

The Social Oppression of Women and its Representations in The Monodramatic Texts of Safaa Al-Baili

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ABSTRACT

Oppression is a concept known to human since ancient times, and it is related to societies in general and to human in particular, the motives, means, and goals that cause it differ, and thus the results caused by it differ too. Whether the expression of this behavior is violence, authoritarianism, or force, they all refer to one content, which is oppression, oppression depicts the apparent and observed behavior that aims to inflict harm on the other.

This research is concerned with the study of social oppression in the monodramatic texts of Safaa Al-Baili, as it is divided into two parts: the first section dealt with the topic of social oppression, and the second section dealt with representations of oppression in the monodramatic texts globally, Arab and Iraqi, as the research is being into four chapters, the first chapter is devoted to determine the research problem, which was identified by the following question: How was the writer Safaa Al-Baili able to embody the social oppression of women in her monodramatic texts?

The importance of the research lies by highlighting its monodrama topic and studying the monodramatic texts of the writer Safaa Al-Baili and identifying the most important social issues that she dealt with. This chapter included the aim of the research, which was based on identifying the social oppression of women and its representations in the monodramatic texts of Safaa Al-Baili.

The chapter contained the limits of the research that were defined spatially in the monodramatic texts of the writer Safaa Al-Baili in Egypt, temporally in the monodramatic texts for the period of time (2010-2015) and objectively is the study of social oppression in the monodramatic texts of the writer Safaa Al-Baili. The second chapter contains the theoretical framework and has It included two sections, the first one specialized in studying the concept of social oppression. The second topic was concerned with studying social oppression in the monodramatic text (globally, Arab and Iraqi). The chapter concluded with the most important indicators that resulted from the theoretical framework.

As for the third chapter, it is for the research procedures that included defining the research community according to the two temporal and spatial periods that were included within the limits of the research. As for the research sample, the text of the play (Half Day) was selected in (2015) in an intentional manner and based on the indicators that came from the theoretical framework as a research tool. The study concludes in the fourth chapter a number of findings reached by the researcher, and in total, the texts revealed social oppression that occurs to individuals as a result of the many stresses on them, whether within the family or from the unjust society. This chapter also included conclusions, recommendations, suggestions and a list of Arab and foreign sources and references.

Keywords: Social Oppression, Monodrama, Representations.

I. INTRODUCTION

Oppression is a social phenomenon and a cultural gain, and it appears only in human from the moment that nature transcends itself into a culture. The culture in which individuals live carries a lot of oppression and encourages its perpetration because of the elements it contains through which the priorities of building the personality and the elements of its formation can be determined, there are things that do not aim at oppression directly, but lead to it, including what emphasizes competition and dominance, so the individual here is forced to oppress other members of his group and surpass them, so the possibilities of trust and friendship between the parties to the relationship diminish and turn into hostile tension and each individual becomes a real opponent of society and others.

II. CHAPTER ONE (METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK FOR RESEARCH)

1.2. Research Problem

Oppression is one of the prevalent things in Arab societies, because it is linked to inequality between individuals and the marginalization of certain groups in society, as well as its connection to the political and authoritarian side, and the oppression of authority and influence over peoples and control over their lives and their destinies. All forms of oppression are accompanied by the psychological aspect, which plays a great importance in the formation of societies in general and people in particular, because it causes a state of conflict between the human self and society.

Oppression is an abuse practiced against multiple, different and weak groups. They are unable to express their opinion or objection for many reasons due to either fear and inability to express themselves, or lack of knowledge of rights, following the prevailing traditions and customs, or the dominance of authority over societies. Monodrama is one of theatrical arts that is distinguished by its boldness and its handling of topics that concern contemporary human issues and its dependence on narration by one main character. It is similar to thinking out loud and expressing oneself and the stresses facing people in society, and because of the

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importance of this art as a platform and voice for expressing the marginalized and the oppressed, the writer Safaa Al-Baili has adopted monodrama in her theatrical texts to express oppression, injustice and abuse of others, and from the above, the problem of the current research can be summarized by the following question:

How did the writer Safaa Al-Baili embody the social oppression of women in her monodramatic texts?

