

**THE IMPACT OF CULTURAL POLITICS ON WOMEN'S SELF-REFLECTION IN TWO SELECTED PLAYS: IMAN AL-KUBAISI'S *WA'AD EALAA SHAREE'A* / *INFANTICIDE ACCORDING TO SHAREE'A* AND LILLIAN HELLMAN'S *THE CHILDREN'S HOUR***

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**Abstract**

*Culture is a dynamic phenomenon related to politics encapsulating collective attitudes, beliefs, and perspectives. It establishes a frame within which individuals measure their value and build their understanding of the self. The present study aims at examining the impact of 'cultural politics' on the female presence in the worlds of two selected plays: *Wa'ad Ealaa Sharee'a / Infanticide according to Sharee'a* (2017) by an Iraqi dramatist, Iman Al-Kubaisi, and *The Children's Hour* (1934) by an American dramatist, Lillian Hellman. In both plays, women are shackled by cultural perspectives that limit their roles and suppress their independence and creativity. They are viewed as subordinates who should live by the rules and avoid uniqueness. Women struggle to find sources of liberation and change within their social milieu. Their struggle leads them to undergo a process of self-reflection and exploration of the harsh realities surrounding them.*

**Keywords:** cultural politics, feminism, self-reflection

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## 1. Introduction

What is meant by ‘Cultural Politics’? And how is it manifested in Literature? The first thing that a researcher in literary theory must acknowledge is that the term ‘cultural politics’ does not refer to two separate entities or fields of knowledge, i.e., it does not refer to ‘culture’ separate from ‘politics’, the two are identified together as one entity. To understand the term, one must focus on the way that culture influences the political scene. This is best done through studying people’s attitudes, beliefs and viewpoints that are reflected in art, literary works and media and search for the signs through which a social, political opinion is being shaped. To give an example of what cultural politics might change let us together consider the recent events in Iraq. After 2003, Iraq witnessed a catastrophic change due to the American invasion that happened in 9<sup>th</sup>, April 2003. A new form of media speech started to spread and have its influence on the cultural scene and consequently on the political and viewpoints of the two powerful sectors in the Iraqi society that used to live peacefully in the past. This fueled sectarianism which started to put a heavy burden on everyday life; hardships varied from the difficulty of having a good night sleep due to absence of electricity and fundamental governmental services to being killed because of one’s beliefs. The same thing is applicable to the AIDS epidemic during the early 1980s when the media and Ronald Reagan’s administration called it the gay plague. The word helped to shape opinions of all sorts and political movements started to respond or reshape its focus accordingly. This cultural change is ruled by the first response to the political scene and vice versa giving rise to economic, legal, and social realities. To further explain the term we might refer to the Rwandan genocide of 1994 that started with a media campaign. The media, in this case *The Radio Television des Milles Collines*, used the sentence to “exterminate the cockroaches” referring to a certain ethnicity to be terminated once and for all. This is the demonstration of ‘cultural politics’ in its most violent ways through labelling a whole sector of the society as ‘cockroaches’ to be terminated, giving a death license to a wide range of people just because they represent the majority and the others are minority, in this case we are referring to the mass slaughter of Tutsi, Twa, and moderate Hutu. The term, then, describes Man’s values, beliefs, attitudes, and viewpoints that in one way or another influences the shape of the social and political realities. Jordon and Weedon (1995) argue that to study cultural politics means that you are mainly concerned with studying how culture is “used to legitimate relations of inequality and to contribute to the struggle to transform it” (p.5). It deals with all kinds of ideas, symbols and realistic revelations that reflect both sides of the equation. The idea that a

term or a vocabulary used by a prominent figure in the society or an ordinary person through a joke or an official speech, a caricaturist sketch or a work of art, or a play would definitely have an impact over the public shaping its politics and responding accordingly.

Modern politics towards man's identity seems to be the contemporary style of launching wars. Man is no longer able to stand and reveal his true identity because he might be threatened by an unknown enemy. Thus to be labeled is to be sentenced a death penalty that might come in different shapes and ways, to be part of an organization, an institution, a group, a secret society, a religion, an orientation, or a gender is to be denominated first and doomed second. Society deals with the individual according to the criteria by which it defines that label. Since the dawn of humanity, man used to live by the rules that control the herd and those who look different or think different will be judged different.

