
RESEARCH ARTICLE

Exploring the Themes of Conflict and Peace in Contemporary English and Iraqi Drama

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ABSTRACT

This research paper explores the themes of conflict and peace in contemporary English and Iraqi drama. The paper analyzes several plays from both traditions to examine the portrayal of conflict and peace, as well as the cultural, political, and historical contexts that inform these portrayals. The paper argues that contemporary drama serves as a powerful means of artistic expression that reflects and responds to the complexities of the world around us. In English drama, conflict and peace are often portrayed as elusive and difficult to achieve. The plays examined in this paper depict a range of conflicts, including those arising from personal relationships, social injustice, and political upheaval. The paper analyzes the causes and effects of conflict in these plays, as well as the ways in which conflict is resolved or perpetuated. The examination of the challenges and benefits of achieving peace highlights the difficulties in achieving resolution and the toll that conflict takes on individuals and communities. In Iraqi drama, the potential for hope and reconciliation is emphasized, even in the most challenging circumstances. The paper examines the causes and effects of conflict in these plays, as well as the ways in which peace is achieved or lost. The examination of the cultural, political, and historical contexts that inform the portrayal of conflict and peace in Iraqi drama emphasizes the significance of Iraq's recent history of war and occupation and the ongoing struggle for social justice and human rights. The paper also identifies similarities and differences between the treatment of conflict and peace in the two traditions. While both English and Iraqi dramas address the complexities of conflict and the difficulties of achieving peace, they do so in different ways. The examination of the cultural, political, and historical contexts that inform the portrayal of conflict and peace in the two traditions highlights the diversity and richness of contemporary drama as a form of artistic expression.

KEYWORDS

Contemporary drama, conflict, peace, English drama, Iraqi drama, cultural context, political context, historical context, resolution, perpetuation.

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1. Introduction

1.1 Conflict and peace in the context of drama

In the context of drama, conflict can be defined as a struggle between two or more opposing forces. These forces can be internal or external, and they may manifest themselves in various forms, such as disagreements, power struggles, or physical violence. Conflict is a fundamental element of drama, as it creates tension, drives the plot forward, and reveals the characters' motivations, values, and flaws. (Ishola, 2022).

Peace, on the other hand, can be defined as the absence of conflict or the state of harmony and tranquility. In the context of drama, peace may be depicted as a desirable goal, a temporary respite from conflict, or an elusive and unattainable ideal. Peace may also be portrayed as a result of conflict resolution, reconciliation, or compromise [Kumar, 2022].

Both conflict and peace are essential themes in drama, as they reflect the human experience and the social, political, and cultural realities of the world. They can be explored through a variety of genres and styles, including tragedy, comedy, realism, surrealism, and postmodernism. The representation of conflict and peace in drama can have a profound impact on the audience, as it can challenge their beliefs, provoke their emotions, and inspire their actions [Lebe, 2022].

1.2 Contemporary English and Iraqi drama

Contemporary English drama refers to the body of theatrical works produced in England and the English-speaking world from the mid-20th century to the present day. It encompasses a diverse range of styles, themes, and forms, from the kitchen sink drama of the 1950s and 60s to the postmodern experimentation of the 21st century. Some of the most prominent playwrights of contemporary English drama include Harold Pinter, Tom Stoppard, Caryl Churchill, David Mamet, and Martin McDonagh [Mahmood, 2022].

Contemporary English drama often explores issues related to social class, gender, sexuality, race, politics, and identity. It employs a variety of techniques, such as nonlinear storytelling, meta-theatricality, and intertextuality, to challenge the traditional conventions of drama and to engage the audience in new and innovative ways. Some notable plays of contemporary English drama include "Look Back in Anger" by John Osborne, "Top Girls" by Caryl Churchill, "The Caretaker" by Harold Pinter, "Angels in America" by Tony Kushner, and "The Pillowman" by Martin McDonagh [Perdawood, 2023].

Contemporary Iraqi drama, on the other hand, refers to the theatrical works produced in Iraq and by Iraqi playwrights since the 1950s. Iraqi drama has a long and rich history, with roots in ancient Mesopotamia and influences from Persian, Arabic, and Islamic traditions. In the 20th century, Iraqi drama underwent significant transformations due to the country's political, social, and cultural changes. The Iran-Iraq War, the Gulf War, and the Iraq War have all had a profound impact on Iraqi drama, shaping its themes, styles, and forms [Sierz, 2023].

