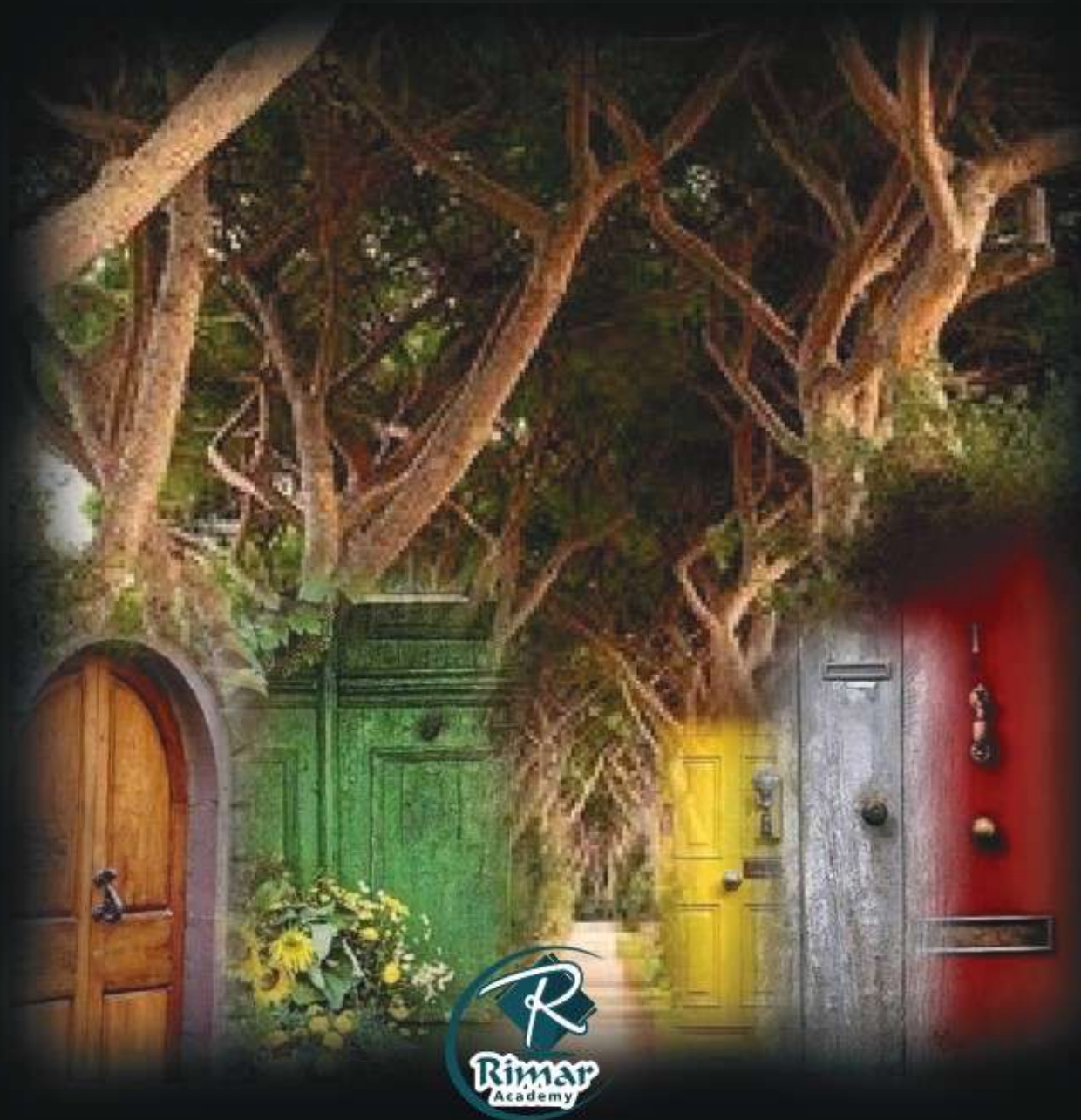


CREATIVITY GROUNDS OF REGIONAL FICTION

Prof. Luma Ibrahim
Al-barzenji

Prof. Nahidh Falih
Al-abbasi



CREATIVITY GROUNDS
OF
REGIONAL FICTION

CREATIVITY GROUNDS
OF
REGIONAL FICTION

Professor Luma Ibrahim
Al-barzenji

Professor Nahidh Falih
Al-abbasi

(PhD) in Modern American Fiction (PhD) in Modern American
Drama

Department of English
Faculty of Education for Humanities
University of Diyala
Iraq

2021

Contents

| | |
|---|-----|
| Acknowledgments..... | 9 |
| Preface..... | 11 |
| Introduction..... | 13 |
| Part One: Turkish Novels and the Question of Identity..... | 15 |
| Part Two: Tales of Refugees in Syrian Novels..... | 45 |
| Part Three: The Fictional Circles in Egypt after the 25th of January 2011..... | 59 |
| Part Four: Iranian Literature between Resistance and Inspiration..... | 73 |
| Part Five: Iraqi Dystopian Reality after the Occupation..... | 89 |
| References..... | 117 |

Professor Luma Ibrahim Al-Barzenji, PhD in Modern American Fiction. She works as a University professor in Department of English at Faculty of Education for Humanities/ Diyala University in Iraq. Al-Abarzenji started her Educational career since 1999 as a University Instructor. She got MA degree in Modern English Fiction in 2002 from Faculty of Education in Diyala University, to finish her literary academic interest when she got PhD in Modern American Fiction in Beirut Arab University in Lebanon in 2013.

Al- Barzenji is highly concerned with Entities to most updated literary subjects that touch emotionally and reasonably human's Imaginative and real stories.

Professor Nahidh Falih Al-Abbasi, PhD in Modern American Drama. He works as a University professor in Department of English at Faculty of Education for Humanities/ Diyala University in Iraq. Al-Abbasi started his Educational career since 1995 as a University Instructor. He got MA degree in Modern English Fiction in 1998 from Faculty of Education-IbnRushid/ Baghdad University. He got PhD in Modern American Drama from Malaya University, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia in 2013.

Al-Abbasi's interests and academic concerns are modern theatre and cultural studies.

Acknowledgments

The regional novel, which shares interests with Arab writings, stands for the cross-cultural profound longing for the past, and more importantly for the future. In a process of completion, the harmonious relationship between the past and the present has determined the necessity of topics the whole region of our subject matter depicts. The new identity and the indigenous rooted one modeled the writings of most contemporary novelists who found in unsilenced voices an authentic way to develop innovation in fiction. Thus, Arab history and the aftermath of sequel recent wars and the influence of Western world part born out intercultural exchange of literary themes all poured in human's critical thinking and man's refusal and opposition of up-to-date reality.

Creativity Grounds of Regional Fiction celebrated the notion of gathering the literary human interests of five of regional countries; Iraq, Turkey, Iran, Syria, and Egypt. The co-authorship book writing authenticate a novel approach of gathering social and political orientations travelled regionally, but randomly first with the notion of double identity in Turkish writing, moving then to the problem of refugees in Syrian fictions, passing to the Egyptian promises of new life after the 25 January revolution 2011, coming close the Iranian facts between resistance and revolutions, and landing off the journey finally on Iraq land marked by the

problem of dystopian reality. In doing so, the authors of this book significantly try to make difference through analyzing selected novels of carefully selected novelists mostly still alive or died very recently.

It is that opportunity the authors searched for to navigate into deep human's real conflict and to harvest what is being hopefully fruitful.

Preface

Building realm of creativity on ground of reality has inspirationally sparked writers' eyes of fiction and non-fiction with light of start to depict various themes related separately and privately to each culture tackled in this book, yet connectedly and commonly among all five identities fictionally studied. Creating things so close to reality of the moment means much ink has been spilled in attempting to critically study the transitional spirit that shares some sort of general concern. What formative lesson can be drawn on out of this study may smoothly lead to a debate among multicultural interests indulge mostly in sociopolitical stresses, instability, torrent of events, or sometimes, swirls. In the challenging time of post-post modernism, man finds in literary excerpt a worthy adventure of very wanted promising future that cannot be gained in reality in time when everyday living could not provide a tiny risk of positivity. Moreover, the sequential dissociation among cultures resulted out of internal or external conflicts has increased the political raveling that is always fueled by individuals' rage against their ruling regimes. The unsettled problems of the regional arena of the Middle East, or, issues away of horizon sight, have surprisingly moved toward a surge in literary output of no hilarious mood. The novelists were adept and provoked in principal to document what history left behind, what present forces them to live, and what future may read in their cup coffee. Thus, paradoxically, readers

are motivated by the unknown and the archived documents of complicated and spiral social texture to passionately read pieces of literature which rarely are apolitical.

The quest for a new metaphor beyond the world of sheer has explained why writers of regional environment of prominent countries in the Middle East as Iraq, turkey, Iran, Syria, and Egypt passed national boundaries in the framing process of their critical literary thinking. Each of which tackled thoroughly their own movement of theoretical framework that concerned with thematic paradigm of identity, war, refuge, revolt, bigotry, and history revival. The broader debate over the conceptualization of reality has jointly unified the ideology of novelists and readers' thinking in that both follow a possible way to logicalize the illogic and to cope with desperate situations.

The conception of identity craft gave rise to the independent form of literature in each country involved in this book, yet, it is intimately tied as a common worldview of political and social nature and content of human. Hence, the book primarily aims to assess the latest regional literary views toward thoughts and updates. Moreover, the book is read as a sample-reference separate nationality lies in five parts of selected authors and works that each marked as a representative figure of a certain culture.

The book contains the remembrance of memories took place in certain places and the lost love as well as the sad moments of departure, the forcefully separated people, the displacement of refugees, the sectarian war, the longing for parted yesteryears, the false results of true targeted revolutions and promising changes, the lost identity between the past and present, and the stolen souls of innocence.

Introduction

The shift to another pattern is sometimes unavoidable. The flowing tune of altering necessity is that infrequent repetition of life examples in which readers must recognize deeply the grouping order of themes or demographic trend of the area. A number of common lines of close interest challenge the readers' expanded knowledge to widen it profoundly for that expansion should move in parallel concerns with the up-dated man's productive endings. In this sense, the various patterns of knowledge navigate human's thoughts to discover, compare, evaluate, and to conclude the significance of each of which and to consider the integration among all. The matter of contrast among the physicality of the text materials might be only in terms of mere intellectual potential that shrinks itself when the human nature collects its separate interpretations to build the grouped one.

In communities where the current social structure is strongly traced to traditions of yester generations and yester ages, the hegemonic social and literary contexts are that travel to courses of the triumphant morals and defeated transgressions. The solidarity in accepting the common theme distributed among various cultures of the regional area such as Iraq, Turkey, Syria, Lebanon, Iran, Egypt, and

so forth has a euphonious sound in the reader's challenging pattern of reading and looking at processes. As is clear in the "now additions" of the reader's life concerns, particularly those related to the sociopolitical fundamentals, the acquisition or gradual gathering of experiences and interests shaped another engaging in worries to navigate the earnest and substantial changes. For instance, the political accumulation of conflict in certain countries such as Iraq, Syria, and Egypt channels the tension through an increasing calls for any modification may occur that re-centering power to people's hands and will.

The emergence of socio-political issues during the twentieth century and the rapid events of the twenty-first century later was accompanied by a gradual concern in tackling the theoretical as well as sociopolitical grounds within some countries contexts that highlighted comparative psychoanalytic themes. Fiction is mostly selected because of the theme it celebrates and the human feeling it highly considers. Thus, a serious attention is given to two; first, the comparison demonstrated over multicultural themes in that trauma, for instance, is dealt with differently in various cultures due to its situational backgrounds of politics or sociology particularly the area experienced war trauma. Second, to the psychoanalytical perspectives that analyze the individual's positive or negative interaction in societies, or the problem of identity that covered lately most of literary developmental changes.

Part One:

Turkish Novels and the Question of Identity

The tendency towards changes has taken place recently when historical concentricity started to order itself behind in row of priorities. For instance, the collective themes of multiculturalism and multi identical memory of Ottoman period during 1840s up to 1910 highlighted by Turkish authors such as Semsettin Sami (1850-1904), Ahmet Mithat Efendi (1844-1912), Samipasazade Sezai (1860-1936), and Halit Ziya Usakligil (1866-1945), were man's relations to cultural cohesion where Christians and Muslims were mostly and widely involved in everyday society. The 'Otherness' of Ottoman educated writers was hardly read in their writing environment. The ultimate goal of early twentieth century in pre-Turkey Republic did not exceed the coalescence of the organic parts of Turkish society that symbolized nostalgically the charming country as a big cottage built over multiethnicity.

In 2006, Orhan Pamuk won the Nobel Prize for Literature. As a clever representative name of contemporary Turkish literature, Pamuk developed the experimental post-modernist style that overrides the monoculturalism of the social-realist literature which was followed traditionally by writers during and after Ottomanism. To Pamuk, Tur-

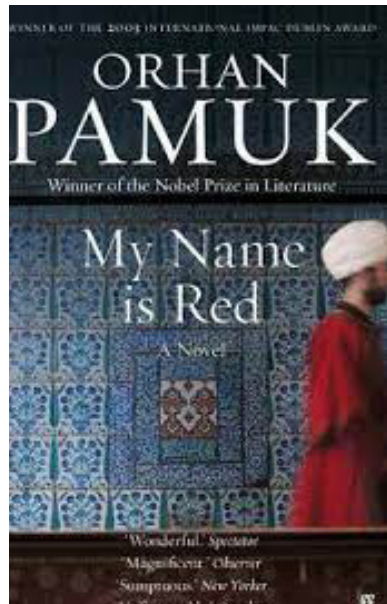
key shaped the way of resumption between the past and the present, and successfully carried something on over the process of pertinacity. Due to his ideology, history and now are fundamentally emphasized and strongly worked on when Western and Eastern cultures are studied out of monoculturalism.

Pamuk experimentally led the notion of the remembrance of the Ottoman history in the memory of the present. Nevertheless, Pamuk's tactic of continuation doomed him by mono culturalism as an orientalist who "plays for the West" for "supporting the imperialist forces who want to undermine the country and divide it", for "not defending Turkish interests against world interests" (Sagaster 68). Although Pamuk followed a non-political postmodern form, yet he could not avoid talking about "the dark spots" in Turkish political history related to the treatment of the Americans during World War One. The transitional phase of Turkey to be one of the European Union countries had eagered Pamuk to side this objective toward one of his real interests and to hand him over as political and out of Kemalism. The political interest in personal attitudes and writings did leave much space for Pamuk's literary discussion and fictional debate. The concept of identity and its transitional meaning from the social-realist discourse of the Kemalist state ideology into bicultural or multicultural literature line has guided novel writing to the process of Western lifestyle intrusion.

The confrontational universal fact of identity has based its argumentation on human dignity. The moral consideration of identity has debated its meaning due to Western and non-western images. Though people are different in their divisions and variations, still, they wel-

come changes and sharing ideas and concerns with others. The point is that, civilization produced the two poles of culturalization East and West. Saman Hashemipour in his book *Logoteunison: Literary Easternization in Orhan Pamuk's Works* (2019) emphasizes that “Westerner” is a unique term that refers to cultures that prefer to label themselves as such. By contrast, the term “Easterner” is rarely used by people living in non-Western countries and is not regularly used by these countries’ members” (Hashemipour 32). In this sense, novelty is only brought to West by East for the former’s coming and emerging with the latter may help to confirm the large effect of Eastern into Western, while the opposite chance could not be achieved for the less Westerns’ availability in the eastern portion.

The Eastern oriental style, however, has a detailed description that framed itself strongly, though dangerously sometimes, with the Western practices. The mingled necessity between Eastern and Western practices has shown clearly again in Orhan Pamuk’s 1998 novel *My Name Is Red* in that he did not forget to get back to the traditions of Ottoman Empire of 1591 as a setting for his novel, and he could not avoid a certain blend between West and East.



In *My Name Is Red*, the heroine transposes her realization and status from East to West: “My fickle heart longs for the West when I ‘m in the East and for the East when I ‘m in the West”(*My Name Is Red* no page). Stork describes her belongingness between East and West, front side and back-side as simultaneously both. More clearly, Stork addresses a Butterfly to head West instead of East, but immediately gets an emphasis from the butterfly that “God belongs to the East and the West”(*My Name Is Red*).

The identity concept questions the reference of one’s construction and the real belonging to a certain group. Hence, most writers of the postmodernism push back other social and political cases to see themselves more in the triumphant sense of identity. Again, Pamuk’s *The White Castle* (1985), though it is a historical novel, presents a sinuous treatise on the enigma of identity and the close relation between East and West. The young Italian character who was taken as a prisoner and delivered to Constantinople, was under the custody of a scholar named Hoja. Years later, the slave helped his master to widen his knowledge about Western sciences from medicine to Pyrotechnics, and via exchangeable sciences they shared, the aware of identity raised:” why am I what I am?” Hoja, as an Easterner asked the same question of his Western prisoner (*The White Castle*).

