

The Representation of Women as a Disgrace in The

Kidnapped by Warid Al-salim

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Abstract:

This study aims to provide a deeper understanding of how women are stigmatized in Iraqi society and how it is portrayed in the literature through woman's representation in Alsalim's *The Kidnapped*. This study is guided by the question: How did Al-Salim introduce the concept of women as a disgrace from the perspective of society and its impact on women themselves. The theoretical framework in this study is based on the concept of shame as a social and cultural structure rooted in the culture of society. The study relies on the opinions of theorists such as Fredrickson & Roberts, Crenshaw, and Lewis, who are theorists and scholars who have dealt with the issue of shame and its connection to women and their bodies and their impact on them. This study is a contribution to shedding light on the number of studies that dealt with the concept of shame and its connection to the woman's body in the literature of the Middle East, specifically in the Iraqi literature. The results of this study show that the concept of shame and its connection to the female body is a prevalent theme in Iraqi society. Education and awareness-raising campaigns can also play a crucial role in changing societal attitudes and perceptions towards women and their bodies. Additionally, it is crucial to create safe spaces for women to speak out against violence and discrimination, and to empower them to take control of their bodies and their lives.

Keywords: (women, Disgrace, society, body).

تمثيل المرأة وصمة عار في خطفه وريد السالم

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الملخص:

تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى تقديم فهم أعمق لكيفية وصم المرأة بالعار في المجتمع العراقي وكيف يتم تصويرها في الأدب من خلال تمثيل المرأة في كتاب السالم المختطفون. تسترشد هذه الدراسة بالسؤال التالي: كيف قدم السالم مفهوم المرأة باعتباره وصمة عار من منظور المجتمع وأثره على المرأة نفسها ، والإطار النظري في هذه الدراسة مبني على مفهوم العار كعار اجتماعي و هيكل ثقافي متجذر في ثقافة المجتمع. اعتمدت الدراسة على آراء أصحاب النظريات مثل فريديريكسون وروبرتس وكرينشو ولويس ، وهم منظرين وعلماء تعاملوا مع قضية العار وصلته بالمرأة وأجسادها وتأثيرها عليها. هذه الدراسة مساهمة في تسليط الضوء على عدد من الدراسات التي تناولت مفهوم العار وعلاقته بجسد المرأة في أدب الشرق الأوسط وتحديداً في الأدب العراقي. تظهر نتائج هذه الدراسة أن مفهوم العار وارتباطه بجسد الأنثى هو موضوع سائد في المجتمع العراقي. يمكن أن تلعب حملات التثقيف والتوعية دوراً حاسماً في تغيير المواقف والمفاهيم المجتمعية تجاه النساء وأجسادهن. بالإضافة إلى ذلك ، من الضروري إنشاء مساحات آمنة للنساء للتحدث ضد العنف والتمييز ، وتمكينهن من السيطرة على أجسادهن وحياتهن.

الكلمات المفتاحية: (المرأة ، العار ، المجتمع ، الجسد).

Introduction

The concept of disgrace is an important topic that is dealt with in Arabic literature in particular and the Middle East in general by writers. Where the issue of honor is often closely linked to the woman's body and behavior, and this carries a heavy burden on her and her life and makes her very careful in pleasing the family and society as a whole in terms of her actions and daily behavior. The writer, Warid Al-Salim, touches on this concept in his novel *The Kidnapped* through the thoughts and words of the protagonist Shaimaa, who was kidnapped and released seven days after the kidnapping, but the feeling of shame and guilt that she has become impure or polluted, and the fear of society's view of her, continues to haunt her continuously. This study aims to provide a deeper understanding of how women are stigmatized in Iraqi society and how it is portrayed in the literature. This study is guided by the question: How did Al-Salim introduce the concept of women as a disgrace from the perspective of society and its impact on women themselves.

The theoretical framework in this study is based on the concept of shame as a social and cultural structure rooted in the culture of society. The study relies on the opinions of theorists such as Fredrickson & Roberts, Crenshaw, and Lewis, who are theorists and scholars who have dealt with the issue of shame and its connection to women and their bodies and their impact on them.

