



Oppression Upon Oppression: Critical Analysis of Parks' "In The Blood" Through the Intersectional Perspective

Latifa I. Jabboury

Asst. Prof. /English Literature

Department of English Language and Literature, College of Arts,
University of Mustansiriyah, Baghdad, Iraq

dr.latifij@uomustansiriyah.edu.iq

Received: 12-10-2023 Revised: 1-12-2023

Accepted: 12-12-2023 Published: 31-12-2023

DOI: 10.21608/jssa.2024.255086.1588

Volume 24 Issue 9 (2023) Pp. 17-36

Abstract

Research on Suzan-Lori Parks' *"In the Blood"* (1999) has been tied to the literary spheres that locate Hester, the protagonist of the play, within the context of social studies. Through the theory of intersectionality, this article asserts that Hester's character attains new dimensions of discussion. Hence, this article exhibits a portrayal of a woman who was oppressed by the social system through the various aspects of her identity as a poor black woman. This paper aims to address Hester's persecution within the frame of three interlocking denotations of her identity: gender, class and race. Therefore, the study investigates the overlapping concerns of oppression endured by Hester through questioning how these three intersecting denotations combine to shape her persecution right up to the point that lead to her tragic end. The paper seeks to study Parks' *"In the Blood"* through the theory of intersectionality. The article is structured into five sections. The first section is an introduction. The second section presents the framework of intersectionality. The third section discusses the intersectional perspective as reflected in the play. The fourth section investigates the significance of the title of the play. The conclusion in the fifth section states the main findings of the study. The article is concluded, then, to emphasize that Hester was persecuted not only because of her gender but also because of her race and class. Moreover, Parks in this play asserts that the shapes of discrimination and oppression in contemporary American society are indirect.

Keywords: Parks; intersectionality; "In the Blood"; Hester; oppression

Introduction

Drama written by Suzan-Lori Parks awakens issues in the lives of American black women. In her plays such as "[Venus](#)" (1996), "[Topdog/Underdog](#)" (1999), "[In The Blood](#)" (1999), "[Fucking A](#)" (2000), Parks explores themes of identity, race, and gender, and how these themes intersect and impact the lives of black women. Parks tackles the struggles and challenges black women endure in American society, including discrimination, poverty, and the legacy of slavery. Through her artistic contributions, Parks illuminates the intricate nature of the experiences encountered by black women and questions the prevailing narratives that frequently disregard or relegate their voices. Utilizing her plays as a medium, Parks aims to draw focus towards the endurance, fortitude, and inherent humanity of black women, simultaneously emphasizing the systemic obstacles they persistently confront.

Parks' was a Pulitzer Prize-winning playwright known for her experimental and poetic style. Her play *In The Blood* was first premiered at the Public Theater in New York City in (1999) and has been produced around the world. Critics as varied as Gies (2004), Foster (2007), Berkman (2007) and Park (2008) point out that Parks' [In The Blood](#) stands out as one of the remarkable work by black American playwright. Hester, a destitute mother with no permanent residence, is the central character in the play. She has five children who were conceived unlawfully and resides in the heart of the city under the bridge. Each of her children has a different father, all of whom have deserted her. The play explores themes of poverty, class, race, and gender as Hester struggles to provide for her children and maintain her dignity in a society that has cast her aside.

In contrast to other playwrights of her time, Parks' perspective on feminist matters demonstrates a distinct emphasis on intersectionality. The play uncovers the various forms of oppression experienced by Hester, the main character, as she endures suffering. These oppressions are intertwined, incorporating multiple aspects of her life, exacerbated by her own uncertain and conflicting emotions regarding her five fatherless kids. The cruelty of the nature of life Hester and her kids live is evident in the nature of the stage represented by the bridge they take as their home, which symbolizes more than just a location, and in the characters they meet in their

life. The play mirrors the continuity of oppression against black women even at the end of the second millennium.

