himself a source of strength in society, have found themselves in the same Margin, besieged by the contradictions of war and deprived of their centers in society and in their own minds.

From this perspective, it can be said that War has shown us the fragility of the human being and their existence; it has not been a creator of heroes, but of broken human beings in search of a reason to live in a world that destroys all meanings. So, it can be said that War has redefined the relationship between the Ego and the Other, not as a relation of conflict, but as a relation of pain, tragedy, and wandering (Cooke, 2005).

Apart from the labyrinths that resulted from wars that brought the Ego and the Other together towards the frontiers of the Margin, Alienation emerged as a natural consequence of these wars and sieges. This results in loneliness, an internal feeling that ravages the self and excludes it from the surrounding world, no matter how busy and noisy it is with movement and life. This results in isolation and, therefore, reveals a state of depression that manifests itself as an exclusion of characters, voluntarily or involuntarily, from life as they continue to retreat into themselves and into the pains and regrets of their selves. This feeling of emptiness results in a lack of trust both in people and life. At this point, alienation reveals itself as a double experience revealing an imbalance, not only as a psychological state, but also as a margin revealing how the Ego and the Other are brought together towards another margin leading to absence and exile under the dominance of an authority that consecrates and perpetuates this absence (Mutassim, 2004).

In addition to War and Alienation, there is another element that forces the Ego and the Other to the margin: Sectarianism, which is considered one of the most brutal and influential factors in defining the Shared Margin. Feminist writers tackled the

crimes of sectarianism and the tragedies that resulted from them in society, turning sectarianism into a destructive force that reflects the reproduction of collective violence under the pretext of sect or faith. The writers revealed that this type of conflict is simply a continuation of a bloody and brutal history that has been inherited, making the current situation even more brutal. The writers often employ personal experiences, such as the loss of a brother, a lover, or a son, symbolically to enter the scene and reflect on the level of suffering that has been experienced. This loss turns into a tragedy that crushes the Ego and destroys all its images. At this point, the feminist narrative affirms again that sectarianism turns man and woman into victims of a harsh margin that is even more brutal than their ability to confront it (Kadhim, 2018).

According to the two writers, terrorism is considered an extension of one of the faces of loathsome sectarianism, defining a harsher margin in its appearance and turning into a blind force that spares no one from its oppression and cruelty. The act of killing or the threat of it is no longer for personal or specific reasons, but because the victim is different from that system in thought or vision. The writers, therefore, defined this scene as a stage of brokenness where everything disappears, the human being loses its senses, feelings of sadness accumulate, and all forms of alienation lead to its end. Light disappears in front of this extremism that cannot differentiate between its victims and is not concerned with the fact that the victim is a man or a woman, but rather treats all victims equally in terms of suffering and brokenness (Kadhim, 2018).

In continuation of this path, the feminist narrative also shows another form of the Margin that surrounds both woman and man: living under the authority of a despotic tyrant. Here, violence is not only against the body but also against the soul, dignity is wasted, oppression and injustice are achieved in a moment that ends in a complete collapse of all security for the human being. Violence is a daily practice that does not even need justification in a world where there is no law, and scenes of subjugation are repeated where people are forced by violence and their voices are muzzled. Finally, the human being loses their ability to move and make a choice, and fear is a state through which man and woman are stripped of their social status and their humanity. Therefore, they are forced to live in a margin that keeps them helpless in front of an authority that only knows oppression and killing (Al-Manasra, 2013).

Inaam Kachachi and Doris Lessing dealt with

these forms of narrative representation as a means through which they dealt with their themes of how the Ego and the Other fell together into the space of margins. Both writers dealt with these forms as the most important foundations that pushed the human being into labyrinths of subjugation, brokenness, and marginalization. However, both writers did not deal with these themes as a mere symbolic means but as a reality that worked to displace the Ego and the Other from their centrality in life and push them to the Margin imposed on them by higher authorities seeking to downsize their presence and dismantle their existential balance. Despite the difference between the social surroundings of the characters of the stories written by Inaam Kachachi and those written by Doris Lessing, there is one meeting point between the two writers, which is their lamentation of the destiny of the human being who is pushed to the Margin. Thus, through their stories, the two writers sought to demonstrate the ways of oppressing the individual by groups of people, showing how the Ego and the Other share the same destiny when besieged by layers of marginalization, where they cannot build their lives clearly, where they can find the basic requirements of their lives, such as security, freedom, and dignity. We will start where we left off, talking about the most important manifestations that led the Ego and the Other to the space of the Margin, which is suffering under the authority of despotic power. The author of the novel, Inaam Kachachi, discussed this form of marginality in her discussion of the character Widian and her fiancé Youssef, who is an engineering professor teaching the Sheikh's son. The emotional relationship between Widian and Youssef brought them together, but this relationship encountered the interference of authority, which is the Sheikh's son, who used his authority to control Widian and keep Youssef away from her.

