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Saudi Drama Commencements, Efforts, and Progression (9): 'From Under the Chair' by Ad-Dubaikhi as an Epitome

Yahya Saleh Hasan Dahami

Associate Professor, Albaha University, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, <https://orcid.org/0000-0003-0195-7878>

***Correspondence email:** dahami02@gmail.com.

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Abstract: Drama is a ubiquitous and cross-cultural phenomenon rooted in the concept of theatrics, where a designated environment is established for the manifestation of dramatic occurrences. The origins of drama and theatre can be traced back to religious ceremonies, choral odes, and ceremonial gatherings, as well as historical pageantry. Through the medium of drama, social change can be actively influenced and public consciousness regarding societal matters can be heightened. The collective arts, such as theatre and drama, hold significant value as they epitomize social cooperation and foster a sense of community among individuals. By emphasizing the necessity of considering the needs and perspectives of others, theatre and drama serve as powerful mediums for promoting social empathy and understanding. This research, which is part of a series looking at Saudi theatre and drama, aimed to offer insight into the beginnings, challenges, and evolution of Saudi play. This study contributes to the field of Saudi drama by conducting a critical assessment and analysis of the social comedy "From Under the Chairs", a play that has not been previously examined in this manner. The play serves as a representative example of the cultural landscape of the 1980s, which marked a pivotal era in the development of Saudi drama. By exploring the originality and significance of this play, this study sheds light on the evolution of Saudi theatre during this transformative period. An analytical and critical approach was used in the analysis.

Following a concise introduction, the study delved into important literary issues like the contribution of Saudi television to dramatic activities. After that, it discussed and examined the nature of a Saudi play, "From Under the Chairs" by Ahmad Ad-Dubaikhi, as an illustration of comic social drama in Saudi Arabia. After this main part of the study, it reached a brief discussion and conclusion.

Keywords: comedy, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, Saudi drama, Saudi dramatists, Saudi theatre, social drama.

Introduction

The term "drama" originates from Greek and means "to do or act." The word originates from the Greek term "dran," signifying action. Drama is a kind of expression that primarily depends on the actors' facial expressions and vocal articulation. This is a narrative that should be told live. In the past, drama was the best way to narrate a story, depict a scenario, or arrange a lyrical concept. Since its gloomy origins on the banks of the Nile in ancient Egypt some six thousand years ago, the theatre has mirrored the life, customs, manners, and general living habits of the people. It is the most advanced and user-friendly method of documenting human effort. It is meant to be both educational and entertaining.

Drama serves as a tool to accentuate both the tragic and comedic aspects of human existence, symbolising the full spectrum of life's emotional states. It stands as a prominent and captivating genre within literature, with the goal of articulating the essence of a particular period and location in time and space. Through the utilisation of vibrant storytelling and intricate character development, drama effectively captures the essence of the human experience, evoking profound emotional responses and sparking the creativity of its audience (Dahami, 2023d).

One of the earliest literary genres created by the poets and priests of antiquity was the theatre. It has played a significant social role and influenced society ever since its inception. Theatre "is the recreation of life on a stage, every action performed, words spoken, gestures made are representations of real life, plays, novels, and similar works are personal expressions of the writer who attempts to pass a message to society" (Suhaila, 2021). The theological, social, and human ramifications of the drama have also altered the content of man's morality, habits, and thoughts. Drama has caught the interest of dramaturgs, performers, and literary critics as a literary form. Drama is a reflection of people's psyches, as are the psyches of those involved in its creation. It is among the most well-liked, unusual, and captivating literary genres. Drama highlights the most tragic and humorous events in our lives and embodies both the beauty and the pain of life. It may appeal to a variety of people for a variety of reasons since it may have many goals, whether social, political, or religious.

It is so deeply associated with and dependent upon the whole material world of the theatre, with its thronging crowds and its universal appeal; it lies so near to the deeper consciousness of the nation in which it takes its rise (Allardyce, 1969, p. 9; Dahami, 2017).

Social drama is essential since it functions as a vehicle for cultural expression, as the preceding response made clear, enabling people and communities to reflect on and communicate their norms, values, and internal problems. The revised sentence is: Social drama is an educational tool that

encourages students [and actors] to take on roles that focus on addressing social issues (Ramadhani & Nazriani, 2023). The ability of social theatre to aid in problem resolution is one of its main features. Social dramas can be a useful tool for communities to confront and potentially resolve negative issues because they provide an organised, frequently ritualised environment for the exploration of tensions. Increased understanding and social cohesiveness may result from this.

