

Hybridity Towards Kurdish Redemption in Goran Sabah's Narrative

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الهجينية نحو الانعتاق الكوردي في سرد كوران صباح

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Abstract

This paper conducts a comparative analysis of Goran Sabah's memoir *Iraqi Fulbrighter* (2011) and novel *Deer Girls* (2024), in the light of American School of Comparative Literature. It examines the complex relationship between fear, displacement, and construction of hybrid identity as being paradigms of the Kurdish experience in both texts. Given this, this study analyses the aspects of metaphorical domains of resilience thereby creating cross-cultural platforms where the localized memory and the global traits of showcasing Kurdish experiences encounter. It analyzes *Iraqi Fulbrighter* with reference to displacement and nostalgia that embody ways of self-awareness and ideological resistance for Kurdish characters, while investigates how Kurdish characters in *Deer Girls* experience fear and captivity as a move towards re-contextualizing a philosophical inquiry into hybridity in terms of interfaith solidarity. The comparative approach, meanwhile, highlights the trans-national and trans-cultural natures of both narratives whereby hybridity is not always presented as loss of originality, but performs as an act of survival. Through convergence of trauma, memory, and cultural negotiation, this paper argues that Sabah's chosen works are creative tools for expressing Kurdish experiences, yet in different paths, in novel ways through a transnational literary context. Keywords: comparative literature, displacement, hybridity, Kurdish identity, resistance.

الخلاصة

تُجري هذه الورقة البحثية تحليلاً مقارناً لمذكرات كوران صباح "طالب فولبرايت عراقي" (٢٠١١) وروايته "فتيات الغزلان" (٢٠٢٤)، في ضوء المدرسة الأمريكية للأدب المقارن. تفحص الدراسة العلاقة المعقدة بين الخوف والتهجير وبناء الهوية الهجينة بوصفها نماذج للتجربة الكردية في كلا النصين. وبناءً على ذلك، تحلل هذه الدراسة جوانب المجالات الاستعارية للمرونة، مما يخلق منصات عابرة للثقافات حيث تتلاقى الذاكرة المحلية والسماوات العالمية لعرض التجارب الكردية. تحلل الدراسة "طالب فولبرايت عراقي" بالإشارة إلى التهجير والحنين اللذين يجسدان طرق الوعي الذاتي والمقاومة الأيديولوجية للشخصيات الكردية، بينما تبحث كيف تختبر الشخصيات الكردية في "فتيات الغزلان" الخوف والأسر كخطوة نحو إعادة تأطير استنقاص فلسفي للهجانة من حيث التضامن بين الأديان. يسلط المنهج المقارن، في الوقت نفسه، الضوء على الطبيعة العابرة للحدود الوطنية والثقافية لكلا السردين، حيث لا تُقدّم الهجانة دائماً على أنها فقدان للأصالة، بل تعمل كفعل من أفعال البقاء. من خلال تقارب الصدمة

والذاكرة والتفاوض الثقافي، تجادل هذه الورقة بأن أعمال صباح المختارة هي أدوات إبداعية للتعبير عن التجارب الكردية، ولكن بمسارات مختلفة، وبطرق جديدة عبر سياق أدبي عابر للحدود الوطنية.

1. Introduction

The postmodern reflection of hybridity questions the orthodoxy traits that repetitively hail the concept of “originality”. It establishes the fact that hybridity acts towards deconstructing the pre-assumptive worldviews of one’s background as a means of globality and cross-border reconciliations. This study examines the status of hybridity as a vehicle for expressing one’s identity and redemption as portrayed in Goran Sabah’s memoir *Iraqi Fulbrighter*¹ which is written in fictional style and his novel *Deer Girls*. By means of analyzing themes of exile, cross-cultural interactions and identity struggles, this paper investigates how the characters manage their sense of self through travelling beyond borders. This also reflects the way Sabah, as the author of the chosen works, attempt to write in English in order to address a wider readership and travel beyond the cultural borders. In an interview with Sabah, he refers to such cross-cultural journey through writing in English: I deliberately targeted English-speaking readers because this audience was significantly wider and more accessible. Beyond mere numbers, I had a deeper purpose: I wanted the world to hear my voice as a Kurdish writer and to discover the richness of Kurdish literature and stories. Writing in English became my bridge to share our culture with a global audience. [18 December 2025]Such a trend by the author to narrate one’s own nation’s story in another language targeting speakers of another language is a postmodern indicator. Identity is thus no longer understood as a fixed or inherited category but a fluid one that is constructed through experience, displacement and negotiation of cultures. Postmodernism, by denying any single truths and consistent origins, allows the characters such as Batya and Goran to be understood as a subject whose identity is realized in fragments, not as linear histories. Jean-François Lyotard (1984) argues that the postmodern identity is constructed in small and intimate stories rather than in large-scale cultural premises, a view that can also be traced in the gradual reconstructions of the self that the characters pursue as they shift through the landscape of various cultures. Similarly, Linda Hutcheon (1988) highlights the postmodern propensity to reveal identity as a performative and dynamic process, a tendency that is experienced as both protagonists negotiate their experiences in the cultural landscape, which constantly reforms their identity. In this sense, hybridity in the stories of Sabah is not just the state of survival, but a postmodern performance of redefining the self out of the boundaries of national, linguistic, or religious purity. The study employs an American school of comparative approach focusing on cross linguistic interpretations as well as cross cultural interpretation. Comparative literature has long been concerned with the encounter between texts across linguistic, cultural, and national borders. The American School of Comparative Literature is characterized by its concern with universal themes, human experience, and transmission of ideas, not by philological or narrowly historical approaches. This study presents a critical reading of *Iraqi Fulbrighter* and *Deer Girls* through a postcolonial and postmodern lens thereby analyzing the way hybridity – as a phenomenon – is rendered into a redemptive method. The argument is centered on the process of constructing hybrid identities as being a negotiated platform, acting towards cultural survival and liberation in a war-torn environment that Kurdish characters are exposed to. Moreover, the other emphasis of the research concerns the ways that cross-cultural encounters and interwoven identities provide alternatives to fixed national and ethnic boundaries, a step towards de-mythicizing notions of originality as a means of self fulfilment. This framework helps not only to lay the philosophical foundation of the argumentative approaches of this study, but also to shape the analytical approaches to further postmodern interpretations of the chosen texts under examination. Similarly, the Kurdish protagonist of *Iraqi Fulbrighter* (2011) experiences a gradual transformation of his culture but continues having strong emotional connections to his mother country, which implies his diasporic path of identity formation. The concept of hybridity, which has been widely discussed in the context of postcolonial literature, is the result of historical processes such as colonization, globalization and displacement, in which these processes are re-invented as sites of cultural negotiation and renewal. The term is implemented by Homi K. Bhabha in *The Location of Culture* (1994) for it challenges the essentialist and binary views of identity with the suggestion that cultural identity is dynamic and shifting. For Bhabha, it is created in the “Third Space”, a space where new meanings and identities emerge. The space in question is common to colonizers and colonized, but it is most fruitfully utilized by the latter. The Third Space, though a space of interstitial space of contestation and negotiation, is at the same time a space where creative resistance must emerge and the remaking of identity outside domination. Bhabha insists that “hybridity is the reassessment of the assumption of colonial identity through the repetition of discriminatory identity effects” (Bhabha, 1994, p. 112). Hence, hybridity can be thought of as being a subversive strategy that would be the opposite of domination, while acting fluidly and in pluralistic

