

Forms of Resistance in Dunya Mikhail's Poetry: A Feminist Study

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Abstract

This research explores the various forms of resistance embedded in Dunya Mikhail's poetry through a feminist lens, focusing on her articulation of women's struggles against socio-political injustices. Analyzing Mikhail's poetry alongside critical feminist theory, the study reveals that her work employs nuanced imagery and subversive language to challenge oppressive structures, emphasizing themes of female agency, identity, and resilience. Key findings indicate that Mikhail's poetry not only critiques the socio-political landscape but also advocates for empowerment and social change, making a vital connection between personal narratives and broader feminist movements. The significance of these insights extends beyond literary analysis, highlighting the importance of creative expression in addressing issues of physical health and emotional well-being, particularly for marginalized voices affected by systemic oppression. Accordingly, this paper offers a new reading of Dunya Mikhail's poetry in the light of Judith Butler's theory of gender performativity, suggesting that the former's female characters challenge societal and cultural limitations to engage in a fluid, performative gender identity that redefines the parameters of feminist representations. Through a reconstructed sense of self, their flaws serve as a catalyst to redefine gender identity, not as a static defect or source of despair, but as an exploratory realm from which new expressions of the self or identity can arise.

This paper examines how Mikhail's poetic portrayal of women embodies feminist resistance via symbolic defiance, fluidity, and nonconformity. By placing Mikhail's work in the context of feminist theory and post-war sociopolitical dynamics in Iraq, the paper uncovers how gender identity acts as a point of resistance and how poetic language functions as a transformative medium for self-expression.

Keywords: Dunya Mikhail, Feminism, Feminist Theory, Poetry, Resistance, War Poetry.

Literature Review

Dunya Mikhail's poetry embodies personal experiences while also connecting with wider socio-political matters, establishing her as a vital voice in contemporary literature. Her work is marked by a profound exploration of topics like absence, cultural identity, and the effects of war. Researchers and critics have attempted to analyze her poems regarding postcolonial ecocriticism, highlighting cultural and environmental devastation wrought by the American War in Iraq. Bahooty (2020), for example, examines the connection between colonial aggression and environmental destruction, illustrating how warfare significantly affects both human and non-human existence. In this respect, the study analyzes the environmental aftermath of the 2003 American invasion of Iraq alongside the ensuing cultural, moral, and social decay, concluding that there is an "interrelatedness between the ecological destruction and the eradication of Iraqis' culture and identity" at the hands of rising extremists and terrorists. From this perspective, extremism and terrorism are seen as "pragmatic acts of resistance" that attempt to "mark out the lines on which a decolonized society will be recognized" (Bahooty, 2020, p. 66). Although the study's concentration on ecological themes is effective, its impact on gender and women's experiences during those devastating war years is not considered.

In the field of feminist studies, Brinda J. Mehta (2010) tackles the aspect of creative resistance in Mikhail's collection *The War Works Hard* in light of Nawal Saadawi's concept of 'dissidence and creativity'. The essay argues that poetry serves as a means of creative defiance that transforms into a pressing demand for action in scenarios of control and chaos. The study argues that the process of writing (poetry) extends outside the boundaries of what is possible, comparing the

writer to the dissenting resister or *al Munadil*, who utilizes language as a tool to combat oppression and exploitation without surrendering.

Schmermund (2024) is the most recent study that places Mikhail in the context of Middle Eastern poetic customs, especially the lament form traditionally linked to women. It contends that Mikhail intentionally connects with the heritage of early female poets, like al-Khansaa, to grieve not just the human casualties from the Gulf Wars of 1991 and 2003, but also the decline of Iraq's cultural legacy. By embracing a feminist viewpoint, the paper frames Mikhail's poetry as both a ceremonial expression of grief and an impactful denunciation of war. It also critiques Western views that frequently marginalize or simplify Arabic texts authored by women, highlighting how these works—and their creators—are often misinterpreted in literary and political settings. By emphasizing lineage, cultural continuity, and intentional literary strategy, the author rightly resists the reductive view of Mikhail as merely a dissenting voice or an exceptional figure.

