









THE SAVIOUR CONCEPT IN SELECTED IRAQI POST-WAR OF 2003 NOVELS



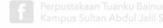




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THE SAVIOUR CONCEPT IN SELECTED IRAQI POST-WAR OF 2003 NOVELS

JUBAIR AHMED KARYOSH JUBAIR











THESIS PRESENTED TO QUALIFY FOR A DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

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2021













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To my family and friends for all their love and support



















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Thanks for all





















ABSTRACT

The main objective of this study was to investigate the notion of the saviour concept in the selected post-2003 Iraqi war novels. In this study I argued that the novelistic publication in Iraq post-2003 war and the U.S invasion of Iraq flourished after the drastic change in the political, social, cultural and economic life of Iraqis. The saviour concept is discussed in three contemporary novels written by three Iraqi novelists; namelyFrankenstein in Baghdad by Ahmed Saadawi, A Hope to Live by Fawzi Al Hindawi, and The Tobacco Keeper by Ali Bader. The themes and discourses in the novels witnessed new trends and styles of writing and became the real reflection of life and sufferings of Iraqis. The saviour concept as a theme was adopted from the universal phenomena based on the English novel Frankenstein by Mary Shelley. This concept is employed consciously to convey the idea of the Saviour as the last resort and hope for those who are suffering from marginalization and impoverishment in the neighbourhoods of Baghdad. Two major theories are adopted to shed light on the concept of saviour are New Historicism and the Postcolonial theory. The conclusion of the study is that the saviour concept is centred at the core of every faith and religious belief, so the idea of waiting for this saviour was present in every heavenly or earthly religion. The study implicates the idea that a philosophy of waiting of a universal Saviour is almost the common denominator among all peoples, nations and civilizations especially in times of need.



























ABSTRAK

Objektif utama kajian ini ialah untuk menyiasat tanggapan konsep penyelamat dalam novel-novel perang Iraq pasca-2003. Dalam kajian ini, penyelidik berhujah bahawa penerbitan novel perang di Iraq pasca-2003 dan penaklukan Irak oleh Amerika berkembang selepas perubahan drastik dalam kehidupan politik, budaya, dan ekonomi masyarakat Iraq. Konsep penyelamat ini dibincangkan di dalamtiga novel kontemporari oleh tiga novelis Iraq iaitu Frankenstein in Baghdad oleh Ahmed Saadawi, A Hope to Live oleh Fawzi Al Hindawi, dan The Tobacco Keeperoleh Ali Bader. Tema dan wacana di dalam novel-novel ini menyaksikan trend dan gaya baharu penulisan dan menjadi cerminan sebenar tentang kehidupan dan penderitaan masyarakat Iraq. Konsep penyelamat sebagai tema utama ini telah diserap dari fenomena sejagat berdasarkan novel Bahasa Inggeris bertajuk Frankenstein oleh Mary Shelley. Konsep ini digunakan secara sedar untuk memberi maksud gagasan penyelamat sebagai jalan dan harapan terakhir bagi mereka yang menanggung derita akibat peminggiran dan kemiskinan di perjiranan Baghdad. Dua teori utama yang digunakan untuk memberi penerangan tentang konsep penyelamat Historisisme Baharu dan Teori Pascakolonialisme. Kesimpulan dari kajian ini ialah konsep penyelamat berpusat pada setiap kepercayaan dan agama dan adalah gagasan mengenai satu penantian terhadap seorang penyelamat akan sentiasa hadir di dalam setiap agama langit dan bumi. Implikasi kajian ini ialah bahawa gagasan falsafah penantian seorang penyelamat sejagat adalah satu penyebut sepunya di kalangan bangsa, negara dan peradaban terutama pada masa dan ketika diperlukan.