ways to embrace all the differences in a harmonious way. This study, therefore, discusses that hybridity in the chosen literary works performs as a means of constructing fluid, fractured, and re-combined bodies. For example, the inner monologues of the protagonists, cultural references, codes of language are closely analyzed in order to detect hybrid formations. Moreover, this study will explore migration - as metaphorical symbols -, crossing borders, multilingualism and cultural rituals that symbolize hybridity in the two narratives, outlining how characters use their new constructed hybrid identities to negotiate systems of oppression and trace new forms of belonging. Additionally, the study will discuss how hybridity influences narrative structure and genre in both works. Sabah borrows from the narratological genres based on different cultural traditions, testimonial narrative and political allegory, in his writing style. This technical hybridity underlines the postmodern rejection of a sole truth or a sole origin. The examined texts are thus postmodern narrative strategies to question linear history and to make room for fragmented, multi-perspectival, voices. This selection of method demonstrates Hutcheon's argument in *The Politics of Postmodernism* that postmodern literature "is a contradictory enterprise: it undersets conventions" (Hutcheon, 2002, p. 3). Sabah does so by incorporating Kurdish oral tradition as well as diasporic memory into the Western literary tradition thereby producing hybrid narratives to defy exclusionary discourses. In addition, the research investigates dominant legacies and marginalized voices as portrayed through literary depictions in the chosen texts. It reads the texts through Edward Said's argumentative approaches of "contrapuntal reading" in his *Culture and Imperialism* (1993), thereby, reading that the texts with within Western and Kurdish contexts to demonstrate that the Kurdish voices are mainly hybrid. This analysis thus shows the Kurdish experience of hybridity as empowerment through migration. In *Iraqi Fulbrighter*, the experience of living the American culture does not make Goran stop being a Kurd but rather it gives him a wider perspective where he can redefine his own culture. Similarly, the mixed Kurdish-Jewish affiliations of Batya in *Deer Girls* do not disintegrate her identity but, instead, allow her to rebuild it through empathy, strength and the cross-cultural awareness. Hybridity in both stories is a productive element which transforms displacement into modified self-understanding and intercultural resilience. Lastly, hybridity will be discussed in conjunction with political resistance and cultural redemption. The texts imply that hybrid individuals are more qualified to imagine alternative futures for their communities. They cross the cultural grids, alleviate the difficulties of conflicts and rather suggest new models of coexistence. This redemptive feature of hybridity aligns with postcolonial argumentations such as that of Stuart Hall, who takes identity as "not an essence but a positioning" (Hall, 2019). Hall's view will be useful for understanding how characters in Goran Sabah's works redefine Kurdishness as being dynamic, within shifting cultural practices, rather than differently from being static. In terms of postmodern discourses, identity is not merely unidimensional or static, but dependable, performative and relational. This reminds of Judith Butler's theory of performativity in her book *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (1990) that characters perform and negotiate their hybrid selves in different cultural contexts. Moreover, the performative acts of womanhood are significantly depicted in *Deer Girls*. Womanhood is practiced by the characters outside the mere definitions imposed by patriarchal outlooks and antagonistic worldviews. Batya's rejection of traditional gender roles and reinterpretation of femininity within the frames of political and cross-cultural contexts are literary reflections of postcolonial feminist theoretical critiques. Encounters from across cultures are of equal significance to both works. They are the vessel into which the hybrid identity is being created. The encounters of characters – who are from different cultural backgrounds – are ways of constructing hybrid entities as established through friendship and displacement. This study demonstrates that these transformative moments destabilize ethno-nationalist ideologies. They even overcome the questions regarding belonging and cultural empathy. Finally, it argues that the idea of redemption runs through the texts in both individual and collective appeals. Redemption has nothing to do with a return to purity or origin; it is achieved through acceptance of multiplicity. The birth of hybrid characters in the chosen works gives hope for Kurdish cultural survival and Literature Review This study is the first academic research about the chosen texts. No previous study has been conducted on either of the texts. The memoir *Iraqi Fulbrighter* and the novel *Deer Girls* provide an entrance to the issues of hybridity, displacement, identity and cross-cultural belonging. The chosen texts do not only dramatize the mental and social struggles of displaced people but are also political allegories of Kurdish existence on the global platform. Nevertheless, Sabah attacks traditional accounts of continuity and nationhood in both texts. He tends to employ non-linear route, disjointed plot and unreliable narrators to suggest that memory and identity are reconstituted on a postmodern scale. All these stylistic elements echo with the theory of historiographic metafiction written by Linda Hutcheon which was formulated in *A Politics of Postmodernism*, which puts much emphasis on the mixing of historical narrative with