Tyranny was in its zenith when Widian had to suffer the loss of her hearing for not succumbing to the desire of the Sheikh's Son. He wanted to own her just because she was someone he wanted to own, despite her being the fiancée of his own professor. He was used to doing whatever he wanted with any woman he wanted to own, just because he wanted to own her. He was strengthened in his desire by the power of his own name and his own illustrious family. When faced with this tyranny against his own woman, Youssef is helpless in front of the power of the Sheikh's son and his own father. He is helpless in front of the power of fear and abandons her and ends up divorcing her.

The moment of separation is thus shown in the novel as a prime example of how both the Self and the Other are forced towards the Margin in front of the power of a tyrannical power. Such a power forces its own decisions on all and every individual despite themselves and in accordance with their own power.

Widian says:

...He gnaws at me, pains me, exhaling his pent-up steam into me. I weep with him, my tears soaking his hair. I never imagined I would live through such a moment with Youssef. We were in the silken days of our engagement, novices to grief. We tried to take shelter in a shell. The shell is in a raging sea. The sea sweeps away a country; the country retreats; the Party dissembles. Wars follow in succession. Conspiracies and gallows. A popular army and a regular army; the Leader's commandos; opposition Islamist groups. A people swallowing their tongues; tribes chanting in the South; consultants growing fat in the North; poems of praise. The Leader's friends, a new military rank, a collective Zaar trance, everyone tossing their heads left and right.

A total pollution envelops the atmosphere; breaths are stifled; our shell cracks like an eggshell. The sparks strike us no matter how we fortify ourselves. No fortress holds in this land; no man survives, and no woman.

My fiancé treats me like this because he pushes me away with violence. 'My father can only dominate my mother.' If kicking me would give him relief, I would have kneeled at his feet and rolled on the ground for him to kick me. I love him, and I see him being slaughtered, and so my blood is flowing. He is heading towards madness, and he is the most rational man in the world, humiliated, broken, and desperate. He is like a feather in the wind, in the palm of a moronic boy, and I am just one of the dolls that he is playing with, and I will be just like them. Youssef is sobbing, and the tears of men are killing me. The essence of souls that are being trampled underfoot. And these are no ordinary tears, nor is this an ordinary man, and I am talking about the tears of my beloved, falling on my face like acid. He is wiping them with his palms and goes on with his madness.

In the novel *The Memoirs of a Survivor*, Doris Lessing talks of a reality that is quite similar to the world created by Inaam Kachachi in the novel *The Dispersal*. Lessing talks of a different kind of margin by presenting her readers with an image of a repressive authority in disintegration, thus giving rise to the absence of laws and the prevalence of

street violence. The formation of armed groups for self-protection thus gives rise to a scene of utter chaos and disintegration, which led to the marginalization of all men and women. The tendency of all such individuals to move towards the armed groups was not a move of strength, but a move that resulted from the utter disintegration and fall of the groups in question (Ali, 2010).

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The involvement of Emily and her friend Gerald in the ranks of the armed groups is thus depicted in the novel as an example of the move towards the Margin after transforming into elements that operated in an extra-legal space. The novel, as depicted by the author, also talks of the involvement of Emily and her friend Gerald in the armed groups from a marginal position, as it is dictated by a reality of disintegration. The voice of the novel is thus one that emerges from the depths of the margins of society, as opposed to the voice that emerges from the core of the society.

In the novel *The Memoirs of a Survivor*, Doris Lessing thus goes one step further than the author of the novel *The Dispersal*, as she presents her readers with a picture of the complex world of the Margin. We thus come to the realization that the narrative voice of the novel emerges from the Margin, as the Margin becomes the core of the narrative.

The text reads:

.....tribe, her life. A striking-looking girl, with her dark hair flat

on either side of a pale, too earnest face, she was where Gerald

was, who swaggered there with the knives in his belt, his

whiskers, his strong brown arms. Good Lord, how many

centuries had we overturned, how many long slow steps of

man's upclimbing did Emily undo when she crossed from my

flat to the life on the pavement! And what promise, what

possibilities, what experiments, what variations on the human

theme had been cancelled out! Watching, I fell into despair at the precariousness of every human attempt and effort, and I

left the window. It was that afternoon I tried deliberately to

reach behind the wall:I stood there a long time
 looking and
 waiting.The wall did not have light lying on it
 now,was
 uniform,dull,blank.I went up and pressed my
 palms against
 it,and moved my hands all over it,feeling and
 sensing,trying
 everything to make the heavy solidity of the
 thing go down
 under the pressure of my will.It was nonsense,I
 knew that.;...(Lessing,1988).

