

Cultural Alienation , Otherness and Hybridity in Jhumpa Lahiri's The Lowland and Ahmed Saadawi's Frankenstein in Baghdad

Rasool Mohammed A. Al Al-Muslimawi

PhD student , Department of English Language and Literature , School of
Literature and Humanities English Literature , Shiraz University , Iran
rassolhamoodi@gmail.com

Dr. Farideh Pourgiv

Professor , English Literature (retired) Editor of Persian Literary Studies
Journal (plsj.shirazu.ac.ir) Dept. of Foreign Languages & Linguistics Eram
Campus , Shiraz University Shiraz , Iran
fpourgiv@rose.shirazu.ac.ir

Dr. Sayyed Rahim Moosavinia

Professor , Department of English Language and Literature , Shahid Chamran
University of Ahvaz , Ahvaz , Iran
moosavinia@scu.ac.ir

الإغتراب الثقافي والإختلاف والتهجين لرواية الأرض المنخفضة للاهيري وفرانكنشتاين في بغداد لأحمد السعداوي

رسول محمد عبد الحسين المسلماوي

طالب دكتوراه، قسم اللغة الإنجليزية وآدابها، كلية الآداب والعلوم الإنسانية الأدب الإنجليزي،
جامعة شيراز، إيران

الدكتورة فريدة بورغيف

أستاذ، محررة مجلة الدراسات الأدبية الفارسية (plsj.shirazu.ac.ir) حرم إيرام، قسم اللغات
الأجنبية واللغويات، جامعة شيراز، إيران

الدكتور سيد رحيم موسافينيا

أستاذ، قسم اللغة الإنجليزية وآدابها، جامعة الشهيد تشرمان أهواز، أهواز، إيران

Abstract:-

This research investigates cultural identity in literature by analyzing two novels, Jhumpa Lahiri's *The Lowland* and Ahmad Saadawi's *Frankenstein* in Baghdad. The study focuses on themes of cultural alienation, difference, and hybridization portrayed in these novels. It seeks to comprehend how culture molds individual identities and how diverse experiences, challenges, and disparities influence perspectives and conflicts. The analysis highlights the unique contexts and viewpoints depicted in the novels. *Frankenstein* in Baghdad critiques scientific advancement and societal exclusion while examining the impact of war on cultural identity. Cultural identity encompasses language, beliefs, values, and traditions, and literature has historically explored this complexity. *The Lowland* narrates the cultural identity development of two brothers in Calcutta and America, during political unrest. *Frankenstein* in Baghdad explores the effect of war on cultural identity through characters constructing a monster from found body parts. This research aims to provide insights into cultural identity's intricate nature and sense of belonging. By studying these novels through a cultural identity lens, it aims to deepen understanding of how culture shapes individual experiences and viewpoints, drawing inspiration from theorists like Homi K. Bhabha and Edward Said.

Key words: Cultural alienation, Otherness, Hybridity, Identity, Novels.

المخلص:-

هذا البحث يسلط الضوء على الهوية الثقافية في الأدب من خلال تحليل روايتين، الأرض المنخفضة لجومبا لاهيري وفرانكنشتاين في بغداد لأحمد السعداوي. تركز الدراسة على موضوعات الاغتراب الثقافي والاختلاف والتهجين المصور في هذه الروايات. إنها تسعى إلى فهم كيف تؤثر الثقافة على هويات فردية وكيف تؤثر التجارب والتحديات والتفاوتات المتنوعة على وجهات النظر والصراعات. يسلط التحليل الضوء على السياقات الفريدة ووجهات النظر الموضحة في الروايات. ينتقد فرانكنشتاين في بغداد التقدم العلمي والاستبعاد المجتمعي أثناء دراسة تأثير الحرب على الهوية الثقافية. تشمل الهوية الثقافية اللغة والمعتقدات والقيم والتقاليد والأدب. قد استكشفت تاريخياً هذا التعقيد. تروي الأراضي المنخفضة تطور الهوية الثقافية لشقيقتين في كلكتا وأمريكا، خلال الاضطرابات السياسية.

يستكشف فرانكنشتاين في بغداد تأثير الحرب على الهوية الثقافية من خلال شخصيات بناء وحش من أجزاء الجسم التي تم العثور عليها. يهدف هذا البحث إلى توفير نظرة ثاقبة على الطبيعة المعقدة للهوية الثقافية والشعور بالانتماء. من خلال دراسة هذه الروايات من خلال عدسة الهوية الثقافية، فإنه يهدف إلى تعميق فهم كيف تشكل الثقافة التجارب الفردية ووجهات النظر، مما يستلهم منظرين مثل Homi K. Bhabha وإدوارد.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الاغتراب الثقافي، الآخر، التهجين، الهوية، الروايات.

INTRODUCTION

The development of individual identities and personalities occurs as a result of the societal upbringing in which coexistence occurs, and it contributes to modifying these identities. Culture is the main factor that along with society and environmental upbringing deeply affects the identity of one individual or a group of people belonging to the same society. Culture is defined as the shared experience that includes several individuals under one umbrella (Merriam-Webster). An individual from one culture differs from another because they are exposed to a variety of experiences and obstacles, such as history, geographic area, religion, and other features of the environment. There is a long history of colonization of Asian and Africa by the Europeans, in particular, might not even fully comprehend the Asian's perspective and struggles, while the colonizer may not comprehend what colonialism entails. The reality of cultural hybridization pushes the people's identities to change accordingly and renegotiate. Cultural diversity and personal motives are primary incentives for immigrants to consider who they are and what they aspire to be.