self-reflexivity and irony. Hutcheon indicates that postmodern fiction refutes the monologues of history and adopts numerous stories (Hutcheon, 2002). Iraqi Fulbrighter destroys the certainties of culture with a mixture of the memories of evidence and ironic criticism. In a like way, Batya, in *Deer Girls*, does not base her personal losses in any fixed historical time line but works in random memories, emotional fragments and varying points of view. Sabah therefore uses postmodern methods to question both national and ethnic absolutes and allows creation of the hybrid subject through technical displacement. Furthermore, the representation of identity in Sabah is also overwhelmed by the exercise of power who can speak and who has to be silent. In both works, characters are fighting against social constructs that force monolithic classification to their identity. A such tendency is found in Iraqi Fulbrighter where the main character fights against the forces of national loyalty and in *Deer Girls* where Batya goes beyond her limited gender and ethnicity roles. The Archaeology of Knowledge by Michel Foucault is a critical point of view into that process, examining how discourse has created, and controls, knowledge and identity (Foucault, 2002). Foucault argues that the institutional discourses are usually influential in the manner in which people view themselves and the characters of Sabah disobey the institutional requirements through creation of alternative self-assessments which reshape existing cultural concepts of the powerful. The issue of the Western perceptions of the Kurdish and Middle Eastern identities appear in the writings of Sabah repeatedly. The main character in Iraqi Fulbrighter is constantly being presented with the Americanized stereotyping of the Middle East, and in *Deer Girls*, Batya has to overcome her identity with narratives of otherness, handed down to her and Through such representations to the theory of Orientalism embedded by Edward Said (1978), he criticizes the way the West creates the other by conceptualizing the East as the exotic and inferior other (Said, 1978). The characters in the stories by Sabah openly oppose this exoticization, through providing counter-narratives that focus on the theme of agency, complexity and multiplicity. Out of Place: A Memoir by Said (1999) is also applicable here considering that the author of the memoir focuses on the emotional and intellectual consequences surrounding exile and hybrid identity a situation similar to the case of the protagonists in the Sabah novel. Similar to Said, characters of Sabah do not pursue any means to restore a similar state to pure origin, but rather are stuck within cultural hybridity in order to survive . The image of hybrid subjectivity described by Sabah also implies the wider power trends and the mechanisms of government in postcolonial times. Both Iraqi Fulbrighter and *Deer Girls* draw characters existing in the contexts of cultural subordination and opposition. Thus, the practices of cultural negotiation, oppression, and resistance are congruent with the exhibitions made by Achille Mbembe in the *On the Postcolony* (2001), where he speaks about the fact that postcolonial subjects exist with the remnant forms of control associated with colonial procedures, and this process shapes the identity and agency (Mbembe, 2001). The characters in both texts are not merely creations of colonial leftovers; they are reinterpreted as well, creating identities to speak back to these structures of power symbolically and culturally through subversion. In similar to the displacement experience in the Sabah's works, thoughts are presented by Salman Rushdie in *Imaginary Homelands* (1991) as Rushdie studies the manner in which the displaced persons invent themselves using memory, imagination, and assimilation of cultures (Rushdie, 1991). Both protagonists in Iraqi Fulbrighter and in *Deer Girls* envision other futures, and re-create identities not in the struggle against exile, but, rather, through the experience of being homeaway. Their identity is hybrid, provisional and deliberately fractured; that is exactly the kind of identity that Rushdie perceives as a mark of the modern diasporic subject .As this literature review has shown, Sabah's texts are firmly located in the international debates of the theory of hybridity, identity, and postcolonial subjectivity. The Kurdish literature is hardly studied in the field of postcolonial literature in spite of its rich involvement in the themes shared between postcolonial records. Although the issue of hybrid identity had been theorized in Arabic, Persian, and Turkish literature, Kurdish ones particularly those written in English, or in the bilingual environment, are marginal. This paper will thus be serving this gap, which is perceived to be a crucial role in the scholarship of locating the works of Goran Sabah in the contextual framework of postmodern and postcolonial literary theories. His literature does not only expand the Kurdish literary field but also introduces to a broader discussion of transnationalism, cultural survivals, and identity politics in world literature.

1. Hybridity in the Face of Displacement

As a main theoretical construct, hybridity is said to be a key concept in the context of displacement, where established ideas of identity and belonging are shaken because of exile, migration, and cultural discontinuity. Postcolonial critics argue that displacement does not result in loss alone, instead, it creates an interstitial space where identities are re-conceptualized in terms of negotiation and transformation (Bhabha, 1994; Hall, 1990). In this interstitial space, the hybridity is a dynamic process, but not a static state, as it is constituted by memory,

difference and intercultural interaction. Displacement is also presented as a possibility of redemption, but this is not meant as a reinstatement of an identity that existed before but rather the ability to reform meaning and agency after a dislocation. The discontinuous experience of the exile may foster critical consciousness and new ways of belonging as proposed by Said (2000). This chapter conceptualizes hybridity as a positive reaction to displacement, thus, creating the theoretical framework through which the characters are able to negotiate the fear, cultural dislocation, and renewal in the stories of Sabah. The characters of both texts are shaped through the understanding that Kurdishness is not transmitted in definite forms, and that it is founded upon the violence of displacement, the stress of exile, and the need to negotiate with the culture. These characters are portrayed as allegorical of a more encompassing Kurdish story of survival, perseverance and change of fragmented landscapes. Moreover, this study analyzes the way the author focuses on Iraqi Fulbrighter and Deer Girls on their own, and then both texts will be put in opposition with each other. The author stresses on each of the texts protagonists in turn examining how personal trauma, fear, and unease due to emotional or physical loss or place, fracture their sense of self, but then helps them to re-build it in a stronger shape for the act of survival. The current research claims that the isolation of Goran, the protagonist in Iraqi Fulbrighter is less explicit, and defined by emotional alienation, homesickness, and ideological conflict in the United States, where the narrator, Goran is faced with the need to make sense of practice in a new country, as well as the mental burdens of being in isolation. He does not refer to physical pain, but an internal one to leaving his family at a time when his wife is pregnant. On the contrary, the patriarchal systems of thought displace Batya in a violent manner leading to her imprisonment, disempowerment and experiencing a dehumanized treatment. However, during this imprisonment, Batya starts to draw back her hybrid identity by recalling memory, language and trans-cultural discourse. To the contrary, Furthermore, in this chapter the texts will also be analyzed in the light of postmodernist theories and identity issues in order to examine such developments. The Third Space concept actuated by Homi Bhabha is adopted to explain how such negotiations of identities that come up between cultures, languages, and histories are conducted between Goran and Batya. The experiences and survival of psychological violence of both heroes can be explained in the context of the writings of Frantz Fanon on the areas of dehumanization, trauma and resistance. The Exile and representation as reflections of Edward Said are vital to the interpretation of the chapter of the diasporic state of Goran and captivity of Batya. The concept of *différance* introduced by Jacques Derrida yields further on the argument of identity as fractious, deferred, and created within absence. The American School of Comparative Literature influences the development of the comparative framework of this chapter as it tends to emphasize transnational, thematic, and humanistic approach. Being the works of the same author writing in the same language, Iraqi Fulbrighter and Deer Girls provide an opportunity to extensively study the question of continuity and contrast. The fact that the American School is open to learning materials across the linguistic and cultural borders predestines its special suitability in discussing the manner in which Sabah constructs Kurdish identity differently, both to native and international audiences. The chapter eventually concludes that neither of the two texts finds hybrid identity in cultural harmony, but rather, trauma, fear and displacement through which the main characters in both books are able to create new selves by creating something out of loss, hardship, and regeneration .