In this scene, Inaam Kachachi focuses on the disintegration of the human center under the tyrannical rule that had marginalized all. In the text, Widian does not talk of the love story that hurt her, but rather of dark spaces where the human being is crushed under the power of totalitarian regimes. In such spaces, Woman does not have the power to understand her destiny or protect her relationships from being disintegrated. Her pain-filled words show her disintegration and fragility under the face of the reality that does not give her space for resistance, making her, in the end, witness to the disintegration of her own world under the disintegration of the world that is larger than her.

The novelist does not show Yousif as the center of power or the symbol of the patriarchal authority, but rather as the crushed human being whose will is broken, heading towards destiny that he cannot resist. He is also disintegrated, becoming the fragile human being who rotates around the axis of the tyrannical power that controls him as it does with all the others. Therefore, he is as fragile as Widian. This shows that the oppression and enslavement of the human being under the authority disintegrate the human center, making Man and Woman equally marginal, without the power to protect their lives from the interference of the other.

In this way, Kachachi offers an image of the forced margin that is imposed upon the human being under the weight of the encompassing power. This power does not make any distinction between one another; rather, it drives both towards the role of the victim, even without offering the power of speech to either of them. Kachachi is speaking of the margin that has become the common destiny of the Self and the Other, revealing the fall of the human being under the weight of the power that offers a center to no one.

In the same way, Doris Lessing also offers an image of the margin inhabited by the Self and the Other, despite the differences in the forms that this takes. While the novel offers the image of the

beautiful girl that is Emily, it also reveals her as a being burdened under the weight of the reality that surrounds her, until the very beauty of the girl is charged with the fear that she instills. Her presence in the scene is not an active one; rather, it positions her at the edge of the event that is larger than she is, through which she experiences the fall of the volatile reality that is governed by the laws of the chaos. Her entrance into this space of the turmoil strips her of any center or any position that she might hold.

The novel also offers the image of Gerald, who is revealed to have the outward marks of the strong man, but is offered no center at all, revealing the fragmentation of the other kind. The entrance of Gerald into the armed groups is not an act that is driven from any power at all; rather, it is the result of the reality that is imposed upon him, revealing the armament as the main means of the survival that is offered to him. Thus, the character of Gerald is the one that is burdened by the weapon rather than the master of the weapon; the weapon itself is the symbol of the loss of the center rather than the possession of it.

From this scene, it is understood that the concept of marginality has affected both Emily and Gerald in their own way, depending on their experience with their own center or place. Lessing, however, brings in a new dimension to Kachachi's narrative when she explains, at the end of the text, the silent wall that represents the concept of marginality in its most extreme form. The novel is trying to move this wall in an attempt to penetrate the silence of the cruel world, but this is not possible.

The wall represents the absent-yet-present figures between the individual and their ability to control their own fate. This is the main reason for the marginalization of the individuals involved because it is the wall that separates the individual from the center of the action. The texts reveals that the Margin is not the fault of the individual; rather, it is the result of the fall of the whole human system. The power of the Patriarchy comes to an end, and the femininity loses its essence; hence, both Emily and Gerald are at the same place, sharing the sense of vulnerability of the crumbling world and bowing to the authority of the fractured world that offers neither of the characters a center nor the power of action.

The texts of both authors show the narrative vision that intersects at its core and shows the fall of the human center and the fall of Woman and Man into the Margin. The contexts of the stories are very different, yet the narrative shows the picture of a

turbulent political world where the individuals involved are transformed into the victims of the oppressive systems that govern their world, the dictatorial authority in Kachachi's narrative and the lawless, volatile world in Lessing's narrative.

In this change, the center is broken, and a shared marginality is formed, which includes the Self and the Other. These turbulent images led these two writers to create characters living in a world of increasing anxiety about their destiny, which led these selves to pose questions about the existence of life, the purpose of existence, and the possibility of self-actualization.

This existential anxiety is a continuation of the anxiety that the human character has faced in all the ages of history when it has faced a major crisis in its existence, leading to a state of confusion and inner conflict, which makes the self-incapable of harmonizing with the surroundings or with itself, leading to a loss of balance and the cracking of the psychological self, which disappears at the point of contact with the reality that it cannot control. In this way, the self of the human character falls into the abyss of the Margin, changing from a self-capable of controlling and creating its own existence to a marginalized self, leaving the center of action with nothing but a weak position outside the total structure of existence. Therefore, the Margin in Inaam Kachachi's text is the forced margin, in which the characters, Widian and Yousif, are crushed by the weight of a dictatorial regime in which no one has the power to act. Lessing, on the other hand, reveals in her text the existential margin, which came as a result of the disintegration of the state and the instability of reality.

