Chapter-5

Theme and Style of Bakathir's Historical Dramas

The share of historical drama in the works of Ali Ahmad Bakathir is very big. A comprehensive list of Bakathir's historical dramas in the chronological order of their publication is given below:

1. *Ikhnatun wa Nefertiti* 1940
2. *Ibrahim Basha aw al-Watan al-Akbar* 1944
3. *Qasr al-Hawdaj* 1944
4. *Sirr al-Hakim bi Amrillah* 1947
5. *Dar Ibn Luqman* 1960
6. *Al-Dudat wa al-Thu'ban* (first series from his trilogy) 1965
7. *Al-Fallah al-Fasih* 1966
8. *Shadiat al-Islam* 1966
9. *Harb al-Basus* 1967
10. *Ahlam Nabiliun* (second series of his trilogy)
11. *Ma'sat Zainab* (third series of his trilogy).

Bakathir also wrote collection of short dramas deriving from Islamic history which revolve around the lives of the Prophet Muhammad's companions, their companions and the religious leaders. Among them are *Hakaza Laqallah 'Umar* (1964) and *Min Fawqi Sab'a Samawaat* (1973).

Anyone who closely follows Bakathir's historical dramas can easily know that the truth, justice and freedom are concepts that outline the basic vision for the world he envisioned. Here is a critical appreciation of the theme and style of Bakathir's historical dramas:

5.1 *Ikhnatun wa Nefertiti*

The basic topic in *Ikhnatun wa Nefertiti* is that the rightness needs force so that its supremacy can prevail and the great propagations need the force so as to protect its basic elements and defend itself from the factors of decline. This

basic theme relies on the contradiction between the peaceful poetical nature of Ikhnatun and the violence of his enemies who refused to obey him. Therefore, the writer in his work - to highlight the basic theme- stresses on the paradox between the belief and method in Ikhnatun's propagation; he tries to justify the strong pillars on which the propagation of Ikhnatun relied. The first of these pillars are those ideas which advocate for monotheism in the Egyptian God and Ikhnatun did not take these ideas from any foreign source. Thus, Ikhnatun was not the first person to invent these ideas which point towards the theism.[212] The historians attempted to prove the originality of the claim of Ikhnatun in its Egyptianness in terms of thought and belief, refuting the claims that these ideas were taken from foreign beliefs, it also refutes that these ideas were taken from Torah, and it was not a brainchild of Ikhnatun. We can get Bakathir's attempt to prove this powerful pillar in Ikhnatun's message through some phrases uttered by the Queen Ti, Ikhnatun's mother:

> Never, O' my son, we have only one God.
>
> He is the God of good and bad.
>
> He is our creator, He provides us with our livelihood, and it is He who gives us life and death.[213]

It appears that the writer is trustworthy for taking this from the historical source. He attempts for portraying the sources of power in that great revolt and deepest of all was the power of his recourse to the world of nature.

The English poet Wordsworth became famous for his poems on description of nature[214]. Thus, the contemplation of nature and thought in its substance and its indications on the power of the creator are the primary source from which Ikhnatun has drawn concept about one God, the possessor of the world. Likewise, the nature was the source from which Ikhnatun derived his belief in

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[212] Hasan, Salim, *Ancient Egypt*, vol. No.5, Cairo, Dar al Kutub al Misria, 1948, P. 295
[213] Bakathir, A.A. *Ikhnatun wa Nefertiti*, Cairo, Al-Khanji Library, 1940, P. 28-29
[214] Hasan. Salim, Ibid, p. 319

one God, as Bakathir claims. The secret (spiritual) conversation of Ikhnatun with his creator in the beginning of the second chapter titled *Belief* reflects his taking refuge in nature and the evidence which proves the existence of the creator.[215]

This new spirit in Ikhnatun's period, who drew his inspiration from the greatness of nature and its blessings, was very sensitive from the point of view of human life and human relations.[216] Therefore, some historians have observed that Ikhnatun was a messenger of both the world of nature and human life and he had drawn his teachings from his pondering over the scenes of these two worlds together.

This sensitivity in human relations is amply clear in the play so far the relationship of Ikhnatun with his wife, mother and daughters are concerned. The writer also highlights this human realisation for human relationships to Ikhnatun at the end of the play in the scene *The Death*.

But all these esteemed religious principles and high philosophical views brought by Ikhnatun "could not save his empire …"[217] from the factors of fatigue and cracking, here the danger of method of Ikhnatun for propagating his belief appears. He believed in the love and peace among the people, same way as he believed in one God.

So, the shortcoming was not in his belief but the real cause for the failure of Ikhnatun's message was his method. Ikhnatun wanted to spread his message but this negative approach through which he wanted to compel all the people - especially the priests- to convert to his belief and he did not have anything positive to prove. Therefore, spreading his message was not an easy task against

[215] Bakathir, *Ikhnatun wa Nefertiti*, Third Scene, P. 61

[216] One small and uncompleted statue was found in one of two royal images at Amrana Hill, where the sculptor did not portray the sitting king only- with his little daughter on a boulder embracing her as the king embraces his little princess- but he portrayed Pharaoh kissing his little daughter. Consult: Salim Hasan: op. cit., 320-321.

[217] Bakathir, A.A. *Ikhnatun wa Nefertiti*, p.

his mighty foes; amongst them were the priests of different religions, who were very powerful and had a great influence on the general public of that time. Bakathir stressed his viewpoint on this issue, 'Issue of War and Peace' in the dialogue that took place between Ikhnatun and Horemheb, who holds the conflict between the concept of war as represented by Horemheb and the concept of peace which is represented by Ikhnatun in his attempt to propagate his belief with argument and proof:

Ikhnatun : There is no compulsion in God's religion O' Horemheb.

Horemheb : With argument and evidence?

Ikhnatun : Yes, with argument and evidence.

Horemheb: Even this, O my lord, cannot be achieved without maintaining security and the security is untenable without the beating at the hands of abusers.

Ikhnatun : How can I call the people to accept the religion of love and peace while using my sword?

Horemheb: Whether your Lord prevented you from the war, O my lord?

Ikhnatun : But He asked me to call the people towards love and peace.

Horemheb: But whether you got any clear message from Him for forsaking the war?

Ikhnatun : Never…But the message of love and peace demand to forsake the war.[218]

This conversation clearly proves the writer's complete agreement with the point of view of Horemheb and his refusal of Ikhnatun's views. Despite all his efforts Horemheb failed to convince Ikhnatun. And this stand does not match the Islamic viewpoint from which Bakathir borrows, because the peace does not eliminate the justice of sword. Ikhnatun realised this fact after dreadful revolt against him inside and outside Egypt. His closest people turned against him and joined his foes. Here the tragedy lies. Consequently, we find him at the end of the play *In Dying Scene* turning on himself and realised his mistake and shouted:

Sword, Sword! Bring me Horemheb, where is Horemheb?

[218] Bakathir, *Ikhnatun wa Nefertiti*., The third sciene, pp. 129-231

Horemheb : I am here, O' my lord Ikhnatun who lives for rightness and spreads the religion of love and peace.