2.1 Fear, Displacement, and the Genesis of Hybrid Identity in Iraqi Fulbrighter

Iraqi Fulbrighter depicts the statuses of fear and displacement as being a more insidious than in Deer Girls. In this case, the hybridization of the main character Goran is not brought about by war or imprisonment but by the loss of emotions and cultural dislocation as well as gradual destruction of self in the unfamiliar environment. Goran is a Fulbright scholar and arrives to the United States to feel nostalgic about something he cannot even define. As a scholar, he has to struggle with the new cultural environment and the burden of national tragedy and personal desire. Here, hybrid identity is not romanticized; it is what he is creating one moment to another due to the lack of belonging. Iraqi Fulbrighter thus posits hybridity as a psychic-disoriented state, created in the fault-lines between obligation and passion, here and then. Using the arguments of different theorists and relying on the textual evidence, the given section defines the ways in which the experience of exile implies a peculiar identity, whose fragmentary nature is reinforced by strength. Among the most touching scenes in the novel is the breaking of Goran in his thoughts about being apart with family :Missing my family was like a murderer who murdered me every now and then. Crying those two hours under the heavy rain made me decide to fly back home in the winter break which was close to come.... I had even tickets for a round trip to Canada. But missing my family pushed me to reverse all of that. (Sabah, 2011, p. 159). This quote shows how displacement has a negative effect on the psychological world. Goran does not introduce homesickness as a kind of nostalgia, but he illustrates

it as a repetitive, violent action, as a murderer, which disrupts his physical sense of self. This breakdown in the rain is a symbol of the everyday work of exile, where pain is constant not absorbed in a lost memory. His aspirations to be a specialized fulbright and the emotive attachment to his home country in Iraq is a contradiction that underscores the fact that displacement breaks the straight line of identity and success. The myth of return” is one of the salient characteristics of the diasporic consciousness established by William Safran in his seminal essay on the concept of the diaspora: a persistent desire to be reunited with the homeland that still defines individual identity when the very process of the return is impossible (Safran, 1991). The fact that Goran chooses to abandon his academic career in order to temporarily reunite with his family is in agreement with this pull because the imagined motherland, more specific, the family residents in the motherland, creates the gravitational force that interferes with both professional and geographic obligations. The homesickness of Goran in this context is not just an indication of regression, but it is also an element of the paths in which his hybrid identity is created: a life that exists in a continuous state of motion between ambitions elsewhere and a desire to be home. Further, the estrangement study presented by Sara Ahmed brings in a subtle aspect. Displacement in her version is represented as a sense of being out of place that does not strictly occur as a mere geographical phenomenon, but rather as a quality that infuses the body; the migrant subject is also both familiar and alien with the self (Ahmed, 2000). The suggestive image of tears is touchingly described when Goran sobs in the rain where his body is the center of displacement; the physiological process of crying does not separate the internal fragmentation and the external exile. This scene of dramatic effect explains the contradiction of hybrid identity. In this respect, hybridization is the rejection of a paradigm of cultural synthesis in favor of a radical dichotomy: Goran stands in an interstitial position between his possible pursuit of the Fulbright scholarship and the necessity to go back to his family. The continuing conflict between these rival self-constitutions is what hybridity is all about. Redemption at this point is not the unification of these conflicting dimensions but the practice of patience to live with them. That split stands out even more when it comes to how Goran portrays his surrounding and how he communicates in the United States :Each one was heading to their own paradise, and I headed to a cold home far from paradise. I was always consoling myself. I felt like a very strong force inside me that pushes me to go on and complete this successfully. That force made me forget the paradise for now and stay tuned on the task I have come for, (Sabah, p. 29). The force that is identified by Goran here is not simply physical vitality, but rather a developed discipline that comes into being by hybrid processes. His language depicts a man caught between two worlds of affection; the heading to the “paradise” - which is symbolic of family and home ties, and the coldness of exile. The diaspora concept by Stuart Hall argues that diasporic identity is not a fixed entity, but rather a project of becoming as well as being that continuously takes place in both spatial and temporal layers, including the history and culture (Hall, 2019). It is this ontological vitality that Goran displays. Therefore, he stifles urgent desire to achieve an endeavor that will eventually redeem his displacement; a plan that will seek to convert misery into an end. Through its destructiveness, Ghassan Hage observes that, as a form of affect, diasporic longing is directional: nostalgic homesickness is not only a productive affect, but also a paradigm by which migrants orient their life paths (Hage, 1997). This claim that Goran does not indulge in nostalgia does not mean that he does not want to go home, but is a redirection of the desire to act. This is an expression of hybrid identity as an affective discipline demanding a continuous retuning of memory and ambition. Goran thus goes beyond binary division, learning to move in the spaces of emotional turmoil. Such experience is reminiscent of the claim made by Marianna Charountaki that Kurdish identity has always been flexible and negotiable due to the lack of statehood: “The Kurds' lack of statehood has produced a political culture of constant adaptation and redefinition” (Charountaki, 2010, p. 19). This historical state is internalized in Goran. His hybridity is not an individual phenomenon; it is a reflection of the Kurdish experience, overall, to live without a home and survive by adjusting to discontinuous conditions. The phrase cold home can imply that being an exile is never a good substitution to the warmth of belonging, but it also hints at the fact that the only way to survive is to learn to live in cold conditions without giving up hope. Therefore, it is more acceptable that the proclamation by Goran would be interpreted as an admission of defeat, a philosophy of survival. His identity as a mixed-race person does not solve contradictions, but turns them into fuel. By doing so, he becomes a man who lives between the spaces of desire and achievement, exile and mission, fracture and redemption and in that agonizing link he finds his agency. Language and memory equally important factors in constructing the shattered identity of Goran. He is presented with an epiphany of dreamy authenticity :Sleeping took me to the small worlds which my son and I were often laughing. I dreamt like the plane changed its direction from Miami to Kansas to Kurdistan. That was my best dream ever in my life. (Sabah, p. 29) . This dream transcends the boundaries of the sentimental escapism, as it is