Contemporary theater has dealt with this issue as a disease that will end forever the shape of the living system we are used to live according to and bring new rules that might destroy the sense of humanity. With respect to that, the present study tackles Iman Al-Kubaisi's *Wa'ad Ealaa Sharee'a / Infanticide according to Sharee'a* and Lillian Hellman's *The Children's Hour*. Al-Kubaisi's play deals with the world of Puppetry and Toy Theater. Marionette wishes to be a real human being, and to be freed from the strings that rule her life; she begs the Super Doll to fulfill her wish and change her being, but she faces the refusal of the Marionettist whom she has loved dearly and served all her life thinking that he will be happy to see her turned into a human being. Faced by his brutal attitude she comes to a conclusion to her suffering that she should gain her freedom even at the expense of her life and ties to her society, a choice that shocks everybody. Hellman's play is set in a girl's boarding school which represents Karen Wright and Martha Dobie's life accomplishment. Martha Tilford, a spoiled teenage who hates being obliged to stay in this foundation runs away from the school, plotting a story against the two ladies to avoid being send again to school. She tells her grandmother, Mrs. Tilford, that there is a strange love relationship between the two ladies; an accusation that destroys the women's careers, relationships and lives. The plot depicts the problem of the two women and how they face the accusations of being homosexual, a matter that ruins them because they are rejected by a society that has no solid evidence to treat the rumors as a fact. Both of the female dramatists believed that sectarianism and identity politics are but the new shape of an atomic bomb, and that McCarthyism of the 1950s and ISIS of the dawn of the new Millennium are but manifestations of cultural politics.

## **2. Iman Al-Kubaisi's *Wa'ad Ealaa Sharee'a / Infanticide according to Sharee'a***

Iman Abdul Sattar Attallah Al Kubaisi is an M.A. holder of Fine Arts- Children's Theatre and a Ph.D. holder and a professor specialized in the philosophy of Artistic Education- Children's Theatre. She wrote plays that deal with contemporary Iraqi political scene, interested in the field of adolescence and children's arts. She wrote her play *Wa'ad Ealaa Sharee'a / Infanticide according to Sharee'a* when Iraqi people were living the turmoil of the influences of the military battle against ISIS and the social battle against the enactment of the two law drafts of *the right of information access and the freedom of expression* in the Iraqi Parliament which had its impact on the individual due to the fact that it expressed tyranny in its most violent phase because ironically this law restricts the right of information access and the freedom of expression.

Against a troubled background of social and political turmoil, Al-Kubaisi has presented her female Marionette. She is a dancing figure dominating the almost empty stage with her vibrant, swift movement. The spotlight follows her show with the male Marionettist. It has showed her glamour till it highlights the dangling strings that shackle her movement to the hands of Marionettist. This is a moment of revelation that accelerates a series of shocking discoveries, resulting from an awareness of bitter realities surrounding her frail presence.

Marionette addresses other three female Dolls: Doll 1, Doll 2, and Doll 3, in an attempt to investigate their mutual situation. Driven by a sense of empathy and unity with them, she plays their roles and allows them to speak through her. She gives power to their broken voices, but got stuffed with their pain. At the moment, she loses her individuality and perceives her belonging to the category of the suppressed woman. This category is decided by various factors that have been highlighted in the play.

The first factor is the religious one that is manifested in the title of the play, *Wa'ad Ealaa Sharee'a*, in reference to the infanticide of female children in the pre-Islamic Arabian society which is condemned and forbidden by *The Holy Quran*. Hence, it is against the rules of Islamic Sharee'a. The play is a post-ISIS work. Thus, the reference to Wa'ad becomes clear to be related to the false values of Islamic extremism. Under the rule of extremists, women are not only killed like other innocent people due to their beliefs and appearance, but also suppressed; they go through a state of death in life. Religious extremism in Iraq is a result of a period of sectarian conflicts caused by political unrest.

