

Shahrazad Tells her Stories in Raffo's *Nine Parts of Desire*

By

Tengku Sepora Mahadi and Maysoon Taher Muhi

School of Languages, Literacies and Translation of Universiti Sains Malaysia

Abstract

*If Shahrazad saved herself and the kingdom from annihilation by offering herself to the avenged king whom she kept him entranced for one thousand and one nights by her stories until the king cured, Raffo's women in her play *Nine Parts of Desire* are far from curing the 'king' of their time. These women tell their own painful stories to uncover a hidden reality and not imaginative one. Raffo attempts to refigure and to recover the female experience in Iraq where women are painfully experiencing different trauma caused by wars. This play presents a portrait of nine Iraqi women from all walks of life—from the most traditional to the most modern. In her play, Raffo positions herself as a translator, exposing and explaining vividly the kind of life that Iraqi women live, creating a dialogue with the American and the International community. Raffo's play, as defined by John Lahr, a reviewer for *The New York*, is "an example of how art can make the world eloquently name pain." (Lahr, 2004) Hence, this study aims at exploring how Raffo is able to visualize the Iraqi women's lives through a piece of drama.*

Keywords: *Raffo, *Nine Parts of Desire*, Iraqi women, freedom*