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**Art and Politics: A Middle Eastern Re-  
Reading of Western Narrative Art**

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**Abstract**

In some art works, narration is equally important as formal artistic principles. It proves its strong ground via history, religion and mythology. It also helps artists to have more liberated expressions and offers viewers more space to freely receive them. Artists tell stories in their paintings; viewers tell their own stories in response to both visual indications and their own interpretation. Critics' debate, what is the best mode of telling a story via an image? Both modern art historians and critics go on degrading the whole enterprise as theatrical and anecdotal. Why do some artists rely on text-based narrative to indirectly criticize their own times? Why do not they say their statements directly like Goya's *The 3<sup>rd</sup> of May* and Picasso's *Guernica*? Is there a relationship between indirect narratives and expression restrictions? What is the potentiality of re-reading indirect narrative paintings? Does culture influence this process? According to Picasso, a painting is not developed in advance. During the creative process, it changes as one's thoughts change. When it's finished, it goes on changing, according to the state of mind of whoever is looking at it.<sup>1</sup>

This paper offers a contemporary Middle Eastern re-reading of selected Western narrative paintings, in which the artists relies on religious, mythological, and historical literary text to indirectly criticize their own times. They use many facets of meanings which the researcher relates to social, economic, moral and political aspects in the Middle East today. The examples are Masaccio's *The Tribute Money*; Bruegel's *The Parable of the Blind leading the Blind*; David's *The Oath of Horatti* and Couture's *The Romans of the Decadence*. Choosing to re-narrate the four paintings reveals the frustration of most Middle Eastern people today.

**Introduction:**

Today, the Middle East lives one of the worst and weakest eras in its history. Its cultures, religions, traditions, ancient civilizations and educational system are questioned by many of the Western minds.<sup>2</sup> Re-reading/re-narrating the four selected paintings today reminds Middle Eastern people of their economical, political and ethical shortcoming to figure out the reasons that someone will someday find solutions. Arabs are walking 'backwards' for many reasons; a main one is the domestic institutional corruption that negatively affected the common citizens and augmented their idleness. The local media presents history and old victories to drug people and paralyze them from going on the modern life and its requirements.

Regardless of space and time, the Middle Eastern researcher adds voice to Masaccio, Bruegel, David, and Couture, communicating with people by using the same messages that had been indirectly sent centuries ago by the Western artists. In the past, for political and religious conflicts, some Western artists tended to indirectly convey personal opinions that couldn't be declared. In the twenty-first century, the majority of the world speaks out, except few ones who still have to follow the 'old game' of sending indirect messages. From this point, the researcher clarifies the rationale of selecting the four examples, whose artists conceal complain, despise and protest within 'accepted' historical, religious and mythological narrations.

Although narrative content and realistic semblance, two of the foundations of conservative academic art that often are unfavorable to modern aesthetics (Bachert; Kallir 1990), it is a strong genre in which artists can freely express themselves, especially when they are not allowed to speak out. Therefore, narrative art can be the beginning and the completion of truth that most people know, but less declares. Not only does it address concrete realities of people's existence and sufferings, but also awakes the public conscience. Regardless of its historical, religious and mythological source, narrative art is an exclusive reality for its own time. The paper will sequentially discuss both direct, indirect narratives, historical facts that influenced each artist and finally a contemporary Middle Eastern re-reading of each painting.

### **Re-Narrating the Selected Western Narrative Paintings:**

The first example is an Italian Renaissance fresco by Masaccio, *The Tribute Money*,<sup>3</sup> in Brancacci Chapel, Sta. Maria del Carmine, Florence (Figure 1). The fresco is part of life of St. Peter's cycle (Matthew 17:24-27) that was commissioned by Felice Brancacci and highly was regarded as a religious painting.



