



The Scattered Identity as a Comparative Analysis in the Turkish, Irish and Iraqi Novel
Prof. Luma Ibrahim Shakir Al-Brazenji Mustafa Jumaah Chiyad

الهوية المبعثرة كتحليل مقارن في الرواية التركية والعراقية والاييرلندية

Author Information

Prof. Luma Ibrahim Shakir Al-Brazenji **Mustafa Jumaah Chiyad**

University of
Diyala

College of
Education for
Humanities

Author info

Lumahh50@gmail.com **mustafajomaa16@gmail.com**

Article History

Received

12/10/2022

Accepted:

1/11/2022

KEYWORDS: Scattered Identity,
Turkish Culture, Iraqi Culture

هذه مقالة وصول مفتوح بموجب ترخيص

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Abstract:

The importance of this study is to zoom out the hidden facts and to show how circumstances effectively work in scattering the identity through a deep study of the cultures, especially in the literature of the contemporary novel. The theme of the scattered identity is highly analyzed by focusing on the share points in the selected novels. Writers like Elef Shafak from the Turkish Culture, Inaam Kachachi from the Iraqi culture and Anne Enright from the Irish culture. Based on the events in showing the suffering of the main characters in which the mentioned writers find fiction is the only way to escape from the grim reality of the modern life. The scattered identity theme is the common point in the selected works and the unified subject through sharing beliefs and drawing ideas to present concrete facts about how identity is really scattered and shattered in the contemporary literature.



Identity is an essential theme in literature and specially in the literature of those writers like Anne Enright, Inaam Kachachi and Elif Shafak who share the agony of identity scattering. What Enright initiated is activated by Shafak and ended by Kachachi. Actually it is an open ended story full of hard events and black memories. Anne Enright's *What Are You Like?* is an influential work and extraordinary storytelling, not only for its woven threads but also for its depiction of the grim reality of the Irish society at that time. When reality is hard to be seen and darkness overcomes the scene, Enright successfully could build a realm of fiction in a realm of reality to present a vivid image for her readers. As well as to zoom out the unseen images reflected by the suffering of the Irish individual to prove her existence in a country seems to be doubled not yet united.

Unlike Kachachi's *The American Granddaughter* and Shafak's *The Bastard of Istanbul*, the plot of Enright's *What Are You Like?* is as ancient as storytelling itself. Twin baby girls separated at birth move through the story to the point where they meet each other, so the union of the two girls is the key point of the lost identity. Actually, it is not a miraculous vision; instead, Enright's extraordinarily gifted hands and her magical fingers meticulously painted the scene. Marie and Maria, who are oblivious of one other's existence, live young, vibrant lives characterized by a feeling of dislocation and loss due to the plot's influence on every element of their lives.

Along with Enright's *What Are You Like?* and Shafak's *The Bastard of Istanbul*, Kachachi's *The American Granddaughter* is an amazing work in which reality and fiction are mixed together to present such a perfect work as she declares "We let ourselves be won over by this novel that describes with such faithfulness and emotion the tearing apart of a country and a woman forever caught between two shores" (Kachachi, *The American Granddaughter*, 2010, p. 127). "Full of poetry and freshness" (Lire Virgin, 2006). Compared with Enright's *What Are You Like* and Shafak's *The Bastard of Istanbul*, *The American Granddaughter* is somehow different. As a U.S. Army translator, Kachachi sees the occupation of Iraq through the eyes of an Iraqi-American lady in her age. Through the narrator's conflicted feelings, the researcher is able to observe the misery of a nation that has just emerged from tyranny and is now under the control of another country.

Similarly, Enright's *What are You Like?*, Kachachi's *The American Granddaughter* and Shafak's *The Bastard of Istanbul* are nearly unified in presenting the problematic issue of the scattered identity. In *The Bastard of Istanbul*, the novel follows the threads of two separated families from different origins. These families are represented by the Tchakhmakhchian family from the Armenian diaspora in San Francisco and the Kazanci family from Istanbul, respectively, their stories are intertwined here. Both of these families are included in the story. As part of reconstructing their lives in the United States, the descendants of the Armenians who had survived the massacre cut all links with their nation of origin.