In an interview with [Jacobs-Jenkins](#) from The Paris Review, Suzan-Lori Parks (2020) emphasized the intention behind her works, expressing that her plays aim to stimulate contemplation and confront the audience's preexisting beliefs. She holds the belief that art should be a catalyst for change and her objective through her work is to challenge the existing norms and instigate discussions on critical social and political matters. Parks also places great importance on diversity and representation in the arts, making an effort to develop characters and narratives that accurately portray the intricate and diverse nature of our society. In addition, Parks considers her plays as a way to engage in activism and encourage comprehension and empathy within society. Parks asserts that both racial and patriarchal dominance burdens black women, and it is crucial for them to challenge and dismantle these oppressive systems. This assertion emphasizes the interconnected nature of the challenges faced by black women, who encounter prejudice and marginalization due to both their race and gender. Black women must confront racial and patriarchal dominance, leading to various forms of inequality and injustice. Recognizing this intersectional experience is crucial in advocating for the rights and empowerment of black women, as they confront unique and compounded discrimination. It also highlights the necessity for a more comprehensive and intersectional approach to social justice and feminist movements.

It is important for society to recognize and address these intersectional imbalances in order to create a more inclusive and equitable environment for all individuals. This may involve addressing systemic issues such as poverty, racism, and sexism, as well as providing support and resources for marginalized communities to help them overcome the alienation and discrimination they face. Overall, Hester's story serves as a poignant reminder of the impact of intersectional imbalances on individuals and the need for society to work towards creating a more inclusive and supportive environment for all. According to the above, the present paper investigates the intersectional oppression Hester endures in Parks' *In The Blood*. The implication for society in our findings include the various ways in which intersectional imbalances lead to persecution and the ways in which this persecution

can have adverse effects on the human psyche, potentially resulting in deleterious life decisions, particularly amongst marginalized communities.

To expand on this point, the present article investigates the examination of oppressions in Parks' play *In The Blood* using the critical framework of intersectionality. This analysis is grounded in the intersecting battle against institutionalized racism faced by African Americans, drawing on the theory formulated by Crenshaw. The intention is to shed new light on the study of Hester's character by exploring the themes of intersectionality within the play, which have been previously criticized as both anti-black and problematic.

The Intersectional Standpoint

In this present article, I explore the subject of oppression in Parks' play *In The Blood* from an intersectional standpoint. As such, this research expands upon Crenshaw's (1989) theory of intersectionality. I will analyze how the interconnected factors of gender, class, and race contribute to the oppressive system that confines Hester to a marginalized and constrained position. Motivated by two reasons, I employ the concept of intersectionality to analyze the themes of oppression. The first reason is that intersectionality provides us with insights into the significance of Parks' *In The Blood* in addressing prevalent forms of oppression that lead to marginalization. The second reason is that intersectionality further deepens our understanding of the intricate experiences of black women in terms of overlapping forms of repression.

The central focus of the discussion is on the severe forms of oppression that profoundly impact an individual's life. Various facets of oppression, such as classism, racism, sexism, and disenfranchisement, are considered. In instances of such oppression, the potential outcome may involve a person taking their own life or someone in their family doing so, as illustrated by Hester's situation in the present article. Similar to numerous characters in Parks' plays, Hester becomes a victim of her own identity. She suffers from multiple layers of oppression due to being a black illiterate woman who is extremely impoverished and lacks any form of protection or familial support. Being both an African-American and a woman, she experiences the double oppression of patriarchal domination and white supremacy. The oppression

portrayed in the play reflects Hester's life circumstances, which ultimately lead her to a breaking point and compel her to kill her son.

Intersectional standpoint is closely associated with black feminism and originated from Crenshaw's theory, which is based on her personal experience as an African-American. Crenshaw's (1989) groundbreaking article, "Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex," presents her analysis on the importance of counting the intersectionality between race and gender, and emphasizes the need to study these categories together when examining oppression. Crenshaw proposed the concept of intersectionality to explore the interconnectedness of various cultural and biological aspects of identity, such as race, gender, sex, class, ability, and numerous other dimensions.