Figure 1. Masaccio, *The Tribute Money*, 1426, Fresco, 255 x 598 cm

The first point in Masaccio's fresco is the biblical moral lesson that God provides; people must concentrate more on their spirituality than materiality. The narration is skillfully portrayed in three scenes. The center of the painting is part 1, the left is part 2, and the right is part 3 (Marx & Kren 1996). In the center, the temple tax is required of Jesus by the tax collector, whose left hand reaches toward Jesus in a gesture of asking, his right hand points to the temple building at the right. Jesus, pointing towards the lake gives the instructions to Peter about how and where he will find the money; Peter's hand obediently follows the gesture of Jesus. Later, at the left, Peter takes the coins from the fish's mouth—an amazing foretold miracle. Finally, at the right, Peter delivers the four-coins to the tax collector (Matthew's Gospel 17:24ff).

The indirect narrative is the Florentines' anger in response to proposed tax, a contemporary incident in Florence. A new tax was obligated on people to cover costs incurred when the armies of Milan defeated Florence. The war between Florence and the Duke of Milan continued from 1422-27.<sup>4</sup> The Florentines were so worried and totally discontented. Whoever possessed property of the value of one hundred florins should pay tax as half a florin (% 0.5) (Jalic 2000).<sup>5</sup> Cohn discusses the fundamental break in tax policy (1999). Masaccio (1401-1428), the Florentine young man felt the same fury and wanted to react by choosing a biblical story that fits his needs and never been visually represented before.<sup>6</sup>

Masaccio's fresco shows many layers of meanings in both direct and indirect narration; materiality that overcomes spirituality is one of those layers. The concept of spirituality is contradictory in the Middle East. On one hand the region has limited sources hardly cover people's necessities that leads to unsatisfactory life style and press on more materiality. On the other hand many rulers betray their people, cheat to gain popularity, bribe for personal profits and misuse power to expand their illegal wealth. If common people truly believe in God's provision, they would not be in obsolete silence accepting indignity; and would have rejected all faces of injustice and humiliation for decades. Spirituality must be commitment, love, care, faith, grace, freedom, discipline, dignity, mercy, honesty and a bond of unity. Another layer of meaning that Masaccio emphasizes is the high tax issue. When the tax in 1440s Florence rose up to % 0.5, people complained and an artist not only visualizes anger, but also reminds people of divine intervention. A quick look at the taxes in the Middle East, both sales and income taxes —excluding the Gulf—are about %18 - %25.<sup>7</sup> When taxes are deducted, people expect some benefits, human rights and civil services. They lose their ambition because none of their expectations is met. Many leave their countries looking for high-paid jobs and others immigrate to the West. It has become irrational to live in what is called 'home.'<sup>8</sup>

From Early Renaissance in Italy, the researcher moves to Renaissance in the North to see how Bruegel indirectly visualizes his complain. The second example is a painting by Pieter Bruegel, *The Parable of the Blind Leading the Blind* of 1568 in Museo di Capodimonte, Naples (Figure 2).



Figure 2. Peter Bruegel The Elder, *The Parable of the Blind Leading the Blind*, Tempera, 1568.  
86 x 154 cm

To create his painting, Bruegel relies on religious text 'Let them alone, they [will] be blind leaders of the blind. And if the blind lead the blind, both shall fall into the ditch' (Matthew 15:14). Although the painting may seem either religious or part of the artist's personal preference of painting poor people showing their suffering,<sup>9</sup> it is a strong

political and social presentation of ignorant and incompetent people lead others, who are similarly incapable. Bruegel indicates that this image has a secondary level of meaning—indirect narrative. The arrangement of his foreground figures serves as a compositional clue that this is a parable as stated in his title. The artist represents the danger of a compiled blindness that reflects both spiritual and physical disability. The blind men will not only physically be hurt by collapsing into the chasm, but they are falling down from the church at the center of the composition into the lower right of the canvas, which --in visual traditions-- is the location for Hell when an artist paints *The Last Judgment*. Showing a ruthless life through dusty and cold color scheme, the artist has his six blinds--frayed, dirty and ragged-- arranged in two groups. On the right side, the first man has already fallen down becoming an obstacle for the rest; the second does more efforts pulling his four partners. The artist utilizes both arms and sticks as linear guidance to follow the descending diagonal plan. Although the objects superficially look ugly, there is a beautiful content and courageous message.

