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Iraqi Woman in Ambience of War: A Post-Orientalist Study of  
Abdul Razaq Al-Rubai's A Strange Bird on our Roof

## A B S T R A C T

Iraqi woman image within the framework of the horrific 2003 war on Iraq is perceived to be as 'angel in the house' or obsequious victim who is in need of emancipation. George Bush and his wife Laura, on a motley of formal speeches in the wake of the invasion and American media, have ingrained this modus operandi of the docile cliché in the consciousness of American denizens. The vindication to liberate Iraqi people; particularly women, which is utilized to wage war on Iraq, has gone awry. This discourse of liberation falls short of the expectations of Iraqi people and the world. In fact, Iraqi women have enduringly suffered corollaries of the invasion. Nonetheless, still the Iraqi women keep their head high and never to yield to this lumpy miasma as they keep confronting quotidian life quandaries with hard-hitting resilience. In this Context, Abdul Razaq Al-Rubai's magnum opus A Strange Bird on our Roof (2013) is to be censoriously analyzed within the framework of Post-Orientalism. As such, the current paper means to sledgehammer the smeary clichés manufactured about the Iraqi women by representing the veracity of the Iraqi woman.

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المراة العراقية في أجواء الحرب: دراسة ما بعد استشراقية لمسرحية "طائر غريب على سطحنا"

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الملخص:

يُنظر إلى صورة المرأة العراقية في إطار الحرب على العراق عام ٢٠٠٣ على أنها "ملاك في المنزل" أو ضحية خاضعة تحتاج إلى التحرر. لقد نجح جورج بوش وزوجته لوريا، في خطاباتها الرسمية المتنوعة قبيل الغزو ووسائل الإعلام الأمريكية، في ترسيخ هذه من الكليشيهات عن المرأة العراقية في وعي المواطنين الأمريكيين. تحرير الشعب العراقي؛ وخاصة النساء، الذي تم استخدامه كذريعة لشن الحرب على العراق قد انحرف عن مساره. إن خطاب التحرير

هذا لا يرقى إلى مستوى توقعات الشعب العراقي والعالم. وفي الواقع، عانت المرأة العراقية باستمرار من الغزو. تواصل المرأة العراقية مكافحة الظروف الصعبة ولا تستسلم أبداً. في هذا السياق، سوف يتم تحليل العمل الرائع "طائر غريب على سطحنا" بشكل نقدي في إطار ما بعد الاستشراق. وعلى هذا النحو، فإن الورقة الحالية تعمل على مواجهة الكليشيهات النمطية حول المرأة العراقية.

**الكلمات المفتاحية:** المرأة العراقية، ما بعد الاستشراق، التمثيل، "طائر غريب على سطحنا"

## 1. Introduction:

In the aftermath of the guerrilla kamikaze on September 11, 2001, there was a bulbous surge of curiosity about the people of the Middle East. However, this interest was swiftly misshapen into misunderstandings when miscellaneous and convoluted racial, ethnic, and religious identities were portrayed in a undeviating manner. The American government and media have played a tremendous role in perpetuating images and accounts about Arabs and Muslims.

During a televised address to the Congress on September 20, 2001, President George W. Bush officially identified the extremists accountable for the attacks, characterising them as adversaries of liberty. He goes on to say, "Civilized people throughout the world are speaking out in horror," indicating that the countries siding with America are civilized, while those who are against them are barbarians. Moreover, Nada Shabout (2010) points out that within the narratives in media and fiction, Arab women in particular have been "transformed into unfortunate objects of pity"; an image that was evoked as a justification for the United States' invasion of Iraq (p.152). These identifications then evolved into tropes employed to bolster certain political objectives within the context of Bush's 'War on Terror'; a conflict that he considered by Bush as a struggle. "of all who believe in progress and pluralism, tolerance and freedom." (Bush, 2001)