According to Cho, Crenshaw, and McCall (2013), scholars from around the world are increasingly searching for methods to utilize the distinct perspectives offered by the intersectionality approach. Dhamoon (2011) and MacKinnon (2013) affirm that the intersectionality paradigm offers a structure in which worldviews and theories are constructed, encompassing ontological, epistemological, and methodological aspects. This framework enables academics and advocates comprehending the various mechanisms through which these classifications function and contribute to imbalances that exist on both a fundamental and cognitive level. Intersectional factors influence not only an individual's self-identity but also their interpretation and comprehension of the surrounding world. It results in aspirations and inclinations that influence their life decisions. This can be witnessed in the turmoil of identity that Hester undergoes in the theatrical production.

Intersectional Oppression in Parks' *In The Blood*

In The Blood was published collectively with Park's another play *Fucking A* (2001) in *The Red Letter Plays*; the plays present today's image of Nathaniel Hawthorne's novel, *The Scarlet Letter* (1850). Actually, in Parks' adaptation, Hester is a black woman living in contemporary America, adding layers of racial and social commentary to the story. The play explores the intersection of race, gender, and sexuality, and the ways in which society judges and punishes women for their choices. *In The Blood* also delves into the struggles of single motherhood and the challenges Hester faces in trying to provide for her children while being

marginalized by society. The play highlights the systemic issues that contribute to Hester's plight and the ways in which she is failed by the institutions meant to support her. Parks' adaptation of *The Scarlet Letter* offers a fresh and relevant perspective on the timeless themes of judgment, shame, and resilience. By reimagining Hester Prynne's story in a contemporary context, Parks invites audiences to consider the ways in which society continues to stigmatize and oppress women, particularly those of marginalized backgrounds. In her article about the play, Batobara (2019, p. 20-21) views that Parks has utilized black Hester as a tool to ridicule the contemporary American hypocrisy in a similar way that Hawthorne utilized the white Hester to criticize the culture of 19th century puritanical society. Batobara finds that the difference between the both works is that Hawthorn's Hester was struggling to confront the imprisonment of the Puritan society While Park's Hester is fighting all the difficulties and restrictions as a single black mother within a modern society.

In the play Suzan-Lori Parks effectively portrays a black woman who finds herself in a community and circumstances that greatly influence her transition from an individual standpoint to becoming part of a larger collective. Through the character of Hester La Negrita, Parks depicts the experiences of African-American women who endure the harsh consequences of the societal system they inhabit, including financial and sexual oppression. Furthermore, Parks skillfully brings together various characters and narratives that celebrate the fluidity and interconnectedness of identities and environments. Her works thrive in the fringes of society, occupying spaces often overlooked or marginalized. In her research paper, Hadia Ashraf (2012, pp. 106-107) assures that the author effectively critiques American society by substituting a black character for a white one. Through satirical means, she is able to depict how society places blame and punishes individuals who are primarily products of its various institutions and organizations. The protagonist Hester La Negrita, tirelessly endeavors to build a fresh existence for both herself and her family who are without a home. She is a woman engaged in a constant battle against destitution, the welfare system, and the norms of society. Ashraf further views that according to the playwright, *The Scarlet Letter* merely serves as an A that Hester repeatedly attempts to inscribe in the soil as a way of gaining an advantage within her community, until she distressingly etches it with her beloved son's blood.

In the play, we observe that Hester is oppressed not only by the whites but rather by her own black community, specifically women. In Scene four of the play in the confession of the Welfare lady, she reveals that she asks Hester to share in a sexual intercourse with herself and her husband, and then Hester does it (Parks 2001, p. 69-71). This is a problematic statement as it perpetuates harmful stereotypes about Black American women and their sexuality. It is significant to recognize that Hester's experience of oppression is not solely based on her race or gender, but rather the intersection of both together. Additionally, Hester's participation in the sex encounter is a result of the power dynamics at play and the limited options available to her in a system that fails to provide adequate support and resources. Parks here reflects the approach of oppression and marginalized communities with little sensitivity, as she does not avoid presenting the harmful stereotypes and biases.