Turkish writers, novelist specifically, experienced the troubled title of identity whether they should think of themselves primarily as westerners and European, but Muslim, or Middle Easterners of national dignity and brilliant traditions. The project of modernism in the Turkish literary

sphere gave novelists such as Semsettin Sami, Namik Kemal, and Ahmet Mithat, a pointed novelty to turn into European literature with all the peculiarities may meaning hold. Through novel, the transition signifies a move from “childness to maturity”, or to an outstanding civilization. Ayşe Özge Kocak in her book *The Turkish Novel and the Quest for Rationality* (2019) elaborates the need for this transitional literary and cultural mood:” the turn to the novel as the medium of expression becomes more meaningful, for the novel allowed the Tanzimat intellectuals to inculcate in the public the new sensibilities and attitudes required by modernity...these new intellectuals took it upon themselves to cultivate a new identity for the Ottoman Turk” (Hemmat 54). This allowed most modern Turkish critics to involve in the process of modernizing thoughts that the necessity of following should be affirmed by Turkish intellectuals to West. Nergis Ertürk’s *Grammatology of Turkish Literary Modernity* (2011), is a superb and an outstanding example points the reflection of language politics in modern Turkish literature. Parallely, Ertürk emphasizes on the acquisition of western model to develop the opinion for modernity, and the legacy of the national Turkish identity that demandingly asks for self-reconstruction. Berna Moran in her *Türk Romanı Elestirel Bir Bakış* (1983), centers on the up growth of Turkish novel through the adoption of new ideas via a clever comparison to the European fictional samples. Due to this logic, Pamuk in his immediate first book since winning the Nobel Prize *Other Colors* (2011), best exemplifies the spirit of belonging to another place when the feeling of “no boundaries” finds its precise expression into logic.

Orhan Pamuk

Among other themes, Identity and the swayed belonging were fundamental reviewed by Turkish novelists. When *The White Castle* enthusiastically drawn deep into this theme, Pamuk recognized that his lovely Istanbul would be contrasted sharply with “third World” portrait of turkey. His *The New Life* (1997), and then *My Name is Red* (2001) hastened Pamuk on charges for insulting Turkishness a year before awarding him the Nobel Prize in (2006).



As a writer of focal sociopolitical theme, Pamuk was intellectually assigned as the icon of serious literature. His name was often discussed authenticity as a writer, and second as a “Jewish convert, enemy of Turks or self-hating Turk, of opposing Kemalism, of being entrepreneurial, political, comprador, a bourgeois elitist, a commodifier of

literature, of being in service of foreign lobbies or conspiratorial networks, and of selling out his country for personal gain” (Goknar Introduction). Additionally, secularists or Kemalists had accused Pamuk of writing to Europeans or Americans but not to Turkish and his literary products are bushy, hard to understand because of its complexity of ideas. In an interview set in 2005 with Pamuk published in *Das Magazine*, and was conducted by peer Teuwsen in German conversation when Teuwsen wittingly lured Pamuk into a fact that the latter is faced by aversion and rancor by secularists.

Distinguishably, the concept of identity in Pamuk’s writings has subjugated him to close possible acquisition as a ‘secret Jew’ by extremists. This slander of being so has taken as a cultural warning particularly after his 2002 novel *Snow*, published in Turkish and translated into English by Maureen Freely to be published again in 2004. In a reference to *Snow*, Pamuk’s parody of political Islam and secularism has archived him with hatred in Turkey. Themes of political exile, suicidal epidemic among young religious women forbidden to wear their headscarves, the local election and the winning of Islamists, terrorism, losing identity under the shadow of Europe, the spiritual fragility of the non-western world, the ambivalence about the godless West, and finally, the falling snow that reveals the chance to alter one’s own identity through a successful modification from the “Other” into the “Self”. The main concern of *Snow* lies not on status of being covered by extremists, but in the ability of replacing others by ourselves. At the core of this strongly argumentative issue of identity, stands women’s veiling and its modern significance as a per se new trend of the sociocultural mood added to modernity. The headscarf-

ing complexity searched further meaning in Pamuk's *Snow* to vehemently realize the shift from tradition to modernity and the difference between backwardness and progress totally signifies the considered perspectives of balance and misalignment between Islamic and Western methods of living. The novel itself functions women's veiling to comment on secularism and traditional Turkey, or more precisely, a challenge between religion and secularism. This challenge had torn Turkey to traditional Islam followed by low and middle classes, and the lead class which followed modern secular trend. The return of Ka, the Turkish exiled journalist to Germany, to Turkey, and to Kars increased his inquisitiveness to report on the dangerously rising Girl Suicide phenomenon. Kars does not only represents the sample of Turkish life, but it drops hints to the global power-play representatives of recent time.

Snow is apparently divided into religion led by Islamists, schools, the political party, and anti-modern change. While secularism is shown through police, army, media and Kemalist state. Ka, on the other hand is a double-vision man. The rest of the novel characters strictly challenge for their share in power. Kars collects various forces of political and ethnic bases of Kurds, Americans, secularists, and Islamists. As the main power player, Blue Leader of the dominant Islamists group in Kars represented by Turgut Bey, is portrayed controllingly when Turgut Bey said to Ka: "The Islamists have embarked on a clean-up operation. They're taking care of us one by one. If you want to save your skin, I would advise that you increase your faith in God at the earliest opportunity. It won't be long, I fear, before a moderate belief in God will be insufficient to save the skin of an old atheist" (*Snow* 134). There is religious and

political parts led by Muhtar Bey who fought election in the name of religion: “Give your vote to the prosperity party, the party of God; we’ve fallen into this destitution because we’ve wandered off the path of God...The new mayor will belong to God’s Party”(Snow 26). So, the voices of Islamists were raised high with Religious High School through its members Fazal and Necip, and the spiritual leader of the Mystical Religion Sheikh Afendi.

Feminist Islam plays another big role through Kadife, the leader of Headscarf Girls who took another name “Hicran” and whose beauty and courage are most distinguished. Besides, the religious statements are always here to conclude Ka’s involvement in Kars mode through a conversation between Mesut and Ka:

Mesut: Are’nt you an atheist, too?

Ka: I don’t know

Mesut: ...do you or don’t you believe that God Almighty created the universe and everything in it, even the snow that is falling from the sky?

Ka: The snow reminds me of God (Snow 85)

Ka, every now and then talks about God:” If I were an author and Ka were a character in a book, I’d say, “Snow reminds Ka of God!” But I ‘m not sure that would be accurate. What brings me close to God is the silence of snow” (Snow 62).

Simultaneously, secularism subjugates individuals and forces them to cooperate with the State. The State police and army work on tapping and surveillancing phones: “Ka

felt a tinge of respect for Muhtar, who had ingratiated himself with the bullying policemen” (*Snow* 65). Secularists force girls not to wear scarves. Women are subjugated to various kinds of harassment and vexation; “...girls are not allowed to wear scarves. If they wear scarves they are expelled from the universities” (*Snow* 4). The Secular State is for Ka as the executioner, the reason behind girls’ suicide; “The State denies them the right on their minds and bodies. The families of those girls force them into unwanted marriage which lead them to take refuge in suicide...The girls had to commit suicide because of a chorus of male voices-fathers, imams, the state” (*Snow* 14-15).



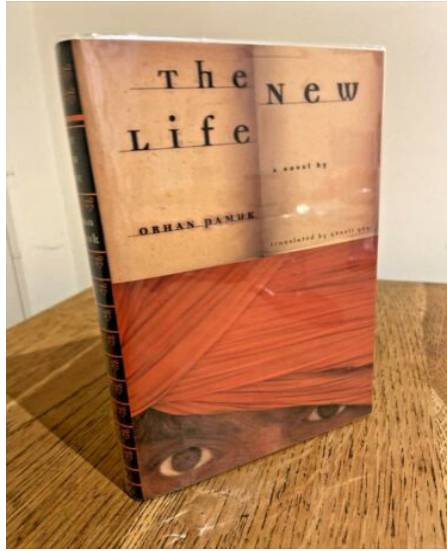
When the play *My Fatherland or My Headscarf* telecasted on national Television mirrored how a Girl burns her headscarf, Ka considered every word in the title though he identified “himself with the secular political camp” (*Snow* 38). Thus, the wondering identity of Ka and that one of Turkish individuals have lost among globalism, modernity,

and Western necessities. Moreover, *Snow* comes as a gendered novel sides more with feminist's experience of being religious or secular.

Pamuk's thoughts are generally occupied with the focal concept of Turkish identity. Thematically, he motivates his readers to discover what Turkey hides beautifully the life texture and how Istanbul, in particular, does stress on identity. In *The Black Book* (1994), translated into English by Maureen Freely in 2006, Pamuk interchangeably moves from heightening the identity of the Turkish State into the identity of Turkish nation emphasizing on how that nation is more dynamic and open to change. Human desire is also examined to be oneself or somebody when the protagonist Galip heard different stories in an Istanbul nightclub. Over and above, Galip's friendship with Celal and Ruya increased his interest to discover Celal more as a human and as a journalist. Writing articles for the newspaper in Celal's name helps Galip to re-evaluate potentially his identity as a writer in that his quest for inner self and self-rediscovery were circled the time he started to involve and melt in Celal's identity and charisma. It might be unintentionally that Galip dislikes who he is and his life as a lawyer. He might be either envious of Celal's successful professional career, or hater of his own ones. Thus, the novel theme brought the reader to point out the concept of identity through a constructive relevance that accesses to the true self when Galip became Celal.

A closer look is taken at Pamuk's repeated description that termed identity as his ideology of self and nation. In *The New Life* (1994), Pamuk triggers the new mode of Turkish modernization, and the sequencing coups such as secular-

ism, socialism, or Islamism. It is the new approach which is not necessary perfect. The sense of identity has troubled the writer and his male protagonist Osman, a 22-year-old civil engineering university student in Istanbul, with the idea of self and nation to get a new identity. Pamuk adventures a shift from mystery into intellectuality through creating some sort of world changed by a book or a transient romance. Identity starts as a struggle against all global threats. Osman in *The New Life* meets a street hawker who tells him that Turkey is in defeat; “The West has swallowed us up, trampled on us in passing. They have invaded us down to our soup... they have finished us off. But someday, someday perhaps a thousand years from now, we will avenge ourselves; we will bring an end to this conspiracy by taking them out of our soup, our chewing gum, our souls” (*The New Life* 287). So, Turkish people need to find sense in West “conspirational behavior” as the peddler understands it due to the fact that there are several who think this is some sort of great conspirational plot on the part of the foreign side. The conspirational thinking is dangerously increased the time East meets West or tradition meets modernity or postmodernity and globalization (Buyze n.p). Thus, the adventure of Osman and his fellow students is the act of messaging a new community by seekers who found in bus a perfect experience to cross Turkey through a heart-bounding adventure. In this sense, identity is discussed widely from two points of view; first, it is threatened as a global theme attacked and goaled threateningly by West. Second, identity is examined nationally when Turkey is passed by adventures feeling how close it is. Osman and Dr. Fine hardly mingle between the world and identity they like to have and what they really experience.



The intellectuality Pamuk cleverly uses in *The New Life* has permitted Osman to make from the “book” and its oppression a novel turn in his life which simultaneously has alienated him from his family and people around. The book is mysteriously referred to as “light shining from its pages”, and as Osman states, “I could create myself a new (*The New Life* 7). Significantly, Pamuk functions that book as both the object of a Great Conspiracy and a Great counter-Conspiracy (Goknar 169). Moreover, Osman, Mehmet, and Canan were Istanbul University students who studied engineering, medicine, and architecture who engaged in specific activities worthy as professionals, skillful, and assured figures of that secular modernity. Ironically, these figures rejected the old tradition that minimizes their identity to nationalism, yet, they were rejected by the secular mainstream of globalization. On the other hand, *The New Life* readers have parallelized Osman’s search for mystery and concern

of identity. Osman's quest for mysterious context in the book confronts equally the demand for romance toward his beloved Canan in whose hands he first saw the book. To Osman, Canan's Sufi attitude and mysticism were the hurdles he should pass over to build a new life as a husband and his positive relationships with other people. His big and real question was whether he can establish a different life coping with normality and simple availability of things. Yet, Osman never forgets how the book questions his identity. The spiritual effect of the book on Osman is perspicuous:

One day I read a book and my whole life changed...The book affected not only my soul but everything that constituted me...I thought light was emanating from the pages of the book: A light that both blinded my reason and illuminated me. This was the kind of light in which I could remark myself; I had the suspicion that this light could also derail me...I saw light seeping over the threshold [esik] of another life...There was a journey, always, everything was a journey. (The New Life 7-9)

Elif Shafak



"...faith is way too important to leave it to the religious. Patriotism is way too important to leave it to the nationalists. Politics is way too important to leave it to self-serving career politicians. Environment is way too important to leave it to the whims of the elite. And technology is way too important to leave it to profit-driven tech monopolies. In all these fields and many more, we must become more engaged as citizens of this lonely planet..."

The acclaimed author of the award-winning *The Gaze* and *The Bastard of Istanbul*, and the foremost female author in Turkey is Elif Shafak (1971-). She is a contributor to *The Telegraph*, *The Guardian* and *The New York Times*, and the woman who writes confidently about violent scenes of war archived in politics of fiction.

What was focal in Orhan Pamuk's writings is repeated in Elif Shafak's intellectual description of Istanbul and its individuals. Istanbul's cultural and political identity has been expanded literary. The identity of the city has connected with the urbanism mode through how this city mingles between the traditional episodes of Ottoman and the modern demands of European/ Western identity.

The national identity serves a significant psychological demand. It groups individuals within self-identification indispensable goal equaled to the basic requirements of life

such as food and warmth. Psychologically, the high-status groups confer self-esteem to their current individual's identity, or to those who will come after. But self-esteem may confront low status if this evaluation comes from oneself. Blue in Pamuk's *Snow* tells Ka: "Most of the time it's not Europeans who belittle us. What happens when we look at them is that we belittle ourselves" (*Snow* 75). To Pamuk, happiness that accompanied with self-esteem is his character's choice in that none of whom senses comfort with his/her preference. In Shafak's *The Bastard of Istanbul*, the protagonist Ayse Zarakol examines the concept "self-esteem" that Western stigmatization of Russia, Turkey, and Japan as backward countries was a source of national humiliation and provided a strong incentive to modernize (Ellemers and Barreto 328). Hostility has improved considerably when self-esteem is connected inversely with low-level countries. Shafak states: "The more you are read in the Western world, the more you are hated in your motherland" (The Guardian 14).



Shafak has been deeply attached to Istanbul which plays a fundamental role in most of her novels. Thus, multicultural themes and multicultural identity characters' grounds have distinguished this well-educated modern westernized Turkish woman. Her returning with a divorced mother to Ankara where she lived with the spiritual-mood grandmother after her birth in France, made Elif more concerned about how people behave differently of multi self-identification when they experience birthing and bringing up in different cultures and social environment. Shafak's shift of accepting life as a daughter of an educated and Westernized mother into less rational, traditional, and spirituality believer grandmother has added to her gradual but profound literary career. The precious lesson Shafak got from the bicultural surroundings was how to make from the connection in the worlds beyond the lived one a positive risk to act outwardly. To Shafak, identity could pass beyond shrinking and diminishing if it is fueled by the variations of life images. Furtherly, Shafak's view of multiculturalism brings together her well-potential writings, and her embracing of beliefs in filling the holes in people's comprehensive walls. Not far from these walls, the Other could be seen and loved by our-side others. As a talker in TED Radio Hour on 11th October, 2013, Shafak gave a speech under the title "Can Stories overcome Identity Politics?" as she states: "we always talk about identity, we fight for identity, and sometimes we kill for identity. But why is that? Why can't we talk about belongings? Multiple belongings". To Shafak, all people were born in certain identical circles, identical nations, and identical families, yet if all live unconnected, they will experience the psychological risk inside and all

will be hunted by uncivilized discourse. Hence, the matter of belonging and identical reference was Shafak's point of view to write not about her day-to-day experiences, but about people rather than her. In her stories as in her personal life, each individual does not represent his/her private status, but each of whom stands as a representative of something larger. More importantly, for Shafak, the politics of identity was not that what she was looked at by others as Turkish woman as Turkish are identified by main three criteria; the movies Turkish women prefer at midnight, the regular question of how many cigarettes may be smoked a day since Turkish people are thought as heavy smokers, and last the wondering question about Hijab. Only through these three stereotypes of Turkish culture, Shafak realized that the politics of the Turkish identity is defined through the kind of movie, cigarettes, and the veil.

