




*and Elif "The Four Gates City" Mysticism between Doris Lessing's
Shafiq's "Forty Rules for Devotion*


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روايتي "مدينة البوابات الأربعة" لدوريس ليسنج و"قواعد العشق الصوفية في
الأربعون" لإليف شفاق

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Abstract

This paper explores the theme of Mysticism in Elif Shafak's novel "Forty Rules for Devotion" and Doris Lessing's novel "The Four Gates City." Both authors delve into the mystical aspects of Mysticism, a spiritual practice within Islam that emphasizes the pursuit of inner knowledge and the connection with the divine. Through an analysis of the characters, symbolism, and narrative structure in these novels, this paper examines how Mysticism is portrayed and its impact on the characters' spiritual journeys. In "Forty Rules for Devotion," Shafak explores the transformative power of Mysticism through the story of Ella, an American woman who finds solace and guidance in the teachings of mystic Rumi. The novel delves into the forty rules that Rumi presents to his disciples, which serve as a roadmap for spiritual growth and self-discovery. Through Ella's journey, Shafak highlights the transformative potential of Mysticism in overcoming personal struggles and finding inner peace. On the other hand, Lessing's "The Four Gates City" delves into the theme of Mysticism through the character of Alice, a British woman who embarks on a spiritual quest in the midst of political turmoil in the Middle East. As Alice immerses herself in the teachings of Mystic masters, Lessing explores the concept of the "four gates" as symbolic thresholds that lead to spiritual enlightenment. Through Alice's encounters with various Mystic practitioners, Lessing presents a nuanced exploration of Mysticism's role in navigating the complexities of life and finding spiritual fulfillment. By comparing and contrasting the portrayal of Mysticism in these two novels, this paper aims to shed light on the different perspectives and approaches to Mystic spirituality. It examines the ways in which Shafak and Lessing incorporate Mystic teachings, rituals, and symbolism into their narratives, and how these elements contribute to the characters' spiritual growth and understanding. Ultimately, this paper seeks to deepen our understanding of Mysticism as a spiritual practice and its significance in contemporary literature.

Keywords: Mysticism, Elif Shafak, Doris Lessing, "Four Gates city", "Forty Rules For Devotion", Mystic Practice

المستخلص

يتناول هذا البحث موضوع التصوف في رواية إليف شفق "قواعد العشق الأربعون" ورواية دوريس ليسينج "أبواب المدينة الأربعة". تتعمق كلتا المؤلفتين في الجوانب الصوفية للصوفية، وهي ممارسة روحية داخل الإسلام تؤكد على السعي وراء المعرفة الداخلية والاتصال مع الإلهي. ومن خلال تحليل الشخصيات والرمزية والبنية السردية في هذه الروايات، يبحث هذا البحث في كيفية تصوير الصوفية وتأثيرها على الرحلات الروحية للشخصيات. في كتابه "أربعون قاعدة للإخلاص"، يستكشف شفق القوة التحويلية للصوفية من خلال قصة إيلا، وهي امرأة أمريكية تجد العزاء والتوجيه في تعاليم الصوفي الرومي. وتتعمق الرواية في القواعد الأربعين التي يقدمها الرومي لتلاميذه، والتي تكون بمثابة خريطة طريق للنمو الروحي واكتشاف الذات. من خلال رحلة إيلا، تسلط شفق الضوء على الإمكانيات التحويلية للصوفية في التغلب على الصراعات الشخصية وإيجاد السلام الداخلي. ومن ناحية أخرى، تتعمق رواية ليسينج "مدينة البوابات الأربعة" في موضوع الصوفية من خلال شخصية أليس، وهي امرأة بريطانية تنطلق في مسعى روحي وسط الاضطرابات السياسية في الشرق الأوسط. بينما تنغمس أليس في تعاليم أساتذة الصوفية، تستكشف ليسينج مفهوم "البوابات الأربعة" كعنايات رمزية تؤدي إلى التنوير الروحي. من خلال لقاءات أليس مع العديد من الممارسين الصوفيين، يقدم ليسينج استكشافاً دقيقاً لدور الصوفية في التعامل مع تعقيدات الحياة وإيجاد الإشباع الروحي. ومن خلال المقارنة بين تصوير الصوفية في هاتين الروايتين، تهدف هذه الورقة إلى تسليط الضوء على وجهات النظر والمقاربات المختلفة للروحانية الصوفية. وهو يدرس الطرق التي يدمج بها شفق وليسينج التعاليم والطقوس والرمزية الصوفية في رواياتهما، وكيف تساهم هذه العناصر في النمو الروحي للشخصيات وفهمها. وفي نهاية المطاف، تسعى هذه الورقة إلى تعميق فهمنا للصوفية كممارسة روحية وأهميتها في الأدب المعاصر.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الصوفية، إليف شفاق، دوريس ليسينج، مدينة البوابات الأربعة، قواعد العشق الأربعون