Ikhnatun : there won't be any love and peace after today.

Horemheb : But today is the day of love and peace.

(He takes out his sword)

We shall smash the sword of aggression with the sword of justice.

Ikhnatun : Yes.[219]

Ikhnatun turned from his insistence on the principle of peace and to belief in the principle of force and justice of sword, which crushes the sword of injustice. This concept of *the logical premise*, if we can borrow the description of the basic concept by Layus Aijeri, "should be available in every good play and should have clear traits and should be constructed well". [220]

The end provided to Ikhnatun by Bakathir does not seem to be tenable, so far the historical truth- even if it is proven true artistically. He has left Ikhnatun dying on his bed. While the introductory end to prove his point of view which he intended to attain is good. Some historians have doubted the death of Ikhnatun as whether he died on his bed? Or the conspirators assassinated him after he was left uncared for?[221] While others have stated that his death occurred due to the planned conspiracy to kill him.

Bakathir mentioned an event which occurs regarding Ikhnatun's killing when he was once strolling alone at night outside his palace. This event is historically proven. Ikhnatun escapes unhurt thanks to the chief of the police Mahu, who was stumbled on in his grave on a detailed painting of that conspiracy. But Bakathir narrates to prove that Ikhnatun believed in his peace plan, so he made Ikhnatun to face the conspirator, who wanted to kill him, only through words till

[219] Bakathir, *Ikhnatun wa Nefertiti*, The Fifth Scene, pp. 173-174
[220] Salamah, M. A., op. cit., p. 26
[221] Hassan, Salim, op. cit., p. 263.

he turns away from him.[222] This incident in any case cannot be a partial reality and cannot be cited as a basis to judge all human beings.

Whatever may be the outcome of these observations, Bakathir succeeded in this play to put forward his vision for history, on the one hand and harmonisation of history for the significance which he derived from Ikhnatun's story as he portrays in his play, on the other hand. Bakathir knew the duty of a litterateur when he was taking for his artistic works materials from historical events and the biographies of characters. He always insists on presenting his vision and understanding of the events minutely. Otherwise the artistic or literary works will become merely a literal record. Bakathir's consciousness with this fact appears as a practical consciousness in this drama, as per his consciousness about it theoretically. He says that to me the art generally and the art of drama particularly should be more based on symbol and inspiration than on specification and limitisation. It will make the truth, which an art of work portrays wider and broader than the truth which is portrayed by the reality.[223]

Practically Bakathir succeeded in bringing out from the biography of Ikhnatun the characteristic of this personality and at the same time made the story general in nature for far the issue of war and peace which has been discussed in this play. It also presented as a human issue of prime importance. Aristotle used to differentiate the same way between the history and poetry- namely the tragedy- while discussing the experiences of history he tried to move with it from specification to generalisation. In other words, took it from a particular historical reality to the domain of general mankind.

Apart from this general significance, Bakathir's strong link with the concept of Arab nationalism is reflected in this play. He wrote consciously to refuse the calls of regionalism promoted by the imperialism which was strongly supported

[222] Bakathir, *Ikhnatun wa Nefertiti*, The Third Scene, p. 78.
[223] Bakathir, *Fann al-Masrahiyya*, p. 35

by some Egyptians on pretext to respecting the Pharaohnic glories.[224] The universal nature of Ikhnatun's message helped him in portraying this stand. Ikhnatun in his message wanted to move out from the narrow Egyptian nationalism so as to making it universal in nature and to strengthen its pillars as a religion for the entire mankind.

With this consciousness, Bakathir tried to solve which appeared as contradiction between the present reality and historical stand which is preceded by all Arab civilisations, through a call to come out from the narrow meaning of nationalism. There is no meaning to talk about Pharaohnic nationalism or Babylonian nationalism or Assyrian nationalism but we should talk about the Arab nationalism which covers the entire Arab world, in the way that there is not even an iota of contradiction between respecting this and taking pride in that. With this awareness, Bakathir expressed his views on the concept of Arab nationalism and tried to present it as a broader concept which links the whole Arab Middle East to its history and its new and old heritage.

5.2 *Ibrahim Basha aw al-Watan al-Akbar*

This consciousness about the concept of Arab nationalism, which does not accept the narrow regional boundaries, was main motive behind writing the play *Ibrahim Basha* in its prose form and in its blank verse form known as *Blank Verse* which is entitled by the author as *Al-Watan al-Akbar* (The Greatest Homeland). Despite the minor changes made by the author in the play's prose form, it retained the ultimate goal in its new poetical form, both in substance or form. Therefore, our main view about the theme in this work takes up two plays- prose and poetic plays.

[224] Bakathir, *Fann al-Masrahiyya*, P. 34

The basic theme portrayed here that 'the unity of the Arabs is a must' and hence the concept of Arab is the pivotal concept on which the writer has based his work. The events revolve around a fixed axis which aims at highlighting of what the Turkish rule wanted by Turkeyisation of the country taking refuge in the concept of 'Islamic Caliphate' and stirring religious feelings. The writer tries to expose the actual danger of this deception, which can push the whole Arab civilisation and the Arab culture to backwardness and the state of disintegration.

Bakathir aimed at making Egypt a torch which can enlighten the Arab world on its way towards the great unity. The historical reality of Ibrahim Pasha's personality appears- in writer's perception- appropriate to comment on the Arab reality at the time of writing this drama. It appears suitable also for highlighting the leading role of Egypt. The establishment of the Islamic Arab country was the real motive behind Ibrahim Pasha's concern to conquer the Arab countries. But it was not only reason, in fact there was another reason which increased his concern for this annexation. That is because he came to Egypt in his childhood, to country where Arabic is the first language, master the local dialect, loved the people of Egypt truly too much and he found the Egyptian mentality extremely soft, resilient and the most suitable for accepting the stagnant Turkish psyche. He inclined to mixing up with the Egyptian soldiers, had fun with them and always praised their origin and considered them on par with the stupid Turks.

He narrates that once an Egyptian asked him that how he says this (about the stupidity of Turks) when he himself is a Turkish, he replied "I came to Egypt as a child and the Egyptian sun changed my blood and turned it into a pure Egyptian blood". [225]

This phrase which continuously quoted from *Ibrahim Basha*, was the basic source of the drama in terms of characteristic and general substance. The writer

[225] Pierre Krptis, *Ibrahim Pasha*, translation of Muhammad Badran, Cairo, Lajna al Ta'lif wa al Tarjima wa al-Nashr, 1937, p. 42-43.

has made him expressing real satisfaction with the Arabian concept and made it a source for his approach in all fronts. Thus, his war with the *Wahabis* in Najd was an attempt to strengthen the Arab power and not only compel them to obey the Ottoman Emperor:

> Ibrahim : I sear in the name of God that we have not come to Hijaz and Najd to force it to obey the Turkish Empire but to free and liberate the Arab land from them and to build a great country which will bring back our old Arab glory.[226]

This is the same meaning which was meant by *Ibrahim Basha* in the prose drama by saying:

> I liberate their hearts from these soldiers! Whether they could not understand that we have not come here to conquer the country? But in fact we have come here as the liberators.[227]

Bakathir took liberty to explain the position of Ibrahim Pasha for his war with the *Wahabi*s as per his own view about the Arab concept. He shows Pasha to forgiving all the *Wahabi* prisoners- except a woman named Ghalia- influenced by the historical drama which holds: Ibrahim showed generosity to the *Wahabis* and treated them with utmost tolerance[228], keeping in dark what the other historians mentioned about his cruelty to these people and this Egyptian commander's blood instincts for torturing them.