This research attempts to provide an in-depth exploration of the hybridization of Indian immigrant characters in *The Lowland*, the revolution of the capitalist class and the negative impact of maternal mortality on the psychological state of children as well as crossbreeding and its impact on Indian immigrants' identities.

This paper analyzes the revolution of the capitalist class and the negative impact of maternal mortality on the psychological state of children; it focuses on crossbreeding and hybridization. The word "Hybrid" has recently been linked to the works of Bhabha, for whom an understanding focuses mainly on relations and highlights the interaction and mutual production of unique peculiarities. Bhabha claims that over-culture knowledge and structures are created in a place that is called the "third space of articulate". Cultural occurrences inevitably thrive in this ever-changing and puzzling setting, making the idea of a cultural hierarchy completely unfeasible.

By discerning this paradoxical realm of cultural identity, Bhabha contends that we can transcend the bewilderment induced by diverse cultural manifestations, for it is in acknowledging the catalyzing amalgamation that cultural divergence truly thrives. It is of utmost

importance to discern the inherent colonial or postcolonial underpinnings that permeate the productivity dynamics within this Third Space. By deliberately immersing oneself within a distinct foreign realm, a door is unlocked, inviting the exploration of a multinational culture that is founded not upon the dichotomy of otherness inherent in multiculturalism or the sheer diversity of civilizations, but rather on the profound imprints and eloquent expressions arising from cultural hybridity (Bhabha, 1994, 12).

In addition, we will look at hybridization in Saadawi's *Frankenstein in Baghdad*, as he showed hybridization from a new angle. That creepy photo of Frankenstein's body in Baghdad, Shisma (Whatsitsname) can readily detach any portion of his body due to his hybrid nature. This is another facet of his awful physical look. That unusual body is a body formed as a result of the actions in Saadawi's story, it is never ended; it is continuously getting built, produced, formed, and founded again. This primarily pertains to the mysterious figure, which is the definition of the term "Shisma," whose body requires constant renewal to stay alive. This paper attempts to shed light on the concept of crossbreeding, which allows acceptance of the other with his ideas, ideologies, and culture because it studies the details of the suffering of the human psyche to reach a certain state and develop the personality that contributes to the appreciation of hybrid identities. Literary and cultural aspects related to the human and personal psyche are considered the most important narrative and pivotal aspects in the literary text, whether that novel is realistic or imaginary. Homi K. Bhabha's theory of hybridity is influential in postcolonial studies, emphasizing the intersection and influence of different cultures. Hybridity is not merely mixing cultures but a process of negotiation and translation that produces new and dynamic forms of cultural expression. Colonialism has had a damaging impact on the colonized, leading to the deformation of local culture and identity. The colonizers' beliefs, languages, and traditions often replace the native culture, resulting in a deformed identity and a fragmented sense of history. Critics argue that Bhabha's theory of hybridity can be essentialist and reductive, and it may involve cultural appropriation. However, the theory remains influential in understanding the complex nature of cultural identity and the ways in which cultures intersect and influence each other.

OVERVIEW OF JHUMPA LAHIRI AND AHMAD SAADAWI

In her article Layered Temporalities – Between Modernism and Postmodernism - in Jhumpa Lahiri's *The Lowland*, published in 2020, Stoican delves into a discussion surrounding Jhumpa Lahiri's novel. Stoican aims to uncover the author's stance in relation to modern and postmodern frameworks. The analysis centers on Gauri, the novel's main character, tracing her transnational journey across geographical and temporal boundaries. This journey gains significance through Gauri's abiding interest in the nature of time, which aligns with her academic pursuit in philosophy (Stoican, 2020, P.5).

Additionally, Stoican links Gauri's life choices and personal trajectory to the political climate of her pre-emigration days, notably the Naxalite movement. These elements collectively suggest that *The Lowland* implicitly communicates a message about the larger historical narrative vis-à-vis temporal perception and the shaping of female identity. Stoican's study investigates whether Lahiri's approach to these themes predominantly echoes a (post)modern perspective (Stoican, 2020, P.5).

In their article "Indoctrination Against Women in *The Lowland* by Jhumpa Lahiri," Tomi Arianto and colleagues explore the subtle mechanisms of indoctrination as a means to covertly confine women's spheres. The use of indoctrination operates discreetly, avoiding overtly constraining women's mobility. This is achieved by aligning the indoctrination process with established conventions and long-standing traditions within the community (Arianto & Ambalegin, 2018, P.3). This nuanced perspective finds reflection in Jhumpa Lahiri's novel *The Lowland*. Through the narrative lens of the novel, the authors examine the plight of women in India, who find themselves 'voluntarily' bound by indoctrination. The novel underscores how indoctrination manifests through various facets of customs, traditions, and other societal facets. The character Gauri epitomizes this reality, where nearly every facet of her existence is dictated by the influence of men (Arianto & Ambalegin, 2018, P. 5).

Employing Barbara Welter's concept of the confines placed on women, the study underscores how these limitations stem from societal constructs. The study's findings discern that the contestation of indoctrination within *The Lowland* manifests in four distinct forms:

piety, purity, submissiveness, and domesticity (Arianto & Ambalegin, 2018, P. 7). Beyond its exploration of indoctrination, *The Lowland* also serves as a portrayal of feminism. The customary and communal traditions critiqued by Lahiri are indicative of the larger societal landscape. Gauri's experience within the patriarchal conventions resonates with that of numerous women in India. The space for their agency and movement becomes constrained by the imposition of religious, normative, customary, and traditional labels (Arianto & Ambalegin, 2018, P. 8).