Moreover, being a part of or observing social conflicts together can strengthen bonds within the community and cultivate a feeling of common identity. These experiences' emotional and psychological resonance can help participants feel more connected to one another and have a common understanding. Moreover, social dramas can give people a controlled, frequently cleansing way to express and process complex feelings, thoughts, and experiences by giving them an emotional outlet. For the participants—dramatists, actors, directors, etc.—as well as the larger community, this can have healing benefits.

A vital component of social interaction and societal operation is social drama. In communities, it refers to the disputes, pressures, and agreements that arise in public or semi-public contexts. Social dramas are also excellent teaching tools because they help people see and absorb social norms, their repercussions, and the complexity of interpersonal relationships. Younger members of a society may benefit most from this socialization process since they will be able to understand the dynamics and unspoken rules that shape social conduct.

Tensions that could otherwise simmer under the surface and possibly escalate into more serious disputes have a release through social drama. Social drama makes problems visible, so they can be acknowledged and possibly resolved. In addition, these plays frequently function as a vehicle for either criticizing or supporting established societal systems. Several critics such, as Bhandari (2023), consider that "it is necessary to consider the strategic components of social inequality and its role in the life of civilisation in the past, present, and future." Inequality, I believe, is a natural phenomenon to measure the variation of the progress of Saudi drama and theatre from the past, passing to the present until reaching the future. One of the purposes of drama and theatre is to edify and educate people in society. Consequentially, drama and theatre are means of education. On this basis, "continuing education and the development of new skills allow people to be prepared for changes in society" (Sanakuiev, 2022). Based on their evolution and response, they can either bolster the current state or serve as drivers for transformation.

In a similar vein, social dramas are essential for socialisation and cultural transmission. People learn about the expectations, values, and dispute-resolution techniques of their society by watching and taking part in these events. This is especially crucial for the community's younger residents. Social dramas frequently function as pivotal events in the collective history of a community. These serve as anchors that shape collective memory and identity, encouraging unity and a feeling of shared history. Despite the discomfort or disruption caused by social conflicts, they are vital for maintaining, adapting, and strengthening social bonds and institutions. They play a crucial role in how civilizations deal with change, uphold their core beliefs, and remain together.

There are several research gaps that this study aims to fill, such as the documentation of Saudi drama evolution. The paper is part of a series documenting the history and development of Saudi theatre and drama. This suggests there may have been a lack of comprehensive research on the progression of drama in Saudi Arabia; this paper is just the beginning. Another gap the study tries to fill is a brief analysis of Saudi television's influence. By investigating the contribution of Saudi television to dramatic movements, the study manages a gap in understanding how media has

affected the maturation of drama in the Saudi context. Another gap the study tackles is the cultural aspects of Saudi theatre. By studying the nature of a Saudi play, the study provides insights into the cultural nuances and characteristics of Saudi drama, which may have been underexplored in previous research. Another research gap that the study seeks to fill is the challenge of Saudi drama. The mention of "challenges" in the evolution of Saudi play suggests the paper addresses gaps in understanding the obstacles faced by dramatists and theatre practitioners in Saudi Arabia.

One of the primary gaps of the study to endeavour to tackle is an assessment of Saudi-specific play. The focus on "From Under the Chairs" as an illustration of comic social drama in Saudi Arabia suggests a step to analyse and emphasise works that are uniquely Saudi, potentially filling a gap in the critical analysis of Saudi-specific dramatic literature. Another point is the social influence of drama in the Saudi context. The paper's discussion of drama as a strategy for social change and raising public awareness of social matters addresses a gap in understanding how drama functions as a social mechanism within Saudi society. Finally, the study deals with the contextualisation of Saudi drama by discussing drama as a universal theme and then focusing on its manifestation in Saudi Arabia. The paper bridges a gap between global dramatic theory and its specific application in the Saudi context.

Objectives of the Study

Analysing and showing the exceptionality of the start, origins, and growth of one of the major literary genres, drama, is one of the goals of this research study series. This study aimed to investigate, analyse, and explore the identity of the commencement and development of Saudi drama and theatre with a specific reference to the social comedy-drama "From Under the Chairs" by the dramatist Ahmad Ad-Dubaikhi.