TABLE OF CONTENTS

		Page
DECLARATION OF ORIG	INAL WORK	ii
DECLARATION OF THES	IS	iii
DEDICATION		iv
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS		v
ABSTRACT		vi
ABSTRAK		vii
TABLE OF CONTENTS		viii
CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCT	TION	
1.1 Introdu	ction	1
05-4506832	ound of the Study nku Bainun	5 ptbup
1.3 Problem	n Statement	7
1.4 Research	ch Objectives	8
1.5 Research	ch Questions	9
1.6 Signific	cance of the Study	9
1.7 Scope a	and Limitation of the Study	11
1.8 Definiti	on of Terms	12
1.8.1	Savior	12
1.8.2	Alshisma	13
1.8.3	Sectarianism	13
1.8.4	National Identity	15
1.9 Summa	rv	18













CHAPTER 2 LITERATURE REVIEW

	2.1	Introd	uction	20
	2.2	Conte	mporary Iraqi Novel	26
		2.2.1	The Novel During Saddam's Regime	33
		2.2.2	The Novel Under Freedom in Exile	34
	2.3	Post-2	2003 War and U.S. Invasion of Iraq Reading	37
	2.4	Readi	ng in Post-War Iraqi Novels	38
	2.5	The In	mpact of the War of 2003 on the Iraq	41
		2.5.1	Cultural Impact	41
		2.5.2	Social Impact	44
		2.5.3	Political Impact	46
05-4506832	pustaka.u	2.5.4	Economic Impactanku Bainun Kampus Saltan Abdul Jalil Shah	47 _{ptbu}
		2.5.5	Frankenstein in Baghdad by Ahmed Saadawi	49
		2.5.6	A Hope to Live by Fawzi Al Hindawi	56
		2.5.7	The Tobacco Keeper by Ali Bader	59
	2.6	Summ	nary	63
CHAP	FER 3 THE	ORETI	CAL FRAMEWORK	
	3.1	Introd	uction	65
	3.2	Overv	riew of Theories	69
	3.3	Discu	ssion of the Chosen Concepts	76
		3.3.1	Savior Concept	76
			3.3.1.1 Religious Point of View: Savior as a Person with Superpower	77
			a. Savior in Egyptian Mythology	79











3.4

3.5

05-4506832 p.3.6







b.	Savior in Judaism	81
c.	Savior in Christianity	82
d.	Savior in Islam	85
3.3.1.2 Savi	or as a Trend	88
a. De	emocracy	88
b. Re	eligious Group (Militias)	89
c. Gl	obalization	91
3.3.2 Sectarianism		93
3.3.3 National Ident	tity	96
Methods of Data Co	ollection	103
Procedures of Data	Analysis	104
		TBainun 105 bur
CALLOD CONCER		D . CIID . D

CHAPTER 4 THE SAVIOR CONCEPT IN FRANKENSTEIN IN BAGHDAD:

"ALSHISMA" OR "WHATS-ITS-NAME"

4.1	Introduction		107
4.2	Frank	enstein in Baghdad	110
	4.2.1	The Bibliography of the author	110
	4.2.2	Frankenstein in Baghdad- New Style and Technique	113
	4.2.3	The Saviour Concept	127
	4.2.4	Sectarianism	137
	4.2.5	National Identity	141
4.3	Summ	nary	144





















CHAPTER 5 THE SEVIOR CONCEPT IN A HOPE TO LIVE "LOVE AS A

SAVIOR"

5.1	Introduction	147
5.2	A Hope To Live	148
	5.2.1 The Bibliography of the author	148
	5.2.2 A Hope to Live - The Struggle between Love and War	153
	5.2.3 Saviour Concept	155
	5.2.4 Sectarianism	158
	5.2.5 National Identity	166
5.3	Summary	172

CHAPTER 6 THE SAVIOR CONCEPT IN THE TOBACCO KEEPER



DIVERSITY OF FORGED IDENTITIES

6.1	Introduction	174
6.2	The Tobacco Keeper	175
	6.2.1 The Bibliography of the author	175
	6.2.2 The Tobacco Keeper: Inspiration of Changing Identity	177
	6.2.3 Savior Concept	184
	6.2.4 Sectarianism	186
	6.2.5 National Identity	192
6.3	Summary	202

















xii

CHAPTER 7 CONCLUSIONS

7.1	Introduction	204
7.2	Summary of Findings	215
	7.2.1 Importance of the Savior in Iraqi Novelistic	215
	7.2.2 Sectarianism in the Selected Novels	216
	7.2.3 National Identity	218
7.3	Recommendations for Further Research	220
7.4	Contributions of the Research	221
7.5	Closing	222
REFERENCES		223





















INTRODUCTION











1.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the background of the study, the statement of the problem, the objectives of the research, questions of the research, significance of the research, and scope and limitations of the research. Also, the terms used in this research will be defined in detail. The idea of a universal saviour is almost the common denominator among all peoples, nations and civilizations especially in times of need. Researches and studies from some religions and beliefs have confirmed that almost no people or nation is free of this idea. This idea extends to the depth of history ever since the advent of civilisations. All people and nation suffering misery and oppression will long for their own kind of saviour to rescue them from evil and injustices and to have security, justice, and peaceful life back.