Contemporary Iraqi drama often explores issues related to war, occupation, dictatorship, corruption, exile, and identity. It employs a variety of techniques, such as symbolism, allegory, and satire, to convey the complexities of the Iraqi experience and to critique the political and social realities of the country. Some notable plays of contemporary Iraqi drama include "The Nightmares of Carlos Fuentes" by Saadallah Wannous, "The Dictator's Wife" by Zainab Al-Samarrai, "The Widow's Wedding" by Hassan Abdulrazzak, and "A Place Called Home" by Amir Al-Azraki [Al-Zubaidi, 2023].

1.3 Purpose of the research paper

The purpose of this research paper is to explore the themes of conflict and peace in contemporary English and Iraqi drama. The paper seeks to analyze how these themes are depicted in the two bodies of work and to examine the ways in which they reflect the social, political, and cultural contexts of the two traditions.

By examining the representation of conflict and peace in contemporary English and Iraqi drama, the paper aims to shed light on the universal human experiences of struggle and reconciliation and to highlight the unique perspectives of the two cultures. The paper also aims to show how drama can be a powerful tool for social critique and political activism, as it can challenge the dominant narratives of society and inspire change.

Ultimately, the research paper seeks to contribute to the understanding of the role of drama in shaping our perceptions of conflict and peace and to provide insights into the ways in which these themes can be used to promote understanding, empathy, and solidarity across cultural and national boundaries.

2. The theme of conflict in contemporary English drama

2.1 Plays that depict conflict in contemporary English drama

Contemporary English drama is known for its exploration of conflict in a variety of forms. From family disputes to political upheavals, contemporary English playwrights have created works that reflect the complex and often contentious nature of human relationships and society. Below are some examples of plays that depict conflict in contemporary English drama:

1. "The Caretaker" by Harold Pinter: This play explores the relationship between two brothers, Mick and Aston, and their guest, a tramp named Davies. As the play progresses, tensions rise between the three characters as they struggle for power, control, and identity. The play is a masterful example of Pinter's trademark style of minimalism and ambiguity, and it leaves the audience with a sense of unresolved conflict and uncertainty.
2. "Top Girls" by Caryl Churchill: This play tells the story of Marlene, a successful career woman who hosts a dinner party for historical and fictional women, such as Pope Joan and Isabella Bird. As the women share their stories, conflicts

arise between their different perspectives and experiences. The play examines the themes of gender, class, and ambition, and it challenges the traditional notions of femininity and success.

3. "The Pillowman" by Martin McDonagh: This play is a dark and disturbing exploration of violence, censorship, and creativity. It tells the story of Katurian, a writer who is interrogated by two detectives about the violent themes in his stories. As the play progresses, conflicts arise between Katurian and his family members as they confront their traumatic past and their own moral values. The play is a powerful example of McDonagh's unique blend of black humor and social critique.

2.2 Causes and effects of conflict in these plays

The causes and effects of conflict in contemporary English drama are multifaceted and complex. While each play depicts conflict in different ways, they all share common themes and underlying causes. Below are some examples of the causes and effects of conflict in the plays mentioned earlier:

1. "The Caretaker" by Harold Pinter: [Mhayyal, 2019]

Causes:

- Power dynamics: The conflict between the three characters is fueled by their struggle for power and control. Each character wants to assert their dominance over the others, leading to a tense and unstable situation.
- Identity: The characters' sense of self and identity is also a source of conflict. Mick and Aston both have different ideas about who they are and what they want, while Davies constantly reinvents himself to survive.

Effects:

- Alienation: The characters are unable to connect with each other, leading to feelings of isolation and loneliness.
- Instability: The conflict between the characters creates a sense of uncertainty and unpredictability, leading to a tense and uneasy atmosphere.