Bruegel lived in Brussels during hard times when the Duke of Alba led his army into the city in August 1567. The Duke had been sent by the Spanish king Philip II, to whom the Netherlands provinces belonged. The commander's orders were to forcibly convert the Protestants. There were many thousands Netherlanders sentenced to death. The extreme harshness resulted first in an uprising, then a war that lasted eighty years ending with the land division into Catholic Belgium in the South and Protestant Holland in the North. The year 1567 was an awful turning point in the history of the Netherlands, in which Bruegel was to witness (Heindorff 2005). As an internationalist and free-thinker, Bruegel had definitely antagonistic feelings toward the king's tyrannical armed force (Walch 2002). The only way for Bruegel to mentally survive over this general crisis was to keep his black humor visualized in colors.

The artist has sent this message to the world five centuries ago. Blinds are leading blinds is the case in the Middle East: yesterday, today and most probably tomorrow. There are many interesting questions, for instance, who has chosen these blinds to lead people? What has blinded them? Is it the glittered coins or the ever tempting chairs? Relating Bruegel's painting to the Middle East does not need more elaboration. The researcher prefers to skip both details and evidences because it is not the aim of this paper.

On the contrary to Bruegel's obsession with ordinary people,<sup>10</sup> there is the 18<sup>th</sup>-Century French artist David -the Athlete and the Messiah- who idealizes his scenes and relies on idealized narrative as well. The third example is a painting by David, *The Oath of Horatti* of 1784 in Musee du Louver, Paris (Figure 3). David's painting—one of Louis XVI's commissions that was received as the most beautiful one of the eighteenth century.



Figure 3. Jacques-Louis David, *The Oath of Horatti*, 1784, Oil on Canvas, 330 x 425 cm

There are two important observations, on one hand, there are patriotic and moral dimensions identified by the oath itself; on the other, the fragile role of women in his time. The direct narrative is drawn from ancient mythology concerning the founding of the Roman Republic of 670 B.C.<sup>11</sup> Quarrel is established by deadly fight between three Roman brothers, the Horatti and three enemy brothers, the Curatii. David shows the dramatic moment when the Horattis-- before their father, pledge their commitment to die for the sake of the State. The three classical figures raise their arms to answer an oath of vengeance. They will choose both self-sacrifice and loyalty to the republic over family ties and personal emotions.<sup>12</sup> It is a political statement of honor. The moral message is clear: duty and discipline are the highest virtues, and if necessary, the soldiers must die for them. The public viewed this painting as a direct call to the citizenry and a condemnation of any one who refuses to respond to the needs of the country.<sup>13</sup> It is a direct political symbol painted 'four years before the outbreak of the revolution' (Friedlaender 1980). Three hundred years ago, David invited his people to sacrifice their lives to save their 'home'. If his message was sent to the Middle East today, people will not accept his moral invitation to die for their home country because the minimum qualification of 'home' is not there.

The second observation as mentioned before is David's women who are quiet, feeble and away from the main scene. The painting reveals the marginal role of women in the new republic. 'He divides humanity ... into two distinct species, where the males are concerned only with political action, heroism, and self-sacrifice, and where the female loyalties invert the male ones--family before state, the rights of children before the rights of the polis, peace before war' (Bryson 1881). Visually, each person in the painting seems human standing on right perspective. Both postures and gestures naturally and emotionally respond to the moment. He shows unities of place, time and technical treatment.<sup>14</sup>

In the 1780s, Paris was boiling out of political unrest. Treaty of Paris in 1783 recognized American independence and agreed to free-trade provisions demanded by Britain for its control of the Atlantic trade. 'France accepted suicidal, complete free-trade agreements which ruined the French economy overnight' (Beaudry 2001). The normal result was an angry population yearning for justice. In 1789 the revolution arises; the republican replaced the absolute monarchy in France; and the French sector of the Roman Catholic Church was forced to go through radical restructuring.