This study intends to examine the poetry of Iraqi poet Dunya Mikhail utilizing Judith Butler's conceptual framework of 'gender performativity'. It sets out the following objectives: to analyze how Mikhail's female characters defy conventional gender roles in patriarchal and wartime contexts; to investigate the connection between poetic language and acts of resistance; and to show how Butler's theories provide a valuable interpretive framework for understanding Mikhail's poetic techniques. The article suggests that resistance in Mikhail's poetry is demonstrated not just through explicit defiance but also through nuanced displays of vulnerability, voice, and symbolic reversal. In this way, this research enhances feminist literary analysis by connecting theory with poetic structure, highlighting how language acts as a medium for resistance.

Theoretical Framework

This paper proposes a new reading of Dunya Mikhail's poetry in the light of Judith Butler's theory of "gender performativity", where I argue that the poet's female figures assume "fluid" characters that do not conform to the norms of gender rules. In her *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (1990), Judith Butler explains how the term "woman", even in its plural form, has become problematic and a source of concern to many feminists, as it has been a fixed signifier that commands the agreement of those it aims to describe and represent especially in fictional work (p. 3). She argues that "the category of

women, the subject of feminism, is produced and restrained by the very structures of power through which emancipation is sought”; therefore, Butler rejects the assumption that the term *women* should entail a “common identity” and a *fixed* representation in both literature and politics (pp. 2-3). The term “identity”, she suggests, should be reconceptualized as an “*effect*, that is, as produced or generated, opens up possibilities of ‘agency’” (p.147). In the Butlerian theory, this fluid agency is called “performativity”, where gender is by no means a fixed identity or site of agency from which different actions arise; instead, it is an identity precariously formed over time—an identity established through a patterned recurrence of actions (*Performative Acts*, 1988, p. 519). In this respect, Butler dismisses distinct and binary classifications of man and woman that identify them as oppressor and oppressed or strong and weak, respectively (p. 523). Instead, this theory reassigns feminisms with the “critical task...to locate strategies of subversive repetition” caused or enabled by inner or outer constructions, “to affirm the local possibilities of intervention through participating in precisely those practices of repetition that constitute identity and, therefore, present the immanent possibility of contesting them” (*Gender Trouble*, 1990, p.147).

This paper proposes that in the framework of Butler’s theory, Dunya Mikhail's female characters illustrate acts of defiance against strict societal and cultural gender norms. By rejecting the anticipated behavior of feminine passivity, Mikhail's female characters reshape their agency through subtle yet significant actions, altering the interpretation of gendered symbols and demonstrating how poetic expression serves as a means of feminist resistance. In her poetry, gender is *fluid*, not *fixed*, to use Butler’s terms, as women can manifest silent and audible resistance that oscillates between heroic and fearful actions.

Introduction

Dunya Mikhail (1965-) is an Iraqi writer who was born in Baghdad and worked as a journalist for the *Baghdad Watcher*. Her work is mainly concerned with war, conflict, displacement, and exile. She witnessed the Iraq-Iran war (1980-1988) and the Gulf War in 1990. In 1995, Mikhail published her poetry collection *Diary of a Wave Outside the Sea* (1995), which tackled the futility of war and conflict, topics that were considered taboo back then. As the poet mentioned in an

interview, the government expected her “to praise their side. Even if you don’t take sides, that’s a bad thing. You should take sides – their side” (Fowler, 2010). In 1968, the Ba’ath party established the *General Federation of Iraqi Women (GFIW)* as a ‘female arm of the party’ as a means to recruit more women into the political scene and gain their loyalty. By 1980, the GFIW comprised 256 centers and had 177,000 members, with women's literacy rates increasing by 300 percent. Iraqis needed to attend those literary centers, and those who refused or prevented others from attending faced penalties (Cooke, 1997, pp. 220-221). In this respect, the Ba’ath’s recognition of Iraqi women’s roles in the public sphere, as well as the domestic one, laid a heavy burden on them during the eight-year war with Iran and the Gulf War that followed. In her study of the conditions of Iraqi women during the times of war, Nadjé Al-Ali comments that

most importantly, Iraqi women were asked to be ‘superwomen’ during the prolonged war: initially, they were put under pressure to replace men in the workforce and government institutions. Soon, however, their roles became redefined from producers to reproducers, as Saddam Hussein tried to increase the Iraqi population to guarantee future generations of soldiers in his ‘Qadisiya army’ defending Iraq and the Arab nation from the perceived Iranian threat. (2007, p.149)