Research Methods

This task, which is a literary analysis, used the critical-analytical approach as an assessment instrument for the events under examination. There are three sections to the study. The first section provided information on how Saudi drama affects society as well as an overview of certain critical attitudes, viewpoints, and thoughts regarding Saudi drama and Saudi TV's contribution to this literary genre. The play *From Under the Chairs* is examined critically and analytically as a social comedy in the second point. The final section reported on the remaining topics that were discussed and concluded. A comprehensive analysis of the literary techniques employed in a work of literature may yield valuable insights through a systematic investigation. This type of investigation is crucial, especially when approached analytically, as it showcases the reliability of a rigorous examination that evaluates the play's utilisation of techniques such as characterization and exploration of societal themes. By demonstrating how these elements align with current analytical frameworks and expected social norms, the critical-analytical approach proves to be a valuable tool in understanding the complexities of the text.

Results

Saudi Drama: Early Contribution of Saudi Television

On July 7, 1965, the Kingdom witnessed the start of official broadcasting and the first broadcast signal from the Riyadh and Jeddah stations in black and white, and the transmission was on one channel called the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia Channel. The channel used to stop broadcasting at 8 p.m. until the next morning. Then, gradually, the television broadcast was delivered to various parts

of the kingdom until it included all parts of the kingdom (Arab League Educational, 2000, p. 270; Jerace, 2023, p. 208; Moawath, 1984, p. 38; Sabg, 2023). With the emergence and spread of Saudi television, theatre turned to the visual image to gain greater spread and public acceptance. "Through the radio theatre or television theatre, the name of the theatre was revealed, as well as introduced a novel idea to individuals who were unaware of what a theatre was" (Dahami, 2023a). Director Bashir Mardini took the initiative to direct "TV Theatre" after the emergence of television broadcasting, similar to radio theatre, and the first locally produced Saudi play to be shown on television was broadcast. It was entitled (عريس من ذهب) "Bridegroom of Gold" ('Asilan, 2020; Theatre Pioneers in Saudi Arabia, n.d.).

Al-Rabi' (2023) declares that it is contrary to what Al-Saeed said about the emergence of theatre in Saudi Arabia, which confirmed its start in school. There is another effective opinion held by the late playwright Muhammad Al-Othaim, who says, that if we go beyond the history of the first attempts, which for us are unclear, then the current Saudi theatre experiences emerged from the cloak of television. When television was established in 1966 [others say 1965], there was more than one young man trying to direct dramatic work. What happened after that was that one of the television directors, Ibrahim Al-Hamdan, decided to produce a comedy for the audience and show it with the actors themselves, then display it to the public. Therefore, it is Saudi television that supported the emergence of introducing theatre in Saudi Arabia, not the school. Because of the civic understanding of the emergence of theatre. It also seems that it is difficult to identify the theatrical movement in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia during the past twenty years of its journey on the commercial stage.

The radio and television the theatre played a leading role in creating and presenting stars to the local audience. Solomin (2023) states that "television remains an active player in the modern paradigm of the information society, maintaining its status as a relevant broadcaster of content of various kinds", like social drama. The masterpieces of Tariq Abdul Hakim, Talal Maddah, Abdullah Muhammad, Fawzi Mahsoun, Muhammad Abdo, Mutlaq Al-Thiyabi, Obadi Al-Jawhar, Salama Al-Abdullah, Saad Ibrahim, and Salem Al-Huwail will not be forgotten. Even the last artist introduced by the TV theatre was Abdul Majeed Abdullah. At the monologue level, there were Hassan Dardir, Lotfi Zaini, and Abdul Aziz Al-Hazza. All of these were applauded by the Saudi audience through the local TV theatre, which began in the early 1960s, and then they took off in the Arab world. When they go back to the beginnings, they remember the radio and television theatre with some nostalgia.