As Shafak has been started using identity as the main goal in her fictional politics, she realized that writing in English will help much to explore differences in cultures and to certainly navigate in others culture ways of expressions. To Shafak, writing in other language rather than Turkish gives a chance to re-create a self and to establish a construction of close understanding and comprehension.

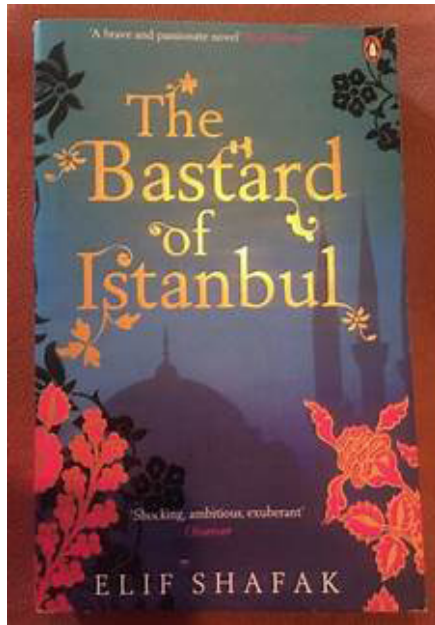
It is becoming increasingly apparent that the notion of identity and its interculturalism has been connected to 'familiar' and 'foreign'. Due to the reciprocal advantages, an individual is no longer a foreigner in another cultural institutions in time when he/she establishes a positive connection with others in terms of work relationships or social needs. To get more positive results, identity should

manifest pukka and sophisticated modifying the opposing arguments on multicultural identity into idealistic concept. Kath Woodward indicates the accounts of the positive or negative choice of multicultural identity:

The interrelationship between the personal and the social involves negotiation. People reconstruct their own identities, even within the constructs of poverty. Through the collective action of social movements, of class-based action, and through asserting ethnic identities and separate national identities within a multicultural society, people reshape the social structures which restrict them. Even at the level of the individual, through body projects, it is possible to recreate our identities through transforming our bodies, by getting fit, by challenging stereotypes. (Woodward 156-7)

At Cambridge University in 2014, Elif Shafak delivered a discourse pointing importantly that her identity is the result of two women, her mother and the grandmother, whom are completely different. In her 2008 novel *The Bastard of Istanbul*, the concept of identity has connected with the role of women, Asya and her mother Zeliha. Both represent Turkish women who are similar to Elif's mother and grandmother, and the aunt Banu who rebelliously acts

against religious and traditional beliefs and who punishes her brother for raping Zeliha. In *The Bastard of Istanbul*, the problem of identity and self-esteem links to the problem of education. Shafak stresses on the importance of education as a weapon to fight against honor based violence in one hand, and to oppose any traditional approach in dealing with female identity and rights. Asya's identity is clarified more through her Personal Manifesto of Nihilism that consists of twelve articles all fall within the demand for opposing women's lost rights; " I am working on Article Eight of my Personal Manifesto of Nihilism: If between society and the Self there lies a cavernous ravine and upon it only a wobbly bridge, you might as well burn that bridge and stay on the side of the Self, safe and sound, unless it is the ravine that you are after" (*The Bastard of Istanbul* no.p). Due to such rebellious articles, Asya stresses on re-considering and re-thinking in Turkish social norms related to female identity that lies within the respected criteria of Self (Paraschiv 45). Asya could never escape from identifying herself as a woman belongs to a transitional code of the traditional Turkish boundaries and the modern demands of Self. She hardly could alter many social notions and standards by instructing people to welcome literature or other possible means. In doing so, Asya moves in a wide space through writing to dare talking about what woman suffers as a wife, daughter, sister, or a mother. Her loud voice that confronts courageously the patriarchal authority authorized her identity to enlighten people and to criticize the wrong belonging to gender equality. Moreover, the model of freedom Asya plays captures the attention of a worldwide readers to sympathy with a woman searches her real strong identity.



Identity in Elif Shafak's *The Bastard of Istanbul* has been tackled from another point of view additionally to *Self and Gender*. The multipul identity among Turkish, Armenian, and American becomes that an uncompleted one. What one takes to be a story of two families-one-Turkish, and the other is Armenian, linked together in rolled up narrative. The plot tends to relate the traditions of the family and Turkey as well, and then moves slowly and complicatedly to metamorphose other sub polts in full magic of the metaphor. The story is intricately coiled when the face of modern Istanbul and its contradictions start the plot to the point when that face pulls the reader deeply into its past of romantic as well as anguish history.

The nine-year old Asya Kazanci is the eponymous “bastard” of the story. She is the daughter of the rebellious mother Zeliha. The family of “aunties” whom Asya lives with- her mother’s three sisters, the Grandma Gulsum and her great-grandmother Petite-Ma represents the combination of twisted history and modern climatic revelations of the novel. The eldest auntie Banu is a soothsayer that has two djinni (one good and the other is evil) , Cevriye is a history teacher and an academic intellectual, Feride is a visionary schizophrenic, and the fourth auntie Zeliha is a tattooist and rebellious woman. The novel allows its reader’s intuition to realize that the menfolk of Kazanci family suffered from a certain sort of curse that prevents its male characters from surviving beyond forties. Thus, all the Kazanci women are either divorced, widowed, unmarried, or single uneasy minded. Mustafa is the only brother to the four auntie who chose his living in Arizona, America, and who preferred a sort of sporadic touch with his family. Significantly, the Turkish and American interconnected identities have been completed by the Armenian one, Armanoush (Amy), the stepdaughter of Mustafa, a girl of an American mother and Armenian father. Amy was the one who fights regularly the Armenian genocide by the Ottoman regime in the 1920s, and who darenly chose her way to Istanbul collecting her past memories. The Armenian-American identity of Amy has been overcome by her desire to discover deeply and passionately more about Turks who forced Armenians, including her grandmother’s family to flee during the 1915 deportation and massacre.

The incursion into people’s and nations memories and social conditions has allowed Shafak’s mentality to build a certain structure beyond any complicated relationship

through interesting character's stories. Yet, Istanbul seems the most important character that torn between two continents, two mental approaches, and two sympathetic emotional belonging. Furtherly, Istanbul tries to cope with the global present as the city of 21st century through a documentary history of deep-dig traditions and the modern mentality of its individuals. Istanbul, Armenia, and Arizona have shaped frequently the novel's characters who repeatedly seem like people of torn looking and belonging:

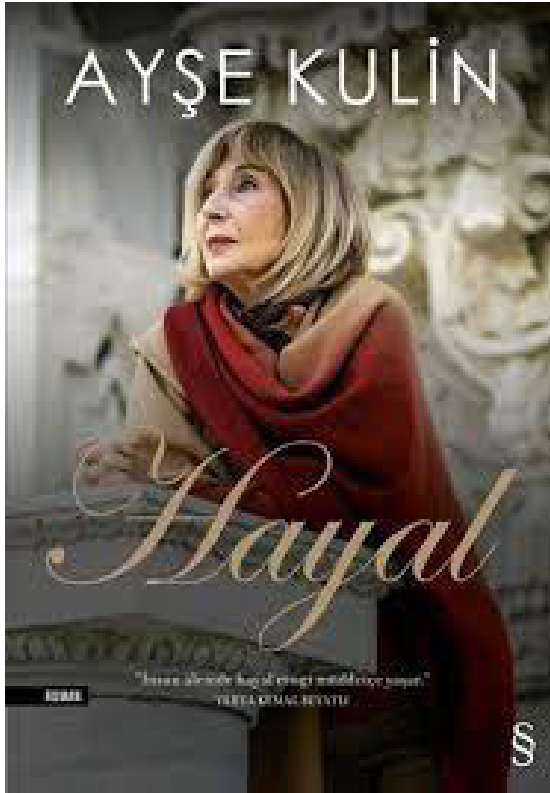
Istanbul is the hodgepodge of ten million are lives. It is an open book of ten million scrambled stories. Istanbul is waking up from its perturbed sleep, ready for the chaos of the rush hour. From now on there too many prayers to answer, too many profanities to note, and too many sinners, as well as too many innocents, to keep an eye on. (*The Bastard of Istanbul*)

The multicultural sense looks like a completion baggage to carry out plot points. Each of whom arise many questions and aware of precious memories. Particularly, the entangled tale of Turkish and American families comes to term with their past, rooted in the flashback of Armenian genocide early 20th century. Everything has poured in Istanbul city. At most, separation can be a form of connection to know more about Turkey and Turkishness. Not only this, the writer shines a light on the Armenian genocide and cen-

ters on a fact that modern Turkey opposes the crime committed by previous generations. Notions such as admission of guilt, asking forgiveness, or denying the responsibility for the action of the forefathers have been represented by the conflict come together when issues of guilt and forgiveness overlapped inside the novel character's inner feeling. The old conflict between Turks and Armenians produces other ways of accepting the differences in identity and relatedness. Though Shafak could hardly tackle the subject of critical politics of her mother country, yet she addresses this issue so beautifully and wisely. It does not matter whether the author thinks the way her characters do, this is not the point, but she could function the multicultural depiction to express the meaning of entanglement of a complexed geopolitical history of Turkey and Armenia.

The problem of identity has been discussed once more from familial point of view. The incestuous relationship that resulted another dispersed identity, has been led to another novel point. Zeliha never told anyone about Asya's real father, not even her family. Her sister Banu finds out this secret and when Mustafa came back from America, she poisoned him because he raped his sister Zeliha and made her pregnant with Asya. At his funeral, Asya knew that the uncle was the father. Hence, Shafak emphasizes that the meeting point of the three cultures (Turkish, Armenian, and American) gave Asya and the novel that title 'Bastard', the born child of no wedlock. The illegitimate child's birth endows a legitimate entanglement among cultures, and donates a sense of forgiveness for the historical guilt.

Ayşe Kulin



Again, identity questions the general mobilization of modern Istanbul and shows the relative values of this concept and its ranking that needs to be critically examined in many Turkish writers of fiction and nonfiction. Ayşe Kulin,

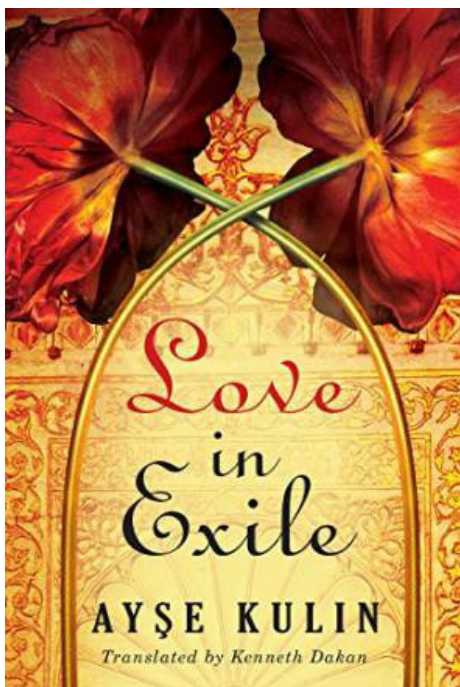
a Turkish female short story writer, novelist, and a screen-writer born in Istanbul in 1941. Her graduation from the American College for Girls in Istanbul had richly widened her thoughts about how the relation between East and West shaped the prior issue discussed on table. The “Haldun Taner Short Story Award and Sait Faik Short Story Award for the short story *Foto Sabah Resimler* in 1996 were the award Kulin won followed in 1997 by the honorary as the “Writer of the Year” by Istanbul Communication Faculty for the biographical novel *Adi Aylin* to be followed again by the same award for her short story *Genis Zamanlar*.

However there is always the identity-based discussion, conflict labels the process of building up other issues related to identity such as ethnicity or bi-identity “dual identity”. Though it is hardly to pinpoint the conflict of getting or losing identity caused by various living factors, but still the centrality of identity in certain communities hypothesizes that this context is matchless in demands and need list.

It is worth mentioning that Turks novelists have targeted their main demands in their modern and postmodern writings giving identity the focal decision to have. Ayse Kulin tested the transitional characterization of Turkish identity between too far world sides in which politics and religion participated largely to determine the identity of identity. Not only this, Kulin went further to follow the line of realism and the close relation to social conditions. As a post-modernist, Kulin finds in magical realism the style that enriches her writings by connecting the traditional Turkish models with the contemporary reactions to the demand of real identity.

The inner longing to the secular system that made her feels so proud of, Kulin moves through difficult times to determine the real identity after listing Turkey within Islamic countries. To Kulin, Turkish were dragged into the debate of the secular or Islamic identity that resulted from the principle big debate of Turkey's belonging to Europe or Middle East. Capturing the real problem of identity in Turkish society has increased in Kulin her admiration in Orhan Pamuk's works and career idealizing him as the icon of Turkish literature when this literature is marked by the Nobel Prize Orhan's name is labeled with. Speaking about Pamuk, Kulin says in a conversation with the Indian interviewer Arunima Mazumdar in *The Hindu* journal articulated the title as "Turkish is a language of the heart; Ayse Kulin": I think he's a great writer and I am thankful to him for the honor he has brought to Turkey. For me, his best work and what I'll call his masterpiece is *My Name is Red*. How I wish that I had written that book! (The Hindu).

The typical image of the clash between the modernized Turkish identity and other identity essentially belongs to other culture and world lies in *Love in Exile* by Kulin, first published as Umut in Turkey in 2008, translated later into English by Kenneth Dakan in 2016, has autobiographical roots of Kulin's father's birth in Istanbul in 1903, and Kulin's birth in 1941. The birth of both has enlightened Ayse's way to depict too vastly different worlds as the first witnessed the last days of Ottoman Empire with all its roles, life, and traditions, while the second lived within the intermingled modern life system Istanbul lives of the Republic of Turkey. By the compiling experiences, changes, and developments of the phases between the two births, Kulin has built up her 2006 novel.



Love in Exile has tackled the idea of identity differently. When the Armenian boy, Aram, and the Muslim girl, Sabahat, in 1920s decided to go through societal change extended from the political effect, the change from empire into republic. The fact that the story came from Kulin's personal family history gives the novel an intimate look at the family dynamics of considering Muslim and Christianity identity in a society lived a crucial political shift. The Christianity of Aram and the Islam of Sabahat have been unified in love identity. Sabahat with her very traditional Bosnian Muslim grandparents managed to escape persecution in their homeland hoping that they could cope with the newness of Is-

tanbul and its radical style as open male-female friendship, new alphabet, clubs, parties, and European fashion clothes. On the other hand, Aram also exiled to Istanbul though he was not sure if he could find a welcome there. Apparently, the longing of the couple to the place originality might be explained through their love to the simple identity they had before coming to Istanbul, or it might be the homesickness for the land both left behind. Love they represent is the identity they tried to keep. The religious identity Kulin involved in the novel has been critically dealt with since Christianity and Muslim are in contrast lines of allowance and forbidding. Sabahat is among other characters that created her own educated identity out of the hard conditions at that time. Her resistance to get the university education and her talk with her father about the love relation with a Christian man formed a non-captivated woman to rules and limits. Her self-strong sense enabled Sabahat to withstand oppositions her relation with Aram faces.

Kulin draws a vivid line through *Love in Exile* about the societal and political upheaval happening in Istanbul during 1920s. The novel vividly depicted the struggle to cope with the new births of beliefs and ideas as well as the ongoing tracks of forbidden relations among religions. Additionally, the historical grounds Kulin presents meant much to the author's regards and the reader's considerations. So, it is Istanbul that endows the sky stars their identity.

Part Two: Tales of Refugees in Syrian Novels

From exile in different and shattered countries, Syrians have told and written their stories.

*The barbed wire mauled my back as I crawled
between the two countries . Then I ran...*

(Samar Yazbeck Crossing)

The catastrophic conflict in Syria does not lend itself to an easy discussion. To most scholars of Middle East, the conflict turned to the shape-shifted sample when the fight took other form among Syrian sects rather than between the political regime and its people. Through various concerns working together or a part, the shape of rebel went on through divisions and sub-divisions. Sunnis against Shi'a or Kurds against Arabs. The war returns repeatedly to the scene whenever possible.

Syria got a focal concern in terms of world's refugee crisis. The issue of displacement and relocation has paradoxically gone with human rights and international laws.

Featuring the truth of such unusual crisis, a seemingly absurd or political-contradictory way has been coined with shameful hallmarks the refuge law. Tima Kurdi, for instance, adds more clarified picture on the crisis of Syrian refugees on their way to across a Turkish sea to the Greek Island of Gos. Tima, the aunt of Alan Kurdi, the toddler whose body was photographed on a Turkish shore and became the flashpoint to the world, distinguishably mirrors not only the 27 month dead Alan, but millions of dislocated Syrians who lost most of their families members either drowning or killing on their ways to be refugees. The deadly life of those people drags the readers deep into the author's heartfelt memoir and inspires a new style of writing and reading through the shocking refugee crisis.

