

VOICES BEYOND WALLS: STORYTELLING AND SEXUALITY, SAYING THE UNSAYABLE

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ABSTRACT

Story-telling is the beginning of a deeper conversation. Through two prominent works of female writers which are Monia Hejaiej's *Behind Closed Doors: Women's Oral Narratives in Tunis* from Tunisia and Fatima Mernissi's *Dreams of Trespass: Tales of Harem Girlhood* from Morocco, the world of storytelling in the Maghreb as a part of the Muslim culture and the unique place of female oral narratives becomes a means to rewrite the scripts of gender. Thus, approaching these books from the thematic angle of 'sexuality' helps to understand the Maghrebian discourse on gender relations and underscores how the female body, sexuality and storytelling coalesce and become the basis for an analysis of power whose ultimate aim is not only to establish equality but also to confirm difference and to celebrate women's agency.

Keywords: Maghrebian society, storytelling, sexuality, honour, shame, Virginity, desire.