This study is based on the analytical methodology, as the texts will be read and analyzed. The analysis will be guided by the question directed in the research and will depend on identifying the cases that describe the concept of shame in the novel and trying to understand the social and cultural factors that consolidate the concept of shame and its attachment to the woman's body and the extent to which the victim (woman) and society respond to the concept of shame. This study is a contribution to shedding light on the number of studies that dealt with the concept of shame and its connection to the woman's body in the literature of the Middle East, specifically in the Iraqi literature. The results of this study may have important implications for understanding the cultural and social dynamics that help consolidate the concept of shame and its attachment to the woman's body in Iraqi society.

Literature review

Siundu (2013) examined in his study entitled "Honour and Shame in the Construction of Difference in Abdulrazak Gurnah's Novels," how Gurnah used the concept of honor and shame in his literary works to reveal the extent of discrimination practiced on the basis of social, religious, sexual, class and even economic differences. Gharneh believes that this distinction is constantly being prepared for by interaction with others. Gharneh sheds light on how to apply the concept of shame and honor to those who are superior and inferior in order to take revenge on them. Rana's novels contribute to the understanding of how the concepts of honor and shame are employed in shaping the hierarchical chain of society and building an abhorrent class.

As for Mikić (2019), in his study "Arab American women and the generational cycle of shame: A cognitive reading of Etaf Rum's A Woman Is No Man," he deals with the concept of shame in the Arab-American generations and how they exercise the patriarchal role over Arab-American women and dominate them through Applying the concept of shame and linking it to women, Mikić will use a narrative, analytical,

and epistemological approach in order to show how the novel captured an accurate picture.

The concept of shame and its association with women as a form of gender discrimination in the culture of patriarchy and male dominance. The novel is very important because it sheds light on the suffering of Arab-American women for three generations of male abuse, stigmatizing them with the stigma and honor of controlling them, as well as

It focuses on the gendered, social and cultural effects that help shape the concept of shame among these groups.

In a study entitled "Reading Arab Women's Autobiographies: Shahrazad Tells Her Story," Golley sheds light on the portrayal of shame in the biographies of Arab women, urging her to mention that the concept of shame and its relationship to women and their bodies are firmly rooted in Arab societies and that they are used to dominate women, control their fate and prevent them from exercising their real roles in society.

In general, the literary works that deal with the issue of women and their relationship to the concept of shame are very wide and abundant in Middle Eastern literature in general and Arabic literature in particular. Many works by Western and Middle Eastern writers dealt with the concept of shame and its relationship to women in Middle Eastern societies. As for the current study entitled "The Representation of Women as a Disgrace in *The Kidnapped* by Warid Al-Salim" in Ward Al-Salim's *The Kidnapped* novel, the gap that is focused on is the lack of studies that focus on the plight of women and looking at them as a source of shame in this novel. Therefore, by focusing on analyzing the concept of shame in this novel will contribute to understanding the broader dialogue about the representation of the role of women in Arab literary works and shed light on the social and cultural dynamics that place the burden of shame and honor on women in Iraqi society.

Methodology

This study is a qualitative study based on collecting, reading and analyzing texts, sources, reviews and studies. Sources and studies were collected on the concept of shame and how it is represented in the Arab and Middle Eastern literature to identify

concepts and topics that focus on women and link them to shame, and thus provided me with a theoretical framework for the study. The evidence was analyzed through careful reading of the text of *The Kidnapped* by Al-Salim, transcribing texts and quotations related to the concept of shame and its connection to the woman's body, and analyzing the linguistic techniques used by Salem to convey the subject of shame and its relationship to women. Based on my analysis of the selected texts and my use of relevant articles, I developed a set of arguments and interpretations about the representation of shame and its connection to women through textual evidence, quotations, and supporting theories that served as a lens to support my argument and provide a context for my analysis.

Feminist Theories

Fredrickson & Roberts (1997) point out in Objectification theory that women are often categorized as objects or possessions, giving others the right to value them and pass unfair judgments against them. This Objectification leads to women's supportive feelings of shame, self-objection, or feelings of guilt and inferiority, which in turn affects women's mental health.