The television had its own musical band, which included an elite group of Saudi musicians such as Abdo Mazyad, Sami Ihsan, Abdullah Al Majed, Muhammad Shafiq, and the famous flute player Tawab Obaid. Art is experiencing a true renaissance with the presence of an artistic and musical generation that performs its role with high qualifications and sensitivity. People's passion for art increased, such as Omar Kadros, Siraj Omar, and Ghazi Ali. On the drama level, there were names who worked hard and spent days filming with limited tools, motivated only by the love of art, led by Saad Khader, Ahmed Al-Hudhail, Abdulaziz Al-Hammad, and Muhammad Al-Ali. They were followed by a strong and qualified generation. All of these names were the Ministry's warm embrace and a safe and secure haven for the generation of that most important theatre in the history of Saudi art. The most famous artistic and variety programs were produced on television theatre.

In the past, TV Theatre featured a top-tier Saudi musical group. However, today, the theatre is tasked with uniting a diverse array of players and musicians from various regions of the Kingdom. A dedicated band of musicians must now be assembled specifically for the television theatre. Since its

establishment in the 1960s, music has been the cornerstone of the theatre and should continue to be, alongside monologues and dramatic scenes. For more information, refer to (Jarrah, 2017; Media, 2023). Theatre in Saudi Arabia began in large part because of the establishment of Saudi television in 1965. However, it is crucial to first examine the history of Saudi television before examining this influence. As a developing country, Saudi Arabia needs support from Arabic experts in various fields, including directing and editing. Due to this necessity, the Saudi government turned to experts from a few Arab countries that had established television before Saudi Arabia—they were not the first Arab country to do so. Regarding theatre, film, and television, Egypt led all other Arab countries in these domains before anybody else; however, it is not the only country to have advanced contributions to Saudi television.

Saudi television began airing a show named Television Theatre in the late 1960s. Despite the term theatre being in the title, no theatrical works were produced by the program. There are various perspectives on the role Saudi television plays in the setting of Saudi theatre. First, drama produced by these countries as well as Saudi artists' work was introduced through broadcasts by other Arabic countries, including Egypt, Lebanon, and Kuwait, that Saudi television aired in the late 1960s and early 1970s. For example, drama from Egypt and Lebanon—particularly drama on TV series—became the norm and the only kind of drama that the Saudi people were exposed to. This was especially true of Saudi artists who started to mimic this type of drama.

Furthermore, Saudi artists started to have access to Kuwaiti theatre, which was featured on Saudi television and focused on realistic forms while addressing social issues in Kuwaiti society. Thus, it is not unexpected that Saudi authors were limited to theatrical broadcastings, particularly from Egypt and Kuwait, according to critics who stated that the theatrical broadcastings, particularly from Egypt and Kuwait, were the foremost resources obtainable to Saudi writers. It is therefore not surprising that the first plays directed for the Saudi theatre were more suited for television drama than for the theatre.

Besides, there were problems with the approach to acting that Saudi actors utilize, which was influenced by the style of acting for television and not on the stage. It seems that the drama and theatre televised by Kuwaiti, Egyptian, and Lebanese performances influenced both the writing and acting styles of Saudi performers. As a result, this contribution will be apparent in the dramatic and theatrical works of Saudi artists. Additionally, Arabic dramatic broadcasts served as the primary educational resource for artists and practitioners, as there were no other institutions or resources available to train Saudi professionals on the intricacies of theatre.

In terms of the influences on Saudi artists, it is impossible to overlook the presence of Syrian specialists. The cooperation between Saudi Arabia and Syrian experts to operate Saudi television for a while went beyond accomplishing this single goal. It implied that Saudis employed in the television sector would benefit from the expertise and experience of those specialists. Thus, the expertise of these Syrian experts would affect Saudi artists, particularly in the absence of other cultural exchanges.

The creation of Saudi television did not grant Saudis with a passion for theatre and drama the opportunity to work exclusively on television productions. It made it possible for them to get together and talk about their shared passions for theatre and dramatic television shows. Before Saudi television was founded, there was no organisation or foundation that attempted to provide a platform for these artists—actors, directors, or writers—to come together with the backing, encouragement, and support of the Saudi authorities.

The launch of Saudi television and the creation of many dramatic productions were seen by Saudi artists as endorsements and stimulants of the country's dramatic movement. This therefore prompted the artists to create more dramatic pieces for television. Among these were several dramatic series and a script titled "Bridegroom from Gold (عريس من ذهب)." When the play was taped for television, 'Bridegroom from Gold' was presented to a private audience in the television building. One of the theatre productions for Saudi television was a play named The Doctor with the Manifold Stick ('Tabeeb Belmisha'ab' طبيب بالمشعاب). After being performed in public, this piece was well-received.