Political disturbance creates gloomy social realities. They are expressed through the situations of the three Dolls. Doll 1 is a widow whose husband has been assassinated in acts

of sectarian violence at a cloudy, quiet night when pre-rain peacefulness has been disturbed by harsh knocking at the door followed by her screams of pain. Since then, she has been in a state of spiritual hibernation: "in a deep sleep, I have been, forbidden from dancing, singing, and moving; my dance is disturbing to neighbors whose happiness has not been debarred by the doors. Ah, those who are satisfied cannot realize the pain of those who are deprived." <sup>i</sup> (Al Kubaisi, 2017) <sup>ii</sup>

Doll 2 is a young divorced girl who recalls the moments of her ex-husband's departure. He has got away indifferent to her pleas to stay, leaving her alone in a room with an open door: "since then, my door has not been knocked again for it remains open after it was flung by the black travelling bag that I uselessly chased to catch ...to prevent from moving away." <sup>iii</sup> Doll 3 is an old virgin who has no hope even for experiencing the agony of love and loss. She gives herself up to despair and says: "it is useless to cry ... let's just silently stand in the queue and wait for our turn." <sup>iv</sup> And all the three dolls exclaim: "it's useless, it's useless," <sup>v</sup> thwarting Marionette's attempts to cheer them up. Marionette reflects on her state of being, giving her mind up to a fluctuating train of thoughts of hope and despair:

What if it is time for me to stand in the queue? But I am still young. (*She dances hysterically and laughs.*) I am still a beautiful butterfly, flying everywhere in a paradise; my soft, velvety wings have never been scratched, (*She stops.*) but what if they will be scratched? What? Is it my turn? The first signs showed up in [Marionettist's] reactions when my eyes have realized the truth; his eyes shined affirming my doubts, his hands were cold, lacking warmth of love ... please light, fade away and give space to darkness to be my friend in order not to see the strings of another Marionette. <sup>vi</sup>

The utterances of Dolls and Marionette form a symphony of exasperated souls sustained by unifying images: the train, the door, and the queue.

The sound of a train moving fast acts as a background music endowing their words with a sense of futility. It is the train of life announcing that it is too late for any change. The reference to the door occurs in the stories of Doll1 and Doll 2. It is a symbol of protection and privacy that reverses its meaning. In the first story, the door is violated by strangers who destroy the serenity of family home. Eventually, it becomes associated with the criminals. Doll 1 calls it "the damned bitch" <sup>vii</sup> as it heralds the catastrophe of death. In the second, the

door is left open stressing the vulnerability of the status of the divorced woman to judgmental views. The knocking at the door acts either as a harbinger of a tragedy (the assassination) or as a desired change (an opportunity for marriage) that has been uselessly waited for. The queue is a strong motif that further unifies the fate of the four females. It is a symbol of waiting for nothing, the end. However, it is challenged by Marionette who does not want to surrender to her fate.

Marionette supplicates Super Doll, a god-like figure, that does not appear onstage. Only her voice can be heard. She is expected to change their fate. Though she claims that she "is able to do everything"<sup>viii</sup>, she does not help the three Dolls, confirming that "this is their fate. ... That is the way of the world"<sup>ix</sup>. She reveals herself as an idol created by social norms preaching women resignation and surrender. She imposes her authority under a religious guise. She may stand for the matriarchy controlling the family domain on behalf of men and subduing women to a way of life characterized by blind obedience. Even though she calls Marionettist a betrayer, she does not advise Marionette to liberate herself from the grip of his strings, claiming that this will lead to her destruction. Finally, Super Doll accepts to turn Marionette into a human being; to be human is to be fully aware of her slavery and to struggle to gain liberation and self-determination, which means more pain.

Marionettist, the man, has his strategies to control Marionette. After her discovery of the strings, he showers her with sweet words expressing his admiration for her, claiming her to be the goddess responsible for his happiness and suffering and the sole dancer on his ground. He motivates her firstly to dance and secondly to cook to satisfy his needs. He wants her to remain his little Marionette. But, she does not surrender. She insists that the strings connecting her to him should be of love, not of captivity. She sings male-centered songs: in the first, the male speaker expresses his willingness to see his beloved free even of accessories: "I don't like bracelets shackling your wrists"<sup>x</sup> and in the second, the female speaker praises her male lover: "dancing with me, he tells me words the likes of which I had never heard before"<sup>xi</sup> Suddenly, she retracts saying that nobody will tell her what to hear and with whom to dance anymore. All will be her choice. She denies man's perspective of freedom and love and prefers to establish her own. She defies the patriarchal authority and gets rid of her strings.