In Intersectionality theory, Crenshaw (1989) confirms that there are many factors such as race and gender intersect with each other to represent fears for women by multiplying the problems against them and making them marginalized and condemned to shame and guilt because of their bodies. According to this theory, women in the Middle East who are considered a source of shame or honor are often subject to multiple forms of oppression and marginalization based on their gender, class, and other social identities. For example, women who are poor and belong to minority ethnic or religious groups may face greater stigma and discrimination than women who are wealthy and belong to dominant social groups (Moghadam, 2005). Lewis (2020) states that women have often been subjected to societal pressures and expectations surrounding their bodies in order to control them.

These theories explain how societal cultures frame women's bodies and condemn them to shame, disgrace, and constant feelings of guilt. Therefore, identifying these destructive and obscene ideas can contribute to a greater understanding of the situation of women and support them in resisting the stigma with which they were stigmatized.

One feminist theory that addresses the issue of women being considered a source of shame or honor in Middle Eastern societies is the theory of "patriarchal bargain." This theory argues that women in patriarchal societies make strategic choices to negotiate with patriarchal norms and values in order to gain some measure of power and agency within their limited social and political spheres (Mahmood, 2001).

According to this theory, women in the Middle East may use their status as "honorable" or "disgraceful" to negotiate their place within the family and community. Women who conform to patriarchal norms and uphold the family's honor may gain some measure of respect and protection from male family members, but they are also subject to restrictive gender roles and expectations. On the other hand, women who challenge patriarchal norms and seek greater freedom and autonomy may be labeled as "disgraceful" and face violence and ostracism from their families and communities (Abu-Lughod, 2002).

Result and discussions

According to the view of the patriarchal bargain theory, women in the countries of the Middle East are subject to the laws of honor and shame that society restricts them to, and accordingly, women find themselves subject to difficult restrictions so as not to be stigmatized as shame and a violation of family honor (Mahmood, 2001). Therefore, women act according to strict restrictions and submit to them in order to obtain the approval and satisfaction of the patriarchal society that places these restrictions for them.

In the novel *The Kidnapped*, Al-Salim presents a model for the men and the family's thinking towards the woman and how to look at her as a shame if some things did not materialize, such as her marriage, for example: "your sister has grown up and it would be a shame if she remained unmarried" (Al-Salim, 2017,p 81).

In this text, Shaima's father addresses her brother, stating that Shaima should get married because remaining unmarried will bring shame to the family. This reflects societal pressure on women as a kind of fulfillment of their traditional role between the two sexes, where the non-marriage of a woman is considered as a kind of disgrace that will befall her and her family.

The concept of shame is closely related to the gender roles of women and reflects the concept of honor in Iraqi culture. Where women submit to very strict restrictions and standards that fall under the concept of chastity, and any defect or deviation from these standards can lead to their rejection or disposal in a harsh manner.

In Al-Salim's *The Kidnapped* the concept of honor and shame is explored through the experiences of the female protagonist, who is kidnapped and threaten to e raped. Despite being a victim of a heinous crime, she is still judged and stigmatized by society because of the perceived damage to her honor and reputation.

Moreover, the societal pressure on women to conform to rigid gender roles and expectations is a significant factor in the concept of 'honor' and 'shame' in Iraqi culture. This pressure can manifest in various ways, including through the pressure to get married and uphold traditional values of modesty and chastity.

There is a reflection of the societal concept of shame in relation to rape and sexual assault in a statement by Shaimaa's husband: "but thank God, Shaimaa returned without being harmed or raped," (P.20). In many cultures, including the one depicted in the novel by Warid Al-Salim, rape is considered a source of shame not only for the victim but also for their family and community. This is why the husband's relief at Shamaa's return without being raped is indicative of the shame he and his family would have felt had she been assaulted.

Furthermore, the husband's role in Shaimaa's kidnapping and ransom demands adds another layer to the concept of shame. He is attempting to absolve himself of guilt by pretending to be innocent, even though his actions have caused immense harm to Shaimaa and her family. In this context, shame is not only associated with the act of rape but also with the violation of trust and the betrayal of social norms.

Additionally, the fact that Shaimaa's shame is "surrounded" by her reality as a disaster highlights the ways in which shame can compound and exacerbate the effects of trauma. Rather than being a discrete emotion, shame can become entwined with other feelings of fear, guilt, and powerlessness, creating a complex web of negative emotions that can be difficult to unravel.