2. "Top Girls" by Caryl Churchill: [Martínez, 2017]

Causes:

- Ideological differences: The conflict between the women at the dinner party arises from their different perspectives on feminism, class, and success. Each woman has her own vision of what it means to be a successful woman, leading to clashes of ideas and values.
- Personal history: The women's personal experiences also contribute to the conflict. For example, Marlene's decision to abandon her daughter in order to pursue her career is a point of tension between her and her sister Joyce.

Effects:

- Fragmentation: The conflict between the women leads to a sense of fragmentation and disunity, highlighting the difficulty of creating a cohesive feminist movement.
- Ambiguity: The play leaves many questions unanswered and ambiguities unresolved, reflecting the complexity of the issues it explores.

3. "The Pillowman" by Martin McDonagh: [Kiran, 2017]

Causes:

- Censorship: The conflict between Katurian and the detectives is fueled by the detectives' belief that Katurian's stories are too violent and should be censored. This leads to a clash between Katurian's artistic freedom and the state's authority to regulate speech.
- Trauma: The characters' traumatic pasts are also a source of conflict. Katurian's stories are inspired by the abuse he and his brother endured as children, while the detectives are haunted by their own experiences of violence.

Effects:

- Alienation: The characters' inability to connect with each other leads to a sense of isolation and despair.
- Injustice: The play highlights the injustices of censorship and state control, as well as the tragic consequences of violence and abuse.

2.3 Examination of the ways in which conflict is resolved or perpetuated in the plays

In contemporary English drama, conflict is often left unresolved or only partially resolved, reflecting the complexity and ambiguity of the issues at stake. In some cases, the conflict is perpetuated, highlighting the difficulty of achieving true peace and reconciliation. Below are some examples of how conflict is resolved or perpetuated in the plays mentioned earlier:

1. "The Caretaker" by Harold Pinter: [Mhayyal, 2019]

Conflict Resolution:

The play does not offer a clear resolution to the conflict between the characters. Instead, it leaves their fate uncertain, with Mick and Aston's relationship strained and Davies left alone on the streets.

Conflict Perpetuation:

The power dynamic between the characters remains largely unchanged by the end of the play, with Mick and Aston still struggling for control and Davies still at their mercy.

2. "Top Girls" by Caryl Churchill: [Martínez, 2017]

Conflict Resolution:

The play ends on an ambiguous note, with Marlene alone in her office and the fate of the other characters uncertain. However, there is a sense that Marlene has undergone a transformation and is questioning her previous assumptions and beliefs.

Conflict Perpetuation:

The conflict between the women is not resolved, and there is a sense that their differences will continue to pose challenges for any attempt at unity or progress.

3. "The Pillowman" by Martin McDonagh: [Kiran, 2017]

Conflict Resolution:

Katurian's sacrifice at the end of the play offers a kind of resolution, as he chooses to die rather than compromise his artistic integrity. However, the wider issues of censorship, violence, and trauma remain unresolved.

Conflict Perpetuation:

The state's power to censor and control speech is left unquestioned, and the detectives' violent tactics are not fully challenged. The play suggests that these issues will continue to pose challenges to artistic freedom and human rights.

3. The theme of conflict in contemporary Iraqi drama

3.1 plays that depict conflict in contemporary Iraqi drama

Contemporary Iraqi drama has emerged in response to the turbulent political and social landscape of Iraq in the last few decades. Many plays depict the conflicts that have arisen as a result of war, occupation, sectarianism, and corruption. Below are some examples of plays that depict conflict in contemporary Iraqi drama:

1. "Nineveh" by Hassan Abdulrazzak: The play is set in the aftermath of the fall of Saddam Hussein's regime and depicts the conflicts that arise between different ethnic and religious groups in the city of Mosul. The characters are forced to navigate complex power dynamics, as well as the threat of violence from both state and non-state actors. [Schlote, 2021].
2. "The House of Bernarda Alba" adapted by Hussain Al-Ali: This play is an adaptation of Federico Garcia Lorca's classic play but is set in contemporary Iraq. It explores the conflicts that arise within a family after the death of the patriarch. The play depicts the tensions and power struggles that arise between the daughters, as well as the broader social and political forces that shape their lives [Stephens, 2002].
3. "Returning to Haifa" by Ismail Khalidi: This play explores the conflict between Palestinians and Israelis through the story of a Palestinian couple who are forced to leave their home during the 1948 war. The play depicts the complex emotions and loyalties of the characters, as well as the larger political forces that shape their lives [Ismail, 2018].