The play The Doctor with the Manifold Stick can be seen as a literary work that represents a reflection of what was forbidden in Saudi Arabia in terms of content at one time. As for the form, it can be referred to as the writer's ability to transform the French text into an Arabic model that is socially and culturally equivalent to Saudi society" (Dahami, 2023c).

Furthermore, "cultural and historical progress has shaped the corresponding types of society" (Shakun, 2022). Therefore, in the history of Saudi theatre, it was the first play in Saudi Arabia to be produced and performed outside of the country's clubs and schools. Furthermore, it was produced for the first time by Saudi Television, an official organization. See more at (Media Center, n.d.).

From Under the Chair: Social Comedy

The play "From Under the Chairs" (1985) a social comedy, is one of the most prominent Saudi plays written by the author Ahmed Abdul-Aziz Ad-Dubaikhi. This play is considered one of the pioneering works in Saudi theatre, and it achieved wide fame when it was presented. The author is playwright Ahmed Ad-Dubaikhi. It was first shown in the eighties. In its early stages, the play was often directed by prominent Saudi directors. The play "From Under the Chairs" included several well-known Saudi actors who contributed to the play's success and spread. It is believed that "the cultural renewal and development of society largely depends on the educational potential of communities" (Krymets, 2022; Turdiyev, 2021). The events of the play revolve around contemporary social issues and themes in Saudi society, and it is distinguished by its comedic style, which carries within it deep critical messages about some customs, traditions, and social practices. "Social drama concentrates principally on the theme of money, and the societal behaviour of the individual in the society, along with the denunciation and condemnation of poverty" (Dahami, 2020). The title "From Under the Chairs" metaphorically alludes to the excavation of concealed information and the investigation of phenomena that are imperceptible to the unaided senses, in line with the pursuit of verifiable knowledge in the midst of societal issues, quandaries, and dilemmas.

Dahami (2022) and Gibb, (1974) mention that 'in literary drama and plays on modern social themes, all of these productions, however, short stories, novels, and plays, remain bound by the horizons and conventions of the Arab world; when translated into other languages, they are often more interesting as social documents than as literary achievements' (p. 161).

The play 'From Under the Chairs' is one of the works that succeeded in highlighting some social themes and problems in a humorous way, which made it close to the hearts of the audience. The play contributed to enhancing the art of theatre in Saudi Arabia and encouraging more writers and directors to produce local theatrical works. The play garnered praise from the Saudi audience and enjoyed remarkable success, earning multiple repeat performances. "From Under the Chairs" is hailed as a pioneering work in Saudi theatre, blending comedy and social commentary in a

captivating artistic presentation. It also contributed to the development of Saudi theatre and highlighted new talents in the fields of acting and directing. The play was distinguished by its precise direction, which contributed to highlighting comedy and social criticism in a balanced manner. Despite the decades since its premiere, *Under the Chairs* remains one of the theatrical works referred to as an example of how social comedy can be used to convey serious social messages.

Abu Ali, the play's central figure, initially presents himself as an upright and honourable manager, but the events quickly reveal that this is not the case. Three chapters make up the play *Under the Chairs*. The first chapter's events start in the early morning as Abu Ali's working hours get underway. Abu Ali's attitude at work displays discipline in his interactions with the auditors' clients and with manager Abu Abdullah, who is in charge of monitoring and inspection.

When Abu Abdullah informs Abu Ali that he has had numerous complaints about his work performance, Abu Ali replies that he is a dedicated and faithful person who upholds all laws—until the formal end of working hours at 5 p.m., but in reality, he gets home at 1 p.m.! When Abu Ali got Watson, one of the overseas clients, that is when the corruption of Abu Ali started to be exposed. Watson was prepared to pay Abu Ali, but Abu Ali would not sign the contracts unless Watson did.

It was then made obvious that Abu Ali does not get the money in cash in order to keep his situation a secret. This implies that in addition to obtaining cash as a bribe, Abu Ali also received automobiles, numerous gifts, and facilities for his business. The second part starts in Abu Ali's home, whose lavish home and lifestyle are made possible by the bribes he takes. In this chapter, Abu Muhammad, Abu Adel's brother, who is radically different from him, and Adel, the pampered child who is willing to lie to obtain money, also make an appearance. He does not accept haram money because he is an upright and honest man.