In their article "The natural domination of capitalism: Darwinist organicism and the perverse postcolonial fantasy in Jhumpa Lahiri's *The Lowland*" (P. 135), the authors engage in a thorough exploration of Jhumpa Lahiri's literary works. The analysis surpasses Lahiri's status as a key figure in 'postcolonial literature' and delves into the intricate realm of her fiction's 'macro-politics.' This approach necessitates a comprehensive examination of Lahiri's ideological inclinations and aversions. The endeavor includes situating Lahiri's postcolonial perspective within the context of global geopolitical and economic shifts over the past seventy years. This investigation also requires grappling with themes such as neo-liberalism, imperialism, and neo-conservative military interventions, areas that have remained underexplored in the critical discourse.

Within the scope of their essay, the authors argue that a 'macro-political' interpretation of Lahiri's *The Lowland* could provide crucial insights for postcolonial studies and its self-evaluative processes (Saeid, 2021, P. 135)^٤, A meticulous analysis of the narrative as a politically biased historiography unveils the deployment of social Darwinist (evolutionary) doctrines. This is accompanied by a rather straightforward dismissal of leftist opposition, amounting to an apologia for neo-liberal capitalism and its assertive 'foreign policy' interventions. However, this paradigm faces challenges in self-justification, as evidenced by the rise of global populism and the 'environmentalist' movement. The authors also seek to establish parallels between the current crisis and the historical specter of twentieth-century fascism. Insights from Max Horkheimer illuminate the ideological underpinnings of the novel, demonstrating that, despite overt apologetics, it exposes inherent contradictions within the neo-liberal capitalist structure. Given the ongoing crisis, the very

sustainability of organized human existence hinges on a radical systemic transformation. Thus, Lahiri's relegation of transformative politics to the realm of juvenile utopianism emerges as an untenable act of denial and projection.

According to the study conducted by Kalyan Nadiminti and colleagues, the novel *The Lowland* by Jhumpa Lahiri (2013) challenges the prevailing narrative surrounding Asian American family immigration and upward mobility. This challenge is facilitated through the deliberate avoidance of reproductive labor as a central theme. Historically validated by the 1965 Immigration and Nationality Act, the family structure has evolved into a potent intersection of domestic sentiment and national assimilation within narratives featuring "desirable" immigrants. Such narratives often emphasize biopolitical expectations of heightened productivity. However, in Lahiri's novel, the Mitra family's migration to the west triggers a transformation that replaces reproductive labor with intellectual pursuits. This shift fundamentally alters the immigrant family dynamic and reconfigures the heterofuturist underpinnings of American immigration policies (Nadiminti, 2018, P. 239).

The focus is directed towards Jhumpa Lahiri's exploration of masculinity and care-work within the context of her Pulitzer Prize-winning novel *The Lowland* (2013). This novel, set within a middle-class Bengali family, orbits around the distinctive ambitions and intellectual motivations of its key figures – the brothers Subhash and Udayan, along with Gauri, the woman who becomes intertwined with their lives. Delving into the intricate cultural reservoir of middle-class intellectual Bengali masculinity, the article subsequently elucidates how Lahiri portrays this specific form of masculinity through her emphasis on Subhash's emotionally charged masculinity. The utilization of affect theory becomes crucial as a conceptual framework to anchor this theoretical investigation. This approach also aids in unraveling Subhash's nuanced confrontation with reproductive heteronormativity. Furthermore, the article investigates the gendered landscape of care-work within the confines of the Bengali heteronormative family structure. In parallel, it posits Subhash's masculinity as an illustrative case where entrenched gendered concepts are effectively blurred. It's important to note that Subhash's masculinity isn't a comprehensive representation of all middle-class

Bengali masculinities; rather, this analysis serves as a roadmap to theoretically discern heteronormative middle-class masculinity through the lens of affect theory (De, 2021, P. 144).

Furthermore, the novel combines both cultural and physical dislocation through its pages. Consequently, elements of diaspora and hybridity are presented as the domain in every single event throughout the text. Nonetheless, the novel has liminality to go parallel to other concepts like migration crisis and losing the self-identity. Such concepts have been fully discussed by many critics to find out the cultural and psychological prospects of Lahiri's new style in literature. To trace the specific constellation of identity and hegemony articulations in distinct social environments, cultural studies frequently concentrate on the dynamic conflicts among dominant norms and marginalized groups (Langer & Brown, 2008, P. 14). Lahiri's novel *The Lowland* is a piece of postcolonial literature. The geopolitical division of the world during the period of Western colonialism to the East has its unique perspectives that can be considered as subjects of a cultural encounter for non-Western writers. Hybridization in her novel "identity" arose as the main issue of cultural studies and was prompted by political conflicts as well as philosophical and linguistic concerns, so the true identity with authentic roots has disappeared, there is no identity, no culture although culture is the necessary basis for survival. Accordingly, hybridity as defined in the postcolonial literature and discourse is the exchange of cross-cultures. Hence, Lahiri stands as a typical example of including such a definition in her writings, particularly *The Lowland* which seeks to present equal cultures parallel to each other and to the nature of hybridization in postcolonial societies. It can develop from deliberate cases of cultural repression when a colonial power decides to invade to establish influence and control, or it can result from attempts to "assimilate" new social norms. Becoming a hybrid refers to the difficulty of having numerous identities. The word hybrid initially conjures images of creatures like the legendary chimera or possibly hybrid cars, something that combines various elements. A hybrid of styles is an example of a phenomenon that is "heterogeneous in origin or structure" and can be described as either "a personality that background is a combination of two separate cultures or traditions".