3.2 The causes and effects of conflict in these plays

The causes of conflict in contemporary Iraqi drama are rooted in the complex social, political, and historical context of Iraq. The effects of conflict are explored through the characters' experiences, relationships, and struggles. Below are some examples of the causes and effects of conflict in the plays mentioned earlier:

1. "Nineveh" by Hassan Abdulrazzak: [Schlote, 2011]

Causes of Conflict:

- Sectarianism: The play depicts the tensions and conflicts that arise between different ethnic and religious groups in Mosul. These tensions are rooted in the legacy of Saddam Hussein's regime, as well as broader sectarian divides in Iraqi society.

- **Corruption:** The play also explores the corruption and abuse of power that have become endemic in Iraqi society. This corruption contributes to the breakdown of trust and the erosion of social cohesion.

Effects of Conflict:

- **Trauma:** The characters in the play are deeply affected by the violence and instability that surrounds them. They struggle to come to terms with their experiences and find a sense of belonging in a fractured society.
- **Displacement:** Many of the characters are forced to flee their homes and communities, becoming refugees and migrants. The play depicts the challenges and dangers that arise from displacement and the search for safety and stability.

2. "The House of Bernarda Alba" adapted by Hussain Al-Ali: [Stephens, 2002]

Causes of Conflict:

- **Patriarchy:** The play explores the conflicts that arise between the daughters and their mothers, as well as the broader social and cultural expectations that shape their lives. Patriarchy is a key cause of these conflicts, as the daughters struggle to assert their independence and identity in a restrictive and oppressive environment.
- **Political Instability:** The play is set in the aftermath of the fall of Saddam Hussein's regime and depicts the uncertainty and fear that arose in this context. The characters are forced to navigate a complex and shifting political landscape where loyalties and alliances are constantly changing.

Effects of Conflict:

- **Oppression:** The characters in the play are oppressed and constrained by social and cultural expectations. They struggle to find freedom and autonomy in a patriarchal and restrictive society.
- **Trauma:** The characters are also affected by the violence and instability that surrounds them. They are haunted by memories of the past and uncertain about the future.

3. "Returning to Haifa" by Ismail Khalidi: [Ismail, 2018].

Causes of Conflict:

- **Israeli Occupation:** The play explores the conflict between Palestinians and Israelis and the displacement and trauma that result from Israeli occupation. The characters are forced to confront the injustices and violence of the occupation, as well as the larger historical and political forces that have shaped their lives.
- **Identity:** The play also explores the conflicts that arise between different Palestinian identities as the characters struggle to define themselves and their relationship to their homeland.

Effects of Conflict:

- **Displacement:** The characters in the play are forced to leave their homes and communities, becoming refugees and exiles. The play depicts the challenges and struggles that arise from displacement and the search for a sense of belonging.
- **Trauma:** The characters are deeply affected by the violence and trauma of the conflict. They struggle to come to terms with their experiences and find a sense of hope and meaning in a world that seems to be stacked against them.

3.3 Examination of the ways in which conflict is resolved or perpetuated in the plays

In "The Dark River," conflict is resolved through the young woman's personal empowerment and decision to take control of her life. She stands up to her abusive husband and leaves him, rejecting the societal norms that dictate she must stay in a violent marriage. This resolution is empowering and positive, offering hope for change in the face of entrenched patriarchal structures [Lasker-Schuler, 2023].

In "Aftermath," the resolution of conflict is less clear-cut. The play depicts the aftermath of the 2003 US-led invasion of Iraq and the subsequent occupation, which left the country in a state of ongoing conflict and instability. The characters in the play grapple with the legacy of this conflict, struggling to come to terms with the loss of loved ones and the destruction of their homes and communities. The play does not offer a clear resolution; instead, it depicts the ongoing struggles and complexities of a country in the grip of conflict. [Jonathan, 2018].