Because of his brother's terrible reputation, Abu Muhammad expressed his irritation at being unable to join social gatherings. However, Abu Ali tries to make things easier by using different terminology; he refers to bribes as presents, and the bribes are friends! This chapter makes it very evident how materialistic and avaricious Abu Ali is. Because he is wealthy, he is willing to marry off his 18-year-old daughter to his old neighbour, who is married to two women, under the justification that his daughter lives in affluence and deserves to marry someone who will give her the same lifestyle but at a higher standard of living.

In the third act of *Under the Chairs*, when Abu Abdullah arrives with his assistant Hamad and Officer Muhammad to look into allegations against Abu Ali, the truth about Abu Ali's censorship corruption is made clear. Abu Ali vehemently denies the accusations, but when evidence is presented by agents who offered him money and gifts to cooperate, the investigators are forced to acknowledge the truth of the claims. Abu Ali is arrested and the ordeal comes to an end.

In "*Under the Chairs*," administrative corruption—specifically, department manager bribery—and how it can be concealed for as long as feasible are the main themes. The play also describes the corrupt lifestyle and the unavoidable demise of every corrupt individual. The social and moral issues that are summed up in the ongoing confrontation between integrity and corruption are embodied in the play "*Under the Chairs*" as a type of dramatic conflict.

It is crucial to note that one of the traditional elements of social plays was the curtain, which was used both at the start and in between the acts and scenes. The Saudi Arabian workday begins at half past seven in the morning; thus, it is important to keep in mind that the scene shows that the manager

starts working one hour earlier than that. The fact that he is late suggests that the manager does not value his effort. The exchange between the servant and the man, who instantly awakens upon hearing the servant's voice, opens the scene. The servant clarifies that this is only true in private organizations, contradicting the man's explanation that he came early because work normally starts at half past seven. This could mean that the play is about government agencies or the public sector.

It also illustrates how the public and private sectors differ from one another when it comes to limiting employee work hours. The man accepts the servant's invitation to join him as he begins to eat breakfast, walking right up to the food. The servant instantly decides to change his mind and adds, "I am joking ... it is a kind of joke..." (Ad-Dubaikhi, 2020). The servant's response is regarded as one of the play's humorous elements. The man's way of eating habits is also criticized by the servant. The critique exposes humorous terms such as "be careful" or "do not damage your stomach" (Ad-Dubaikhi, 2020). Another humorous element in this incident is when the servant, realizing the man has finished his meal, he shouts asking angrily, "Are you in Africa?" (Ad-Dubaikhi, 2020).

The servant also jokes around with the other employees in the office. For example, he remarks of the enormous man, "I do not know what these people eat" (Ad-Dubaikhi, 2020), then, fearing that the big man would harm the skinny man, the servant comically requests the latter not to sit next to the big man. The theatrical directions state that the manager's approach is announced by the servant upon hearing a sound screaming loudly: "The manager has arrived ... "The manager has arrived ... congratulations" (Ad-Dubaikhi, 2020).

After stating that they are not at a hotel and making remarks about a few employees who appear to be napping in the office, the manager walks onto the stage and instructs them to wash their faces. Given the light-hearted nature of the manager's remark, it is clear that language plays a major role in the play's comedic elements. As the performers get ready to leave the stage, one walks up to the manager and whispers something. This is another instance of the use of physical humour as a cameo. When the manager notices that the man has horrible breath, he covers his nose immediately. Before continuing, he asks the man to exit the office and wash his mouth.

The manager gets a call as he is seated in his chair. The caller, who wishes to remain anonymous, informs him of some positive stock market news. As a result, the manager says he would like to take advantage of the money he has made in the stock market by taking a brief vacation. Through this dialogue, the author makes observations about the growing affluence in Saudi society and the desire of the Saudi populace to use this money for leisure travel. The author also shows how the manager's personal interests take precedence over his responsibilities.

Act I continues with several actions that illustrate this facet of the character (the manager). For example, the manager instructs the servant to attend to the needs of the people who seem to be wealthy first and prioritize them. The way the manager handles a needy man who comes in seeking assistance serves as another illustration. According to the theatrical directions, the interaction between the manager and the beggar is gestural until the manager kicks the beggar out at the end.