The regime was eager to enlist additional men for a war that was becoming more disliked by the public. Hundreds of thousands of Iraqi males were enlisted in the military following the implementation of conscription. Even the educated elite, who had previously been exempt, started to be drafted to combat in what many considered to be “a senseless war” (Al-Ali, 2007, pp.150-151) or, as Mikhail puts it:

The wars multiply
and discard us.
As for the other one,
he sets off on tiptoe over the graves,
on his way to another war. (*Diary of A Wave*, 1995, p. 32)

Wars in Iraq were like a vicious circle where people suffered constantly. There seems to be two opposite sides here: “us” (the poet and the rest of the population) and “he” (the tyrant) who steps on their beloved graves. Even in the years that followed and during the years of international sanctions on Iraq, women

were especially impacted in a context where economic hardship, rampant poverty, crumbling infrastructure, and elevated unemployment rates coincided with the state's reduction of free services, which had been vital for women's engagement in public life, along with a move towards more conservative gender beliefs and the reinforcement of patriarchal authority within tribes and families. However, Iraqi women were not simply victims during these immensely challenging periods. The narratives and experiences of women who have endured all or part of this era also demonstrate that many women were remarkably inventive in their efforts to navigate and adapt to the changing economic conditions and social circumstances, participating in the growing informal sector, ensuring their children received education in a deteriorating schooling system, and maintaining their dignity as their surroundings grew increasingly corrupt and bleak. This dignity, along with the robust desire to live and hope, manifests itself in forms of resistance (Al-Ali, 2007, p. 213).

It is the concern of this research paper to demonstrate how Dunya Mikhail's female figures mirror Iraqi women in their different forms and shapes of resistance techniques against the backdrop of wars and gender bias. Just like the Iraqi women during crises, those fictional figures manifest dignity, hope, and a persistent desire to live. They do not escape death; they rather embrace fear and loneliness.

Discussion

This paper incorporates feminist theory, including poststructuralist feminist analyses that highlight the fragmented and constructed essence of female subjectivity, along with intersectional feminism that examines how elements like war, nationality, and exile interact with gender. These viewpoints are essential for comprehending Mikhail's depiction of women in the Iraqi sociopolitical setting, where female defiance needs to be interpreted through various layers of marginalization. Feminist theory consequently offers an essential basis for examining how Mikhail's poetry confronts patriarchal systems and restores women's voices and identities via literary expression.

In examining women's forms of resistance against violence and how they adopt "nonviolence" to reinforce their "political effectiveness," Cynthia Enloe depicts the aftermath of the Belgrade's war and its effect on women activists. During their anti-government demonstrations, women leaders distributed whistles to be tools of defiance and signs of opposition to all types of violence:

Women, Let's Whistle!

.....

We are supporting protests on the streets of Belgrade and

When I whistle I hear myself

When I whistle the others hear me

.....

By whistling I am stronger

Whistling is courageous

.....

Whistling is feminine. (cited in Enloe, 2000, p. 41)

Describing whistling as feminine reinterprets a behavior typically viewed as masculine and transforms it into a symbol of bravery for women. It challenges societal expectations that specify how women ought to conduct themselves in public—subdued, passive, courteous. By reinterpreting whistling as a feminine act, the poem challenges traditional gender norms and reasserts space and sound as instruments of feminist defiance. These feminists have successfully established examinations of aggression and modes of communication that would neither incite nor depend on military responses (Enloe, 2000, p. 40).

In a similar context, Mikhail employs women's voices as a type of resistance to war. In “Song Inside the Fossil”, the poet writes:

Birds don't know

what coming to this world means,

but the bird who survived sings.

Is it an elegy for the two silent birds,

or a way of coming back to life?