3- The importance of research and the need for it

The importance of the research and the need for it are summarized in the following points:

1- Studying the monodramatic texts of the writer Safaa Al-Baili and identifying the most important social issues that she dealt with.

2- It shows the role of theater in conveying social reality and highlighting oppression in society.

Research Objective

The current research aims to:

Learn about the social oppression of women and its representations in the monodramatic texts of Safaa Al-Baili.

Research Limits

1- Temporary limits: It includes the monodramatic texts written in the period (2010-2015).

2- Spatial limits: Egypt.

3- Objective limits: A study of the social oppression of women and its representations in the monodramatic texts of Safaa Al-Baili.

Define Terms

Oppression

A- language

1- Ahmad Mukhtar defined it as:

“Conquering a person despise him and dominate him with injustice, oppressed oppress, oppression, he is oppressor, and the object is oppressed”(Omar, 2008).

B-Idiomatically

The Arabic Language Academy defines it as “everything that hinders the freedom of the individual in that he lives in a society. It is either organized as laws or common as customs and traditions” (Salbya, 1982)

Social Oppression

Idiomatically

It is the deprivation of the individual from his social and personal rights and the attempt to limit his integration into society and the exercise of his role as a free human being in society with rights and duties (Abdel Wahab, 1994).

Social Oppression

Procedurally

The set of cruel, domineering and unfair practices practiced by personalities with influence, authority or money on the weak personalities in the monodramatic characters of Safaa Al-Baili.

A woman is a living example of oppression, as she is considered a social property (the clan, the village, the family, the husband and before him the father, son and uncle). Woman entity is not her property, she does not have the right to choose, discuss, think or analyze and this led her for suffering, myth and magical solutions to confront her situation and thus reflect this on her children and exercise oppression on them through her dominance within the family by instilling in their souls dependency through love and surrounds them with a world of myths, occultism and fears, and thus the child grows up unable to confront reality and his constant sense of being an oppressed human. In addition to this, the father imposes oppression on the family through the law of domination and submission, instilling fear and obedience in the child and forbidding him to express his opinion about what is happening in the family from the parents and the authority they represent, so the child is constantly exposed to a torrent of commands and prohibitions, thus instilling in his mind a system of oppression and injustice (Hijazi, 2015).

From the above, the researcher sees that oppression in society occurs within a limited area. A person who is subjected to oppression cannot reach those who oppressed him and wronged him because they are higher in authority than him or because his affairs are in their hands, he is afraid of confronting them, so he resorts to those who are less than him or under his control to exercise the oppression that he himself has been subjected to.

III. CHAPTER TWO (FIRST TOPIC)

Through the ages, the family has occupied a large space with great importance in societies. Its issues have occupied the thoughts of thinkers in various philosophical, social, psychological and educational trends. The family is consider as the base of society and it's the first structure of the individual and act as the small community for the child. The individual personality depend on the family, and the success of the family have great effect on the society. A healthy family is the basis of a healthy society. The success of the family as an integrated first organization for the individual that performs all the roles of other social organizations within its scope leads to the success of other organizations in society (Bayoumi, no date). The first forms of oppression appeared within the family and then moved to society due to the reflection of the emotions and behaviors of oppressed individuals.

The family is the main and basic structure for building human society, and any defect in the system of the family and its members

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leads to a defect in the system of society. We find that many families suffer from material and moral oppression, such as the husband's oppression of the wife, the non-observance of her rights and her violence, or vice versa, the wife's oppression of the husband by demanding financial resources that the husband's income cannot bear, and thus the husband becomes oppressed within his family. Or oppressing parents for their children, not building them, and pushing them to corruption. (Musa, 2008). All of these are examples oppression, which extends to the large society to become an oppressed society.