Samar Yazbek



Narratives of migration has been co-opted by writers who couldn't discard their personal and public suffering when they conjured fears of death or country collapse. The world responses to such political crises generally took years to condemn, but the literary cry fictionally or not fictionally seeks immediate and urgent response. Many writers speak firsthand of the refugee experience. Most of them ended up in US or other European countries, then they travelled back to their first camps seeking for any spiritual touch as relic reminds them of their own life as a refugee. Samar Yazbek (1970-), tipped as one of the top young Arab writers. She

is the woman who experienced Syrian war, refugee camps, migration, and increasingly, lived the bullying conditions abroad against Syrians.

Between the following news, the ongoing Syrian civil war, the battle against ISIS, the suffering of civilians on the frontlines, and writing the crucial wartime fatal events, a woman writer appears to shift the concern from documenting the chronicle cultural and historic treasures into the stories of Syrian refugees or survivors in terms of literature of wartime and the aftermath. From the beginning point of Syrian war, it has seen a wave of nonfiction and memories authored by women that capture the most far-enduring human's comprehension of the Syrian civil war. Samar Yazbek is a remarkable example who picturizes the Syrian rebellion, civil war, and displacement. Her female voice often transports the reader's attention cleverly into these crises. When Yazbek left Syria with her daughter in 2011, she realized that her coming back would be wounded. Then, her secret back to Syria in 2012 to set up a civic institution for women's empowerment helped to make her mind up for the latest novel *The Crossing: "My Journey to the Shattered Heart of Syria"*. Her experiences through a travel to rebel-held regions and to speak to jihadists are accounted as a suicidal task. She lived and witnessed a refugee camp of no promising future before successfully passing her way out to Europe, specifically France. Laura Reeck, professor of French and international studies emphasizes the fact that during the current migration crisis, Yazbek considered well the worries of exiled Syrians and other exiled people. She writes as a journalist in the French journal *Liberation* (2017):

The term exile seems to me to be a literary and intellectual luxury used to describe our dispersal, we, the five million Syrians confronted with a growing hell. It applies to a small set of elite and well-known writers and intellectuals, whereas it exclude millions of anonymous refugees and displaced people. (Reeck 187)

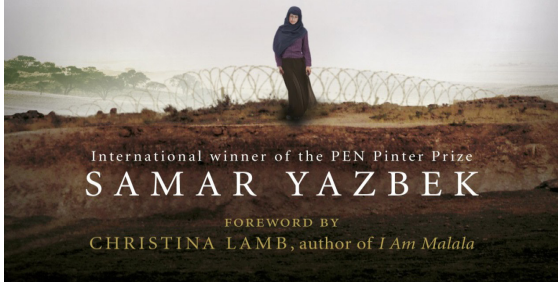
Yazbek's *The Crossing* is a harrowing account of Syria's decline into hooliganism. It represents a mixing documentary paper of the author's memoir and other refugees' stories. Samar's crossing three times over 12 months to Syria has given her a chance to meet Abu Ahmed, an emir of Ahrar al-sham, a rebel jihadist group based north Syria. Through her question and answer conversation, Abu Ahmed barbaric answer has increased Samar's insistence that things go worst in future: "There will be laws to protect the sects and the non-Muslims, the Nasara- the Christians. It will be unlawful for women to go out without a hijab. Appearing unveiled shall be prohibited; that's the most important thing" (*The Crossing*). What Abu Ahmed confirmed has justified the decision of Samar of refuging to far broader area as possible as she could. Abu Ahmed continues: "if the Druze and Ismailtes return to Islam then they are welcome, and if they don't, they'll be judged as infidels, but the Alawites are apostates and must be killed. But the women and children...the women, what's their sin? Samar asked. "The women give birth to children. The children become men and then they kill us, answered the emir"(*The Crossing*).

'Powerful and moving...may be one of the first political classics of the 21st century'

Observer

T H E
Crossing

My journey to the
shattered heart of Syria



Crossing the border by Samar and all refugees has reminded Syrians that the fence holds the realities started from the first innocent demonstrations for democracy, through the establishment of the Free Syrian Army, to the grounding of ISIS there. *The Crossing*, undoubtedly, lists questions of why refugees make up minds to leave homeland the time people challenge living and death under the gaze of a sniper, how children could ban themselves not to play with neighbors, or how women walk freely unveiled. Desperately, the reality of the Syrian life situations serves

to icon Samar as a brave author daring hectic travels to Syria while she managed to escape as a refugee. The novel documents the author's journey deep into mental and spiritual self-control as well as it spots a spiral of adventures took place under a wire fence in the line of the border:

The bared wire lacerated my back. I was trembling uncontrollably. After long hours spent waiting for nightfall, to avoid attracting the attention of Turkish soldiers, I finally raised my head and gazed up at the distant sky, darkening to black. Under the wire fence marking the line of the border a tiny burrow had been dug out, just big enough for one person...I took a deep breath, arched my back and ran, as fast as I could. (*The Crossing*)

Passing through a hole in the fence with the Turkish border represents how the dream of democracy became the alarm for the destruction of the country which was in the past a prosper land that turned into nothingness. On the other hand, Samar's case as a refugee increased her self-bravery. For instance, she involves in building schools for refugees, economically she empowers Syrian widows, she regularly meets rebels, as the emir Abu Ahmed, to argue about the necessity for the civil war and the way for rebuilding the country, and she documents real stories from survivors or recovered.

The swirl of crises Syrian passes by, Yazbek pays attention to the factions whom took parts in destructing her homeland. Wonderingly, her exile sets her certain belief that Islamist factions, Free Syrian Army, civilians, and foreign agendas have helped to choose unwillingly another home as displaced woman. To Yazbek, exile is nowhere, just a short visit, a transformational temporal necessity, or the crossing into the void;” How could I forget the moment I truly stepped into the void of meaninglessness?” Samar continues: “...never return, that my country was occupied and the sky was occupied, and I became motionless ...I stared hard, unblinking back at the void of the border” (*The Crossing*). Crossing into the void was nothing than moving in and out the wire fence. The in and out of Syria is that meaningless void that bitterly captured the meaning of refuge and the scene of the Syrian reality.

Khaled Khalifa

Under attack by Syrian regime forces and other militants, Syrian novelist Khaled Khalifa, born in 1964, was emerged to state that “writing, in war and in peace, is the same thing”. As a writer and a screenwriter, Khalifa views himself not beyond the fiery boundary of Arab countries as he reconsidered things in light of mass death, history, and bloody revolutions.

Khaled Khalifa, deeply and revolutionarily, celebrated the Syrian issues politically and culturally, and made of his birth place city Aleppo a spiritual and physical drive when he wrote about the memories and pains of his country. Through his five novels, two of them are translated into English, Khalifa reached profoundly the real depiction of political and religious repression additionally to the social one. His writings about sectarianism, hatred, shedding blood, death, refuge, immigration, and other after war themes have permitted his works to be a sort of healing that digs deeply into Syrian society. His constant concern to portray the political and religious misuses in his country has put him into a real dangerous confrontation with the government authorities in that his works had been banned in the past before he got a conditional permission in case he writes or travels outside Syria. As a “furious with oppression and tyranny”, Khalifa permanently describes himself in which his pen presents the reality of situations as the tool

of a critic and not as a partisan. Loosely, his leaving to Damascus in 1999 cheapened Khalifa's monitoring views to trace the Aleppo history as the city destructed completely physically, spiritually, and culturally during Baath rule. Yet, the values, morals, and aesthetics appreciation of the city will return soon by the time when battle will be over. Captivatingly, Khalifa made his innermost told and secret Aleppo stories taken place in its allies and markets. He "recited some lines by an Aleppan poet who had left behind him a poetry volume entitled Songs of the Dome, a huge encyclopedia of Aleppan customs tastes and jokes which boasted of Aleppo's uniqueness" (In Parise of Hatred 52).

Khalifa's writings breathed deeply the Aleppo construction structure the time is destructed or well-constructed "Aleppo will not die, because it cannot die...It will rise again and return, better than it was" (Interview 2017).

War and destruction are the topics Khalifa is assiduous of touching and discussing. Through six years of revolution and until recently, Khalifa still looks at Syria as that strong country of soon-future democracy: "There are millions of people in Syria who are opposed to the regime...The regime cannot keep them all under surveillance, or arrest millions" (Syria Direct Interview).

The concept of 'refuge' as set by Khalifa, is a political hot-speech issue that has its coverage by images of war and its ruins. To Khalifa, the voice of the refugee is not that missed one, but rather, it is the voice of a very perfect opportunity to speak and cry loudly. The voice of refugee decidedly acclaims that Syria though it is sad, but beautiful, and though the immigration is a must choice but the return is of no escape.

In many of Khalifa's novels, the theme of refuge is either implicit or evident. It might be shortened into flowing of inner desires of the hard choice over staying in Syria. The original place to the novel's characters is no longer suitable to stay and live in. death is everywhere and massacres replace the pre-dominating status of security. *In Praise of Hatred*, first published in 2006 and shortlisted for the International Prize for Arabic Fiction in 2008 (by which time it had been banned in Syria and republished in Lebanon), the author foretells how the Syrian regime will battle its earlier opponents when young Syrians will fall like the ripened fruit, that comes close to the real description in Aleppo six years later: "Bodies on both sides fell like ripened berries" in a city where death is as commonplace as a crate of rotten peaches flung out on to the pavement" (*In Praise of Hatred* 133). Though the timeline of Khalifa's third novel goes back to the confrontation between the regime of Hafez al-assad in the late 1970s with the Muslim Brotherhood to culminate in a massacre in Hama in 1982(troops opened fire on the prisoners whose their freedom was quashed by the regime. The prisoners' brains splattered all over the walls and ceilings to send 800 prisoners to death in less than an hour), yet its coverage indication has spread to the existence of the Free Army and Sectarianism that gathered to prison the Syrian society with unknown names such sectarian fever and brainwashing.

Compellingly, Khalifa's novels work to be a part of healing. They dig into society issues. In *No Knives in the Kitchens of this City* (2013), the concept of the dead or living body connected with life. To Khalifa, Syria is that precious body, strongly embraces its individuals though most of them are driven outside it. In *No Knives*, the refuge is

primarily inside Syria, dwelling a house by refugees from other Syrian city. Grievedly, the novel presents people who their trauma was their joys. It is the lifeline that bridges the gap between ourselves and the 'other' who might be named as 'humanity'. Aleppo, again, steps as the novel main character. The novel navigates from the time when Aleppo was the place for refugees, the commercial and population center, and the multicolor cafes, into the time when Aleppo is no more than a name inverted to a "ghost city". Aleppo and the novel are more complicated run without saying, but how readers should get inside? Hence, Khalifa presents a family started its establishment since 1960s and continued until the Syrian revolution. Shifting back and forth is the writer's technique to imbalance and compare between the memories. Terms such as fear, refuge, music, and flashback stand as the story perfume that brings a nostalgic sense to the past and witnessing moments from the present. In *No Knives*, the safe refuge is the mosque in Baghdad where Rashid searches hopelessly to hide himself after continuous bombs America plans dropped. On the other hand, Aleppo is a refuge during the near past before revolution. For some gay people like Nizar, the city embraced such diverse sexualities: "He settled in Old House Bar, and felt liberated in his place where gay people gathered every night and freely exchanged drinks without being disturbed" (*No Knives* 86). The memories inside Aleppo had detailed the past ten years when Madhat was imprisoned. His another refuge added to Aleppo was his prison as he was saved from the Public Investigation Committee and the interrogators of the security branch, questioning him about the bribes paid to him. Thus, Khalifa builds a third sort of refuge when Madhat finds through love experience with Nazar and other gays another

refuging opportunity to get rid of fear he encounters in case he is questioned by the security branch:

His few experiences with casual lovers hadn't brought him the happiness he had shared with Nizar. He considered giving up life as a gay man and requested to see his elder brother...along with seven other employees whose names had been published in full in the state newspaper...He didn't clarify that he lusted after the men who surrounded him night and day. (*No Knives* 153)

The narrative choice is to create homosexuality as some sort of refuging security first inside themselves and second inside the country, and the purpose of fulfilling has placed a psychological need into their own request. Changing his name from Madhat into female name is another action taken independently to get more refuges. "With a sense of relief, Madhat took Noor as his new name. He chose it for its ambiguity, suitable for man or woman" (153). The sense of relief Madhat feels is that normality he lives in Aleppo that became later the remnants of a beautiful era. From that initial reference to the normal relief the characters supposed, Aleppo is characterized by these relationships between it and individuals not only as a place for life, but also as a city of refugees.

No Knives in the kitchens of this city presents Aleppo not because of its commercial impact but because its representation as a human landscape, known by dreams, love, work, longing, and memories. The city has paralleled life and its hardships when secrets have many tales to tell and truth to reveal. The refuge Khalifa lives day-to-day experiences inside his city and suffers the struggle to survive.

Part Three:

The Fictional Circles in Egypt after the 25th of January 2011

Under what is so-called “The Revolution Literature”, Egyptian novel celebrated the literary themes that were seized for many decades. It was another way of looking at the revolution of 2011 dreamingly embraced the fundamental change which was accompanied by a probable failure that these changes will deteriorate further pointing to the 2012 presidential election (the political wing, The Freedom and Justice Party that held an outright majority as presidency as well), presented by the Muslim Brotherhood.

The ideological shift in the Salafist movement encouraged its split to two groups; the Brotherhood who devoted their works to be the Islahi (reformists), and the traditionalists. M. Cherif Bassiouni in his book *Chronicles of the Egyptian Revolution and its Aftermath: 2011-2016* (2016) has elaborated that split: “The Salafists, whose movement was not known to have evolved into a political group before 2012, found themselves divided between traditionalists and reformists who wanted to enter the democratic political arena. The Salafist al-Nour Party platform contained a number of affirmations concerning the rule of law and used termi-

nology implying the pursuit of democracy, but these were misleading since their ultimate goal is a Muslim theocratic state (one that is ruled by the Sharia). The traditionalists reject these subterfuge and stick to the fundamentals of their movement beliefs regarding the demands of Islam” (Bassiouni 222-3). This typically drew the picture that became utterly different than Egyptian once imagined and dreamt of. The amputated freedom, the fragile position women had held in society, the prosaic security, and the restricting literary activities, especially those artistic which all heralded the occurrence of future complications that threatened Egyptians and questioned the nature of the revolution itself. This leaves open one main question, among others; did the Egyptian Revolution had been manipulated by foreigners’ destinations that modified the main goals of the Arab Spring in general, and Egyptian revolution in particular? Consequentially, the political revolution tracked the revolution literature to the awakening status or renaissance. In that sense, literature in Egypt aftermath 2011 needed ample time to evolve. The change did not take place in writing novels, but it skipped to all sorts of arts; street performances, graffiti, singing in cultural cafes, poetry seminars and cultural evenings, underground music bands, and auto/bio graphical authors stories about before and after the 2011 revolution. The drastic change for the good requires an almost all possible ways to reach the destination on which people agree. Thus, the novel played that part of an introducing change before 2011 to warn for the coming political and social shift. *Emaret Ya ’kouban* (The Yacoubian Building, written in 1002 and first translated in 2004) by Alaa al-Aswany, was undoubtedly a good epitome archived as an appropriate work of resistance literature during 1990s. it denounced the

corruption of one-party state that examined its individuals' patience either to stay and show no loyal belonging to their government, or to encounter the unknown in other countries for a new promising life path.