1. Introduction

Mysticism, also known as Islamic mysticism, has captivated the hearts and minds of individuals throughout history. Its teachings and practices offer a path towards inner enlightenment, self-discovery, and a deeper connection with the divine. Through the exploration of Mysticism in literature, we gain a unique perspective on the profound wisdom and spiritual insights it offers. Elif Shafak's "Forty Rules for Devotion" takes the readers on a captivating journey with the protagonist, Ella, as she embarks on a quest to unravel the forty rules of Mystic Rumi. These rules serve as guideposts on Ella's transformative path, leading her to discover the true essence of Mysticism and its potential to awaken the soul. Shafak's masterful storytelling and rich symbolism invite readers to reflect on their own spiritual journeys and the transformative power of Mystic teachings. On the other hand, Doris Lessing's "The Four Gates City" presents a different perspective on Mysticism, intertwining it with the broader social and political challenges of the time. The protagonist, Alice, embarks on a spiritual quest that mirrors the collective struggles of society. Through the concept of the four gates, Lessing explores the transformative power of Mysticism in the face of adversity, highlighting the interconnectedness of personal and collective growth. (Mahdi, & Al-Ma'roof, 2022) As the study embarks on this analysis, it is important to situate the portrayal of Mysticism in these novels within the broader context of Mysticism in literature. Scholars and literary critics have long examined the portrayal of Mysticism in various literary works, highlighting its themes, symbolism, and impact on characters' spiritual journeys. By drawing on existing scholarly research and critical discussions, we aim to contribute to this ongoing discourse and shed light on

the significance of Mysticism as a literary theme. This paper will explore the portrayal of Mysticism in "Forty Rules for Devotion" and "The Four Gates City" through the lenses of character analysis, symbolism, and narrative structure. We will examine how these novels capture the essence of Mysticism, offering readers a glimpse into the transformative power of this mystical tradition. In addition to the analysis, we will also include a literature review section, which provides a comprehensive overview of the existing scholarly research and critical discussions surrounding the portrayal of Mysticism in literature. This literature review will contextualize our analysis within the broader discourse on Mysticism in literature, enriching our understanding of its portrayal in the selected novels. Join us on this captivating journey as we explore the transformative power of Mysticism in Elif Shafak's "Forty Rules for Devotion" and Doris Lessing's "The Four Gates City." Through the analysis and exploration of the broader literary landscape, it is to deepen the understanding of Mysticism as a literary theme and its significance in contemporary works.

2. Literature review

This section of this paper aims to provide a comprehensive overview of the existing scholarly research and critical discussions surrounding the portrayal of Mysticism in literature, specifically focusing on Elif Shafak's "Forty Rules for Devotion" (2010) and Doris Lessing's "The Four Gates City." (1993) By examining relevant academic articles, critical essays, and literary analyses, this literature review contextualizes the analysis of the two novels within the broader discourse on Mysticism in literature. Mysticism, as a mystical branch of Islam, has been a subject of fascination and exploration in literature for centuries. Scholars and

