

Egyptian and Irish Female Protagonists: A Comparative Study of Al-Hakim's Song of Death and Synge's Riders to the Sea

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Abstract : This paper attempts to generally examine Tawfiq Al-Hakim's Song of Death (1950) and John Millington Synge's Riders to the Sea (1904) by comparatively bringing the two plays under focus. Strikingly, the similarities between the two plays appear in the plot, picturization of the characters, tragic intensity, structural perfection, and the economy of language. Plot structure, albeit a simple one in both plays, is enriched by the playwrights' effective use of language, symbols, imagery, and tragic irony. Neither of the two plays has the traditional five-act structure; they are one-act plays. From a feminist point of view, the domination of female characters is observed in both plays. The female protagonists are the main focus of the two plays. Their brave characters and struggle are highly depicted. While Al-Hakim's protagonist is presented as a victim of tribal customs, Synge's protagonist is shown as a victim of nature. Both plays can be described as 'feminine tragedies' using the words of Oona Frwaley. Although the two plays appeared in totally different historical periods of time, both share considerable similarities, thematic as well as linguistic, which result in a concern to investigate them. The paper, basically, aims at asserting the commonalities between human beings and creating awareness of intercultural negotiations and connections. It attempts to bridge the cultural, intellectual, and social gap between Arab and Irish drama by exploring the common elements of the two plays. Thus, the paper presents a critical and comparative study of both plays highlighting the portrayal of the female protagonists.

Keywords : economy of language, imagery, protagonist, symbols, tragic intensity, tragic irony

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