Women in the era of pre- Islamic were exposed to oppression, as they did not enjoy any rights and had no entity of their own at all. Women role was just to make men happy and implement their requests. Society considered them a disgrace, therefore, before Islam, society resorted to infanticide girls and robbed the rights of women, the wife and mother, from the most basic of her rights, which is the management of the family(Khalil, 1972). As for the working class, the man exercises oppression against the woman, as he is playing a strength power role and the responsible for livelihood for the family, so the woman's position turns into weakness and humiliation. Every person has a role in the family, and any defect in these roles leads to the dysfunction of the entire family, but the man remains compensated for all his oppression and humiliation by playing the role of the master who subjugates the woman, enslaves and exploits her and turns her into a tool for him that serves him and gives birth to offspring that enhances his masculine strength and turns into a tool for enjoyment the man (Hijazi, 2015).

So the man imposed his dominance and control against the woman, so he despised her, weakened her status, and controlled over her. This led to corruption of morals, and the woman became looking for a way to get rid of this oppression and tyranny, because she became aware that her ignorance and backwardness led to her being despised by society, and the society make her nothing, society practiced many forms of oppression on women (murder - beating - divorce - female circumcision - deprivation of education) put her in a limited area and under the control of masculine rule, and she became subjugated in family and socially (Khalil, 1972).

As for the woman in the level below the working class, she reaches the highest degree of oppression through denying her existence in the family and society. When she is born, she is received with grumbling and distress or outright rejection, and is placed in second place after the boy, who gives all the value. The girl becomes a servant to the father and the brothers, and the father allows the brothers to exercise their influence, domination and oppression over her in his absence. Women become under stress and restrictions exercised on them from everywhere (Hijazi, 2015).

Although human is born strong and free, society imposes weakness and humiliation on him as a result of political and social reasons. This oppression that society imposes on some individuals usually imposes on the poor and weak, as most cases of rape and assault are for poor girls, either housemaids, farmers, or girls of shelters and orphanages (El-Saadawi, 2007).

SECOND TOPIC

Representations of social oppression in monodramatic texts (globally - Arab)

The issue of oppression is one of the important issues on which the intellectual structure focused in Arab theater literature. It was clear in many literary and intellectual contexts, which took its dimensions on the Arab area within its successive temporal stages. Oppression issue attended the theater with an overwhelming presence as a result of its proximity to the concerns and conditions of contemporary people. The theater addressed the issue of oppression within its multiple forms, to show oppression in its social, economic, political and psychological form, which is imposed by negative daily living conditions. The level of oppression may vary between one monodramatic text and another, but the majority of monodramatic texts depict the types of oppression that a person is subjected to in his life. It serves as a release for the human being from his innermost feelings, so the person expresses through words and signals on the psychological repression and oppression that he is exposed to as a result of the stresses of daily life.

In Antoine Chekhov's play (The Harm of Tobacco), family oppression appears. The husband is an old man who is supposed to give a lecture on the harms of tobacco, but he turns away from the topic of the lecture to find himself talking about his private life and the oppression and persecution he faces from his domineering wife, who manages a music school and supervises motel for girls, and through the events of the play, we find that the old man is subordinate to his wife, as he is a teacher, a cleaner, a manager of the administration, an accountant for servants, a constraint on expenses and others, and all this in exchange for a little food that keeps him alive and that he is sometimes deprived of as a form of punishment.

What can I tell you? I work in the motel as a manager for the administration. I buy foodstuffs, check servants, limit expenses, fight bugs, walk my wife's dog, and hunt mice, and yesterday, for example, my wife denied me food, saying: There is no need to feed you, you stupid (No Author, 2016)

Through this dialogue, we find that the wife practices oppression and abuse on her husband by stripping him of his independent self and making him subordinate to her, as well as his constant feeling of fear of his wife and his weakness in front of her. She exercises moral and material oppression on him, as she does not give him money in return for his exhaustion, and in return he exercises several jobs at the same time. As for moral oppression, it is his constant feeling of defeat, despair and oppression, as she prevented him from even the most basic of his rights, which is the practice of paternity over his daughters.