Mohamed Salmawy

Central to the introductory explanation, the Egyptians' lack of hope under the rule of Mubarak's regime has increased their call for documenting the grim frustrating account in their novels. Mohamed Salmawy in his 2011 novel *Ajnihat al-Farasha* "Butterfly Wings" prefaces his work with a reference to Hamed Abd al-Sammad's 2010 novel "Farewell Sky" (*Wada'an Ayotteha al-Sama*): The novel that predicated the 25th of January Revolution". *Farewell Sky* proposes a foreshadowing phase of the close coming revolution in Tunisia and Egypt months before their outbreak. The key hints indications of *Farewell Sky* surprised the readers of seeing the future so vividly though it was not a foretelling form, yet it depicted the collapse of the political life in Egypt. On the other hand, Salmawy's *Butterfly Wings* has been celebrated as the novel that foretold the revolution in Egypt. With enough saving of time, the novel examines the political and social issues Egypt suffers through decades when the novel is told from different mood of characters. The plot offers a chance for Doha, a fashion designer unhappily married to a leading figure in the Mubarak's regime, to meet on a plane an academic and leading dissident Ashraf. Through a flashback and glimpse of romance, the relationship between Doha and Ashraf moves interestingly to seek a comfort eventually led to Doha's self-discovery and a search for a mother Ashraf never knew before. Doha's collection of memories and her feeling of discomfort pro-

motedly increased her enthusiastic mood to head to Gate 7 leaving the airport immediately the moment she heard the announcement of departure:

Doha waited impatiently for the moment when she would find herself inside the plane. She had a strange feeling that this journey ... would be a turning point in her life, a total transformation...She was unhappy with life. She felt she was lacking something, not materially...but emotionally...she felt unfulfilled...she was looking to find herself, but so far unsuccessfully.
(Butterfly Wings 5-6)

The journey for self-discovery of Doha and her quest to fulfill the emotional gap she lives have challengingly and immensely legitimized the prior preparation for Egyptian people to revolt as Doha's life sample predicted that the fragments from an erupting volcano would soon announce the seethe of the Egyptian street. Getting ready for Doha's departure has personified Egypt for the moment of revolutionary transformation. In principle, the predicted events moved parallelly with tension that accompanied carefully the characters' first actions and reactions. Each is looking to find the true self believing robustly that this search will free them from the political and social chains. The rapid move to society fractures and challenges due to revolutionary transformation exemplified the modern experience of

authoritarian rule that could be mere excited when ideas and stories from the social ground are connected. Doha can only become politically awakened through a relationship with a man: “It’s as if I hear her calling to me, both when I’ m awake and in my sleep. Sometimes I feel I’ve gotten near the truth, that I can almost touch it. But as soon as I get close, it flies off like a butterfly that you glimpse one moment and is gone the next” (*Butterfly Wings* 42). Complexly, *Butterfly Wings* sounds the collection of tales of personal upheaval in times of national turmoil. All the novel characters hook up their separate individual ordeals to the political trends, yet they surely will conjugate into one fate. For instance, Ayman’s brother Abdl Samad is a victim of a marriage scam when he “explained that Sheikha Ruqaya was a widow whose dead husband had left her quite a lot of money. She loved Abdl Samad’s apparent decency and willingness to take care of her money, and they had agreed to get married” (63). Ayman searches deep for a pivotal missing life part that seems absolutely necessary to complete what he lacks. Though Ashraf is a successful university professor, yet politically he is in restlessness shares others the disparity in valuing happiness and social balance. Emotionally, Doha’s eagerness to listen and share Ashraf’s political interests even against her husband, the senior leader in the ruling party, has covertly or overtly permitted a sort of change when she refused the Egyptian embassy hospitality and chauffeurs after her second meeting with Ashraf in Milano. It is the moment Doha’s assertion her own daring independence.

The action of anticipating insurrection or any public rising literarily by Salmawy had been dealt in the novel by the apt description of Ashraf’s opposition to the ruling party

emphasizing that “the whole country is corrupt”(20). For more anticipational stream, the symbolic meaning of rebirth is identified by butterflies. In designing her dresses, Doha makes from butterflies as an inspirational model as well as her inner vows to make up her mind in to re-control her life and “no longer be a caterpillar confined to its chrysalis” (22). On the other hand, the concept of rebirth and people’s new turned paper are reflected metaphorically in Salwa for she represents the innocence and purity of people’s hearts when they are given birth.

The story captures the verge of collapsing Egypt and other Arab Spring countries experienced. The figure like Ashraf represents the youth of Egyptians who gave loud voices to changes for a bright future that proved never really happened. Add to that, the demand of the two brothers to replace their mother by a new mother after a sad discovery that she was not their natural mother which metaphorically points to the replacement of the old regime leadership by a new one. Cleverly, *Butterfly Wings* echoes the true coverage of the recent past of Egypt.

Omar Robert Hamilton



The triumph as well as the disappointment of the 2011 Egyptian political vicissitude has brought very remembering readable narratives or cinematically adapted stories of the Egyptian fiery streets during and after 2011. Omar Robert Hamilton could not find a replaceable way than forwarding his readers the seeming triumph of that upheaval took place in daily erupting Cairo allies. The energy of Cairo streets brought vividly to life the past stages of Mubarak's ruling party and later, the counter-revolution other political trends such as prominently the Muslim Brotherhood that ignores the key necessary people's demands. *The City Always Wins* (2017) brings into memory how the revolution challengingly encountered the frustrating forces of the Brotherhood security and the revived police that restrained revolutionaries through torturing and murdering. The disappointment overstepped to witness how the army killed

too. With a great emphasis, the novel has brought together many of these reversals through chronological novel parts entitled Tomorrow, Today, and Yesterday.

The City Always Wins characters struggle in night-time streets, throttle in traffic, and do difficult or impossible moves to hospitals. The hardships of the revolutionary time exposes another theme in the novel when the protagonist Khalil's identity sounds of multiculturalism smoothly announces the depths of Egyptians' relationships among all. Khalil's nationality is Palestinian -Egyptian of American birth reflects the author's nationality background (the author Omar is the son of the well-known Egyptian writer Ahdaf Soueif and the British poet Ian Hamilton). The cultural texture of the Egyptian society has principally discussed the cohesion among variant social classes as well as cultures and nationalities. The hardships of 2011 revolution have to overshadow people's responses to real changes in Egypt as a sole goal. Khalifa's partner, Mariam, fights in Tahrir Square and responds actively to seek the worthy of living and women's rights though she did not come close to the word of feminism. Through the night battles while revolutionaries confront the police, Omar Hamilton addresses the world that stood listening and watching silently the new making of another Egyptian epic. Hence, the novel covers paintingly the contradictory images of revolution and democracy, and chaos and discipline. The novel is counted to have a spot on young people, particularly Khalil and Mariam, swept up in the wave.

As a co-founder of Chaos, a magazine, the website and broadcast, Khalil considers that their office "becomes a cerebral cortex at the center of the information war" (*The City Always Wins*), in which the place significantly plays a role

in collecting and distributing the revolution news. As Chaos stresses on the massacre of people, mainly Christian, who protested outside Maspero, the state media HQ, other revolutionaries worked on establishing other illegal radio transmitters to announce manifesto or to present opposing public arts. The Chaos collects the public problems of not only Khalil and Mariam, but their friends who document the street demands of change and justice. The possible social media they own was torn between inspiring young to raise a brash or to authenticate martyrdom, shooting, and raping. Desperately, the novel characters move observations and dialogues to the stream of consciousness one resorts to when crises depress the hope for change: “We’ve done it to ourselves. This cycle of horror. Each scene has to be more shocking than the last. Then they care for fifteen minutes until the next horror horrifies them. And how many horrors until people have to just switch off?” (*The City*). Louder and darker, the city of the revolutionaries rebuke the silence of the Western world that the revolution may breathe its last breath: “How many waves of outrage must we spark to reignite the revolution? How many last breaths will we auction off to the breathless interest? If a revolution’s fuel is death, then what will be its end?” (*The City*).

The young of the Egyptian revolution care for more than one crises that will follow their uprising; Mubarak’s ruling, Morsi, then Sisi’s plans to hold the country. Every now and after allows a hidden fate with a nostalgic step back: “There can be nothing new. No new music is imaginable, no new genre, no new memories to repackage and sell, no new stories or ideas or possibilities, no new happiness. There is only nostalgia and kitch...and heartbreak and a sealed fate and surrender” (*The City*).

The major circumstances and moments in the novel have been accompanied by Tweets, headlines, or front line tidings. The characters are captivated by the revolution events. Thus, Hamilton makes from the character's conversation as an authentic sound of the public. Though they live the chaotic situations of the time, still they make reasonably and sympathetically differences in authorizing legally their revolutionary actions. The city as it is suggested by the title is the winner though the obstacles are multiplied. Cairo spirit is tested by the classical music or Jazz which influentially jostle for giving the revolution its rhythm. It is that balance Khalil and his friends want to parallelize, "a balance he thought he could express in music where he failed with language" (*The City*).

Overall, it might be obvious to say that the novel is somber and yet inspiring to draw the reader's attention to the frenzy of the Egyptian political change that was similar to *Les Miserable* when people were promised of freedom and justice, but they expectedly lived the misery of their own reality. The losing of Mubarak's rule, shadowing the bleak atmosphere with music, or grouping under Chaos Cairo broadcasting did not skip the memory of young martyrs in mind, nor forget how women's virginity were raped in Tahrir Square. The coming down of women to Tahrir Square had "infected the air with testosterone and territory" (*The City*). It brought the emotional and spiritual chock that women are confronted now not only by the dominating male, but by the society as their horrible opponents. The other implicit revolution for women's rights is sparkling in Mariam's call for freeing the caged bird. Women are imprisoned, raped, oppressed, and killed. The split scene to women's rights has maximized the revolution goals to other

demands Hamilton embraces:” The time is now, the people are ready: the only revolution left is a women’s revolution. Tomorrow we say “enough”. Every woman will stop working, managing, maintaining the world and we watch it crack at the seams” (*The City*). Mariam became more a reactionary dreamer of a new beginning. She shared many stories of women met by heavy hearts and deep sense of disillusionment. Hence, it is never easy to Hamilton to pass over thousands of country problems through messages of no preachy way. Hamilton’s task is even harder for the Egyptian revolution of 2011 was the first civil uprising in which Twitter and Facebook played a key ruling part. The author quoted several real tweets at key points in the novel as well as he pinned some real people as Alaa Abd el-Fattah, Hamilton’s cousin, who was an imprisoned activist and to whom Hamilton dedicated *The City Always Wins*.

Part Four:

Iranian Literature between Resistance and Inspiration

Two impulses led my thoughts to scope on Iranian fiction and to list it within the regional atmosphere of the Middle East literary talent: to discover the contribution of literature created by Iranians and the reasons behind keep it off or on the world stage, and to zoom the books that have reached readers of English especially the period after 2000s.

Matters should be discussed through reading and analyzing Iranian literature, fiction in particular, are closely related to things happened inside Iran and the individuals' reactions against the state and how the censors of the Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance had filtered what is written, and how through the very limited access can know the literary and aesthetic innovations. Outside of Iran, what has been reached onto readers' hands is the compiling of experiences of narratives of focal interest during the Iranian revolution in 1979 with a torrent of historical events surrounding it and coming after that defined the destiny of Iranians in the 21st century. Many of these literary works resisted the political and religious circumstances written by Iranians surreptitiously inside Iran, or overtly outside it by authors of Iranian descent, in Persian, English, French, or

any other language. What is expressed stealthily, is written openly by Iranian diasporic authors.

Looking critically and historically at the limits of Iranian society and challenges, readers would realize that fiction established its significance as the second importance standard after poetry, particularly within modern times. The phase of modern highlighted Persian poetry was regarded highly due to Nima Yushij's (1897-1960) literary presence as the father of modern Persian poetry that considerably was the gateway to introduce novel styles and techniques fit to the modern demands. Yet, no definition of modern Iranian literature would be fair without a mention of Sadeq Hedayat (1903-1951), as he was widely considered the father of modern Persian fiction. Profoundly and cleverly, he championed his own works that have their influence in works and career of other writers like Edgar Allan Poe, Guy de Maupassant, Franz Kafka, Anton Chekhov, and Fyodor Dostoyevsky. He was the first who translated the works of Kafka and Chekhov into Persian, and the one who edited in Persian Kafka's stories. Intellectually and politically, Hedayat circled himself distinguishably by his literature and by his anti-monarchical and anti-Islamic attitudes that encouraged his belonging to a literary group known as the Four.

As one of the key texts of modern Persian literature is Hedayat's *The Blind Owl* (1937). The novella represents the response to a repressive socio-political climate and it is said to have triggered a series of suicide when it was published. Though the book discussed the socio-political affairs pessimistically, but it showed much understanding of Iranian modern situations. The deep melancholic of

Iranian society Hedayat presented had promised a tragic end for the writer himself as to most of his works' protagonists when Hedayat eventually moved to Paris where he committed suicide there in 1951. Hedayat's death and other deaths he ended up his characters' life allowed to "many of his literary colleagues finally understood this, and much of prerevolutionary Persian literature not only resonated with the imagery of Hedayat's stories but continued to use his device of portraying Iran as diseased, a drugged dream, a progressive decay which can and must be thrown off" (Fischer 181).

The negative or positive inspiration Hedayat brought in his works increased the depth of Iranian soul when he reflected folklore in his stories, the ancient Iran, the traditions of Persianism, and then the satirical analysis of the current time Iran lives. Though he showed his hostility to Arabs, but Hedayat represents the Iranian self-identification and openness to the world that considers distinguishably his country culture and heritage. As a story of new techniques, *The Blind Owl* holds meaningful messages as times of tyranny, corruption, and servitude, all turned religion into a tool of prostration that remarkably lived in Iran. Thus, Hedayat's pessimistic messages in fiction concludingly had been resulted by the Second World War when Iran was occupied by the Allied Forces that turned Iran pointedly into a new modern crisis. Hence, between 1941 and 1947, many intellectual groups had found their way to significantly awaken Iranian thoughts toward making literature as an alarm to another beginning. So, the First Congress of Iranian Writers was established in 1946 included writers such as Jalal Al-e-Ahmed, Ebrahim Golestan, and Sadaq Chubak beside Hedayat.

Realistically, most Iranian writers at this phase of time reflected the social and political challenges. Bozorg Alavi (1904-1997), was an outstanding political writer who functioned his effort in establishing the communist Tudeh Party in 1940s. His exile in Germany and his return to Iran after the downfall of the Shah in 1979, gave Alavi the last opportunity to believe in Iran's social and political stability, choosing eventually Germany to live the last moment of his life there leaving some works behind that *Chashm 'hayash* (*Her Eyes*) in 1952 was best of his novels.

Of no doubt, the revolution of 1979 pushed Iran to live temporarily a period of freedom in literature and independent publications before the coming of the worst decades for Iranian literature in 1980s when the compiling of crises, a war with Iraq, Islamic Republic rigorism, and the economic problems gave no allowance to writers to opt for exile.

The repetition of the miserable political scenes would surely lead to walk in already paved ways for a new generation of young writers such as Zoya Pirzad and Hossein Sanapour who got their not a bad number of readers and who believed that the socio-political ideologies of their country would provide more exposed scenes of criticism and opposition.

Ehsaneh Sadr

Waves of migration out of Iran since 1979 marked the golden period for Iranian literature and championed the literature of migration as most readable and understandable pieces of East and growing body of Iranian thoughts. A large number of Iranian writers have thematically contributed to the rapid changes happened to literary traditions to present rich, realistic, diverse, and more accessible to modern readers of mostly English language speakers. Ehsaneh Sadr, an Iranian novelist and activist woman, worked on campaigns ranging from Iran human rights to biking advocacy, presented in 2009 her novel *A Door Between Us* as a resolute and comic snapshot of a family waded in scary lines portraying how such a family was in a fatal clash with the political ideology the period aftermath of the 2009 Iranian election and the Green Wave protested. Through her regular moves between Iran and United States, Sadr drew the story lines of a young couple whose families fall on opposite side to each other due to the political round in Iran. The novel reflects the internal and personal struggle in the critical time in Iranian modern history, the period that commonly known as the Stolen Election. As a daughter of a Marmon American mother and a Muslim Iranian father, Sadr finds in her family a sort of completion that always followed the Iranian political life news. To Sadr, her father's decision to be in Iran during the revolution of 1979 was a daring choice to live their own democratic experience to return hopefully later to Iran. The novel presents how Sadr's family has

been involved in Iranian life and as supporter of Iranian regime through different events. As Sadr's coming back to Iran before 2009, "she wore a breezy sky-blue house chador draped loosely around and framing a black headscarf, long-sleeved blouse, and skirt" (*A Door Between Us* 32). So, it was really interesting for Sadr to witness the supposed 2009 Election that drew the competition between AhmediNijad who was running against the challenger Mousavi. As the regime favorite candidate, Nijad stood before the liberal Mousavi with his public persona wife Zahra who was involved with the campaign.



Obviously, the green movement took its name when the "election had neared Tehran a washing in the deep green color of Mousavi's campaign. With the cries of Ahmedi, bye-bye!' the capital seemed to rejoice in the opportunity to rid itself of this absurd little man..."(*A Door Between Us* 79). The campaign of Mousavi adopted the green color of green balloons. Politically, the novel depicts the day of election and how people stood in rows and how they hoped for gradual reforms of modern democratic Iran. Moreover, the writer moves on through how people were warned by state officials that any rally of Mousavi's supporters would

be illegal in which gunshots were reported to have been fired at the rally.