While in Enright's *What Are You Like?*, the story follows the origin of twin baby girls separated at birth, a family divided into two halves, each one lives a completely different life and then the journey begins in searching for their scattered identity. In consequence with Kachachi's *The American Granddaughter*, it follows the threads of an American soldier from an Iraqi origin working as a translator with the occupied forces of her country in which she was put into two hells, either to be an Iraqi or an American. From here, the journey begins in searching for her scattered identity.

Comparatively, the story of Enright's protagonists in *What Are You Like?* shares the same features as Shafak's *The Bastard of Istanbul* and Kachachi's *The American Granddaughter*, as they are all scattered and shattered due to many circumstances. Marie was adopted and raised by well-meaning liberal parents in a London neighborhood. Maria, whose father raised her in the home of Dublin, drops out of college, becomes disoriented in New York, and suffers a nervous breakdown. She resists as an adolescent but settles into a job in social work that she is ill-suited owing to her practically unfiltered emotional reactions. Enright captures with aching precision the sensation of yearning in daily lives, familial ties, and the inner workings of two young women's brains in a precise, masterfully built, and humorous language.

Enright argues that contemporary urban life occurs in areas that can never become national symbols because they only exist from moment to moment. As with mirrors, photographs, dressmaking patterns, and clothing, the fitting room becomes a metaphor for the transient nature of identity and its representations. Since garments are defined as 'other-selves' more accurately than the women who wear them, it becomes conceivable to switch identities by just altering one's attire. In this example, Maria is shown as seeing her First Communion clothing as something she must conform to, rather than the other way around: She lies in bed and tries to tell what size she is. When she closes her eyes, her tongue is huge and her hands are big, but the bits in between are any size at all. When she opens her eyes she is the size of the dress. Or she might be. (p. 45)

While the *The American Granddaughter* by the Paris-based Iraqi writer Inaam Kachachi is a narrative "unlike any other" that has the potential to become a literary landmark on the anguish caused by the American war in Iraq. Kachachi's war book protagonist is an Iraqi-born American who works as a translator for the United States armed forces after deposing Saddam Hussein. The narrative follows the protagonist's introspective musings. An Iraqi/American interpreter for the American military during the Second Gulf War is Zeina's main character. Zeina, a 30 years old woman, has been living in Detroit for the last 15 years when the Iraqi war started. The family of her father's Eastern Orthodox faith fled Baghdad when he was detained and tortured when she was a teenager. After being forced to leave Iraq at the age of fifteen, Zeina returns to serve as an interpreter for the United States Army at the age of thirty. When the narrative opens, Zeina tries to come to terms with the traumas she has endured throughout her life.



Accordingly, *The Bastard of Istanbul*, Elif Shafak's critically praised book, examines themes of distorted memory, shattered identity, and a sense of place in the face of exile. As the Armenian diaspora settles into their new life in the United States, Shafak's work examines how the Armenian refugees attempt to hang on to their cultural memory of the genocide while simultaneously criticizing the Turks' collective forgetfulness. In the context of the Armenian diaspora, this case also complicated conceptions of space/place, history/memory, and home/exile.

Shafak's *The Bastard of Istanbul* raises concerns about politics involved in the Armenian refugees an attempt to maintain their cultural memory of the genocide even after they have been resettled and become members of the American diaspora. At the same time, the novel confronts the communal forgetting that has developed about the killing of Armenians at the hands of the Turks. The fundamental goal of this study is to analyze the politics of a repressed past, namely the willful erasure of the Armenian genocide from current Turkish history; to highlight how the homeland for the diaspora is not just a map region but also a cognitive conceptual category and a lived place; to demonstrate how identity is spread, which creates a sense of desire for a homeland; and to show how the memory of violence determines the collective identity.