You say to me: Where are your daughters? Who are these my daughters? I talk to them while they giggle. And my wife has seven daughters.. No, sorry, I think six daughters... (lively) seven! (No Author, 2016)

In this play, the hero listed his wishes in front of the audience instead of trying to achieve it. After this long life, he did not think to change the reality in which he lives, but wanted to escape from his life and did not succeed in that because of his fear and lack of a strong personality that makes him free from the oppression of his domineering wife.

The representations of oppression in Arab monodramatic texts do not differ much from the Western monodramatic texts, because all societies suffer from the same types of oppression, but with disparity and contrast between one society and another. In the monodrama (Um Al-Rubabikia. Hind Rest in Al-Nisnas Valley) by the writer (Emile Habibi), depict of oppression appears, and the social one, which is the oppression of the occupier (Hind) a Palestinian woman in her fifties who lives under oppression imposed by the Zionist occupation on her with its brutality and oppression of the Palestinian people, where he displaced all those who were around her, but she refused to leave and remained in her home in Al- Nisnas Valley in Haifa, so they called her (Queen of the Valley). She and her home became a meeting place for her countrymen. As a result of the social and material oppression of life, in addition to the political oppression that (Hind) faced, she was forced to work in the sale and purchase of used items and their waste. She acquired another nickname, "Um AL- Rubabikia". The play depicts one day after the setback in September 1967. In his monodramatic text, (Habibi) portrayed (Hind) as if it was Palestine, so he portrayed it with a firm national stance and a complete belief in the love of the homeland and its insistence not to abandon it even after the departure of her three sons (Hassan Hosni Hosnia) and left their home for fear of the occupying Zionist gangs. She waited a long time for their return, but she still had hope that one day they would return to her arms and the arms of Palestine.

She says addressing one of the arrivals

Where are you came from, son of our neighbor?

From Kuwait or further away?..... (Habibi, 1995).

The insistence of (Hind) not to leave her country despite the suffering, cruelty and oppression she faces from the Zionist occupation stems from her feeling and love for herself and her country. She lives for the beautiful and loving memories that existed among the people of her area, as well as her confirmation of the depth of human relations that existed between them. She hope that those beautiful days and memories will return and her children will return to her, and she was expressing all her suffering, oppression, pain and hope through (alzagharid) as a kind of venting from within her.

In his monodramatic text, (Habibi) portrayed two aspects of the social oppression that (Hind) experienced, the first after the homeland became a prisoner of the Zionist occupier and its imposition of a miserable political reality on the Palestinians and the practice of the worst forms of oppression such as killing, displacement, exclusion, imprisonment and deprivation of the most basic rights, and the second is social oppression represented by her insistence on facing this oppression and staying in her home as a kind of challenge and an attempt to remove oppression from her and to address the violations that she is exposed to by compelling occupier.

Indications Resulting from the Theoretical Framework

Oppression is a social phenomenon found in societies and is a cultural gain in them.

Oppression is linked to tyranny and despotism, as the oppressor deviates towards the individual interests or of a small group at the expense of society.

Tyranny leads to the marginalization of the individual and the abolition of his role in society, which is the result of deprivation and aggression.

The family is the basic structure of societies, as it is responsible for creating the personality and entity of the individual.

Society practices oppression on women and considers them weak entity, which made them look for a way to get rid of oppression.

In humans, oppression leads to depression, isolation, and a desire not to live.

Violence is one of the main causes of oppression.

Coercion, force, authoritarianism, abuse and neglect are concepts related to oppression.

Oppression occurs within societies as a result of class difference.

The oppression that occurs within the family is directly reflected in the societies.