According to Homi K. Bhabha, hybridity is a concept that challenges fixed notions of identity and recognizes the complex and dynamic nature of cultural identities. In his influential work, *The Location of Culture*, Bhabha argues that hybridity emerges from the intermingling of different cultures, resulting in the formation of new and unique identities that cannot be easily categorized or reduced to a singular origin. Hybridity disrupts essentialist notions of identity and highlights the fluidity, ambiguity, and negotiation involved in the construction of individual and collective cultural identities (Bhabha, 1994, P. 18).

Frankenstein in Baghdad reflects Saadawi's belief in the power of fiction to convey the emotional experience of living in a war-torn city. Through his artistic imagination, he aims to go beyond the media's portrayal of reality and provide readers with a deeper understanding of Iraq. The novel captures the political and social instability in the country and highlights the need for creativity in difficult times. Saadawi's characters, especially the war monster known as *Frankenstein*, represent the postcolonial potential and explore cross-cultural issues. The novel emphasizes the cultural divide between Iraqis and the Western occupying forces and addresses the concept of "Otherness." Overall, Ahmed Saadawi's *Frankenstein in Baghdad* is a powerful and imaginative portrayal of the violence and chaos experienced in Iraq during the American occupation. It combines elements of horror, fantasy, and social commentary to create a compelling narrative that resonates with readers. Ahmed Saadawi is an Iraqi writer, poet, and filmmaker known for his novel *Frankenstein in Baghdad*. He was born in Baghdad in 1973 and gained recognition after the publication of his poetic collection *Anniversary of Bad Songs* in 2000. Saadawi has also worked as a filmmaker, particularly in documentary films that depict the daily lives of people in Iraq and the effects of the American occupation. *Frankenstein in Baghdad*, published in 2013, brought Saadawi international acclaim.

The novel won the International Prize for Arabic Fiction (IPAF) in 2014 and France's Grand Prize for Fantasy (FGPF) in 2017. It was also nominated for the Man Booker International Prize (MBIP) in 2018. The novel explores the violent scenes in Baghdad, particularly during the American occupation. It depicts the chaos and destruction in the city through discarded corpses and the smell of blood after explosions.

Saadawi's narrative combines elements of the supernatural with the harsh realities of life during a period of losing control.

The novel addresses the theme of violence and its impact on both individuals and society. Saadawi's writing style is influenced by his Arabic heritage, characterized by a poetic and complex narrative. He also draws inspiration from Western authors, including Mary Shelley's Frankenstein. The novel uses the metaphor of Frankenstein to comment on the realities experienced by the Iraqi people under the control of external forces.

CULTURAL ALIENATION AND OTHERNESS IN CHARACTERS OF FRANKENSTEIN IN BAGHDAD

Ahmed Saadawi's novel Frankenstein in Baghdad explores themes of cultural alienation and otherness through its characters and their experiences (Mohammad Asad, 2021, P 73). Set in war-torn Baghdad, the novel follows various characters who are marginalized and displaced by the violence and chaos around them. Here are some examples of how the novel addresses these issues in the characters of Hadi, Elishva, Mahmoud, General Surur and Whatsitsname. This shows how individuals need dignity and self-esteem and how the nation should be after sympathy and a sense of integrity among these different individuals. Hadi is a junk dealer who collects body parts from bomb explosion sites in Baghdad. He constructs a composite body, known as "Whatsitsname," and brings it to life using a spell. Whatsitsname embodies the idea of otherness and cultural alienation. It is a patchwork of various body parts from different people, symbolizing the fragmented and disjointed nature of Iraqi society. Whatsitsname is rejected by society and struggles to find its place, reflecting the sense of alienation experienced by those who are seen as different or other.

Elishva is an elderly Assyrian woman whose son, Daniel, goes missing during the war. She experiences profound grief and a sense of displacement, both due to her son's absence and the destruction of her community. Elishva represents the cultural alienation of minority groups in Iraq, particularly the Assyrians, who have faced persecution and marginalization. Her story highlights the struggle of maintaining cultural identity and belonging in a society torn apart by violence and conflict. Mahmoud is an investigative journalist who seeks the truth about the Whatsitsname killings. Through his

character, Saadawi addresses the issue of cultural alienation by exploring the impact of media and public perception on marginalized communities. As Mahmoud delves deeper into the story, he encounters the indifference and apathy of society towards the victims, who are predominantly poor and disenfranchised. This indifference further alienates the victims and perpetuates their otherness, reflecting the societal divisions and prejudices that exist.

General Surur represents the oppressive and authoritarian nature of the Iraqi government. His character showcases how power dynamics can contribute to cultural alienation and otherness. Surur manipulates the Whatsitsname killings to serve his own interests and consolidate his power, disregarding the suffering and marginalization of the victims. This illustrates how those in positions of authority can exacerbate the sense of otherness experienced by marginalized communities. Through these characters and their experiences, Saadawi portrays the profound impact of cultural alienation and otherness on individuals and communities. The novel highlights the need for empathy, understanding, and solidarity in a society fractured by violence and conflict, and underscores the importance of recognizing the humanity and dignity of all individuals, regardless of their differences.

BIRTH OF WHATSITSNAME AND CHARACTER DEVELOPMENT IN FRANKENSTEIN IN BAGHDAD

The character of Shisma who is a central character created in the novel Frankenstein in Baghdad, Whatsitsname character is created through a process that involves collecting and assembling body parts and here we find out how that happens in the story. Hadi a junk dealer in war-torn Baghdad, scours the city for body parts left behind by bomb explosions. These body parts belong to different individuals who have been killed in the ongoing violence. Hadi gathers these disparate pieces, which represent the fragmented and shattered lives of the victims. Hadi assembles the body, by using his skills as a junk dealer and his knowledge of anatomy. He carefully selects and assembles the collected body parts. He stitches them together, creating a composite body that combines various limbs and organs from different individuals. The resulting body becomes known as "Whatsitsname." The spell of the missing parts, in the novel, Hadi also acquires a spell, known as the "spell of the missing parts," from a

mysterious source. This spell is believed to give life to the constructed body. Hadi recites the spell, infusing Whatsitsname with an unknown form of animation. Whatsitsname comes to life after the spell is recited, Whatsitsname is brought to life. It becomes a sentient being, with consciousness and the ability to move and interact with the world.