In analogous context, Laura Bush (2001) delivered a radio speech in which she states that the women are maltreated in Iraq; thus this is a good reason for United States military intervention in Iraq. Her speech describes these women as preys in need of saving. She went on to announce that the "fight against terrorism is also a fight for the rights and dignity of women," in Iraq appropriating a kind of hoax as a means of justifying the decision of her husband's government to unleash the heinously blood-spattered war. George W. Bush also stated that the invasion was launched under the pretext of "disarming Iraq to freeing its people" (qtd. in Democracy Now!, 2023). That is, "the United States and the United Kingdom exploited the cause of women and girls in Afghanistan and the rest of the Muslim world to justify their invasion, occupation and other forms of intervention in Muslim nations" (Bishara, 2021, para, 1). Karen Beckman (2004) states that in the narrative of American political rhetoric, Iraqi women are portrayed as subjugated and voiceless, reinforcing the imperialistic notion that such women need to be "saved" (p. 45). In the same fashion, we have to remember that even women in the united States have endured certain hardships and they, "were not treated equally in certain contexts since they were excluded from participating in the justice system..." (Nati, 2019, p.1).

One should bear in mind that Iraqi women had hoped for a long-overdue improvement in their social, political, and economic ventures after the US overthrew Saddam Hussein's administration. Women looked on the United States to fulfil its promise of ensuring their involvement in decision-making about rebuilding and democratization (Al-Tamimi, 2019). However, many Iraqi women, like Nadjé Al-Ali, say that the Bush administration, which stoked these hopes, has failed to adequately include women in the rebuilding of the new Iraq (Wajid, 2009). And it is true there was a surge of women's rights groups and a lot of mobilisation in the aftermath of the invasion, however, the story of 20 years of invasion is also a story of devastation, demolition and turmoil. It also a story of resilience; Iraqi women are not passive victims but they always face the adversities ahead with braveness. Thus, contrary to the prevailing notion that Arab and Iraqi women are marginalised and subjugated, writers, like Heather Raffo, Mohja Kahf and Yussef El Guindi attempt to challenge the stereotypical representation of "Arab [Iraqi] women who are presented as submissive, oppressed and invisible in the public sphere" (Mankhi, 2021, p. 1510).

Moving swiftly on, the stereotypical representation manufactured about the people of the orient is nothing new; on the contrary it has a long history which is given the term orientalism. The word "Orient" originates from the Latin word *Oriens*, which signifies the direction of the East and the rising sun (Al-Alihan, 2003). The term "Occident" serves as the antithesis to the concept of the "Orient," originating from the Latin word *Occidens*, to denote the western direction and the descent of the sun. Orientalism, thus, refers to the academic examination of the East, including its civilizations, societies, languages, cultures, and populations, as conducted by researchers and intellectuals from the Occident or Western world (Al-Namleh, 1993).

Edward Said (1978) posits that orientalism is an academic field in which scholars specialise in teaching, presenting, and writing about the Orient. Said (1978) employs Michel Foucault's notion of 'discourse' to study how the orient was misrepresented. According to Foucault, a discourse is "The delimitation of a field of objects, the definition of a legitimate perspective for the agent of knowledge, and the fixing of norms for the elaboration of concepts and theories" (qtd in Kennedy, 2000, p.12). The expansion of European rule was facilitated by the establishment and growth of orientalist institutions (Said, 1978). Throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries orientalist organisations and intellectuals saw significant growth and widespread dissemination, so imperial powers like France and Britain spread their wings. The rationale for the extensive scholarly investigation into the Orient has been examined by several academics, like Edward Said, Talal Assad and Anouar Abdel-Malek. Orientalists faced allegations of harbouring several hidden agendas like Bernard Lewis and Rudyard Kipling, with the intention of procuring knowledge to assist their governments in the process of colonization (Al-Namleh, 1993). Instantaneously, one ought to bear in mind that "colonisation is an imperial power structure that privileges European control, values, tradition, and culture over those of the colonised" (Az-Zubaidy & Albady, 2020, p. 2803).