A Door Between Us significantly points to the crisis that has engulfed Iran in a series of conflicts since the presidential election of 2009 in a hope for reconstructing the political map. The novel negotiates the political identity rooted deeply in a specific religious project that develops another deterrent between the government and its individuals (Farhi).

In the course of the novel, Sarah's love affair with Ali has ended in the two families' arrangement for marriage, but the close coming of election obliged Sarah's family to try to call off the wedding. Though many obstacles have appeared in simultaneous way with that marriage such as Sarah's cousin Sadegh who is a member of Baseej, the supporter of the government and who is tasked by the regime to arrest protesters and shutting down speech against the regime, and Azar, Ali's sister who is activist and a Green Wave supporter, still Sarah and Ali insisted to live the normalcy of life. In doing so, Sadr tries to report narratively the happenings of the Green Wave or Green Movement as she weaves history and contexts into conditions she calls to understand. Socially, Sadr makes her readers familiar with a lot of social conflicts when families are torn apart by a corrupt regime and political mistakes. Family ties and loyalties are examined in which tension and action rooted dangerously in the response of real individuals. In fact, Sadr realizes that the whole world knows little about the social life inside Iran since so little is ever said or written about this country. The tragic social and political background has been exposed through the green hijabs, painted faces, clothes, and green fingers. Thus, the green color involved

strongly with the socio-political process and gave the family of Sarah and Ali a deal to be with or against. Socially, the two families clash when they confronted the political beliefs. Ali's sister, Azar, a divorced lawyer, finds in that movement an outlet to call for women's rights; "Azar has insisted that the election had been rigged, that the Green Wave protesters were simply standing up for their rights" (*A Door Between Us*). She tries to make a big difference against the oppression on women and awful homes.

The novel interestingly welcomed all sorts of people, some are good, others are awful, some are grey people and others are lost searching for their way, and some show their concern in social matters, while others could not avoid being involved in politics. What has been read by the novelist's readers is the significance of the internal resistance to create a true belief that Islam is more easily tackled by true believers than they are actually doing. In addition, the novel resulted into a point that despite a movement going on, life, too, goes on.

A Door Between Us is a book about how to find love, how to navigate hardships, how to comprehend commonality when people show disagreement about deeply crucial matters, and how politics operates as an influential life lines. The readers were captivated truly by the consequences of the Green Wave because something did not fit quite right or look natural. Alongside of the socio-political thoughts inside the novel, the centralization of the Iranian experiences and perspectives has increased the readers' longing to widen their knowledge about the inside of Iran, education, culture, and the level of people's understanding and appreciation of the political acceptance or refusal.

The living of Ehsaneh Sadr with her family in the United States and being the writer of her debut novel has stopped readers to focus on another exiled Iranian woman in New York City. Azareen Van der Vliet Oloomi is the author of the novel *Call Me Zebra* (2018), the winner of the 2019 PEN/ Faulkner Award for Fiction, The John Gardner Award, longlisted for the PEN open Book Award, an Amazon Best Book of the Year, a Publisher's Weekly Bestseller and named a Most Anticipated Book of 2018 by over twenty publications.

Azareen Van der Oloomi

Call me Zebra (2018), the second novel by Azareen Van der Oloomi, critically is a defense against the traumas of the world. The novel combines cleverly between the effect of exile in the United States and the love for books that dealt with friendly and lusty love to literature books. In these books, the scars of long history, the pain of the displacement, the unbelonging to determined spot, and the suffering of not being equal in passion to normal people, all have ruled the individual's mind to behave disorderly. The scene of Iranian revolution of 1979 is repeated when the only choice of exile to America is strongly taken as an escape from Iran to the place where identity there named as "other". It was not only the memory of the Iranian 1979 revolution the thing that imposed the thoughts of the young woman, Zebra, but also the consequences after 9/11 drew a scary image of other identity than American with a decision that strangers are only a threat in the eyes of Americans. The solace is the keys to understand reality and imagination in the matrix of literature. Zebra does not only her who takes this comfort in books, but she was preceded by her father who indulges himself more in finding a refuge in books. She is marvelously intelligent, well-read, and whimsical that these features easily uplift the nerve of people around her who could not understand that she is only the worst product of time and chances and the last in the queue of happiness. She is dismissed far from people's thoughts and attention. Books' papers are Zebra's only companions,

until she met Ludo who connects with her magnetically and who was fascinated by her complex literary theories and her views of death and history ;” My head was still spinning from the smell of the rotting corpses in that no man’s hand, from my mother’s death. I looked at the leveled city, which is known as the pearl of the East” (*Call Me Zebra* 20). She represents that victimized human, framed by history and literature, and constructed out of violence and imperialism. Still, the idea of death has no escape from Zebra’s mind when the matter is related nostalgically to her mother: “The whole world seemed unreal, tinged with my mother’s death and the death of the Hosseinis. I thought to myself, she is everywhere; she has contaminated everything. I took comfort in this” (16). She toured the world through a zany trip along in her Grand Tour of Exile:” Love, like death and literature and liberty, is everywhere and nowhere at once” (292).



Zebra, the name the heroine has chosen for herself, a character pinned in carefully by the author to be the sample of well-educated woman, effected and witted:

I told him that I speak directly because in order to stay alive I must always work to make up for the time I've lost due to the fact that, as an ill-fated citizen of this negligible world, I am subjected to being constantly attacked by history and that I have been trained by my literary-minded ancestors to combat the dulling effects of the psychic and emotional wounds caused by these violent attacks with verbal efficiency'. (*Call Me Zebra* 143)

As she comes from a long line of 'Autodidacts, Anarchists, and Atheists', Zebra proudly leveled herself high due to heritage and history she belongs to. On her way out of Iran where her father smuggled her, Zebra emphasizes that her father taught her all he mastered about life, literature, experiences, and Iranian history. Giving that great amount of knowledge to his daughter might enable her to use it after his death, or at least, know how to consider her history. On her way to US, passing through Barcelona from Iran, Zebra should strictly realize the meaning of sacrifice and the great meaning of Grand Tour of Exile to "force life to dissolve its resistance toward me":

I, Zebra, am recrossing borders
I have already crossed in order to
map the literature of the void and
prove once and for all that any
thought worth preserving in our
pitiably human record was man-
ifested in the mind of an exile, an
immigrant, a refugee...persons flee-
ing from persecution, and/or oth-
erwise homeless beings. (*Call Me
Zebra* 179)

Barely and lonely, Zebra symbolizes the determined woman who shakes off the scary world by confronting, challenging, and remembering. She, in exile, is an oppressed, marginalized, and forgotten figure where no people care for her existence as a refugee. In this sense, Oloomi precisely reflects the tension and mental illness people suffer when they are exiled far out from their real belonging. The complexity and simplicity of Oloomi's narration have constructed the nature of humans when life conditions and politics, in particular, examine man's endurance. The sort of character Oloomi chose is disorderly created in the Middle Eastern world part. To Oloomi, the idea of creating a male or female character connected historically and spiritually with a place and time, is addressed differently and complicatedly. The perplexity of the author lies in the process of defeating evil by mental-disorder fighters whom mostly are considered unlikable characters.

In her relationship with Ludo Bembo, Zebra suffers more when her lover has no way but to shout at her for her

actions and thoughts that seem unfit to others' ways and approaches. He could not offer the support she needs, or at least, the psychological safety she lacks, yet he fulfills his physical needs when sex is demandable to mitigate both. To Zebra, Ludo is envisioned by her thought as another addition to the "Pyramid of Exile" the moment when she desperately searches for unanswerable questions of life significance while Ludo's interest lies in how to sleep with her. Zebra's dissatisfaction of Ludo's ignorance of her suffering brought her to terms of her humanity worthiness: "Am I so worthless that I am barred from taking pleasure in my own suffering?" (*Call Me Zebra* 49). More miserably, Zebra owns herself the motif of unbearable endurance: "I am unafraid to admit that the world we live in is violent, obtuse; that a gulf, once opened, is not easily sealed; ...that one does not drink from the waters of death and go on living disaffected, untouched (49).

The unstabilization of Zebra's mentality has been connected politically with Iran's history and unstable recovery. Iran has faced decades of bloodshed and wonky grounds of changes. Thus, Zebra figures herself as that one who represents all those displayed by war roamed the world once as refugees and other as chased. When an American police officer suspects her behavior, she shouts at him: "(41) keep on bombing Iraq and invading Afghanistan, strangling the region, and there will be more of us here" (41). Metaphorically, Zebra's breaking down via a fight with Ludo, then to, aimlessly find a place to be saved, has obliged her to invite herself in Ludo's apartment surrounding to the reality and captivity to his immediate wish to sleep with her. While this might be connected with the political view about America and refugees, readers would quickly realize how American

military destabilizing the Middle East region and how it objects the fleeing of refugees from the countries it bungs.

The clear connection between politics and mental disability of Zebra has another significant reference to the magical realism Oloomi relies on. Zebra is often visited by her father's ghost. Very cleverly, the author finds in that illusionary figure a lot of depth in analyzing her character's mentality and historical longing for the vision of the father figure is a bell reminder of one's history and heritage.

Oloomi also expects her readers to create that link between the magical realism and the metaphor for exile and displacement adventuring by the fact that refugees suffer surely from the psychological distress and void. It is actually that sense of loss and that reality of throwing self away. It is the denial of dignity framed by the literature of exile.

Part Five:

Iraqi Dystopian Reality after the Occupation

The fact that could never be either encountered or left is the US invasion on Iraq in 2003 and the subsequence of that occupation. The Iraqi fiction started with the 2003 has fueled the enthusiasm of many Iraqi writers for some sort of literature that witnessed successive wars Iraq had passed through and bitterly experienced. Writing about one era of noes equal means representation of a missing piece in the puzzle of knowledge about the contemporary Iraqi culture and conditions. Yet, the luck has its last remaining card to fill significantly the gap in this knowledge through the prolific writings by Iraqi writers who either exemplified the bitterness as first person voice, or mirrored the diversified tales of others using their own language and talent and reflecting their special attitudes toward the crises that have overwhelmed the country history and dragged people's memory into decades that cannot be summarized by pen and paper.

Phases under stifling circumstances had been disastrously replaced by occupation. After years of sanction that were produced principally by Gulf War and previously by The Eight-year War between Iraq and Iran, Iraq was ready to be marked as the country that involved automatically and

randomly in wars. Furthermore, it was labeled by another iconic record loudly voicing the pain that dated the long waves of political, social, and cultural exhaustion. Wars that drained blood and the social entity represented a drive for Iraqi novelists to seek a zeal for privatization to document narratively the tangible experiences of the soldiers, the suicide bomber war, and finally, the sectarianism. In this sense, many novelists defined the theoretical framework of the war itself, as well as they analyzed the conditions and the situational choices that subjugated Iraq to be counted backwardly among other countries in the territory. The dramatic rise of challenging events in Iraq were only most striking examples of the democracy lie came handed by the American policy during the invasion of Iraq. Though the fall Saddam's regime rationalized that invasion and made it palatable, even requisite, yet this political change had been labeled by rapid moves to dangerous notions connected extremely and intensively to sectarianism and controversial Islamic entities. For many purposes and in the context of sequel wars, economic sanctions, and then occupation, Iraq situation devoid of normalcy.

Peter Sluglett in his *Forward Understanding Recent Social and Political Developments in the Middle East and North Africa: A Personal Odyssey*, prefaces his article with a "no exception" general standpoint: "For most of my adult lifetime, the news from the Middle East has been almost uniformly gloomy: Until quite recently, it seemed that the Arab world was unable to leave behind its postcolonial trauma" (Sluglett Preface). Sluglett's focus on the fiery political situation in the Middle East privileged a scoped speech about Iraq in the literary culture where fiction has long been the most celebrated tool, writers have a shifty

close to realism stressing the fact that what is coming to the surface now is darker and deeper. Hence, Iraqi authors, novelists, dramatists, and poets notably resort to think of their political and literary experiences having that singularity of unique unrest political conditions. So, the sharp contrast between Iraq and other countries in the Middle East territory has been marked by the increasing complexity of the nature of struggle modern Iraqi history held. The landmark Iraq categorized in literature was specifically after the America invasion decision to declare the development and growth of Iraqi novels that took place since the 2003 occupation and the years over.

Dystopian themes of Iraqi novelists have been prominently explored. The trends of political and social failure that walked hand in hand with chaotic and mess reality took place after the occupation have captured the general taste of dystopia Iraqi novelists who found in the sense of despair better to write stories about than to pin code the promises of freedom of democracy. Layla Al-Zubaidi, coeditor of a collection of Post-Arab Spring writing titled *Diaries of an Unfinished Revolution*, states that “these futuristic stories are all about lost utopia” (Al-Zubaidi Introduction).

With a brain to think and a heart to feel, Iraqi writers became familiar with the dystopian literary directions. They increasingly were obsessed with the sense of paradoxes in Iraqi political and social scenes that sound could never be reconciled in any way. Betoool Khedairi (1965-), born in Baghdad to an Iraqi father and a Scottish mother, has not underestimated the effect of wars and hardships Iraq passed by on the cross-sections of Baghdadian society. Her black comedy novel *Absent* (2007), presents how Iraqi families were stifled under wars and sanction accumulation reach-

ing the fools of actions during Saddam's reign leading the country to flounder what had been stepped steadily before Iraq-Iran War. In *Absent*, the picture of Iraqi society emerges of people desperately struggle to resist and survive under a gross amount of horrific life conditions. Due to the backdrop of economic sanctions and the never-stop bombing threat, Khedairi improved what is otherwise a coercive depiction of the impact of non-battlefield war lived by Iraqi civilians. In spite of the dark side that centers hardships as the main theme and concludes sadness as the novel end, still the book starts with the comedy that ends with the characters' heart broken. The fragmentary nature of the novel, variant occupants of crowded apartment building of different stories of each formed by unhappy sequences during and after wars swaying between dialogues and first-person voice of Dalal's tone as a detached observer, makes the narrative as a choppy read piece. Khedairi moves on with her characters to maintain normal lives after exposing horrible events of bombing, starving, missing people, and desperately coffee-cup reading. Though the occupants of this building pass through normalcy of living days such as marriage, birth giving, varying their trades, and re-purposing second-hand products, still their living was stepped out of line with a constant fear and persistent risk. In *Absent*, people are fed with daily high dose of lies that multiplies their dilemma and increases their resilience to confirmly accept the difficult details: "In 1980, we became involved in an eight-year war with our neighbor Iran. We'd barely celebrated the ceasefire, when in 1990, the government decided to invade Kuwait and the Gulf War started. My God, first the foreigners bombs us, then they crown their operations with an open-ended blockade?" (*Absent*). Needless to say

it was the common people who suffered most. What it focuses on is the deprivation and common pain that people faced, and how they did their best to overcome them. Khe-dairi's attempt to expose the fate of the Iraqi people who have been harmed by war and sanctions. It is not only a book that gives the hint of success, it strikes the heart with the precision of the American and its allies western bombs that have destroyed Iraq for over 20 years. The author deftly blends what is real about the sanctions/bombing of Iraq with the stories of fictional inhabitants in one Baghdad building. Readers are ready to realize what is awful related to the lives of women (who have lost their men/sons in bombings) as they try to find a way to survive and men who are trying to find a job or any other way that will guarantee the food of the day. It is of the quiet desperation when things seem useless to work and bring. For Example, Dalal, the narrator, helps her uncle begin a business raising bees, while her aunt takes in sewing; another neighbor opens a barbershop, while a mysterious fortune-teller moves in upstairs. Dalal finds another outlet of a romantic/sexual awakening with another character. Actually, it is a message for westerners that sanctions really do harm ordinary people.

The bee and Dalal's uncle beehives are Iraqi people status metaphorically appreciated and symbolized by the novelist in a reference to the longing for the "days of plenty" when food and medical were readily available. So, the book moves on with Dala's effort and the beehives of her uncle to taste the honey of their bitter living because their ancient civilization has been under risky fire for decades while the citizens of this country still remaining in their "on-possible a substitutional place" have to make a life out of what's left. The ways people behaved to survive in Iraq was some-

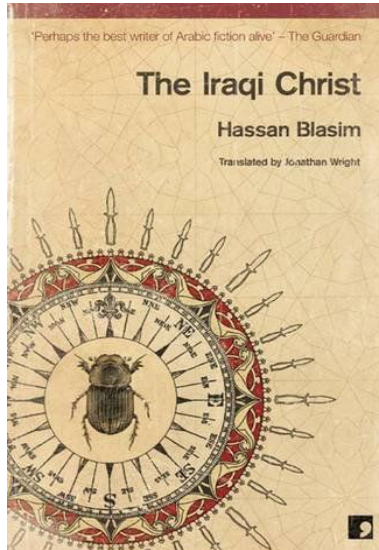
times upsetting. Characters readers came to know and love turn out to be something completely varied - how hard if individuals truly had to live in fear of being betrayed to a government that didn't actually care for their welfare. Be-tool Khedairi's story takes place in Baghdad in the 1990s while it is groaning under US sanctions and bombing. All in all, *Absent* is a book and a look at the other side of what the US does to other countries in the name of dreamy beautiful terms like freedom and justice. Iraqis have endured much at the hands of greed, and they still to endure lives that most westerners can't even imagine. Thus, to Khedairi, this dystopian black comedy points to forces that have wiped out normalcy as well as it completely transports the readers back to that time and place where the sight, smell, and the sounds of Baghdad were featured and dignified beautifully.