Hbean H. H. & Al-Abedi I. M. (2022, p.1650) in their discussion about vulnerability in the play, they explain that Parks presents "a different version of black females" that are not supportive to one another. The Welfare lady in the play is a good example of this "version". She is a "black middle-class caseworker" who gives Hester a work of sewing but she did not teach her how to sew, blaming her for being the reason for her own "economic hardship" because she got "five illegitimate" children. The Welfare lady represents a lack of empathy and understanding for Hester's situation. Instead of offering support and guidance, she blames Hester for her circumstances and shows no compassion for the struggles she faces as a single mother. The following conversation between Hester and the Welfare lady clarifies this discussion:

Welfare: You won't get something for nothing.

Hester: I been good.

Welfare: 5 bastards is not good. 5 bastards is bad.

Hester: Don't make me hurt you! (Hester raises her club to strike Welfare).

Welfare: You hurt me and, kids or no kids, I'll have you locked up.

We'll take your kids away and y'll never see them again.

Hester: My life's my own fault. I know that. But the world don't help, Maam.

Welfare: The world is not here to help us, Hester. The world is simply here. We must help ourselves.

(Parks, *IN The Blood*, Scene 4, p.67-68)

This portrayal of black females lacking compassion for each other may perpetuate negative stereotypes and undermine the importance of solidarity and support within the black community. It is important to challenge these portrayals and highlight the diversity and complexity of black female experiences. However, Hester replies bravely, acknowledges that her actions have consequences and takes full responsibility for her choices. She does not blame others or seek to shift the burden onto the community. Instead, she faces the consequences of her actions with courage and honesty (p. 68). This confession shows her strength of character and her willingness to accept the consequences of her actions. Actually, Carol Schafer (2008, p.193) observes that part of Hester's tragedy lies in the way she burdens herself with the whole responsibility of the consequences of her life refusing to tell about her persecutors. Hence, we can describe her as a character with a tragic flaw that ultimately leads to her own downfall. As she calls them her "5 treasures" (p. 21), still Hester has taken her responsibility to do everything she could for the sake of her kids.

In their article about the play, Ghani & Joodi (2015; p. 207-208) point out that when the play had been performed for the first time in 1999 "at the Joseph Papp Public Theatre's New York Shakespeare Festival", more than one million single black mothers were living beneath the poverty line. She also refers that the poverty ratio of Afro-Americans at that time registered three times the poverty ratio for White Americans. In their study Ghani & Joodi explain that the total range of the homeless black women was more than forty seven percentage. The play presents the protagonist, Hester la Negritta as a homeless black woman afflicted by poverty. Moreover, she is a single mother with five children who had produced by various fathers and the family lives in a very bad situation under the bridge which they consider their own home.

Black woman was enduring the invisibility through various public domains. Living under the bridge and wandering in the streets, this situation is certainly brought grand troubles for women similar to Hester. Such women are indeed in need

for the aid of others and definitely they are in need for protection and help. Hence, aiding them is the responsibility of institutional and governmental organizations, as well as some individuals who are supposed to help them. Yet, unfortunately, these exact people and institutions may add another source of woman's suffering; they often exploit the bad condition of such woman. A homeless black woman is often persecuted and oppressed by the exact people who are supposed to help her. Hester is a representative instance of such a homeless poor black woman. The play shows the effects of the American institutional systems upon women, specifically the poor black women within the close of the second millennium, the time when the play had been performed.

Parks combines Hester la nagritta's grim story with Nathaniel Hawthorne's somber novel *The Scarlet Letter*, written in 1850, in her play *In the Blood*, in order to examine the consequences of poverty and homelessness on different systems in contemporary America. The play depicts the story of Hester and her five children, each conceived through illicit relationships with men who had no regard for her wellbeing. These men only viewed her in a sexual manner and exploited her sexually. In addition to sexual exploitation, Hester was subjected to various forms of exploitation by those entrusted to protect her, including mistreatment from those close to her. To illustrate, Amiga Gringa, who is supposed to be her closest friend, betrays her by taking something valuable when Hester entrusts her to sell that watch (p. 32). Mr. Reverend, the father of her youngest son, refuses to acknowledge their relationship due to concerns about his social standing (p. 88). Additionally, Trouble's father, a doctor, took measures to prevent Hester from having children (p. 117). Even Chili, Hester's first lover and the father of her eldest son Jabber, rejected her upon discovering that she had children from other men during their separation (p. 106).