As far as the novel *The American Granddaughter* by Inaam Kachachi is concerned, it is worth noting that the author introduces another margin into which both Woman and Man have entered. Nevertheless, it is worth noting that this margin is represented in two different ways, since while it is true that the Self and the Other are both outside the center, the novel has presented two different marginal experiences through the story of Muhaymin and Zeina.

Despite the fact that the character of Muhaymin has gone through significant changes in his ideology, although he represents a part of the Male Other in the novel, he has been a confusing character associated with fear, but he has not represented a central position. Instead, he has been moving on the margins of the novel without being associated with a central position.

As far as the character of Zeina is concerned, it is

worth noting that the novel has represented this character as an American woman of Iraqi descent who has been experiencing a fragmented existence because of her work with the U.S. Army. This means that her existence has been surrounded by anxiety, since she has been inflicting a tear upon herself, being associated with a constant fear of death. This means that the author has represented these two characters within a complex margin, since this margin has been associated with fear, turmoil, and contradictions.

Through this marginal segment, the novel has created a love relationship between Zeina and Muhaymin, without dwelling long on the fact that these two characters are foster siblings, since they are siblings by breastfeeding. Nevertheless, Zeina has dismissed this issue, since her focus has been on the significant disparity that exists between the two characters, since Muhaymin represents a faction of the army that is hostile to and fights the U.S. Army, while Zeina, being an Iraqi-American, represents the U.S. Army through her work as a translator. In this way, the novel offers the reader two different margins that meet at the same place. The text reads:

I am not a foreigner.

Your name is Zeina, but you hold an American nationality.

Your name is Muhaymin, but you speak Persian.

He did not seem surprised by this, but a muscle twitched in his left cheek, and he let out a sigh that came in ragged breaths from his chest.

I learned it when I was in Iran... as a prisoner.

How much time do I need to know him and his entire history? How many calendars does he need to encompass me, in my entirety, with all that I carry? For the first time, I feel that time is stingy with me, and that what has passed of it should not have passed in such a way.

The cafes of Amman are tightening around our story. Their lazy rhythm cannot withstand the urgent passion that makes language race against its own letters.

They took him prisoner in the last year of the war. He was walking with a companion on Al-Saadoon Street when a military police patrol picked them up from the sidewalk and threw them into a truck transporting volunteers to the battlefronts...

Muhaymin remained in captivity for four years. You turned him inside out: he left as a communist by inheritance and returned as a jurist debating matters of heaven and hell.

I say to him in an attempt to show empathy:

Your essence hasn't changed...

One thing has remained unchanged in me... my

hatred for the Americans...

We talked about our past lives, each trying to compress our life into a small capsule for the other to swallow, so we can find some relief from talking. I was in a hurry; I didn't own my time. I know my days in Amman are numbered, and my 'Green Zone' is waiting for me, my golden prison, which will shield me from being killed and from those who lie in wait.

I think my killer will be Muhaymin or one of his companions. A crazy thought that puts me on the threshold of great abysses. A masked mujahid will approach me, one of those whose pictures I see on fundamentalist sites. As soon as he is by my side, he will plunge his knife into my side.

I will hold onto him as I fall to the ground, and I will remove his mask. Then, I will smile, relieved by my death, which came to me through him. He will remove my helmet and will let out a silent scream, seeing my face. He will then understand that with his knife, he has spilled his sister's blood. A dream that I see with my eyes wide open, until my throat dries up and my hands stiffen.

An Indian movie I haven't watched yet (Kachachi, 2022).

In the novel *The Grass is Singing*, Doris Lessing portrays the theme of conflict between the margins of man and woman, but this is far from the margins presented in *The American Granddaughter* by Inaam Kachachi. Lessing portrays the characters of Mary Turner and her husband, Turner, and places them within the boundaries of a single narrative space, but within asymmetrical margins despite the fact that the characters belong to the same family unit. The novel portrays the image of the character of Mary as she oscillates between the margins of psychological breakdown, internal fragmentation, powerlessness, frustration, and the loss of the meaning of life. The character of Mary develops gradually until she loses the ability to face the world and approaches the point of complete annihilation in the existence of the world.

Contrary to the image of the character of Mary, the novel portrays the character of Turner as oscillating within the margins of internal fragmentation, the breakdown of the family, isolation, the loss of the meaning of life, and poverty. Lessing portrays the fundamental theme of this novel, namely the possibility that the margins include both characters, despite the fact that the characters feel that they have the power to overcome the margins.