an affective recuperation in the framework of the cultural displacement. In the dream story, Goran breaks space and restores closeness with his son, indicating symbolic oneness with his motherland. The sudden route of Miami to Kansas and finally to Kurdistan is a metaphor of the free flow of attachment and memory hence marking a geography that crosses the conventional state borders. Jacques Derrida's concept of *différance* explains why identity never presents itself entirely, but is constantly deferred and haunted by absence (Derrida, 1976, p. 23). This deferral is supported by the dreamscape in which Goran has to live, as this example demonstrates that the imagery of Kurdistan is available only in partial, ghostly shapes. These pieces can never be recovered completely, although at the same time, they cannot be lost forever. Hirsch argues that post-memory, especially in the diasporic contextual context, favors the sensitive reconstruction of the historical fragments rather than the actual remembrance, thus to the survival in the present day (Hirsch, 1997). This reinvention is expressed through the dream by Goran, who transforms longing into temporary moments of happiness. Moreover, the philosophy of memory of Paul Ricoeur assumes that memory is always narrative, reconfigured, re-inscribed, as opposed to being neutral recollection: "to remember is to refigure the past, not to restore it" (Ricoeur, 2004, p. 32). This is illustrated by the dream in a very impressive way: Goran does not literally come back to Kurdistan, but reconstructs it with the help of laughter of his son. This is an affective reconstruction that is disjointed and redeemed. It proves that hybridity is not only negotiated with the external world and other cultures and nations, but it is also negotiated in the internal spaces of the terrain of memory and desire. The laughter between Goran and his son in the dream is not just a form of remembering but rather the rehearing of selfhood which is what exile tries to break. The dream thus dismisses the belief that identity has to be found somewhere fixed; it instead points out that identity is in the attachments which negotiate in cross border moves and maintain displacement. Hybridity is therefore seen as internal strength: discontinuous, slow but able to generate intimacy and joy in the face of dislocation. One more strong moment that demonstrates the conflict between the cultural identity and stereotype: Middle Easterners think that Americans respect cats and dogs more than any other creatures including women. These are all wrong and misunderstandings and negative stereotypes created intentional by anti-American people in the mind of Middle Easterners. In Americans' perception, making love between man and woman in the Middle Eastern countries is a big sin.... The Middle Easterners and other countries in the East have become the victims of the Islamic Political Movements that bring nothing but shame for the civilians. (Sabah, p. 32). The quotation predicts the issues that come with stereotyping that face the diasporic people like Goran, who stand in the intersection of the multi-cultural gazes. Notably, it shows that stereotypes work in both directions, whereby the Middle East breeds perverted images of the west and the west also breeds perverted images of the east. As a result, characters such as Goran are caught between two conflicting stories, each of which has a strong claim of authority over it. This process is described by Frantz Fanon as 'epidermalization' in which the definition of identity is characterized externally and then internalized by racial, cultural, or religious stereotypes: "the black man has two dimensions. One on his fellows, the other with the white man" (Fanon, 2008, p. 9). This is an expression of how colonized subject is forced into external imposed identities. Similarly, Edward Said argues that the East has been historically constructed as the opposite image, concept, character and experience by the west (Said, 1978). This observation by Said helps to explain why Goran believes that stereotyping is not a misunderstanding, but a purposeful ideological creation with political agendas. In addition, Gayatri Spivak offers strategic essentialism where the subaltern groups are allowed to use simplified identities, but they should not allow the identities to be internalized completely (Spivak, 1999). This ideological position highlights a rejection of both Orientalism stereotypes and Islamist absolutism, where Goran opposes the dichotomy of the two narratives. The text is not only a manifestation of hybridity in terms of cultural adaptation but also a tool of ideological resistance. With the hybridity, the hybrid subject reveals the inauthenticity of stereotypes and dismantles the power structures that preserve them. As a result, the identity of Goran is not merely a negotiation between East and West, but it is an example of a critical approach that breaks down binaries and needs to be complicated. Another defining moment is when Goran delivers an explanation on what being a Kurd to his American students: Kurds are the largest stateless nation in the world. They were divided onto four different countries: Iraq, Iran, Syria and Turkey. Iraq is a country in the Middle East and borders with the other three including Saudi Arabia and Kuwait. Kurds in Iraq live in the north. They have their own government, parliament, constitution, language and judiciary system. (Sabah, p. 11) This quote is not a geographical description but rather a political gesture of self-definition which is expressed in the intimacy of friendship. In claiming that Kurds are the largest stateless nation, Goran asserts the colonialism heritage of partition that divided Kurdistan between four contemporary states. The fact that he is speaking to his friend and not directly to a formal audience heightens

the sense of the moment; not an abstract teaching but a personal witnessing back to a long suppressed story with lost dignity. According to Edward Said, the postcolonial identities are often “established in opposition to hegemonic representations made by others.” (Said, 1978, p. 3). The fact that Goran is telling Kurdish life to a speaker who might not be familiar with it directly does not yield to Orientalist neglect and politics erasure. His words are beyond informational value; they bring back reality to a people who have been long deprived of being acknowledged. This is especially relevant to imagined communities as conceived by Benedict Anderson. According to Anderson, nations are imagined since members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members but in the minds of every member is the image of their communion (Anderson, 2006). This communion is revitalized when Goran narrates to his friend; by speaking Kurdish institutions and Kurdish history, he translates Kurdistan to existence by the word, even when in exile. Etienne Balibar, meanwhile, goes even further and notes that borders not only separate the states but also at all times and places they cut across the societies. “cutting across societies, everywhere, and at every moment” (Balibar, 2002). An example of this condition can be seen in the insistence of Goran that Kurds are divided between Iraq, Iran, Syria and Turkey. His words are a revelation of the way boundaries divide not only peoples and cultures but also show how the very peoples continue to recreate identity across imposed boundaries. Lastly, the argument by Hamid Dabashi that subaltern subjects recover themselves by re-narrating the narration of the empire (Dabashi, 2009) supports the importance of this exchange. In this seemingly innocent dialogue with a friend, the voice of Goran turns into a political performance of protest - breaking the silence, and combatting the distortion by telling his personal tale. Combined, this scene shows that hybridity is not only produced during intercultural interactions with the West but also during intimate moments of narration which recreate collective memory. Describing the political and cultural reality of Kurdistan to his friend, Goran turns a personal conversation into a kind of resistance, where he tells his homeland story to a foreigner that has no glimpse about the state of Kurdistan.

1.2 Fear, Displacement, and the Genesis of Hybrid Identity in *Deer Girls*

Creating a new path towards experiencing hybridity, *Deer Girls* diverges in representing constructions of hybrid identity in novel terms. The novel narrates the life of Batya, a Kurdish-Jewish girl who is captured by an extremist group during the on-going conflict in the Middle East. Her account, and that of other arrested girls, who belong to diverse cultural and religious backgrounds, portrays the methodical encounter of violence, fear and displacement. Throughout the novel, Sabah outlines the psychological transformation Batya goes through as she negotiates trauma, existence and belonging in the environment of cross cultural encounter. Her experience with Kurdish, Palestinian and heterogeneously religious individuals allow her to rebuild a hybrid identity that cannot be purified in terms of ideology and ethnic exclusivity. Finally, the novel assumes that survival is more than physical survival, it is a continuous process of identity rebuilding, sympathetic interaction and ethical perseverance hence highlighting the ambiguities that surround displacement. *Deer Girls* does not portray hybridity as a happy mixture of different cultures, as it can be seen in harmonious melodies. Instead, hybridity is the painful construction that is created as a survival mechanism of war disaster. Some of the major events of the novel will be discussed as an illustration of how Sabah represents hybrid identity not as a product of freedom but a product of crisis based on the works of various postcolonial theorists, such as Homi Bhabha, Frantz Fanon, and Edward Said, as well as my critical analysis of the quest of Batya. The narrative begins with a dense and symbolical moment when Batya expresses:” I am in a hall in that has a picture of a fallow deer, for I am five feet tall. In the eyes of the Black Surge emirs, we are fallows... wars erase memory” (Sabah, 2024, pp. 5-6). In this occurrence, Batya instantly makes a relationship between her physical weakness, cultural inferiority and mental collapse. The term “fallow deer” creates a picture of a hunted and a dainty innocence. It is not only literal that she is small and caged but also it is symbolic because her imprisonments think of her as a creature whose existence needs to be tamed or exterminated. The disconnect is also evidenced by the fact that she is in a hall with a picture of the deer and not in a forest or a field. It is the most spine-tingling about this excerpt how she states that wars destroy the minds. The meaning of her mental breakdown is condensed in that brief sentence. The loss Batya experiences in the start of the war is not just safety and dignity but also continuity. Her memory is all mixed up, who she is, who her ancestors were, where did she come from and where can she go. This is reminiscent of Edward Said’s experience as he maintains in his *Out of Place* 1999 that exile can never exist without memory, but the memory is unstable and can be either distorted or suppressed (Said, 1999). For Batya, it is not only the environment around her is unfamiliar, her very mind has become an alien. This is where her hybrid identity starts: not as a new creative synthesis, but as a need. During memory erasing, there must be something that needs to replace memory, something that is never truly assembled in one place, but more of a