Once the curtain of Act I falls, Act II begins with Adel, Abo Adel's son, dancing to Western music in a manner considered inappropriate. This display serves as a clear indication that Adel lacks familiarity with this genre of music. This is a reference to how Saudi youngsters at the time were influenced by Western culture. Adel is dancing when his uncle walks onto the stage and takes a chair that he cannot see. Adel is not aware that his uncle is there. When the phone rings, Adel talks for a

while with a person who he believes to be his girlfriend. Adel pretends to be talking to Abu Ali, his father's servant, and changes the topic as soon as he sees his uncle (Ad-Dubaikhi, 2020).

Adel's uncle calls him and attempts to give him advice about the relationship he has with the girl. "Suppose you were her brother; what is your feeling? (Ad-Dubaikhi, 2020)" He asks Adel in an attempt to convince him of his nephew while rationally discussing the nature of the culture they live in. It is noteworthy that Adel's uncle, who stands in for an experienced older man, needs to have a thorough discussion with him about the love dilemma between Adel and the girl. In contrast to the play's central subject of bribery, the author appears to view this one as peripheral. Adel's uncle asks him to call the appearance of his father and come in as the scene comes to an end.

An Asian servant enters to provide the uncle with coffee before his father shows up. The author supports the preconceived notion of an Asian servant in this particular scene. It is insisted upon that he is an idiot. The emergence of this image, which seems to be widespread in most societal dramas, can be linked to the arrival of Asian laborers in Saudi Arabia who lacked knowledge of the country's societal norms, traditions, or language. The core theme of the play unfolds as the plot unfolds, showcasing a conflict or disagreement between Abo Adel and his brother.

The issue of Abo Adel's choice to compel his young daughter to marry an elderly man comes up in their conversation. As Abo Adel explains, the old man's riches and the money he will pay as a dowry make him appealing. Abo Adel disagrees with his brother's claim that the girl should marry a man her own age because young people don't have any money or prospects. The author attempts to highlight another facet of Abo Adel in this discussion—that is, his attempt to accumulate fortune at the expense of his daughter's happiness. It is acknowledged that Abo Adel's inappropriate actions affect not just his career but also his family's future.

Returning to the manager's office for the third act, the general manager walks into the company of two men, one of whom is an officer. The general manager informs Abo Adel that these people need to interview him and that an investigation into his unlawful actions is being launched. Two persons arrive at the office throughout the investigation with gifts in an attempt to buy Abo Adel's completion of their paperwork. This is seen as proof of his unlawful actions. The officer draws attention to the way Islam views such behaviour and accuses Abo Adel and the servant of being involved in this unlawful deed. He claims that because they are Muslims, they must follow Islamic law and that this conduct is forbidden by Islam (Ad-Dubaikhi, 2020). The officer declares at the play's conclusion that jail is the result of this behaviour.

Discussion

The play "From Under the Chairs" employs a sociological lens to explore various facets of Saudi society. Through a comedic framework, the play presents a group of characters that represent different segments of the society, allowing for an examination of key social themes. One such theme is social hypocrisy, depicted through the characters' interactions and the discrepancies between their actions and words. The play also delves into the theme of bureaucracy, critiquing the bureaucratic systems that perpetuate complications and obstacles for individuals in their daily lives. Moreover, the play addresses the critical issue of social inequality, shedding light on class differences and the resulting social problems. By delving into these themes, the play provides a nuanced analysis of the societal dynamics at play in Saudi Arabia, showcasing the complexities and challenges faced by individuals in navigating public life. Through its exploration of these social

themes, "From Under the Chairs" offers a scientific examination of the intricacies of Saudi society and the various structural issues that contribute to social inequality and hypocrisy.

From Under the Chairs received a good response to its exciting topic. It was also highly appreciated by critics, who praised the quality of the script and the performances of the actors, as well as the deep social messages it carries. "From Under the Chairs" contributed to the development of the art of theatre in Saudi Arabia, as it encouraged other writers and directors to present works that carry purposeful messages. "Theatre and drama are not just stories to be told or roles to be played for laughter and entertainment. It also has a significant impact and role in reflecting and presenting the reality of societies and revealing and exposing negative and inhuman behaviors" (Dahami, 2023b). Furthermore, the manner in which a specific community explains reality shapes the underlying foundation of an individual's worldview and influences their perception of the surrounding realities (Rudenko & Zaika, 2023). In addition, the play played a role in educating society about important social issues through a comedic framework, which made heavy topics more acceptable. The play also inspired many young people to enter the field of acting and theatre directing and contributed to the emergence of new faces in Saudi theatre.