Universally, the idea of the Saviour is one of the axioms and necessities for humanity. The oppressed are constantly waiting for the Saviour who will bring justice and laws and liberate them from oppression. Fouladi (2011) states that for some people the Saviour is "a superhero with powers beyond those of mortal men, embodies the best of human virtues, and uses his abilities to protect the populace rather than trying to profit for himself" (p.1)

The year 2003 ushered in a new era for Iraqis after the toppling of Saddam Hussein's regime and the invasion and occupation by the United States forces. However, the Iraqis suffer from the absence of a clear vision of their future. It came after the failure of global, national and patriotic ideologies to achieve the people's aspirations in one hand and the inability of the people to produce a saviour who can help them to fulfil their dreams of peace and prosperity and to stop the massive destruction of the country and people caused by external and internal elements in the form of ethnic, sectarian and partisan conflicts. All these reasons stimulate people into thinking of the need for salvation, whether created by the people themselves or salvation granted by metaphysically divine powers in the form of a saviour or a mythical character that will eliminate the corruption and misery of the present reality.

Within the context of this research the writers employ the novel to convey their thoughts and feelings because a novel is a literary form which reflect the reality of a people in a particular society. Writers have always been interested in the world around them, and the development of the novel genre reflects a move away from an essentially religious view











of life towards a new interest in the complexities of everyday experience. As Peck and Coyle (2002) mention, "most novels are concerned with ordinary people and their problems in the societies in which they find themselves" (p. 114). Also, Dobie (2015) points out that "according to the new historicists, all texts are social documents and, as such, they both reflect and affect the world that produces them" (p.185).

Iraq went through an era rich of events and political and ideological changes due to the change of governments. The abrupt transitions from the Hashemite monarchy (1932– 58) to 'Abd al-Karim Qasim's regime (1958–63), the dictatorship of the Ba'th Party (1968– 2003), and through the years of sanctions imposed on Iraq by the United Nations Security Council (1991–2003), which were socially and economically devastating to the Iraqi people. For Iraqis, the years of embargo were a continuous state of war against them as well, and writers narrated the hardships in their literary work, and finally "the post-2003 occupation era punctuated the ideological schisms and fractious state-writer relationship" (Hanoosh, 2013).

This study will focus on scrutinising the Saviour as a linguistic concept and as a philosophical idea. I will tackle many beliefs and conventions reflected in different societies. The focus will be on using such concept in the contemporary Iraqi novels and how the novelists employed it in conveying the concerns, hopes and aspirations of the ordinary man in the local areas of Baghdad under the invasion of the U.S. forces. I argue that the writers tend to use fantasy as a style to decrease or mitigate the cruelty of the period of invasion where the scene was full of death and bloodshed. As explained by Al Najjar













(2014) the use of fantasy renders the book more entertaining to readers and also offers a chance to deal with reality in an untraditional way. The element of fantasy adds a touch of joy to the work, mitigating its cruelty.

When the world was beyond imagination with its incidents, alien to its reality, the novelist needed an eye to see with a magical realism that embodies the truth with a deeper perspective corresponds to the real, unfamiliar reality in its debates with the daily life of human societies in all its general challenges and coaxial issues. When the realist and surrealist school did not cover these gratifications in the treatment of reality, a miraculous realistic tendency arose to satisfy the reader's need to challenge consciousness and logic in exploring the mysteries and alienations that surround most phenomena in our daily life, especially social and political in particular. As magic realism literature is a simulation of reality, it is not imagining or assuming reality with a particular vision that relates to the writer. It is a literature that accepts the existence of reality, the natural and the ordinary, which can later be rejected by all of them. The literature of magical realism is considered to be a single genus in its own right that has its own mark in fiction, different from the other genres such as the romance, myth, or science fiction. This form of literature invades the cultural and literary arena by relying on simulating magical reality. It comes from Latin America with his confident steps and modern techniques, adding new fantasy elements to the world of fictional narration.





