Likewise, Enright's *What Are You Like?* the two main protagonists Maria and Rose lose the capacity to identify themselves just before their breakdown. Maria is unable to recognize her reflection and no longer knows what she looks like, and Rose is unable to complete the passport application. There is absolutely no stability, and the characters deteriorate into nothingness. Rose and Maria achieve at least temporary stability due to their resemblance. Maria and Rose ultimately meet and recognize each other toward the conclusion of the tale. For some critics, this is a cheap disappointment, an easy solution that undermines the work's intricacy. For others, it is a time of redemption when "twin meets twin, England meets Ireland, and there is much joy and comparing of notes," however, this remark has caustic undertones. In a post-nationalist culture, the twins' reunion may be interpreted as further emphasizing the value of the present above the myths of the past. Rose and Maria realize that they both had a close friend named Emily in elementary school and that they both put these commonalities on an equal level. However, one is a mere coincidence while the other is due to genetics.

Like Enright's protagonists, the twins, Shafak's protagonists, the sisters in law in which the coincidence effectively worked to gather the scattered siblings. However, Armanoush Tchakhmakhchian, a young Armenian-American woman, is compelled to return to her ancestors' land to express her feelings of sorrow and seek an apology from the person she imagines to be the one who wronged her. These emotions are accompanied by a sense of being betrayed and having her identity shattered. Therefore, Armanoush pays a visit to the Kazanci family in Istanbul to obtain some kind of justice, or at least, an acknowledgement of their part in the crime and of regaining the memories of her ancestors who lived their lives in exile. During Armanoush's voyage of self-discovery, she comes face-to-face because she and the Turks have



the same cultural background. There are numerous similarities between the Armenian diaspora and Turkish women's voices in Shafak's book.

Unlike Shafak's protagonist Armanoush, Kachachi's protagonist Zeina in which Zeina's coming back to her country as a soldier represents the enemy, while Armanoush's coming back was to discover her origin. So, this is totally juxtaposing with the sense of belonging as she is the frenemy, a double sense as a friend and an enemy. This case evokes in her the sense of detachment and not belonging, which later on, the senses of belonging and not belonging are mixed, resulting in her scattered state of identity. Here, situations put her in the point and evoke the sense of longing for the home, and this can be understood when she discovers that her origin is rooted in this country through an unexpected meeting with her grandmother. Being rejected and not welcomed, as her grandmother declares, "you are the enemy himself", she was put in a very embarrassing situation. She was totally overwhelmed to find herself neither an Iraqi nor an American.

In comparison with Kachachi's *The American Granddaughter* and Shafak's *The Bastard of Istanbul* about how the past and the present effect the new generations in finding the scattered identity, Enright is eager to point out that even the similarities between the twins involve aspects of chance and cannot be explained only by genetics. Thus, the origins of identity are situated in the present, in the similarities between brothers, rather than in the past. Nonetheless, they are revealed to be unstable and incidental instead of fundamental. There are no solutions to concerns of identity or belonging, just the development of a temporary connection based on similarity, which may equate to a post-nationalist perspective on temporary alliances and shared interests.

According to Ray Ryan, this fixation with the 'present' and its attendant rejection of history are typical of post-nationalism as the expression of a self-generation disconnected from any collective body called Ireland'. However, this rejection of the past comes at a cost since nothing can replace the rejected pictures. Through her account of Rose, in particular, Enright suggests that alienation and loss are undesirable qualities of a post-nationalist society. While Enright is sceptical of nationalist idealization, he does not propose a cheerful utopia as a remedy; instead, he recognizes that demolishing old certainties may also be incapacitating.

Similarly, Anne Enright's perspective about how the present effects the new generation's identity, Kachachi shows the troublesome view that the main protagonist Zeina has of herself and the inability to connect that she has with her parents' self-narratives, her place of residency, and her homeland are portrayed in *The American Granddaughter* on many levels. This case is done through the lens of the issue that many young people with fragmented identities experience they now dwell in. Muhyamin, Zeina's milk brother, says that her identity is fragmented and that she has a 'rupture' in her 'spirit,' and he uses the word "instability" (Kachachi, 2010: 130), leaving behind her life, identity, and home to embrace the abyss. According to him, this is the same as being suspended between two lives, with no comfort in continuing or turning back. This case is also due mainly to the fact that he can never "imagine having a stepmother land," which is what



he refers to as being "caught." Zeina's Iraqi milk mother, Tawoos, also refers to her as "a dog with two homes," which Zeina perceives as an indicator that she is disoriented and perplexed. Zeina's two homes are in Iraq and the United States: "I could not get my old life back, and I could not adapt to my life in the Zone. I was a dog with two homes but unable to feel at home in either" (Kachachi, *The American Granddaughter*, 2010, p 147). From the beginning of the story, Zeina's melancholy and sense of loss are evident as she reveals her feelings of emptiness:

If sorrow were a man I would not kill him. I would pray for his long life. For it has honed me and smoothed over the edges of my reckless nature. It has turned the world and everything in it a strange colour with unfamiliar hues that my words stutter to describe and my eyes fail to register. (Kachachi, *The American Granddaughter*, 2010, 1)

As Kachachi is viewing, the novel begins with a pivotal event in the protagonist's life, which takes place in 2003, when she witnesses the nation in which she resides attacking the country she was born in . The conflict between Iraq and the United States is taking place. From the relative safety of her house in Detroit, Zeina watches as the chaos of war unfolds outside her window, and she asserts:

like any skilled actor, I felt I had the ability to adopt a role and change character, to be simultaneously their daughter and their enemy, while they could be my kin as well as my enemy. From that day on, I became aware of the malady of grief that afflicted me, to which I adapted and for which I sought no cure. (Kachachi, *The American Granddaughter*, 2010, 7)

Unlike Kachachi's protagonist Zeina and Enright's the twins, Armanoush, Shafak's protagonist who refers to herself as "Madame My Exiled Soul," decided to go to the country of birth of her father's family in order to learn more about her heritage. Armanoush's grandfather wed a lady from Kentucky, but they quickly separated since they did not have enough in common to continue their marriage. Armanoush is required to spend her time with her American mother and Turkish stepfather, but she is permitted to spend her time off with the family of her Armenian father. Despite having been raised in a household with elements of more than one culture, she feels a stronger connection to her family's Armenian heritage. On her trip to Turkey, Armanoush discovers a different reality of contemporary Turkey, which reveals the fault lines and fissures of the Armenian-American virtual chat group's predominant discourse. Armanoush's view is unsettling the members of the diaspora group, who refuse to accept it. Members of the community establish their own "imaginary homeland" by reliving the past and urging others to do the same. Armanoush's personal account of her journey back to her birthplace highlights a void in our communal recollection of the past.

While it is difficult to regain one's memories, it is much more difficult for those who have been violent to deny their past. This case generates further difficulties in their life. After erasing their history from public consciousness, the younger generation of Turks are stuck in a state of



boredom and cannot go on with their lives. Shafak creates a parallel storyline about a group of young artists and intellectuals in Istanbul who congregate in a coffee shop called Café Kundera. In this story, they discuss art and ideas.

In contrast to the participants of the chat group Anoush Tree, the members of this group do not bear any recollection of or responsibility for previous wrongdoings. Nihilism and world-weariness are the only things they have in common. They now only live in the present because they have been able to effectively obliterate the memory of the Armenian genocide and deny that they are responsible for the massive amount of carnage that occurred. On the other hand, since they are stuck between Eastern and Western culture, they are always bored. The Exceptionally Untalented Poet, a stock figure who frequents Café Kundera, groans in anguish as he reads his latest work:

We are stuck. We are stuck between the East and the West. Between the past and the future. On the one hand here are the secular modernists, so proud of the regime they constructed, you cannot breathe a critical word. They've got the army and half of the state on their side. On the other hand there are the conventional traditionalists, so infatuated with the Ottoman past, you cannot breathe a critical word. They've got the general public and the remaining half of the state on their side. (Elif Shafak, *The Bastard Of Istanbul*, 2008,113)

In comparison with Shafak's protagonists, the sisters in law, Enright's the twins, in which both Maria and Mari are two contradicted poles; even if they are twins from the same father and mother but each one lives a separated life from the birth. Longing and the need for union is the uncompleted part for both, in which their suffering and searching for their own identity is the unreachable destination. Enright's role here in this novel is evident because she sheds light on things that seem to be covered and yet unrevealed. It is not only about the Irish identity but also about the self-identity which is lost and missed from the birth. In this novel, she initiates themes that are mentioned before but with a unique flavour; she puts her finger on the unhealed wound in which the Irish body is divided into two halves, two identities and two faces, which Enright presents through her novel the twin characters that really touches the Irish spirit and the pursuit for the lost identity of the homeland.