Similarly, the Arabian concept appears as source in his treatment of prince Abdullah after he defeated the *Wahabis*. He explained Ibrahim's insistence to send the *Wahabi* prince to Turkish sultan because he was interested to obey him so as to enhance his help, win over his trust through his victory, otherwise all works could have gone wasted inside and outside Egypt.

This is known fact that after defeating the *Wahabi*s Ibrahim Pasha's biggest aim was to capture Abdullah and the rest of the leaders. He told the defeated

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[226] Bakathir, *Al-Watan al-Akbar*, p. 7.
[227] Ibrahim Pasha, *Al-Qahira*, Da'ar al-Fikri al-Arabi, p.67
[228] Pierre Krptis, *Ibrahim pasha*, translation of Muhamed Badran, Cairo, 1937, pp 37-38.

Amir when he was brought to him: "I am a servant of the sultan of Astana, he is to decide your future, as for I am concerned I don't have this right".[229]

Bakathir tried to present a specific explanation for every position he thought was appropriate to highlight Ibrahim Pasha's personality as a leader who calls for Arabian concept under the leadership of Egypt in order to counter the concept of the Islamic caliphate represented by Sultan Mamoud, the sultan of Turkey. This is supported by the idiom authentically quoted from *Ibrahim Pasha*, which was mentioned a little while ago. But he presents further evidence by directing it towards the Turkish spy Sabir Bek who spoke before him very clearly in favour of the Turkish sultan, following their strong dispute pertaining to the legality of the caliphate and the right of the sultan on it.

Sabir : It's surprising from you O my lord! You abuse Turkish and you are one of them.

Ibrahim : Stop this…I am not a Turkish.
I came to Egypt as a child.
The Sun of the valley has Egyptianised me.
And it has transformed my blood and thus it ran into my veins as Arabian blood.[230]

Bakathir could present a specific explanation for the events and characters as it suited him, even though this vision was not correct in actual historical standard. However, he succeeded in presenting of his vision element of completeness and logicality in a new form on which he has designed the events and characters.

He can be critiqued- as some critiques do- that Bakathir was pre-content with the Arabian concept before writing his play. It portrays a basic axis so far his thought and literary works are concerned from the beginning to the end.

[229] Pierre Krptis, op. cit., p. 37.
[230] Bakathir, *Al-Watan al-Akbar*, p. 27.

> So, the Arabian concept in this play was predetermined. Bakathir made effort through this play to see a complete period of history. This concept kept on declaring time and again that it was predetermined.[231]

Having a predetermine concept is not a bad idea as such. The concept, as Bentali believes, is an ambiguous imagination… and all the phrases depend on some thoughts. Hence, every play is based on a concept which has relevance to human life.[232]

However, the author's shortcoming can be seen in his failure in making the concept sticking together with material frame of the play, which appears scattered in description of the events. This should have happened as Aristotle did, who asserts that any thought must help in proving or disproving something. But he is of the view that this should not be by itself a target in theatre, as it happens in oratory but this should emerge from the event itself, because it is a part of it and should be in accordance with the character simply because it is the natural expression of the character.[233]

Bakathir failed to show this cohesion between the concept and the theatrical frame, because he made the characters of the play express their satisfaction with this concept in a style of oratory. He did not stopped at making Ibrahim Pasha expressing his satisfaction but made Colonel Saif-Sulaiman Pasha al-Fransawi-expressing his believe in the probability of achieving Arabian concept. He thinks it is a natural concept which just requires good planning and true determination to emerge from the world of thought to the world of reality. As Bashir al-Shihabi expresses his hope for the Arab unity against the Turks who take revenge against them after his isolation and expulsion.[234]

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[231] Ismail, Izuddin, *Bakathir's Poetic Theatre* "The Second Series", Journal of Theatre, April issue, year 1970, p. 91.
[232] Bentali, Arek, *Modern Theatre*, translation of Mohammad Aziz Rafat, Cairo, al Dar al Misria li al Talif wa al Tarjima, 1965, p. 106.
[233] Rushdi, Rashad, *Aristotle's view of Drama till now*, Maktaba Anjlu al Misria, p. 54-55.
[234] *Al-Watan al-Akbar*, pp. 17-18

The reader feels that the writer influences these scenes and the characters in order to magnify on their tongue this dream which represents the possibility of achieving the Arabian concept, or a single Arab country. The example of these spurious stands is the stand through which he wanted to explore a dimension from the original dimensions of the Arab concept. He also intended to show his language Arabism by making Ibrahim Pasha refuting the congratulatory speeches delivered after his victory over the Turks at Quinn because it were not written in Arabic.[235]

This play, both in prose and poetry form has expressed a particular vision of the writer and shows his conceptual consciousness backwardness because the theatrical art should be based on symbol and insinuation and not on particularisation and specification.

5.3 *Sirr al-Hakim bi Amrillah*

In this play, Bakathir shows his link with the issue of governance. He endeavours very seriously to reconstruct the life of a famous historical personality that is Al-Hakim bi Amrillah, one of the Fatimid rulers who ruled Egypt in the beginning of the 4th century AH. He was an enigma which baffled the historians and stirred the attention of the playwrights and novelists.[236]

The basic theme which Bakathir wants to highlight through the depiction of this personality is that the governance is a sort of trust and the leadership is for a person to whom it reaches and not for a person who takes over it. Therefore, his emphasis on the personality of Al-Hakim bi Amrillah seems to be apparent because he desired by his work to solve the enigma of Al-Hakim and to expose his mystery as to whether he was a mad? Or was a wise man that had a specific philosophy for life? He tried to find out a key to solve the enigma of Al-Hakim

[235] Bakathir, *Al-Watan al-Akbar*, p. 68
[236] Salamah, M.A, op.cit., p. 32

bi Amrillah through solving the contradiction that is found between the personalities with which Al-Hakim is known historically and the image which Bakathir wanted through relating the experience of the governance to a colour of mysticism and deep asceticism. Al-Hakim did not erect in him a God or semi God. But he tried through his rigorous psychological training to come out of the human attributes only to get absorbed with the divinity. Bakathir explained the behaviour of the Fatimid caliph and his contradictory actions. He has explained this ruler's excessive killings, bloodshed, declaring legal what Allah made illegal and declared unlawful what Allah made lawful. However, some historians, who considered him a mad person and related with him all kinds of the madness and all types of actions, have disagreed with this explanation.