Marionettist, who seems to have the upper hand over the dancing ground, is discovered to be shackled with strings like Marionette's. He admits his bondage:

Since my birth, those strings have been with me. They increase in number over the years; the older I am, the more they will be. ... When you were a puppet, all your strings have been controlled by one hand. But now, there will be more hands. Your strings will be, like mine, manifold. They will vary according to the wills of those controlling you.<sup>xii</sup>

He uses a carrot-stick approach to convince her to adhere to his control. He begs her to forget about her freedom. He admits that he betrays her, but promises to cherish her. Then, he threatens to suppress her with societal and religious restrictions. He faces her resistance with showing more power and authority. This is symbolized by the trial scene when he wears the dress of both the judge and the prosecutor. He admits that her crime is defying laws that are earthly not divine. However, he accuses her of being the cause of expelling humanity from paradise. Marionette keeps resisting and insists on dancing without strings. Marionette gives voice to every woman living in a spot on earth where her freedom is denied. Her resistance is that of

Eve who has been allegedly charged with various accusations since the beginning of creation. Her accusations will extend to an unspecific point of the future. She is accused only because she is a 'woman', which becomes a word descriptive of submission. She is submissive ... because she knows that her birth was unwelcomed by man who is on the alert to prevent her from blemishing his and his tribes' reputation.<sup>xiii</sup> (Al-Buni, 2018)

Marionettist acts as a social agent imposing norms. He assumes the role of the master, but reveals himself in bondage. He fears Marionette, his inmate, because she is more powerful than him.

The text establishes a substructure rich with symbols showing the dominance of females. Marionette dominates the visible space. She appears more than Marionettist onstage. In the stories of the three Dolls, men are absent and rendered into references to third-person pronouns. It is true that Dolls appear broken and exasperated, but their appearance is necessary to support Marionette's role in investigating their mutual dilemma and exhibiting a sense of female solidarity. The play ends with Marionette in a dynamic stance, dancing and

singing. While dancing, the strings are wrapping around her neck. However, she achieves liberation. She keeps moving despite the strings because she is strong and resilient.

Furthermore, the invisible space is occupied by Super Doll. Although she herself acts as a suppressing factor, she represents a feminine will to let life go on in the face of cultural patterns interrelated to social and political variables. They fetter women's freedom under the guise of religion. Women are denominated subordinates. However, they investigate inner resources of power that enable them to endure hardships and resist unjust cultural classification.

### **3. Lillian Hellman's *The Children's Hour***

Lillian Florence Hellman (June 20, 1905 – June 30, 1984) was an American playwright who is known for her Communist political activism. She suffered the tyranny of the McCarthy's anti-communist campaign during the 1950s.

In his book, *Dramatic Soundings: Evaluations and Retractions Culled from 30 years of Dramatic Criticism*, John Gassner (1968) says that it needs a "strong mind and will" to present a play that joins both social criticism and artistic, entertaining Drama (391). The strong will of the female character in Hellman's play that is going to be examined in the following pages is admirable. The play has voiced the voiceless and presented issues that were diagnosed as being controversial and considered taboos in certain societies.

Lillian Hellman's style as a playwright is described by R. C. Reynolds (1986) as being innovative and different; she managed to lead a successful career at a time when women playwrights were not easily acknowledged. This is due to her choice of dramatic techniques and her interpretations of social problems (128).

*The Children's Hour* was Hellman's first play and it granted her a position in Broadway as a well accomplished playwright. The play is based on an 1810 Scottish trial. The play was produced in a hectic era in the modern history of the United States of America; the Great Economic Depression was hitting all America causing problems to everybody. They were difficult days to survive for the American individual who sought an escape from this dilemma. Hellman's play symbolizes the impact of such social environment on the individual who seeks change and prosperity reinforced by freedom of the will. She argues that prejudice which is based on identity and orientation, or gender brings destruction to societies due to the many layers of violence run within its folds.



The play starts in the Wright-Dobie School for girls, soon we realize that a storm is threatening this institution and finally will destroy everything Karen Wright and Martha Dobie are working hard to accomplish. This happens when Mary Tilford, a student in this institution accuses the two headmistresses of having a lesbian affair to escape staying at this school; such an accusation blows everything these two women have worked hard to achieve away.