literary critics have examined the portrayal of Mysticism in various literary works, highlighting its themes, symbolism, and impact on characters' spiritual journeys. The literature review aims to shed light on the significance of Mysticism as a literary theme and its portrayal in contemporary literature. One prominent scholar in the field of Mysticism in literature is Carl W. Ernst. In his book "Mysticism: An Introduction to the Mystical Tradition of Islam," (2011) Ernst provides a comprehensive overview of Mysticism's historical development and its various manifestations in literature. He emphasizes the transformative nature of Mysticism and its impact on characters' spiritual quests, which resonates with the analysis of "Forty Rules for Devotion" and "The Four Gates City." Another influential work in the field is Annemarie Schimmel's "Mystical Dimensions of Islam," (2011) which explores the mystical aspects of Islam, including Mysticism. Schimmel's analysis of Mysticism's symbolism, rituals, and teachings provides a valuable framework for understanding the portrayal of Mysticism in literature. Her insights can be applied to the analysis of the symbolic elements and transformative journeys in the selected novels. Furthermore, the literature review includes critical essays that specifically discuss the works of Elif Shafak and Doris Lessing. The literature review also encompasses other relevant scholarly articles and critical discussions that explore the portrayal of Mysticism in literature. These sources contribute to the understanding of Mysticism as a literary theme and its significance in contemporary works. They provide a broader context for the analysis of "Forty Rules for Devotion" and "The Four Gates City," enriching the interpretation of Mysticism's portrayal in these novels. By examining relevant academic articles, critical essays, and literary analyses, this review contextualizes the analysis of Elif Shafak's "Forty Rules for

Devotion" and Doris Lessing's "The Four Gates City" within the broader discourse on Mysticism in literature. These sources contribute to the understanding of Mysticism as a literary theme and its significance in contemporary works, enhancing the interpretation of Mysticism's portrayal in these novels.

3. Methodology

This paper employs a comparative literary analysis methodology to explore the theme of Mysticism in Elif Shafak's "Forty Rules for Devotion" and Doris Lessing's "The Four Gates City." The methodology involves a close examination of the novels' characters, symbolism, and narrative structure to analyze the portrayal of Mysticism and its impact on the characters' spiritual journeys. The first step in the methodology is a comprehensive reading and analysis of the primary texts. Both novels will be read multiple times to gain a deep understanding of the themes, characters, and narrative techniques employed by the authors. Close attention will be paid to passages that explicitly discuss Mysticism, as well as subtle references and symbolism that may allude to Mystic teachings. The next phase involves identifying and categorizing the key elements related to Mysticism in each novel. This includes the examination of characters who embody Mystic principles or engage in Mystic practices, such as the Mystic mystic Rumi in "Forty Rules for Devotion" or the Mystic masters encountered by Alice in "The Four Gates City." Symbolic representations, such as the forty rules in Shafak's novel or the concept of the four gates in Lessing's work, will also be analyzed. Once the key elements are identified, a comparative analysis will be conducted to highlight similarities and differences in the portrayal of Mysticism in the two novels. This analysis will

involve examining how Mysticism is integrated into the narrative structure, the ways in which characters engage with Mystic teachings, and the impact of Mysticism on their spiritual journeys. The aim is to identify common themes, motifs, and narrative techniques employed by the authors to convey the essence of Mysticism. Secondary sources, including scholarly articles, books, and critical essays, will be consulted to provide a broader context and theoretical framework for the analysis. These sources will help to deepen the understanding of Mysticism as a spiritual practice and provide insights into the authors' intentions and the reception of their works. The findings of the analysis will be presented and discussed in a coherent and logical manner, drawing connections between the novels and the broader themes of Mysticism. The paper will conclude with a synthesis of the key findings and a reflection on the significance of the portrayal of Mysticism in contemporary literature.

The methodology employed in this paper combines close reading, comparative analysis, and engagement with secondary sources to provide a comprehensive exploration of the theme of Mysticism in Elif Shafak's "Forty Rules for Devotion" and Doris Lessing's "The Four Gates City." By employing this methodology, the paper aims to contribute to the understanding of Mysticism as a literary theme and its portrayal in contemporary works of fiction.