Near the close of *In the Blood*, Hester's health crumbles and she also starts to get strange visions. The whole situation had been increased by Hester's shocking hearing her eldest son calling her a "slut," a matter that pushed her to beat him to death, and then she utilized his blood to write the letter "A" on the ground next to his corpse. In her argumentation, Larson (2008, p.91) finds this point as a very intense and disturbing turn of events in the play. It seems that Hester's mental and emotional state has reached a breaking point, and she has become consumed by despair and rage. These strange visions and the degradation of her health indicate

that she is in a deeply troubled state of mind. The fact that she uses her son's blood to write the letter "A" on the ground is a powerful and symbolic act. It could be interpreted as a manifestation of her guilt and shame, as well as a reflection of her feeling of being marked or branded by her actions. The use of the letter "A" also brings to mind Nathaniel Hawthorne's novel "The Scarlet Letter," in which the protagonist is similarly marked by her sin.

In her research on "Contemporary African American Women Playwrights," Inmaculada Pineda (2012) explores the social inequality experienced by African American women in the United States with regards to violence. Pineda examines the perspective of black feminist thought on identity, which addresses the challenges related to gender and sexuality. Additionally, she analyzes various contemporary texts written by black women playwrights that depict violence, highlighting the need to approach these plays with consideration for their complex interrelated themes. Regarding Parks' play *In The Blood*, Pineda argues that once violence is established as a part of Hester's daily life on stage, the audience or reader accepts her decision to keep the club for self-defense without questioning it. This creates a complex and challenging experience for the audience, as they are forced to confront their own biases and preconceptions about victims of violence. Parks' decision to show the effects of violence on stage, rather than the acts themselves, also adds a layer of complexity to the play, as it forces the audience to confront the aftermath and consequences of violence in a more visceral and immediate way.

The play seems to be delving into themes of guilt, redemption, and the destructive power of unresolved trauma. Hester's actions are a stark and tragic representation of the consequences of unchecked emotional turmoil. It's a harrowing and thought-provoking exploration of the human psyche and the depths of despair. Through Hester's character in the play Parks draws a picture of a woman whose relations with men lead to disappointment and disillusionment. Yet, Parks' intension seems to push us towards looking at Hester within the view "of our cruel and continuing histories of oppression" (Kolin, 2010, p.11). Referring to Hester of *The Scarlet Letter* by Nathaniel Hawthorne, Parks clarifies the impact of time and history on the present-day circumstances, especially for black and poor woman. This interpretation highlights the evolving challenges and struggles faced by marginalized communities in the context of American society. Similar to

Hawthorne's Hester; Parks' Hester was a social castaway. Definitely, Hester's predicament has been sophisticated by the effect of time and history. The new oppressions increased the old ones and at the end these oppressions pushed her to be desperate and hopeless asserted that there was no exit to change her destiny.

In their research about the play, Ghani & Joodi discuss that Hester is labeled by the letter "A", as "it is the only letter she knows of the English alphabet" (2015, p. 209). However, the label is metaphoric as well; as it explains that her lack of crucial knowledge may also contribute to her inability to advocate for herself and challenge the systems of power that keep her marginalized. Ghani & Joodi, then, suggest that her limited understanding of important information could be a reason why she is unable to stand up for herself and confront the powerful systems that marginalize her. If she lacks a comprehensive grasp of social and political dynamics, she may find it difficult to identify and confront the unfair treatment she experiences. This is evident in how everyone around her, including individuals and organizations, take advantage of and oppress her. Additionally, her illiteracy may also prevent her doing meaningful connections with others who could potentially support and empower her. Hence, she was struggling to engage in conversations and relationships that could help her navigate and challenge the oppressive forces in her life.

The play presents a harsh critique of American justice and the structures that support it. Hester, the main character in the play, portrays a homeless woman who symbolizes the marginalized and powerless in American society. She is always moving, seeking love and protection, but is continuously subjected to exploitation and hostility. The chorus, composed of various characters that come across Hester, highlights the injustices and contradictions of the oppressive systems. They resemble vultures, encircling her and benefiting from her suffering. The chorus represents the entirety of society, including individuals and institutions. The play's emphasis on a single location outside underscores Hester's exclusion from society. She is never permitted to get inside, both literally and symbolically, and is perpetually on the fringes. The epilogue serves as a somber reminder of the pointlessness of Hester's fight. The dominant institutions that enforce her oppression are too formidable and deeply established to be conquered by one person alone. The drama strongly

condemns the ideals of the American Dream and the mechanisms that support it, and urges for active efforts towards a fairer and more equal society.