Post-Orientalism, in the same context, as a literary theory by Hamid Dabashi, is a comprehensive contemplations about the issue of authority and the capacity to portray the Orient. He questions the west/ American alleged normative and moral agency to represent the

other. Dabashi (2009) adroitly orchestrates a framework for the people from the orient, Islamic world or what is called the Middle East to upheave their voice resuscitating in them the capacity to represent themselves. Thus, Dabashi (2009) elaborate on Post-Orientalism, stating:

My next move, in the same vein, is to work my way towards a mode of agential autonomy that enables the subaltern to produce knowledge about the world without being implicated in the so-called crisis of the subject. To do so, I will first have to dismantle the essentialized notion of "the subaltern" (or "the Oriental") as being ipso facto conducive to the formation of agency and, in a Saidian move, seek to place the normative authority of the subaltern in a contrapuntal position that refuses essentialized agency. (p. xiv)

Therefore, Postorientalism as a literary theory orchestrates a framework to provide a down-to-earth representation of Orient (Dabashi, 2009). The literary theory of Post-orientalism emerged because Said's work *Orientalism* thought very adroitly critiques the unanchored in reality misrepresentation, still he did not provide the real image of the orient which he saw not his subject. Said (1978), in *Orientalism*, defined the "subtle and persistent Eurocentric prejudice against Arabo-Islamic peoples and their culture." (cited in Windschuttle, 1999, para, 1). Within this framework, the Arab/Muslim woman is consistently subjected to scrutiny, reconstruction, and devaluation. She is shown as an object of desire, a sexual being meant to be claimed and controlled, among other things. She exhibits traits of being reserved, submissive, and compliant, and she easily reverts back to a primitive condition. This justifies the Western intervention in the area. Abu-Lughod (2013) contends that after the events of September 11, 2001, these portrayals were more intertwined with the objective of rescuing Arab women from their culture. Each of these forced portrayals strips the Arab woman of her autonomy as an autonomous agent and reduces her to a mere instrument for the West to use for political advantage over the East (Zine, 2002).

However, Dabashi (2009), states that "such acts of racist representation speak voluminously of a far more deeply rooted claim to normative and moral agency, a phenomenon that must be unearthed and examined" which is the onus of the intellectuals of the orient (p.xi). Postorientalism, then, seeks to move beyond the misrepresentations and engage with a more nuanced understanding of the East throughout providing an adept theory for the power of self-representation and rebellious agency for marginalised individuals who are subjugated, colonised, or dominated (Dabasahi, 2009). In the same spirit, the Palestinian thinker Wael Hallaq in a lecture entitled *What is Post Orientalism?* (2023) articulates that by restating, redrafting and reconstituting orientalism we would able to offer a narrative about Islam [Orient] that begins to shape an autonomous and independent freeway Muslims use to articulate their history (cited in College of Islamic Studies, 2023).

Postorientalism, thus, is an approach to generate a "mode of counter-knowledge production in time of terror and total war, and as the will to resist power must mount its energy to match the will to dominate, represent, and show human beings as cockroaches waiting to be exterminated" (Dabashi, 2009, p. xiv). In this fashion, with Post-orientalism "[we]... will perhaps have detected a cautious searching for the paths ahead... to get the implicit presence of a European interlocutor looking over our shoulder as we write" (Dabashi, 2015, p. 2). This emphasises the central role of agency as a primary concern. The agency, in

play, for Dabashi (2009) means placing great importance on the role of the intellectuals from the orient to generate a counter-knowledge and “to come to grips with his varied attempts at an aesthetic articulation of moral and normative agency beyond the inherited limitation of a colonial subject” (p. 155).