Through this hard psychological training Al-Hakim intended to attain the ultimate leadership (Imama) because,

> The righteous Imam is one who purifies his spirit till Allah shower him with a quality through which he can know the truth and the veil gets disperses, moves out of the shells and penetrates to the mind. And this cannot happen without rigorous psychological training.[237]

From this basic theme another theme emanates that is the power of law should not get broken by the mediations.

Bakathir wanted to make the Al-Hakim's personality a symbol for things which were beyond their individual boundaries, as the history depicts, and wants to connect it with high values and moralities which should be visible in any person who wants to take over the leadership (Imama) of the Muslims, primarily because the governance is a trust and a feeling with responsibility for countering the desire.

The end set out for Al-Hakim comes as intended to, which the play tried to get it from the historical reality of this personality. He skips the conspiracy

[237] Bakathir, *Sirr al-Hakim bi Amrillah*, Cairo, Dar al-Fikr al-Arabi, p. 33-34.

factor[238] mentioned by Ibrahim Ramzi and it appears that he takes the concept of going to a deliberate hiding or permanent migration advocated by the church narrative, which has been taken by the orientalist Miller[239]. Al-Hakim bi Amrillah in Bakathir's play goes out of his palace in spite of the fact that he knew about the conspiracy to kill him saying:

> The hour of freedom has come and time to be get free has reached, so enable me to come near to you, O' my lord disperse me of veil of invisibility and make me aware of mysteries of your wisdom and give me some of your knowledge and some of your completeness.[240]

The play ends with Al-Hakim's going out bidding good bye to all wrongs of life and necessities of body.

In this way Bakathir constructed the end of Al-Hakim bi Amrillah 'when he (al-Hakim) got depressed and failed to achieve the God's attributes he welcomed the defeat'. But the End the way the author constructed it remains open and does not lead to a particular possibility in decisive manner. And for this it was possible for the writer to achieve his goal but this end changed while being presented as an end of a closed drama. It appears that the writer was not happy for this change and that's why he demanded for representation of the play a fresh.[241]

5.4 *Al-Fallah al-Fasih*

The play *Al-Fallah al-Fasih* (the eloquent farmer) was the second attempt to create a comedy on the basis of history. The play has some seriousness, despite the fact that it is a comedy. This is the characteristic of the romantic comedy as

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[238] Anan, Mohammad Abdullah, *Al-Hakim bi Amrillah wa Asrar al-Dawa al-Fatimia*, Cairo, Dar al Nashr al-Hadeeth, p.p 125-127.
[239] Ibid, p. 149.
[240] *Sirr al-Hakim bi Amrillah*, p. 147.
[241] Bakathir, *Surat al-Msrah al-Misri 1953-1966* as seen by the people of theatres, Majallah al-Masrah, No. 31/1966, p. 18.

portrayed by Shakespeare. The world which this play envisions was not totally funny, but gets intertwined with serious moments.

The basic theme of this play is that justice is eternal human goal and the key of this justice is in the hands of the ruling class'. Bakathir, in treating this theme, relies on a Pharaohnic story, which has its origin before the period of the 12th century.[242]

The crux of this story is that a man from Wahat Milh (literally Oasis salt and presently known as Al-Natroon Valley) named Khunabob, came to the Nile valley to sell the fruits of Oasis and buy his necessities. But when he had arrived the Nensu city, the capital of the 10th Family Kings, then the ruling family, a miscreant intercepted him, beat him up and robbed him off his donkey along whatever was loaded on it. So, he approached the highest officer of the state, in whose area the aggression had taken place, with complaints, he got the justice and he could get the revenge from the aggressor.[243]

Bakathir wants to discuss a general value that is the justice and wants to link this discussion, at the same time, with his stand pertaining to the governance issue, on which we noticed his insistence in his earlier works. The story of this farmer came to his mind. This man was subjected to aggression and suffered the slow pace of justice, suffered for nothing but for approaching the king with all his complaints so as to get justice. This story appeared to him suitable to represent his stand about the governance issue and to portray through this *Al-Fallah al-Fasih* (eloquent farmer) as to how the highness becomes the synonyms for justice. This personality appeared to him- because the way he suffered injustice- suitable to carry forward the revolutionary content for the

[242] Lofer, Gostove *Egyptian Novels and Stories from Pharaoh' Period*, translation of Ali Hafiz, Cairo, Maktaba Misr, p. 90.
[243] Ibid, p. 91.

meaning of social justice. The character Khanum in the play expressed his feeling against injustice when his hope for justice gets shattered:

Khanum : (shouts) Rai, Rai. Where are you O' Rai.

Renzi : Yes, O' Khanum.

Khanum : Allah may forgive you, have you not led me to this place I would have hopeful of getting Allah's justice, if I could meet Him then in Him I could get solace. But you brought me to the king where the justice I hoped for is merely a mirage.[244]

This conversation indicates the thirst of a tyrannized person for justice who wants to get even the hope for justice and his complaints are not turned down and his hope for justice does not become a mirage.

This comedy is considered among those dramas which represent the political overthrow, which includes the clear gleams of light for the works of the (ruling) class surrounding the ruler and how it deceives him and presents to him its affairs wrongly so as to achieve its specific greed. Renzi points towards this class by trying to somehow divert the attention of the king; therefore he fabricates the art of lies and covers it with awesome hints for the eternality of the king with this literature which develops in his period. He had no purpose other than jumping towards the throne with the help of his wife to achieve this goal, even by compromising her honour for him and this is with her husband's agreement.

Bakathir stresses on this stand so as to hold the ruler through this responsible for the injustice with help of the people while he protects the injustice doers. Khanum explains this meaning very clearly:

Khanum (in pain): Even you O' Rai subservient with me to these thieves.

Renzi : O' dirty farmer. The king is a thief to you?

Khanum : To me no, but to himself yes because he protects the thieves.[245]

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[244] Bakathir, *Al-Fallah al-Fasih*, Cairo, al Dar al Misria li al Talif wa al-Tarjima, 1966, p. 15-16.
[245] Ibid. p. 17.

Bakathir in fact explains the causes of this injustice and looks for justice through his view about the inheritance issue in governance which he raised in the *Dar ibn Luqman* (House of Luqman) and where a portion of characteristic serves the basic character. But he develops this in this play generalizing the governance inheritance issue as the basis for injustice. *Khanum* expresses his view on governance inheritance issue in a way by which we can hear the writer's voice very loudly.

This clash between the justice and injustice continued until the writer adopted Khanum's position on the inheritance issue of governance with this revolution which he enflamed by his poetries and by inciting the people everywhere till their feelings got stirred.

Bakathir has portrayed him as a person who has a clear revolutionary stand on which he does not want bargain with Renzi so far the revolutionaries were concerned. He also refuses to sell the revolution on any price. Thus, when the queen asks him to ask the revolutionaries to retain him on the throne he refuses to answer her despite his acknowledgement of her benevolence on him.