Parks opens her play with a prologue and concludes it with an epilogue, similar to the structure of Greek classic tragedy. The actors function as a chorus, encircling Hester like vultures. Through the prologue, Parks establishes the play's tone, which is a harsh critique of the political, medical, capitalistic, and religious systems that shape the American ideal (Ghani & Joodi 2015; p. 209). Additionally, all the events in the play take place outdoors to signify Hester's exclusion from society, physically and symbolically, thereby emphasizing the unity of place. The setting of the play is designated as "Here," emphasizing the poverty that permeates Hester's life. Notably, Hester's residence is situated beneath a bridge, further isolating her from civilized society.

Hester is seen as an outsider who doesn't quite fit in with the rest of society. This can be a lonely and isolating experience, as she may feel misunderstood and misjudged by others. Without the protection and support of the social order, she is definitely more vulnerable to discrimination and mistreatment. Devoid of the shelter and assistance provided by societal structure, Hester is undoubtedly more susceptible to discrimination and mistreatment. However, being outside the accepted social parameters can also give her a unique perspective and the freedom to challenge societal norms. She may be able to see things from a different angle and bring about a change in her community. While it may be difficult at times, being outside the social order can also be a source of resilience for her. Existing outside the accepted social boundaries may also grant her a distinct viewpoint and the freedom to question established societal standards. This ability may empower her to perceive matters from a different perspective and instigate a transformation within her community. Although it may present challenges, being outside the social order can also serve as a wellspring of resilience for her.

The epilogue serves as a bleak reminder of the futility of Hester's struggle. The systems that oppress her are too powerful and entrenched to be overcome by a single individual. The play is a powerful indictment of the American Dream and the systems that uphold it, and a call to action for a more just and equitable society. Hester's life is shaped by various influences as the play explores the social, cultural, and economic environment. Keene (2012, p.10) views that Hester is subjected to

discrimination based on her race, gender, innocence, strong desire to be a good mother, and her economic status. Amiga Gringa, her supposed best friend, only shows kindness when Hester has something to offer. The medical profession is only interested in preventing her from having children, while taking advantage of her desperate circumstances. The government, represented by the Welfare Lady, pays little attention to Hester and offers her work for which she is unprepared. Organized religion only serves as another form of oppression and subordination for her. The man Hester truly loves and who is the father of her eldest son, Jabber, cannot tolerate the challenges that come with loving her.

It is crucial to advocate for policies and systems that support and uplift women in need, rather than perpetuating harmful stereotypes and stigmas. Women whose life is dependent upon the assistance of the government, get usual observation around personal issues (Keene, 2012, p.52). Given that this is so, this kind of scrutiny is often unfair and perpetuates harmful stereotypes about women who rely on government assistance. Hester and other women in similar situations do not deserve to be treated with that kind of cruelty, with no dignity and no respect, regardless of their financial circumstances or the low class they belong to. Instead of focusing on perceived shortcomings, society should work towards providing support and resources to help these women thrive and succeed. It is also important to challenge the negative stereotypes and stigmas that are often associated with women who rely on government assistance. Hester and her similar women are often working hard to provide for themselves and their families, and they deserve to be treated with compassion and understanding. At least we should treat them kindly. In the Prologue to Parks' *In The Blood*, the above message is clarified by words said by the chorus who represent society and Parks named them as "ALL". They describe Hester as she is aware that she is worthless, lazy, without ambition, problematic, and a burden to society. The woman has given birth to five illegitimate children and has no money. Measures must be taken to prevent such situations (Parks 2001, p.16). This informative statement said by "All" explains, in clear-cut terms to what extent Hester is cornered and oppressed by people around her.