In general, the concept of shame in *The Kidnapped* is a powerful and pervasive force that shapes the experiences of the novel's characters, particularly women. Through

Shaimaa's statement, the novel highlights the damaging effects of shame and the urgent need to challenge societal attitudes towards gender, power, and morality:

my body worried me a lot and i didnt want it to be my scandal. for its sake, i was breathing and gasping with difficulty i had been terrified. i cried and screamed so that m body would not surrender, which would allow them to rob it, and it to die. please iam an educator. i each m students islamic education. i was screaming in a killing disapair. humiliation was crushing me, insulting the dignity of chastity that i hold pure and white in color (P.32).

These words are said by Shaimaa, "my body worried me a lot and I didn't want it to be my scandal," highlights the concept of shame in the context of sexual violence. Shaimaa's words reflect the cultural association of a woman's body with her honor, and the fear that her body being violated would bring shame upon herself and her family.

Shaimaa's statement also highlights the struggle that survivors of sexual violence often face in reclaiming agency over their bodies. She describes the physical and emotional toll of fighting off her attackers, crying and screaming to prevent them from "robbing" her body and leaving her for dead. This underscores the way that sexual violence can strip a person of their autonomy and sense of self, making it difficult to reclaim their agency even after the immediate threat has passed.

Moreover, Shaimaa's reference to her role as an educator of Islamic education adds another layer of complexity to her experience of shame. As a person who is expected to uphold moral and religious values, the experience of sexual violence can be particularly devastating, as it can feel like a violation of not just one's body, but also one's identity and integrity.

Al-Salim's *The Kidnapped* portrays shame as a pervasive and destructive force that affects both individuals and society as a whole. Through Shaimaa's words, the novel highlights the deeply entrenched cultural attitudes that link a woman's honor to her body, and the devastating consequences that this can have for survivors of sexual violence:

I didnt know if i had discovered that the body is the prestige and personality of woman, and its details are not terrains of seduction. instead, it is the link to life,

dignity, and beauty in closed box to enhance personal value and give prestige to it (P.33).

These words reflect the cultural association of a woman's body with her honor and prestige in the context of Iraqi society. Shaimaa states that she didn't know if she had discovered that "the body is the prestige and personality of a woman," which suggests that her experience of sexual violence has made her reflect on the cultural attitudes towards women's bodies.

Shaimaa's words also suggest that there is a dichotomy between the perceived value of a woman's body as a tool for seduction versus its value as a symbol of dignity and beauty. She suggests that the latter is a more accurate reflection of the true value of a woman's body, and that the cultural norms that equate a woman's body with seduction are misplaced.

The idea of a "closed box" to enhance personal value and give prestige to a woman's body further reinforces the notion that a woman's body should be protected and guarded. This is a common theme in the society, where women's bodies are often seen as belonging to their families and communities rather than to the individual woman herself.

In general, the passage highlights the complex and deeply entrenched cultural attitudes towards women's bodies in Iraqi society, and the impact that these attitudes can have on women who experience sexual violence. By challenging the notion that a woman's body is primarily a tool for seduction, Shaimaa is advocating for a redefinition of the value of women's bodies based on dignity, beauty, and personal value, rather than societal expectations and norms:

I squeezed it into my body and drenched myself with it until my height diminished, shriveled, and my bodily features mingled together. I wondered, later, how it obeyed me and knew that it was in danger with me, and so it complied with the instinct for honor, chastity, purity, and righteous survival the first two days. I was also quite eager to keep that secret prestige that I had not understood previously, except for what all females understand instinctively and innately, to discover that the body is the

identity of a woman which cannot be surrendered and raped no matter what the circumstances surrounding it are. i think a woman body is the big mind in her (p.34).

In these words, Shaimaa expresses her understanding of the body as the identity of a woman that cannot be surrendered or raped regardless of the circumstances surrounding it. She sees the body as a source of honor, chastity, purity, and righteous survival, and as something that should not be used as a terrain of seduction. Shamaa reflects on how she had previously underestimated the importance of this "secret prestige" that comes with preserving her bodily integrity.

Shaimaa's words highlight the concept of honor and shame around her, which is often linked to the female body. The female body is considered the vessel of family and community honor, and any perceived transgression or violation of its integrity can result in shame and dishonor for the individual and their family. This societal pressure to maintain bodily purity can lead to the stigmatization of victims of sexual violence and make it difficult for them to seek justice or receive support.