Hassan Blasim

Hassan Blasim (1973-), an Iraqi novelist and filmmaker and the winner of the Independent Foreign Fiction Prize for *The Iraqi Christ*, conveys the inner conflict and the bleak sense refugee experiences. the intimidation and spot arrest had lightened Blasim's green start to flee to Kurdistan and a four-year searching travel in Europe to eventually get the asylum in Finland in 2004 starting then his second literary deep journey in the short story world.

Hassan Blasim in Baghdad and Irvine Welsh in Finland has translated literary the language of post-war and post-Saddam's reign. In his collection of fictional short stories *The Madman of Freedom Square* (2009), Blasim moves in a similar comparison from the Iraq/Iran War through the occupation on Iraq in 2003. It cleverly shows the viewing relationship between the West and Iraq and how the Western consideration has evaluated the legitimacy of that invasion. Furthermore, the collection haunts the critique of the postwar refugees experience.

In *The Market of Stories*, Blasim emphasizes that "since the fall of Saddam Hussein, there have been incessant calls for writing to be intelligible, realistic, factual and pragmatic". This could be realized when Blasim let his documentary-style narrative waves realistic stories mixed with fabulous description of some Iraqi scenes that hardly believed happened.



In *The Iraqi Christ*, Blasim initiates his novel by selecting a scene of how Iraqi refugees were waiting to tell their stories:

People were waiting in queues to tell their stories. The police intervened to marshal the crowd and the main street opposite the radio station was closed to traffic. People were terrified a terrorist would infiltrate the crowd and turn all these stories into a pulp of flesh and fire. (*The Iraqi Christ* n.p.)

In spite of borrowing the narrating cues from Kafka, Blasim's descriptive style has been blended with the fanaticism with everyday reality, the bizarre metaphors with

too-real stories. His mingling between the dazzling prose and traumatic strategy has adapted a master process in circling the stories of war and post war. Blasim continues:

Memory Radio has been set up after the fall of the dictator...the radio station had adopted a documentary approach to programming, without news bulletins or songs, just documentary reports and programs that delved into the country's past. The station had become famous after announcing that it was going to record-new program entitled *Their Stories in Their own Voices*...The idea was simple: to select the best stories and record them as narrated by the people involved but without mentioning their real names; then the listeners would choose the top three stories, which would win valuable prizes. (*The Iraqi Christ* n.p.)

The tipping point to Blasim's documentary-style reality writing started with his stories' characters when their past comes and moves with them. In *The Reality and The Record*, the strongest one among others in the collection *The Madman of Freedom Square* (2009), a Baghdad ambulance driver is kidnapped to be passed among jihadist groups. He was beaten, tortured, and recorded by videos. The driver's

story is told by him in a refugee center in Sweden, explaining to the immigration officer why he was found back in his ambulance with six heads: “They had kidnapped me on that cold accursed night...The policemen were standing around six headless bodies...I carried the sack of heads on my ambulance” (The Reality and The Record). Certainly, *The Madman* presents that freak of powers imposed on Iraqi people from fate, government, may be the chance and even the world, and ends with Blasim’s deliberated attempt to provoke a challenge in powerless individuals.

Ali Bader

What has been scoped in Blasim's writings repeated, or might be preceded, in Ali Bader, the Iraqi novelist born in Baghdad in 1964. As a number of prizes winner, perhaps the most outstandingly the State Prize for Literature in Baghdad in 2002 for his novel *Baba Sartre, Tumult, Women and a Sunken Writer, Running after the Wolves*, and the two longlisted novels for The International Prize for Arabic Fiction. *The Tobacco Guard* (2009), and *Kings of Sands* (2010), Bader authorized over 15 books, nine of which are fiction.

Through the chronicling the recent history of Iraq and specifically Baghdad, Bader proves that his fiction and non-fiction writings distinguishably managed to adopt the genre of historical novel principally the circular section of the Ottoman Empire control to the fall of Saddam's reign era. His mixing between the reality of historian circumstances and imaginative interwoven fictional texture has hastened archiving Bader's name within the guiding literary Iraqi icons who documented contemporary manner of Iraqi novel.

Since studied French literature at Baghdad University, Bader shows his admiration of existentialism of the French writers and philosophers. In his *Baba Sartre*, Bader brought to his professional career a fame of a satirical manner writer who confronts bravely the same manner of other Iraqi writers who wrongly imitated French existentialism. This was notably obvious and cleverly discussed through

Baba Sartre's protagonist Abdulrahman when the latter gets back from France to Iraq modeling his ideal philosopher's thoughts and believing that these thoughts are the modern manner Iraqi culture and people really need.

In 2002, Bader stepped chronically again to fictionalize the collapse of Baghdad aristocracy during 1950s through his novel *Shita' al-ila, The Winter of the Family*, to be followed by another historical documentary novel *al-Walima al-ariya, The Naked Banquet* in 2004 to scope the fall of the Ottoman rulers and the submission of Baghdad under the British control. In that sense, Bader presents the afflictive reality, a devastating flood of events during war and social and political conflicts not only in Iraq, but that despotism in the Middle East.

More or less, *The Guardian of Tobacco* 2008, has dealt with what Iraqi culture suffered from after the invasion of America. It closes to what virtually happened and wrongly promised Iraqi of hopeful changes. The episodes vision a journey took place in people's minds and memory that could parse bring other cultural and psychological collapse. Hence, Bader's mastering manner in mirroring Iraq and the Middle East reality has permitted his active career to be a war correspondent in the Middle East, articles writer and poet in Iraq and Arab newspapers, an editor for the literary journal *Al-Talia*, and a receiver of; the Abu-Qasim al Shabi Prize in Tunis in 2001, The State Literature Prize in Baghdad, the prize for Narrative Creativity in the United Arab Emirates, and the Ibn Battuta Prize for Contemporary Travel Literature.

The Iraqi identity as it was called far more lately by almost all Iraqi novelists principally Ali Bader, has giv-

en a guarantee by intellectuals to be necessary and dominant. Salim Matter, the Iraqi intellectual and novelist, born (1954) has preceded Bader in defining Iraqi identity within the concept of memory. As the Iraqi history suffered from a wound, Matter combined that wound with the identity in his 500 pages book “*Wounded Self*”, *Al-Dhat al-Jariha* (1995), in that he pointedly wove the Iraqi identity with a texture of examples from history and philosophy, as well as he examined the national identity through the problems of identity in Iraq and in Arab world. Thus, due to the common demonstrations and contributions of Iraqi writers, Bader has found in Matter and other literary names the anthropological memory the same as it is called by Jafar Najim when the latter connected between the memory of society and the memory of individuals and their identities. In doing so, Matter, Najim, Bader, and the most rest find in history and the back flash memory another sort of social bond that can’t be either ignored nor eradicated.

By explicitly concentrating on rhythm, humor, self-criticism, derision, and historical documentary, Bader’s novel writing techniques have made an iconic fame among Arab community. It was not only his aesthetics that changed after 2003, but he lived a crucial shift of socio-political change. His considerations have passed beyond Iraq hardships and its political reforms to think deeply and seriously of Arab social revolutions after Arab Spring in 2011, maybe notably of Women’s liberation. So, the demonstrated shift from chronicling history of Iraqi society, that would be tackled in the following next discussion, into widely Arab social problems crowned when he met an Iraqi woman in a bar in Belgium in 2014, while he was a refugee camp there to discover coincidentally that this woman also lives at the same

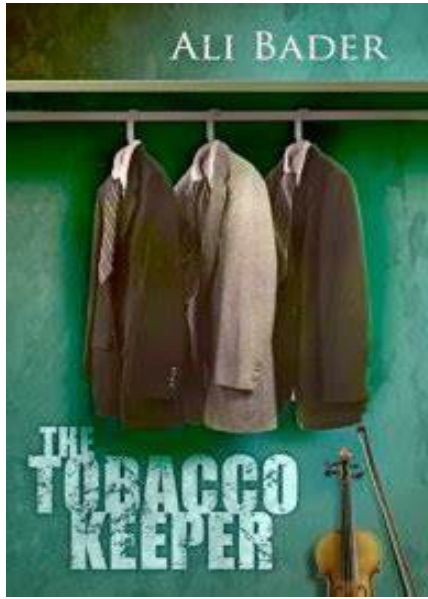
camp of his to eventually make a story from this inspirational haphazard entitled *Al-Kafira, The Infidel Woman*. Though the story of *Al-Kafira* was basically written as a movie scenario, but Bader made up his mind to present it as a novel when the German director mixed wrongly between the writer's wish to present the social recovery of women's presence in the male-dominance world, and the project of an erotic theme. *Al-Kafira*, felt like a deep desire to address the world by a woman's tongue. More technically, Bader thinks that presenting a story in woman's voice added another fictional and professional experience to his writing style. Moreover, the novel has widened another consideration to gender studies that examines not only the world wide unbalancing formula between male and female rights, but it comes close the identities and relationship between West and East modernity and religion trends.

What has been clear in Bader's thoughts is his novelty in combining the contemporary world view about Iraq and Arab issues especially after the Arab Spring, and the historical sense that documented the concept of identities as an archived majority. In one of his interviews held by Arab lit Quarterly, Bader discussed the Iraqi novels that zoomed on identity particularly during and after the sectarian conflict in Iraq that awfully gave birth to death to be the first interest to Iraqi writers. To Bader, when occupation on Iraq waved a good-bye to Iraq's social and political stability, he was not hesitant to show his dismay at how poor consideration Iraqi literary contributions could get from all over the world. That "good-bye waving" has questioned in Bader the case of minority in Iraq and the problem of false and horrible feeling of identity. Thus, when Bader was asked about the reason behind his novel *The Tobacco Keeper* (2008), he

preferred to limit the answer with how the world is formed by different considerations to religion and politics. Hence, the central theme of war, history, sectarianism, and identity would have been possible to fuel Bader's enthusiasm to re-explore himself and to re-think of his identity among other Iraqi identities the time he strongly felt that things come out of nowhere but by hand made.

An involving account of an area where the “dogs of war are often barking and the drums of death are nearly ringing”, one is normally hears of a story of somebody facing the turmoil of the twenty-first century in the region. Ali Bader explicitly covers up one of the complex real story of the Jewish Iraqi violinist Kamal Medhat in his first published Arabic novel *The Tobacco Keeper* to be long-listed for the Arabic Booker Prize in 2009, investigating the life of Medhat who was expelled to Israel in the 1950s, having returned to Iraq via Iran, returning for the third time under a forged passport to be assassinated and thrown in the River Tigris in Baghdad during sectarianism.

The Tobacco Keeper as a retrospective novel within a novel got the world attention when the International Prize for Arabic Fiction nominated the novel for the prize in 2009. To discover historically the bloody-touches of Iraqi consecutive decades from the present day Baghdad backward to the 1940s, Bader reflects the unknown details of the expelled Iraqi Jews from Baghdad in 1941 until the recent fall of Saddam government. This reflection has its correspondence with the writing up the life of Kamal Medhat and his death who started as the violinist Yousef Sami Saleh forced to immigrate to Israel in 1950 when Iraqi Jews were stripped of their nationality.



Due to Bader's central theme of mixing between history and identity, the assuming of the persona of an Iranian Shia of Medhat has increased the novelist's appetite to search additional reason for leaving Israel, then Iran, to end in Iraq during the reign of Saddam. To Bader, the impression that had been left on Iraqi identity and nationality empowered him to write prolifically about how Iraqi identity had been fought against by orientations that strongly and dangerously involved sectarianism of 2006.

The dissociation of Kamal Medhat's lives encouraged Bader's readers to tour through the history of Iraq and other regional countries from 1920s on such as Syria, Iran, and the beginning of Israel as a new entity in the Homeland. Historically, Medhat witnessed the 1941 Farhud pogrom that was unleashed against the Iraqi Jews, and the 1980 de-

porting of Iraqi-Iranian originality to Iran early beginning of war with Iran and the deprivation of their properties. The dissociation from an identity into another has philosophically interpreted by Bader's writing mode connecting that split with war conditions in the Middle East generally and in Iraq specifically. He views that lost-related identity traces backwardly to the historical reductionism or moves forwardly into a present multiethnicity. But frequently and easily, such issues of identity assign which model is a bombing case now.

The faked identities of Medhat that might be viewed as mafia or militia, allowed demandable topics of "identity games" to be discussed regarding to the impact of history on an individual identity. Thus, it was a refreshing air to read about the Iraq post-war from a novelist who examines how politics gave permission to conflict to think many times of the national identity validity.

As far as the novel theme is centered on, Kamal is assuming "three" very different identities during his life time. He was born as a Jew, then became a Shia Muslim in Iran, and finally preferred to be a Sunni in Iraq. Yousef, a Jewish musician, refuses how people consider his identity:

"Do not put me in a tight corner, do not place me in a little box. When you treat me like a Jew, you suffocate me"... As a Jew and wear the Jewish mask, in the same way that Muslims and Christians had to play their respective roles and

wear their respective masks. Masks make it easy for individuals to live in society. (*The Tobacco Keeper*)

Then the game of identity made from wearing the mask as an acceptable possibility when Bader asserts; “he had to wear a mask, because the mask made it possible for him to regain his self-confidence. It calmed his fears, expelled his demons and quelled the violent cries in the depths of his heart, the depth that told of hell”(The *Tobacco Keeper*). Still, Bader wonderly thinks of ‘Yousif’ and his recreative ability to be another person with another name and wife. The three identities of that ‘player’ manage him to have three lives instead of one, yet entirely it deprived him the feeling of having one respected normal and legal identity. Under this typical coverage of identity game, Bader comes back to warn against a complete surrender to the artificial role:

We must not forget ourselves entirely, even if we surrender to a role we’ve invented ...because we have chosen to play a role. But I see that others, instead of playing their roles. Are played by them... we often imagine that we control the game unaware that it actually controls us. (*The Tobacco Keeper*)

The brief historical sketch of events from the 1940s up the occupation on Iraq in 2003 and the sectarian war start-

ed in 2006 inspired Bader to illustrate three key identities of his novel protagonist Kamal. Kamal's life has fabricated due to the narration of Iraqi history for nearly seventy onward years. The adaptation of the character's story has located itself in Iraqi non-imaginative community rarely altered that way of Kamal's but accept the status of being a spy. The uprooting from one own home, fleeing across continents, and eventually assimilating in completing different contexts would guarantee a sense of rootlessness and disloyalty that might end up in espionage. Seemingly, Bader has vivid things to say about what a forged passport may mean when a man was originally from 'Israel' and then came from Iran to insist on staying in Iraq.

The Tobacco Keeper comes with the notion that real stories of Iraqi individuals are under the judgment of multiple audience who certainly conscious of what different sects and wars had brought to the contemporary Iraq. It emotionally dealt with the shifting identities and took special places in Damascus, Tehran, Baghdad, and other places. It questions the displacement of a character that masks him with a history of a complicated tale. In trying to answer the questions around Medhat's cloudy identity, Bader went back to the origin of Farhoud incident in May 1941 in which Medhat's conflict started before that time. Bader points: "the first extended from his childhood in Baghdad up to the Farhoud Incident in May 1941, which followed the rise of the Nazi organizations in Iraq and which saw the death of hundreds of Jewish victims in Baghdad" (The Tobacco Keeper). Bader still narrates that "when Yousif woke up that morning, he tried out a tune or two on his violin as usual... something in them inspired fear in his heart and him tremble. He was scared of the mob and tried to keep as far

away from them as possible. He had very little confidence in angry popular favor. Perhaps Farhoud was the reason” (The Tobacco Keeper). Medhat realized that his life and death are the formula that he would be blamed for. The life journey between his life and death enabled the Iraqi Jewish Yousif Sami Salah to immigrate to Israel in 1950 before he got his son Meir and before he discovered “the unbearable life” there. His escape to Tehran in 1953 through Moscow under the name Haider Salman gave him the second chance of marriage, Tahira the daughter of a wealthy Iranian merchant, and to have his second son Hussein. In 1958, Haider Salman got back to Iraq with his family until 1980 where Iranian nationality forcedly expelled to Iran. In 1981, Salman manage to escape to Damascus with a doctored Iraqi passport of Kamal Medhat to end dead reportedly by the US Today News when Medhat was kidnapped from his home in Al-Mansour by an armed group in 2006 and found dead near the Jumhuriya Bridge, these sequential steps of Medhat’s shifting identities had given him a portrait of a suspicious man.