Martha (*violently*): An insane asylum has been let loose. How do we know what's happened?

Cardin: What was it?

Karen: We didn't know what it was. Nobody would talk to us, nobody would tell us anything.

....

Martha: It was madhouse. People rushing in and out, the children being pushed into cars-

Karen (*quiet now, takes his hand*): Mrs. Rogers finally told us.

Carden: What? What?

Karen: That- that Martha and I have been- have been lovers. Mrs. Tilford told them.

(Hellman, 1953, p.23)<sup>xiv</sup>

The two ladies are accused of having an affair by an angry student, a spoiled teenage who does not want to stay at school, yet nobody cares for asking for a solid evidence and the whole society reveals its ugly face, everybody decides that they must discard these two ladies and they judge the two before even listening to their side of the story. Social stigma carries within its layers the sentence of rejection and banishment. Karen cries her voice out asking for somebody to listen to her but this seems to be in vain facing a judgmental social milieu.

Karen: What's she talking about, Joe? What's she mean? What is she trying to do to us? What is everybody doing to us?

Martha (*softly, as though to herself*): Pushed around. We're being pushed around by crazy people. (*Shakes herself slightly*) That's an awful thing. And we're standing here-(*Cardin puts his arms around Karen, walks with her to the window. They stand there together.*) We're standing here talking it.

*(Suddenly with violence)* Didn't you know we'd come here? Were we supposed to lie down and grin while you kicked us around with these lies?

Mrs. Tilford: This can't do any of us any good, Miss Dobie.

Martha *(scornfully imitating her)*: 'This can't do any of us any good.' Listen, listen. Try to understand this: you're not playing with paper dolls. We're human beings, see? It's our lives you're fooling with. *Our* lives. That's serious business for us. Can you understand that?

(pp. 23-24)

Justice comes with torturing obligations; the two ladies start a lawsuit to defend their being and get justice but they failed due to strong rejection from the society. Such feelings of refusal are negatively influencing both women. Karen comes out of this experience another person because she realizes how identity politics builds barriers and encloses her within a pot which she creates for protection against others. Martha's protest to being labeled and judged by her society is reflected in her suicide, she refuses to be under the pressure of rejection in its most vicious and cruel reality. She is blinded by feelings of both eagerness to defend her identity as a human being and being loyal to this identity, thus she is driven towards violence which comes here as part of the options she is facing and she comes with the result that it is the only right choice she might take.

Karen: We're not going to suffer any more. It's too late. Martha is dead.... So you've come here to relieve your conscience? Well, I won't be your confessor. It's chocking you, is it? *(Violently)* you? You've done a wrong and you have to right that wrong or you can't rest your head again. You want to be 'just', don't you, and you want us to help you be just? You've come to the wrong place for help. You want to be a 'good' woman again, don't you? *(Bitterly)* Oh, I know. You told us that night you had to do what you did. Now you 'have' to do this. A public apology and money paid, and you can sleep again and eat again. That done and there'll be peace for you. You're old, and the old are callous. Ten, fifteen years left for you. But what of me? It's a whole life for me. A whole God-damned life. *(Suddenly quiet, points to door Right)* And what of her?

(p.28)

It is torturing for the individual, represented in the play by Karen and Martha, to live in a violent society which uses not a specific type of violence but all types: verbal, physical, cultural and institutional. In the play, investigating reality is blocked by identity politics, and being aware that you are standing against a kind of terrorism that is equipped with an ideology that dominates the cultural and religious layers of the society, makes the individual surrender to his helplessness. The influence of terrorism is crossing the limits of culture, education, citizenship, and concentrates on identity politics.

#### **4. Conclusion**

Both Hellman's Karen and Al-Kubaisi's Marionette beg to be recognized as independent human beings having their interests and uniqueness, not only as a subordinate part of a society.

Karen (*goes to her*): I don't want to have anything to do with your mess, do you hear me? It makes me feel dirty and sick to be forced to say this, but here it is: there isn't a single word of truth in anything you've said. We're standing here defending ourselves- and against what? Against a lie. A great, awful lie.