Along with Kachachi's and Shafak's influential role in presenting the agony of their protagonists, Enright's magical touches are felt by every Irish citizen in which the work reflects the suffering of the Irish society. There was a long history of pain and suffering when generation by generation inherited the pain, and it is an open gap not yet filled. In *What Are You Like?*, Maria Delahunty, whose mother died during delivery and was raised by her sad father, finds herself in her twenties drowned in nameless need and love for the wrong guy. She discovers a picture that will reveal a truth more heartbreaking than her father's extended sorrow but more pregnant with possibilities while going through her belongings. Moving between Dublin, New York, and London, *What Are You Like?* is a stunning story of twins and irretrievable losses, of a



woman plagued by her absent self, and pointing to the powerlessness against the deep connection to origins.

By actively working to dismantle conventional images of Irish femininity, Enright gave women a platform to express themselves and empower them. Enright herself states: "I do not write about Ireland so much as from Ireland. I am keenly aware of" (Giambona, 2020,132). Returning to the dilemma between opposing tradition and being anchored in the area, Enright asserts that she cannot avoid being impacted by this tradition. Thus, the author complicates, reworks, and reimagines nationalist concepts and aspirations. Such principles cannot be disregarded, but they must be updated and broadened to reflect the modern country. Then, it is permissible to observe how Enright's literature explores themes of Ireland and Irishness.

The intricate and non-linear nature of postcolonial identity is mirrored in the work's narrative structure. First, the personal and the national are entwined throughout the work, and Enright employs several narrative tactics to question the reader's preconceived notions of individual and collective identity. To be more specific, Enright is playing with issues of Irish female identity, specifically in regards to myths in Irish society that are a remnant of the nation's colonial and postcolonial history.

In relation to Kachachi's novel *The American Granddaughter*, though she has immersed an amid mayhem, writer Zeina Hussain never misses an opportunity to present a complete picture of the fifteen years of conflict between Iraq and the United States. In Kachachi's view, Zeina leads the reader into a world of shattered and broken identity and linguistic devaluation due to the strain of concurrently belonging to two opposing worlds: one of the colonized and one of the colonizer. Furthermore, she shows how the individual and national are linked by using recorded reports as well as newspaper clippings to demonstrate this relationship. Personal sorrow and self-scattered identities are discussed unflinchingly, reminding readers of their tragedies. The readers are never the same after reading *The American Granddaughter*; they are never allowed the relief of taking one side rather than the other.

According to this section, complex trauma and dissociation may blame the translator's dispersion and shatter. Zeina's traumatized silence and cynical outlook on life may be attributed to her experience of being identity dispersed, which has led to a lifetime of detachment, possibly dissociation, and a devaluing of language. Traumatized as a youngster when her parents were forced to flee Iraq with their children, she has difficulty dealing with it. In their new nation, they experience a dramatic shift in their level of life. After moving to the U.S., a well-known TV personality's father and a university professor's mother worked as hotel receptionists. His brother Yazan becomes a heroin addict due to the same trauma that impacts Zeina.

According to Cathy Caruth, trauma is an intense experience of abrupt or catastrophic occurrences. Hallucinations and other disturbing symptoms are common reactions to a traumatic experience. These symptoms are frequently delayed and uncontrollable. What happened to Zeina is an expected outcome in which the events she passed through much affected her sense of



belonging as she declares: "I find myself more Americanized than an Iraqi, a country I have never had and ever remembered, just with sorrow and pain, just like a nightmare, the only thing I remembered, just sad memories" (Kachachi, *The American Granddaughter*, 2010, 140).