### **Analysis:**

War is a prominent topos in contemporary drama, serving as a means to underscore the anguish experienced by both those who perpetrate agony and those who endure it, encompassing both civilian and soldiers. Al-Rubai penned the play *A Strange Bird on Our Roof* in 2006 which circumnavigates an Iraqi family whose son joined the insurgency which puts them under American Army observation, and the story dramatises their lives as a result (Al-Azraki and Al-Shamaa, 2017). Thus, the play serves as an apparatus of presenting the American spectators with a genuine portrayal of Iraqis and Iraqi woman on a specific scale. Thus, it aids in generating a discourse which counters the perennial distortion and smeary veneer about Arab/Iraqi woman which have stomached and which, “exists in popular American culture and media” (Hamad, 2016, p.60).

Moving swiftly on, the playwright proclaims that the genesis of the play was spurred by an incident which happened in 2006 in Tikrit. Rasha Fadhil, another Iraqi playwright from Tikrit, where insurgent activities against American soldiers were on carnage told the playwright that the American perpetrators established a monitoring outpost above a family’s home with the intention of ambushing the son who had become associated with the insurgency (Al-Rubai, 2017). As such, it goes in rhythm with very crux of post-orientalism which calls for the intellectuals from what Dabashi calls ‘the global South’, in his book *Can Non-Europeans Think?* (2015,) to articulate their own voice fashioning a genuine episteme to counter the western/ American discourse. The counter-discourse may generate new information or new ways of thinking, thus it is important that power always comes with resistance (Mtairi, 2019). In other words, “power is initiated within the field of struggle and conflict and consequently it generates resistance through discourse” (Mtairi, 2019, p. 3). Al-Rubai as an Iraq eyewitness to the invasion wreak havoc on the very assumption that the Iraqi people, being non-European; thus they cannot think or “ they cannot represent themselves, so they must be represented” to use Marx Words (Said. 1978, p. 5).

The play kicks off with the placement of an American soldier above Rasha and her mother’s roof. Rasha says "...But we need to deal with him realistically. He is imposed on us" ( Al-Rubai, 2017, p.126). Rasha attributes their current predicament on her brother, since he is the one who joined the resistance against the American forces. This goes in contrary to what the native informants Kanan Makiya and Fouad Ajami said “that in response to the US invasion the Iraqis would pour into their streets bearing flowers and sweets” (Dabashi, 2011, p.12). However, Ziad fled without taking into account the potential repercussions of his conduct:

**The mother** Are they gone?

**Rasha** No, they left one on the roof.

**The mother** So what! He should understand that he is occupying our roof and that his prayers are false.

**Rasha** Everything in this war is false, especially this man on our roof. He came from the end of the world seeking only to profit from our misfortune.

**The mother** And he came here to become a hero. (Al-Rubai, 2017, p.125).

Thus, right away from the very start of the play the female characters, Rasha and her mother, show their rejection of the placement of the soldier above their house. Moreover, the conversation also shows that the women are keenly aware of the behind the scene reason for the existence of the American soldiers in their homeland Iraq, that is why they describe his prayer as “false”. They say that the mere reason for the presence of the Americans in their country is to get “profit” which is to swindle the black gold. This, of course, aids igniting a counter-discourse which is a term that Richard Terdiman applied to both the concept and implementation of symbolic resistance. Terdiman (1985) investigates the methods by which authentic change can be generated in opposition to the “capacity of established discourses to ignore or absorb would-be subversion” (p.13) Thus, both the mother and Rasha announce their unequivocal rejection of the occupation right away from the outset of the play and how the invasion had impacted their life and their country:

**Rasha** No, but they entered in the middle of the night with no respect for the inviolability and privacy of our home . . . violation of the sacred.