In the interpretation of the results, it is important to first provide a critical evaluation of the existing scientific literature related to this research problem. A review of the relevant papers reveals that previous studies have explored.

This research sought to fill this gap by analysing the play From Under the Chairs from a historical and cultural perspective, shedding light on its significance in the context of Saudi drama and theatre. By examining the themes, characters, and stylistic elements of the play, we aim to contribute to a deeper understanding of Saudi theatre and its evolution over time. Furthermore, this study also aimed to explore the reception of From Under the Chairs among audiences and critics, as well as its impact on the broader cultural landscape of Saudi Arabia. By engaging with the play in a rigorous and analytical manner, we hope to provide fresh insights and perspectives that will enrich the existing literature on Saudi drama and theatre. In conclusion, this paper demonstrated the value of further exploring previously uncharted territories in research, such as the play From Under the Chairs, in order to advance our understanding of complex scientific problems and cultural phenomena. By continuing to push the boundaries of knowledge and inquiry, we can continue to expand our horizons and deepen our appreciation of the rich tapestry of human creativity and expression.

In considering the limitations of the study, it is important to note that Saudi drama and theatre is a wide range of literature, and this task is insufficient to cover all the needed areas of Saudi drama and theatre, past and present. These limitations may constrain the simplification of the results and call for thoughtful interpretation. Future research should seek to address these limitations by doing many studies and investigations that could overcome the limitations, if any. The findings of this study provide a valuable contribution to the understanding of the significance of Saudi drama and theatre as a literary genre that plays vital roles in the welfare and knowledge of society.

By critically evaluating the current play, From Under the Chairs, comparing the results to previous findings, and identifying unexplored avenues for future research, the researcher has shed new light on this important literary issue. With careful consideration of the limitations, such marks offer a basis for continued exploration and advancement in this field. Generally, this task demonstrates the significance of continued study of Saudi drama. It is expected that the findings might inform and inspire future research in this area.

Suggestions for Future Research

One of the challenges encountered by the researcher in this study is the dearth of available information and literature, both in Arabic and English, pertaining to the playwright and his work. There appears to be a lack of scholarly analysis on *From Under the Chair*. Therefore, it is imperative for future studies to delve into Ahmed Ad-Dubaikhi's significance as a prominent Saudi literary figure and to examine the social satire present in his play as a valuable component of Saudi literary heritage.

Moreover, it is advisable for researchers to conduct comparative analyses between *From Under the Chair* and other Saudi plays in order to identify common themes, stylistic elements, and societal critiques. Such studies may provide insights into the origins and development of Saudi drama and theater. Additionally, investigations on the enduring impact of *From Under the Chair* on Saudi theatrical productions could yield valuable insights into its contributions to shaping subsequent works and themes within the realm of Saudi literature.

Furthermore, it is recommended that future research delves deeper into the socio-political, historical, and educational contexts of Saudi Arabia during the 1970s and 1980s to elucidate the influences that shaped the thematic content and reception of the play. This holistic approach would offer a more comprehensive understanding of the cultural and artistic landscape that informed Ad-Dubaikhi's creative output.

Conclusion

The character of the social dramas prevalent in theatre from 1974 to the mid-1980s can be illuminated through analysis of the play "*Under the Chairs*," which serves as a prime exemplar of the common traits found in these productions. These traits include a commitment to verisimilitude in representing reality, the deliberate usage of the Saudi accent, and the exploration of social issues pertinent to Saudi culture. However, the primary theme of corruption and bribery within Saudi organizations distinguishes this play as a groundbreaking piece within this genre. "*Under the Chairs*" holds a significant position within the Saudi theatre canon, with Ahmed Ad-Dubaikhi's work being celebrated as a cornerstone of Saudi literary history. The play is revered by theatre enthusiasts in the Kingdom for its cultural relevance and artistic merit. Ultimately, "*Under the Chairs*" stands not only as a work of art but as a crucial component of Saudi cultural heritage that has shaped and advanced the theatrical landscape of the nation. In essence, the play embodies a pivotal moment in the evolution of Saudi theatrical art, reflecting the societal and cultural transformations witnessed during its time.

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