However, Whatsitsname existence is marked by a sense of otherness and a struggle to find its place in society. The creation of Whatsitsname symbolizes the repercussions of violence and war on society, representing the fragmented and disjointed nature of Iraqi society itself. Whatsitsname composite body serves as a metaphor for the disintegration and fragmentation of human lives in a conflict-ridden environment. The character raises questions about identity, belonging, and the profound impact of violence on individuals and communities.

EXPLORING HYBRIDITY: THE CHARACTER OF WHATSITSNAME IN FRANKENSTEIN IN BAGHDAD AND EDWARD SAID'S THEORY

The character of Whatsitsname in Frankenstein in Baghdad can be related to the theory of hybridity put forth by Edward Said. Said's concept of hybridity (Said, 2004, P. 45). refers to the blending and mixing of different cultures, identities and experiences. Whatsitsname embodies the idea of hybridity in several ways. It is a composite body constructed from body parts belonging to different individuals. This amalgamation of body parts represents a physical embodiment of cultural hybridity. Each body part carries its own history, experiences, and cultural markers, which are brought together to create a new and hybrid identity. Whatsitsname represents the blending of multiple cultural identities, reflecting the diverse and multifaceted nature of Iraqi society. The character as a hybrid body raises questions about identity. It does not have a clear, singular identity since it is composed of various parts. Similarly, individuals in hybrid cultures often have complex and multifaceted identities, influenced by multiple cultural backgrounds (Said, 2004, p. 185).

Furthermore, its struggle to find its place in society reflects the challenges faced by individuals with hybrid identities who may feel marginalized or alienated from both their original cultures and the dominant culture (Said, 2004, p. 184). Its experiences also highlight

the hybridity of lived experiences in a war-torn environment. It navigates the chaos and violence of the city, interacting with different characters from various walks of life. In doing so, Whatsitsname encounters a range of perspectives, ideologies, and social dynamics, reflecting the diverse experiences within a hybrid cultural context. Overall, this character in Frankenstein in Baghdad aligns with Edward Said's theory of hybridity by embodying a complex blend of cultures, identities, and experiences. Whatsitsname serves as a metaphorical representation of the hybrid nature of societies impacted by conflict and highlights the challenges and complexities faced by individuals with hybrid identities in such contexts.

INVESTIGATING SHARED THEMES IN JHUMPA LAHIRI'S LITERATURE: EXAMINING CHARACTER RELATIONSHIPS THROUGH THE LENS OF EDWARD SAID AND HOMI K. BHABHA

Jhumpa Lahiri's writing often explores themes of identity, belonging, cultural assimilation, and the immigrant experience. Her characters grapple with issues of displacement, cultural alienation, and the tension between maintaining their heritage and assimilating into a new culture. Lahiri's work engaged with the theories of Edward Said and Homi K. Bhabha, so we can draw some connections between her themes and their theories: Identity and Cultural Hybridity can be shown in Lahiri's characters often navigate the complexities of their dual identities, existing in a hybrid space between their cultural heritage and the dominant culture of their new home. This resonates with Edward Said's concept of hybridity, as Lahiri's characters negotiate their dual cultural identities and attempt to reconcile their past with their present. Otherness and Exoticism can be seen in Lahiri's characters frequently face the experience of being seen as the "Other" due to their cultural background and appearance.

They encounter stereotypes, exoticization, and a sense of alienation in the societies they inhabit. This relates to Homi K. Bhabha's ideas on the construction of the "Other" and the ways in which individuals are positioned as outsiders or marginalized due to their cultural differences. Lahiri's work often focuses on characters who have experienced displacement and are part of the diaspora (Hirsch, 1991, P. 9: 39).

They grapple with the longing for a homeland, feelings of nostalgia, and a sense of being uprooted. These themes resonate

with both Said and Bhabha's theories on the experiences of migration, exile, and the complex relationships between homeland and adopted land. Lahiri's characters confront the challenges of assimilating into a new culture while preserving aspects of their own heritage (Antonsich, 2012, P. 59-76).

They navigate issues of language, customs, and cultural expectations, often feeling caught between multiple worlds. These themes align with both Said and Bhabha's discussions on the negotiation of cultural identities in postcolonial contexts. While Lahiri's writing does not explicitly engage with the theories of Edward Said and Homi K. Bhabha, her exploration of themes such as identity, cultural hybridity, otherness, displacement, and assimilation can be seen as resonating with their ideas on the complexities of postcolonial experiences and the construction of cultural identities.

In Jhumpa Lahiri's *The Lowland*, there are several characters who grapple with the complexities of postcolonial experiences and the construction of cultural identities. Subhash, one of the central characters, leaves India to pursue higher studies in the United States. He undergoes a process of assimilation and adaptation to a new culture, highlighting the tensions between his Indian heritage and his desire to belong in the American society. Subhash's experiences resonate with Edward Said's ideas on the complexities of cultural assimilation and the negotiation of identity in a postcolonial context.