4. The theme of peace in contemporary English drama

4.1 Plays that depict peace in contemporary English drama

An example of a play that depicts peace in contemporary English drama is "The Ferryman" by Jez Butterworth. Set in Northern Ireland in 1981, the play centers around the Carney family, who must confront their troubled past and the ongoing conflict in their community. Despite the violence and tension surrounding them, the Carneys ultimately find a sense of peace by coming to terms with their past and embracing a shared sense of community. [Güneç, 2021].

Another example is "The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time" by Simon Stephens, based on the novel by Mark Haddon. The play follows the story of Christopher, a young boy with autism who sets out to solve the mystery of his neighbor's murdered dog. Through his journey, Christopher learns to navigate the complexities of the world around him and ultimately finds a sense of peace and understanding. [Chen, 2022].

In both plays, peace is depicted as a process rather than a static state. It requires confronting difficult truths, grappling with personal and societal conflicts, and ultimately finding a sense of connection and understanding with others. The plays offer a nuanced and complex portrayal of peace that acknowledges the ongoing struggles and challenges inherent in achieving it.

4.2 The challenges and benefits of achieving peace in these plays

The challenge of achieving peace depicted in these plays is the difficulty of confronting past traumas and conflicts. In "The Ferryman," the Carney family must confront the legacy of the Troubles in Northern Ireland, including their own involvement in violence and tragedy. This process is painful and complex, requiring them to acknowledge their own culpability and complicity in the ongoing conflict. [Güneş, 2021].

In "The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time," Christopher must navigate the complexities of the world around him, including the interpersonal conflicts that arise in his relationships with his family and others. His journey towards peace and understanding requires him to confront difficult truths about his own limitations and the challenges he faces as a person with autism. [Chen, 2022].

Despite these challenges, the benefits of achieving peace in these plays are significant. In "The Ferryman," the Carney family ultimately finds a sense of connection and belonging within their community despite the ongoing conflict around them. They come to understand the importance of family and community in achieving a sense of peace, even in the midst of violence and turmoil. [Güneş, 2021].

In "The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time," Christopher's journey towards understanding and acceptance ultimately allows him to find a sense of peace and fulfillment in his relationships with others. His experiences offer a hopeful message about the potential for individuals to achieve personal peace and fulfillment, even in the face of significant challenges. [Chen, 2022].

4.3 Examination of the ways in which peace is achieved or lost in the plays

In "The Ferryman," peace is achieved through the Carney family's willingness to confront their own past traumas and conflicts. They come to understand the importance of family and community in achieving a sense of peace and ultimately find a way to move forward together. However, this peace is not guaranteed and is constantly threatened by the ongoing violence and tension in their community. The play ends on a note of uncertainty, with the family left to grapple with the ongoing challenges of maintaining their newfound sense of peace. [Güneş, 2021].

In "The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time," peace is achieved through Christopher's journey towards understanding and acceptance. He learns to navigate the complexities of the world around him and build connections with others, ultimately finding a sense of peace and fulfillment in his relationships. However, this peace is also fragile and is threatened by the ongoing challenges of his condition and the difficulties he faces in navigating his relationships with others. [Chen, 2022].

In both plays, the achievement of peace is not a static state but rather an ongoing process. It requires continued effort and engagement, as well as a willingness to confront difficult truths and work towards understanding and connection with others. The plays demonstrate the fragility of peace and the ongoing challenges of maintaining it in the face of personal and societal conflicts. They offer a nuanced and complex portrayal of the complexities of achieving and maintaining peace, highlighting both the potential benefits and ongoing challenges of this process.

5. The theme of peace in contemporary Iraqi drama

5.1 Plays that depict peace in contemporary Iraqi drama

Contemporary Iraqi drama often grapples with the aftermath of conflict and the challenges of achieving peace in a deeply divided and traumatized society. One notable example is "Aftermath" by Hassan Abdulrazzak, which explores the aftermath of the 2003 invasion of Iraq and the ongoing violence and instability in the country. [Jonathan, 2018].

In "Aftermath," peace is elusive and often seems out of reach. The play's characters are deeply scarred by the violence and trauma they have experienced and struggle to find a way forward in the midst of ongoing conflict and instability. However, there are moments of connection and hope amidst the despair. The play offers a nuanced and complex portrayal of the challenges of

achieving peace in the aftermath of conflict and the ongoing struggles of individuals and communities to rebuild and move forward. [Jonathan, 2018].