Their circular embrace is a song inside a fossil,

life in a cage. (*In Her Feminine Sign*, 2019, pp. 13-14)

Just like whistling in the abovementioned poem, here the survivor's song serves as an act of resistance. The act of singing is not just an expression; it represents testimony and memory, as opposed to cultural erasure. Singing inside the fossil is compared to "life in a cage," where the voice of the surviving bird serves as an "elegy for the two silent birds" and "a way of coming back to life". Amid the atrocities of war, a mother's voice could carry water (a symbol of life) to her infant as a glimpse of hope in the poem (p.13). This poem is placed in the collection called *In Her Feminine Sign* (2019), where the title itself draws attention to another form of resistance, that is, embracing femininity. Mikhail's women tend to subvert gender roles prescribed by society. Unlike the expected, women choose to observe, leave quietly, or sing in a fossil in response to death and war. The choice of not taking action, being vulnerable, and/or being subjected are in fact "critical acts of resistance" during hard times (*Frames of War*, 2009, p. 62).

In the poetic memoir *Diary of a Wave Outside the Sea*, Dunya Mikhail documented what happened in Iraq "on 1/17/91/ at dawn or during the night" as horrific scenes of bombardments and deaths where "an exhausting flash buries innumerable people/Engines run faster than eggs whipped in our dreams/ [and] Weapons with dark wings crash" (1995, p. 42). At the same time, the female persona declares: "I don't turn the other cheek when struck/ because I am absentmindedly watching the moon" (p. 42). The fact that she is being absent-minded while being "struck", which ambiguously may refer to both the bombs and/or the moon, assigns the female with the role of the fearless spectator who has the power to "release songs from within" and "launch the earth far away" from the violent scenes (P. 42). The moon, "by virtue of its location near the planes," is introduced as a silent eyewitness to "everything that fell" (14). The moon serves as the vulnerable side of the female that could "fall like a tear" when she could not cry herself (42). The moon is an archetype usually associated with the feminine; however, in the poem "The Prisoner," the moon is also associated with the masculine. After being charged "guilty" and imprisoned for no clear crime, the prisoner's mother laments "that he should be kept there with lonely strangers". She wonders how he "would end up in this cold place without windows or moons" (*The War Works Hard*, 2005, p. 23). The absence of the silent companion, i.e., the moon, makes it even harder for the prisoner to withstand life in prison. Shockingly, the state of being silent, for Mikhail, is itself a kind of resistance where the poet decides not to use words, as she clarifies in an interview: "Being quite, does not

necessarily mean I have no objections, but internally I am a persistent protestor. You can see me alone in a silent demonstration” (cited in Boumaaza, p. 38).

Dunya Mikhail challenges gender norms that equate silence with submissiveness and acceptance. For her, the act of being silent suggests a political stand against the injustices of war. Moreover, she associates the moon, a symbol of femininity, with both men and women. However, in her poems, women are the saviors and heroes, while men are the victims and the disempowered. Despite living under the same war circumstances, Mikhail's woman is described as a “tough rose”, “a new” one with “thorns” and “prison cells with views of the moon”, unlike the male prisoner who was kept in the dark with “no moons” (*The War Works Hard*, 2005, pp. 29, 23). Mikhail's female narrator conforms to the Butlerian theory by rejecting the conventional roles typically imposed on women in war-ravaged and patriarchal settings, like the damsel-in-distress or the passive witness to male-led violence. Conversely, the female voice in the poetry expresses her identity beyond these conventional norms, claiming autonomy via acts of poetic expression, displacement, and self-telling.

Unlike the expected cruelty and rigidity found in most war poetry, Mikhail's “narratives” are infused “with unexpected beauty,” as her “style maintains an impressive fragility and delicacy of image that touches the reader's heart” (Campbell; *American Poetry Review*, n.d.). The poet employs those images to convey an unorthodox form of resistance that shows patience and strength. Sometimes, the speaker is the collective voice of the Iraqis: “once again/ we bow/ to let war fly over us” (*Diary of A Wave*, 1995, p.16; emphasis mine). In this context, the kind of resistance here is passive, as the act of ‘bowing’ does not mean to surrender but to survive. They bend in order not to break, a determination to avoid destruction, even if it requires temporarily conceding. Iraqis declare that “the hell their [the enemy's] new machines have made/is not enough/ to face the paradise of meeting our loved ones again” (*Diary of A Wave*, 1995, p.16). The destructive power of the enemy's bombs and drones, despite its superiority, “is not enough” to break the spirits of those looking forward to death to meet their loved ones in heaven.