Udayan, Subhash's younger brother, becomes involved in political activism during the Naxalite movement in India. His radicalization and subsequent actions reflect the tensions and conflicts that arise from postcolonial struggles for liberation and the complexities of navigating a society transitioning from colonial rule. Udayan's character resonates with Homi K. Bhabha's theories on the construction of cultural identities and the ways in which individuals negotiate their position within a postcolonial society. Gauri is Subhash's wife and later Udayan's widow. After Udayan's death, Gauri leaves India and settles in the United States. Gauri's experiences exemplify the challenges of cultural adaptation, as she must reconcile her Indian identity with the expectations and norms of American society.

Her character reflects the complexities of postcolonial experiences and the negotiation of cultural identities in a transnational context. Through these characters, Lahiri explores the complexities of postcolonial experiences, including the tensions between cultural identities, the challenges of assimilation and adaptation to new environments, and the impacts of political and social movements on individual lives.

HYBRIDIZATION IN LAHIRI'S THE LOWLAND AND SAADAWI'S FRANKENSTEIN IN BAGHDAD

The concept of hybridization is explored in the two novels, Jhumpa Lahiri's *The Lowland* and Ahmed Saadawi's *Frankenstein in Baghdad*. These novels reflect the interaction and blending of different cultures, highlighting the effects of colonialism and the desire for cultural survival. On the one hand, *The Lowland* presents equal cultures in parallel, showcasing nostalgia, assimilation, diaspora, and identity acculturation. Lahiri incorporates the nature of hybridity in postcolonial communities, resulting from cultural suppression and patterns of immigration from imperial areas of influence.

On the other hand, *Frankenstein in Baghdad* depicts postcolonial prospects through the character of Frankenstein, representing the monster of war. Saadawi explores cultural problems and encounters, emphasizing the cultural gap between Iraqis and western colonizing forces. The novel reflects the legacy of colonialism and the desire for liberation.

THE THEORY OF HYBRIDITY

Here in this research, we are trying to employ a comparative methodology to analyze the works of Saadawi and Lahiri, exploring their experimental visions and recurrent themes. Colonialism is analyzed based on Bhabha's and Said's conceptions, highlighting the similarities and differences in the novels and the results of colonialism, including alienation and deformation of local culture. The concept of hybridization is crucial for understanding global cultural dynamics in postcolonial literature. The novels by Saadawi and Lahiri provide insights into the effects of colonialism, cultural survival, and the negotiation of cultural identities in a hybridized world. Edward Said and Homi K. Bhabha are renowned scholars known for their writings on the relationship between culture, politics, and identity.

This summary examines their theories on hybridity and cultural identity, as well as their impact on postcolonial studies and literary analysis. Said's theory of hybridity emphasizes the complex and multifaceted nature of human identity. He argues that identity is shaped by various social, cultural, and historical factors, and is not fixed or predetermined.

Hybridity, according to Said, is a valuable aspect of human identity that allows for adaptation and evolution over time. Postcolonial literature exemplifies hybridity in practice, as writers incorporate elements from their own cultural traditions and those of the colonizers. This blending of different cultural and linguistic influences reflects the hybrid nature of postcolonial identity and serves as a means of resistance against colonial hegemony (Bhabha, 1994, P. 19:45).

Critics argue that Said's theory of hybridity can be essentialist and reductive, assuming that all individuals and cultures are inherently hybrid. Additionally, some view hybridity as a form of cultural appropriation. However, Said's theory remains influential in understanding the dynamic nature of human identity and its interaction with diverse cultural contexts.

Lahiri's characters often experience displacement and alienation as they navigate new cultural contexts. They grapple with finding a sense of belonging and must negotiate the complexities of multiple cultural identities. Lahiri's writing explores the nuanced experiences of cultural hybridity and its impact on individuals. Critics argue that Lahiri's portrayal of cultural hybridity can be limited, focusing primarily on privileged, middle-class immigrants. They suggest that her work overlooks the experiences of marginalized individuals. Nevertheless, Lahiri's writing offers valuable insights into the complexities of cultural identity and the challenges and opportunities presented by cultural hybridity.

The theories of hybridity and cultural identity put forth by Edward Said and Homi K. Bhabha provide frameworks for understanding the dynamic nature of human identity and its interaction with diverse cultural contexts. Through their work, scholars and writers continue to explore the rich and complex experiences of cultural hybridity in postcolonial literature and beyond. Saadawi's Frankenstein in

Baghdad explores the theme of hybridity through the creation of a monster called (Whatsitsname or Shisma) by the protagonist, Hadi. The novel delves into the complexities of cultural identity in Iraq and raises questions about the effects of war and violence on cultural transformation (Saadawi, 2018, P. 44). Hadi, a collector of discarded objects, assembles the monster using body parts from Iraq War victims. The monster represents the complex and fragmented nature of cultural identity in Iraq. Its destructive actions underscore the devastating impact of violence on communities and cultures (Bhabha, 1994, P. 173).

Saadawi highlights the role of creativity and imagination in the process of cultural hybridity. Hadi's desire to create something new out of discarded materials reflects the transformative potential of cultural identity. However, the novel also raises ethical questions about the exploitation of the dead in this creative process. Frankenstein in Baghdad offers a nuanced portrayal of cultural hybridity, particularly through Hadi's character and the creation of the monster. Hadi's identity, like the monster's, is a composite of various identities annihilated by war. His mixed ethnicity and diverse experiences contribute to a synthesis of several cultures. Saadawi's novel intricately explores the multifaceted nature of cultural identity and the profound impacts of war and violence on its evolution. By delving into the experiences of characters like Hadi and the creation of the monster, the novel presents a captivating examination of cultural hybridity in Iraq, prompting significant contemplation on the prospects of cultural identity amidst conflict and violence. The Whatsitsname character in the novel represents the beliefs and aspirations of the central characters in different ways. Each character sees the Whatsitsname as a source of salvation or fulfillment of their desires.