IV. CHAPTER THREE (RESEARCH PROCEDURES)

First: The Research Community

The research community included (seven) theatrical texts, monodrama and non-monodrama produced during the time period between (2010 AD - 2015 AD), of which (three) monodrama texts were selected as a final society for research as shown in the following table:

S	Name of the play	Author	Publication
1	Violent Woman	Safaa Al-Baili	2010
2	Julia	Safaa Al-Baili	2014
3	Half-Day	Safaa Al-Baili	2015

Second: The Research Sample

The researcher chose a sample (violent woman), in an intentional manner, for the following reasons:

1. This sample was present within the time period specified for the research.
2. This sample included many images of social oppression.
3. A representative sample of the research community and achieving the goal of the research.

Third: Research Methodology

The researcher relied on the (descriptive approach) in analyzing the research sample, according to what is dictated by the nature of the current research.

Fourth: The Research Tool

The researcher relied on the indicators referred to in the theoretical framework, as well as the sources, references and studies that the researcher reviewed.

Sample Analysis

Violent Woman

Safaa Al-Baili

A Violent Woman monodrama is about a woman in her forties who is married and has children, a public school teacher. An educated woman who loves to read political, social and literary books. It believes in freedoms and human rights and defends the Palestinian issue and the peoples who suffer from the oppression of other governments hostile to it. It also refuses to be just a means to make men happy, as it refuses only to perform the duties of the house and take care of the children and husband, but believes that the woman can be a leader in society and believes that she can change something in society for the better. Because of what she believed in, she did not accept to be silent about injustice or harming others. She faced difficulties as a result of this, which led her to being oppressed by society and by certain people.

This monodrama depicts (Zubaydah), who is one of the middle-class intellectuals, who reflected on them the absence of freedom and true democracy. Thus, their suffering, anxiety, frustration, and oppression emerged, as well as their resentment, anger, protest and rebellion at times against the oppressor.

In (Violent Women), oppression appears as if it fills the space surrounding Zubaydah and penetrates into the cells of the entire social fabric. This oppression has diverse and multiple sources, which are generated as a result of the structure of societies and their various formations within the first institution, which is the family with its structure and the nature of the relationship between its members to work and then to the entire society including it from different laws, customs and traditions.

In this text, the writer revealed to us about Zubaydah’s social oppression within her family and what she was suffering from her husband for many years. He was imposing his desires, his will and his choices on her, and therefore we find that she has fallen under the restrictions of the family, so that these restrictions and a sense of oppression are reflected on her life within society, so that she suffers another type of oppression, it is the oppression of work, so the school is another place in which Zubaydah loses her freedom to express her opinion. The school for it is a narrow space dominated by routine and dominated by stifling, ill-considered laws that are binding on everyone. Any violation of these laws represents an anomaly from the traditional society, and therefore the perverted individual finds material or moral repression, and thus becomes an undesirable person in society.

The writer also depicts for us another form of social oppression, which occurs as a result of the class differences in societies, and this difference is an existing phenomenon and has many effects on people’s souls. The difference is either a result of the financial difference between members of society or from an authoritarian class difference. The oppressor exercises his force over who weaker than him, depriving him of his rights to live and even depriving them of the dream of a decent life.

The reader of the text notes that the monodramatic character revolves in a boundaries of oppression. Psychological oppression begins with the family and is reflected in society, and on the contrary, the oppression in society that our Arab countries suffer from is reflected in the psyche of the personality, causing it to suffer psychological oppression that is reflected in the character itself and its internal entity. Thus, we see that the heroine in this monodrama lives in a continuous cycle of oppression, originated from harsh conditions surrounding her, so the unconscious here have a great importance, as her existential experience has gained from her unconscious life, which is caused by the intense stress exerted by the repress in her life.

The writer highlights on an issue that can be said is a global, as it exists in our Arab and foreign societies, and this issue is the subordination of women and their inferiority. This subordination is present in the collective unconscious of different cultures, and this led the men to the possession of women, so he believed that he had the right to own their bodies, and what helped him in this was the weak economic situation of some women who offered their bodies in exchange for money. In this monodrama, the woman faces this kind of oppression, where she fights in her workplace and is seen as a commodity or merchandise that is easy to acquire by any man who has money. And this is what happened to Zubaydah in this monodrama, where the cycle of oppression, represented by the man's domination and oppression, is repeated, as well as fight against her in her new workplace.