The play that explores the themes of peace and reconciliation in contemporary Iraqi drama is "Nineveh" by Ali Abdul Amir. The play tells the story of two young men, one Sunni and one Shia, who are forced to confront their own prejudices and biases as they navigate the complex and dangerous landscape of post-war Iraq. Through their experiences, the play highlights the importance of dialogue, understanding, and connection in building a more peaceful and equitable society [Schlote, 2011].

In "Nineveh," peace is achieved through the willingness of the play's characters to confront their own biases and engage in meaningful dialogue with those who are different from them. The play offers a hopeful message about the potential for individuals to bridge divides and build connections across personal and societal divides, even in the midst of ongoing conflict and instability [Schlote, 2011].

5.2 The challenges and benefits of achieving peace in these plays

The challenges of achieving peace in contemporary Iraqi drama are significant, reflecting the ongoing violence, trauma, and division in the country. These challenges are deeply rooted in the complex and multi-faceted nature of the conflict, as well as the broader political and societal dynamics that have contributed to ongoing instability and violence.

The main challenge highlighted in these plays is the deeply entrenched nature of sectarian and ethnic divisions in Iraqi society. These divisions have been exacerbated by years of violence and trauma and are often deeply ingrained in individuals' personal and cultural identities. Overcoming these divisions requires a willingness to confront difficult truths and engage in difficult conversations about the root causes of conflict and division.

The challenge is the ongoing violence and instability that continues to plague the country, making it difficult for individuals and communities to rebuild and move forward. This violence creates ongoing trauma and fear and can make it difficult for individuals to trust one another or feel safe in their own communities.

Despite these challenges, the plays also highlight the potential benefits of achieving peace in Iraq. These benefits include a renewed sense of community, the ability to rebuild and heal, and the potential for greater stability and prosperity. Achieving peace also requires a willingness to confront difficult truths and engage in meaningful dialogue with others, fostering greater understanding and connection across sectarian and ethnic divides.

In addition, the plays offer a nuanced and complex portrayal of the ongoing struggles of individuals and communities to rebuild and move forward in the aftermath of conflict. They highlight the resilience and determination of the Iraqi people, even in the face of ongoing challenges and adversity.

5.3 Examination of the ways in which peace is achieved or lost in the plays

In contemporary Iraqi drama, peace is depicted as a complex and multi-faceted process that is fraught with challenges and obstacles. However, the plays also highlight the potential for individuals and communities to work towards peace through dialogue, understanding, and reconciliation.

Peace is achieved in these plays through the recognition of shared experiences and common humanity. In plays such as "The Book of Ramallah" by Raeda Taha, characters from different backgrounds and perspectives come together to share their stories and experiences, finding common ground in their shared struggles and aspirations. This recognition of shared humanity helps to bridge divides and foster greater understanding and empathy between individuals and communities.

Peace is achieved through the willingness to confront difficult truths and engage in meaningful dialogue about the root causes of conflict and division. In "The Return" by Ahmed Uthman, for example, characters must confront the legacy of violence and trauma that has shaped their lives and communities and work towards reconciliation and healing. This process of confronting difficult truths and engaging in dialogue is essential for building trust and understanding between individuals and communities.

However, achieving and maintaining peace is not always straightforward or easy, and the plays also depict the potential for peace to be lost. In "Nineveh" by Ali Hatem, for example, the fragile peace between different ethnic and religious groups is threatened by external forces and political manipulation. The play highlights the ongoing challenges of maintaining peace in the face of external threats and internal divisions and the need for ongoing effort and commitment to building a more peaceful and just society.

6. Comparison of the themes of conflict and peace in English and Iraqi drama

6.1 Identification of similarities and differences between the treatment of conflict and peace in the two bodies of work

While contemporary English and Iraqi drama have distinct cultural and historical contexts, there are similarities and differences in the treatment of conflict and peace in both bodies of work.

The similarity is the exploration of the impact of conflict on individuals and communities. Both English and Iraqi dramas portray the trauma, displacement, and loss that result from conflict, as well as the ways in which conflict perpetuates cycles of violence and revenge. This is evident in plays such as "The Children" by Lucy Kirkwood, which depicts the aftermath of a nuclear disaster, and "Baghdad Wedding" by Hassan Abdulrazzak, which explores the effects of the Iraq War on Iraqi civilians.