In the majority of Mikhail's poems, women illustrate acts of defiance against strict patriarchal gender norms. Her heroines' “performativity”, to use Butler's term, entails recognitions of weakness and vulnerability alongside

assertion of ownership. This reflects their rejection of being submissive or restricted by socially defined gender roles. Instead of representing sadness or yielding, their symbolic framework parallels Butler's assertion that gender identity is formed through repeated acts and can thus be disrupted by different expressions that are fluid rather than fixed:

I would not have found this cracked jar
if it weren't for my loneliness,
which sees gold in all that glitters.
Inside the jar is the magic plant
that Gilgamesh never stopped looking for. (*The Iraqi Nights*, 2014, p. 11)

Unlike war male heroes who show strength and greatness in their characters and actions, the female persona embraces her character's flaws (being deceived by appearances and feeling lonely). This reverses a conventional storyline—emotional openness transforms into a way to uncover concealed realities. The speaker attributes finding the plant of immortality, which Gilgamesh was seeking, to her flaws. To analyze this text in the light of Butler's theory of gender performativity, one can conclude that Mikhail's female characters reject societal structures that have long misperceived women's nature (Nima, 2025, p. 1002). Accordingly, Mikhail's female characters reshape their agency through subtle yet significant actions, altering the interpretation of gendered symbols and demonstrating how poetic expression serves as a means of feminist resistance. There is a process of redescription, as Butler puts it,

of performative gender acts, one which both redescribes existing gender identities and offers a prescriptive view about the kind of gender reality there ought to be. The redescription needs to expose the reifications that tacitly serve as substantial gender cores or identities, and to elucidate both the act and the strategy of disavowal, which at once constitute and conceal gender as we live it. (*Performative Acts*, 1988, p. 530)

Loneliness works as a trigger for Mikhail's character to redescribe the flaw or hopelessness (existing gender identity) as a means of exploration (gender reality). Moreover, the metaphor of the "cracked jar" (*The Iraqi Nights*, 2014, p. 11)

signifies embracing both harm and flaws in the character, as well as the discovery of immortality through imperfections. This reflects the Japanese idea of kintsugi—mending shattered pottery with gold, integrating the flaws into the aesthetic. It is believed that the completed vessel possesses greater beauty due to its imperfections. In psychology, this method has been used to treat war trauma victims through embracing their imperfections and character breaks instead of concealing or overlooking them (Stickley, 2019, p. 26). In other words, “the process of kintsugi could be incorporated into the Create, Destroy, Transform method to aid survivors in trauma resolution through metaphor by transforming a broken vessel to create something beautiful” (Stickley, 2019, p. 26). Similarly, Mikhail’s “cracked jar”, I argue, works as a kintsugi method that transforms the identity of the female war victim through “performative gender acts”, to use Butler’s words, like acceptance, failure, pain, and loneliness. In this case, the crack signifies not failure, but access. It opposes the societal drive for completeness or flawlessness. I conclude that Mikhail succeeds in redescribing gender rules by presenting women whose characters oscillate between the weak and strong interplay without punitive consequences.

In a similar vein, and perhaps more articulate, the poem “Pronouns” presents a brief yet impactful reflection on gender roles and the effects of socially created identities. By employing a repetitive and playful format, Mikhail enacts a gender performance that closely mirrors Judith Butler’s concept of gender performativity:

He plays a train.

She plays a whistle.

They move away.

He plays a rope.

She plays a tree.

They swing.

He plays a dream.

She plays a feather.

They fly.

He plays a general.

She plays people.

