The Concept of Violence as Depicted in Contemporary Iraqi Novels: A Review Study

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
	This review study explores the controversial concept of violence in contemporary Iraqi novels. This study draws on studies that discussed the concept of violence as depicted in contemporary Iraqi novels of Alsaadawi's. It argues that violence in contemporary Iraqi novels is represented in those literary works as something other than mere physical cruelty, it is also a psychical, social, and political event. The discussion offers insight into historical and modern-day violence occurring in Iraq. It also deals with themes of war, trauma, and identity. A clear enunciation among the findings is that these novels engage in very critical ways with how optimum violence constructs and is constructed by both the individual and collective identity, relating to societal structures and dynamics of power. It is in these works that elements of horror, supernatural, and stark realist descriptions of the modern warfare setting interplay to create something that does hold deep insight into the dehumanizing process of violence and the resilience of its victims. In this way, the present research concludes by pointing out that literature has an important role in realizing and challenging the complex realities of violence.

1. Introduction

Violence in Iraq, more so after 2003, runs deep and is such a pervading power that has been very instrumental in forming a lot about the lives of its people and the social cloth. The study will review how contemporary Iraqi literature represents this multi-dimensionality through some studies discussing the prominent works of Ahmad Al-Sa'adawi. These literary texts are turned to for important mediums that give meaning to complex violence, be it physical, psychic, social, or political in dimension.

Only against the backdrop of Iraq since 2003, intervention by foreign powers, sectarian violence, and economic decline provide fertile ground for understanding the discourses that Arabic creative writers have been able to weave into their nuance. The aim of this paper is to tease out how such narratives not only mirrored an experience of living with violence but challenged and criticized very structures of power underpinning it. This paper attempts to tease out the deeper dimensions of war, trauma, and issues of identity represented in Iraqi literature through an analysis of portrayals of violence effected by character, setting, and symbolic elements.

In this process, a number of major themes would be teased out: the cyclical nature of violence, the psychic impact of individuals and communities, and the place of literature in processes and strategies of coping and resilience. The review will bring out how such novels represent the dehumanizing impact of violence on one hand, and the strength and resilience of Iraqi society on the other. This contribution shall proceed with a well-analyzed review of the selected works in relation to the literature on the role that it plays in addressing and interpreting the intricacies of violence in contemporary Iraq.

Discussions

Kuoti (2016), in his paper "Exclusion and Violence in Post-2003 Iraq," describes the polysemic concept of violence: physical, political, economic, and social. How it illustrates the historical development of violence and foreign interventions with the rapport of consequences—increased sectarianism, a worsening economy, and frail national identity—in Iraqi society. It has been found out that violence post-2003 has deepened political and societal polarization, poverty, and

unemployment. On the other hand, it lessens the sense of national unity. Toward the end, the researcher provides suggestions for national unity, economic reform, education, and international support.

In "The Transformation of Violence in Iraq," Green & Ward examine the shifting nature of violence in the post-2003 Iraqi context, with multifaceted dimensions: physical, political, economic, and social. This paper aims to contextualize the history of violence in Iraq, sarcasm tailing off the aftermath of the 2003 invasion, and the role that foreign intervention has played in deepening and manipulating religious conflict, economic deterioration, and social fragmentation. Among the key findings reported are those in which heightened violence since 2003 has increased the divisions within society, heaped poverty and unemployment, and weakened national identity. The author concludes her paper by appealing for national cohesion, economic reform, education, and international support to overcome continued challenges of the regime of death-related violence and exclusion.

In "The Multiple Faces of Violence in Ahmad Al-Sa'adawi's Frankenstein in Baghdad and Judith Thompson's The Palace of the End," Mankhi looks at (2019) the various facets of violence reflected in these postmodern literary works. Such analysis will focus on the manner by which both authors represent acts of violence not simply as kind of physical brutality but also as representations of a type of psychic, social, political phenomenon. The themes in the discussion are violence in Iraq, both historic and present; war, trauma, and identity. In this regard, the researcher finds out that on an elaborate macro- and micro-level, both works critically tackle the pervasive impacts of violence on individual and collective identities by portraying how it shapes and is shaped by societal structures and power dynamics. Conclusively, this research seeks to underscore the integral role played by literature in enabling an understanding and challenging the intricate realities of violence.

Hanoosh (2013), in "Beyond the Trauma of War: Iraqi Literature Today," discusses the ways
in which contemporary Iraqi literature has confronted and represented this multivalent concept of violence. The analysis spins around violence with a differentiated approach to physical, psychic, and structural violence, along with the way these forms come together with themes of war, displacement, and identity. The Iraqi authors discuss the after-effects of violence on a person and society at large by using literature, hence giving critique of the current conditions and offering a way out through coping and resilience. Hence, the researcher concludes that Iraqi literature becomes a powerful tool for fathoming the intricacies of violence and its long-term effects on society, and further needs to be represented on the global literary platform.