**The mother** And you think the land, the occupied land, is sacred?

**Rasha** No . . . no. Everything is defiled under the boots of the invaders.

**The mother** Then our lives have no value. We should go up and strangle that jerboa and seize the crown of heroism.

**Rasha** They won't let us take the crown. If we approach him, they will incinerate us in a blaze of fire... (Al-Rubai, 2017, p. 126)

Then, Rasha speaks of slings and arrows that the American enter into their house in the middle of the night without asking for permission and, therefore, they defiled the sacredness and the privacy not only of their house but also of their homeland; because, after all, their home is a metaphor for the whole nation of Iraq. Thus, “Beyond the moral and material, human and environmental, calamities that it has caused, the Operation Iraqi Freedom, as the Orwellian Newspeak has it, sent a bunker buster nuclear device into the inner sanctum of a people's most inviolable memories” (Dabashi, 2008, p.182). Rasha's avowal that "Everything is defiled under the boots of the invaders" (Al-Rubai, 2017, p. 126) reflects how deeply she is affected by the sacrilege inflicted by the invaders. And when Rasha's mother suggests that they should strangle the invader 'jerboa' and seize the crown of heroism this imbues a sense of resistance and agency. One should note that for though most Iraqis were eager to be topple the regime of Saddam Hussein. However, “the way the U.S. handled the occupation after the invasion angers virtually every Iraqi, even those who welcomed it...So many people had their

lives torn apart in Iraq because of the U.S. intervention” (Thompson, 2011, para. 7). In the same context:

**Rasha** The war has no prayer because of the bloodshed, and blood is impure.

**The mother** For years we fight and pray.

**Rasha** The blood of martyrdom is pure and cleanses the earth.

**The mother** We will seek martyrdom as long as the war rages on.

**Rasha** It seems that war will never end, as long as the black gold flows below.

**The mother** No, it will continue as long as we live (Al-Rubai, 2017, p. 127)

Rasha states that the fight is devoid of any hope or chance for success due to the massive loss of life, since blood is considered filthy. Thus, she reflects on the devastating consequences of the occupation on Iraqis' lives. This view goes against the glamorized perception of war and reflects its detrimental effect, depicting it as something that damage both people and the country. In effect, in regards to the Anglo-American conceptions of their imperial missions, "the rest of humanity was only a raw material, clay to be moulded by the potter's hand. This assumption of superiority may be called a legacy of British insularity, magnified by America's size and wealth" (Dabashi, 2006, para, 6). Also, Rasha argues that martyrdom has a cleansing influence on the land which shows the necessity of sacrifice in the face of struggle. This outlook stems from the cultural or ideological background which emphasizes the significance of martyrdom as a decent and virtuous act, possibly based on religious or jingoistic attitudes. The mother's affirms that the war will continue "as long as we live" which underlines the correlation of the characters' lives with the ongoing conflict. Regardless, their true identity is imbued with tenaciousness:

**The mother** But we're just an old woman and a spinster.

*She cries.*

**Rasha** No, Mother. Don't cry. Stay strong in their eyes.

**The mother** We are strong. Our tears prove our strength—they show that we're human.

**Rasha** The killer rejoices in the victim's tears. (Al-Rubai, 2017, p. 128)

Rasha and her mother cannot be reduced into clichés or flaccid victims. Rasha and her mother are characters with their own opinions, feelings, and responses. Rasha, especially, defies the old-fashioned representation of Iraqi women as obedient and helpless by advising her mother to remain resilient and stressing the human facet of their sentiments. The mother's affirms that the tears verify their métier. The mother's declaration of their human nature through cries augments the profundity of their persona and challenges the orthodox depictions. Rasha's states that the killer exults the dupe's tears which implies a opposition to being reduced exclusively to victims. This perspective disrupts what Edward Said labels as the 'colonial discourse' where Orientals are portrayed as passive and helpless. In this breath, the 'colonial discourse' is "the system of knowledge and beliefs about the world within which acts of colonization take place" manufactured by the perpetrators (Ashcroft et al., 2013, p. 37). Then, Rasha's recognition of the impact of their tears on the perpetrator shifts the power dynamic and challenges any one-dimensional portrayal of victimhood. Thus, the passage

subverts traditional gender roles and expectations. The mother's assertion of strength in the face of tears challenges stereotypes that associate vulnerability and emotionality solely with weakness. Rasha's insistence on strength in the eyes of others indicates a conscious effort to redefine societal expectations and challenge preconceived notions. Moving swiftly on, for Rasha, communication is unattainable between the branch and the bullet.:

**The soldier:** I'm sorry for coming into your house without permission. I'm here to protect you.

**Rasha** Leave us alone—we can protect ourselves. We didn't ask for your help. **Soldier** But your leaders did...

**Rasha** Dialogue is impossible between the branch and the bullet.

**Soldier** I'm not a bullet; I'm a wall. This gun protects both you and me.

**Rasha** We know how to protect ourselves. We might have been friends, but the gun . . . *The Soldier sets his gun aside.*

**Soldier** We've come here to spread democracy and liberate you from a dictatorship.

**Rasha** You exploited a historical circumstance, so you came to save us with your tanks. Why have you stayed? Why have you allowed chaos to engulf our country, a country ravaged by war and sanctions, and lost in darkness? . .

**Rasha** If you had read a little bit of history, you would have known that your journey was a waste of time. You can't offer anything that you don't have. You, for example, are here only for your salary. Do you call this liberation? (Al-Rubai, 2017, p. 134)

The scene censures the American rhetoric unleashed in the wake of invading Iraq in the name of spreading democracy and liberation. And “In fact, when the Americans waged their "war on terrorism" they convinced their soldiers that the Iraqis are terrorist. But, after the invasion the soldiers were shocked to find the what their leaders taught them was incorrect.” (Hassani, 2022, p. 52). This demonstrates that there is “Something in American imperialism needs to rescue a world it sees as caught in native barbarity, to make it safe for mortal humanity and the immortal idea of "America". That is, “All American superheroes from Spiderman to Batman are invariably lonely creatures aware that "with great power comes great responsibility” (Dabashi, 2011, p.9). Thus, the professed responsibility is fake and, therefore, the dialogue is impossible between the "branch" and the "bullet" which reflects a deep doubt about the chance of nonviolent communication between incompatible camps. The soldier's endeavor to cast away the role of a "bullet" by stating that he is a "wall" points out that the soldier is keenly aware of the undesirable implications related to the arms. Nonetheless, Rasha is incredulous, highlighting the emblematic power of the weapon as a barricade to unpretentious connection and comprehension. The soldier's justifies his presence for spreading democracy and liberation from dictatorship which is “some previous knowledge of the Orient, to which he refers and on which he relies” (said, 1978, p.20). Nevertheless, Rasha espouses that the occupation was motivated by ulterior motives, such as economic interests or geopolitical strategies. She questions the notion of "White men saving brown women from brown men," as Gayatri Spivak puts it in her seminal essay, "Can the Subaltern Speak?"

(1988, p. 27). Rasha challenges the concept of emancipation by questioning why the turmoil continues and why the promises of optimistic change have not realized.

It is worth remembering the deception surrounding the weapons of mass destruction (WMDs) that supposedly provided a justification for the invasion: "They wrecked the house and the garden. They did not find anything" (Al-Rubai, 2017, p.125); they only demolished the already scorched land. Therefore, the act of occupying Iraq is seen first as an act of freeing the country, and the devastation caused to the nation and the loss of many Iraqi lives are seen acceptable in the pursuit of promoting independence and democratic principles. However, the play is an apt example of an "altered interlocutors" which is the key stance of how the "defiant subjects" articulates their perspectives on the status quo of things (Dabashi, 2009, p.159). These defiant subjects showed that the occupation had another objective rather than spreading democracy which is to bilk Iraq's oil.

What is stupendous is that one should see how the author ventures, with dexterity, to establish a humanitarian environment which exists outside the confines of the colonial discourse and hegemonic boundaries, when the mother invites the soldier to have a cup of tea:

The mother Now the tea is getting cold. Let's invite the soldier to tea with cardamom and cookies.

Rasha But . . .