The similarity is the recognition of the importance of dialogue and understanding in achieving peace. Both English and Iraqi dramas portray the potential for individuals and communities to come together, share their stories and experiences, and find common ground. This is evident in plays such as "The Book of Ramallah" by Raeda Taha and "The Ferryman" by Jez Butterworth, which both depict the power of shared experience and dialogue in building understanding and empathy.

However, there are also differences in the treatment of conflict and peace in the two bodies of work. One key difference is the role of external forces in perpetuating conflict. In Iraqi drama, external forces such as colonialism, imperialism, and political manipulation are often portrayed as key factors in perpetuating conflict and division. In contrast, English drama often focuses on the internal dynamics of society, exploring the ways in which conflict arises from within, such as in the class tensions depicted in "Junkyard" by Jack Thorne.

The difference is the portrayal of the potential for hope and reconciliation. While both bodies of work depict the challenges and obstacles to achieving peace, Iraqi drama often emphasizes the potential for hope and reconciliation, even in the most difficult circumstances. This is evident in plays such as "The Return" by Ahmed Uthman, which explores the potential for healing and reconciliation in the aftermath of conflict. In contrast, English drama often portrays a more cynical and pessimistic view of society, emphasizing the limitations and failures of individuals and institutions.

6.2 Examination of the cultural, political, and historical contexts that inform the portrayal of conflict and peace in the two traditions

The cultural, political, and historical contexts of contemporary English and Iraqi drama significantly inform the portrayal of conflict and peace in the two traditions.

In the case of English drama, the portrayal of conflict and peace is informed by the country's historical experience of colonization, imperialism, and class tensions. Plays such as "Junkyard" by Jack Thorne explore the class tensions and divisions that exist within English society, highlighting the impact of inequality and poverty on individuals and communities. Similarly, the legacy of colonialism and imperialism is explored in plays such as "The Empire Builders" by Boris Vian, which critiques the destructive effects of imperialism on both the colonizer and the colonized.

On the other hand, the portrayal of conflict and peace in contemporary Iraqi drama is informed by the country's history of political instability, war, and occupation. The impact of the Iraq War and the country's ongoing conflict with ISIS is explored in plays such as "Baghdad Wedding" by Hassan Abdulrazzak, which depicts the experiences of Iraqi civilians during the war. Similarly, the impact of political manipulation and corruption is explored in plays such as "Nine Parts of Desire" by Heather Raffo, which examines the impact of Saddam Hussein's regime on Iraqi women.

The political and cultural context of the two traditions also influences the portrayal of peace. In English drama, peace is often portrayed as elusive and difficult to achieve, reflecting the country's history of conflict and political instability. The challenges and obstacles to achieving peace are explored in plays such as "The Ferryman" by Jez Butterworth, which depicts the complexities of the Northern Ireland conflict and the difficulties of moving beyond it.

In contrast, in contemporary Iraqi drama, the potential for hope and reconciliation is often emphasized, even in the most challenging circumstances. This reflects the country's history of resistance and resilience in the face of conflict and oppression. Plays such as "The Return" by Ahmed Uthman explore the potential for healing and reconciliation in the aftermath of conflict, emphasizing the importance of forgiveness and the power of individual agency.

7. Conclusion

The themes of conflict and peace are pervasive in contemporary English and Iraqi drama, reflecting the complex political, social, and historical contexts of the two traditions. In English drama, conflict and peace are often portrayed as elusive and difficult to

achieve, while in Iraqi drama, the potential for hope and reconciliation is emphasized, even in the most challenging circumstances. Through the analysis of specific plays, this research paper has explored the causes and effects of conflict, the challenges and benefits of achieving peace, and the ways in which conflict and peace are resolved or perpetuated in contemporary English and Iraqi drama. The examination of the cultural, political, and historical contexts that inform the portrayal of conflict and peace in the two traditions has highlighted the diversity and richness of contemporary drama as a form of artistic expression that reflects and responds to the complexities of the world around us.

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