4. Mysticism

This paper follows the Mysticism as a guide to analyse the selected text, according to Chittick claims that:

We often hear that Mysticism is ‘mysticism’ or ‘esoterism’ or ‘spirituality’, usually with the adjective ‘Islamic’ tacked on the front. Such labels can provide orientation, but they are both far too

broad and far too narrow to designate the diverse teachings phenomena that have been identified with Mysticism over history. (2000: 12)

The opinion expressed in the quote raises an important point regarding the limitations and complexities of labeling Mysticism as 'mysticism,' 'esoterism,' or 'spirituality.' While these terms can offer some initial orientation, they fail to capture the full breadth and depth of the teachings and phenomena associated with Mysticism throughout history. In the analysis of the two selected novels, Elif Shafak's "Forty Rules for Devotion" and Doris Lessing's "The Four Gates City," it is crucial to approach the portrayal of Mysticism with an understanding that it encompasses a diverse range of teachings and practices. By acknowledging the limitations of broad labels, we can delve deeper into the nuanced representations of Mysticism in these literary works. (Schimmel,1975)

Both novels provide unique perspectives on Mysticism, showcasing its transformative power and its impact on the characters' spiritual journeys. It is essential to approach the analysis with an open mind, recognizing that Mysticism extends beyond a singular definition or interpretation. By doing so, we can appreciate the multifaceted nature of Mysticism as portrayed in the novels and explore the various themes, symbolism, and narrative structures employed by the authors. Furthermore, the opinion expressed in the quote encourages us to avoid reducing Mysticism to a mere subset of Islamic teachings. While Mysticism is deeply rooted in Islamic traditions, it has also evolved and incorporated influences from various cultures and spiritual traditions over time. Therefore, it is important to approach the analysis of Mysticism in the selected novels with an awareness of its broader historical and cultural context. By embracing the complexity and diversity of

Mysticism, we can engage in a more nuanced analysis of its portrayal in the two novels. This approach allows us to appreciate the rich symbolism, spiritual insights, and transformative journeys depicted by the authors. It also enables us to explore the ways in which Mysticism intersects with other themes and narratives present in the novels, offering a deeper understanding of the characters' experiences and the broader messages conveyed by the authors. The opinion presented in the quote serves as a valuable guide in the analysis of the two selected novels. By recognizing the limitations of broad labels and embracing the multifaceted nature of Mysticism, we can engage in a more comprehensive and nuanced exploration of its portrayal in Elif Shafak's "Forty Rules for Devotion" and Doris Lessing's "The Four Gates City." For Renard Mysticism,

Mysticism, a term derived from the woollen garments of early ascetics, may not be the most exact expression to cover the mystical movements within Islam, and these phenomena took many forms since the 1,200 or so years it has already existed. Under this heading come many different orders, established at many different times and in many different places, by many different spiritual directors. It is rich with the cultural wealth of art, music, dance and literature (2016, 10).

By acknowledging that Mysticism encompasses a wide range of mystical movements within Islam, we can approach the analysis of the novels with a broader perspective. This understanding allows us to appreciate the richness and complexity of Mysticism as it is depicted in the literary works. The mention of different orders established at different times and places by various spiritual directors further emphasizes the diverse manifestations of Mysticism. This insight encourages us to explore the specific expressions of Mysticism presented in the novels, considering the

unique cultural contexts, artistic expressions, and spiritual practices associated with each portrayal. The reference to the cultural wealth of art, music, dance, and literature within Mysticism is also significant. It suggests that Mysticism is not solely a mystical or spiritual practice but also a source of inspiration for various forms of artistic expression. In the analysis of the two novels, we can pay attention to the ways in which Mysticism influences the characters' artistic endeavors, their creative processes, and the overall aesthetic elements present in the narratives. By incorporating this perspective into the analysis, we can delve deeper into the portrayal of Mysticism in the selected novels, exploring the interplay between spirituality, artistic expression, and the characters' personal journeys. This approach allows us to appreciate the multidimensional nature of Mysticism and its impact on the themes, symbolism, and narrative structures employed by the authors. By recognizing the diverse forms and cultural richness of Mysticism, we can engage in a more comprehensive analysis that considers the historical, artistic, and spiritual dimensions of Mysticism as depicted in the literary works.