With this stand Bakathir reaches out to his goal. He proves that the son of the soil only enflame the real revolution, and he protects it because he is bound by the revolutionary truth and hence he will not sell the revolution, will not betray it and will not surrender it. The revolution is the only solution for solving the problem of clash between the justice and injustice, because it's the people's revolution against the exploitative feudal. Through this stand Bakathir expresses his view on socialism which is presented in his later play *Usturatu 'Udib* **(**The Legend of Udib) to convey social viewpoints of justice through distributing the wealth.

5.5 *Dar ibn Luqman*

In the play *Dar ibn Luqman* the artistic vision of the writer appears richer, more convincing and more capable of subtle hints and where the subsidiary lines get intermingled with the basic line of the dramatic work and hence, its artistic construction becomes complex. The basic theme in *Dar ibn Luqman* is considered a progress of the basic theme in *Ikhnatun wa Nefertiti* which presents here a subsidiary theme to serve the big theme which is completely different from it and takes us to a different sector in the particular word of the writer.

The basic theme in *Ikhnatun wa Nefertiti* was that the truth needs power to get strengthened and this theme got divided into sections and became complicated in the play *Dar ibn Luqman*. The truth needs the power and this power which supports the right that was snatched away, must rely on a powerful push relying on the power of the nation from which the right has been taken away.

Bakathir always envisions Egypt and also the Arab World which was susceptible to the greed from all sides and was to face the dangers especially when it tries to defend its existence in front of the Christians invasion. With this feeling Bakathir wrote his play *Dar ibn Luqman*, which was not the first dramatic work that countered this onslaught when the king Louis IX was imprisoned in *Dar Ibn Luqman* at al-Mansurah. Ibrahin Ramizi wrote his play *'Abtal al-Mansurah* in 1959 in which the events revolve around this historical position,[246] and it is considered that the drama writing got its maturity in the hands of Ramizi.[247] Bakathir wrote his play in 1960, separated the *Dar ibn Luqman* from complementing conceptual line which neither contradicts nor gets tinted to Bakathir that is his faith in Arab nationalism. This is the decisive issue in his belief, thought and his writings since the early period and his stress on the

[246] Darderi, Ibrahim, op. cit., P.127
[247] Ibid. p.250

dangers, emanating from within or outside, which are threatening the fate of the Arab peoples.

Bakathir must have read the play of Ramizi and may have got influenced by it to a considerable extent. This is confirmed by Bakathir's refuge to- on the footsteps of Ramzi- creating non historical events and characters and its use in completing elements of struggle in the play. What concerns us here is the aim of the writer from picking up this historical reality and the basic substance for which he wanted to use this.

For this he selected the personality of Amir Bebras and considered him as the pivotal personality for serving his purpose to highlight the element of Muslim bravery, which is, in his view, not different from the Arabian bravery.[248]

As for Bakathir is concerned, his basic objective was to make an attempt to represent the national role in this battle so as to push the invading soldiers out of the country. This is the role which traits are generally seen in the historical books. The covering the personality of a general citizen and his role in the country's battles- regardless of whether the battles of belief and idea or actual battles- never got the pivotal attention.

Bakathir could highlight this role and gave a new colour of clarity and cohesion through portraying the efforts of citizens of the country for defending their mother land and their resistance against crusade invasion. Because of this we find him looking examples of individual heroism of these sons of soil, and there is no dearth of such examples in Arabic sources, to present them as a story of a person who made a round whole in a green melon, put his head into it and swam in water and reached the shore where the crusade army was camping. The moment anyone of them neared him to take the melon; he picked up that person

[248] Derderi, Ibrahim. Op.cit., p. 127.

and imprisoned him and swam with him far from the target of the arrow and took him to the army of Al-Mansurah.[249]

Though this story, narrated by Ibn Wasil- and which finds mentions surprisingly in many sources- says that these (nationalists) fighters took money for this work but Bakathir says that these people rendered their services without taking any wages. He tries through this distinction presenting from these ordinary people 'the children of the country' who set out from their homes as volunteers, didn't want anything in return from the leader, and didn't want any post and property, while the Mamluks took for the same work the salaries and food from the Sultan, but the greed of the slaves incited them to ask for more posts and more property.

He makes efforts to make fun of the royal feudal spirit which hated to join the army as a national enemy and didn't want to be compared with these common people in defending the country from the invasion of crusades.

Bakathir succeeded through this portrayal of the role of these common citizens of the country in defending the mother land to highlight the spirit of the time and struggle that was going on between the nationalistic and non-nationalistic elements. He also succeeded in portraying the strong internal disputes which were present among the officers of the Mamluks.

Through this portrayal of people's role the writer wanted to concentrate on the personality of Amir Fakhruddin**,** son of the army general and to consider him as pivotal personality in the play, because he is originally an Egyptian, to present him as an example before the nation comparing it to the uselessness of the rulers, their aggression and sacrificing the interest of the country in order to achieve their goals and greed.

[249] Bakathir, *Dar Ibn Luqman*, Cairo, Maktabat Misr, p. 104-105.

The real essence from this stress on Fakhruddin's personality is an effort of the writer to discuss the decisive issue which engaged the writer's thought. We can observe his persistent call to, what he considered as the decisive issue; in his writings was the issue of governance. His stand on this issue includes the auxiliary theme, which served the basic theme of the play. He takes up this issue from the perspective of democracy to choose the ruler and people's right to their ruler and they choose him from amongst its people.

His point of view on issue of election and inheritance is clear in refusal of the concept that the governance is a wealth, which the sons inherit from their fathers. He likes the system of election advocated by Islam. But the writer's viewpoint, which he expresses through the tongue of Sultan al-Salih, appears contradictory with the method through which Sultan talks to Amir Fakhruddin regarding his being crown prince. He makes Fakhruddin getting from him a secret promise to take over the rule after him. Apart from a clear contradiction of this stand with the historical realities, it is well known historical fact that Sultan al-Salih Ayub died after he made his son Al-Muazzam Turan Shah the Sultan of Egypt and after handing over the general leadership of Al-Mansurah to Amir Fakhruddin ibn Saikh al-Shuyukh.

It appears that the writer relied in this issue on what is known to us that the tree of pearl brought the chiefs of army and leaders the countries to the Sultan's Palace at Al-Mansurah and it spread the news among them that Sultan was unwell and the Sultan wanted them to give him an oath in his and his son Turan Shah's favour and to Amir Fakhruddin as the chief of entire Egyptian armed forces, along with Amir Fakhruddin's participation in running the affairs of government.

This is how we see the continuity of the writer's artistic vision. Thus, the main theme in *Dar ibn Luqman* is considered as a development for the main

theme in *Ikhnatun wa Nefertiti*, and the main theme in *Sirr al-Hakim bi Amrillah*- which emanates from his relation with governance issue- enriches the work in *Dar Ibn Luqman* with another subsidiary theme, which is also emanates from his link with governance issue. He discusses this issue in *Sirr al-Hakim bi Amrillah* at the level of spiritual development so as to be the leader (Imam), while he discusses it here at the level of issue of inheritance and election of the ruler, then he develops it to be linked with liberating the governance from the tyranny in comedy *Al-Fallah al-Fasih*.