After the character of Mary realizes her inability to continue her life on the farm, she decides to

return to her former life in the city, where she had been living normally before her marriage to Turner. But she was surprised to see that she does not want her former life anymore; she does not belong to the women of the city anymore, but she had become a woman with the features of a farm wife, with a gaunt face and a body that is exhausted from hard work and solitude.

The rejection of the city, however, made her return once again to the farm with Turner, who had come to fetch her. Therefore, Mary conformed to the status quo, succumbing to the margin into which Turner had placed her, just as he had placed himself. As such, the two remain in adjacent margins, albeit differing, yet equally cruel. The text reads:

at the club. She found herself glancing down at her hands,

which were crinkled and brown; and hid them under her

bag. The man opposite to her was staring at her, looking

closely at her face. Then he glanced at her shoes, which were

still red with dust, because she had forgotten to wipe them.

Looking grieved, but at the same time shocked, even scan-

dalized, he said that the job had been filled already, and

that he was sorry. She felt, again, outraged; for all that time

she had worked here, it had been part of herself, this office,

and now he would not take her back. I am sorry, Mary, he

said, avoiding her eyes; and she saw that the job had not

been filled and that he was putting her off. There was a long

moment of silence, while Mary saw the dreams of the last

few weeks fade and vanish. Then he asked her if she had

been ill.

No, she said bleakly.

Back in the hotel bedroom she looked at herself in the

glass. Her frock was a faded cotton; and she could see, com-

paring it with the clothes of the girls in the office, that it was

very out of fashion. Still, it was decent enough. True that her

skin became dried and brown, but when she relaxed her face, she could not see much difference in herself. Holding it smoothed and still, there were little white marks raying out from her eyes, like brush strokes. It was a bad habit to get into, she thought, screwing up one's eyes. And her hair was not very smart. But then, did he think one had hair-dressers on farms? She was suddenly viciously, revengefully angry against him, against the matron, against everyone. What did they expect? That she should have gone through all those sufferings and disappointments and yet remain unchanged? But it was the..... In his turn he came to his senses, and, as she had done, glanced at himself in the mirror. He had come in his farm clothes, without stopping even to eat, after reading the note which had seemed to stab him with pain and humiliation. His sleeves flapped over spare burned arms; his feet were After they had eaten, in a restaurant that Mary chose because it looked too out of the way for any of her old friends to see her there, they went back to the farm, as it everything were quite normal, and her running away a little thing, and one that could be easily forgotten. But when she got home, and she found herself back in her usual routine, with now not even daydreams to sustain her, facing her future with a tired stoicism, she found she was exhausted. It was an effort for her to do anything at all. It seemed as if the trip into town had drained her reserves of strength and left her with just enough each day to do what had to be done, but nothing more. This was the beginning

of an inner disintegration in her. It began with this numb-

ness. as if she could no longer feel or fight (Lessing,1976).

Through her narrative vision, Kachachi's works show the multiplicity of the margin, which varies according to the diversity of human experiences. The margin, which links the Self and the Other in Kachachi's works, is not a single entity, as it is distributed over the levels of the character's encounter, without ever arriving at a destination or a center of power.

Therefore, Kachachi's works deal with two entirely different margins of a single experience. The margin of the Other, as depicted by the character of Muhaymin, was neither accidental nor marginal, as it resulted from the transformations forced upon his character and the internal fragmentation of his identity resulting from such transformations. This has placed him at the edge of existence, as burdened by an ideological and psychological disintegration, rendering him outside any actual and functional center.

The Self, as depicted by the character of Zeina, is also a dimension of the margin, as she contains several margins of her own. On the one hand, she is an Iraqi-American, and her experience is marked by a fragmented identity. On the other hand, she is also part of a complex structure resulting from her profession as a translator for the U.S. Army, which places her in a precarious position of existence, marked by anxiety and fear. Therefore, as depicted by this dimension of the margin, the Self is placed in a general margin of alienation, threat, fear, and, finally, the search for meaning in a fragmented love affair. Thus, Kachachi links the existential margin related to the Self, namely, Zeina, with the ideological-psychological margin related to the Other, namely, Muhaymin. In this sense, the novel points to the capacity of human beings, irrespective of gender, to exist in an internal brokenness, in the sense of scatter, accepting their lives, which they do not wish to live. Both move in opposite directions from each other, in the marginal space of instability, without the presence of a defined central vision.

