

The dialectic of the father's absence in Nawal El Saadawi works

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Abstract

The subject of the Father-Daughter relationship has been largely dealt with in the Feminist Art and the Feminist Theory.

The Father's role, however, is an objective fact that has deep historical roots in the different simple and complicated cultures and societies. The Father's authority is represented mainly in the masculine domination in society, specifically in his control of the family system and keeping the Mother's at a lower rank in the family hierarchy. This idea is probably a common one in all the forms of the patriarchal systems. The Father is the source of creating a state of ambivalence. On the one hand, he is the authority and the object of love, on the other. The Father usurps the role of the Mother, and her role appears to be secondary to him. As a result, her role is lowered in the eyes of the children and turns into a weak, absent or even denied role.

The Father takes the role of the hateful family member, mainly his daughter. The model of the Father that Al-Sadawi introduces is the traditional father who belongs to the male patriarchal society that bears tribal hatred to females versus love for males of the members of the same family. It is natural then to come across images of hatred of the heroine to her father repeatedly whenever that narrative line of the novel drives us towards its consecutive events towards the end. The representation of the Father's hatred in Al-Sadawi's novels is quite clear. The account for the radical hatred to the entity of the Father and his unjust masculinity can be attributed to the patriarchal injustice that is done to Al-Sadawi's women and leaves a compound impact on their entity. Al-Sadawi, being the text writer of the novels, saved no effort in narrating that comprehensive hatred from the beginning of the narrative line of the story till its end. The image of the Father has a suppressive, unjust and dark dimension that castrates the woman's femininity, which represents the male society and symbolizes man's authority and repression, and injustice. Finally, we see the retreat and shrinkage of the man's positivity in Al-Sadawi's novels that are discussed in this study. The reason for that can be attributed to the fact that the Father in our society is authoritative. Besides, the adopted method of bringing up the girl and absence of opportunities for her to communicate with the Father and create sound emotional ties with him affects her viewpoint about him. The process of narrating the Father's image in the novels of Al-Sadawi does not depend on a dramatic attitude in which the heroine participates with her father

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in representing the Father, who is introduced in the image of the father who devalues females whether they are 'daughters' or 'girls' or grown up women in general, but he highly evaluates the status of male children, boys, and young men in the same family or outside it. In my view, that is the characteristic of variety in narrating the orbits of hatred to the Father in Al-Sadawi novel.

Keywords: Female, Father-Daughter relationship, Feminist Art, Feminist Theory, Electra complex, The Totem banquet.