The nameless narrator of the Tobacco Keeper prefaces the narration with Kamal Medhat’s house visited by the narrator after the killing of the former as part of the investigation into his murder. On a small teak table in Medhat’s room, there was a real cover book written in English of a collection of poems called Tobacco Shop by the Portuguese poet Fernando Pessoa. Inside the book, Medhat margined what he thought as necessary notes and comments that caused an extremely stunning reaction. Strangely, the book has similar details of Medhat’s life and secrets and blends directly to his discovered and undiscovered yet reality. In Topacco Shop, as the narrator states:

Pessoa presents three different characters, involving three cases of assumed identity. Each one of the fictional characters represents a facet of Pessoa's own personality, who is the given separate names, ages and different lives. Each has different convictions, ideas, and traits. With each personality, Pessoa develops a deeper and broader sense of identity, but ultimately we are left with the true ambiguity of identity. The first character is the keeper of flocks...while the second is that of the protected man... The third is the tobacconist ...Suddenly we find ourselves confronted by a game a-trois or 3D Cubist image of a single face. (The Tobacco Keeper)

Seemingly, Medhat had adapted exactly what the book smoothly contains and goes on surprisingly to discover by a deep search from the narrator's side that Yousif Sami Saleh was an enlightened and liberal Jewish musician, born in Baghdad in 1926 and died in 'Israel' in 1955, while Haid-er Salman is a middle-class and Shia musician joined the communist movement in Tehran and died there in 1981. Kamal Medhat was a Mousl-Sunni musician born in 1933. The faked personalities had been examined very carefully by Medhat who precisely depended on real names and identified himself through the three masked persona of them.

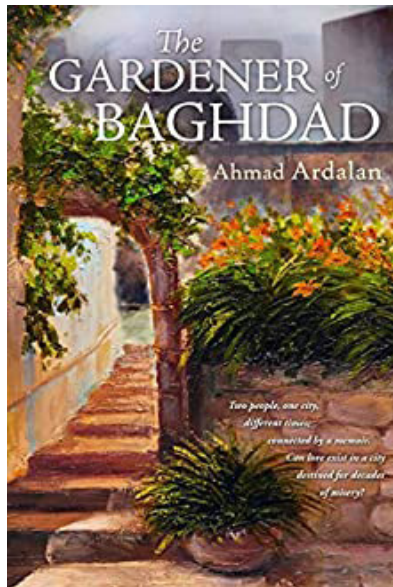
Bader returns once more to the blending of historical events and identity that formalized his process of writing and textuality. The crucial point to Bader was not the character he involved in his writing, but rather the historical backdrop that happened in Iraq and the Middle East as well. What was workless to Bader was the writing of no historical documentary when truths have no place in his literary career.

Despite numerous challenges, identity still represents the huge waves of swimming and diving up and down in Iraqi literary virtuosity. Most young Iraqi writers mold their writings in the manner of documentary narrative that deals with Iraqi history, specifically wars, and real individuals' stories. Fleeing the country for fear of killing or kidnapping and exiling in different world countries were treated similarly as the two choices became possibly recognized and desirable through writing the dramatic plot of a novel. In its faded recollections of Baghdad ravaged by wars, a reader could get a strange sense that memory and history serves as the drive to walk the paths of life. Ahmed Ardalan, a young Iraqi novelist born in Baghdad in 1979 and moved with his parents to Vienna, Austria where his father worked through a diplomatic mission, decided to return to Iraq in 1989 after finishing his missionary job there. The decision to leave Iraq and go to UAE had been taken by a long thinking of Iraqi political, social, and economic unstable conditions. Similar to most literary figures, travelling to different countries, meeting countless faces, and examining various cultures have increased in Ardalan the sense of discovering self and others and the desire to write about cities, and of no doubt, Baghdad got the top.

The six novels of Ardalan; *The Clout of Gen* (2012), *The Gardner of Baghdad* (2013), *Matt* (2015), *Baghdad: The*

Final Gathering (2016), *The Boy of the Mosque* (2018), and *The Art Collector of Le Marais* (2019). Ardalan led a senior role in gathering between beautiful romance took place in two separate periods of political disorder in Baghdad. As the most favorite work to Ardalan, *The Gardener of Baghdad* is presented to readers through a story within a story technical writing comes with a fresh and simple style. Cleverly, it encourages the reader to wonder how love was warm-heartedly lived and valued during 1950s Baghdad.

The Gardener of Baghdad provides a specific account of how life goes on in a period of war, and how people coped to be fully living or dying because they are bewildered between life and death. This unstable condition and out-of-will choices are connected romantically with a love story set between 1955 and 1958, between an Iraqi gay and the daughter of a British general, Mary.



When Adnan, the owner of a bookstore in Baghdad which its window glasses were broken out of a bomb, surrendered to his wife's desire to sell this bookstore, and while dusting the shelves of special rare books, he discovered by a glance a book that hides a gold locket and pages of handwritten memoir. It was his curious desire to re-locate himself as in the past on a chair he used to sit and to start reading what had been written inside. What has been distinguished to *The Gardner of Baghdad's* reader is the normalcy of experiencing war and death, and detailing the fall in love which came totally from the fact that Iraqi repeatedly lives the political chaos and then prepared for another.

When Ardalan prefaced his *The Gardner of Baghdad*, he starts with the unanswerable questions; "Who's behind it all? What do they stand to gain from it?" (*The Gardner of Baghdad* 6). Adnan had never changed his thought that some hidden forces do those causalities of bombs, kidnapping, and shootings. And, it is the place that hardly could be endured to live any more by people. Due to the continuous conflict of peaceful harmony, people, strangle search for better education, work opportunities, and establishing new families. The sweetness of the bitter lives with the threat and smell of death surrounding Iraqis. Passing through these conflicts, Adnan reaches his final decision submitted down to his wife's will to sell the near future damaged bookstore since "Baghdad isn't safe", the wife's final words before she hung up her call with Adnan.

It is this inner debate on leaving the memory of the place behind or searching a "nice, safe place where he and his family and their future generations could live" (*The Gard-*

ner of Baghdad 6). To Ardalan, the decision taken out of a psychological clash has a tragic context that usually ends with a surrender to human's social stability similar to the writer's own life decision to leave Iraq and find his world elsewhere. Yet, the decision of Ardalan and Adnan represented the metaphysical truth and had much to meddle with war. To both, the politics and circumstances can be realized as their possibility to counteract to the hardships of wars. In this conception, they retreated into unendurable conceptions of all sorts of wars. Simultaneously, the decision of leaving the place took another thought of discovering what the bookstore shelves embrace. While Ardalan asserts the panic current reality of war, he fictionally connects it with a question of how romance may balance the scale of life. Hence, recalling happy memories before forty-one year when Adnan's father started the business in 1944 of collecting books, turned Adnan to remember how he used to keep that work and the store as his father, though he made up his mind after the last bomb to keep his family safe; "That's it. This bomb was the last straw" *The Gardner of Baghdad* 7). Again and again, the reality struck Adnan whenever he recalls the last bomb and how people run and the bookstore glass blew off: "Right. There's no other way". The chaos inside Adnan's thoughts has involved the thinking of the store and the possibility to re-open another one in the new place when he raises more other questions mostly left without answers. What makes things more difficult is Adnan's wonder of his inherited books could not be shipped nor could be left with a solution. Thus, the proper way is to buy some new books and sell what will be kept here since they bring good money. Significantly, the novelist made from that solving thought an entry to a surprising moment after

hours of dusting and thumbing books in re-arranged rows when a book fell with a French title. The curiosity of Adnan in discovering what is inside a book written in 1931, and a “leaf-shaped locket where “the pendant was dark golden in color, and two green stones, emerald in the shape of eyes, were embedded in it”, was accompanied by the same of the novelist’s inquisitiveness where the latter kept examine the result of mixing romance and war. In one of the novelist’s quotes in *The Gardener of Baghdad*, “I believe in Love, and I know love conquers all” (*The Gardner of Baghdad* 70), Ardalan insists that war could not manage to conquer people’s emotion, not either stop at their different nationalities or ethnicities. When the pendant-on-side engraved letters M&A elegantly touched by Adnan, and a black and white photograph of a woman behind a small glass stamped on the other side, it was well recognizably thought that a woman sounds foreigner of no Arabic features. But, how it comes to forget that this woman may address by eyes a man who both belongs to the period before the World war Two?!

Through the clashing waves of questions, Adnan comes to represent an existence, shifted in his thoughts between the war-torn Baghdad and its daily bombs, and the sudden discovery of a love story before 40 years heroed by Ali, the Gardner of Baghdad, who loved the British woman and kept in a handwritten memoir his story of love and hope. For Ardalan, the involvement of a story within a story functions hopeful meaning of life even in the gloomy corners of conditions. The heartwarming story of two young people of different culture and religion has captivated Adnan to taste another meaning of life rather than bombing and killing. On the other hand, it picks up the novelist’s idea that Baghdad had never stopped being the place of learning, order,

love, and challenges. Moreover, though the most parts of the novel take place in the mid-1950s in Baghdad when the place witnessed fatal stages of political tension, still, the protagonist shows the flow of life parts when he was given the chance of refuge with Kurds in Sulaymaniyah.

The obvious concern for formalizing the novel through recalling the past and live the present helped Adnan to become more engrossed in portraying real people. He is deeply obsessed with reaching what that memoir could bring finally, particularly when he tracked down Ali's family to stand for the truth of what happened to the rest of the story which is in a way or another signify Adnan's decision to wave Baghdad final farewell. Thus, opening the locket and reading the first pages of the book that dated up in Arabic July 12, 1958, had taken Adnan to moments ignoring his family and his business until he finishes the memoir:

I have a feeling things won't go well when we return to Baghdad tomorrow ... I am writing this so my beautiful daughter knows the sacrifices her mother and I have made in the name of our love. If I'm not there to tell my daughter who her father is, this will help her a lot or at least I hope so. (*The Gardener of Baghdad* 14)

When Ali started in his memoir that he was born in 1934 in Diyala as the only child to his parents, the smooth details of his story had given Adnan other reasons to awak-

en again identity, relationship, revolution, culture, country, and sacrifices. The written words in the memoir shared their significance with Adnan who draws a connection with his city tales.

It is tempting to say that Adnan's novel sounds more realistic and develops equally all the plot surroundings. The story within the story covers two time periods in a very skillful and professional way. The characters are painted dramatically as images presented on a stage. The novelist gives the story its suspenseful mystery and gives glimpses into the world where love is defined more purely and differently. The gardener of Baghdad localizes a special sort of love rooted in Baghdad and spread its meaning to the world. It is love that beautifully brings safety to hearts in unsafe Baghdad still hidden in a French book cover. It is the romance that secretly gathered a Gardener of Baghdad Ali, and the British girl Mary back in the 1950s.

References

- Bassiouni, M. Cherif (2017), *Chronicles of the Egyptian Revolution and its Aftermath: 2011-2016*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

- Buyze, M. Afridi. D. (2012). *Global Perspectives on Orhan Pamuk: Existentialism and Politics*. Springer.

- Ellemers, Naomi and Manuela Barreto (1992), "Impact of Relative Group Status";

Luhtanen and Croker, J "A Collective Self-Esteem Scale: Self-evaluation of One's social identity. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 18, 302- 318.

- Ellemers, Naomi and Manuela Barreto (2001), "The Impact of Relative Group Status: Affective, Perceptual and Behavioral Consequences". In *Blackwell Handbook of Social Psychology: Intergroup Processes*. Edited by Rupert Brown and Samuel L. Gaertner. Blackwell Publishing, PP: 324-344.

- Erturk, Nergis (2011), *Grammatology of Turkish Literary Modernity*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

- Farhi, Farideh (2012), "The Tenth Presidential Elections and Their Aftermath". In *Iran: From Theocracy to the Green Movement*. Edited by N. Nabavi. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

- Fischer, Michael M J. (2004), *Mute Dreams, Blind Owls, and Dispersed Knowledges: Persian Poesis in the Transitional Circuitry*. Duke University Press.

- Goknar, Erdag (2013). *Orhan Pamuk, Secularism and Blasphemy: The Politics of the Turkish Novel*. New York: Routledge Taylor and Francis Group. Introduction

- Hamilto, Omar Robert (2017), *The City Always Wins*. Faber & Faber.

- Hashemipour, Saman (2019) *Logoteunison: Literary Easternization in Orhan Pamuk's Works*. Delaware: Vernon Press. Print.

- Hemmat, Ayse Ozge Kocak (2019). *The Turkish Novel and the quest for Rationality*,

BRILL.

- Khalifa, Khaled. *In Paris of Hatred*. An Interview by Sama Mohammed and Mateo Nelson on Syria Direct: "Syrian Novelist Khaled Khalifa tells the Stories of a Bleeding, beautiful Country: Writing is part of healing". On March 23rd, 2017.

- Khalifa, Khaled (2012), *In Paris of Hatred*. Translated by Leri Price. London: Random House

- Khalifa, Khaled (2016), *No Knives in the Kitchen of this City*. Translated by Leri Price. New York: Oxford University Press.

- Mazumdar, Aranima. "Turkish is a Language of the Heart: Ayse Kulin. July 19, 2019.

- Oloomi, Azareen Van der Vliet (2018), *Call Me Zebra*. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt.

- Pamuk, Orhan (2004). *Snow*. Translated by Maureen Freely. Vintage.----- (2014). *The New Life: A Novel*. Translated by Guneli Gun. Farrar,

Strausand Giroux.

----- (2015). *The White Castle: A Novel*. Penguin Uk.

----- (2011), *Other Colours*. Faber and Faber. Translated by Nazim Dikbas.

- Paraschiv, Maria Mirabela (2018), “Elif Shafak’s Works: A Means of Preventing HonorBased Violence”. In *Violence Preventing and Safety Promotion in Higher Education Settings*. Edited by Mihaela Baden and Mikaela Suditu. USA: IGI Global, PP: 36-50.

- Reeck, Laura (2018), “Bernardo Toro: Beyond Lieux Communs”. In *Paris and the Marginalized Author: Treachery, Alienation, Queerness, and Exile*. Edited by Valerie K. Orlando and Pamela A. Pears. New York: Lexington Book, Rowman and Littlefield, PP: 179-193.

- Ruskin, Susanna, (2014), “Interview with Elif Shafak”, *Guardian Review*, 6th December.

-Sadr, Ehsaneh (2020), *A Door Between Us*. The Blackstone Publishing.

-Sagaster, Borte, (2009) “Canon, Extra-Canon, Anti-Canon: On Literature as a Medium of Cultural Memory in Turkey”. In *Turkish Literature and Cultural Memory: “Multiculturalism as a Literary Theme after 1980*. Edited by Catharina Dufft. Germany: Hurbert and Co., Cottingen, PP: 63-79.

-Salmway, Mohamed (2014), *Butterfly Wings*. Publisher: The American University in Cairo Press; 1st edition.

- Shafak, Elif (2008), *The Bastard of Istanbul*. Penguin

- Woodward, Kath (2000), *Questioning Identity: Gender, Class, Nation*. New York: Routledge

- Yazbek, Samar (2015), *The Crossing-My Journey to the Shattered Heart of Syria*. Random House. Translated by Nashwa Gowanlock Ruth Ahmedzai Kemp.

Professor Luma Ibrahim Al-Barzenji, PhD in Modern American Fiction. She works as a University professor in Department of English at Faculty of Education for Humanities/ Diyala University in Iraq. Al-Abarzenji started her Educational career since 1999 as a University Instructor. She got MA degree in Modern English Fiction in 2002 from Faculty of Education in Diyala University, to finish her literary academic interest when she got PhD in Modern American Fiction in Beirut Arab University in Lebanon in 2013.

Al- Barzenji is highly concerned with Entities to most updated literary subjects that touch emotionally and reasonably human's Imaginative and real stories.

Professor Nahidh Falih Al-Abbasi, PhD in Modern American Drama. He works as a University professor in Department of English at Faculty of Education for Humanities/ Diyala University in Iraq. Al-Abbasi started his Educational career since 1995 as a University Instructor. He got MA degree in Modern English Fiction in 1998 from Faculty of Education-IbnRushid/ Baghdad University. He got PhD in Modern American Drama from Malaya University, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia in 2013.

Al-Abbasi's interests and academic concerns are modern theatre and cultural studies.