Shaimaa's reflection on the importance of bodily integrity also emphasizes the agency and resilience of women in navigating these societal expectations and protecting their own honor and dignity. Despite the trauma she endured, Shamaa recognized the instinctual drive to protect her bodily integrity and the value of her body as the "big mind in her." This challenges the notion that women are passive victims of societal expectations and instead highlights their active role in defining and protecting their own sense of honor and dignity: "when the ghost of m body scandal went away, the thought of death left too, the thought that I wished for to rid me of my despicable personal burden in this mstrious maze" (P.34).

In these words, Shaimaa reflects on how the shame she carried with her due to the violation of her body caused her to feel like she had a personal burden to bear. She had wished for death to release her from this shame, but once it passed, she felt a sense of relief. This suggests that in the Iraqi society, there is a strong connection between a woman's body and her sense of honor and shame.

The shame that Shaimaa felt after her ordeal reflects the social pressure placed on women to uphold these societal expectations. The idea that death would release her

from this burden indicates how overwhelming this shame can be for women in Iraqi society.

In general, the portrayal of shame and honor in Shaimaa's story highlights the complex relationship between a woman's body and her identity in the Iraqi society, where her honor and reputation are closely tied to her physical purity: "I surrendered patiently to my dark fate in this tunnel, which might bring shame and various poisonous gossip to my family in front of the neighbors, relatives, and teachers of the school" (P.36).

The concept of "disgrace" or "shame" in the context of the female body is central to the themes explored in Salim's *The Kidnapped*. The excerpt above highlights the idea that the female body is seen as a source of family honor. Any violation of her body is seen as a stain on the family's reputation and this violation can lead to shame and gossip that can affect not only the individual but also their family. This creates a burden on women to protect their chastity and uphold societal norms surrounding their behavior and appearance. The protagonist's acceptance of her "dark fate" demonstrates the weight of this burden and the limited agency that women have in navigating these expectations. The language of "poisonous gossip" further emphasizes the potential danger that can come from a woman's perceived transgression of societal norms. In general, the excerpt highlights the deep-seated cultural values surrounding the female body in Iraqi society and the impact it can have on women's lives and experiences. The concept of honor in the society is closely tied to the woman's body and her sexual purity. This creates a burden on women to maintain their chastity and purity and to avoid any situation that could lead to their bodies being violated.

Conclusion

The concept of "disgrace" or "shame" in the context of the female body is central to the themes explored in Salim's *The Kidnapped*. After analyzing the passages from A-Salim's *The Kidnapped*, it is clear that the concept of shame and its connection to the female body is a prevalent theme in Iraqi society. The female body is seen as the embodiment of honor, chastity, and purity, and any violation of these traits is considered a source of shame for the woman and her family.

Throughout the novel, the protagonist, Shaima, grapples with the shame and stigma attached to her body after being kidnapped and sexually assaulted. She sees her body as a source of shame, something to be hidden and protected at all costs. However, she also comes to realize that her body is not the source of shame, but rather it is the actions of those who violated her body that are shameful.

Also, the male members of Shaima's family view the female body as a source of honor and how the unmarried status of a female family member can bring shame to the entire family. This is evident in the statement made by Shaima's father to her brother, where he expresses concern about Shaima remaining unmarried and the shame it would bring to the family.

Moreover, Al-Sallem in his "The Kidnapped" portrays the complex relationship between the female body, shame, and honor in Iraqi society. It highlights how the female body is often viewed as a source of honor and shame, and how this perception can have far-reaching consequences for women and their families.

This derogatory view of women and their bodies is a pervasive issue in many societies, not just in Iraq. It perpetuates harmful gender stereotypes and objectification, and it reinforces the notion that a woman's worth is determined by her physical appearance and sexual purity. To address this issue, it is important to challenge and dismantle these harmful beliefs and attitudes, and to promote gender equality and respect for all individuals regardless of their gender or physical attributes. Education and awareness-raising campaigns can also play a crucial role in changing societal attitudes and perceptions towards women and their bodies. Additionally, it is crucial to create safe spaces for women to speak out against violence and discrimination, and to empower them to take control of their bodies and their lives.

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