(p.24)

Super Doll : I can do everything...everything.

Marionette: Then why am I doomed to face misery, while you can give me happiness? Why did you have to put these rules and make me a second grade citizen? Why am I doomed to be enslaved by those who are not better than me? Isn't it our duty to obey you and yours to foster us? Or are we created only to obey? Didn't you promise us a prosperous life; here we are obeying your commands... Doing our part of the bargain, where is your part of the contract? Look at (*she points at the other Dolls*) these Infanticide Dolls, What did you do for them? Why did you accept throwing them in graveyards of desperation?

Super Doll: This is their destiny.

....

Marionette: I have become fearless, I doubt everything, I demand that you turn me into a human being, I do not want to stand in a queue any longer... I shall not wait for my destiny.. nor become content with it.<sup>xv</sup>

They have fought for creating and approving their individuality a part from any presupposed identity; they want others to consider them as equal to anybody else. Pre-supposed viewpoints about a certain sector of the society and misconceptions about other cultures prevent and blind others from seeing the negativity of that attitude. The man in ' *Wa'ad Ala Al Shareea* ' believes that Marionette is a passive character who does not have feelings and goals and who never aspires to reach that point when she demands to be acknowledged as an individual who wants to feel independent. Both women are opposed by the men of their lives.

Cardin: I have nothing to ask. Nothing- (*Quickly*) All right. Is it – was it ever- Karen (*puts her hand over his mouth*). No. Martha and I have never touched each other. (*Pulls his head down on her shoulder.*) That's alright, darling. I'm glad you asked. I'm not mad a bit, really.

(p.26)

Marionette: I know everything, and because they are my strings I shall leave them as a souvenir... when I become human, then maybe I will come back to you by my own will.

Marionettist: No..no..no..I shall not allow it, you do not have the right to do that, I am your only owner, the controller of your destiny, you are mine, and mine alone.

Marionette: I shall be yours only, but with the flavor of freedom and the scent of will.

....

Marionettist: This is nonsense; you shall not be free from my control.<sup>xvi</sup>

Karen feels betrayed by her man when he asks about the reality of what is said and Marionette is prevented from transforming and admitting her individuality. But, in conclusion, they become stronger and more persistent to live their reality.

Both plays show the influence of 'cultural politics' on the life of the female characters. It reflects the impact of a society moved by a pre-shaped attitude towards certain sectors of the society. Neither Karen nor Marionette is given the chance to explain themselves. They are

deemed wrong according to cultural traditions and should blindly adhere to the rules. Both are judged and the judgment is to terminate their existence and end their influence. However, they refuse to comply and insist to defy any attempts to deny their freedom. Unlike them, the men in their lives conform to false standards, trying to suppress the women, but end as slaves deprived of their will. Whether the attitudes and opinions of the individuals in both societies are wrong or right that is not relevant here, what we are paying attention to is that in both cases it is cultural politics that is moving the scene. It classifies people into categories enfolding collective attitudes, beliefs, and perspectives and generating sometimes unjust rules that force individuals to go through hard experiences. Resistance usually involves journeys of self-reflection that may end with discovering inner resources of power.

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## Notes

وأنا في هذا النوم العميق, ممنوعة من الرقص من الغناء من الحركة, لان رقصي يزعج جيرانني ممن لم تنتهي .<sup>i</sup>  
الأبواب سعادتهم  
والشبعان ميدري بالجوعان

<sup>ii</sup> All quotations from the play are taken from Al-Kubaisi, I. (2017). *Wa'ad Ealaa Sharee'a / Infanticide according to Sharee'a . Theatrical Arts Journal*. Retrieved from [https://theaterars.blogspot.com/2017/08/blog-post\\_36.html#.XhTDetIzZdg](https://theaterars.blogspot.com/2017/08/blog-post_36.html#.XhTDetIzZdg)

بابي لم يطرق بابي ظل مفتوحا بعد ارتطامه بحقيبة السفر السوداء, ركضت وراءها مترجبة... حاولت التمسك بها ,<sup>iii</sup>  
منعها من مغادرة مخدعي... دون جدوى

لا جدوى بالصراخ... لا جدوى .... كل واحد يقف في الطابور ... كل حسب دوره.<sup>iv</sup>