As for the main theme in *Dar Ibn Luqman* is concerned, Bakathir develops it in his trilogy pertaining to French campaign so as to move it from merely portraying the people's role in defending the country to a call for creating the national army and the need for a national government.

5.6 *Harb al-Basus*

Bakathir wrote the play *Harb al-Basus* in 1967 influenced by the defeat of Egypt in its war against Israel. Bakathir was interested in exposing the reasons for this defeat through a stage play and it was not possible for him to take up this position in a direct style through the contemporary events. He, therefore, once again took refuge in history so as to comment on the present bitter scenario after this defeat. And his choice fell in the *Harb al-Basus*, which was fought between the tribes of Bakr and Taghlib for over 40 years.

He gives himself more freedom in his comment on the contemporary reality and in his explanation. He takes support from the time dimension in two phases and presents a time dimension from within the dimension. The events of the play begin around 40 years after the *Harb al-Basus* and then he distances this past to a period preceded the beginning of this war. Thus, we know the reasons of this war as we know the oppression of Kulaib Wa'il and his insult to family and

relatives, which resulted in the beginning of this war and the character of Kulaib becomes effective- through this second time dimension- in moving the events and stirring the psychological factors of the characters without having a stage presence before the characters. Inside the play there appears a reality which is considered the past of its present and both- past and present of the play- appear to the reader as past. It provided him with more freedom to explain.

The main theme of this drama is that the unity between the Arab nations is a necessity to get rid of the dangers of their countries. It was the same theme the writer has presented in the play *Ibrahim Basha* and in *Al-Watan al-Akbar*- in poetical drama- as already mentioned. He presents some new dimensions and wants to discuss them at the general line portrayed by the historical events and at the particular line represented by those creative events and characters which he added to the historical background.

Thus the historical characters and events encourage the process of political decline on the defeat and explain its reasons arising out of the nature of events and characters.

The conversation between Hajras and his maternal uncle Jassas in the beginning of the play expresses the domination of Kulaib Wa'il and his aggression against his people and it carries a satire for the situations which were the indirect reasons for the defeat of 1967 and which represented in the phenomenon of the psychological subjugation and the control on the freedoms.

Hajras: They say that Kulaib never killed anyone from his people.

Jassas: But he insulted them and the insult is worse than killing.

Hajras: O' uncle did you kill him for this?

Jassas: Yes.

Hajras: They say you assassinated him out of your personal anger.

Jassas: But for personal anger and for people's anger.

Hajras: For Camel and its young calf?

Jassas: But for the nation and its tribe.[250]

Bakathir benefitted from the stand of Al-Harith bin Abbad and his isolation from that war then his change of stand and his declaration for participation in this war after Al-Muhalhal killed his son Bujair saying: "Hell to Kulaib"[251] in commenting on the negative stand which some Arab countries had followed to counter the danger they were threatened by. The event of killing of Bujair in the hands of Al-Muhalhal carries a warning for these Arab countries that this danger which is threatening an Arab country is in fact waiting for this and it will certainly surround it if the Arab countries do not fight shoulder to shoulder to defend it and resist it. The difference between the Arab nations was the basic reason for this defeat and the writer expresses through this vision through the tongue of Murra bin Zahl bin Shaiba in a direct oratory song, which is not suitable and the critics of the stage do not agree for the need of metaphor in narrating the information to the reader or the audiences.[252]

And at the particular level the writer tries to highlight the Jewish planning which wants to take control of the Arab land and wants to create division amongst the Arabs. In this respect he got the help by adding the characters and events to the foreign events of the story. He added the two characters namely Nishwan and Zakwan to play the role of spy so as to incite Mushkam bin Sallam, leader of the Jews of Khaibar. Thus, Nishwan incites his leader Murra bin Zahl to purchase the land of Bani Shaiban from a person belonged to Aws tribe- in his assumption- but it went to the Jews who constructed the strong forts and established the armed colonies.[253] While, Zakwan does the same thing, He suggests his master Al-Muhalhal to buy the land of Bani Taghlib which

[250] Bakathir, *Harb al-Basus*, p. 3
[251] Consult Ibn Katheer: *Al-Kamil fi al-Tarikh*, vol. 1, p. 322, al Aghani (sasi), vol. 4, p. 144
[252] Bakathir, A.A. *Harb al-Basus*, p. 7
[253] Ibid. p. 47

belonged to a person at Yathrib and he was Mushkam bin Sallam, the leader Jews at Khaibar.[254]

He in fact tries to explain the behaviour of Kulaib and his haughtiness and arrogance against his people through this plan. When Zakwan joined him to serve him he overpowered him and kept on inciting him on this stand. At the same time Nishwan incites Jassas to kill Kulaib and Zakwan incites Al-Muhahal to kill Bujair. This is how the writer diverts this division amongst the Arabs to the Jewish plan and its spies' attempts to create the division among them.

After exposing this design it becomes amply clear before the Arabs that the unity amongst them is a must and they should be careful about the danger which has surrounded them, get rid of their differences and strengthen their determination to fight against their enemies and to reject the war amongst themselves.

The difference in narrations regarding the killing of Jassas bin Murrah and uncertainty of any of these narrations provide the writer an option to discard all these narrations. Thus, he makes Hajras and also Jassas to put back their swards into the scabbards so that they divert their attention towards fighting against the Abyssinians in Yemen.

With all this he directs all the events and characters of the play to convince the people about his concept for the necessity of unity amongst the Arab nations so as to get rid of the dangers which were threatening them.

5.7 Bakathir's Trilogy on French Campaign

In this trilogy Bakathir continued his fruitful effort for portraying the national struggle against the foreign invasion. He takes up the history of French campaign against Egypt and what followed that invasion. This trilogy comprises

[254] Bakathir, A.A. *Harb al-Basus*, p. 48

three plays "of relatively independent in terms of both form and content"[255]. The play *Al-Dudat wa al-Thu'ban* portrays the first series of this trilogy, while the second series is represented by the play *Ahlamu Nabliun.* The third one is represented by the play *Ma'satu Zainab.*

Al-Dudat wa al-Thu'ban

The basic theme in *Al-Dudat wa al-Thu'ban* is that 'the country cannot be defended but by its people', and hence this series stresses on the need for self determination and on the need for establishing the national army. In this respect, this play is considered as a development of the basic theme in *Dar Ibn Luqman*, which he highlighted and towards which he attracted the attention of the people. He however adds to it the new elements which make this play richer and deeper.