T.E. Apter (1989) in his book Fantasy in Literature: An Approach to Reality tackled the term fantasy in literature and the importance it acquired in the creative work that it is based on as a main subject. He also illustrates the very subtle differences between fantasy from one hand and myth or dream and hallucinations on the other hand. He asserts that there is a close connection between the realm of fantasy and the everyday real world. As such some Iraqi writers, especially Ahmed Saadawi used this feature to fill his novel with fantasy characters represented by the What-its-name or Alshisma, who is a supernatural character where the bullets can penetrate but could not kill him.

In Iraqi magic realism there is a connection between fantasy and the tales of jinn, myths and heroic stories. The events from this type of genre usually happen in worlds different from ours in terms of time and space or they are works of historical and fictional symbolisms. The simplest definition of the fantastical worlds is a violation of the natural laws and logic. For example, in the novels the Alshisma character is not affected by bullets, is able to develop new flesh to patch his injured body and his ability to survive without the need to eat or drink.

1.2 **Background of the Study**

In its modern history, Iraq has experienced difficult political and social conditions represented by bloody political conflicts, rebellions in the north of Iraq since the 1940's, bloody military coups and invasion (Ibrahim, 2010: p.175). The collapse of Saddam













Hussein's regime and the occupation by the American Forces gave rationale and justifications for the world interest in Iraq. The interest included all fields; political, cultural and literature in particular. We can notice an unprecedented number of literary works especially novels being published. The narrators usually covered the period under the dictatorship and post-2003 war. At times when one might expect Iraqi authors to write about the devastating effects of the 2003 American war on Iraq and the chaos and violence that engulfed the country thereafter, it is surprising to see that they dedicate much of their creativity and imagination to excavating the past and re-examining old wars, portraying previously un-discussed phenomena such as desertion – particularly during the Iran–Iraq War of 1980 to 1988, oppositions to war, and the relationship between war and art.

After the US-led coalition invaded Iraq, we cannot approach Iraqi literature today without recognizing the multiple shifts and varieties in its literary expression. The 2003 war in Iraq spawned a decade of violence, chaos, and suffering. The post- Ba'athist era witnessed the sudden fall of a dictatorship, an encounter with Western military occupation, and an unprecedented upsurge in sectarian conflicts, to name only the most prominent events. In addition to these events, the development of contemporary Iraqi literature is the product of several fluctuations in cultural expression that span the bulk of the twentieth century (Hanoosh, 2013). The post- 2003 occupation era punctuates the ideological schisms and fractious state-writer relationship. as Hanoosh (2013) further states, the literary shifts also highlight the emergence of civil society in Iraq, the dynamics within the public sphere, and the ideological makeup of the various state-controlled cultural projects.











1.3 **Problem Statement**

The contemporary Iraqi novel genre has flourished during the end of the twenty-first century (the period following the fall of the Saddam regime) and especially after the drastic change in the political, social, cultural and economic life of Iraqis. There are a lot of Iraqi experiences in narratives that reflect the life of the marginalized people who were directly affected by the chaos and huge social and economic changes which occurred after the U.S. invasion in 2003. It was really an unprecedented narrative revolution. The achievements in the novel genre are so obvious and many Iraqi novels became international. Eventually, the Iraqi novel genre is able to liberate itself from the old-fashioned styles of writing and develops its own subjects and writing form. As such it is able to mark a presence in the







This study investigates the aftermath of the U.S. invasion on the Iraqi narrative production and the changes in style, themes, and discourse of language. There are few studies conducted in the area of the novel genre mentioned. Some theses and dissertations discussed the Iraqi novel from certain techniques or subjects. However, the study will investigate the inability of the Iraqi critics to keep up the massive novelistic production after 2003. This study is an attempt to fill the gap and establish a foundation study for further research.











The main concept used in the new Iraqi novel genre is the use of the Saviour concept as a theme adopted from the novella Frankenstein by Mary Shelley. This concept is employed consciously to convey the idea of the Saviour as the last resort of hope for those who are suffering from marginalization and oppression in an impoverished area in the neighbourhoods of Baghdad. The great pressure on those poor people forced them to flee and leave Iraq to migrate to different countries or to face their oppressors and be a target for all difficulties of the new life imposed on them after the invasion which led them to resort to identity change. The invasion period highlighted the array of terror and vengeance that characterizes the frayed fabric of life and injustice in the country.