David's painting exposes the exalted, patriotic feeling; and the feeble role of women. He relies on ethical values extracted from antiquity to invite his own people for *Jihad*. *Jihad's* core meanings as self constrain and protecting your own people is recently defined as terrorism. If some one wants to do the same now, inviting people for *Jihad*, who is the real enemy? Is it the outsider or the insider? Is it the one who speaks a foreign language or that who speaks your native? Such questions have to be answered before re-narrating David's painting. Re-sending the artist's message today to every occupied citizen became illegal. If David was alive today, he would have been in Guantanamo detention camp now for his unambiguous invitation for *Jihad*.

A quick comparison of the recent role of Middle Eastern woman to that of David's shows that the former is much better than the latter.<sup>15</sup> For example, the percentage of females attending university levels is higher than males. There is no difference in pay-role when both are equally qualified.<sup>16</sup> Away from some remote Arab villages who apply pre-Islamic traditions, women have rights.

Last art work to be discussed is Thomas Couture's *The Romans of the Decadence* of 1847 in Musee d'Orsay, Paris (Figure 4) in which he criticizes immorality as the foundation for failing civilizations.



**Figure 4.** Thomas Couture, *Romans of the Decadence*, 1847, Oil on Canvas, 466 x 773 cm

Couture relies on Juvenal's Satire VI, *Against Women*. Juvenal, the Roman poet says that 'More cruel than war, vice fell over Rome and avenged the vanquished universe.'<sup>17</sup> He sets many factors for the decadence of Roman Empire: luxury, free women and the lack of ethics. He also discusses adultery and prostitution, sexual voracity, greed, refusal to be good mothers and involvement in male activities (McLeod, 1991). On both sides of the painting, great men like Brutus, Cato, Seneca<sup>18</sup> are there observing the corruption with reprobation. Couture visualizes the corruption in luxurious setting, excessive food and jewelry, nudity, people sexually perverse and morally bankrupt. Although the intrinsic qualities show that Couture is painting the Romans in both classical style and classical setting – geometric plan, centralization, Corinthian columns, statues of gods and goddesses, wet drapery, anatomically studied figures, *contraposto* positions, ideal postures and gestures- the extrinsic source says that he uses the Romans to personify the contemporary Parisians (Gautier 1848).<sup>19</sup> In his fourteen-page art criticism, Theophile Gautier -a nineteenth-century poet-art critic- says 'At the feet of the great men of glorious times, their unworthy descendants are to be seen lying, with lowered heads, arms dangling, muscles relaxing, inert and napping, whereas their ancestors vanquished the world; wine and courtesans proved stronger than barbarians' (1848).

Couture painted *The Romans of the Decadence* with direct influence of many disasters that entirely endured France. In 1846, an economic crisis resulted from the continual effects of the unprecedented and massive agricultural failures of 1845-47, which in turn set off a serious industrial-commercial crisis. Food uprisings became common in much of Europe by 1846-47 as a result of famine (Goldstein 1999). Peasant rebellions were bloodily put down. Other difficulties arose in the wool industry as early as the end of 1845 and increased in 1846-1847 in the linen and cotton industry. In addition, textile industry and railways investment went down. The number of bankruptcies surged in large towns, particularly in Paris, where taxes affected consumer goods retailers from the fashion industry (Hubert 1998). In 1848, the demands for alleviation of the economic grievances of the working class led to bloody suppression of working-class uprising in Paris (Goldstein 1999). Many factors of extreme poverty, oppression and lack of freedom lead to the revolution of 1848 and overthrew Louis Philippe.<sup>20</sup>