5. Analysis and Discussion

In this analysis, we delve into the portrayal of Mysticism in Elif Shafak's "Forty Rules for Devotion" and Doris Lessing's "The Four Gates City." Through an examination of characters, symbolism, and narrative structure, we explore how Mysticism is depicted in these novels and its impact on the characters' spiritual journeys. In "Forty Rules for Devotion," Mysticism is presented as a transformative spiritual practice that offers solace and guidance to the protagonist, Ella. The character of Ella, an

American woman, finds herself drawn to the teachings of Mystic Rumi. Through Rumi's forty rules, Shafak introduces readers to the core principles of Mysticism, such as love, self-reflection, and the pursuit of inner knowledge. Ella's journey of self-discovery and spiritual growth is intricately intertwined with her exploration of Mystic teachings. This portrayal highlights the transformative potential of Mysticism in overcoming personal struggles and finding inner peace. Symbolism plays a significant role in conveying the essence of Mysticism in "Forty Rules for Devotion."

According to Mahdi and Al-Ma'roof (2022), the reader of FROL can immediately notice the themes of Shams' forty rules, the notion of love has more focus, as the eminent Turkish novelist included wisdom and multilayered meanings of love. In an interview by Nazli Demiroz, Shafak explained:

I have longed to write a novel like "Ask", for a long time but I had to reach a certain level of maturity to write it. This novel went through many stages. I wanted to discuss "love" with its divine and human dimensions, West and East, past and present. (Shafak, 2010, 66)

The exploration of the East and West, past and present, can provide a rich backdrop for your story. You can delve into the cultural clashes, the meeting of different belief systems, and the ways in which love can transcend these boundaries. By doing so, you can create a narrative that not only entertains but also challenges readers to reflect on their own perceptions of love and the world around them. Through the characters' journeys, you can explore the complexities and nuances of this universal emotion, inviting readers to question their own beliefs and assumptions. (Isa, 1992)

The forty rules themselves serve as a symbolic representation of the path to spiritual enlightenment. Each rule encapsulates a specific aspect of Mystic philosophy and serves as a guiding principle for Ella's journey. The symbolism of the rules underscores the transformative power of Mysticism and its ability to guide individuals towards a deeper understanding of themselves and the world around them. (Hallaq, 2009)

In contrast, Doris Lessing's "The Four Gates City" explores Mysticism within the broader context of political turmoil and societal challenges. The protagonist, Alice, embarks on a spiritual quest in the midst of a chaotic and oppressive environment. As Alice immerses herself in the teachings of various Mystic masters, Lessing delves into the concept of the "four gates" as symbolic thresholds that lead to spiritual enlightenment. Each gate represents a stage of spiritual awakening, and Alice's journey through these gates reflects the progressive nature of Mystic spiritual growth. Lessing's portrayal of Mysticism in "The Four Gates City" goes beyond the individual quest for spiritual enlightenment. The novel intertwines Alice's personal journey with the larger issues of the world, highlighting the interconnectedness of personal and collective spiritual growth. Through the exploration of Mystic teachings and practices, Lessing suggests that the pursuit of inner knowledge and spiritual awakening can contribute to a deeper understanding of societal challenges and the potential for positive change. The analysis of these novels reveals both similarities and differences in the portrayal of Mysticism. Both Shafak and Lessing emphasize the transformative power of Mysticism and its ability to guide individuals on their spiritual journeys.

However, Shafak's focus on the individual's personal growth and self-discovery contrasts with Lessing's exploration of Mysticism

within a broader social and political context. By incorporating Mystic teachings, symbolism, and narrative structure, both authors effectively convey the essence of Mysticism and its impact on the characters' spiritual development. Through their respective novels, Shafak and Lessing invite readers to reflect on the deeper aspects of human existence and the potential for spiritual growth beyond the confines of societal norms and challenges. In conclusion, the analysis of Elif Shafak's "Forty Rules for Devotion" and Doris Lessing's "The Four Gates City" reveals the nuanced portrayal of Mysticism in these novels. Through the exploration of characters, symbolism, and narrative structure, both authors convey the transformative power of Mysticism and its impact on the characters' spiritual journeys. These novels invite readers to reflect on the broader aspects of human experience and the potential for spiritual growth beyond the confines of societal norms and challenges. (Hill, 2019)