The mother No buts. I made the tea for him and he will have it. It's from the new tea ration. (Al-Rubai, 2017, p. 136)

However, the women's strong nous of national identity hinders the embracement of the invaders into their country. Remarkable to notice here is that, "in postcolonial context", the vein of identity became a fundamental and protuberant subject (Haraj & Hashim, 2016, p.100). Thus, the colonized are bonded to "surmise that they are by nature irrational and uncultured, lacking ethical qualities; so, they require education, civilization to be brought to them. This degradation requires the affirmation of identity and ritual of local methods for living and history" (Ashcroft and Ahluwalia, 1999, ). In this fashion, the invasion not only results in the physical annihilation of nations, but also has profound repercussions on collective memory, emotional well-being, and individual identity. Rasha says that "We will straighten things out, but who will sort through the memories scrambled in our heads?" (Al-Rubai, 2017, p. 125). Thence, one would argue rightly that the invasion caused upheaval and ordeals to an abundant segment of Iraqi people. Nadjie Al-Ali, approaching the situation of Iraq 20 years following the invasion, proclaiming that

The invasion of Iraq had a devastating impact on Iraqi society which exhibits the gap between the rhetoric of liberation, bringing human rights and democracy particularly in relation to women's rights and the reality of what happened in the aftermath...yet to my mind really the biggest losers in the post-invasion scenario have been women for George Bush used them as a symbol of the Midwives of the new Iraq as he used to say. (qtd. in Democracy Now!, 2023)

Still, it's important to remember that Iraqis did fight back. Rasha encountered opposition from her mother whenever she tried to appease her: "So what! He should understand that he is occupying our roof" ( Al-Rubai, 2017, p.125). Rasha and her mother are housebound. The stranger's dwelling is the "roof" of the home. This is their sanctuary, yet it became a hostile environment the moment the stranger stepped foot inside. Furthermore, this is symbolic of Iraq after 2003, when the Iraqis were no longer protected anywhere in the country. Colonisation makes people's lives more complex, stressful, and prone to humiliation at the hands of interlopers. People start to run away for these and other reasons because they cannot afford to live well there. However, abandoning the nation would do nothing except strengthen the colonizer's grip on power. In this manner, the mother tells her daughter not to make that blunder that "life turns its back on those who turn away from their country" (Al-Rubai, 2017, p.120). In the same breath, Frantz Fanon (1967) espouses that "For a colonized people the most essential value, because the most concrete, is first and foremost the land: the land which will bring them bread and, above all, dignity" (p.9).

### **Conclusion:**

Media in the West has long held a verily smelly cliché of the Iraqi woman due to certain goals and agendas; being a Middle Eastern Women, she is correlated with the Afghani woman who is often represented as a oblique and disenfranchised woman. Thus, she needs to be unencumbered from the coerces of society, male's shackles, and cultural and political manacles. However, the Iraqi woman with many cases whether in literature or in reality holds a stupendously high esteem and who is never relegated to a docile angle or as a site of sexual attraction; on the contrary she is as much as her Western counterparts: a woman whose voice is loud in the face of adversity. In the play, the playwright endeavored to break a lance with the hegemony of the smelly stereotypes that is ubiquitous in media deftly worked out. As shown, the invasion inflicts a devastating swings on the Iraqi people and women especially for they were used as a pretext to vindicate the invasion. However, in the midst of all this miasma Iraqi women show a tough will and resilience in the face of this outrageous and barbaric endeavor to uproot the Iraqi identity. In the play, Rasha and her mother represent the microcosm of the large Iraqi women during time of occupation. They are not inert dupes of the quandaries inflicted upon them; rather they with endurance sustain their sense of Iraqiness and hope for better future, keeping an equivalent pattern of life, working, and helping each other etc. henceforth, the long-held cliché of the Iraqi woman as angel in the house is sledgehammered adroitly, engendering a counter-discourse. Thus, Al-Rubai as Iraqi playwright and a witness to the occupation serves very perfect of how intellectual from the Orient can represent themselves.

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