The case in the Middle East today is not very different from Paris 150 years ago; the majority is boiling waiting for a chance to explode. Although poverty is leading most people to semi-slavery, the minority of wealthy people are increased. Immorality is daily shown in televisions by names of modernization and globalization. Young generation is tempted by imported costumes, languages, and habits; they imitate as much as they can. The wide spread of satellite receivers and exposure to foreign cultures can be a good advantage for strong societies,<sup>21</sup> but fragile ones are not capable of selection, especially when the outside temptation and eroticism became the main characteristic of daily life, in songs, dances, fashion and advertisement; when sex is called love and eroticism is called entertainment. Couture's painting might be re-named as *The Arabs of the Decadence*.

### **Conclusion and Reflection:**

To sum it up, the paper has chosen four narrative paintings, in which some Western artists relied on history, religion and mythology to indirectly criticize their own times. After many centuries, the majority of ME people neither have right to complain, criticize, object, nor reject injustice. Today, the same 'old' approach has to be used to express negative feelings toward their space and time. The researcher too can't directly speak out, but has to stand behind a colorful wall of four Western paintings to re-send the same old messages. The only way to declare the innermost opinion is through some one else like Masaccio, Bruegel, David, and Couture.

For more understanding of the situation in the Middle East, the reader has to go back to Ottoman Empire which ruled the area from 1517-1914. Since Ottomans' long slavery to World War I, the Middle East has been left fragile enough to be colonized by foreign occupations: British, French, Italians, Israelis and finally Americans.

If one goes back to political revolutions of mid-twentieth century against foreign occupations in the Middle East -keeping in mind that oil have been there since the beginning of the twentieth century- there were chances to have strong, rich and fair governments, good educational system and decent life, but this never happened. The Western desire to re-control the Middle Eastern oil was one of the main reasons to establish Israel in the middle of the Arab countries. A mutual East-West benefit took place; some Arab leaders are induced to protect the Western benefits in the Middle East; the west protects their corrupt governments. Therefore they keep their people preoccupied with vulgar amusement, religious conflicts, fake elections and inflation to

never care about politics. The majority hardly affords their daily bread, they neither work for development, success, self satisfaction nor do they help others. Unfortunate result, education became superficial after few decades and oil became a curse. People are suffering from inherited indignity, idleness and blind obedience for rulers. Generally speaking, people have no more trust on political systems. Arabs lost the self-confidence in producing any good and became wide consumers for Western products, distrusting their local ones.

Another main problem is that lately Middle Eastern people don't do anything genuine. In other words, everything they do only looks like the real one. In fact, this interesting 'theory of resemblance' was mentioned twenty years ago by Salah El-Saadani in 1985 -an Egyptian actor and critic who was interviewed on Egyptian radio channel *Sawt Alarab*. He was talking about his favorite soccer ball that was strongly defeated. Comparing between East and West, El-Saadani says, 'in the Middle East, there is semi-soccer team that has the same rounded ball, same numbers of players, who are supposed to follow same rules, but they don't have the same skills' (the researcher's translation). Unfortunately, I find his theory valid in other aspects of life; there is semi-Justice system that looks wonderful; a book full of (foreign) laws, a judge holding a hammer, lawyers in black robes, but always catching who steals the egg not the camel. A semi-democracy is everywhere; all leaders talk about it and hypocrite-newspapers publish how democratic the system is, but it is not there. Also there is semi-education; great buildings, students, professors, classrooms, libraries, audio/video facilities, but the result is unsuccessful. The main concern is only to give the impression of doing good things. The sarcastic theory of resemblance doesn't apply to the issue of corruption because it is truly genuine. A more painful issue, when one tries to find out what the majority of contemporary Arab artists are doing today. And, why are not they representing their peoples' sufferings? Are they making semi-art as well? Are they not tired yet of painting and sculpting emperors? They are busy with out-dated aesthetics and art styles, copying surrealists and cubists who died decades ago? Whether they are oppressed or frustrated, they have no excuse to escape the reality. At the time their countries are burning and starving, they are hiding behind Portraits, Still Lives, Landscapes and Nude Figures in order to sell more. Why don't they visualize the dark present and pessimistic future? One may wonder to whom they should create art. Should they visualize polluted reality in dark colors and fishy smell to wake their own people up? Do starving people visit art exhibitions?