combination of several sources, as the case would be so with Batya and her hybrid identity. Here, the narrator makes a metaphor of his physical smallness, cultural alienation and ontological defenselessness with the mention of the fallow deer. It is reduced to hunted symbol like Batya is a fragile, silent and wrongly belonging symbol. But rather than the forest she finds herself in a hall, in the simulated presence of a painted deer. The experience is similar to what Avtar Brah maintains that diasporic space is more than a place to which the displaced refugees are assigned to; it is the position where various histories, traumas, and power relations are interrelated and destabilize identity (Brah, 1996). The narrator is lost in a disjointed world, torn between forgetting and remembering. The fallow deer metaphor is not only an exile but a powerless position at the mercy of the Black Surge who treat them as subjects that are to be observed, manipulated or even killed. The last line, wars erase memory, downgrades the metaphor of power to the bare reality of war. The place where she lives is neither home nor exile but a dislocated diaspora space where one has to make an identity based on fragmented remains scattered throughout the space. Then the narrator amplifies this mental state by using another initial line in telling how Batya expresses her inner world: "The smell, the black color, Kill, kill. makes me feel I'm in a deep well full of scorpions" (Sabah, p. 6). This is a horrifying but (revealing) picture. Sensory overload, with the smell, the darkness, and the repetition of the word Kill, practically blends an outer chaos and an inner collapse. This is not something that Batya is endangered by, but has been drowned in. The metaphor that she uses ("a deep well full of scorpions") demonstrates that her trauma is not at a rational level now. Now she is unable to explain her surroundings by using conventional diction; she has to take off to more unrealistic and heavily symbolic adornment in order to define what she is going through. Such status is that of being unhomey as Bhabha for being a state of confusion in which the boundary between the individual and society, personal and communal space remain unclear (Bhabha, 1994). At this instant, Batya is involved in an emotional encounter that cannot be separated with the war that surrounds her. Her identity is no longer an inner construction but what is created by all the sounds and the shadows around her. It is not just a psychological breakdown of internal boundaries but a political one as well. This aspect was evident because the system of domination was literally manipulating the self of Batya to get rid of any form of autonomy or cultural integrity. This collapse however is also her starting point to change. Once she loses the ability to rely on memory and coherent stories, she begins to reckon new openings of seeing, feeling, and concerning. This is the agonizing origin of her hybrid identity, not a synthesis between cultures in communication, but a fragmented individual forced to discover how to remain alive. Moreover, the world in which Batya resides is very uncanny and this parallels with the expression of "das Unheimliche" as being coined by Sigmund Freud. For Freud, uncanny is an instance whereby familiar things turn out to be unfamiliar because of the repression or trauma (Freud, 2003). The world that Batya inhabits, which was once familiar perhaps, turns alien and enemy-like. The well full of scorpions is not just symbolic, but a psychic reality, the recurring of the repressed fear and pain. She repeats the word kill and this according to Freud can be referred to as the compulsive backward movement to trauma, a symptom of her inability to have control over the experience. Therefore, the unhomey world Batya lives in is unpleasantly strange, being transformed through psychological terror. Jacqueline Rose goes further and demonstrates how political structures and national discourse tend to generate just such instances of self-destruction in women. She has also stated that subjects, particularly women are often forced to bear the psychological weight of historical violence as she points out in States of Fantasy (Rose, 1996). Batya does not have a personal collapse, but rather disintegration that is socially scripted, since this is caused by the ideologies that overwhelm her. Her realization that she is being pursued, as well as being in a well with scorpions is not delusional, but it is the result of suffering encapsulated in the horrors of political world. Later on, Batya states a general state of the girls who are enslaved with her: "Each one of us is ready to go insane any minute. I can't bear us becoming worse than objects to be dealt with." (Sabah, p. 39). In this sentence we can see how fear is not anymore merely a reaction to some external violence; it is an integral option of the lives of the girls; the state of psychological corrosion. They are on the point of breaking down not only because of what is done to them, but because of what they are being made into. Dehumanization is the most important issue to Batya (rather than death). She is terrified that they are being slimmed down to nothing less than objects. Frantz Fanon provides a very important introduction to such objectification. According to him, the colonized person is not addressed as someone with consciousness and feelings in the colonial world but as an object; an existence that is only available to be exploited and neglected (Fanon, 2008). This is not only a physical process; it is also a psychological process that functions by means of the internalization of the gaze of the colonizer so as to deny the conscripted subject of the sense on having a self. The oppressed, in this kind of a world, are treated not only as exploits- but more so distorted to be unknowable to themselves, in a misrecognition

that is violent to the extent that it renders the oppressed fragmented. Simone de Beauvoir also argues that women are created a punitive position as the Other in patriarchal ideology, which defines the subordinate group as a dissimilarity solely opposite to the prevailing male standard. Woman is reduced to an object and is deprived of subjectivity and she is handled as something with no future in which she can define herself (Beauvoir, 2011). However, it is not an intermittent process of objectification and it is not merely an occasional process, but rather cultural structuring of perception, language and behavior. The demeaning acts become even more hazardous as women internalize this role because it is no longer imposed externally but reiterated at the internal level.