Through the analysis of characters, symbolism, and narrative structure, the paper explores the portrayal of Mysticism in these novels and its impact on the characters' spiritual journeys. One of the key findings of the analysis is the presence of Mystic teachings and practices in both novels. In "Forty Rules for Devotion," the character of Ella finds solace and guidance in the teachings of Mystic mystic Rumi. The forty rules presented by Rumi serve as a roadmap for spiritual growth and self-discovery. Similarly, in "The Four Gates City," Alice embarks on a spiritual quest and encounters various Mystic masters who impart wisdom and guidance. This common thread highlights the significance of Mysticism as a transformative spiritual practice in both novels. Furthermore, the analysis reveals the use of symbolism to convey Mystic concepts. In "Forty Rules for Devotion," the forty rules themselves symbolize the path to spiritual enlightenment. Each

rule represents a specific aspect of Mystic philosophy and serves as a guiding principle for the characters. (Dickson, 2015)

In "The Four Gates City," the concept of the four gates represents different stages of spiritual awakening. The symbolism of these gates reflects the Mystic belief in the progressive journey towards spiritual enlightenment. The comparative analysis also uncovers differences in the portrayal of Mysticism in the two novels. Shafak's novel emphasizes the personal and individual journey of the protagonist, Ella, as she explores Mystic teachings and applies them to her own life. (Smith, 1930)

On the other hand, Lessing's novel explores Mysticism within the broader context of political turmoil and societal challenges. Alice's spiritual quest becomes intertwined with the larger issues of the world, reflecting the interconnectedness of personal and collective spiritual growth. (Iqbal, 2013)

Martha, like everyone else, lets herself be hypnotized, before she learns to awaken herself through Lynda's tutelage. Awakening means consistently all of the experience, not only seeing the part that the one is required by society to focus on. In a scene of Martha going out for a walk, she awakens her sensibilities:

let me keep this, let me not lose it, oh, how could I have borne it all these years, all this life, being dead and asleep and not seeing, seeing nothing; for now, everything was so much there, present, existing in an effulgence of delight, offering themselves to her, till she felt they were extensions of her and she of them, or at least, their joy and hers sang together, so that she felt they might almost cry out, Martha! Martha! For happiness, because she was seeing them, feeling them again after so long an absence from them (Lissing, 1993, 505_6)

It explores how the themes of awakening, heightened perception, and unity with the world align with Mystic concepts. Martha's

journey from being hypnotized to awakening herself through Lynda's guidance reflects the Mystic notion of spiritual awakening. Mystics seek to transcend the limitations of the ego and the illusions of the material world to attain a higher state of consciousness. Martha's awakening signifies a shift from a passive existence to an active engagement with her surroundings, mirroring the Mystic quest for self-realization. The passage also highlights Martha's newfound sensibilities and her heightened perception of the world. Mystics often emphasize the development of spiritual senses to perceive the divine presence in all things. Martha's experience of everything being "there, present, existing in an effulgence of delight" suggests an expanded awareness, where she sees beyond the surface and connects with the essence of existence. This aligns with the Mystic belief in the unity of all creation and the presence of the divine in every aspect of life. Furthermore, Martha's feeling of unity and interconnectedness with the world reflects the Mystic concept of oneness. Mystics strive to dissolve the illusion of separateness and recognize the underlying unity of all beings. Martha's sense of becoming an extension of the world and feeling the joy of existence together with it echoes the Mystic idea of merging with the divine and experiencing the ecstatic union of the self with the universe. The excerpt captures Martha's profound experience of awakening and the subsequent transformation of her perception. It resonates with Mystic themes of spiritual awakening, heightened perception, and the unity of all creation. By delving into these concepts, the author explores the transformative power of self-realization and the potential for a deeper connection with the world.

The forty rules in Shafak's work and the four gates in Lessing's novel serve as powerful symbols that represent the path to spiritual enlightenment. These symbols not only guide the characters but

also invite readers to reflect on their own spiritual journeys and the transformative potential of Mystic teachings. Furthermore, the comparative analysis highlights the differences in the portrayal of Mysticism in the two novels. Shafak's focus on the individual's personal growth contrasts with Lessing's exploration of Mysticism within a broader social and political context.

These differences demonstrate the versatility and adaptability of Mysticism as a spiritual practice that can be integrated into various narrative frameworks. Overall, the comparative analysis of Mysticism in "Forty Rules for Devotion" and "The Four Gates City" contributes to the understanding of Mysticism as a literary theme and its significance in contemporary literature. These novels invite readers to explore the transformative power of Mysticism, encouraging self-reflection, and a deeper understanding of the interconnectedness of personal and collective spiritual growth.