The objectives of this study are as follows:

- 1-How the Savoir concept is employed in the selected post-2003 Iraqi post-war novels. Frankenstein in Baghdad.
- 2-How love as a Saviour concept is used in the selected post-2013 contemporary Iraqi novels.
- 3-How the mask is used as a saviour concept in selected post-2003 Iraqi novels















Research Questions 1.5

This study attempts to answer the following research questions:

- 1-How is the Saviour concept employed in the selected post-2003 Iraqi post-war novels?
- 2-How is love as a Saviour concept embodied in the selected post-2003 Iraqi postwar novels?
- 3-How is the mask as a Saviour concept embodied in the selected post-2003 Iraqi novels?











1.6 Significance of the Study

The Iraqi novelistic production witnessed a revolution of narration after the toppling of the Saddam regime. The new narrators were encouraged to publish and as a result more than six hundred novels were published during the period from 2003 to 2016. This massive literary output of the narrations documented the history, difficulties, miseries, and burdens of the Iraqis during the Saddam regime, exile experiences and under the occupation of the U.S. led forces. All the published novels focused on events in Iraq under the occupation of the U.S troops and Iraq that was represented by bloodshed and confused values. There is a sense that the writers felt the need to write differently in order to express this new situation that was happening during the time. The publications of the Iraqi narratives are related to











modern Iraqi history. The novelists found themselves tasked with chronicling the political, social and psychological history of Iraq partly due to the absence of the unbiased historians. Every ideological historian would try to write the history from his point of view, be it nationalist or communist. Whereas the project of the religious history tends to totally abolish the contemporary Iraqi history and transmits it to the righteous ancestors represented by the religious symbols that put magical solutions almost for everything (Ibraheem, 2010).

Many novelists write serious and distinct works in the novel genre. Some of it are based on reality in its various forms and others are based on the workout of elements and techniques to serve the text and the intellectual and mental expression of the novelists according to the particular environment and their intellectual ability. The novelists also try to liberate themselves from the static traditional styles of text towards the renewal of new styles with the aim of achieving the opposite by raising the questions related to the structure and form of language and discourse. So, there are many reasons for the tendency towards the use of modern techniques in the narration and dialogue and the use of other creative arts such as cinema, plastic arts and self-biography as well as how to display the characters in the novel. This study is an attempt to fill the gap and establish a foundation study for further research. It sheds light on the new writing styles the Iraqi narrators use in writing their novels in which they are able to gain global reputation. The selected novels are among the best samples of contemporary Iraqi texts which are recognized globally and in the Arab world. This is especially in regard to the novel Frankenstein in Baghdad by Ahmed Saadawi, which was shortlisted as the best ten novels in the world due to the skillfulness



















of the novelist in using the new techniques in narration such as using fantasy as the medium for storytelling. The conscious use of fantastic, superstitious figure and grotesque phenomenon in the Iraqi novelistic style is the special mark of this time period. Hence, the study will analyze novels written after the 2003 invasion and occupation of Iraq and to explore the unique use of new invented themes. This study also will highlight the achievements of Iraqi novels to reach global recognition.

1.7 Scope and Limitation of the Study

The study will investigate the meaning and use of the Saviour concept and mythical figures in four of the well-known civilizations and religions such as Egyptian Mythology, Christianity, Judaism, and Islam. It also presents a thorough analysis of Iraqi novels published during the occupation of the U.S. forces in 2003 in which the idea of the Saviour and myth was part of its theme. These novels are Frankenstein in Baghdad (2013) by Ahmed Saadawi, A Hope to Live (2015) by Fawzi Al Hindawi, and The Tobacco Keeper (2011) by Ali Bader. The research also focuses on the changes in the writing style of the novelists to a new style in the description of the daily life of Iraqis. The sectarian conflicts, during the period between 2005 to 2008, are given more attention and reflect the themes of the above-mentioned novels. Another reason is because this is the most critical period in the history of Iraq. It was a turning point in the Iraqi societal fabric that established a new phase of the relationships among the one united country. It also brought terrorism.



