Likewise, in *The Grass is Singing*, Lessing presents two marginal centers, yet the concept of marginality in Lessing's work is different from that proposed in Kachachi's novel. According to Lessing, the Self, namely, Mary, is an entity related to fragile past centers. Mary, who had an unstable and turbulent childhood, tried to establish a formal center through her work in the city. However, her move to the farm after marrying Turner imposed

the margins upon her once again. Eventually, the accumulation of the margins led Mary to a resonating fall in her social environment, along with the presence of continuous feelings of ennui, related to the disappointments of married life.

The second margin Lessing introduces is revealed in the character of Turner, whom she portrays using a series of margins. Turner is first portrayed within a social margin, depicted as an eccentric character with little notable or impactful presence in society. At the same time, the author also portrays an economic margin, as revealed in the character's inability to achieve his goals or advance his financial status despite his efforts.

However, the largest margin is represented in his relationship with Mary. Despite being the man/male in the patriarchal construct represented within the novel, he fails to provide her with any sense of security. Instead, he is represented as a man without any substance, a man who is devoid of any representative masculine power. In this way, Lessing represents the character of Turner as a model of the multi-fractured margin, a man who has reached the depth of marginality when he loses everything that represents his existence. In this way, it is clear that both Turner, like Mary, exists on the remnants of old margins that are constantly being renewed, but his margin appears to be at a greater depth and intensity. This is because, while Mary, despite her state of disintegration, was able to make a step, Turner was unable to make any expression or speech, remaining drowned in marginality until the end of the novel.

Both Inaam Kachachi and Doris Lessing reveal a multiplicity of margins surrounding their characters within a single narrative experience. These margins are represented within the heartbreak of love, psychological, and ideological aspects. Most importantly, however, it is evident that both authors do not utilize this multiplicity of margins as a tool, a technical aspect, or a description of cases. Instead, it represents a medium, a way of reflecting life as it really is, life that exists outside of the Center, life that exists within the fragmented reality constructed upon the margin. The multiplicity of margins, in this case, reflects the nature of reality rather than being a character trait. The margins are not singular, as they accumulate a series of experiences that reveal the disintegration of human existence and the end of the stability of the Self.

It is possible to assert that the path of both authors led to the dominance of certain narrative techniques in the texts, such as the transmission of events, the use of internal monologue, and the direct

characterization of feelings, perceptions, and positions. The narrators employ these techniques as significant reporting testimonies, rather than for indoctrination or the imposition of a ready-made vision, and to create a vivid emotional state for the reader. This indicates that the narrators either sought to reveal the facts of the lives of the characters who actually lived those events or to reveal the hidden truths, secrets, and internal fantasies of those characters.

The two authors, in this sense, placed the experience of writing in the problematic of writing the self, as they sought to reveal the margins in which the self has shattered in the texts, as a literary product dealing with the problem of the fragmentation of the self and how the self finally finds its place in the structure of margins that create and re-present its existence (Al-Dahi, 2006).

From this point, it is possible to understand the Center that forced Zeina and Muhaymin into the dual margin in *The American Granddaughter*. The dual forces of the U.S. Army and the religious faction were equal centers of conflict, while the dual protagonists were completely outside this conflict, in a void that is neither the one nor the other center. The dual center in *The Grass is Singing* is split into two levels for the character of Mary; the city represented the center and the possibility of integration and self-realization for her. Turner, however, had no center at all.

Continuing with the novel *Tashari*, Kachachi talks about a completely different margin from the ones mentioned above; this is the margin where everything falls apart, the Self, the Other, and society itself. The author talks about her poetry collection through the dialogue between Wardia's niece and her son, Iskandar, in one of the scenes of the novel. The author talks about the title of her collection with pain and bitterness, showing the audience the way she and her family were relegated to the margin of alienation after being scattered in distant lands due to the wars and terrorism that engulfed the region.

The author also talks about the way exile becomes one of the most encompassing margins of existence, splitting the human being between a past from which they cannot return and a present from which they cannot belong or adapt to. The audience is then presented with the image of a family that has lost its centrality and history, being scattered in dispersed exiles after having been robbed of their center, their homeland, their language, and everything else. The text reads:

...He found a thick, eye-catching purple notebook

in his mother's drawer. On its cover was a word in Arabic he didn't understand. When he asked her, she said it was her collection, ready for publication.

What is the title?

Tashari.

Meaning?

In Eloquent Arabic: They dispersed like the people of Saba.

Meaning?

They scattered like the pellets of a shotgun blast that spread in all directions.

Mama, do you write poems about weapons and bullets?