In this series, Bakathir's ability to choose the right direction is seen. In spite of very bad picture of Mamluks rule, where the bad prevailed on the good and the fighting among their chieftains was so intense that it destroyed the life and made it corrupt, we find Bakathir not stressing much on portraying the Mamluks' state or on presenting the greed of their chieftains and their infightings. Through all this the writer intended to affirm his concept, what Shawqi failed to achieve in his play *Ali Beik al-Kabir* because he engaged himself in portraying the socio-political condition of the dark era. He even did not show the struggle between the people and the corruption which led him to be blamed for his weak concerned about the people.[256] But Bakathir put aside this in favour of the power of the nation, which he wanted to highlight so as to counter the French invasion.

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[255] Ismail, Izzudin, *Muqaddima al-Dudat wa al-Thu'ban*, Cairo, Dar al Kitab al Arabi li al Tiba't wa al Nashr

[256] Mandur, Mohammad, *Masrahiyaatu Shawqi*, Cairo, Maktaba Nahda Misr, third edition, p. 70.

Through presenting the Mamluks' standpoint vis-à-vis the French invasion and their business in smuggling their wealth[257] the writer tried to ascertain his perceived concept. In this respect we get support from what Al-Jubruti narrated,[258] because he was an eye-witness and his narrations can provide us with the true picture of social, moral and psychological conditions of the Egyptians during this period of its history. It's historically known that the Mamluks accumulated huge wealth[259] and they remained busy in smuggling this wealth at the moment when the country was facing the threat of foreign invasion, let alone the way in which they gathered their wealth, which proves that they did not have any national or religious feelings, as any nation feels it when threatened by a foreign enemy.

At a time when the French army was knocking at the doors of Cairo, the two rulers of Mamluk Ibrahim and Murad were trying to deposit their wealth to al-Sheikh Sulaiman al-Jusaqi al-Dareer in order to keep them away from the hands of the French.[260]

By recording this position, the writer benefitted in deepening the viewpoint about the Mamluks' psychological and social absence from the country and the absence of real attachment with it and also to deepen the basic concept which he wanted to ascertain and that was no country can be defended but by its people.

As for the resistance led by Sayed 'Umar Mukarram in Cairo against the invading French army is concerned, it was not a serious matter to the writer, despite his view in support of having a national force consisting of the citizens

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[257] Bakathir, A.A. *Al-Dudat wa al-Thu'ban*, p. 27-29.

[258] In this respect Al-Jubruti mentions, after reaching the news of the arrival Murad Beik at Imbaba that "the hearts of officials were not satisfied when they started moving their properties from the famous large houses to the unknown small houses and some of them sent their properties to the rural areas and they began accelerating loads or bringing the animals of cargo and the tools of departure". Madihat Awad has mentioned this quotation in *'Masrah Ali Ahmad Bakathir'* p. 43

[259] Awad, Ahmad Hafiz, *Fathu Misr al Hadeeth au Nabiliun Bonabert fi Misr*, Cairo, Matba'a Misr, p. 9.

[260] Bakathir, A.A. *Al-Dudat wa al-Thu'ban*, pp. 34-39.

themselves. This is despite the fact that Sayed ‘Umar Mukarram and the elders, who believed in his efforts, belonged fully to the country and from where they shared with the country its feelings and sorrows. But -as projected by the drama- they were not eligible for the leadership because of their perception was very narrow and incomplete. This perception even did not take care of the present, let alone the historical and political consciousness which provides visions with the broadness and provides the ability to include the position with its past, present and future.

This is how the writer believed that Syed ‘Umar Mukarram and the elders did not possess the leadership capabilities. Whatever it may be, some critics see,

> The cruelty in this government and none expected that these leaders can do anything because they could not muster the support of the public. Moreover, the situations in which they found themselves did not permit them to crush the feelings of the general people, had they provided the people an opportunity to express their feelings the reactions could have been worse.[261]

Though Bakathir has taken support from the historical facts narrated by Al-Jubruti in the method of Sayed ‘Umar Mukarram and the elders in resisting the foreign invasion[262], he was very bold in denouncing Sayed ‘Umar Mukarram’s movement and his attempt to awaken the public in which the elders of the period had believed. In his denunciation of this movement the writer benefitted in highlighting the situation he wanted and for which he was calling the public to participate in national resistance and to stress on the value of armed and planned struggle against the foreign forces:

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[261] Salamah, M. Op.cit., pp. 43-44

[262] Al-Jubruti describing the situation of the nation after the arrival of Murad Beg at Imbata mentions that the poor people came out of their homes with drums, wind instruments and flags shouting and creating uproar, and were reciting different hymns. Sayed Umar Mukarram climbed on the fort and brought down a big banner named by the people the “prophet’s banner”, spread it in his hands from the fort to Bulaq. And thousands of people accompanied him with sticks and plants and were praising Allah and were shouting very louder. The chieftains sat around the corner of Ali Beg in Bulaq praying Allah for help. Consult Madihat Awad, p. 45

> Rusti: What's your opinion about this planet O' Sheikh Sulaima?
>
> Al-Jusaqi: Alas they are fighting at the pond without arms, without any planning and without a leader.
>
> Al-Qadi: And Sayed Sayed Mukarram.
>
> Al-Jusaqi: Have you ever heard in the history of Islam about a leader who led his army withi his rosary amber?[263]

Albeit, the concept of national armed resistance against the French invasion was a temporary alternative of creating the national army for which the possibilities and situations and were not congenial at that time. This concept was a hope for the conscious leaders of the country who resisted against the French until they - as history tells us- were killed or deported but could awaken the people's consciousness that the only way to get rid of the French was creating the national army which can free the country from the foreign invasion.

Bakathir highlights this concept by portraying Al-Jusaqi's personality, which he found possessing profound materialistic, moral and leadership powers. He could highlight through al-Jusaqi's insistence on proving this concept, the campaigns of doubts about the possibility for such a national army because it was believed that the Egyptians were non-fighting nation. The seeds of these campaigns were sown by the Turks and the Mamluks followed it so as to keep the nation away from joining the army.

Bakathir could spread his concept about the national army in his entire play with utmost skills. He made it as emanating from the events and the characters in such a way that it's difficult for us to separate the concept from the materialistic frame of the play.

Ahlamu Nabliun

[263] Bakathir, A.A. *Al-Dudat wa al-Thu'ban*, p. 16.