1.8 **Definition of Terms**

In this study, the following terms are used extensively:

1.8.1 **Saviour**

Linguistically saviour means "one that saves from danger or destruction" or "someone who saves something or someone from danger, harm, failure, etc." (Webster). There are several names for the Saviour based on each religion. For instance, the Christians and Jews call him Jesus Christ and Messiah. In Shia'a Islamic jurisprudence (Figh), they call him Al-Qa'em (who does the command of Allah), Al-Mahdi or Al Muntadhar (the waited). Others call the Saviour a superhero, superpower or Great Reformer in which the character has powers beyond those of mortal men, embodies the best of human virtues, and uses his abilities to protect the populace rather than trying to profit for himself (Fouladi, 2011: p. 1). The concept of the Saviour is a common denominator in world civilizations though his limitations, descriptions, and details are different. The idea exists in religion, philosophy and in politics. Within the context of this research, Saviour is a man or an idea or philosophy who will achieve justice and bring real justice and liberate the oppressed people from injustice by rulers and dictators who restrict their freedom and kill those who dare defy them.

















Alshisma, Nameless figure or Whats-its-name (in Iraqi dialect) is an Iraqi version of the fantasy creature Frankenstein in Frankenstein by Mary Shelley. It is a supernatural character used as the main character in Ahmed Saadawi's novel Frankenstein in Baghdad. It is a monster created by another character, Hadi Al-Attag who decides to literally stitch together a corpse from the fresh flesh of the victims of suicide bombings and sectarian violence in Baghdad whose corpses are blown to pieces and unburied. This monster is invincible where bullets could penetrate but not kill him. He believes that the Iraqi political mix that surfaced after 2003 failed to create horizons for common action or at least to set a work program that could help the state rise from the ashes. The shape and identity of the state became ambiguous, as is the character of the nameless figure in the novel.

Sectarianism 1.8.3

Iraq is made up of many ethnic groups and sects that are intertwined with one another; It is ethnically composed of Arabs and the Kurds, Turkmen and Assyrians, and also Sunnis, Shiites, Christians, and a few other sects by religion. This broad pluralism of ethnicities and religions were able to live harmoniously until the United States invasion of Iraq in 2003. Thereafter, years after the fall of Saddam Hussein's regime, violence and tension between Sunnis, Shiites, and Kurds continue to threaten stability of Iraq and its institutions. The rivalry between Shiites and Sunnis in Iraq has been at the heart of the political struggle











in the country since the fall of the former president Saddam Hussein in 2003. As such, sectarian tensions impeded state building processes and destabilized the country.

The measures taken by the Iraqi governments so far have only led to more political conflicts that lead to sectarian violence between those ethnicities and religions. In addition, one of the most important factors that promoted sectarian violence in Iraq was the US occupation, as it sought to establish a political system based on sectarian and ethnic lines, and to draft a new constitution that paved the way for the existence of the loose and disjointed state. As a result, there is a spread of chaos in the country and the lack of control of its borders, which facilitated the way to the entry of armed groups that had an active role in sectarian violence, especially Al Qaeda and ISIS.











Sectarianism relates to religious or political sects and the differences between them that normally leads to conflicts and bloodshed. Here, the term is used to denote the sectarian struggle between the Iraqi societal components from the Sunni vs. Shia'a Arabs, Kurdish vs. Arabs, Christian vs. Muslims, etcetera. All these societal components try to protect themselves by joining groups or parties to get rights and earnings from the authority after the 2003 war and invasion by the U.S. led coalition of Iraq.

Sectarian issues are a central problem in Iraq. Sectarianism and ethnic divisions have expanded from struggles by extremists and activists to actions by popular movements with a steadily broader support base. While most Iraqis still express support for national unity in public opinion polls, the base for violence and cleansing expands to include more





















and more of the population in areas where there are sectarian and ethnic tension and violence. The rise of sectarianism increases after the dramatic change in historical, social, political and cultural aspects. The sectarian conflict of the 2005- 2008 eras was an undeclared, low-level civil war that was destroying Iraq as a nation. The occupation of Iraq by the US forces, and the consequent excessive use of military force, which is a kind of violence that led to the destruction of the Iraqi army as well as the destruction of the state and its institutions, and what followed is creating a from chaos among the people, sowing discord, and creating a state of division among the spectrums of society its impact continues to this day. Thus, the American occupation has a role in promoting sectarian violence in Iraq.