They declare war. (*The War Works Hard*, 2005, p. 87)

The poem consists of rhythmic stanzas that link the pronouns “he” and “she” with differing actions or items, while “they” signifies the result or consequence. The poem adheres to a tripartite framework: “He plays.../ She plays.../ They...”—a structure that reflects, one suggests, Butler’s idea of identity being shaped through repetitive actions. The verb “plays” is crucial; it instantly indicates that these gender roles are not inherent realities but socially constructed performances. The poem’s evolution—from trains and trees to dreams and generals—demonstrates a transition from purity and creativity to aggression and authority. The actions reflecting gender align with this intensification: “he plays a general,” “she plays people.” These lines highlight the distinct gender differences, with the male figure holding a position of power, while the female figure represents the collective or the vulnerable. The last line of the poem, “They declare war,” does not convey a peak of male dominance, but rather reflects a tragic outcome of socially ingrained roles that have consistently been enacted without inquiry. However, by highlighting the mechanics of these performances, Mikhail also creates an opportunity for contemplation and opposition. The poem’s very structure acts as a critique—highlighting how effortlessly we slip into established gender binaries and how this performance results in actual consequences, such as conflict and violence.

Instead of depicting “she” as solely passive or oppressed, Mikhail presents a subtle resistance within the dynamics of the roles. The actions of the female figure are not passive; they are expressive, meaningful, and reactive. She does not follow or obey; she “plays”—she interprets and innovates. This illustrates Butler’s focus on subversive repetition—the notion that agency arises not from outright rejection of roles but from performing them differently, incorporating a twist that undermines their authority. Through the portrayal of people, the woman is not merely passive; she transforms into a representation of shared human experience, possibly even those who oppose the general’s proclamations. Moreover, in addition to demonstrating performativity, the poem also highlights how nuanced, routine actions can act as means of resisting rigid identities and hierarchical power dynamics.

In this context, "Pronouns" serves as a means of poetic resistance as it employs a tactical subversion to reveal the fragility of gender roles. By resonating with Butler's framework, Mikhail's poem illustrates how literary expression can function as a space of feminist resistance, where identities are scrutinized, binaries challenged, and agency regained through language and structure. In the dynamic relationship among "he," "she," and "they," the poem challenges the notion of static pronouns, highlighting that identity is perpetually evolving and, therefore, continuously subject to redefinition.

The importance of this research lies in showing how Dunya Mikhail's women are depicted not as rigid archetypes but as dynamic identities that confront conventional gender norms. This depiction corresponds with Judith Butler's significant theory of gender performativity, as described in *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (1990). Butler examines the term "woman" as a contentious and excessively strict classification, contending that it has traditionally functioned as a stable signifier, frequently requiring sameness from individuals it aims to depict. She argues that gender identity is not an inherent or fixed quality but is instead the product of continual social and cultural displays. This performativity, according to Butler, undermines binary concepts of gender and creates opportunities for new types of agency via subversive repetition. Within this context, as this paper has demonstrated, Mikhail's poetic imagery signifies resistance by defying the anticipated passivity of femininity and opting for complex actions that reimagine gendered symbols. In her poetry, Mikhail portrays womanhood as a dynamic and challenging realm, where empowerment arises not from significant upheaval but from daily acts of resistance.

Through a close reading of Mikhail's poetry, this paper has illustrated various forms of resistance (voiced/voiceless protest, language and the disruption of hegemony, embracing heroic flaws and imperfections, subverting normative gender roles) through which those fictional women encapsulate the Butlerian term of "gender performativity," arguing that gender is not a fixed identity but rather a continual performance formed through repeated social actions. Those women question the fundamental ideas of a singular female identity, advocating for the disruptive power of performative actions that undermine conventional gender classifications. Women are not depicted as merely passive victims but as active agents who challenge and redefine assigned identities.

Conclusion

Iraq has suffered devastating wars that left it in ruins (Abdulatif, 2017, pp.15-16). Many Iraqis suffered psychological, physical, or mental problems. Those who were forced to leave or escaped the dictator's regime suffered even more, as they lived in exile, reminiscing about their pre-war moments with their beloved. In an interview, when she was asked about her years in Iraq, Mikhail replied: "The fact that I was born in Iraq, for example, means waking up every day to the sounds of sirens and explosions...the coffee shops for men only ...discussions about art and poetry...using metaphors to hide the true meanings from censors, [and] the death of my father due to lack of medical treatment" (Khan, 2015, p. 10).