لا جدوى ... لا جدوى<sup>v</sup>

ماذا لو حان دوري في الطابور؟ لكني لازلت فتية (ترقص بهستيريا وهي تضحك) لازلت تلك الفراشة المتنقلة بين<sup>vi</sup>  
ربوع الفردوس, ها هي اجنحتي الناعمة المترفة لم تُخدش (تتوقف) لكن ماذا لو خُدشت؟ ماذا؟ ا حان دوري فعلا؟ لقد  
بانت أول تلك العلامات, أبصرتها عيناى, لمعة عينيه تستفز ظنوني, وذلك الجبل الجليدي في اليدين, غيبوبة المشاعر

...

أيها الضوء ارحل ودع لي الظلام صديقا حميما حتى لا أرى خيوطا لراقصة غيري.

المومس اللعينة<sup>vii</sup>

بإمكاني فعل كل شيء<sup>viii</sup>

... هذا ديدن الحياة.. هذا قدرهن<sup>ix</sup>

"لا أُحِبُّ القُيُودَ في معصَمَيْكَ"<sup>xi</sup>

The above line is from a song written by Elia Abu Madi, a Lebanese poet, (May 15, 1890 – November 23, 1957) and sung by Nathem al-Ghazali, an Iraqi singer (1921 – 23 October 1963).

<sup>xi</sup> "يسمعني حين يراقصني كلمات ليست كالكلمات"

The above line is from a song written by Nizar Tawfiq Qabbani, a Syrian poet, (21 March 1923 – 30 April 1998) and sung by Majida Al Roumi, a Lebanese singer (born 13 December 1956).

xii منذ ولادتي وهذه الخيوط معي, كلما كبر سني زاد عدده. ... عندما كنت دمية كانت كل خيوطك في يد لاعب واحد, أما xii الآن فخيوطك مثلي, متشعبة, متفرعة حسب لاعبيها وأهوائهم.

xiii حواء التي يكيل لها المجتمع كل التهم منذ الخليفة الى اليوم والى مستقبل لا نعرف مداه, متهمة لأنها امرأة, وخانعة xiii لهذه الصفة لكونها تعرف كينونتها ... ما رحب به الرجل حين اخرج انثى لا بد من تضيق الخناق عليها قبل ان تتسبب بعار يلحق بسمعته وعشيرته وقبيلته.

xiv All quotations from the play are taken from Hellman, L. (1953). *The Complete Text of The Children's Hour: A Drama in Three Acts*. New York, USA: Theatre Arts.

xv

الدمية العظيمة: بأمكناني فعل كل شيء... كل شيء  
الدمية: اذن لماذا قسمت لي الشقاء، وانت قادرة على اسعادي؟ لماذا اوجدت قوانينك التي تجعلني مواطن درجة ثانية؟  
لماذا سلبت حريتي؟ لماذا ارضختني لعبودية من هم ليسو بأفضل مني؟ أليس من واجبنا الطاعة مقابل رعايتك لنا؟ أم اننا  
خالفنا للطاعة فقط؟ ألم تعدينا بحياة منعمة، ها نحن نطيعك... ونفي بالتزامنا، فأين نصيبك من العقد. انظري الى (تشير  
الى الدمى) تلك الدمى المؤودة، اين انت منهن؟ لماذا رضيت رميهن في مقابر اليأس؟  
الدمية العظيمة: هذا قدرهن

....

الدمية: بل اتجرد من خوفي، اشكك في كل شيء، واطلب تحويلي انسانا، لا اريد الوقوف في طابور... لن انتظر  
قدري... ولن ارض به.

xvi

الدمية: اعلم كل شيء، ولانها خيوطي سأتركها لك تذكاري... بعد ان اصبح انسية، وعندها ربما اعود اليك لكن  
بأرادتي.  
اللاعب: لا.. لا.. لا يمكن.. لن اسمح بذلك، ليس لك الحق في هذا، انا مالك الوحيد، المتحكم في مصيرك، انت لي انا  
وحدي.  
الدمية: سأكون لك وحدك لكن مع قليل من نكهة الحرية وعطر الارادة.

....

اللاعب: هذا كلام فارغ، لن تخرجي عن سيطرتي.