"In The Blood": The Significance of the Title

The importance of the play's title can be understood through multiple ways and interpretations. The violence and corruption that Hester encounters are not just limited to her own deeds or choices, but are also fueled by the actions and choices of the men in her life. By refusing to acknowledge their own blood relations and abandoning their own children, these men are presenting a cycle of abandonment and emotional trauma (Kolin 2006, p. 245). This behavior not only harms their children but also reflects a lack of responsibility and empathy. It is important for these men to recognize the impact of their actions and seek help in order to break this destructive pattern.

At the close of the play Hester ends up shedding blood when her own son, Jabber, uses the same label that the rest of society uses to describe her as a "slut". This society that condemns her includes the hypocritical men who have fathered her children but will not acknowledge their own blood. Violence is therefore passed down through these corrupt bloodlines, along with disgrace. In their discussion of the themes of gender and class in the play, Batobara and Saleem (2019, p.24) view that the final scene, which contains violence, appears to be a manifestation of Hester's pent-up anger towards society that is triggered by her son's slightest provocation, but it also reveals her own feelings of guilt and shame regarding her past sexual transgressions.

Moreover, the concept conveyed by the title suggests that some characteristics or actions are genetically transmitted or handed down over successive generations. The violence and corruption within Hester's connections with her children and their fathers are regarded as inherent "in the blood" of her family's past, suggesting that these unfavorable behaviors are deeply rooted. Philip Kolin (2006, p. 246) asserts that the word "blood" in the title of the play refers to Hester's own pollution and to "her biological scarlet letter". The title also may suggest the concept of familial bonds and the importance of staying connected to one's own family. Despite the obstacles and difficulties Hester experiences, she remains strongly linked to her children and encounters a feeling of obligation towards them due to their common genetic heritage.

Kolin and Young (2014) view that Hester's journey to spiritual healing begins with violence. Batobara and Saleem (2019) agree with this notion, stating that Parks sees the violent ending as a necessary step towards healing. Parks believes

that the play inflicts a wound that serves as the initial stage in the process of healing. Batobara and Saleem go further in their analysis of the play assuring that the word "Blood" may also represent Hester's "disease" such as "AIDS" (the result of her sexual wrongdoing will haunt her for the remainder of her life). At the very beginning of the play Hester is damned by the society for having "bad news in her blood" (Parks; p. 16). To Hester, "blood" means her offspring to whom she dedicates her own life "physically and spiritually" (Batobara; p. 25). Hester sees her whole life through her kids "My kids is mine. I get rid of em what do I got? Nothing. I got nothing now, but if I lose them I got less than nothing." (Parks; p. 36).

The title of the play may refer to the biblical story of Cain and Abel, in which Cain kills his brother Abel and his blood cries out from the ground. The play suggests that the blood of the poor and marginalized also cries out for justice and recognition. In her discussion about the oppression black women endure, Jessica Lewis (2017, p. 24) asserts that the psychology of trauma is closely connected to both experiences of identity and experiences of trauma. They are marginalized and oppressed in the both societies of men; white and black. Actually, men want black women to be completely mute with no tongue to speak. Such women are oppressed by sexism, racism and class which comes from "prohibitions". These women are victimized in one way or another.

Conclusion

The intersectional approach of *In The Blood* is particularly significant, as it reveals that black women experience oppression in multiple ways that are not detached or categorized. Hester's struggles with her racial discrimination and her identity as a poor black woman speak to the broader experiences of many black women who grapple with the complexities of their racial and cultural backgrounds. The play challenges traditional notions of identity and oppression, and it remains a significant and thought-provoking work in the canon of black American playwrights. Accordingly, I find that Parks's *In the Blood* represents a powerful exploration of the intersectionality of race, gender, and class. Hester's experiences highlight the ways in which these axes of oppression intersect and compound one another, creating a complex web of marginalization and oppression. Hester's struggles with her gender and racial identity illustrate the ways that social class can be a source of

shame and oppression, and the difficulty of navigating the complex social and cultural expectations that come with being a black woman.