CULTURAL ALIENATION, OTHERNESS, AND HYBRIDITY: IDENTITY IN JHUMPA LAHIRI'S THE LOWLAND AND AHMED SAADAWI'S FRANKENSTEIN IN BAGHDAD – THE POWER OF WORDS

The turbulent and violent environment left by the war and American occupation is what led to the spread of poverty and suffering among the Iraqi people, and through the cultural background of Ahmed Saadawi, he portrayed it in his novel as he said, After years of wars and sanctions, Baghdad was a chaotic city,

where there were no guarantees of safety or even a peaceful death. The dead mingled with the living, and occasionally, they would become the living (Saadawi, 2018, P. 105).

Personalities struggle internally to show cultural alienation in a challenge to the identity that is dispersed in a society that suffers from divisions due to political and religious affiliations. Hadi finds himself unable to identify with any group of society, which increases his sense of isolation and separation. He says, "I'm not a terrorist, I'm not an infidel, and I'm not a secularist. So, what am I?"(Saadawi, 2018, P. 137).

It is an allegorical depiction of the rampant violence with death that permeated daily life in Baghdad during that period.

The monster was made up of pieces from different people, so it couldn't be classified as belonging to any specific sect, religion, or race (Saadawi, 2018, P. 143).

Whatsitsname's body is an actual image of alienation, being a mixture of different identities and cultures, and shares this with the character of Hadi, due to their inability to integrate with any class. The monster is seen as a threat by the society surrounding it. Society's rejection and fear of those who do not adhere to the standards as if they are no longer a part of it. Mahmoud confronts the changing dynamics of Iraqi society. "It's like we're living in a country that doesn't exist anymore" (Saadawi, 2018, P. 109).

He wrestles with his deep sense of cultural alienation as he realizes that the country he knew no longer exists. This realization leaves him feeling alienated, lost, and detached from his surroundings. His feelings are affected by his rejection of societal changes, which highlights the instability of identity in the face of the transformed social landscape. The elderly Christian woman who represents the imperial figure who has lost touch with her family and her cultural heritage. "I've been cut off from my family, my language, my culture, my identity" (Saadawi, 2018, P. 116).

Here we see how this symbolizes the loss and separation of identity resulting from the imposition of Western cultural values on Eastern societies. This highlights the negative effects of dominant cultural forces on individuals to make them feel isolated and Elishva's

situation is a true example of the consequences of cultural imperialism. On the other side in Jhumpa Lahiri's *The Lowland* the family's move from the homeland to a land that bears another cultural background in America and under current circumstances imposed the creation of a conflict between identity and the radical cultural backgrounds of the characters to convey the deep sense that embodies the siege between a past that has become absent and an uncertain present, which leads to a deep sense of displacement and confusion.

I was living in two different time zones, the past and the present. The difference between the two felt like night and day. (Lahiri, 2013, P.19).

CONCLUSION

The conflict between personal cultural backgrounds and identity that was affected by the conflicts caused by the war in Iraq appears through personalities such as Hadi collecting the parts of the victims to create a monster in which the spirit lives. It symbolizes the fragmented identity of the Iraqi people after the war. It is what formed the experience that Hadi suffers from in Identity dispersed in front of the divisions in the country. As for the elderly Christian woman who represents the imperial figure, "Elishva", who is searching for her lost son, represents another challenge in the face of religious minorities in Iraq with the suffering of loss and displacement, and the monster itself embodies collective trauma and suffering. For the Iraqi people, their changing and evolving identity, reflect the complexity of individual and group identities in times of conflict. The novel reveals the interaction between personal and collective identity through Hadi, Elishva, Mahmoud Al-Sawadi, and Whatsitsname, emphasizing the difficulties of rebuilding and unifying a fractured society. Through our reading of Lahiri's novel, *The Lowland* concepts of cultural identity and how one's cultural background shapes one's sense of self are revealed and we see how characters confront their own identities and grapple with the complexities of navigating diverse cultural worlds. The character of Subhash, Udayan, Gauri and Bela experience the tension between individual identity and societal expectations with the complex nature of cultural heritage. Lahiri was able to enrich the literary text (Singh, 2015, p.43).

The diversity that arises from mixing different cultural backgrounds while highlighting the suffering and challenges faced by

immigrants and members of the second generation in finding their place within society (Drouhot and Nee, 2019, p. 25). Both Saadawi and Lahiri, as writers, have been deeply influenced by the profound impact of cultural background on personal identity in their literary works. However, their writings diverge in terms of contextual settings. Saadawi's *Frankenstein in Baghdad* delves into the aftermath of war and violence in postwar Iraq, while Lahiri's *The Lowland* explores the experiences of Indian immigrants residing in the United States. These distinct cultural contexts profoundly shape the characters' connection to their cultural heritage. Saadawi's characters grapple with the task of reconciling their Iraqi identity with the violence they have endured, whereas Lahiri's characters wrestle with the tension between their identity and the expectations imposed by their cultural background. Additionally, the two authors exhibit distinct writing styles. Saadawi employs magical realism to explore the profound impact of war and violence on individuals, while Lahiri takes a realistic approach to delve into the intricacies of cultural identity and the challenges of seeking a sense of belonging.

Despite these stylistic disparities, both authors highlight the multifaceted nature of personal identity and the profound influence of cultural background. They not only celebrate cultural heritage but also address the hardships faced by marginalized communities. Themes of otherness, hybridity, and cultural alienation permeate both novels, offering a reflection on the ramifications of colonialism, imperialism, and globalization on individual identities. Edward Said's theory of Orientalism provides a lens through which to understand the power dynamics between the West and the East, as both narratives critique dominant power structures and amplify the voices of marginalized individuals. The characters in these novels exist within liminal spaces, navigating between cultures and grappling with their identities in the face of societal expectations and stereotypes. The concept of hybrids is central, with characters traversing multiple identities and contending with the tensions that arise from such complexity (Wurgaft, 2007, P.98).