1.8.4 **National Identity**

Identity can be defined as "an ideological concept represents the shared features among a group of people such as religion, ethnicity, language or sect. These features are variables according to their use and employment" (Izzat, 2016, p. 6). A National identity is the set of values, morals, customs, practices and beliefs that we believe in. From my point of view, the national identity means the unconditional general regularity in the preservation of each component, acquisitions, interests, values, customs, traditions, and systems of a society whose members bear a nationality itself in a country according to an ethical principle within a coherent societal framework. The commitment to what it stipulates of constitution, domestic and international laws, respect for common humanitarian principles and

















tolerance, the difference, the diversity of ideas, the other opinion, its belief and its point of view, if it does not affect the difference and the values, opinions and ideas, the sovereignty and unity of the nation. The absolute recognition is that raising generations to love the homeland, its obedience to the rulers, and sacrifice to preserve its gains, identity and defense its territories and borders are axioms that cannot be negotiated and concessions are offered. National identity is a complex system that is not easy to ignore the data entangled in it.

It naturally contains the components and practices of loyalty, belonging to and following certain customs, traditions and values that are governed by the individual's relationship with his creator, the soul, the family and its familial, tribal and community surroundings in the village, or neighbourhood, city, and then the state as a whole in what is termed entirely in the 'community of national identity'. National identity has a human group gathered by an independent geographic land that is not subject to any kind of domination. Its actions reflect adherence to the rules and customs of society and respect for the rule of law It is an important theme used in Iraqi literature. This theme was dealt according to ethnic, sectarian, or regional affiliations. The identity struggle started locally and expands to include nations and states. Every ethnic or sect group related to a state or a nation who adopt sponsorship of this group and supporting it to keep surviving. The national identity is not a metaphysical, eternal, tribal and predetermined element. It is a dynamic reality for a body can be reformulated, reshaped and developed. Iraq, after 2003, and through its exposure to the occupation and the destruction of all its infrastructure and the exposure of its legal institutions to destruction, has entered the stage of danger. Its unit





















has become threatened by fragmentation and the absence of national identity, under the headings of sub-national identities, religious, sectarian, and entered the preludes to the sectarian civil war. The political forces contributed, with all their orientations, on the fragmentation of the national identity, as the sectarian politicians are the cause of this crack in the identity, so we do not count on the politicians to find the treatment, they are all responsible for this crack in the national identity.

The subject of national identity is one of the most problematic issues the Iraqis ever face. The issue of Iraqi national identity violently exploded after the toppling of Saddam Hussein's regime and there was an identity change in the period after 2003. Nationalist identity was developed as a reaction to colonialism or occupation by foreign countries. The Iraqi national identity is given attention because there was a feeling of non-affiliation to their own country because of the post-war unexpected discrepancies. There are different kinds of identities such as immigrant identity, personal identity and "fatal identity" which means that the identity "in which the human becomes limited to one element of the identity and considers this element, whether religious or nationalistic, stand for the whole identity" (Al Shibibi, 2014, p.67).















1.9 Summary

The introductory chapter discusses the background of the study and how the title is chosen, the statement of the problem is highlighted and discussed in detail. The argument in this study is that the contemporary Iraqi novels flourishing during the twenty-first century and especially after the drastic change in political, social, cultural and economic life of the Iraqis mostly deals with sufferings and, therefore, the yearnings of the people for a saviour. It investigates the aftermath of the U.S. invasion on the Iraqi narrative production and the changes in style, themes, and language of discourse and the inability of the critics to cope with this massive novelistic production.

Also, it discusses the identity change in the postcolonial period after 2003. More than six hundred novels were published during the period from 2003-2016. This massive literary production documented the history, difficulties, miseries, and burdens of the Iraqis during the time under the Saddam regime, life in exile or surviving under the occupation of the U.S. led forces. The objectives of this study show how the Saviour concept is used deliberately in the contemporary Iraqi novels post-2003 war.

The idea of the Saviour is raised as a common denominator among different peoples, nations, and civilizations. It focuses on the selected 2003 post-war novels such as Frankenstein in Baghdad by Ahmed Saadawi, A Hope to Live by Dr. Fawzi Al Hindawi and The Tobacco Keeper by Ali Bader. The novels show how the Iraqi novelists use fantasy in their writings to reflect the attitudes and situation of people after the collapse of the











dictatorship of Saddam Hussein's regime and the occupation of the American Forces which give rationale and justifications for the world interest in Iraq.

