Overall, Hester's lack of knowledge in social and political matters is an obstacle to her ability to control her life and freedom, resulting in her being pushed to the outskirts of society and continuing to be subjected to exploitation and suppression. It is of utmost importance for her to acquire a discerning comprehension of the social and political mechanisms so that she can speak up for herself and confront the systems that marginalize her. But unfortunately, she had endured oppression upon oppression by being poor, illiterate and black woman.

Using a tough, pragmatic approach that incorporates the dynamic arrangement of stage directions and the interconnected challenges faced by marginalized groups, Parks crafted Hester's character as a symbol to represent the intersecting discrimination endured by African-American women, stemming from various forms of oppression and the impact of trauma on their sense of self. The protagonist's disadvantaged socioeconomic status and racial identity further contribute to the unjust treatment depicted in this theatrical piece. Hester's disadvantaged socioeconomic status and racial identity further contribute to the unjust treatment she endures, shedding light on the intersecting forms of oppression that African-American women face. Parks' portrayal of Hester as a symbol serves as a powerful commentary on the systemic discrimination and hardships experienced by marginalized groups, offering a poignant and thought-provoking exploration of these issues within the context of the play.

Hester's alienation in Parks' *In The Blood* is a powerful example of how intersectional imbalances can lead to social and psychological alienation. Hester, a single mother living in poverty, faces various forms of oppression and discrimination due to her race, gender, and socioeconomic status. This intersectionality of oppressions leads to her feeling isolated and marginalized within society. The implications for society are significant. Our findings highlight the ways in which intersectional imbalances can lead to alienation, which can have adverse effects on an individual's mental and emotional well-being. This can lead to deleterious life decisions, particularly amongst marginalized communities who may not have access to the resources and support needed to overcome these challenges.

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حيف على حيف: تحليل نقدي لمسرحية باركس "في الدم" من خلال المنظور التقاطعي

لطيفة اسماعيل جبوري

قسم اللغة الانكليزية وادابها، كلية الاداب، الجامعة المستنصرية، بغداد، العراق

dr.latifj@uomustansiriyah.edu.iq

المستخلص

ارتبطت الأبحاث حول مسرحية "في الدم" (1999) لسوزان- لوري باركس بمجالات النقد الذي يحدد موقع هيوستن، بطلة المسرحية، في سياق الدراسات الاجتماعية. من خلال النظرية التقاطعية، يؤكد هذا المقال أن شخصية هيوستن لها أبعاد جديدة للمناقشة. لذا يعرض هذا المقال صورة امرأة مضطهدة من قبل النظام الاجتماعي من خلال الجوانب المتعددة لهويتها كمرأة سوداء فقيرة الحال. الهدف من هذا البحث هو معالجة اضطهاد هيوستن ضمن إطار ثلاث دلالات متشابهة لهويتها: الجنس والعرق والطبقة الاجتماعية. لذلك، تبحث الدراسة في الشؤون المتداخلة للاضطهاد الذي عانت منه هيوستن من خلال التساؤل عن كيفية تضافر هذه الدلالات الثلاثة المتقاطعة لتشكيل اضطهادها وصولاً إلى النقطة التي أدت إلى نهايتها المأساوية. يسعى البحث إلى دراسة مسرحية باركس "في الدم" من خلال عدسة النظرية التقاطعية. تم بناء المقال بخمسة أقسام. القسم الأول عبارة عن مقدمة. والقسم الثاني يعرض النظرية التقاطعية. يناقش القسم الثالث المنظور التقاطعي منعكسا في المسرحية. ويتحرى القسم الرابع أهمية عنوان المسرحية. أما الخاتمة في الفصل الخامس فقد ذكرت أهم الاستنتاجات التي توصلت إليها الدراسة. ويختتم المقال بالتأكيد على أن هيوستن تعرضت للاضطهاد ليس فقط بسبب جنسها، ولكن أيضاً بسبب عرقها وطبقتها الاجتماعية الفقيرة. علاوة على ذلك، تؤكد باركس في هذه المسرحية أن أشكال التمييز والاضطهاد في المجتمع الأمريكي المعاصر قد اتخذت أشكالاً غير مباشرة.

الكلمات المفتاحية: باركس، التقاطعية، "في الدم"، هيوستن، اضطهاد