They are my kin, who have scattered across the world like Tashari bullets. Tashari, with no one to claim them," she repeated, swaying in her seat as her voice cracked. She composed herself and laughed so as not to cry. As for him, he did not know who the claimant was. He preferred not to ask; his questions stirred the stagnant lake hidden behind her smile. There are stagnant lakes behind every one of these elders, and it is best not to cast a stone into them; for then, vague, evil, and repulsive breaths leak out (Kachachi, 2022).

In the novel *The Good Terrorist* written by Doris Lessing, there is a similar theme to the Kachachi premise, where everyone is left in the margin. The reason for this is, however, not exile but rather terrorism. The novel is talking about the feelings of remorse that Alice is experiencing because of the bombing that the group she belonged to had planned. Lessing has given a very sharp and profound picture of the psychological state that overwhelms Alice after the explosion. Lessing has portrayed the feelings of the terrorist act that the group committed and the guilt that the terrorist act instilled in Alice. This guilt for the terrorist act is the reason why Alice is left in the margin with her group. The turmoil that Lessing is talking about is the reason why Alice is left in the margin with her group. Lessing has given a very clear picture of the margin through the turmoil that the character is going through, plunging her into the depths of the margin and leaving her to experience the fragmentation of her personality and the cracking of her own self. The novel states:

She really did feel very peculiar, not herself at all! Well, that was only natural. She needed to go for a good long walk, or perhaps drop over for a little chat with Joan Robbins? No, there'd only be a lot of silly talk about the IRA and the bombing. Ordinary people simply didn't understand, and it was no good expecting them

to.... Here the tenderness that had been washing around the place, mrae aq ouE side her, not knowing where it belonged, fastened itself on these ordinary people, and Alice sat with tears in her eyes, thinking, Poor things, poor things, they simply don't understand! -as if she had her farms around all the poor silly ordinary people in the world.

Now she began to think, but very carefully, about her parents. First, her father: no, he was too awful to waste time on, she wasn't ever going to think about him again. Her mother... What would Dorothy say if she knew her daughter had been at the bombing? Not that Alice believed that she-Alice-had any real reason to feel bad; she hadn't really been part of it. Alice sighed, a long shuddery breath, like a small child. This was something she could never, ever tell Dorothy, and knowing this made her feel severed from her mother as she had not done before: she might have said a final goodbye to her, instead of just having had one of their silly quarrels! (Lessing, 2008).

The discussion of Inaam Kachachi's text in the novel *Tashari*, and her discussion of the margin through the medium of dialogue, is an effort by the author to shed light on the major cracks that have been created in the lives of a major segment of the Iraqi people after 2003, through the series of invasions, wars, and terrorism. This discussion is made through the medium of dialogue by a woman who is spread out over all of exile. Her fall into the margin is simply an expression of her internal anxieties and fear, which came about through this harsh exile, which caused the human being to fall into fragmentation and lose all the pillars of belonging.

So, Inaam Kachachi had spoken about a society that is broken and fragmented, like the pellets of a *Tashari*, which is a type of shotgun fire that spreads out in all directions, so that all members of that society become victims of this displacement, which cannot be collected together. In this way, the author has been successful in bringing the margin into shape and placing it into another margin, so that through a series of margins, the margins come together to reveal their significance, which is to reveal the weakness of human beings in this new age of alienation and loss.

The discussion of the margins through the medium of poetry, through the discussion of the

diwan, by Inaam Kachachi, is not simply an arbitrary act by the author, but it is an important and significant narrative signifier, which came into play as a means of confrontation against all those margins that had been created through the harsh changes that had been made to the Self, the Other, and society, so that the self-had been lost and identity had been erased. Nevertheless, this act of expression is not sufficient to shield the character from slipping into an even wider and stronger margin. Therefore, she remained stuck in this space of alienation, experiencing the bitter taste of distance, which is a fact that made the centrality of this diwan lose significance before the multiplicity of margins and their growing presence, which cancelled all attempts to regain equilibrium and rebuild the Self.

In this way, the margins addressed by Inaam Kachachi's narrative come to be seen as phenomena that took place over two periods of time, both of which had lost the ability to welcome the identity of the Self and the Other in those societies. The mother remains in exile, living in a space of silence and collapse, while her children and family members are living in various countries. This is what enhances the notion of fragmentation, especially when it takes the form of a collective destiny that is constantly repeated. Therefore, the margins here do not come to be seen as a single entity, but come to be seen as margins within margins that produce and intersect with each other; every experience of exile and separation creates a new margin that consumes all that came before it. At this stage, the margin takes the form of a continuous structure that surrounds the Self, the Other, and society as a whole, as a result of the alienation that has left all of them outside the centers of stability.