As the reactions play an effective role in both novels; Anne Enright's *what Are You Like?* and Inaam Kachachi's *The American Granddaughter*, Elif Shafak's *The Bastard of Istanbul* also left an influential stamp in the Turkish community. According to Shafak's account, there are several elements of commonality and difference between the two cultures. By adding a suffix to the family name, both groups connect the professions to the family name. Women from both Turkish and Armenian families demonstrate their ability to persuade, bargain, and assert themselves without their male relatives (the men of both families having died or shifted base). As a result of being abused and left alone by their male family members, they share worry, indecision, and eccentricity qualities. The complex cooking habits of ladies from many ethnic and religious backgrounds are also strikingly similar.

The political leadership saw a danger to the Ottoman Empire's long-term existence after the Balkan Wars of 1912-1913. As a precondition for constructing an Islamic state out of the ruins of a multiethnic Ottoman Empire, the Armenian genocide had to be carried out. Taner Acklam explains:

Thus the ruling Ottoman-Turkish authorities formed a policy which aimed at homogenizing the population of Anatolia, the territorial heart of the empire. This policy has two main components: the first was to disperse and relocate non-Turkish Muslims, such as Kurds and Arabs, among the Turkish majority with the purpose of their assimilation. The second component involved expelling non-Muslim non-Turkish people from Anatolia...essentially the region's entire Christian population. (Taner, 1913, 34)

Therefore, Turkish citizens must celebrate diversity, recognise historical injustices committed against the country's Armenian minority, and provide a warm welcome to Armenians who have returned to their birthplace. Although Armenian genocide survivors have been able to return to their homelands, the catastrophe of such scale has shattered the identity of the survivors and their next-generation diaspora. It was an opportunity for Turkish authorities to expropriate "abandoned property" and bring about ethnic uniformity in Turkey after the genocide of Armenians and the forced departure of the surviving from their ancestral territory. The distinction between the Armenian diaspora and the displaced Armenian population in this country must be recognized. Refugees were Armenians who fled the state-sponsored bloodshed and sought sanctuary elsewhere. Diasporans are Armenians who have grown up in their host country and are the following generation. The genocide did not directly touch the Armenian diasporas, but they bore the weight of their dislocation and sense of alienation. The book by Elif Shafak is about an Armenian diaspora family who has made America their new home.

Conclusion



The scattered identity is presented and analyzed as a comparative analysis among three writers from different cultures. The scattered identity sense is much attached to those who lost the meaning of being themselves, which makes individuals from different cultures and societies live in a very chaotic state and lack the sense of belonging to their own native homelands. Individuals should accept their own multi identities to stop this scattered state; the study concludes that one's identity should be flexible and accept its shifting state to cope with the societies passed by and be self-released from this scattered sense.

الهوية المبعثرة كتحليل مقارن في الرواية التركية والعراقية والاييرلندية

معلومات الباحثين وعناوينهم

جامعة ديالى/ كلية التربية أ. د لى ابراهيم شاكِر

للعلوم الانسانية البرزنجي

مصطفى جمعه جِيَاد

Lumahh50@gmail.com mustafajomaa16@gmail.com

Keyword

الكلمات المفتاحية: الهوية المبعثرة , الثقافة التركية , الثقافة العراقية

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المخلص:

ان اهمية هذه الدراسة تكمن في كشف الحقائق المخفية في وتوضح كيف ان الظروف لعبت دورا فعال تشتت الهوية من خلال دراسة عميقة للثقافات خصوصا في أدب الرواية المعاصرة. تم تحليل موضوع الهوية المبعثرة بشكل دقيق وذلك من خلال التركيز على النقاط المشتركة في هذه الروايات المختارة. كتاب مثل أيليف شفق من الثقافة التركية , أنعام كجيجي من الثقافة العراقية وأن انرايت من الثقافة الايرلندية. استنادا الى الاحداث في توضيح المعاناة للشخصيات الرئيسية حيث ان الكتاب المذكورين وجدوا ان الخيال هو السبيل الوحيد للهروب من الحقيقة البشعة في الحياة الحديثة. ان موضوع الهوية المبعثرة هو السمة المشتركة في هذه الاعمال المختارة والموضوع الموحد من خلال تقاطع الافكار والمعتقدات لتقديم حقائق راسخة عن الهوية المشتتة والمبعثرة في روايات الادب المعاصر.



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