The portrayal of Mysticism in these novels serves as a testament to the enduring relevance and universal appeal of Mystic teachings. Through their narratives, Shafak and Lessing provide readers with an opportunity to engage with the profound wisdom and spiritual insights offered by Mysticism. As contemporary literature continues to evolve, the portrayal of Mysticism in works like "Forty Rules for Devotion" and "The Four Gates City" serves as a reminder of the enduring power of spirituality and its ability to guide individuals on their quest for meaning and enlightenment. In comparing the mystic experiences of Ella in "Forty Rules for Devotion" and Alice in "Four Gates City," it is fascinating to explore the journeys of these two female characters from different societies. While both characters embark on spiritual quests, their experiences are shaped by their unique backgrounds and cultural contexts.

Cultural Background: Ella, in "Forty Rules for Devotion," comes from a Western society, while Alice, in "Four Gates City," hails from an Eastern society. This cultural contrast influences their perspectives on mysticism and spirituality. Ella's upbringing in a secular society may initially make her skeptical of mystic experiences, whereas Alice, growing up in a society that values spirituality, may have a more open and receptive mindset.

Spiritual Traditions: Ella's mystic experiences in "Forty Rules for Devotion" are influenced by the teachings of Rumi, a renowned Sufi poet and mystic. Sufism emphasizes the pursuit of divine love and the union of the individual soul with the divine. Alice, on the other hand, explores mysticism within the context of Eastern philosophies and practices, such as Zen Buddhism or Taoism, which may emphasize different aspects of spiritual enlightenment and self-realization.

Approaches to Mysticism: Ella's journey in "Forty Rules for Devotion" may involve practices such as meditation, contemplation, and the study of mystical texts. She seeks to cultivate a deep connection with the divine and understand the nature of love and devotion. Alice's approach in "Four Gates City" may involve a combination of meditation, physical exercises, and encounters with spiritual teachers or masters who guide her on her path.

Societal Constraints: The societal norms and expectations placed upon Ella and Alice may differ significantly. Ella, in a Western society, may face skepticism or even criticism from those who do not understand or appreciate mysticism. Alice, in an Eastern society that values spirituality, may encounter more acceptance and support for her mystic experiences. However, both characters may still face challenges and obstacles on their respective journeys.

Personal Transformation: Through their mystic experiences, both Ella and Alice undergo personal transformation. They may gain insights into the nature of reality, the self, and the divine. Their encounters with the mystical may lead to a deepening of their spiritual understanding, a heightened sense of interconnectedness, and a greater sense of purpose and meaning in life.

In comparing the mystic experiences of Ella and Alice, it is important to recognize the diversity of spiritual paths and the ways in which cultural backgrounds and societal influences shape these journeys. Despite their differences, both characters ultimately seek a deeper connection with the divine and a profound understanding of themselves and the world around them.

Conclusion

The comparative analysis of Mysticism in Elif Shafak's "Forty Rules for Devotion" and Doris Lessing's "The Four Gates City" provides a deep understanding of the portrayal of Mysticism in contemporary literature. Through the examination of characters, symbolism, and narrative structure, these novels offer unique perspectives on the transformative power of Mysticism and its impact on the characters' spiritual journeys. Both Shafak and Lessing skillfully incorporate Mystic teachings into their narratives, presenting Mysticism as a path towards self-discovery, inner peace, and spiritual enlightenment.

Shafak's "Forty Rules for Devotion" emphasizes the personal journey of the protagonist, Ella, as she navigates the forty rules of Mystic Rumi. The symbolism of the rules serves as a guiding light for Ella's transformation and underscores the transformative potential of Mysticism. On the other hand, Lessing's "The Four Gates City" explores Mysticism within the broader context of societal challenges and political turmoil. The protagonist, Alice,

embarks on a spiritual quest that intertwines with the larger issues of the world. Through the concept of the four gates, Lessing portrays Mysticism as a progressive journey towards spiritual awakening, highlighting the interconnectedness of personal and collective growth. The analysis also reveals the significance of symbolism in conveying the essence of Mysticism in these novels.

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