Regarding Doris Lessing, the author also touched upon the issue of the fall of the Self, the Other, and Society into interlocking margins, albeit in a different way, that is, through the author's experience with terrorism, which the author presented in the character of Alice. This woman created her house into a haven for her comrades, who were politically enthusiastic, thus becoming a witness to the creation of a new margin that resulted from the tensions and the conflicts. By providing shelter to the activists involved in the planning of the protest actions, including actions that could reach the level of bombings, the author facilitated the process. In this way, the author created the interlocking margins in the same space, that is, the margin of Alice, the woman who experienced the splitting of her Self in the face of what is happening;

the margin of the comrades, the people who lived outside the political and social center; and the margin of the Society that paid the price for the split. In this way, the author managed to erase the borders that usually exist between the Self and the Other, thus presenting a reality in which the components are located in the overlapping marginal circles that nullify the possibility of the existence of a center for the human being or existence. Through the character of Alice, Lessing set the stage to show the way the Self, the Other, and society slide into the superimposed margins. Lessing depicted the character of Alice as a simple woman with a gentle nature, always inclined to avoid hurting the feelings of others. Nevertheless, the fundamental paradox is that she harbors a group of activists involved in illegal activities within her home. Lessing succeeded in showing the internal conflict within the character of Alice, who embodies both compassion and the production of violence at the same time.

The focus on the above two works brings us to the narrative proposition of the authors, showing their conscious intention to deal with the multiplicity of margins and their varying degrees of centrality, power, and hierarchy. Through the character of the mother in Tashari, Kachachi revealed the existence of the primary margin, the margin of exile, the margin into which the protagonist fell as a result of the scattering of the family in various lands of displacement. This primary margin, however, was only one of the other harsh margins, the margin of war and the margin of terrorism, and the consequent shattering of the self and the loss of identity.

Through the character of Alice in *The Good Terrorist*, Doris Lessing provided another example of falling into the minor margins within the larger ones. The character of Alice fell into a certain margin when she harbored the activists within her home; however, this small margin soon revealed itself to be merely a gateway to the larger and more dangerous one—the margin of terrorist practices based on the killing of innocents. The small margin expanded to engulf everyone simultaneously.

Thus, it is possible to understand that the margin, in the works of both authors, was conceived as a superimposed structure, which advances from the smallest individual margins towards the largest collective ones. Therefore, the margins in the works of both writers appear as one of the most severe experiences developed by the two writers, in which the human being falls, the identity is erased, the memory is disassembled, and the individual is displaced from all the centers.

In conclusion, the researcher realizes that Inaam Kachachi and Doris Lessing tackled the idea of the Center and Margin in the context of feminist narrative as an important stage in which the two writers sought to reveal the position of the woman in society and in the text. After addressing the victimization of the woman and her continuous marginalization in society and in the narrative structure, which forced the woman to be excluded, the two writers moved towards addressing the idea of the new images that would allow the woman to take up a new position, which is different from the one previously imposed upon her. Moreover, the two writers did not merely address the marginalization of the woman and the solutions to address the issue; rather, they utilized feminist narrative to construct the new positions that the woman would be able to take up in society and in the narrative structure. Therefore, feminist narrative was utilized as an effective tool in addressing the structure that produced the margin and the center, in addition to revealing the new feminist center, which is different from the past, as is clearly reflected in the texts of the two writers, who sought to address the boundaries of the center and the margin.

However, the researcher realizes that there are certain divergences between the two writers, which the researcher seeks to address in the following points:

Documentation vs. Deconstruction: One of the first differences is the fact that Inaam Kachachi gave a narration on the center and margin, which was

close to documentation or recording, and did not actually discuss the deconstruction of the issue. However, Doris Lessing moved to a higher level and gave a narration on the deconstruction of the self, highlighting the fact that the female characters had the consciousness of their position in the new center.

The Nature of the Center: Another difference between the two writers is the nature of the center that was given to the woman. In the case of Inaam Kachachi, there was a general nature of the center, which was presented as a strategy and a possibility of getting out of the margin. However, in the case of Doris Lessing, there were different natures of the center, ranging from the possession of language to the reproduction of writing in the form of the female self, and the discussion of the issue of liberation in a more resistant manner.

The Source of the Margin: One of the main differences between the two writers is the nature of the margin, which was discussed by each writer. In the case of Inaam Kachachi, the margin was due to political coercion, and the writer discussed the margins imposed on the female. However, in the case of Doris Lessing, the margin was psychological, and the writer discussed the margin in the context of the formation of the self and the society, which was dominated by the lack of law and justice, which made the margin an inner one and at the same time imposed on the self. However, in the end, the margin, irrespective of its nature, was a source of anxiety, difficulties, and bitterness for both authors.

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