Zubaydah: Im here to play and sing

Zubaydah: (In the lady's voice) But with the noble gentleman, it's different.. and a beautiful woman? mature? And your voice is beautiful? In general, you are a fine merchandise, and there is always someone to pay the price.

Zubaydah: What do you say? merchandise is paid? what do you mean by that(Al-Baili, 2022).

In this text, the writer sought to show many forms of oppression that women can face in society, such as people exploiting, weakening and controlling them. Our heroine here faced many forms of social oppression. The writer depicted her as she moved from one workplace to another because of the domination of others. After she was expelled from the discotheque, she worked as a maid in a cafe, and at first she worked without wages only to sleep and eat in the place, and here she faced injustice from the customers of the owner of the cafe, who stipulated that she work without wages, and this is a kind of exploitation and the vulnerability of women in society and looking at them with inferiority and the difference between them and men. At the end of the play, the writer explains that Zubaydah reaching conviction that the false regime turned society into a large prison, and justice in it was the justice of oppression and freedom was conditioned on the approval of the security services and authority, human in these societies lost his freedom and his humanity.

Zubaydah: life there must be better.. No conspiracies, no greeting cards, no forgery, no grammatical errors, no premeditated killing, no politics, no central security, and no system, there is where sterile philosophies and delusional minds end. There...where there is no one else(Al-Baili, 2022).

V. FOURTH CHAPTER (RESULTS AND CONCLUSIONS)

First: The Results

- 1- The writer used the direct style in raising the subject of oppression that afflicted the monodramatic characters and brought it very close to the lived reality.
- 2- Social oppression of women occurs as a result of old and inherited customs, traditions and norms and as a result of patriarchal masculine authority. This appears in the play sample where the authority of the father who rules by social custom and authoritarianism and oblige his daughter to marry by force to a person she does not desire.
- 3- The sample showed the women weakness in the view point of society and that they can give up their rights in exchange for living in peace or because of fear of society.
- 4- The class inequality between the members of society leads to the domination of one class over another, and thus the oppression of one class against another
- 5- The monodramatic characters (Al-Baili) belong to the middle and poor social classes, as shown by the research sample.
- 6- The monodramatic characters of (Al-Baili) were characterized by being lonely suffering from oppression as a result of frustration, despair and injustice that happened to them.

Second: Conclusions

- 1- The monodramatic Al-Baili texts revealed characters who suffer from oppression as a result of the surrounding social and psychological conditions.
- 2- The writer drew her topics from the lived reality and from her local environment and linked them to the inner life of the character, thus creating an internal conflict of the personality and an external conflict between the character and the external environment.
- 3- Injustice, despotism, tyranny, authoritarianism and bullying are concepts that lead to oppression.
- 4- The writer presented her monodramatic characters spontaneously by reliance on the narration in presenting her main problem.
- 5- All the images of social oppression revealed by the writer lead to psychological oppression of the character.
- 6- The monodramatic characters of (Al-Baili) live in a state of contradiction between their past and what they live in the present through exposure to various shocks in their life that made them live in a state of oscillation between (sadness_ happiness), (repression_ disclosure) and (despair_ hope).
- 7- (Al-Baili) relied on the monologue to show the sadness and inner oppression of the monodramatic character.

Third: Recommendations

- 1- The researcher recommends paying close attention to the art of (monodrama) by publishing monodrama texts in cultural magazines and local newspapers.
- 2- Organizing an annual monodrama festival in all colleges and institutes of fine arts.

3- The interest of researchers and theater theorists in the art of monodrama, and documenting their researchs with books on monodrama and supplying public libraries with it.

Fourth: Suggestions

- 1- Study of oppression and its representations in local monodramatic texts.
- 2- A study of social oppression and its reflection on society in Arab monodramatic texts.

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