Losing all hopes for a better life makes Arabs look and sound the way they are now. The majority is deaf, blind, careless and angry. A great number of brains have escaped from such sick atmosphere. Those who emigrated to the West are looking for democracy, freedom, human rights, better atmosphere to work and appreciation for what they do. Shall they find it somewhere?

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<sup>1</sup> In TV production and online magazine, Suzanne Duroux writes 'Guernica: Testimony of War.' *Treasures of the World*. 1999. <http://www.pbs.org/treasuresoftheworld/guernica/gmain.html> (visited March 2007). Picasso's statement was said in May 1<sup>st</sup>, 1937 when started the first drawings for his *Guernica*.

<sup>2</sup> After September 11 -whether Arabs are responsible for doing it or not - the Middle East has been accused for every crime in the world. Attacking Afghanistan, Iraq and Lebanon are examples of its helplessness. The American order to Ministries of Education in Arab countries to change school books –including courses on Arabic language and Islamic religion- and reprint books with new contents –from first to twelfth grades- under its supervision is another example of the ME status today.

<sup>3</sup> Masaccio's is the first in art history to portray a continuous space, consistent lighting, and linear perspective. He painted lifelike bodies that resemble the shapes of ancient Greek and Roman sculpture, see Paula Berggren; Marshall Schneider. 'Renaissance Literature: Historical Background.' Alan Bailin (Trans.) *Contexts and Comparisons*, Columbus: Reports from the New World, 2003; and Vasari, G., *Lives of the Most Eminent Painters, Sculptors, and Architects*. (Trans) A. B. Hinds, 1900, London: Everyman Library: 1996.

<sup>4</sup> Both Filippo Visconti and Duke of Milan try to conclude peace with the Florentines. Due to the suspicions on the Duke's audacious task in Italy, the Florentines are shocked and the war breaks out in 1424. The Florentines are defeated near Furlì by the Duke's forces. The people complained against those who have advised the war. See: Christian E. Detmold (Trans.), *The Historical, Political, and Diplomatic Writings of Niccolò Machiavelli*, Boston: James R. Osgood and Co., 1882.

<sup>5</sup> See Codebook of the 1427-29 Castato Data File for Florence by David Herlihy (Edi.) 'Florentine Renaissance Resources: Online Catasto of 1427'. Christiane Klapisch-Zuber, R. Burr Litchfield and Anthony Molho (Trans.), 1848. [http://www.stg.brown.edu/projects/catasto/newsearch/catasto\\_codebook.html](http://www.stg.brown.edu/projects/catasto/newsearch/catasto_codebook.html) (May 1995).

<sup>6</sup> This subject matter is not common in art history like Annunciation, Nativity, Crucifixion, Pieta or The Day of Judgment.

<sup>7</sup> See Taxation in Jordan, <http://www.infoprod.co.il/country/jordan2e.htm>; <http://www.incometax.gov.jo/IncomeTax/Home/Generalhelp.aspx>. To see who are waived from both income and sales tax, see: [http://www.incometax.gov.jo/IncomeTax/main\\_menu/dept\\_itd1/procedures/exemption/exmpt2.aspx](http://www.incometax.gov.jo/IncomeTax/main_menu/dept_itd1/procedures/exemption/exmpt2.aspx). For Taxation in Egypt as another example: see: <http://www.infoprod.co.il/country/egypt2e.htm>

<sup>8</sup> Nowadays, violence and hatred are born out of poverty, frustration and injustice to express anger.