In the second part of the trilogy *Ahlamu Nabliun* (dreams of Napoleon) the writer seems aims at highlighting the phenomena of social changes, which accompanied the French campaign, as the transition period in history of Egypt. One of the signs of this social change can be seen in the movement of unveiling and freedom of the woman along with Cairo women liberty and their imitation of French women in dress and behaviour. Al-Jubruti has mentioned this movement in detail[264] and in which he rejected these phenomena which violate the traditions associated with the personal and social life of the woman.[265]

But Bakathir focuses his play on the tragedy of Zainab, daughter of Al-Sheikh al-Bikri in which he saw the tragedy of the entire period which got caught between two civilizations and thus paid a heavy price for its courage to challenge the old before the victory of the new.[266] He made the rumours about Zainab's relation with Napoleon Bonaparte an axis in the plays *Ahlamu Nabliun* and *Ma'sat Zainab*. He did not try to portray the social condition which prevailed in that period as a reaction to French invasion, as al-Jubruti narrated in detail and considered it as a general phenomenon. The writer has aimed at portraying the individual tragedy. Probably his concern with the human psychological tragedies was because of the influence of the works of Shakespeare on him. But the simple style adopted for analyzing that tragedy becomes apparent in his defence of al-Bikri's daughter which clearly contradicts with the known historical facts. The rumours spread that Zainab had intimate relations with Napoleon, as mentioned by the author Jean Defray in her book *Napoleon Bonaparte in Egypt*. She has stressed that the daughter of al-Bikri (she mentioned her name as Zainab al-Bikria) was a lover of Napoleon Bonaparte.[267]

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[264] Al-Jubruti's view mentioned by Madihat Awad Salamah, op.cit. p.44
[265] Awad, Louis, *Tarikh al-Fikr al-Misri al Hadeeth,* Silsila Kitab al Hilal 1969, vol. 2, p. 33
[266] Ibid. p. 43
[267] Salamah, Madihat Awad, op. cit., p. 46

But Bakathir- defending his intention to making the national history clean and free from all the errors- elaborately portrays the relation between Zainab and Napoleon with all simplicity and this portrayal proves that she was legally married to Napoleon.

This is claim which contradicts with the historical facts. This is an issue which is refuted by the critics of the play, especially when the concerned historical personality in the play is famous and well known. This is a condition where Milton Marx cautions against playing gravely with the facts,[268] because the reader of the play in this condition would expect from the writer to reflect his historical sources with honesty.

Al-Jubruti narrates to us about a large number of French people who were converting to Islam and marring with the daughters of the well kwon Egyptians by exploiting their influence. He mentioned the marriage of Abdullah Menu with the daughter of Shaikh Ali al-Rashidi after he announced his Islam.[269]Al-Jubruti was accustomed to record the event of Napoleon's marriage to the daughter of Al-Bikri only if he had a historical proof and as we know that he was an eye-witness who recorded the events directly and with familiarity.

Bakathir tries to make the structure of his play closer to possibility or probability relied on the narration of the Napoleon's Islam, as mentioned by Al-Rafei, in which Napoleon says that:

> Tell the Egyptians that I have come to get your rights for you from the oppressors and I am the king who worship the God better than any other kings and respect His prophet and the holy Quran.[270]

He also says:

> Tell your people that the French are also sincere and its proof is that they came to the Mighty Romans and destroyed the pope hood, which always incited the Christians to

[268] Salamah, M.A. op.cit., p. 46
[269] Salamah, M.A. consulted in p. 47
[270] Al-Rafei, *Tariekh al-Haraka al-Quaria fi Misr*, vol. 1, p.76

> fight against Islam, then they came to Malta Island and drove away from their *al-Kawalris* who believed that the God demands from them to fight against the Muslims.....[271]

And to prove this narration it appears that Shaikh al-Bikri's stand for agreeing for this marriage was justified. But the writer was cautious and therefore he highlighted along with the claim about the Napoleon's conversion to Islam and exploited it to prove the aims of the French:

> Kaliber: We cannot wait until the morning.
>
> Napoleon: Why?
>
> Kaliber: This is the rumour which spread everywhere that we will convert to Islam.
>
> Napoleon: This is one of our planning, as you all know. We do it to win over their hearts, especially after this devastated revolt.[272]

His emphasis in this series on an individual tragedy to convert it to a vision in such a way that the events of the series appeared isolated from the main theme, which he tried to develop in his play *Al-Dudat wa al-Thu'ban*. He centered his work on an effort to portray a picture which is free from all the allegations against Zainab daughter of Al-Bikri. He paved the way with this picture so that it can play the leadership role in the national struggle in his third series *Ma'sat Zainab.*

Ma'sat Zainab

The play *Ma'sat Zainab* represents the third series of Bakathir's trilogy. In this play Bakathir highlights the character of Zainab, daughter of Al-Bikri in the frame of national heroism and makes it heading towards the movement of followers of Al-Sheikh al-Jusaqi in the struggle against the foreign invasion. But this role, which was clear and integrated in the play *Al-Dudat wa al-Thu'ban*, appears faded in this series and the concept of the national army surfaces once

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[271] Al-Rafe'i, op.cit., p.77
[272] Bakathir, A.A. *Ahlamu Nabliun*, op. cit., p.13

again. But the author expresses it in a praying style which makes it difficult to hide the personality of the writer whose voice we hear clearly when he makes Fardih, the Deputy Commander of army, to express his satisfaction with the concept of a national army:

> Fardih: Never, the excuse will never benefit them nor benefit us, but we must ensure that it never occurs again in future.
>
> Kaliber: How?
>
> Fardih: If we agree on creating the national army.[273]

The concept in this style does not come out of the character's nature and thus, it becomes illogical to demand from an invading commander to achieve this national goal. The concept appears more connected with the character when he makes Zainab expressing her belief in the concept of the national army.[274] But the concept remains unconnected with the events and we can separate them without disturbing the materialistic frame of the play.

The concept of the national army declares itself once in Zainab's tongue and once in Mohiuddin's tongue and sometimes in Fardih's tongue in an oratory style which does not prove the independence of the characters from the writer who insists upon interfering in the narration of the events so as to express this concept through the tongues of the characters. This is a stand which reflects the short coming of Bakathir's understanding of nature of the dramatic work as creation of an objective world which marches ahead according to its internal rules and the characters appear as merely a means to explain the writer's views and his believes. Because he tries to express and does not try to create and the difference between the two is very big.

As for the end, which Bakathir has designed for the daughter of Al-Bikri is concerned, it appears based on the historical fact, although he prolongs the scene

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[273]Bakathir, A.A. *Ma'sat Zainab*, pp. 24-25
[274] Ibid. p. 21

of the trial which he held in the last chapter of the play. In this scene Zainab becomes a trumpet of the propaganda which carries his views about Islam, about unveiling of women, about veil and about the status of woman in Islam. All that Al-Jubruti mentioned about this trial is that;

> The daughter of Al-Bikri was asked by the Minister to be brought because she was one of those who went out with the French unveiled, they came to her mother's house after the evening prayer and they brought her and her father and she was asked about what she did then she replied: I have sought resentence from that, then they told her father what he wanted to say, then he replied: I have nothing to do with her and thus they broke her neck.[275]

Bakathir benefitted from his commitment with this end for the daughter of Al-Bikri for deepening the basic thread on which he wanted to emphasize in his trilogy and that is the need for having a national government and the ruler should be amongst the countrymen. The matter did not occur as the writer wanted, except the infighting of the foreign forces for the power. This struggle-portrayed by the *Ma'sat Zainab* which resulted in those tragedies and for which the people of Egypt paid a heavy price in all respects.

All this makes it clear that Bakathir's historical works always reflect his everlasting concern about his objective from outside of the stage. The feeling, which connects him with national issues, always becomes the encouraging factors for him to write. And from here his elements of vision acquired the ability for continuity and development.

[275] Qouted from Salamah, M.A., p. 49