Nevertheless, Judith Butler continues this thought expressing her idea that subjection is not only a matter of repression, it is also a matter of becoming a subject. Social norms and repetition are practices of power, which create the subject by trying to impose roles. But Butler also demands that there still can be resistance despite domination. Even the rejection that accompanies the obedience or compliance of the subject is an aspect of disturbing the regulatory system (Butler, 1997). This disruption, which is more than rebelling, is a portal to a new and devoted vision of the self. In this regard, it was argued convincingly that what Batya said went beyond a cry of despair and was more of a cry of disobedience and non-surrendering. She does not talk with full authority and revolution, she speaks on the brink of her collapse, and that is why her uprising is so humane and so strong. Her fear that they are turning into something worse than objects is but an acknowledgement of a factual process being affected with the repression of identity and interiority. And yet naming it in this way, she cuts off. She does not give it time to fulfill itself. This scene is interesting mainly because Sabah does not exaggerate the resistance of Batya into some form of heroism. There is nothing spectacular, no overt revolution. Instead we get a phenomenon of a young woman thinking, fearing, and refusing in her silent but radical manner. She does not yet know how to fight, but she knows this should not come any further. That internal rejection is the start of re-subjectification of re-taking ownership of the right to say, "I.". And it is never clean and immediate. She does not recover wholeness as a person in one go. Instead she sets out on a long and agonizing process of reclaiming it bit by bit, in a world that never stops trying to break her to bits. The identification with Dilkesh later in the story widens the meaning of identity to the transnational, multi-historical layer "Kurdistan" ".Kurdistan?" I make sure I did not hear Kyrgyzstan in Central Asia" .Yes. Kur-dis-tan," she articulates it, "the land of Kurds" ".I'm familiar where that is," I say. "I've heard it several times from my father. Our origins are Kurdish as my parents emigrated from northern Iraq to Israel" ".We are relatives then." (Sabah, p. 9) This text is a turning point in how Batya perceives herself. Instead of being a closed person under the trauma, she places herself in a larger transnational discourse about life of Kurdish people. Batya starts imagining and living a Jewish ethnic memory that has moved beyond the boundaries of nationalism and religiosity by identifying herself with Dilkesh. Her saying, "Our origins are Kurdish," is much closer to more than a call to family lineage; a reconnection to that deeper level of identification that can bridge her to the dispersed and diasporic memory of Kurdishness.

David McDowall notes that Kurdish identity has long been more of a state of mind or citizen-consciousness rather than of the state due to the fact that their case has never been granted political sovereignty (McDowall, 2004). Such stateless yet lasting feeling of belongingness reverberates in the redemption of Batya. Kurdishness comes to the fore, even with fragmented memory, as one of the sources of reconstruction of her identity. This process is strengthened by the theory of collective memory developed by Maurice Halbwachs: according to his theory, memory is not strictly individual but appurtenant to groups that construct their identities even in those cases when the individual memory fails (Halbwachs, 1980). An example of this is the way in which Batya learns to recognize her Kurdish roots, which is not based only on a reconstruction of the privately remembered, but on her inscription into a transgenerational, diasporic history. Moreover, the concept of the Third Space developed by Homi Bhabha becomes pivotal at this stage. The Third Space of Bhabha is the space of negotiation instead of purity or fixity where new hybrid identities are achieved; the new location between recognized places which defeats fixed cultural borders (Bhabha, 1994). Batya lives in this borderland: she is neither fully Kurdish nor Jewish and does not get any religion or secular. Rather, she is a composite of all these at once as she transports between structures of their intermingled lives. This hybridity does not mean a dilution of identity but a reconfiguration which is productive. Also very helpful in supplying a frame is the concept of the diaspora developed by Paul Gilroy as a form of a changing same. For Gilroy, diasporic identity can never be single but evolves and grows with continued struggle, movement and translation (Gilroy, 1993). This statement of Batya links her Kurdish background to her Israeli Jewish background not with a view to abolishing it but to enable the two to exist and that one supports the other and redefines it. Her scene of communion with Dilkesh allegorizes exactly this layering of diaspora, where identification is a matter of belonging. The main character never says

that she has one source of origin and has to eliminate the others; she learns to cradle multiple: simultaneously. There is nothing ornamental about that carrying; it is a work of survival. This concept is progressed further in the interfaith dialogue between Batya and Dilkesheh: "Islam sounds like Judaism and Christianity," I say". All the monotheistic religions are the continuation of one another and complimentary. They are all the same with different messengers. Their essence is to spread peace on earth." (Sabah, p. 23) This text is a sign that Batya has undergone a tremendous change in the way she views identity and belief. Neither Batya nor Dilkesheh tries to uphold a single religious truth but, rather admit the fact that religions, as identities, are relationally shared and limited by overlapping with or intersecting with one another. By doing so, they oppose the national and sectarian politics of purity that informs most of the violence around them. The discussion points to what Stuart Hall explains about the nature of cultural identity as being both a "matter of 'becoming' as well as of 'being'" in Cultural identity and Diaspora. (Hall, 2019, p. 225). Even belief as such is thereby no longer presented as fixed but rather as a permeable circulation of similarities and differences between traditions. The notion of 'Third Space' by Homi Bhabha is as helpful. Religion, in the case of Batya and Dilkesheh, is taken as a Third Space: not Judaism, nor Islam, nor even Christianity is a stand-alone concept, but the existence of a common ethical landscape. Jacques Derrida also notes that truth is never absolute, he says it is never present but appears in a deferred state and is marked by difference and constructed relationally (Derrida, 1976). Their discourse is a characteristic of this postmodern striving against religious absolutism, since they assert plurality. With reference to the ethicality of religion, Talal Asad argues that religion should be seen as a living discourse that involves its own intra-ethical struggles (Asad, 2003). Batya and Dilkesheh trigger a collective discourse about religious affiliation and thus, proactively preserve their hybrid identities in the context of the erasures initiated by violence and displacement. Their theological discourse is a process of self-narration in which identity is maintained and rebuilt instead of destroyed by trauma. This interaction therefore represents the theory of narrative identity formulated by Paul Ricoeur, who believes that identity is not fixed but is constantly negotiated by the story that people form about themselves and others (Ricoeur, 1992). This demonstrates that hybridity as a survival strategy is comprised of philosophy, an aware rejection of absolute truths thereby embracing multiplicity and diversity. In captivity, Batya and Dilkesheh are able to offer each other room to empathize and critically think across divisions. In their exchange, they declare that hybridity is not a state of weakness or dilution, but rather of intellectual and moral power, one which insists that the meanings of things, and the belongingness of things are always in negotiation, always plural .

٢,٣ From Displacement to Cultural Negotiations: A journey between Iraqi Fulbrighter and Deer Girls

The given notion becomes especially relevant when examining Iraqi Fulbrighter by Goran Sabah and Deer Girls. Both have been written in English and provide the complementary insights into fear, displacement and the formation of hybrid identity as part of the Kurdish experience. A comparative reading of the two works allows an examination of the expression of common thematic issues in different narrative conditions, which allows seeing the existence of both the universal and specific aspects of Kurdish identity in exile and conflict. In a personal interview with Sabah, he stated that the hybrid experience of Kurdish characters – as depicted in his works – is one that oscillates between the sense of belonging and living different cultures :Hybridity proved successful for both protagonists, though achieved through considerable struggle—testament to the resilience of Kurdish people and their ability to adapt across cultures. Both texts unfold outside the protagonists' homeland, where hybridity becomes their greatest challenge. Navigating between identities, languages, and cultures demands extraordinary strength. Their journeys illustrate how displacement forces individuals to negotiate multiple worlds simultaneously, blending traditions while forging new paths. Though the process is arduous, their eventual success demonstrates the remarkable adaptability inherent in the Kurdish experience. These characters embody the complex reality of living between cultures, neither fully here nor there. [24 December, 2025]Despite such repetitive reflections in his work, the chosen works in this study represent the sense of hybridity in different ways. One of the first similarities between the two works is the way in which fear and displacement are represented, though the means of expression are very different. Displacement is depicted in Iraqi Fulbrighter as something gradual and psychological. The metaphor that Goran uses to describe his feelings "missing my family was like a murderer who killed me every now and then" (p. 159), turns longing into a kind of serial murder. The exile, as described by Edward Said as an "incurable schism" between self and original home finds its reflection in the experience of Goran; in this case, the absence and alienation, and not direct violence, is the schism. By contrast, in Deer Girls, fear is expressed in a direct, physical, unmissable way. The fact is that Batya confesses that "Each one of us is capable of going insane any minute." "I can't have us become

