

A Sequence of Traumatic Pain: Feminist Issues within Laila Al-Othman's Şamt al-Farāshāt (Silence of the Butterflies)

Authors : Khaled Igbaria

Abstract : Laila Al-Othman is a well-known feminist writer in Kuwait and the entire Arab world. She was born in 1943 in Kuwait to a large and wealthy family. The author has written several short stories, as well as novels, such as *The Woman and the Cat* (1985) and *Wasumayya Comes out of the Sea* (1986), which was chosen as one of the best 100 Arab novels of the 21st century. Another prominent novel of hers is *Şamt al-Farāshāt [Silence of the Butterflies]* (2007), which was highly controversial in her native Kuwait upon publication. For this study, her engagement in feminism was achieved by exploring the different ways in which her novel, *Şamt al-Farāshāt [Silence of the Butterflies]*, addresses several feminist issues, mainly forced marriage, rape and sexual abuse, gender-based physical, sexual violence, and enforced silence. This paper focuses on demonstrating social obstacles and continuous trauma caused by a sequence of pain experienced by Arab females in their patriarchal society. This study argues that the novel reveals a sustained effort to raise the banner of feminism and a strong desire to liberate Arab women from patriarchal domination. Al-Othman successfully and uniquely represents women as gender-based traumatic victims of sexual and physical violence, forced silence, and general oppression in the patriarchal Arab society, as those needing help, support, protection, and liberation. They are not represented as independent or free. Methodologically, the study employs a qualitative literary analysis method in addition to trauma theory psychoanalysis, concentrating on feminist issues highlighted in the novel.

Keywords : Al-Othman, Arab women pain, trauma within narration., Silence of the Butterflies

Conference Title : ICHSD 2024 : International Conference on History and Social Development

Conference Location : London, United Kingdom

Conference Dates : August 22-23, 2024