In the paper "Violence as the Abject in Iraqi Literature: Ahmed Saadawi's Frankenstein in Baghdad and Mary Shelley's Frankenstein," Jani tries, in 2015, through comparative analysis, to identify violence. The focus is on how violence occurs within the works in question as abjection, symbolizing not only straightforward instances of physical brutality but also societal and psychological degradation. The discussion focuses on the thematic continuities between the texts, bringing out the ways in which the authors of both use the trope of "Frankenstein" to reflect upon the consequences of violence, trauma, and marginalization in Iraqi society. The author tries to exemplify that such violence, presented as abject in the novels, provokes viewers to confront the unpleasant realities of conflict and their deep effects on the dignity and identity of people.

Mankhi & Nati (2019) in "Topography of Fear and Violence in Ahmad Al Sadawi's Frankenstein in Baghdad," the researcher reviews how Al Sadawi intricately maps the pervasive climate of fear and the omnipresence of violence in his novel. The present study brings forth, through a close analysis, how Baghdad is depicted—a city torn apart by incessant conflict—provides a grim backdrop wherein life and death blur into each other. The researcher deconstructs what the creature symbolizes as embodied by the protagonist, Hadi, to show a fragmented and scarred psyche of the city's inhabitants. The realization of such a creature, forged and given form from the dismembered body parts of victims of war in general, strikes as an extremely powerful metaphor for the cyclical nature of violence and the quest for retribution. The research Co .Event Queue contends with the fact that Al Sadawi's narrative resonates to include not only the physical, but also its deep psychological gashes inflicted on its people. It is in this light that through the intertwinement of elements of horror and supernatural factors with the bare realities of modern warfare, the researcher draws how Al Sadawi critiques the dehumanizing effect of violence and inescapable fear that governs everyday life in a war zone.

Abd-Aun deconstructs, with a great level of meticulousness, how Saadawi skillfully weaves together trauma and violence in the background of war-torn Baghdad in his work "Trauma and Violence in Ahmed Saadawi's

Frankenstein in Baghdad." The research is focused on the character of Hadi and his creature, the monster composed of body parts of bomb attack victims, symbolizing collective suffering and unresolved grief of city dwellers. It is a creature that, having been designed once and for all to exact retribution from the dead, sustains a circle of violence in a way that duplicates the incessant contest and reigning instability of Iraq. It therefore shows the researcher's argument, not simply showing capture of physical destruction in Baghdad that Saadawi does by going into the depth of the psychological impact upon the residents through emphasis on that sense of fear and loss. Mixing elements of the supernatural with harsh realities of war brings in Saadawi and her critique of dehumanization against violence, apart from outstandingly trying to explain the atypical dynamics that ushie within a community perpetually beset with war.

While sharing a common denominator on the multi-dimensionality of violence in post-2003 Iraqi literature, several research studies focus on Ahmad AlSa'adawi's "Frankenstein in Baghdad." Other researchers like Mankhi, 2019; Jani, 2015; Abd-Aun, 2021, go on to explain how violence is not just about the physical brutality but has its tiers in the psychological, social, and political dimensioning linked down to trauma, war, and identity. According to Mankhi in 2019 and Abd-Aun in 2021, the supernatural device in Al-Sa'adawi's oeuvre spells out the horrors of modern war in a dehumanizing but cyclical violence. Jani explains it in the context of abjection and societal-psychological degradation in the forms of violence. While Hanoosh 2013 and Green & Ward 2009 frame their arguments more within the historical and contemporary settings of violence in Iraq, focusing on the impact of the situation on society and the economy, the same works overlap with Mankhi 2019 and Jani 2015 on the urgent need for literature to represent these elaborate realities and perform some critique. Though all these studies have separate arguments, to put it broadly, what comes out is how resilient Iraqi society and literature are in having much to say about the human condition against the backdrop of persistent violence.

Conclusion

These works are treated comprehensively in order to express a complex and multilevel representation of violence. It supports abstraction from physical brutality to a multilevel indicator for violence in the modern Iraqi novel. Through the lenses of Ahmad Al-Sa'adawi's "Frankenstein in Baghdad" and other works of similar nature, researchers show ways in which violence in post-2003 Iraq takes on a psychological, social, and political meaning. Cycles of violence, dehumanization, and implications for individual and collective identity are themes that cut across the studies. The novels contribute to powerful means for social critique and the exploration of traumata, while showing a strong resilience of the affected. The findings underline literature's leading role in understanding and challenging the complexities associated with violence, but with finesse in a way that enriches the literary global landscape and gives deeper insight into the lasting effects of conflict on human dignity and identity.

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