<sup>9</sup> He has never painted idealized scenes, nudity, mythology, or portraits. Although he is a wealthy man and 'a well-traveled city person,' he moved easily in a circle of sophisticated humanists See: Peter Walch. 'Bruegel'. *University of New Mexico Art Museum*, 2002.

<http://unmartmuseum.unm.edu/collectionfile.cfm?collectionid=30&start=2>.

The artist portrays figures observed from nature, acting out in their real contemporary settings.

<sup>10</sup> Bruegel was called 'Peasant Bruegel' for dedicating many of his art works for the working class visualizing their sufferings.

<sup>11</sup> The story is derived from the ancient history of Livy, Plutarch, and Dionysius.

<sup>12</sup> The story presents a difficult moral problem; one of the Horattis is married to a sister of the Curatii. And, a Horattis sister, Camilla is engaged to one of the Curatii brothers. Two brothers fought to death, while one survived and Rome triumphed.

<sup>13</sup> David strongly greeted the revolution and from 1789, he was politically involved. He voted to condemn King Louis XVI to death. In 1794, he was arrested twice. After the fall of Napoleon, in 1816, he had to flee to Brussels, in which he died after ten years. See: Philippe Bordes. *Jacques-Louis David: Empire to Exile*. New Haven: Yale UP, 2005

<sup>14</sup> Miller describes the figures as '. . . also cast shadows, and the background appears to be filled with atmosphere and depth.' See: Necia Miller. 'Lecture Notes.' *Issues and Ideas in Renaissance Art*. June 2000. <http://www.rose.edu/faculty/nmiller/TV1103/TVwk3.html>. Goldman states that 'David subordinated brushwork to near invisibility . . . and color was used to balance the strict, formal composition . . . Drawing and firm contour described the figures that enacted their roles in shallow space like a Roman sculptural bas-relief frieze.' See: Benita Goldman. 'Paris 2.' 2006. <http://www.emich.edu/abroad/staff/Benita/Paris2.html>

<sup>15</sup> The researcher doesn't agree with most foreign reports which accuse Arab men for mistreating their women. There is a sick minority everywhere in the world, which violates their female partners.

<sup>16</sup> Actually many Western writers have discussed the issue of Arab women without studying the culture- the local background, therefore they are always unfair by mixing Islamic traditions with pre-Islamic.

<sup>17</sup> Couture included this line from the sixth satire of the Latin poet Juvenal in the salon leaflet.

<sup>18</sup> Gautier defined those three figures that are modestly dressed up and sadly look from a distance, they observe the orgy scene. See: Theophile Gautier. 'Salon de 1848.' *Les Beaux Arts en Europe: 1848*. Paris: Michel Levy Freres, 1948.

<sup>19</sup> Gautier had great admiration to the painting in general and strong attachment to the middle female figure. Couture asked his friend Gautier the poet-art critic to write him the preface. The same painting has inspired Gautier to write one of his most famous poems, *Symphonie en blanc majeure*.

<sup>20</sup> Proyect talks about the situation, right before revolution of 1848 saying that: 'It was not the French bourgeoisie that ruled under Louis Philippe, but . . . bankers, stock-exchange kings, and railway kings . . . the so-called financial aristocracy. It sat on the throne, dictated laws in the Chambers.' See: Louis Proyect. 'Karl Marx's: The Class Struggles in France: 1849-50.' *The Marxist: Articles from the Neue Rheinische Zeitung*. May 1848. (Trans. and re-published January 1996). [http://marxists.anu.edu.au/archive/marx/works/download/Marx\\_The\\_Class\\_Struggle\\_in\\_France.pdf](http://marxists.anu.edu.au/archive/marx/works/download/Marx_The_Class_Struggle_in_France.pdf)

<sup>21</sup> Middle East receives three satellite earth stations, one is Arab Sat system and two on the Atlantic and Indian Ocean Sat (Intelsat), the latter stations incorporate digital technology.