Mikhail succeeded in reflecting Iraqi women's life experiences through her fictional characters. In facing crises, they demonstrate agency in nuanced yet impactful ways through embracing their flaws and painful memories, intertwining personal tales of displacement, conflict, and female strength into powerful expressions of literary rebellion.

This paper has examined Dunya Mikhail's poetry in the light of Judith Butler's performative theory. The poet's work acts as a dynamic and diverse form of resistance against various types of oppression. Viewed through a feminist perspective, Mikhail's work unveils resistance to patriarchal systems, critiques of warfare and political repression, and honors female identity and agency. Her striking imagery, thoughtful symbolism, and emotionally impactful language express the real experiences of individuals marginalized by gender, culture, and conflict. Through the blending of individual and shared stories, Mikhail not only records injustice but also presents avenues for healing and strength. Her work demonstrates that poetry can serve as a documentation of trauma and a declaration for revitalization. Rooted in feminist and postcolonial traditions, her poetry celebrates the lasting strength of creative expression as a means for both resistance and healing.

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أشكال المقاومة في شعر دنيا ميخائيل: دراسة نسوية

منى عبد الكاظم نعمة العبودي

قسم اللغة الانكليزية, كلية اللغات, جامعة بغداد, بغداد, العراق

المستخلص

يتناول البحث أشكال المقاومة المختلفة المستنبطة من شعر دنيا ميخائيل من منظور نسوي مع التركيز على كيفية التعبير عن معاناة النساء في مواجهة الظلم الاجتماعي والسياسي، ومن خلال تحليل شعر ميخائيل بالتوازي مع النظرية النسوية النقدية يُظهر البحث أن أعمالها تستعمل صوراً دقيقة ولغة متمردة لتحدي البنى القمعية، مع التأكيد على التمكين الذاتي والهوية والصمود لدى النساء، وتشير نتائج البحث إلى أن شعر ميخائيل لا ينتقد المشهد الاجتماعي، والسياسي فحسب بل يدعو إلى التمكين والتغيير الاجتماعي أيضاً مما يربط بشكل جوهري بين سرد الشخصيات، والحركات النسوية على نطاق أوسع.

أن أهمية هذه الرؤى تتجاوز التحليل الأدبي؛ لتسلط الضوء على أهمية التعبير الإبداعي في معالجة قضايا الصحة النفسية والجسدية، لاسيما فيما يتعلق بالأصوات المهمشة المتأثرة بالقمع المنهجي .

وعليه تقدّم هذه الورقة البحثية قراءة جديدة لشعر دنيا ميخائيل في ضوء نظرية (أداء النوع الاجتماعي) لجوديث بتلر ، مما يشير إلى أن الشخصيات النسائية في الشعر تتحدى القيود المجتمعية، والثقافية لتتبنى هوية نوعية مرنة، وأدائية تعيد تعريف معايير التمثيلات النسوية، ومن خلال إعادة بناء الإحساس بالذات تصبح عيوب هذه الشخصيات محفزاً لإعادة تعريف الهوية النوعية، ليس بعدها خللاً ثابتاً أو مصدرًا لليأس، بل بوصفها مساحة استكشافية يمكن أن تنبثق منها تعبيرات جديدة عن الذات أو الهوية، وتتحرى هذه الورقة البحثية كيفية تجسيد شعر ميخائيل للمقاومة النسوية من خلال التحدي الرمزي، والانسحابية، وعدم المطابقة، ومن خلال وضع أعمال ميخائيل في سياق النظرية النسوية وديناميكية الحياة الاجتماعية والسياسية للعراق بعد الحرب، و يكشف البحث كيف أن الهوية النوعية مصدراً للمقاومة، وكيف تُستعمل اللغة الشعرية بوصفها وسيلة للتعبير عن المشاعر الذاتية.

الكلمات المفتاحية: دنيا ميخائيل، النسوية، النظرية النسوية، الشعر، المقاومة، شعر الحرب.