Cultural alienation is also explored as the characters strive to find acceptance and a sense of belonging within their respective communities (Saadawi, 2018, P. 135). In their exploration of these profound themes, Lahiri and Saadawi challenge binary thinking and Orientalist discourse, offering a nuanced understanding of cultural

identity shaped by internal and external factors alike. The exploration of cultural identity in literature delves into a multifaceted subject that necessitates a nuanced comprehension of societal attitudes and political contexts.

By analyzing Jhumpa Lahiri's *The Lowland* and Ahmed Saadawi's *Frankenstein in Baghdad*, this study emphasizes the significance of acknowledging the influence of culture on individual identities. These two novels offer distinct perspectives that provide valuable insights into the intricacies of cultural identity and the sense of belonging. The examination of cultural identity in literature is an essential component of comprehending the complexities inherent in human experiences. The analysis of *The Lowland* and *Frankenstein in Baghdad* sheds light on the pivotal role culture plays in shaping individual identities. While *The Lowland* investigates the impact of societal and political circumstances on personal encounters, *Frankenstein in Baghdad* explores how war disrupts cultural identity. Themes of cultural alienation, otherness, and hybridity permeate both novels, underscoring the challenges individuals encounter when navigating their cultural identities. By exploring these themes through literature, readers can gain a deeper understanding of how culture molds individual experiences and perspectives.

This study provides valuable insights into the intricate nature of cultural identity and belonging, serving as a poignant reminder that comprehending cultural differences is crucial for fostering an inclusive society. What sets this research apart from other studies is its concentrated examination of specific themes such as cultural identity, difference, and hybridity within the novels *The Lowland* and *Frankenstein in Baghdad*. By juxtaposing the writing styles of the two authors and analyzing the distinctive contexts that underscore the theories put forth by Edward Said and Homi K. Bhabha concerning cultural reference and identity, this research sheds light on the critical aspects of the writers' works. In *Frankenstein in Baghdad*, a critical exploration of scientific progress and societal rejection of the ramifications of war on cultural identity is undertaken, along with an analysis of the dynamics between otherness and hybridity. Furthermore, the research delves deep into how culture molds individual identities and how exposure to diverse experiences and obstacles can lead to divergent perspectives and conflicts.

Reference:

- Antonsich, M. (2012). Exploring the demands of assimilation among white ethnic majorities in Western Europe. *Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies*, 38(1), 59-76.
- Bhabha, H. K. (1994). *The location of culture*. Routledge.
- Chorna, L., Shevchenko, I., & Shostak, O. (2018). *Mental health: Dislocation of the concept in the small group*. Institute for Social and Political Psychology, National Academy of Educational Sciences of Ukraine, Kyiv, 1(3), 16-18.
- De, A. (2021). Marking men, affect and care work: a study of middle-class Bengali masculinity in Jhumpa Lahiri's *The Lowland*. *NORMA*, 16(3), 144-158.
- Drouhot, L. G., & Nee, V. (2019). Assimilation and the second generation in Europe and America: Blending and segregating social dynamics between immigrants and natives. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 45, 177-199.
- Hirsch, M. (1991). *Diaspora and displacement: Home, memory, and identity among second-generation Jews in France and America*. *Diaspora: A Journal of Transnational Studies*, 1(1), 9-39.
- Lahiri, J. (2013). *The Lowland*. Alfred A. Knopf.
- Langer, A., & Brown, G. K. (2007). Cultural status inequalities: An important dimension of group mobilization. *CRISE Working Paper*, 1(41), 1-26.
- Laslett, B., & Brenner, J. (1989). *Gender and social reproduction: Historical perspectives*. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 15(1), 381-404.
- Mohammad Asad, T. (2021). *The Reading of Post-Colonial Otherness in J. Wright's Translation of A. Saadawi's Frankenstein in Baghdad* (Doctoral dissertation, An Najah National University).
- Nadiminti, K. (2018). "A Betrayal of Everything": The Law of the Family in Jhumpa Lahiri's *The Lowland*. *Journal of Asian American Studies*, 21(2), 239-262.
- Saadawi, A. (2018). *Frankenstein in Baghdad* (J. Wright, Trans.). Penguin Books.
- Saeid, A. (2021). The natural domination of capitalism: Darwinist organicism and the perverse postcolonial fantasy in Jhumpa Lahiri's *The Lowland*. *Critique*, 49(1), 135-148.
- Said, E. W. (2000). *Invention, memory, and place*. *Critical Inquiry*, 26(2), 175-192.
- Said, E. W. (2004). *Orientalism*. Vintage Books.
- Singh, A. (2015). Cultural Transformation, Identity and Resistance in Jhumpa Lahiri's 'The Lowland'. *ANGLISTICUM. Journal of the Association-Institute for English Language and American Studies*, 4(3), 38-43.
- Stoican, A. E. (2020). Layered temporalities – Between modernism and postmodernism – in Jhumpa Lahiri's *The Lowland*. *English Studies at NBU*, 6(2), 249-264.
- Tomi Arianto & Ambalegin, A. (2018). Indoctrination Against Women in 'The Lowland' by Jhumpa Lahiri. *OKARA: Journal Bahasa Dan Sastra*, 12(2), 153-164.
- Wurgaft, N. (2007). *Also known as: An exploration of cultural hybridity*. Antioch New England Graduate School.