less than objects to be manipulated," (p. 39) clearly demonstrate the way in which war objectifies people and subjects them to agency deficiency. This observation is in line with the criticism of colonial violence developed by Frantz Fanon whereby the subject of colonization is regarded as a thing (Fanon, 2008, p. 82). In this respect, displacement takes on an ontological nature: the life of Batya becomes unrecognizable. The thematic analogy favored by the American School allows these narratives to be studied in the light of comparison: whereas Batya is exiled by her physical restraint and terror, Goran is exiled by recollection, alienation and weakness. The two works place fear at the heart of the Kurdish identity formation under different historical and narrative conditions .

The depictions of hybridity in the two texts take on two different paths in terms of enactment. Iraqi Fulbrighter indicates the occurrence of hybridity not because of interreligious dialogue but by way of intellectual exile. Goran draws comparisons between the cultural life of the Kurdish and the American people especially in the context of family duties, which places him in the diaspora space that Avtar Brah describes; the space in which various identities and histories overlap (Brah, 1996). His hybridity is not a synthesis but a negotiation of contradictions in a continuous form that puts him under the pressure of being Kurdish, as he adapts to the foreign environment. But in contrast, Cross-cultural and interfaith exchanges are the means of expression of hybridity in *Deer Girls*. Batya finds the commonality in religion when she declares that "Islam sounds like Judaism and Christianity" (p. 23). This statement questions the nationalist and sectarian requirements of purity and is reminiscent of the concept of the Third Space, which Homi Bhabha formulated, a space where cultural meanings are not imposed in one way but are constantly negotiated (Bhabha, 1994). In the case of Batya, hybrid identity is a survival tactic in the face of trauma, where she gets to know how to rely on several traditions and solidarities to survive violence. The contrast between these stories shows that the process of hybridity is not always consistent, but it may depend on the immediate situations, i.e. violent captivity or alienation as a diasporic .

Moreover, the comparative aspect is even more notable when it comes to the contextualization of Kurdish identity in both works in the context of national and transnational belonging. In Iraqi Fulbrighter, Goran also outlines Kurdish nationhood in his conversations, by telling his friend that Kurds are the biggest stateless nation, spread over a number of states. This statement not only informs but also defies the silence imposed by history, in line with Hamid Dabashi's argument on how subaltern voices emancipate themselves through narration against the empire's narrative (Dabashi, 2009). In *Deer Girls*, Batya is on the same side with Dilkes in the understanding of their Kurdishness, which strengthens the power of memory and continuity of identity despite trauma. According to the analysis of nations presented by Benedict Anderson, the "imagined communities" are provided with the help of common narratives, but not with a definite border (Anderson, 2006). . Both texts thereby perform the act of imagining Kurdistan into being, although from different contexts: Goran from the space of exile and witness, Batya from within captivity and violence. The American School framework is especially well-suited to this comparative task, because of its emphasis on the study of themes and human concerns beyond national boundaries. Rene Wellek argued that comparative literature should be concerned with "literature as a whole and the interrelations among its parts" (Wellek, 1963, p. 5), while Henry Remak defined it as the study of the literature outside one nation and in relation to other disciplines and ideas (Remak, 1961). Reading Iraqi Fulbrighter and *Deer Girls* together fits this framework quite perfectly, since the two texts are components of one author's literary project that address universal questions of exile, trauma, and hybridity, nonetheless in different cultural registers. Additionally, Iraqi Fulbrighter and *Deer Girls* illustrate that hybrid identity is not a stable synthesis and instead is a negotiation of sorts, one constantly influenced by fear and displacement. In a text, hybridity is the product of diaspora, nostalgia as well as critical involvement with the host culture. In the other, it is created by interfaith solidarity and reclaiming memory in captivity conditions. Together, these productions shed light on how the Kurdish identity, which is discontinuous in statelessness and violence, is continued, adjusting to various situations, whether it is facing the insistence of the trauma or the desire of the isolation. With the aid of a comparative approach that is based on the American School, one can see these two works as the complementary expressions of the same struggle, which are written by the same writer, and share the motif of survival in the conditions of fragmentation .Although both works struggle with the motifs of fear, displacement, and an identity of hybridity, their use of English is different as it is used to locate the Kurdish experience in the context of the global literary circulation. In Iraqi Fulbrighter, English is a reflective and dialogical space in which the main character makes sense of cultural divergence, expresses political consciousness, and makes Kurdish history comprehensible to the global audience. On the other hand, in *Deer Girls*, English evokes immediacy, urgency and vulnerability, especially in captivity and survival tales, where language is used as a witness. Such variation in the context of the American School of Comparative Literature supports the value of reading the two works as

parallel analyses of a shared thematic core, and enlighten the ways in which similar concerns lead to the creation of different narrative forms when refracted through exile, violence, memory, and gendered experience .

Conclusion

Goran Sabah's Iraqi Fulbrighter and Deer Girls are examples of the complicated nature of fear, displacement, and hybridity of the ongoing identity-forming process where it is based on cultural encounter. Both works were written in English, representing two aspects of the same creative outlook: one was connected to the collective memory of the Kurds, the other one was oriented to the international audience. This paper has argued that the concept of displacement in Iraqi Fulbrighter, is expressed by means of themes of disaffection and longing, and fear in Deer Girls, is represented through motifs of captivity and war. Nevertheless, in spite of this difference, both texts overcome the victimhood and transform the suffering into strength. The heroes do not pursue a traditional search of restorative stability; they are practicing a way of life that incorporates contradiction, thus making hybridity a point of survival. Based on this position, the literary work of Sabah indicates that identity is fluid and constantly reconstituted by the experience of life, shared memory, and intercultural interaction. Finally, the comparative study of the two books also helps outline the idea that hybridity is not an unchanging mix of cultures but a dynamic survival mechanism. The writings of Sabah anticipate the Kurdish struggle to be heard, which makes isolation and home away a creative force and fragmentation a continuity. Therefore, the works of the author testify to the fact that identity can survive, change, and flourish despite displacement.renewal.

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هوامش البحث

¹ Iraqi Fulbrighter has been translated into Kurdish in (2012) entitled Tirs u Riq